

# Liverpool Chamber Training Ltd

Independent Learning Provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		25–28 March 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is good because:

- The success rates within planned timescales are high for a substantial majority of learners.
- A large majority of apprentices make good progress and develop successfully their personal, vocational and professional skills that enhance their contribution to the workplace.
- Frequent and thorough assessment and review sessions motivate learners and help them make progress.
- Assessors collaborate successfully with learners on the choice of units within their learning programmes that challenge them to extend their skills.
- The very positive working relationships with employers contribute actively to learners finding permanent jobs. The provider makes a strong contribution to the region's strategy for economic growth.
- Good initial assessment ensures learners have the ability and capacity to succeed. The good guidance and ongoing support encourage learners to progress to further learning and employment.
- Leaders and managers use well-targeted actions which contribute effectively to improved retention, success rates and growth in apprenticeship numbers.
- Leadership and management are good and managers have a good capacity to maintain and build on current improvements.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The overall success rates for female learners, for some advanced learners and learners aged 19 to 24 lag behind the high success rates for intermediate learners aged 16 to 18 and males.
- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding or consistently good.
- Learners are not encouraged sufficiently to take responsibility for monitoring their own progress.
- Functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are not sufficiently integrated into vocational learning programmes.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the overall success rates of female learners and some adult learners so that they become as high as those for intermediate learners aged 16 to 18 and males. Activate this by strengthening the support for, and monitoring of, at-risk learners. Ensure that all female learners have a positive view of the value and status of an apprenticeship.
- Increase the proportion of consistently good and outstanding teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - continuing to develop the process for observing teaching, learning and assessment, ensuring it is systematically applied and continually reviewed for effectiveness
  - increasing employers' involvement in learners' assessment and progress reviews
  - strengthening the quality of written feedback so that learners understand clearly what they need to do to improve, giving extra attention to setting high standards for spelling, punctuation and grammar in written work.
- Ensure assessors extend opportunities for learners to take greater responsibility for monitoring their own progress. Make more effective and independent use of e-portfolios to support this.
- Improve assessors' recognition of how to develop learners' functional skills within learners' job roles.

### Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outcomes for apprentices at Liverpool Chamber Training Ltd (LCT) are good. Nearly all learners make at least adequate progress towards their learning goals and for a large majority progress is good. The number of young and adult apprentices completing in their planned time is consistently high and very high on intermediate programmes.</li> <li>▪ Overall success rates are improving but are not yet consistently good. In 2012/13, the overall success rates for learners improved to just above the national average reversing the decline in 2011/12. Rates were very high in 2010/11. LCT recognises the need to improve success rates by improving retention in areas such as advanced-level management for 16 to 18-year-old learners and actions taken indicate further improvements in the current year.</li> <li>▪ For current learners the gaps between the success rates of males and females is reducing. In 2012/13 male learners achieved more highly than females overall and at both intermediate and advanced levels within the planned time. The very small numbers of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve better than the majority of White British learners. The small numbers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve less well than the average for all learners. LCT systematically analyses and monitors the difference between the outcomes for particular groups of learners and for current learners gaps are narrowing.</li> <li>▪ Learners develop and value the good personal, social and employability skills they acquire on their programmes. Employers appreciate the impact on their businesses of learners' improved confidence and performance in the workplace. For example, some learners have designed websites and constructed databases for marketing purposes while others are able to deal sensitively with patients when making appointments.</li> <li>▪ A significant majority of apprentices develop good organisational skills and strong work-related practices. Employers rely on apprentices to take on additional responsibilities at work and some are promoted to positions of greater responsibility such as assistant manager. Learners' success is given a high profile and celebrated publicly. A few have achieved prestigious regional and national awards.</li> </ul>	

