

Skills for Security

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		24–28 June 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- The provision is not yet of a consistently good standard.
- Initial assessment does not sufficiently support the needs of individual learners and there is a lack of understanding of apprentices' progress due to weak coordination of training.
- The late delivery of mathematics, English and functional skills does not allow apprentices to make good progress.
- There is a lack of variety and practical activities in some lessons.
- The methods of teaching require more variety and increased use of practical activities to support and guide learners in the development of their knowledge and understanding.
- Quality assurance processes require further development for them to become fully effective.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Overall success rates are above those of similar providers.
- Good skills development for security systems apprentices which meets learners' and employers' needs well.
- Assessors use their significant vocational experience to good effect and support learners well in improving their technical skills and occupational competency.
- The employability programme is meeting closely the needs of the unemployed and industry sector.
- Good operational management is improving the provision through sharply focused actions to promote strong ambition, improve teaching and learning and outcomes for learners.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve overall success rates and learners' achievement within the planned duration of programme by:
 - ensuring all learner groups succeed as well as each other, giving particular emphasis to White British males in the Greater London area
 - ensuring recently implemented improvements are sustained
 - improving the percentage of intermediate apprentices progressing to advanced levels.
- Use individual learning plans and reviews to better plan and monitor the coordination of on- and off-the-job learning so that employers have a better understanding of learner progress and assessors take account of workplace activities.
- Develop more rigorous initial assessment practices that will improve the planning of learning and support for individuals.
- Plan the delivery of mathematics, English and functional skills to begin much earlier in the learners' programme and ensure that learners who need support receive it promptly.
- Improve the delivery of off-the-job teaching and learning by more consistent use of questioning and other forms of assessment to confirm learners' understanding. Make better use of e-learning and practical activities to enliven lessons.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring senior leaders and board members have sufficient information in order to challenge effectively any under-performance in the provision
 - ensure contract visits to all subcontractors include arrangements to undertake observations of their teaching staff, monitor retention levels and learner progress
 - more systematically collecting learner and employer views to enable robust analysis of the provision
 - planning learning to enable more experienced learners to complete their programme more quickly
 - significantly improving the learning resources and quality of accommodation at the Birmingham training centre
 - including subcontractors in the self-assessment process
 - ensuring long-term planning specifically includes strategies for improving the participation of minority ethnic groups and females in security systems programmes.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Overall success rates for apprenticeships in security training are high. However, the proportion of apprentices who gain their qualifications by the planned end date has declined sharply. It was high in 2010/11, but below average for similar providers in 2011/12. The monitoring of current apprentices indicates that the large majority of them are now making at least satisfactory progress towards their learning outcomes, relative to their initial starting point. At the previous inspection a key recommendation was to increase the success rates for intermediate apprentices aged 16 to 18; outcomes for this group are now well above other similar providers.
- On workplace learning programmes, overall success rates are very high; however, the proportion of learners who successfully completed their qualifications within the planned timescales is around the national rate and requires improvement. Since the last inspection Skills for Security has successfully widened its provision to include a new employability programme in security training. Outcomes for learners on this course are good, learners comment positively on the skills that they gain and progression into employment is good.

