

Train'd Up Railway Resourcing Ltd

Focused monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider
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FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Train'd Up Railway Resourcing Limited (TUP) is a national training organisation with bases in the West Midlands, London and Scotland. It delivers tailored recruitment and training provision to a range of sectors, predominantly transport and engineering. The company, formed in 2004, began delivering recruitment programmes and modern apprenticeship provision in Scotland where its head office is based. The company gained contracts in England in 2007 with the West Midlands LSC and London LSC to offer engineering courses and management courses through Train to Gain and advanced apprenticeships for young people and adults.

At their last inspection in October 2008, inspectors judged the effectiveness of the provision as good overall. In particular, the outcomes for learners were satisfactory. The quality of provision and leadership and management were good. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. This report focuses on key themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

How effectively is self-assessment and improvement planning used to bring about improvements?

Reasonable progress

TUP has made reasonable progress in using self-assessment and improvement planning to bring about improvements. Since the last inspection, managers have carried out revisions to the self-assessment process in order to produce a more usable report more focused on what the business needs to do to improve. TUP has made use of an external quality consultant to review and provide guidance on the revised report. The revised process integrates and incorporates both Investors in People and Matrix accreditation processes. Self-assessment is also an on-going process that takes place at all team meetings.

The current quality improvement plan identifies required actions against self-assessed identified strengths and areas of development need. This plan is effective in providing managers with a tool to monitor the progress towards achievement of the identified targets. However, some of the actions in the plan lack detail and measurable targets. For example, it states an aim to maintain high success rates but it does not provide detail regarding at what level TUP need to maintain the success rates. It is unclear whether this target applies to all of the sectors and programmes. Some other targets identified are similarly vague.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has TUP made in improving outcomes for learners? **Reasonable progress**

TUP has made reasonable progress in improving outcomes for learners. TUP still does not have apprenticeship framework completions, as the engineering apprentices do not complete their full programme until October 2010. In their latest self-assessment report TUP analyse NVQ success rates on a regional basis and compare performance against 2008/09 national averages. On the Train to Gain full level 2 programmes, success rates have increased from 77 to 83% and are in line with the 2008/09 national average. TUP has maintained the rate of learners completing within their planned end date at 73% and this is in line with the national average. On the full level three programme, success rates have decreased from 80% to 60% because of issues with a single employer affecting 17 learners.

TUP has taken effective actions to liaise with employers in maintaining access to learners in order to promote completion of programmes. They maintain a good and flexible approach to both delivery and assessment taking account of work patterns such as night shifts and weekend working.

TUP has achieved good positive outcomes at 76% for participants on a Skills Funding Agency funded 'Personal Best' programme to develop volunteers in preparation for 2012 London Olympics.

Quality of Provision

What progress has the provider made in improving the detail used at learner reviews? **Reasonable progress**

TUP has made reasonable progress in improving the detail used at learner reviews. Since appointing a new training and compliance manager, TUP has carried out a detailed revision of the learner review process. They have developed and implemented new documents for the process including a learner training and assessment record (LTAR). Staff have received training in the revised process and use of the new documents. The revised process takes a more holistic approach capturing more information about learner development and progress. Assessors quantify and record progress towards achievement of qualifications. TUP requires regular reports from participating colleges on learner attendance and progress. Assessors carry out learner reviews more frequently, often every six weeks. Internal verifiers observe assessors carrying out reviews as well as assessments.

However, the learner review documents use closed questions relating to equality of opportunity, self-esteem and health and safety concerns. These require only a 'yes' or 'no' answer and do not give an opportunity to fully explore the issues.

The health and safety section includes a list of areas but requires the assessor to check only three. It is not clear on the document how much of what the learner includes will be shared with the employer.

Leadership and management

What progress has the provider made in further developing the quality systems to drive improvements throughout the provision?

Reasonable progress

TUP has made reasonable progress in further developing the quality systems to drive improvements. The revision of the self-assessment process and report produced is now a more usable document. The newly appointed training and compliance manager is contributing effectively to developments and provides support to a range of staff and assessors. New documentation supports the quality systems such as learner reviews and satisfaction surveys. These are now more frequent and the results are collated to provide information to managers and assessors. However, these also rely heavily on closed style questions. Staff have received training and are becoming more adept at using performance recording software systems.

Managers now access and make better use of performance reports such as qualification success rate (QSR) reports on the provider gateway. Managers use proprietary software to produce a suite of reports for use at management and team meetings.

TUP provide good support for staff training and professional development designed to meet both company and individual aspirations. A three-year business plan is in place to provide a realistic basis for future development. A quality improvement plan provides actions against strengths, development needs and new ideas from the self-assessment. However, some of the targets for improvement are vague.

What progress has the provider made in the maintenance of the very effective communication systems?

Significant progress

TUP has made significant progress in maintaining the very effective communication systems with their disparate work force. All staff are provided with mobile phones and lap top computers, these are all able to dial up and access email, shared files and key documents on the TUP server. Some staff also choose blackberry devices and travel notebooks with 3G connections.

TUP has created very effective systems to maintain regular and frequent communication with all staff, including a very effective lone worker policy requiring all staff to telephone head office on arrival and departure from sites. TUP organise an annual staff event around the Christmas period to enable corporate networking as well as social activities. All staff receive more frequent individual meetings involving

the new training and compliance manager. Newly appointed staff receive more frequent meetings until they are fully established in their role.

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