- The achievement of functional skills by learners at the first attempt is good and much improved. Success rates are high in English, mathematics and ICT at all levels. Learners are making good progress in improving their language and communication skills, although spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes in their written work are not routinely corrected.
- The proportion of learners obtaining full-time employment is high. Apprentices have a high profile in the workplace through the good support from employers. They benefit from the very good opportunities the provider uses to develop placement opportunities with local businesses, and being part of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce facilitates this.
- Learners are able to progress to higher-level qualifications and a small number has progressed successfully from intermediate-level qualifications to achieve qualifications at advanced levels. Learners value highly the programmes and the good opportunities for employment provided by local employers.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. A high proportion of apprentices achieve their frameworks by their planned end dates. They gain confidence, achieve good personal and employability skills and enjoy their learning programmes. Recently implemented strategies have increased the number of apprentices who stay on programme and complete their qualifications.
- Assessors provide good coaching and assessment which, together with the good support from employers, enable apprentices to succeed and to develop a wide range of skills relevant to their jobs. Apprentices improve their practical and personal skills very effectively, enabling them to interact better with their colleagues and carry out a wide range of workplace tasks. These include, for example, the issuing of contracts and invoices for room hire, supporting political campaigning and the running of immigration surgeries.
- Apprentices benefit from good support from assessors through frequent assessment visits, emails and telephone calls. They receive prompt responses, when help is requested, which aids their progress. Apprentices enjoy meeting with their assessors who make good use of their technical expertise and knowledge to enthuse apprentices and encourage them to succeed in their programme.
- Assessors undertake frequent and thorough reviews that provide apprentices with good opportunities to claim units and make progress. However, only a few employers are meaningfully involved in reviews and miss the opportunity to ensure that training is coordinated and apprentices' progress is accelerated. The quality of apprentices' written work is good.
- Apprentices and assessors value the electronic portfolios that enhance the assessment process. However, not enough apprentices and assessors make sufficient use of the online portfolio. Because of this, these apprentices are unable to take sufficient responsibility for their learning programmes and have less understanding of the progress they are making.
- Functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT are introduced early in programmes through discrete sessions which enhance opportunities for apprentices to achieve. This has resulted in much higher success rates. However, the majority of assessors do not make the most of opportunities to improve apprentices' functional skills in vocational contexts by integrating them into the one-to-one sessions.
- Particularly thorough initial assessment is used effectively to ensure apprentices choose the most appropriate qualification and to establish their skill levels and support requirements in English and mathematics. Assessors work collaboratively with apprentices to select individual and challenging optional units for the qualification. During new-starter interviews staff help apprentices to identify their additional care needs and any barriers to learning through specific questions about their home environments, health and welfare, and communication and behavioural difficulties.
- Apprentices receive good oral feedback on how well they carry out tasks at work and this enables them to understand how their learning programme can help them become more

effective employees. Most written feedback is too brief and leaves very little for the apprentice to reflect on. In the majority of cases errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not highlighted and corrected.

- Apprentices receive good advice and guidance before starting their programmes. Good induction arrangements ensure apprentices understand clearly how they will benefit from their learning programme. Effective use of the employment rights and responsibilities booklet helps learners to embed knowledge and understanding of the workplace relevant to their job roles. Assessors regularly discuss with them their future careers and further training and apprenticeship opportunities. The recent introduction of the 'at-risk' form helps staff identify apprentices requiring extra support and more frequent visits to help them stay on programme and achieve.
- Apprentices have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work and how equality and diversity relate to their job. Apprentices say they feel safe and work safely, and know who to approach if they have any safeguarding issues. Their knowledge of equality and diversity at work is extended and reinforced through scenario-based discussions in the majority of reviews. However, assessors do not provide apprentices with sufficient opportunity to expand their wider knowledge of equality and diversity through the curriculum.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Good**