- Although Skills for Security has successfully narrowed the achievement gap for some learners, such as intermediate apprentices aged 16 to 18, not all learners achieve their full potential. For example, learners with recognised learning difficulties and disabilities do not achieve as well as those with no declared need. The success rates for adult apprentices aged 19 to 24, a cohort which accounts for one third of the total provision, are lower than those of other apprentices. In addition, the performance of White British male apprentices is much lower when compared to other learner groups. Skills for Security has identified the issue of underperformance in White British male apprentices in the Greater London area and is implementing strategies to address this, for example strengthening initial advice and guidance and initial assessment arrangements.
- On apprenticeship programmes, learners develop an appropriate range of technical skills that meet employer and industry standards. For example, learners were seen repairing and maintaining complex fire and security systems using a range of sophisticated testing equipment.
- Learners develop appropriate skills in English and mathematics for their job roles and to meet the requirements of their qualifications. Assessors and employers use personal support well to develop learners' workplace skills, such as focusing on the importance of team working, customer service and working towards industry codes of practice.
- Learners receive good initial advice on career routes; however, the progression rate from intermediate to advanced level programmes in security systems is low.
- Learners on a recently developed employability programme achieve industry qualifications that enable them to become fully licensed security officers. Their success rates are high and their progression into employment is good.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement which reflects the outcomes for learners. Teachers and assessors provide good personal support for learners who become more confident and show good commitment and motivation to progress in their learning. However, in administration, learners receive insufficient encouragement to take responsibility for their learning.
- Off-the-job teaching and learning are effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well in delivering lessons, which they plan well and set clear objectives. Teachers use learning materials well and learners increase their knowledge, which they are able to make good use of in their job roles. Most learners are attentive, take interest in the lessons and classroom behaviour is good. Employability learners progress well, and gain additional knowledge in aspects such as stewarding, customer service and team leading, which are over and above the requirements of their primary qualification. However, across all subjects, teaching methods are often too narrow and do not take into account the needs of individual learners. Little use is made of e-learning and there is insufficient focus on practical activities. Questioning to check learners' understanding is ineffective in a minority of lessons.
- On-the-job learning is good, with employers and assessors providing effective coaching, enabling learners to make good progress in the workplace where they develop a wide variety of trade skills. However, the coordination of on- and off-the-job learning is ineffective. Employers do not have sufficient understanding of learning that takes place at college, and assessors do not use learners' individual learning plans and progress reviews to sufficiently plan for and monitor workplace learning.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors use observation well, with good use of questioning to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. Assessors provide good feedback on security and employability programmes, with learners having clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. A few learners on the security programme have insufficient workplace assessment. Learners in administration do not receive sufficiently detailed written feedback to enable them to improve their understanding. Short-term action planning is effective in ensuring learners make at least satisfactory progress in the qualifications, except in administration where planning is weak.

- The planning of individual learning and support is ineffective. Initial assessment does not identify sufficiently existing workplace skills to plan individual programmes. Learners on security apprenticeships have a very structured programme, which is insufficiently flexible to meet learners’ individual needs. Programmes start in October and run for 18 months at all centres. While there are some instances where a few learners receive recognition for prior learning, this is not consistent across all centres.
- Although initial assessment identifies learners’ English and mathematics levels effectively, the process does not provide sufficient identification of specific individual needs. Skills for Security is beginning to make improvements in this area, with more robust initial assessment to identify any specific support needs, as well as better use of diagnostic assessment for English and mathematics.
- Learners make insufficient progress in the development of their English, mathematics and functional skills. The delivery of functional skills is often too late in the programme and learners frequently have to attend on a separate day to their core learning. Skills for Security is currently working with centres to improve the delivery timescale and better embed functional skills in lessons. In the better lessons, teachers and assessors correct grammatical and spelling errors in learners’ work; however, not all staff do this consistently well.
- The provision for information, advice and guidance is broadly good. At the start of the programme, Skills for Security provides a good range of course information and advice to learners and employers in choosing programme units, although this is less effective for learners in administration. Effective exit interviews take place with learners to discuss future learning and progression opportunities. However, the action planning and follow-up to monitor progression in learning is insufficient, and few learners progress to a higher qualification, except for employability learners where progression is good.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is generally good, improving learners’ understanding. Most assessors use reviews well to improve learners’ understanding, utilising good quality learning materials to discuss different equality and diversity topics. However, a few teachers routinely miss naturally occurring opportunities to embed equality and diversity in lessons. Learners have a good understanding of working safely, and are aware of what to do should they have any concerns about their welfare.

Public services Apprenticeships Other work based learning	Requires improvement
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. In the last full year there was a decline in the number of overall achievers and those completing their training within the planned time. Outcomes for the current year show an improvement in performance.
- Learners are well motivated to achieve and develop industry skills, although the number that progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships is too low. A very small minority of learners goes on to complete higher-level qualifications, including surveying and management courses.
- On-the-job training is good. Learners benefit from a wide range of activities including installation, maintenance and repair of complex fire and security systems. However, the quality of off-the-job training is not of a consistently high standard. In better lessons, learners undertake a range of challenging trade-specific activities that develop their practical skills to a high standard. Other sessions are too teacher-centred, failing to encourage learners to take responsibility for their own development.
- Since the last inspection the coordination of on- and off-the-job training has been strengthened through improved planning. However, employers are still not routinely informed of the activities

and tasks learners undertake in training centres and, as a result, are unable to plan workplace activities to complement off-the-job training.

