

Expedient Training Services Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		11-15 June 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Success rates for workplace learners on intermediate health and social programmes are low and significantly below the national average. Achievement rates within planned timescales on some programmes are too low.
- Assessors do not provide sufficient attention to developing learners' interests and learning skills, such as research and critical analysis techniques, to improve their work and help them to progress further.
- The systems to monitor learners' progress and help them understand how much of the framework they have achieved are insufficiently rigorous.
- The provider does not sufficiently ensure that employers fully engage with the learning programmes.
- Managers do not manage staff performance well enough to make sure that the quality of provision improves.
- The company's procedures for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are ineffective.
- Expedient do not have enough checks in place to ensure that the programmes delivered by other organisations on the company's behalf are of a high quality.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Success rates for apprentices in health and social care, construction and engineering are excellent. Workplace learning success rates in construction and engineering are excellent.
- Assessors have good levels of vocational knowledge and experience that they use effectively to engage and motivate learners.
- Directors have a clear strategic vision and a business plan takes good account of local and national needs in an uncertain economic climate.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- The number of learners who achieve their qualification within the planned timescales identified at the start of their learning programme.
- Monitor the performance by different groups of learners so that they can narrow any identified gap effectively.
- Capture, record and monitor learners' progression to higher qualifications and/or changes in their role and responsibilities at work.
- The focus on developing a wider range of interests and learning skills for apprentices in order to promote the variety of roles available in the care sector and to help them progress further.
- The rigour in monitoring learners' progress and helping learners to understand how much progress they have made against the apprenticeship framework.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in order to improve learners' understanding and ability to apply the principles in their workplace.
- Ensure that all employers actively support learners during their apprenticeship.
- Develop an effective self-assessment process based on robust evidence, including evidence of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the views of staff, learners and employers; use this to plan and implement improvement.
- Develop the quality improvement procedures so that they focus on teaching learning and assessment. Review the arrangements for observations to ensure they include all training activities and lead to action for improvement at individual and whole organisation level.
- Strengthen sub-contracting arrangements to ensure that sub-contractors have effective arrangements in place to maintain and improve programme quality.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The achievement of qualifications is excellent for the very large majority of learners across the provision. This includes programmes in health and social care, construction and engineering, and business administration.
- Success rates for apprentices are excellent for intermediate and advanced learners. However, achievement rates within the planned timescales are lower and require improvement; they were just above the national average for intermediate learners and just below the national average for advanced.
- Success rates for workplace learning are also excellent for a very high proportion of learners. This includes workplace learning in construction, and sub-contracted provision in engineering. However, sub-contracted provision in health and social care at intermediate level was less successful. Sub-contracted provision for a small number of learners in public services was inadequate.
- Learners develop a good range of personal, social and employability skills. Construction and engineering programmes meet the specific needs of both employers and learners very well. Employers identify improvements in the quality of the learners' work and the positive impact this has on their business. Health and social care learners develop the confidence to communicate effectively with clients and colleagues. They develop good work place skills such as awareness of safeguarding, communicating care plans to colleagues, and sharing information in a confidential manner. They are able to provide a good demonstration and understanding of the use of specialist equipment for manual handling clients and patients.

- All learners with a declared learning and/or disability achieved their qualification. Apprentices aged 19 to 24 achieve less well than learners aged 25+ but their success rates remain good. There are some gaps in the achievement of male and female learners that require action for improvement. Female learners on intermediate workplace learning programmes, predominantly health and social care learners, achieve less well than male learners. Although females on advanced workplace learning programmes perform slightly better, success rates are only in line with the national average and also require improvement.
- All learners have employed status when they start their training programme and continue in employment at the conclusion of their training. In 2011-12, progression from intermediate to advanced level was satisfactory. However, Expedient do not have formal systems to monitor and report on the progression of learners to higher levels.

Health and Social Care Apprenticeships Other work based learning

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment require improvement even though the outcomes for many learners are good. Apprenticeship success rates are high and most assessors ensure the majority of current apprentices make good progress towards achieving their qualifications. However, not all assessors pay sufficient attention to ensure apprentices develop their wider interests for career progression in the care sector, or develop their learning skills and techniques.
- Assessors have good levels of vocational knowledge and experience, such as domiciliary and specialist independent living care management expertise and use their high aspirations to motivate and encourage learners. They ensure apprentices understand how their learning links with their everyday duties in the various care settings by discussing good case-examples. They ensure apprentices develop sound skills that specifically relate to their work and a thorough understanding of the importance of high standards of care in their workplaces. For example, respecting the confidentiality of the individual's they care for.
- Assessors have high aspirations for their apprentices and provide effective regular individual support and encouragement that engages and motivates apprentices. This instils confidence for apprentices to improve on their workplace practice and skill development. However, they do not always provide apprentices with clear enough advice and guidance at the start of their programme. For example, many apprentices are unaware of the full content of their course, such as the requirement to undertake functional skills qualifications.
- Assessors ensure apprentices' needs are assessed thoroughly at the start of their learning programme but do not always use this information effectively to plan learning to meet individual needs. A few assessors provide frequent verbal assessment that ensures apprentices make progress towards completing their courses. However, they do not always record this for learners to refer to and help them build on their understanding.
- Most assessors provide apprentices with effective verbal feedback that tells them how well they are doing and identifies what they need to do to improve. Assessors are particularly flexible when arranging assessment schedules and respect the demands of busy workplaces, shift patterns and rotas. Some employers are very committed to supporting learners in their work and achievement of their qualifications. However, not all employers are effectively involved in planning and reviewing learning. In a few instances, apprentices' work schedules require them to miss all or significant parts of the assessors' monthly visit which disrupts their learning.
- Formal arrangements for tracking and monitoring of progress do not inform assessors which learners are progressing well and who require further support.
- Assessors do not provide sufficient attention to improving apprentices' skills in English. For example, understanding and use of specialist language or checking spelling frequently enough.

