

# TIR Training Services Limited

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58573

**Name of lead inspector:** Shahram Safavi HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 1 July 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Waltham House  
Riverview Road  
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## Information about the provider

1. TIR Training Services Limited (TIR) is a subsidiary of DEFLOG VQ Trust Limited, which is a registered educational charitable trust set up to offer qualifications to the Armed Forces, specifically the Royal Logistics Corps. TIR has been involved in work-based learning since March 2007 originally through a subcontracting agreement with a local college. Since 2008, the company has had a contract with the Learning and Skills Council (now the Skills Funding Agency) to provide transport and logistics qualifications to young people and adults through apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) provides 71% of the company's revenue; the remainder is from the provision of commercial training.
2. A chief executive has overall responsibility for the company. He reports to a board of nine trustees and is supported by a team of five directors. The board of directors oversees both TIR and DEFLOG VQ Trust Limited. The board members represent the operations, finance, human resources, quality, corporate strategy, and learning services departments.
3. Of the 22 full-time staff that TIR employs, two are senior managers. These are supported by a training manager, 15 training officers and four staff who provide learner support and administration.
4. TIR engages with small- to medium-sized employers and large national companies to recruit learners. All TIR's Train to Gain learners during the inspection were involved in the transport and logistics sector.
5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of TIR:
  - Prima Training Limited

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2009/10
<b>Employer provision:</b>	
Apprenticeships	8 apprentices
Train to Gain	687 learners

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>
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<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>
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<b>Grade 2</b>
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

<b>Subject Areas</b>
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<b>Grade</b>
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Transportation operations and maintenance
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2
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## Overall effectiveness

6. TIR offers a good standard of education and training and its prospects for improving its provision are good. Learners significantly improve their knowledge and driving practices. They find their courses very valuable and enjoy attending them. Learners in TIR perform significantly better than learners in many other providers. An outstanding proportion of Train to Gain learners achieve and complete in the time planned and agreed. Many learners progress to higher levels and gain additional qualifications.
7. Teaching and learning are good. Practical coaching and training are highly effective. Training officers monitor learners' progress well but they do not all complete progress review forms in sufficient detail.
8. TIR meets the needs and interests of learners and employers outstandingly. Training officers visit learners at any location and at times that are convenient to learners and employers. Many of these visits take place late in the evening or at twilight. Training officers respond particularly well to the often short-notice changes reflecting the work pattern of HGV drivers. The availability of information, advice and guidance during courses is good.
9. Leadership and management are good and the company provides outstanding value for money. TIR plans well for future changes, beneficial for learners, and has a number of outstanding training resources including heavy goods vehicles

and large-scale HGV driving simulators. TIR has effective arrangements for protecting its learners and its focus on health and safety is good. The company's initiatives to increase the number of under-represented learners are underdeveloped. TIR has a good understanding of what it needs to do to improve further.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. The overall Train to Gain success rate and the rate of completion within the planned time are both very high and are well above the national average.
- Learners significantly enhance their economic well-being and value the qualifications for which they study. Many of the learners have not studied for a number of years. Although they initially find aspects of their training challenging, they view the experience as beneficial and productive. They comment that their employability skills have improved and their personal confidence has increased.
- Learners have a good understanding of safe working practices. Safe working and raising awareness of being safe play a significant part in induction and learners have a good knowledge of safe practices while driving.
- Overall, teaching and learning are good. Learners benefit from the knowledgeable training officers who have experience of working within the industry. Learners' evidence of competencies is organised by their training officers in their electronic portfolios. Learners are not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for accessing, reviewing or organising their own evidence of competencies.
- Training officers visit learners regularly and generally use data well to monitor their progress. In the better learner reviews, the training officer negotiates appropriate targets with the learner. However, usually training officers do not agree and set clear targets with learners or record their progress. Training officers do not sufficiently discuss and reinforce learners' knowledge of safeguarding, and equality and diversity during reviews although the review documentation encourages them to do so.
- TIR is outstanding in meeting the needs of both learners and employers. Learners and employers speak very highly of the service provided to them. The content and structure of the courses are very appropriate to the needs and aspirations of learners. Training officers work flexibly to visit learners at any time and at any location to assess their work or to discuss their progress.
- TIR has well developed partnerships with a wide range of companies. Employers find TIR extremely responsive to their training needs. TIR collaborates well with employers to develop further programmes, for example in using driving simulators to improve learners' knowledge of efficient driving.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are tested in addition to the testing of their vocational aptitudes. Training officers offer support for these needs or any other identified support needs. Overall, these arrangements are very effective but the support

for learners' literacy, numeracy and language is not planned or recorded sufficiently. Too many learners do not receive sufficient encouragement to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills.