- Leadership and management are good. LCT makes very good use of its strong, integral relationship with the Chamber of Commerce to raise learners' expectations and set high standards for them and their employers. Apprentices work in challenging and stimulating roles in administration, management, and retail and customer service, with many promoted and taking on additional responsibilities as a result of their success in completing their apprenticeship programme.
- LCT contributes strongly to the region's strategy for economic recovery and growth. LCT recruits and employs several apprentices in the training centre, using them to demonstrate to employers the good practice and the high standards they can achieve.
- The observations of teaching, learning and assessment have improved recently and now have stronger links with performance management and staff development. Although at an early stage of development, this is already contributing to improved training and learning.
- Assessors have appropriate vocational experience and attend frequent performance review meetings with the training manager to discuss their apprentices' progress and any concerns. Review meetings help identify priorities for improvement and features of good practice to be disseminated more widely. For example, following the sharing of one assessor's good use of icebreaker activities, the assessor team developed a resource pack which is now used extensively to induct new apprentices and help them settle in quickly. Managers use mentoring, training and coaching skilfully to help assessors improve their practice and take decisive action where staff are underperforming.
- Strong leadership has resulted in improved quality assurance and accurate self-assessment. The management team has a strong capacity to maintain the improvements. These measures have contributed to good timely success rates and functional skills achievements, and improved retention. LCT has successfully dealt with most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Self-assessment is inclusive and draws extensively on outcomes data, employers' feedback and detailed summaries of learners' views, which are overwhelmingly positive. Areas for improvement are fully understood and clearly articulated.
- Action plans focus appropriately on priorities for improvement and targets are clearly stated where they can be easily quantified, such as for success rates. Ways of assessing progress in implementing other improvement measures, such as better involvement of employers in progress reviews, are beginning to be more clearly stated but it is too soon to demonstrate their impact.

- Curriculum planning is particularly good. LCT uses good links with the National Chambers of Commerce to develop its curriculum strategy. Planning takes account of regional and national priorities to ensure that the company meets the needs of employers and contributes to economic development in the city and region. The strong links with the local Chamber of Commerce enable LCT to place apprentices with very supportive employers to help ensure their success.
- Links with local schools are strong and productive, and LCT regularly offers information, advice and guidance to groups of young people, who are consequently well informed about workplace training opportunities.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is adequate. Managers ensure that apprentices are placed with employers who treat them fairly and with respect. LCT has strengthened initial advice, recruitment and induction to improve young apprentices' awareness of employers' expectations following an analysis of why male learners achieve more highly than females. This is significantly reducing the number of young apprentices who leave without completing their programme. Managers have started to identify good practice in promoting diversity in training sessions and progress reviews but know there is more work to do. A few apprentices, interviewed by inspectors, were unable to recall detailed discussions about equality and diversity with their assessor.
- Training for staff to improve assessment, reviews and equality and diversity is good and regularly refreshed. The staff training materials are widely available to apprentices and employers through LCT's online portfolio system, and apprentices are beginning to access the modules to support their training.
- Procedures to safeguard learners are good and meet statutory requirements. The comprehensive policy provides good guidance to staff on how to deal with concerns about both young and adult learners, and includes helpful internet references to external support agencies. Links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board are good. Employers are fully briefed about their responsibilities concerning the employment of apprentices who are under 18-years-of-age.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)****Liverpool Chamber Training Ltd**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Administration</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Business management</b>	<b>2</b>

Type of provider	Independent Learning Provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 553 apprentices								
	Part-time: N/A								
Principal/CEO	Ms Mary Smyth								
Date of previous inspection	December 2011								
Website address	<a href="http://www.liverpoolchambertraining.co.uk">www.liverpoolchambertraining.co.uk</a>								
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	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19			19+		Total			
	N/A			N/A		N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	173	162	23	143	N/A		52		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	The Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None								

## Contextual information

Liverpool Chamber Training Limited (LCT), situated in Liverpool City Centre, serves a region with a population of 465,000. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grades A\* to C has improved in recent years to just above the national average. Unemployment is higher than the national rate and a low proportion of those of working age have an advanced-level qualification. The proportion of the local population without qualifications or with qualifications below foundation level is around 6% less than nationally. Apprenticeships have a high priority in Liverpool and at LCT learner numbers have doubled since August 2012. The main employment is in public administration, health, education, retail, hospitality, and tourism. LCT is developing apprenticeships in job-growth areas such as the digital and creative sectors.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Fred Brown
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A lead inspector and three additional inspectors, assisted by the training manager 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 relevant 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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