

Health and Safety Training 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

Health and Safety Training Ltd (HSTL) is a private company founded in 2003. It provides training and assessment for the National Vocation Qualification (NVQ) level 2 award in plant operations.

HSTL's headquarters is at their premises in North Shields. Much of the training takes place on employers' sites. The Company employs 17 full-time staff, 10 of whom are instructor/assessors.

HSTL provides training for 360 learners, under a contract with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). It also provides training, under subcontracted agreements, for 40 learners from Tyne Metropolitan College and 60 learners from Access Training. HSTL recruits most learners directly through employers. SFA funding represents approximately 60% of HSTL's business.

HSTL was inspected for the first time in February 2009. At this inspection, inspectors judged overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, leadership and management and equality of opportunity to be satisfactory. They judged achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and provision within engineering and manufacturing technologies to be good. This report focuses on the themes explored during the monitoring visit

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in using the self-assessment process to improve the provision?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, HSTL demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve. The company has developed its self-assessment process, which inspectors also found to be satisfactory, to make it a more effective improvement tool. Enhanced arrangements to collect learners' and employers' views help the provider to evaluate feedback more effectively and to judge the impact of improvement measures. Improved systems to monitor and track learner progress are now in place. HSTL has tackled many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

The self-assessment report is evaluative and sufficiently self-critical. It links to an overall quality improvement plan, which is regularly monitored and updated. Evidence to support judgments in the self-assessment report is clear. HSTL reviews its performance against the revised Common Inspection Framework and awards grades for each aspect. Staff understand the need for self-assessment and recognise how the process contributes to continuous improvement. However, there is no

overall self-assessment cycle and staff do not always know when evaluation of key procedures will take place.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made to introduce strategies to improve timely success rates and maintain high overall success rates?

Significant progress

Overall success rates have remained high for the last three years. During 2009/10, they increased to 96%. After the previous inspection, HSTL introduced strategies to improve timely success rates, which were low. It recruited more assessors to increase assessment in the workplace. Improved systems to help managers identify learners at risk of falling behind with their assessments are now in place. Managers focus on ensuring that learners complete their training in a timely manner. A newly appointed quality assurance manager now oversees learners' progress; managers also monitor progress closely during monthly team meetings. HSTL now works better with employers to maximise opportunities for assessment. Timely success rates improved to 93% in 2009/10, which is significantly above the national average.

Success rates and timely success rates are broadly similar in most regions. In Durham, however, they are slightly below the national average.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made to develop arrangements to help support learners with their literacy numeracy and language needs?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, HSTL offered insufficient support to learners with additional development needs in literacy, numeracy and language. All learners now have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills at the start of their training. The results of the initial assessment are given to the learners, and staff discuss the support available in a confidential and sensitive way. About one third of learners have support needs and a few speak English as an additional language. Arrangements are in place for learners to receive support from other specialist providers. In addition to support in the college, which was available at the time of the previous inspection, additional support for learners is now available in the workplace. Too few learners take up the offer of specialist support. HSTL has introduced a strategy for further improving and promoting literacy, numeracy and language support.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made to introduce and develop quality assurance?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, quality improvement systems were incomplete. HSTL relied too heavily on informal arrangements. Observations of teaching and learning did not take place. Following the inspection, HSTL introduced a system for observing teaching and learning regularly. HSTL evaluated the process and recognised that the observations provided too few judgements and actions for improvement. Recent changes have resulted in an external specialist carrying out regular, planned observations throughout the year. Observations now evaluate teaching and learning better and provide clear actions for development. Staff training has taken place to improve the quality of teaching. Systematic observations of assessment, carried out by the interval verifier, are good. HSTL has introduced quality assurance procedures; however, many of these procedures cover administrative processes and do not contribute significantly to the improvement of the training. HSTL recognised the need to increase its emphasis on quality improvement and appointed a quality manager in 2010. HSTL uses quality improvement plans to manage developments but continues to manage much of the development activity informally.

What progress has been made to improve the management information system?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, HSTL did not use its management information system effectively to monitor either learner or staff performance. An improved data capturing system now tracks key aspects of learners' performance throughout their programmes satisfactorily, and provides information for monthly management meetings. Learners and trainers receive good information about progress made and areas to target. HSTL analyses data showing the performance of different groups of learners and takes relevant action to address issues raised. HSTL relies on three separate data collection systems to produce overall reports for business planning and staff performance monitoring. The company purchased a new system, which has the potential to improve data collection and analysis. However, it requires further development before it becomes fully operational.

What progress has been made to improve the promotion of equality and diversity?

Reasonable progress

The promotion of equality of opportunity was satisfactory at the previous inspection. At that time, all staff had received training in equality and diversity. New staff now receive this training as part of their induction. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is still satisfactory. HSTL has improved the coverage of equality and diversity during learners' inductions by introducing video resources and by engaging the learners in discussion. Questions on equality and diversity asked during progress reviews help to re-enforce and develop learners' understanding well. HSTL uses their good links with employers to promote equality and diversity. It monitors the

participation of different groups of learners. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups has risen from 2.5% in 2008/09 to 7% in the current year. HSTL has targeted recruitment in areas with high minority ethnic populations to increase opportunities to those under-represented in learning. HSTL actively promotes training for women and the number of female learners is increasing, although it remains low. The quality improvement plan includes detailed actions for the development of equality and diversity.

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