

# Greater Merseyside Learning Providers' Federation

Not-for-profit organisation

## Inspection dates

19–21 July 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Managers do not require subcontractors to report safeguarding incidents to them promptly and systematically.
- The board of non-executive directors does not monitor the quality and relevance of the study programmes and traineeships closely enough.
- The management of subcontractors is ineffective.
- Managers do not check the course content of study programmes and traineeships to ensure that it complies with programme requirements.
- Managers do not monitor systematically the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the standard of learners' work across the subcontractor network.
- Too much teaching, learning and assessment is ineffective.
- Learners are unable to improve their work because teachers do not provide sufficient constructive feedback on its accuracy and quality.
- Too many learners do not develop the technical skills, knowledge and understanding they need for work because they do not have relevant work experience.
- Learners' attendance rates and punctuality are too low.
- Learners are not working to their full potential and their progress is not always rapid enough.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their intended qualifications, particularly in English and mathematics, is low.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers are strongly committed to recruiting young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- Good levels of pastoral support enable learners to deal with the significant difficulties that many of them face.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Greater Merseyside Learning Providers' Federation (GMLPF) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Liverpool. The company offers a range of services and support to a membership network of work-based learning providers in addition to having an Education Funding Agency contract for the delivery of study programmes and traineeships. It employs seven full-time members of staff, three of whom manage the learning programmes. GMLPF works with 15 subcontractors, spread across the six boroughs of the Liverpool City Region, who deliver programmes on its behalf.
- Unemployment in the Liverpool City Region is higher than the rate for the north west of England and the national rate. The proportion of young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, training or employment is higher than the average for the North West. The proportion of young people achieving five GCSE qualifications at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is lower than the North West and national averages.

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

- Ensure that procedures for reporting safeguarding incidents are clearly defined and followed by subcontractors at all times. Accurately record all safeguarding concerns, tracking their progress systematically until they have been resolved fully.
- Make sure that the board of non-executive directors:
  - is completely objective and impartial in its dealings with GMLPF
  - focuses much more on the relevance and quality of study programmes and traineeships
  - scrutinises rigorously the performance of managers and holds them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and learners' achievements throughout the subcontractor network.
- Improve the management of subcontractors by:
  - deploying sufficient staff resources to manage the provision effectively
  - meeting regularly with subcontractors, formally recording the subjects discussed and the actions required
  - setting key performance indicators for each subcontractor and monitoring them closely
  - taking swift action when underperformance occurs.
- Check systematically all subcontractors' course content for study programmes and traineeships to ensure that it complies fully with programme requirements and that learners are working towards qualifications that stimulate, engage and challenge them.
- Monitor rigorously the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the standard of learners' work across the subcontractor network and take immediate action to improve the quality when it falls below an acceptable level.
- Improve the management of the delivery of English and mathematics to ensure that:
  - all learners improve their skills in English and mathematics
  - learners' starting points are defined accurately and they are working at a level above their previous attainment
  - English and mathematics are integrated more effectively in other teaching and learning
  - learners who have previously gained GCSE qualifications in English and/or mathematics at grade D resit the examinations in an attempt to obtain at least a grade C in each subject.
- Increase achievement rates for all learners, including achievement rates in English and mathematics, by:
  - monitoring learners' achievements at each subcontractor, identifying those whose achievements are low
  - implementing immediate actions to bring about improvements where achievements are low
  - taking swift and effective action to support those learners who are at risk of leaving early so that they remain on their course and obtain their qualifications.
- Ensure that all teachers across the subcontractor network provide constructive and helpful feedback to learners about the accuracy and quality of their work to enable them to improve.
- Make sure that all learners have access to high-quality work experience placements to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for employment.
- Increase learners' attendance and punctuality at lessons; ensure that managers monitor closely attendance and punctuality across the subcontractor network.
- Ensure that managers check systematically that all learners are fully challenged and make rapid progress.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- GMLPF's managers do not manage the subcontractors effectively. Meetings between GMLPF's programme manager and subcontractor managers take place quarterly but they are not recorded and do not systematically result in improvements. Informal communication between the provider and subcontractors' staff is frequent and is effective in resolving day-to-day operational issues.
- Contracts between GMLPF and its subcontractors do not include clear expectations relating to the quality of provision. GMLPF's managers do not set individual performance targets for subcontractors relating to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the proportions of learners completing their programmes or their achievement of learning goals. GMLPF's managers do not analyse data to explore any variations in the performance of different groups and do not set targets for subcontractors that relate to the recruitment or achievement of learners from under-represented groups.
- The provider's management of English and mathematics, identified as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report, is weak. Not all learners who have attained GCSE qualifications at grade D in these subjects continue their studies to improve their skills and grades. Managers do not give sufficient importance to ensuring that learners continue to improve their skills if they already have GCSE qualifications at grade C or above in English and mathematics.
- Managers do not oversee the planning and implementation of study programmes and traineeships closely enough. They do not ensure that learners are challenged to study at a level higher than they have previously attained and that programmes include well-planned work experience or work-related activities to prepare learners for employment.
- Arrangements for collecting, analysing and using management information are inadequate. Managers rely too much on collecting information informally from subcontractors. They do not have accurate, easily accessible information on the number of learners on programmes, programme details and learners' progress. They do not routinely summarise, analyse and use data on learners' attendance at each subcontractor to monitor and improve performance and ensure that learners gain maximum benefit from their programmes.
- Self-assessment arrangements are inadequate. The most recent self-assessment report does not make sufficient use of data, such as that relating to learners' programmes and achievements, or provide clear evidence to support the brief judgements made within the report. Managers did not seek the views of subcontractors' staff and learners to inform the self-assessment judgements.
- Quality improvement arrangements are inadequate. Quality improvement plans in the self-assessment report lack clarity and consist of a list of weaknesses, with no details of actions to be taken, by whom and when, to remedy the problems identified.
- GMLPF's managers have invested significantly in activities to improve the provision. Managers and external consultants carry out a range of quality assurance activities including audits of learners' files, observations of teaching, learning and assessment, and sharing of good practice at quarterly subcontractors' meetings. However, managers do not systematically evaluate the impact of the quality improvement activities to ensure that they achieve the intended outcomes.
- Leaders and managers have a very strong commitment to recruiting young people from the region who are not in education, employment or training, many of whom are disadvantaged due to personal or social circumstances. In addition, the provision enables other young people to access vocational training, for example in engineering, which they would not otherwise be able to participate in locally.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - The board of non-executive directors does not focus closely enough on monitoring the quality of the training provision. In recognition of this, in recent months a sub-group of the board has been established to concentrate specifically on improving the provision, but it is too soon to judge its impact.
  - Several directors are employed by subcontractors which results in a lack of impartiality and objectivity.
  - The board does not scrutinise rigorously the performance of the provider and its subcontractors or set ambitious targets for learners and their achievements.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective**
  - GMLPF's managers do not require subcontractors to report safeguarding incidents to them promptly and systematically. They do not require subcontractors to keep them fully informed of safeguarding issues affecting GMLPF's learners, including details of how concerns have been resolved.
  - GMLPF'S managers do not monitor the absence of their learners and the reasons for non-attendance; they do not ensure that subcontractors check the well-being of absent learners.
  - Managers do not have a strategy or action plan to implement the 'Prevent' duty, although staff and