- Resources are satisfactory. Most centres have a range of industry-standard equipment for learners to practise installation and testing techniques; however, in Preston College, Uxbridge College and the provider’s Birmingham training centre, the information technology facilities require improvement due to very slow computer connection speeds.
- Assessors use good questioning techniques to help ensure learners have the required level of background knowledge. Feedback following assessment is clear and constructive, although in some cases learners’ written work contains spelling mistakes and weak grammar that are left uncorrected.
- Initial assessment of learners’ English, mathematics and functional skills requires improvement. While learning plans note the results of these assessments, assessors do not routinely use the outcomes of initial assessment effectively to plan individual learning or identify additional support needs.
- The teaching and assessment of functional skills require improvement. Whilst exemptions from functional skills are acknowledged, the planning of teaching and assessment does not always meet learners’ and their employers’ needs. For example, in many colleges learners have to attend college for an additional half day for functional skills training and assessment.
- Information given to learners and their employers at the outset of training is clear and well understood. Where learners lack confidence, or have low prior ability, they are encouraged to achieve by supportive trainers and assessors. However, information on day-to-day administration of the programme is often less well understood, such as notification of assessment visits to the workplace.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well in many progress reviews. For example, assessors encourage learners to participate in thought-provoking discussions on how security services may be adapted for customers with disabilities. However, in classroom-based activities, teachers miss the opportunity to reinforce learners’ awareness of equality and diversity. Health and safety are a high priority in all aspects of training. Learners wear appropriate personal protective equipment and follow correct safe working procedures. Safeguarding procedures are well understood and learners feel safe. Their knowledge of what to do if they need support and guidance is regularly checked during progress reviews.

Administration Apprenticeships Other work based learning	Requires improvement
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement which is reflected in the low proportion of learners who complete their programme within planned timescales.
- Staff’s expectations of learners’ independent learning skills are not set sufficiently high. Learners on workplace learning and apprenticeship programmes are not routinely expected to take responsibility for developing the work required to achieve their qualification. Trainers often take the lead in collating and organising evidence of learners’ work, reducing learners’ independence and slowing their progress.
- Support for assessment in the workplace is good. Assessors and trainers working with learners have good vocational experience and are highly skilled at using their commercial experience well to link theory to practical workplace situations, which learners value highly. Trainers and assessors visit learners frequently in their workplace for the purpose of coaching and assessment. Progress reviews for learners are thorough and trainers provide good encouragement and individual support to learners. Trainers are enthusiastic and highly reassuring to learners. Learners speak positively about the support they receive to develop and improve their work skills.

- Initial assessment is weak. Although initial and diagnostic assessments are used effectively to identify learners' trade skills as well as their levels of English and mathematics, the results are not used consistently well enough by tutors and assessors to plan individualised learning programmes, particularly for more able learners. In addition, individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed and short- and medium-term targets are not specific, measurable or time bound.
- Assessment in the workplace is good. Assessors conduct thorough assessments with learners and use an appropriate range of assessment practices. Oral feedback from assessors clearly identifies what learners need to do to meet the standards required for their qualification. However, written feedback is not always sufficiently detailed and evaluative to guide learners as to precisely what to do between assessment visits.
- Teaching requires improvement to ensure all learners achieve to their full potential. In the best training sessions learners are challenged to extend and deepen their thinking and reflective skills through thoughtful questioning. However, in a small minority of training sessions, trainers take insufficient account of individual learner needs to plan and deliver learner-centred activities that inspire, stretch and challenge the learners. In many cases, assessors do not correct errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Arrangements for information, advice and guidance require improvement. Although learners receive appropriate advice and guidance before enrolling onto their programme, they do not receive sufficiently detailed information quickly enough to help support them to make early progress.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners have a well-developed understanding of equality and diversity principles and their relevance to the workplace and beyond. For example, during progress reviews, learners' understanding of equality and diversity is sensitively explored in order to generate discussion of how cultural and disability issues may influence how they approach colleagues and customers in the workplace. Safeguarding arrangements are well understood and learners feel safe.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Operational management requires improvement. Since the last inspection Skills for Security has undergone significant re-organisation. The management and staff structure is relatively new but is already improving the provision. The provider now promotes high ambition for learners and is placing significant focus on ensuring that learners achieve within their planned timescales.
- Board members are knowledgeable about the demands of the provision and participate actively and challenge key aspects in order to secure improvement. However, management reports to the board around specific areas of underperformance, for example the wide variation in success rates between different groups of learners are not detailed enough for board members to provide rigorous challenge or to hold senior managers to account sufficiently.
- The provider sets high expectations for its subcontractors. New monitoring systems have clearly identified historic poor performance, which is being dealt with by the new leadership team well. Initial contracting arrangements are very thorough with clear expectations of what is expected of the subcontractor. However, monitoring visits to the subcontractors, while frequent, do not place sufficient emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. For example, Skills for Security does not take sufficient steps to ensure that learners are provided with stretching and challenging activities, so that all realise their full potential and progress well.
- Quality improvement arrangements, while improving, require further development. The self-assessment process includes the views of employers and learners. However, these are not gathered systematically nor adequately analysed by managers and staff to identify improvements precisely enough. The current self-assessment report does not sufficiently take into account the views of subcontractors, although plans are at an advanced stage to improve this. Arrangements to monitor learner progress, particularly those learners who are at risk of not

