

# Staffline Recruitment Limited

## Independent learning provider

|                                              |                         |                             |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Inspection dates</b>                      |                         | <b>20 – 23 January 2015</b> |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>This inspection:</b> | <b>Good-2</b>               |
|                                              | Previous inspection:    | Requires improvement-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 large majority of current learners achieve well and make good progress to complete their frameworks within planned timescales
- the vast majority of apprentices develop good, relevant, vocational skills and expertise along with well developed, English, mathematics and problem-solving skills which they apply well in the workplace
- tutors have good industry experience which they draw on very effectively to relate training to the apprentices' workplace
- assessment is fair, accurate and timely; tutors conduct frequent and thorough workplace reviews of apprentices' progress using effective tracking data
- managers provide good support for staff through a well-established programme of continuing professional development linked to appraisals and observations of learning sessions
- the use of data to measure company performance is now good
- managers use good links with employers to ensure that programmes develop apprentices well to meet the needs of individual employers and meet the priorities of the local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) for apprentices in manufacturing
- self-assessment is inclusive; the quality improvement plan is very detailed, understood by staff and leads to improvement, and managers monitor its impact well.

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

- tutors do not sufficiently use the results of initial assessment to plan sessions to ensure that all apprentices are challenged by the work
- written feedback on apprentices' submitted work is often too brief and does not provide sufficient guidance on how apprentices could improve
- tutors do not sufficiently embed equality and diversity in training sessions and progress reviews
- the revised observation process does not cover all elements of the learners' time in training and action plans following observations are not always fully effective in leading to improvement.

## Full report

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

- Ensure tutors consistently give apprentices constructive written feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve. Ensure that the setting of challenging and measurable targets during reviews of progress is consistently rigorous for all apprentices. Help all apprentices to improve by always including short-term development targets.
- Fully use information from initial and on-going assessments to inform planning for individual learning appropriately, so that activities in learning sessions meet the needs of different apprentices well.
- Develop staff understanding of equality, diversity and safeguarding to enable them to extend confidently apprentices' awareness and understanding of the diverse needs of communities, colleagues and customers they may encounter in their personal and working life.
- Extend the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to encompass all key processes involving the learner. Managers should monitor the action plans from observations more closely to ensure that provision continues to improve. Introduce a clear moderation process for observation findings and grades to ensure consistency and accuracy.

### Inspection judgements

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| <b>Outcomes for learners</b> | Good |
|------------------------------|------|

- Elpis Training (Elpis), a division of Staffline Recruitment Limited, provides training and assessment in manufacturing technologies to apprentices employed in the manufacturing industry focusing particularly on apprenticeships in improving operational performance. The provider has recently developed an apprenticeship in agriculture and horticulture in partnership with a large supermarket chain. All apprentices on improving operational performance programmes are adults, only two of the eight apprentices following agriculture and horticulture programmes are aged 16 to 18. Elpis do not use any subcontractors and are directly responsible for the provision of all training.
- Outcomes for learners are good. Although overall success rates on apprenticeships declined between 2012/13 and 2013/14, they remained well above national rates. The large majority of current apprentices achieve well and make good progress. The proportion of apprentices completing their frameworks within planned timescales has improved significantly from a very low base to be well above the national rate in 2013/14. In-year data from the provider indicates that overall success rates are increasing and the proportion of apprentices completing their programmes within planned timescales is growing in 2014/15.
- Managers have introduced effective monitoring systems that now ensure that apprentices complete their programmes within planned timescales. This closer monitoring of apprentices' individual progress across all aspects of their framework successfully identifies any barriers to timely achievement and leads to appropriate support and rapid action to ensure apprentices succeed.
- The vast majority of apprentices develop good, relevant, vocational skills and expertise. Many achieve promotion in the workplace in recognition of their new skills. Projects investigated and introduced by apprentices within the workplace have significantly improved productivity, reduced wastage and provided cost savings for their employers. The development of apprentices' skills and the qualifications they gain have resulted in them taking on tasks with greater responsibility, significantly improving their job performance and their employability. The

very large majority of apprentices gain in confidence and self-esteem and have well developed problem-solving skills.

