

Prospect Training Services

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

Prospect Training Services (PTS) is a private limited company which offers training and government-funded work-based learning programmes for both adults and young people. The Skills Funding Agency funds the majority of this provision.

PTS offers training to people who may have struggled in formal education because of their personal circumstances, such as mental health issues, low self-esteem or behavioural problems. The provider offers foundation courses from sites throughout Gloucestershire which include childcare, health and social care, vehicle maintenance and construction.

At the previous inspection, PTS was judged to be good overall with achievement and standards being satisfactory. There were some issues with poor target setting and incomplete recording of information, advice and guidance and learner support information.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has PTS made in using the self-assessment process to bring about improvement?	Significant progress
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At the previous inspection the self-assessment process was judged to be good. It is still very thorough and inclusive. Views of staff, employers and learners all contribute to the self-assessment process. The report is written and checked by staff. The report is well written and provides a largely accurate assessment of the provision, although the section on outcomes is lacking in detailed analysis and judgements.

The self-assessment report is well integrated with the quality improvement plan and the business plan and these have been used to good effect to improve and expand the provision. PTS has an effective meeting structure to implement and monitor the progress of change within the company.

All of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed and PTS has well-structured plans to continue to improve and expand the provision.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has PTS made in improving the success rates and outcomes for learners?	Significant progress
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At the previous inspection, achievement and standards were judged to be satisfactory. PTS has made significant progress in expanding the number of courses and learners. Progression rates have improved from 52% at the previous inspection to 64% in 2009/10. This is particularly significant with respect to the nature of the

client group. The achievement of learners' key objectives has similarly improved. The achievement of qualifications has improved slightly since the previous inspection and work is currently in progress to improve this further.

PTS offers a range of good opportunities to enable learners to develop their personal and social skills and many learners have benefited from these opportunities.

Data are used to good effect to analyse differences between different groups. The progression rates and achievement of key objectives for learners receiving additional support are the same as for all other learners.

Since the previous inspection PTS has introduced a small Train to Gain programme which will be completed within the current year. A small number of apprenticeships have been introduced recently; however it is too early to judge outcomes for these learners.

Quality of provision

What progress has PTS made in improving target setting for learners?	Significant progress
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At the previous inspection, target setting at progress reviews on the construction programmes was poor. PTS has developed very comprehensive target setting procedures. Progress is recorded well within the paper-based files and these are often supplemented with video or audio recordings of the review. These recordings are shared with staff and are made available to learners' parents and prospective employers. The review documents are also available to staff and learners online. Targets have improved however some still remain which are insufficiently specific. Review files are checked for quality and training has been made available to staff to improve target setting.

What progress has PTS made in improving the recording of information on advice and guidance?	Significant progress
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At the previous inspection, the recording of information, advice and guidance and learners support was judged to be incomplete. The system for recording this information is now very comprehensive and used very effectively. All aspects of health and safety relating to the learners and their work placements are thoroughly risk assessed and monitored. Information about learners' additional learning needs and the support the learners are given is recorded in the learner files and also on a database which is used to monitor and evaluate the quality of the support.

Progress reviews are thorough and include records of information, advice and guidance as well as support given to learners. The learners' attitudes and personal well-being are assessed at each review using a questionnaire and this information is collated electronically to assist in the monitoring of learner progress.

What progress has PTS made in improving the quality of initial assessment and the use of data?

Significant progress

At the previous inspection, the quality of initial assessment was judged to be satisfactory but insufficient use was made of the data to evaluate the efficacy of the support. The initial assessment is now much improved and is very thorough. As well as a comprehensive literacy and numeracy assessment, each learner is assessed to identify skills and additional learning needs. This also includes an assessment of their background and personal circumstances. This information is used in a graphic representation of the learner which is used at review to ensure learning needs are met.

Data are now used well to monitor the progress of the learner and also to assess the impact of the learning support. The performance of different groups is monitored and discussed regularly at team meetings. The training in diagnostic testing identified at the previous inspection has been completed and plans are well developed for staff training in Asperger's syndrome.

Leadership and management

What progress has PTS made in improving the partnership working with other agencies?

Significant progress

At the previous inspection, partnership working was judged to be good. PTS has continued to develop good partnership working with a wide variety of outside agencies. This is now much improved and has expanded considerably. Strong links have been made with the local rugby and football clubs, enabling learners to engage in sporting activities and also to explore career opportunities in allied professions, such as catering, groundsmanhip, and sports therapy. Other links include the local Army and Royal Air Force, sports centres, colleges and social services.

PTS has a very good working relationship with the local council and has promoted a range of initiatives for people with disabilities, such as plastering for wheelchair users. PTS works well with local schools to promote vocational training and also with the promotion of university education to learners and parents.

PTS is a very active member of the local learning provider group and participates in various user groups such as peer review, data analysis and bid writing.

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