

# UK Training and Development Limited

## 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

UK Training and Development (UKTD) was established in 1988 to provide specialist training in hairdressing. Located in Hemel Hempstead, it supports around 350 hairdressing apprentices in over 150 employers throughout the South and East of England. When this provision was last inspected, in October 2009, all aspects were judged satisfactory.

Since then, UKTD has expanded into three new subject areas which now make up 30% of its income. The company continues to offer hairdressing apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced level, but has added information and communications technology (ICT), business and administration, and, most recently, youth work. While youth work and business are delivered in the workplace, ICT apprenticeships operate an academy model. ICT learners attend training in the Hemel Hempstead centre and are mostly employed by a new sister company, Computer and Technology Services Ltd. (C.A.T.S.), which provides information technology support to UKTD's staff in the field.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What progress has been made in using self-assessment and performance management systems more effectively, so that managers can identify weaknesses at an early stage and take pre-emptive action to tackle them?** **Reasonable progress**

UKTD has made reasonable progress in implementing improved performance management systems, although managers have not always used them consistently in the current year. The most recent self-assessment report is weak, over-descriptive, and insufficiently focused on learners' experience and progress. However, since it was written, the new structure has enabled managers to introduce more rigorous quality assurance measures. Recent quality improvement plans have clear targets that are risk assessed and linked to the business plan across all aspects of provision. A well-managed quality calendar monitors the success of actions. Enhancements to information systems have improved managers' ability to identify problems and intervene promptly. Outcomes for hairdressing learners are high, with particularly good retention of male learners, a previous area of concern. Measures to improve other programmes, particularly ICT, are showing good impact, after a very poor start, in significantly improved retention and interim achievement.

## Outcomes for learners

### What progress has been made in improving learners' outcomes since the last inspection?

**Insufficient progress**

Success rates rose steadily to 2009/10 and are high in hairdressing. However, although advanced apprentices are achieving well in-year, intermediate success rates have fallen. They remain above average in hairdressing except in London, where UKTD correctly identifies low but improving achievement. Of the 66 London leavers since 2009, 27 left without achieving their qualification. Nearly one-fifth of learners are male, above UKTD's target. The success rate of male learners is 54.5%, 13 percentage points below that of females and only 30% of males completed their apprenticeship within the planned time. Managers identified key factors of poor retention and lower prior attainment. Assessors now plan assessments more flexibly to allow sufficient time for learners to achieve. Currently 99% of hairdressers in learning are expected to complete their apprenticeship by their planned deadline date.

Achievement and progress are poor in ICT and customer service with in-year overall success rates at 18.2% and 60% respectively and only 16.7% and 27.3% completing within the planned time. The company started the ICT programmes with insufficient knowledge or capacity to deliver them successfully. Too many learners were unsuitable for the programmes they joined, timescales for completion were unrealistic, and assessment and support were ineffective. Recent interventions have improved quality and retention considerably but it is too soon to be sure of their impact.

## Quality of Provision

### What progress has been made in broadening the variety of strategies used in teaching, and in improving learning materials?

**Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, some theory sessions were good and used particularly effective learning strategies and resources. However, an over-reliance on self-study restricted a few learners from learning effectively, as insufficient support was given. Learners did not always relate the key skills projects sufficiently to their salon work.

UKTD has developed the observation process further to focus on the impact of teaching on learners and the skills and knowledge they develop. Observers now identify where assessors are not using sufficient variety of resources. Assessors are set actions to improve and they are followed up at subsequent observations. UKTD has widened the range of learning and assessment resources available to learners, enhancing the learning experience. Recently, the company has introduced model session plans for each of the hairdressing units. Clearly stated aims, objectives and supporting activities help assessors deliver theory more consistently. Key skills assignments in hairdressing have not changed since the previous inspection. The

Skills for Life consultants are creative and encourage learners to use examples from work or the industry towards their key skills development, for example, developing communication skills during customer consultations and through writing articles on famous hairdressers.

**What progress has been made in improving arrangements to support learners' literacy and numeracy? Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills was insufficient. Additional support focused too much on coping strategies for passing key skills and hairdressing qualifications.