- Apprentices value the achievement of functional skills and recognise how these help improve both career prospects and job performance. All apprentices benefit from developing functional skills in English and mathematics and can apply them in a practical context, for example, when calculating task times and wastage. All tutors have completed functional skills at level 2 to improve their own confidence and ensure they fully understand problems faced by apprentices. This increased understanding enables tutors to support better the development of apprentices' skills.
- In 2013/14, managers and staff closed the gap in success rates between the low number of women and men that existed in the previous year. However, women achieve at a slower rate. The low numbers of learners from minority ethnic groups make statistical analysis invalid, but data show that learners from the 'any other white background' group succeeded less well than other groups in 2013/14. The proportion of learners who declared a learning difficulty and/or disability over the last three years is very low. Only one learner declared a learning difficulty or disability in 2013/14. This learner achieved their qualification in a timely manner.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The very large majority of apprentices achieve their frameworks qualification within their planned end dates. In-year data clearly indicate continuing high success rates. Apprentices 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. Apprentices progress well in employment, taking on greater responsibility as their skills develop.
- Tutors have good industry experience that they use very effectively to link training to the apprentices' workplace. Tutors and employers work well together to make learning relevant to work tasks. This enables apprentices to identify readily a range of effective significant operational improvements, many of which employers have adopted. For example, apprentices suggested improvements to manual handling on a production line which cut time and significantly reduced the risk of repetitive strain injury to operators. Tutors know their apprentices well, have high expectations and provide good support, ensuring apprentices develop a wide range of skills relevant to their job needs.
- Tutors plan learning sessions well to provide interest and to stimulate learning. In a good session, apprentices confidently produced a schematic diagram of a process line using industry-standard symbols and correct terminology to describe component parts. However, tutors do not always meet individual learning needs by taking insufficient account of apprentices' previous knowledge and ability and they do not always sufficiently differentiate activities in learning sessions to ensure that all apprentices have enough challenge in their work. In a small number of learning sessions, often as a result of too much paperwork, apprentices lose interest and disengage from the activity.
- Assessment is fair, accurate and timely with tutors conducting frequent and thorough workplace reviews using accurate tracking data to monitor progress. Apprentices are aware of how much of their apprenticeship they have completed, and what they still need to do to finish successfully. However, the setting of learning targets is inconsistent; targets are often vague and difficult to measure, and staff and apprentices do not use them effectively to set personal development goals.
- Tutors introduce functional skills in English and mathematics early in programmes through discrete learning sessions that improve opportunities for apprentices to achieve. They embed mathematics well into the engineering curriculum and apprentices demonstrate confidence with calculations in fractions, geometry and percentages. In a minority of cases, tutors do not

develop apprentices' written English sufficiently. For example, they do not always correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Too few apprentices are on programmes for higher-level functional skills qualifications although many are considering progression.

- Apprentices receive good verbal feedback on how well they carry out tasks. Written feedback is often too brief and does not provide guidance to encourage apprentices to reflect on their progress, and indicate how they could improve their skills and understanding to achieve to the best of their ability.
- 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 apprentices to take on knowledge and understanding of the workplace relevant to their job roles. Tutors do not use the results of initial assessment enough to plan and provide training. They do not discuss further training and progression opportunities sufficiently regularly with apprentices.
- Apprentices have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work. Managers and tutors appropriately prioritise health and safety to ensure apprentices have a safe training and working environment. Apprentices understand safeguarding and they know where to go if they have any concerns. Apprentices work well with their colleagues and understand the values of equality. In learning and review sessions, tutors do not do enough to ensure apprentices understand and appreciate the wider diverse needs, beyond that of race and gender, of the customers and colleagues they will encounter.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed managers have ensured that the clear vision and strategy for the company is well communicated and understood by all staff. Elpis's managers and staff ensure that programmes meet the needs of employers and learners well and support local and national priorities identified by the LEPs across several regions, for example in manufacturing apprenticeships and in the development of English and mathematics.
- Senior managers hold effective and frequent meetings with their regional managers who in turn have effective and frequent meetings with tutors to ensure the performance of Elpis and its learners is well understood and communicated. Managers provide good support for staff through a well-established programme of continuing professional development linked to appraisals and to the outcomes of observations of teaching, learning and assessment. They monitor well the participation in, and impact of, professional development within the company.
- The use of data to measure performance has much improved since the last inspection and it is now good. Managers produce a set of meaningful monthly reports that they circulate and discuss at management and team meetings. They make use of data well to demonstrate and analyse performance at these meetings. Staff are now fully aware of the importance of data and have a good understanding of how their own role contributes to the success of the organisation. They now understand particularly well the significance of monitoring apprentices' progress and the importance of ensuring that apprentices achieve within expected timescales, which has led to a substantial increase in performance.
- The range of programmes is very successful at meeting the needs of apprentices, employers and the LEPs. Elpis managers and staff consult closely with employers to select the most appropriate National vocational qualification (NVQ) units to develop the apprentice in the workplace and to match the career paths of apprentices. For example, managers and staff have developed and are piloting an apprenticeship in agriculture and horticulture with a large supermarket chain to encourage growers to train their staff to raise standards.