achieving or are making slow progress, have much improved since the last inspection, but it is too early to judge the full impact of these. Data are now used very effectively to identify where swift actions are needed in order to improve learner achievement.

- Observations of teaching and learning do not extend to all subcontractors. Skills for Security has recently introduced improvements to the observation of teaching and learning, which now has a stronger focus on learning. However, it is too early to judge their impact.
- Staff performance monitoring is good. Accountability of individual staff for their own performance is increasing and well understood.
- The board and senior managers have identified very clearly the training needs of the security sector. They are very actively promoting apprenticeships and skills development to employers and are working closely with legislators to enable learners aged 16 to 18 to be employed in supervised guarding work which it is envisaged will enable more apprentices to gain access to training.
- The curriculum meets well the needs of groups of local employers, and Skills for Security arranges its provision locally according to need. However, programmes are all of a set duration, irrespective of business or learners' needs. The employability programme is meeting the needs well of unemployed learners and is aligned to identified skills shortages in the West Midlands.
- Skills for Security's approach to equality and diversity is good, although the participation of minority ethnic groups and females in security systems programmes is too low to be representative of the industry sector. The promotion of equality and diversity during the review process is good and includes the use of effective learning materials; however, not all reviewers contextualise the use of these as well as others. The promotion of equality and diversity during lessons is not planned well enough in some cases.
- Strategies put in place by managers to narrow achievement gaps require improvement. There is too much variability in the performance between different groups of learners, for example those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities perform less well when compared to other learner groups. Managers have recognised the issues and recently strengthened learner tracking systems to ensure that the progress of all learners is more closely monitored. It is too early to judge the impact of this work.
- Safeguarding arrangements are strong and Skills for Security meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Board members and senior managers are very involved in these arrangements which include the appointment of two appropriately trained designated safeguarding officers. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly for their effectiveness and incident reporting and subsequent actions and interventions taken are swift and thorough.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Skills for Security

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Public Services	3
Administration	3

Provider details

Skills for Security	
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 751
Principal/CEO	Mr Mike Britnell
Date of previous inspection	August 2011
Website address	www.skillsforsecurity.org.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	164	-	81	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	161	43	43	73	-	-		
Number of employability learners	73							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Burnley Telematics Limited ■ Dynamis Enterprises Limited ■ Mercury Training Services Limited ■ Rutherford Training Consultants Limited ■ Bradford College ■ City of Bristol College ■ Loughborough College ■ Preston College ■ Stanmore College ■ The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London ■ Uxbridge College 							

Additional socio-economic information

Skills for Security (SfS) along with its parent company, the British Security Industry Authority, (BSIA) is responsible for licensing individuals undertaking a range of security activities. While BSIA has a remit to provide a range of business support and representation activities, SfS has a specific focus on the provision of publicly and commercially funded training and assessment services. The head office for both organisations is located in Worcester, although SfS operates a skills training centre in Birmingham. The majority of its publicly funded training services are delivered through an extensive network of colleges of further education and independent training providers across the country. SfS are governed by a board of non-executive directors drawn from across the private security industry.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Victor Reid HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Operations 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 three years 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, assessments 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 across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed 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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