governors have attended appropriate training.

- The designated safeguarding officer has attended appropriate training for the role. Managers check that subcontractors have their own appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate**

- During the current year the provider has had 425 learners on a range of study programmes and 18 learners on traineeships. Presently, there are 32 learners on study programmes and 14 on traineeships. Most of these learners work towards employability and functional skills qualifications.
- GMLPF's managers do not monitor the appropriateness of the course content in study programmes and traineeships. They do not check that learners are working for suitable qualifications at the correct level, considering their prior attainment and previous experience.
- GMLPF's managers do not monitor systematically the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the standard of learners' work across the subcontractor network. Consequently, they are insufficiently aware of the considerable differences in the quality of provision, some of which is poor. Managers do not set targets for underperforming subcontractors and, as a result, they have not improved the provision.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not sufficiently effective in ensuring that all learners make the progress expected of them. Too many tutors do not plan lessons well enough to meet the needs of individual learners. Around a quarter of learners leave their programme early and before they complete their qualifications.
- Tutors do not routinely set learners individual targets and monitor their progress against them. Consequently, many learners are working on tasks that are either too easy or too difficult for them and this impedes their progress.
- Tutors do not systematically ensure that learners improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. They do not give enough attention to the spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' written work, with the result that learners do not improve their work. Tutors do not integrate the development of learners' English and mathematics skills effectively into their teaching.
- Most tutors promote British values adequately. This ensures that many learners have an appropriate understanding of fairness and the importance of democracy and the rule of law. Learners successfully develop a greater awareness of the impact of their own behaviour and attitudes on other people in work settings and in wider society. Most tutors use relevant resources to help learners understand the cultural diversity they will encounter in their work and social lives.
- Tutors provide good individual support to enable learners to overcome barriers to learning, such as by providing advice on housing problems and claiming welfare benefits. Tutors identify learners who need extra help at the start of their courses; learners value the effective support and encouragement they receive from tutors.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate**