- Managers and staff work well with partners. They adjust courses to address the specific needs of employers and apprentices, including course times to suit changes in shift patterns of apprentices or to respond to production demands. Elpis business development managers are fully aware of LEP priorities and discuss these with employers when designing and agreeing programmes.
- The new revised observation process for teaching, learning and assessment accurately identifies key strengths and weaknesses in learning sessions. However, moderation to ensure that all observation grades are correct, particularly with the planned introduction of additional observers, lacks rigour. Often observations focus too much on tutor activity and not enough on the impact on learning. Action plans following observations are not always fully effective. Covering equality and diversity in learning sessions and a lack of challenge for the more able learners were areas for improvement at the last inspection. Current observations of learning sessions indicate these require further improvement. Observations include teaching, learning and assessment, but no observations have taken place of induction or progress reviews.
- Managers ensure that self-assessment involves all staff and includes the views of employers and apprentices. A shortfall recognised by managers, is that they collect the views of apprentices at the end rather than throughout the programme. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate and now includes robust analysis of data to inform a precise view of the key strengths or weaknesses of the provision.
- The quality improvement plan for the self-assessment report is very detailed. Staff understand it well. Managers thoroughly monitor the plan each month. They have introduced several effective actions to improve provision since the last inspection, but a delay in the implementation of key improvement measures has lessened their impact to date. For example, the weakness in the quality of written feedback provided to apprentices, a weakness at the last inspection, although improved, remain as an area for improvement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Managers provide equality and diversity training for all staff. Apprentices have a basic understanding of equality, but staff still lack the confidence to discuss and extend apprentices' awareness of equality and diversity in learning sessions and at progress reviews. Managers have not been successful in attracting more women onto apprenticeship programmes. They have started to analyse data to identify participation and performance by different groups of apprentices and have taken effective actions to improve any identified under-performance by different groups.
- The provider's safeguarding of all apprentices is good. Apprentices have a very good understanding of health and safety and know how to report any safeguarding concerns. The vast majority of apprentices are adults, but suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that younger apprentices are safe and aware of the measures in place to protect them. Managers have provided safeguarding training to staff and staff awareness is strong. However, at progress reviews only a check takes place if an apprentice has a safeguarding concern rather than using this as an opportunity to extend apprentices' understanding of this area. All staff are qualified and managers check their records with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Managers have developed an e-safety policy and shared it with all staff and apprentices to ensure that apprentices are fully aware of how to remain safe on the internet. Managers have good links with local safeguarding boards and, through its parent company, have access to current information and guidance from 'Prevent' officers and staff. Elpis are about to introduce radicalisation awareness training to staff.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Staffline Recruitment Limited

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

### Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Grade

**Manufacturing Technologies**

**2**

## Provider details

|                                                                                                 |                                                          |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|-----|----------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| <b>Type of provider</b>                                                                         | Independent learning provider                            |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Age range of learners</b>                                                                    | 16+                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>                  | 239                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Principal/CEO</b>                                                                            | Mrs Laura Savage                                         |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                                                              | 27 September 2013                                        |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Website address</b>                                                                          | www.staffline.co.uk                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>                                       |                                                          |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Main course or learning programme level</b>                                                  | <b>Level 1 or below</b>                                  |     | <b>Level 2</b>  |     | <b>Level 3</b> |     | <b>Level 4 and above</b> |     |
| <b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>                                     | 16-18                                                    | 19+ | 16-18           | 19+ | 16-18          | 19+ | 16-18                    | 19+ |
|                                                                                                 | N/A                                                      | N/A | N/A             | N/A | N/A            | N/A | N/A                      | N/A |
| <b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>                                    | <b>Intermediate</b>                                      |     | <b>Advanced</b> |     | <b>Higher</b>  |     |                          |     |
|                                                                                                 | 16-18                                                    | 19+ | 16-18           | 19+ | 16-18          | 19+ |                          |     |
|                                                                                                 | 4                                                        | 235 | 0               | 0   | 0              | 0   |                          |     |
| <b>Number of traineeships</b>                                                                   | 16-19                                                    |     | 19+             |     | Total          |     |                          |     |
|                                                                                                 | N/A                                                      |     | N/A             |     | N/A            |     |                          |     |
| <b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>                                                            | N/A                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Full-time</b>                                                                                | N/A                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Part-time</b>                                                                                | N/A                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Number of community learners</b>                                                             | N/A                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Number of employability learners</b>                                                         | N/A                                                      |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Funding received from</b>                                                                    | Skills Funding Agency (SFA)                              |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A.</li> </ul> |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |

## Contextual information

Elpis Training, formerly Peter Rowley Ltd, was established in 1997 and was acquired by Staffline Recruitment Ltd in 2009. The Staffline Group also acquired Eos Works in June 2011; Eos is the prime contractor for the work programme in Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country. Through group collaboration, the Elpis Training division of Staffline Recruitment Ltd now operates under the managing director of Eos Works. Elpis Training provides workplace learning within the manufacturing and food sectors. They have 11 field-based tutors located across the country. The division specialises in education, training and consultancy, providing apprenticeship frameworks mostly in improving operational performance.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Bob Busby HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Delivery 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 area listed in the report.



## 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:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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