UKTD has increased the number of consultants within the Skills for Life team since inspection. Initial assessment is now online, giving learners a more immediate result and enabling key skills consultants to provide support more quickly. The key skills consultants now use a more appropriate diagnostic test to identify individual learners' needs. They promote a range of external websites to learners that enable them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners receive individual help with literacy and numeracy that also develops their skills within the workplace. However, although the number of learners receiving key skills support has increased, the proportion of those achieving key skills has yet to improve. UKTD has not instigated any specific action for learners in London, who the company recognises are taking longer to complete the key skills assessments.

**What progress has been made in improving the effectiveness of internal verification to identify slow progress and deal with it promptly? Reasonable progress**

Although assessment and internal verification processes were satisfactory at the previous inspection, these were not being used to identify more promptly learners making slow progress.

Since inspection, UKTD has reviewed its internal verification sampling strategy and risk assessed each assessor based on their previous performance and implemented a standardised grading system. This has freed up time for internal verifiers, enabling them to take a greater role in supporting assessors, including in-salon assessors, who have learners making slower progress. The progress monitoring sheet now has more milestones for assessors to monitor learners' progress at various stages in their programme. Internal verifiers receive copies of this each month and use the results to discuss learners' progress with assessors at team meetings. The number of learners who have stayed past their planned end date has fallen steadily over the last year.

The quality assurance visit process has been changed to check more closely that learners are on target and receiving training at work. UKTD recognises that not all assessors have had recent or routine quality assurance visits or follow up of identified actions. Internal verifiers' and area field managers' roles are currently being revised to rectify this.

**What progress has been made in increasing salon trainers' awareness of their learners' progress, and in ensuring that more learners complete within their planned timescale?**

**Reasonable progress**

The previous inspection identified that salon trainers were not always sufficiently involved in planning and reviewing learners' progress to support good progress towards qualifications. UKTD has made reasonable progress in rectifying this. An increasing number of salons have in-house assessors as a result of UKTD's offer of free training. This is having a good impact on raising standards as well as improving consistency. Employers appreciate the opportunity to stay up to date while maintaining control of training and retaining better-trained staff. UKTD staff keep in touch with regular employer meetings. For those employers without their own assessor the UKTD assessors share learner monitoring information effectively through the review process. UKTD give learners a copy of their progress monitoring sheet which some use effectively to check how well they are doing.

However, a few employers responding to inspection surveys indicated that written information about their apprentices' progress was not clear enough, a view UKTD recognised from its own analysis of employer feedback. Managers agree that the monitoring sheet contains too much detail and are revising its format to be more user friendly.

**Leadership and Management**

**What progress has been made in raising staff, learner and employer awareness of Every Child Matters themes, safeguarding, equality and diversity and how they apply to in the workplace?**

**Insufficient progress**

In 2009, inspectors noted that learners lacked awareness of how safeguarding aspects related to their workplaces, and that assessors missed opportunities, during training and reviews, to reinforce safeguarding, equality and diversity, or Every Child Matters themes, and relate them to learners' work. Staff now receive regular and appropriate training in these topics, with workshops planned to develop their knowledge further. Observations of teaching and learning have been adapted to check that tutors cover safeguarding, equality and diversity. Managers made good progress in 2009, developing posters to counter stereotypes as part of a local peer network, and improving their use of data to analyse the performance of different groups. During 2010, momentum was lost, and consequently overall progress is slow.

However, the new designated safeguarding officer has made very recent progress, setting up representative focus groups on safeguarding, equality and diversity. Although learners receive a thorough grounding during induction, some have little recall of this. Focus groups have drafted promising new materials to replace the ineffective questions used at reviews, which did not sufficiently develop learners' understanding. Recently, a highly relevant safeguarding risk-assessment tool has

been added to learners' core programmes. Work to improve employers' awareness is still at an early stage.

**What progress has been made in identifying and sharing good practice to ensure a consistently good experience for learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

The previous inspection report noted that most staff have significant skills, but the sharing of good practice in training and progress reviews was insufficient.

UKTD's observation and internal verification process now captures good practice. Managers promote good practice examples to assessors at team and moderation meetings. This helps them to support learners through the theory learning and assessment in the more challenging aspects of their programme. The less established teams, for example in ICT and Skills for Life, are developing more consistent approaches to their work. The staff induction process has been restructured to have a common content that includes identified best practice. However, due to restructuring, the availability of observers and changes of staff, observations of teaching and learning have not been sufficiently routine or prioritised to assess the impact of the sharing of good practice on ensuring all learners have a consistently good experience.

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