- Leadership and management are good with a strong focus on detailed and well-considered strategic planning, development of partnerships and management of training. The open approach to management is very effective but some management processes, such as the implementation of staff appraisal and action plans, are not rigorous.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and have significantly improved over recent years. All staff, including almost all members of the board of trustees, have enhanced CRB checks. However, the arrangements for learners to report their safeguarding concerns have not been sufficiently thorough until very recently.
- Overall, TIR's arrangements for promoting equality and diversity are satisfactory. The company's initiatives to engage under-represented groups are underdeveloped and its marketing material does not sufficiently reflect the diverse range of learners which it needs to attract.
- The quality improvement arrangements, including the auditing of key aspects of training, are very effective in bringing about sustained improvements. Some aspects of the quality assurance process are not sufficiently formal. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but in places the self-assessment report is insufficiently critical.
- TIR provides outstanding value for money. Success rates are outstanding and learners develop the skills and knowledge that contribute to their personal and economic well-being. TIR has allocated extensive financial resources for computer-based learning resources, which include a number of large-scale HGV driving simulators.

### **What does TIR Training Services Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that learners take responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and organising their evidence of competencies in their electronic portfolios. Ensure that learners generate directly their own evidence, for example by writing about their own experience.
- Ensure that training officers fully record the details of learners' progress and any support they receive during progress review meetings.
- Encourage all learners who require literacy, numeracy and language support to access this support by making literacy, numeracy and language skills relevant to their work and life. Ensure that this support is fully recorded.
- Promote equality and diversity to learners more effectively throughout learning, by ensuring the discussion of relevant examples of equality and diversity topics in sessions and progress reviews. Review fully the use of marketing and learning materials to support initiatives to engage under-represented learners.

- Develop fully a formal quality assurance system to monitor different stages of learners' training. Ensure that arrangements for moderating the self-assessment report generate a report which is self-critical and firmly based on evidence.

**Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors****What learners like:**

- very experienced training officers who have worked in the industry
- one-to-one coaching and training
- very flexible assessment and visit arrangements
- gaining qualifications.

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

- no improvements identified.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors****What employers like:**

- high degree of flexibility to meet and assess learners
- very good facilities
- good partnership working.

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

- no improvements identified.

## Main inspection findings

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

10. TIR's capacity to improve is good. Learners' success rates have been consistently high and are significantly above the national average. Learners further improve their driving skills and significantly enhance their economic well-being.
11. Senior managers develop good plans to prepare the company for change and they are well supported by the board of trustees. Staff are consulted about changes to their roles and responsibilities and a carefully considered plan is being implemented. TIR has invested extensively in resources to improve its training. Overall, the company promotes equality and diversity appropriately, although it does not sufficiently promote this through its provision. The quality improvement process is highly effective, although some aspects of quality assurance are not sufficiently formal and not implemented systematically. The self-assessment process is effective and inclusive. The report focuses well on the impact of policy and practice on learners but it is insufficiently self-critical and in parts too descriptive.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 1**

12. Achievement of qualifications is outstanding. The overall Train to Gain success rate and the rate of completion within the planned time are both very high and well above the national average. The success rates and the rate of completion within the planned timescale for apprentices are high and well above the national average. Current learners, including the learners whose provision is subcontracted, make good progress.
13. Learners enjoy their learning and value highly the knowledge that they gain. For many learners this is their first study after many years and as they progress towards their qualifications they significantly increase their confidence in their ability to learn and enhance their employability.
14. Learners report that they feel very safe in the centre, in the workplace and while travelling to and from the centre. Learners have a good understanding of safe driving practices and take their health and safety responsibility seriously.

### The quality of provision

**Grade 2**

15. Teaching, training, learning and individual coaching are good. Individual coaching and practical training are very effective in developing the skills of learners. Training officers are very experienced and have developed very productive working relationships with learners so that learners can inform or discuss with them how they learn best within their work schedule, which is often changed at short notice. All learners complete an initial assessment prior to commencing their training but training officers make little use of the results

of this to plan learning. Training officers make good use of information and learning technology (ILT), such as digital voice recorders and cameras, to record evidence of learners' skills. Training officers upload this evidence to the learners' individual electronic portfolios. However, learners rely too much on training officers to manage their portfolios. Learners are not encouraged sufficiently to take responsibility for their portfolios, for example to access and review their work.