- Learners' attendance rates and levels of punctuality are too low. A significant minority of learners do not demonstrate the employability skills they are developing when they attend sessions. For example, more than a third of all learners fail to attend classes regularly at one subcontractor. The monitoring of attendance by GMLPF's managers is weak. Managers do not follow up the reasons why learners are absent and this presents a risk for learners' safety.
- Teachers provide the majority of learners with information, advice and guidance at the beginning of the programme. However, too often learners' aspirations are too low and, consequently, they receive inappropriate guidance on their next steps. Formal arrangements do not exist for learners at all subcontractors to receive impartial careers advice and guidance. As a result, the courses that staff recommend are too easy for the majority of learners. Staff advise too many learners to study for an employability qualification at level 1 even if they already have achieved GCSE or vocational qualifications at a higher level.
- Managers do not ensure that all learners develop the skills they need in English and mathematics. The large majority of learners who already have a D grade in GCSE English and/or mathematics are not enabled to resit the examination, which hinders their future progression. Teachers assess learners' starting points in English and mathematical skills but they do not use them well enough to plan their learning.
- Too many learners do not have external work experience and, as a result, do not develop the technical

skills, knowledge and understanding they need for work. Most subcontractors do not have sufficient, well-established links with local employers to support learners' needs and interests. Learners who take part in practical activities develop the skills they need for work. For example, sports students learn how to coach young people and people with disabilities.

- While staff have had training in the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, learners' awareness and understanding of how these issues can affect them and their lives are poor. Learners are developing some understanding of life in modern Britain. Most learners treat each other and their teachers with respect and understand how to keep themselves safe. Most learners complete a relevant health and safety module which covers bullying, harassment and personal safety. Learners on sports courses understand why they need to warm up and cool down when they take part in practical activities.
- Subcontractors' staff provide learners with good levels of pastoral support. This support enables them to deal with the significant barriers that many face, such as alcohol and drugs misuse, and continue with their studies.
- Learners who stay on their course and attend regularly enjoy their studies and are engaged in learning. Learners improve their self-confidence and self-esteem, and develop new skills to assist them in their development. For example, learners develop their communication skills by taking part in debates and preparing for job interviews.

## **Outcomes for learners**

## **are inadequate**

- Too many learners on study programmes and traineeships do not successfully gain the qualifications for which they are studying. Overall qualification achievement rates for the previous two years have been very low. There are considerable differences in learners' achievements between subcontractors. Managers do not monitor these variations sufficiently and do not set improvement targets for subcontractors in an attempt to drive up achievement rates.
- Achievement rates in functional English and mathematics are poor. Managers place too little importance on the need for learners to improve their English and mathematical skills. Although early indicators suggest that achievement rates in functional English and mathematics in the current year will improve slightly, it is too early to make any firm predictions. However, the projected rates are still too low.
- Most vocational qualification achievement rates for the past two years have been below the achievement rates for similar providers. However, for the last two years achievement rates have been good in engineering. In health studies, and leisure, travel and tourism they are in line with those of similar providers. Around 20% of learners study engineering, health studies, and leisure, travel and tourism.
- Learners with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability are more successful than other learners. However, managers do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring that subcontractors implement actions to enable both groups to be equally successful so that their achievement rates rise considerably.
- The standard of learners' work is variable. While many learners produce work of an acceptable standard, others do not. A significant number of learners repeat grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors that are not identified and corrected.
- While around three quarters of learners progressed from their study programmes and traineeships into further study or employment in 2014/15, GMLPF's managers do not have sufficient information about the type of jobs learners obtain, whether their employment is sustainable and whether the follow-on courses they enrol upon are appropriate. Managers do not identify the significant differences in progression rates between subcontractors and take action to improve them.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Not-for-profit organisation
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16–18 and 19+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	540
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr James Glendenning
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.gmlpf.net">www.gmlpf.net</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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	17	N/A	7	1	4	3	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+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	14		N/A		14			
<b>Number of learners aged 14–16</b>	None							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Alder Training</li> <li>■ Alt Valley Community Trust</li> <li>■ Jelli Studios</li> <li>■ JM Education</li> <li>■ Joint Learning Partnership</li> <li>■ Mactac Training</li> <li>■ Maritime and Engineering College North West</li> <li>■ Mode Training Limited</li> <li>■ North West Community Services Training</li> <li>■ Progress Sports Limited</li> <li>■ Riverside Learning and Education Centre</li> <li>■ Street League</li> <li>■ Training Plus (Merseyside) Limited</li> <li>■ TTE Training Limited</li> <li>■ Young Persons Opportunities Project</li> </ul>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Ken Fisher, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pat Hornsby	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barnett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Machell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the programme manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and an online questionnaire to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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