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Mr R Adams
Adult Education Officer for Quality and Development
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Adult Education Service
Cross Street
Beverly
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Dear Mr Adams

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: employability - the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained employment

This survey evaluates providers' response to initiatives launched on 1 August 2011 to use Skills Funding Agency funds flexibly to support people on benefits.

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and participants, during my visit on 17 and 18 January 2012 to look at your work in employability provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, participants and employers; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of two work skills club lessons.

Key findings

- The East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Adult Education Service has a strong strategic commitment to helping people into work across the county, and particularly those from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. The strategy has led to many successful initiatives that include: work skills clubs that help to prepare participants for employment; skills development courses; working with employers to help them to recruit into new and existing businesses; and working with employees at risk of redundancy.
- The service has linked a recent local economic assessment of local labour market needs very well to current and planned provision. This assessment has helped the service to focus on planning and developing courses and

other initiatives in line with identified employment growth areas and those areas that are expected to decline.

- Staff use initial assessments well to signpost participants to suitable provision, including vocational courses and skills update courses to meet their individual needs. Participants have good access to courses in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) to improve their basic skills for work. The programmes focus well on providing information, advice and guidance, and a good range of support services helps participants identify and overcome their barriers to work.
- Partnership working is very effective. Good links with Jobcentre Plus have led to successful working with employers to recruit unemployed people into sustainable jobs. Work trials with employers provide valuable work experience and help people to find work. Recent partnership working enabled eight out of a group of 35 people with disabilities to gain sustainable employment. This figure is five times higher than the national average for this group of people.
- Good and improving retention and pass rates are being achieved for participants on work skills club courses. In 2010/11 the pass rate was 72% and retention was 75%. In 2011/12 the pass rate has improved to 97% and the retention to 91%.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing a systematic process to monitor participants' progression and destinations to demonstrate the effectiveness of any specific interventions that result in recognised positive outcomes
- providing staff members with targets, such as for retention, achievements and other positive outcomes, to promote improvements, challenge staff and demonstrate improvements in the quality of the overall provision
- increasing the marketing and availability of courses in ESOL to raise the awareness of the availability of this provision to those on benefits and to address the drop in enrolments on these courses.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop employability provision at the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Adult Education Service.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to the Skills Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

John Grimmer
Her Majesty's Inspector