16. Learners find the assessment process clear and well organised. Assessments are arranged flexibly to meet the needs of learners' driving schedules, the route that they take and the employers. Learners have the contact details of training officers so they can inform them about any unexpected changes that can affect assessment. Training officers have a good knowledge of learners' progress and most use the company's management information system well to monitor learners' progress. Progress reviews take place approximately every twelve weeks but their quality is not always satisfactory. In the better reviews, training officers provide a clear summary of the progress individual learners have made since their previous review and clear short-term targets are set for the next visit. To supplement the formal reviews, some training officers review learners' progress informally in between the formal reviews, although this action is not always recorded.
17. TIR meets the needs of both learners and employers outstandingly. The company communicates very well with employers and works closely with them to develop courses that meet the needs of Train to Gain learners and specific training which the employers fund directly. TIR uses its HGV driving simulators and the well-equipped mobile training classroom to ensure that learners can access and update their skills very conveniently. Training officers are extremely flexible in arranging the times of visits, training and assessments. Informed by their experience of the HGV industry, including the HGV drivers' work-time regulation, training officers arrange and conduct these visits well. On many occasions training officers travel with learners for long distances and for many hours.
18. TIR makes very effective use of its partnerships with employers. The company uses its relationships very effectively to recruit learners. TIR works well with employers to ensure that it develops its provision and resources so that HGV drivers can regularly update their driving skills.
19. Learners receive good care, support and guidance. Induction to the training centre and the training programmes is very effective. Throughout their training learners receive clear advice and guidance to support them in completing their programmes, to progress to higher-level courses or to take additional qualifications alongside their programmes. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are assessed in addition to the assessment of their vocational aptitude. Training officers provide support where needs are identified. Overall, literacy, numeracy and language support is very effective for learners receiving it. However, this support is not planned or recorded



sufficiently. Too many learners do not receive sufficient encouragement to take up this support to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

20. Strategic planning is strong, well considered and highly effective. Senior managers consider the changes to the SFA's and employers' requirements thoroughly and evaluate different options for the good operation and development of the business. The company has recently introduced a new staffing structure to improve further its responsiveness to employers' needs. Internal communication is satisfactory, although there is little involvement of staff in strategic planning. TIR has redefined staff roles and responsibilities and has established new appraisal arrangements. However, most training officers have not yet received their appraisals for the current year. TIR's management of its subcontractor is effective. TIR has good systems to record meetings, improvement action plans and annual reviews. However, agreed actions are not always carried out effectively and their impact is insufficiently monitored.
21. The supervisory arrangements for overseeing the strategic development of the company are good. The board of trustees carefully monitors the development of the company and receives regular detailed reports, including reports on learner performance. The board supports senior managers well in their roles and is fully informed about changes within the education and training sector.
22. TIR's safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The company's safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate to safeguard all its learners. Training officers pay good attention to health and safety procedures and update learners on new health and safety legislation. All staff have been CRB checked and records are held centrally. Staff have received appropriate training. Learners receive appropriate briefings and advice on safeguarding issues, although their knowledge is not extended sufficiently during their progress reviews. TIR has a designated safeguarding officer. However, her contact details were not disseminated widely to learners until very recently. Learners do not receive sufficient information about their rights and responsibilities when using digital communication devices or the internet.
23. TIR's promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. It effectively promotes learners' rights and responsibilities and treats learners with respect. Staff have received satisfactory training in equality and diversity. Training officers use a bank of questions at learners' review meetings to monitor or reinforce the understanding of equality and diversity, although they do not always record key discussion points and learners' responses. The company is aware that, as in the wider industry, the percentage of women HGV drivers is low. However, TIR's initiatives to attract women and learners from under-represented groups are underdeveloped and its marketing material, including its website, does not accurately reflect the groups of learners that it needs to recruit.
24. TIR collects the views of learners, employers and other partners regularly and makes satisfactory use of them to identify areas for improvement. Learners'

feedback is analysed effectively and follow-up actions are identified. However, the company does not inform its learners and partners sufficiently about planned or completed improvements.

25. Quality improvement plans and processes, including the results of detailed audits of some key learning processes, are highly effective in bringing about sustained improvements. These plans are detailed and their implementation is monitored well. Internal verification ensures the assessment process is reliable. Observations of teaching, training, learning and progress reviews contribute effectively to improving practice. The written observation records of training sessions observed are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is inclusive and focuses well on the impact the provision has on learners. However, the most recent self-assessment report over-estimates the quality of its provision.
26. TIR provides outstanding value for money. Success rates are outstanding and learners develop the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to their personal and economic well-being. TIR has allocated extensive financial resources for computer-based learning resources, which include a number of large-scale HGV driving simulators. The company receives additional funds from DEFLOG VQ Trust Limited to enhance further the resources for learners.

## Information about the inspection

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's associate director of quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body and data on learners and their achievements over the period of the contract.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed about the provider. They also 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)****TIR Training Services Limited**

**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 at the time of inspection</b>		
Full-time learners	0	0
Part-time learners	236	236
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1	
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	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?*	n/a	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	n/a	
<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?	1	
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?	2	
<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	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	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?	3	
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?	1	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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