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Mrs L Rutter
YMCA Training
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Dear Mrs Rutter

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 visits on 30 November and 1 December 2011 and 21 February 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, and participants; scrutiny of relevant documents; and an observation of a learning session in motor vehicle studies.

Key findings

- Since August 2011, YMCA Training has built on its good track record of delivering programmes to unemployed young people and adults. Careful strategic planning has ensured that the employability provision fits very well into the organisation's overall business model and that it links well to other programmes so that clear progression routes are offered to all participants.
- YMCA Training makes effective use of labour market research, local knowledge and sector-specific expertise to develop and pilot new provision for unemployed people. Staff have developed well-defined models of delivery for 'sector clubs' in seven subject areas that employers have also endorsed. This work has included the development of a clear

implementation plan and thorough management information systems to enable managers to monitor and evaluate this new provision. Systems for monitoring participants' destinations and progression into employment are in place but not yet tested.

- YMCA Training has invested significant time in identifying units that are funded, are available at appropriate levels, form part of full qualifications and are suitable for unemployed participants. However, only a few participants have started these programmes as building links with local jobcentres and work programme providers across multiple sites across England is taking time.
- The development of the new programmes for unemployed participants has involved devising new processes and forms. It is too early to judge how effective these are and YMCA Training is aware of the need to review these forms to ensure that they capture all relevant information and provide participants with clear action plans.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to develop links with jobcentres and work programme providers to ensure that they understand the range of provision YMCA Training offers participants in each geographical area
- ensuring that staff identify carefully participants' barriers to employment and development needs in employability skills and vocational knowledge, and agree appropriate actions with them to support their development.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop employability provision at YMCA.

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

Joy Montgomery
Her Majesty's Inspector