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Mr T Horridge
Managing Director
Cablecom Training Limited
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Dear Mr Horridge

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 15 and 16 March 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, an employer and other partners; scrutiny of relevant documents; visits to two learning sites; and an observation of one learning session.

Key findings

- Since August 2011, CableCom Training Limited (CableCom) built well on its previous experience in delivering provision funded by the Department of Work and Pensions to develop provision specifically for unemployed people. It has used the flexibility in the funding effectively to develop a new 12-week course in telecommunications and cabling. The company has invested significantly in staffing and other resources to support this development and it also contributes further funding to enable participants to achieve additional specialist vocational qualifications not available through public funds.

- Managers have developed excellent partnerships to extend the provision to a wider geographical area and different learning environments. For example, the course was very successfully piloted on the premises of a local League 1 football club and the partnership is currently installing new premises on the site with plans for high industry standard specialist resources. Managers are developing links with Jobcentre Plus, but it currently has insufficient links with employers to identify work-trial opportunities in line with specific vacancies.
- The telecommunications course offers a good mix of background theory and practical training. The participants interviewed enjoyed using the excellent equipment and they developed technical skills to high standards in the observed session. The trainers reinforced good work-related health and safety practices very effectively. The course includes a comprehensive day on employability skills which provides participants with excellent opportunities to reflect on their employability, identify how to develop and project a professional image and select appropriate action to help overcome their personal barriers to employment. However, the course does not focus sufficiently on giving participants feedback on their progress in developing a wider range of employability skills.
- Staff have very high levels of professional expertise. The vocational trainers have in-depth industry experience and very good teaching skills. Similarly, staff are very skilled at guiding participants to reflect on how their own attitudes and behaviour may affect their employability. Although the literacy and numeracy provision for participants on the course relies primarily on electronic programmes, staff have excellent expertise in developing teaching and learning activities in the context of the provider's other provision, such as a programme for employed taxi drivers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to develop links with employers to identify opportunities for purposeful work experience, and work trials linked to job vacancies
- building on staff's specialist expertise to develop participants' literacy and numeracy skills in work-related contexts
- identifying and recording all participants' achievements, including the development of employability skills and their progression into employment.

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

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

**Karen Adriaanse
Her Majesty's Inspector**