

# Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd (GEL)

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58505

**Name of lead inspector:** Russell Jordan HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 8 October 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd  
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## Information about the provider

1. Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd (GEL) is an independent learning provider, operating as a social enterprise to provide a service to the Gloucestershire business community. GEL operates from a main office in Cheltenham and a second office in Thornbury, near Bristol. Its aim is to help local businesses succeed and to raise skills levels in the county by providing local, affordable and quality training for businesses of all types and sizes. GEL is an approved training provider for the 'Gloucester Works' city regeneration funding that is currently available for companies and individuals in and around Gloucester city. Training ranges from one-day courses to year-long programmes, with themes including people and resources management, business planning and employment law. GEL is often successful in obtaining funding to support training activities. GEL works with over 1,200 companies and 6,000 learners every year, and offers over 300 nationally recognised short-courses and qualifications. Almost 70% of these companies are repeat customers.
2. GEL has had a small Train to Gain contract since 2008/09. During the 2009/10 contract year there were around 130 learners on team leading and first line (supervisory) management programmes, with just over 50 in learning at the time of the inspection. The programme is heavily oversubscribed. Train to Gain funding accounted for around 15% of GEL's income derived from training activities in 2009/10. GEL was last inspected in September 2007 as part of a south-west England regional inspection of European Social Fund provision.
3. GEL provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - The Royal Forest of Dean College.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain	116 learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Team leading and supervisory management	2

## Overall effectiveness

4. GEL is a good provider with good capacity to improve. In the first full year of its Train to Gain contract GEL has achieved good outcomes for learners. Learners are highly motivated and refer to the positive impact of their training in increasing their confidence and skills in their jobs. They benefit from well-planned, monthly training sessions taught by experienced and knowledgeable tutors.
5. Assessment meets learners' requirements but assessors make limited use of discussion and observation to enable learners to demonstrate and prove their skills to their assessors. Learners know how well they are doing, although formal arrangements to review and record their progress are in need of development. Their employers are not generally well informed of learners' progress and are not usually involved in progress review meetings.
6. Training meets learners' and employers' needs well, and GEL works well with partners to meet these needs. GEL listens to, and makes good use of, learners' views to improve the quality of training, but it does not do enough to seek out and use employers' views for the same purpose. GEL is inclusive of different types of learners and has achieved significant successes in supporting learners from minority groups to gain their qualifications. However, GEL does not

routinely carry out the analysis needed to highlight these successes or to identify any potential underachievement.

7. GEL knows itself well and makes good use of this knowledge to improve the quality of its work. However, informal quality assurance arrangements are not always sufficiently systematic or frequent to provide a clear picture, such as in the observation of training sessions. The board of directors provides valuable support and challenge to managers, and contributes to GEL being a well-led and well-managed training provider that puts learners at the centre of its work. GEL provides good value for money.

## **Main findings**

- Outcomes for learners are good. The proportion of learners who achieve qualifications by their planned end date is high. Learners rightly point to how well the training meets their needs, giving them more confidence and skills in carrying out their job roles.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan learning sessions well and ensure that content reflects clearly learners' employment contexts. Learners benefit from opportunities to share knowledge and experiences from the workplace.
- Assessment is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements. However, limited use is made of workplace observation and professional discussion to confirm learners' competence.
- Learners know what progress they are making and what they need to do between off-the-job training sessions. However, formal arrangements to review and record centrally learners' progress are underdeveloped.
- Partnerships with the business community and voluntary sector in Gloucestershire are very effective in enabling learners to develop new skills and increase self-esteem.
- GEL uses learners' views well to inform the continuing improvement of the provision and is very responsive to acting on areas for improvement identified. However, communication with employers is an area for development. The extent to which employers are involved in learners' progress reviews, informed of their employees' progress, and contribute to the evaluation of the quality of training, is insufficient.
- GEL is an inclusive provider and has worked well to support the achievement of learners for whom English is a second or other language (ESOL). However, GEL does not analyse data systematically and routinely to identify any potential areas of underachievement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues is satisfactory for their immediate job roles and responsibilities, but there are no opportunities to develop progressively or reinforce their understanding. Arrangements to update staff knowledge are insufficiently regular.

- Self-assessment is self-critical and mostly accurate. It is used well to improve the quality of provision and is at the centre of a culture of continuous improvement and responsiveness. However, the self-assessment report does not evaluate all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) in sufficient depth.
- Quality assurance arrangements are effective but informal. The observation of training sessions is insufficiently systematic or frequent to enable the provider to have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning.
- The board of directors is well informed and provides good support and challenge to managers. The restructuring of the organisation is being managed well. GEL provides good value for money.

### **What does Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd need to do to improve further?**

- Plan and implement the more widespread use by assessors of workplace observation and professional discussion to confirm learners' competence.
- Implement fully plans to make more formal and systematic arrangements to review and record learners' progress centrally.
- Analyse learners' performance data routinely and systematically to identify any potential areas of underachievement by different groups of learners.
- Ensure that employers are informed of their employees' progress and involved in progress review meetings better and more frequently; ensure that employers' views of the quality of training are sought consistently and used to inform the continuous improvement of the provision.
- Establish a formal process to ensure that each trainer is observed at least once annually, so that the provider has a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning, in order to drive up the quality of provision.
- Ensure that self-assessment provides judgements on all aspects of the CIF in sufficient depth.
- Develop opportunities for the progressive development and reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues; plan and implement regular equality and diversity training for staff.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- how well training meets their needs
- the high quality of teaching and training
- good support from tutors that helps them make good progress in their learning
- becoming more confident in their job roles as a result of what they have learned.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

In a small minority of cases:

- greater direct relevance and application of the training to their immediate work role.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

**What employers like:**

- the high standard of training provided
- how well GEL meets their training needs and the relevance of the training to their work.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

- more involvement in reviewing learners' progress.