Expedient have not yet established arrangements or started the delivery of required functional skills in mathematics, English and information and communications technology.

- Assessors work effectively to ensure all apprentices are valued and feel supported. However, assessors do not always adequately reinforce equality and diversity in review meetings with apprentices. They miss opportunities to explore the full range of both equality and diversity issues that might affect care provision generally, and the learner specifically.
- Assessors give satisfactory attention to health and safety arrangements. They support apprentices' development of a good awareness of the importance of observing current legislation, adopting safe practice and following guidance to ensure they safeguard all adults including those that are vulnerable.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Directors have a clear strategic vision and a business plan takes good account of local and national needs in an uncertain economic climate. Leaders promote a supportive culture in which the staff are ambitious to develop high standards for learners on new programmes. To accommodate future change, Directors have reviewed the management structure effectively, introducing an additional tier of managers, appointing new staff, and changing the roles of others. These very recent developments were incomplete at the time of inspection.
- Managers monitor a few aspects of staff performance well through regular meetings and informal discussion. Directors use annual reviews effectively to identify staff training needs and support staff well through a range of continuing professional development opportunities. Although the company requires all trainers to complete an externally accredited basic introductory training course in teaching, not all of them have achieved it. The use of targets to raise the quality of staff performance is weak. Expedient do not have procedures in place to identify differences in performance by different groups of learners, nor strategies to narrow identified achievement gaps, aspects of management require improvement.
- Quality procedures are inadequate. They ensure compliance with external accrediting bodies, but do not identify or evaluate the quality of key stages of the learners' experience from recruitment to achievement adequately. Expedient's response to the previous two inspections highlighting these issues have been ineffective.
- In particular, Expedient does not use observations well enough to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observers evaluate teaching performance but make too little reference to assessment and almost no reference to the quality of learning. Observers do not identify actions to help trainers and assessors and managers improve their practice. Managers do not summarise observation judgements to identify training needs at individual or organisational level or to monitor trends in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- Self-assessment is poor. The report does not accurately reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The company routinely gathers the views of learners and employers and responds well to any concerns. However, managers do not use this evidence to shape judgements in the report. The report does not link to the quality improvement plan. Expedient has not adequately addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- Expedient does not manage the recently introduced subcontracted provision in health and social care sufficiently well. The company has taken too few steps to ensure that the subcontractors' arrangements to monitor and improve quality are effective. Contractual arrangements are unclear and communication between Expedient and the subcontractor has not been fully effective in ensuring the smooth operation of the programmes. Previous sub-contractors involved in delivering construction and engineering work place programmes have a service level agreement that is more effective. However, systems to monitor their performance are weak.

- The company has wide links with a network of local employers through its commercial training activities. It has used these effectively to develop government-funded provision that reflects local and national needs. It has successfully expanded provision into health and social care in residential homes and domiciliary care settings, building on its workplace learning experience to develop apprenticeship training.
- The provider has taken satisfactory action to ensure that staff and learners are aware of equality and diversity issues. Learners' induction includes equality and diversity. Staff have gained external accreditation following a short awareness raising programme two years ago, and have more recently benefitted from further in-house training. However, there is no strategy to promote equality and diversity further. Expedient do not analyse their learner profile and have no strategies to promote their programmes to under-represented groups with the employers with whom they engage in order to influence their recruitment from identified groups of learners. They do not have a formal procedure in place to implement actions to deliver their own equality and diversity policy.
- The approach to safeguarding taken by Expedient is satisfactory and goes beyond statutory requirements. The company checks the suitability of all staff that may meet vulnerable adults. Learners are aware of whom to contact if they have concerns. The company assesses risk carefully and responds appropriately to protect learners from harm or injury.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**Expedient Training Services Ltd**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	4	4	4

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3

Additional socio-economic information

Expedient Training Services Ltd, although based in Jarrow, delivered Workplace learning programmes nationally. Since 2010, they have continued to deliver workplace learning in construction and engineering themselves as well as by using a number of sub-contractors. At this time, they also formed a consortium with partners delivering health and social care. The percentage of pupils in the local area gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics is 1.4% above the national average. Unemployment in the area is above the national average. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications is 12.6%, which is 1.5% more than nationally.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Tim Gardner HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Managing Director as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last year to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care and graded this sector subject area in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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