

Cornwall Marine Network 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

Cornwall Marine Network Limited (CMN) was inspected in February 2009 as Cornwall Marine Employers Training Group Limited (CMETG Ltd). All inspection grades were satisfactory.

CMN is based in Falmouth and was established in 2002 as a membership-owned not-for-profit organisation. It has grown considerably since the inspection and now has over 350 members in the marine industry in Cornwall. Government funding for Train to Gain provision amounts to about 15% of CMN's income. Since the inspection CMN has extended its provision in Train to Gain and in other training, including 14 to 16 provision, foundation learning and privately-funded training. Most staff, including the training manager, have been appointed since the inspection.

At inspection CMN had 30 learners on Train to Gain programmes in engineering at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 and two learners on NVQ business administration programmes at level 2. Currently, CMN has 132 learners on Train to Gain programmes in engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology (ICT); retail and commercial enterprise; leisure, travel and tourism; and, business, administration and law.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has CMN made in improving self-assessment and quality improvement planning to identify areas for improvement and take appropriate actions? **Insufficient progress**

At the last inspection the self-assessment process was judged to be satisfactory overall. The self-assessment report was the first that the provider had written. It was descriptive and insufficiently clear about some aspects, and other aspects were not graded.

CMN adopted a new approach in producing the current self-assessment report. It produced detailed subject self-assessment reports based on the Common Inspection Framework. These identified strengths and areas for improvement which informed the subject quality improvement plans. However, the final self-assessment report does not follow the order of the Common Inspection Framework. It is overly descriptive and includes insufficient detail, especially in relation to the quality of provision, which CMN graded as good. It does not clearly identify the main strengths of the provision and areas for improvement. The overarching quality improvement plan does not clearly link to the self-assessment report. CMN has recently reviewed progress against the subject quality improvement plans. It plans to carry out these reviews monthly. CMN has not yet reviewed progress against the overarching quality

improvement plan, even though it had planned to do this in January with subsequent reviews of progress in June and September.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has CMN made in improving learners' outcomes since the previous inspection?

Reasonable progress

At the last inspection, outcomes for learners were judged to be satisfactory overall. Since the inspection CMN has introduced a range of Train to Gain programmes in engineering and in other subject areas. In 2009/10, with the exception of level 2 engineering, which had an overall success rate of 56%, all learners who completed their programmes achieved their qualification.

In 2009/10, the overall rate of learners completing within the planned duration of the programme was very low at 35%, which was 40 percentage points below the national rate. However, all learners on business, administration and law programmes completed in the planned time frame. Success rates for spectator safety and level 3 engineering programmes were satisfactory. It is too early to judge the success rates for customer service and ICT programmes. Less than a third of learners on level 2 engineering programmes completed in the planned time frame and retention rates were low. CMN has made improvements to the recruitment and monitoring for these programmes. Most level 2 engineering learners due to complete in the next two months are making satisfactory progress and 30% have completed earlier than planned.

Quality of provision

What progress has CMN made in ensuring that assessors are appropriately qualified?

Significant progress

At the last inspection CMN was judged to have insufficient qualified assessors. At that time CMN recruited assessors from its membership network of employers. Few of these work-based assessors had achieved assessor qualifications. CMN has since developed a different strategy for the recruitment of its assessors and has employed experienced and suitably qualified assessors. The few remaining work-based assessors have achieved their assessor qualifications, but are currently not available to act as assessors. CMN holds individual meetings with each assessor to discuss their caseload and their learners' progress. CMN has recently introduced arrangements for these meetings to take place formally on a monthly basis. All assessors are required to attend a minimum of three standardisation meetings each year.

Assessors directly employed by CMN have access to a broad range of staff development opportunities and their take up of these opportunities is good. Assessors employed on a sessional basis participate in some of CMN's staff development opportunities in addition to those available through their main employer. CMN maintains detailed records of assessors' planned and completed

continuing professional development activities. All current assessors have completed basic training in safeguarding.

What progress has CMN made in improving arrangements to monitor learners' progress? Insufficient progress

At the last inspection CMN was judged to insufficiently monitor learners' overall progress. CMN has not rectified the specific issues identified in the report. Assessment is frequent and assessment planning for each visit is clear and appropriate. However, CMN does not ensure that all learners have specific and time-bound short-term targets and a clear understanding of whether they are making sufficient progress to complete their qualification within the agreed time frame. Individual learning plans still lack formal targets. Assessors do not routinely update individual learning plans.

CMN does not collect sufficient information to monitor the progress of learners overall. For example, it uses a spreadsheet to record learners' completion of units, but does not record whether completion was within the expected time frame. The spreadsheet does not record partial completion of units. Monthly team meetings include discussions on individual learners who are near the end of their planned programme and those who have passed their planned time frame for completion. However, CMN does not collect and analyse sufficient information to monitor whether all learners make suitable progress throughout their programme. It does not ensure appropriate action as soon as possible to enable learners to complete their programmes within their planned time frame.

Leadership and management

What progress has CMN made in using data effectively? Insufficient progress

At the last inspection, CMN lacked processes to collect and use data effectively to manage its Train to Gain provision. It did not have suitable systems to monitor the provision or to identify issues of concern. After the inspection CMN developed internal management information systems which enabled it to monitor some aspects of the provision. More recently, the company has purchased software to provide a bespoke management information system. CMN has arranged for staff training in the use of the system to take place next month.

CMN is already using the new management information system to monitor and manage the assessors' caseloads of learners, and also to manage the recruitment of learners to each of the programmes. It monitors learners' planned dates for completion of their programmes. However, this does not include the systematic identification and monitoring of individual learners' progress towards completion. CMN has clear plans to develop the management information system to produce a range of useful data reports. However, as recognised in the self-assessment report, it

has not yet sufficiently developed its procedures to collect and analyse learner data for use as a management tool to monitor and improve all aspects of the provision.

What progress has CMN made in improving quality assurance arrangements? Reasonable progress

At the last inspection quality assurance arrangements were judged to be insufficiently thorough. Since the inspection CMN has revised its quality assurance arrangements and introduced a more extensive set of procedures. Assessment and internal verification processes now meet the requirements of awarding bodies. CMN has developed a supportive process for observations of teaching and learning and of other key activities. However, the process does not include the grading of sessions or the agreement of specific, time-bound action plans for improvement.

A quality improvement manual includes appropriate key procedures to monitor the effectiveness of each stage of learners' programmes. CMN is currently revising the procedures further so that they are suitable for the planned introduction of apprenticeships. For example, it is devising a progress review process which includes effective target setting for learners and the promotion and reinforcement of learners' understanding of health and safety and equality and diversity matters. CMN now carries out audits to ensure the appropriate completion of learner files and is beginning to monitor the quality of completed documentation through one-to-one meetings with assessors. CMN recognises that although its quality assurance arrangements have improved, they require further development.

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