## **Main inspection report**

### **Capacity to make and sustain improvement**

**Grade 2**

8. GEL has good capacity to improve the quality of its provision. Self-assessment is used well as a quality improvement tool and is mostly accurate. GEL is very responsive to acting on areas for improvement and uses learners' views particularly well to improve the quality of provision. In its first full year of its Train to Gain contract GEL has achieved good outcomes for learners with most achieving qualifications by their planned end date and well above the national average for the subject area. The restructuring of the organisation is being managed well. The board of directors provides good support and challenge to managers. Partnership working is strong.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**Grade 2**

9. Outcomes for learners are good. In the first full year of its contract for Train to Gain, the proportion of GEL's learners who achieved by their planned end date was high, well above the national average. Learners enjoy their training and are well motivated. Learners rightly point to the relevance of the training to their needs and how it helps to improve their confidence and skills in performing their job roles. Learners' progress is good. Learners make good use of the work-based projects for the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) award to provide knowledge evidence for their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Learners feel safe and pay good attention to safe working practices.

### **The quality of provision**

**Grade 2**

10. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors and assessors are knowledgeable, experienced and hold appropriate professional and assessor qualifications. Tutors plan learning sessions well with clear outcomes for learners. They are successful in ensuring that the content of learning sessions reflects clearly learners' employment contexts. Learners benefit from well-planned opportunities to share knowledge and experiences from the workplace. Tutors make good use of questioning to check and develop learners' understanding. Training rooms are well equipped. Tutors recommend and direct learners to appropriate websites to supplement materials provided at the monthly training sessions.
11. Assessment is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements. However, assessors make limited use of workplace observation and professional discussion to confirm learners' competence. Assessors provide written feedback to learners on unit summary sheets but, in many instances, this is bland and insufficiently evaluative to inform improvement. Learners know what progress they are making and what they need to do between monthly off-the-job training sessions. Monthly targets for learners are clear and precise. However, formal arrangements to review and record centrally learners' progress are

underdeveloped. GEL does not involve employers sufficiently in the review of learners' progress.

12. The extent to which provision meets the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. Intermediate and advanced level training is available to learners across the adult age range. GEL works to good effect to ensure that learners are on the right course. Learners have the opportunity to build upon existing experience and are encouraged to consider progression for personal and employment reasons. Some learners who have completed the training have been promoted to more responsible workplace roles.
13. Partnerships with the business community and voluntary sector in Gloucestershire have enabled learners to develop new skills and increase self-esteem. GEL has established links with colleges and organisations throughout the south-west of England and is the leading provider of leadership and management training for key initiatives such as 'Response to Redundancy' aimed at promoting social inclusion and sustainable development.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

14. Leaders and managers are successful in promoting a culture of ambition, continuous improvement and responsiveness throughout the organisation, putting learners at the heart of what they do. Staff rightly judge that communication in GEL is good. They are well informed and the organisation is receptive to their views and ideas. On-going change within the organisation, brought about by merger with another organisation earlier in the year, is being managed well.
15. The interim board of directors is well informed and provides good support and challenge to managers. Directors have a good balance of skills and experience to enable them to fulfil their roles.
16. GEL makes particularly good use of learners' views to inform the improvement of the provision. However, GEL recognises that it does not communicate enough with employers to inform them of their employees' progress or to seek their views in improving the quality of training.
17. Self-assessment is appropriately self-critical and mostly accurate. Its value in improving quality is demonstrated well in the increased provision of staff for the review and assessment of learners' work on training days. However, the self-assessment report does not evaluate all aspects of the CIF in sufficient depth. Quality assurance is effective but significant aspects are largely informal and are not recorded adequately or systematically. As GEL recognises in its self-assessment report, managers' observation of learning sessions is insufficiently frequent and systematic to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning.
18. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The training and development manager carries out thorough health and safety checks on employers' premises



before learners, who are all employed, are accepted on training programmes. The risk assessment of training facilities and activities is thorough. Learners are well informed on health and safety in relation to their immediate job roles, work safely, and know how to raise any issues.

19. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Recruitment to the Train to Gain programme is inclusive of different groups of learners. All marketing and training materials are checked for gender or other bias. Policies are clear for both learners and staff and cover relevant legislation. Arrangements to review and update policies are effective. However, there are no formal arrangements to update staff knowledge and understanding. Learners' understanding is appropriate for their immediate job roles and responsibilities, but there are no opportunities to develop progressively or reinforce their understanding. Data reveal no significant differences in achievement for different groups of learners. However, GEL does not analyse routinely and systematically recruitment and learners' performance data to identify any potential gaps in achievement. As a result, GEL has underestimated its successes in supporting the achievement of minority groups. For example, GEL has been successful in assisting the achievement of ESOL learners through well-targeted support.
20. Value for money is good, evidenced by the good outcomes for learners that include the gaining of an additional ILM award alongside the NVQ required for Train to Gain.

## **Information about the inspection**

21. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's training and development manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
22. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

## Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	0	0
Part-time learners	51	51
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	na	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	na	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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