

# MPower Training Solutions Ltd

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

21–24 November 2017

Overall effectiveness		Good	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Good</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers set high standards and have a good understanding of their provision and what they need to do to continue to improve. Self-assessment processes are appropriately self-critical and accurate.
- Leaders and managers promote a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. Consequently, learners and apprentices develop an excellent awareness of a wide range of social and ethical issues they may face in their work and social lives.
- Learners and apprentices take pride in their work and enjoy their time at the training centre. They increase their self-confidence, become self-assured learners and develop into good engineers and gas fitters. They behave well and show high respect for their peers and tutors.
- Learners and apprentices have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They speak confidently about health and safety, and understand risks, such as threats from extremist groups and/or radicalisation.
- Leaders and managers have put effective coaching and mentoring processes in place to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which are now good.
- Tutors use their considerable knowledge, expertise and skills to plan and deliver lively and effective learning sessions which motivate learners and apprentices.
- A high proportion of learners and apprentices make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- A high proportion of adult learners gain good quality and sustainable employment on completion of their programmes.
- Learners and apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills well as appropriate to the requirements of the building services gas industry.
- The proportion of adult learners who complete their programmes within their planned timescales, while improving, remains too low.
- Some targets set for apprentices focus too much on the completion of activities to meet qualification outcomes, rather than the development of skills, knowledge and further understanding.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- MPower Training Solutions (MPower) is based in Waltham Abbey, North London. It has been in operation since 2003 and provides training for apprentices and adult learners in building services engineering, with a focus on gas and smart meter installations, predominantly around the North London and Essex area. Previously operating as a subcontractor to local further education colleges, in 2013 MPower was awarded its own Skills Funding Agency contract to provide apprenticeships and adult learning provision.
- Almost all learners and apprentices are adults. Many adults on programme are looking to improve their employment options in a sector with great skill shortages. A large majority of learners have had previously poor experiences of education and have low prior attainment and few qualifications. All current apprentices work towards the completion of apprenticeship framework programmes.

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

- Leaders and managers should monitor the progress and performance of learners to ensure that the proportion of adult learners who complete their programmes in their planned timescales continues to improve.
- Leaders, managers, tutors and assessors should ensure that targets set for all learners and apprentices help them to achieve and make good progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and managers pursue high standards, motivate staff well and have a good understanding of their business. They have a clear vision to assist and support learners back into employment, many of whom have low prior attainment. Consequently, learners and apprentices are keen to achieve and do well.
- Leaders and managers make good use of effective links with employers from the building services gas industry. They provide good-quality training in gas and smart meter installation that meets employers' specific requirements well. As a result, a high proportion of learners gain high value and sustainable employment on completion of their programmes.
- Leaders and managers set out clear and effective plans for designing, planning and providing apprenticeship and adult learning programmes. Leaders, managers and tutors have a strong focus on learners' individual needs and requirements. Teamwork among the staff team is good. They provide each other with good support and share good practice. Consequently, most learners and apprentices make good progress.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. They carry out effective actions to secure improvement and know what they need to do to improve further. The self-assessment processes are self-critical and accurate. Leaders and managers make good use of data to more effectively monitor provision, to intervene where appropriate and to ensure that most learners and apprentices make at least the progress expected of them.
- Senior leaders work closely and effectively with staff, setting priorities and clear actions to follow. As a result, they have tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection successfully. For example, managers have introduced an effective coaching and mentoring approach to the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, staff, who are highly skilled gas engineers, become increasingly confident tutors who teach effectively and ensure that their learners and apprentices develop good practical skills for life and work.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that employers are involved fully throughout apprentices' programmes. Assessors work effectively with employers to plan and provide training, coaching and assessment opportunities. Assessors monitor and review apprentices' progress well with employers. Employers value highly the skills gained by apprentices and the attitudes they adopt at work. Employers are very positive about the good support and training offered to apprentices and they help to provide good training resources. Senior leaders work very well with employers and employer training groups in focusing on meeting local, regional and industry skills shortages.
- Leaders and managers enthusiastically promote and expect a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. Staff ensure that learners develop an excellent awareness of a wide range of social and ethical issues they may face both in their work and personal lives. From the first day of induction, and throughout the course, learners are encouraged to consider the impact they make on the lives of others. Consequently, learners and apprentices develop a very good understanding of British values and work extremely well

together.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governance is reliable and effective. Senior leaders understand fully the strengths and weaknesses of the adult learning and apprenticeship provision. They provide a focused strategic direction to ensure that learners and apprentices from a wide variety of backgrounds meet the employment needs of the building services gas industry and the new technology energy sector very well.
- Senior leaders challenge managers and staff at all levels well on operational matters, including the proportion of learners completing their programmes and the progress learners and apprentices make. Senior leaders have a strong focus on continuous improvement.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established and maintain a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that leaders, managers and staff adhere rigorously to comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures for apprentices and learners. All staff participate well in appropriate and regular training to update their knowledge. Effective safer recruitment checks ensure that all staff are suitable to be working with vulnerable adults.
- Managers have ensured that learners and apprentices have a very good knowledge of health and safety when working in clients' homes. They fully understand the gas safety regulations and the possible consequences affecting their work. As a result, learners and apprentices say they are safe and know how to keep themselves and their clients safe.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that learners and apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Almost all learners and apprentices are able to describe very clearly the possible dangers from extremist groups and radicalisation within the communities they live and work in.

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

**Good**

- Learners and apprentices benefit from a good range of teaching, learning and assessment activities which are well designed to meet both their and their employer's needs. They enjoy their training, improve their skills and the large majority gain industry-recognised qualifications. Learners and apprentices benefit from access to a broad and relevant range of learning resources and evidence sources, which they use well as part of their training at work and in the training centre. For example, they undertake industry- and product-specific qualifications which broaden their understanding of the different products they may encounter in the future.
- Tutors use their considerable knowledge, expertise and skills to plan and deliver lively and effective learning sessions which motivate learners and apprentices. As a result, most learners and apprentices develop a good sense of teamwork and pride in their individual and collective achievements. For a small minority of the most able learners and apprentices, teaching is insufficiently challenging for them to achieve their potential. A

few learners with relevant experience occasionally repeat work already learned through their existing qualifications or previous work roles.

- Tutors have developed a good range of teaching and assessment methods which effectively support learner progress and success. As a result, learners gain good skills and understanding from their different individual starting points. For example, tutors use group work activities well to facilitate good, professional discussions in classes. This improves personal confidence and spoken English, and encourages learners to share their views and findings. Apprentices effectively develop their literacy skills and as a result they produce good-quality written work which is largely free of errors.
- Following well-planned and impartial assessment practice, tutors provide learners and apprentices with effective feedback. As a result, they understand what they need to do to improve their practical skills and their theoretical knowledge, and gain their qualifications. Tutors and assessors provide useful information on the progress learners and apprentices make. As a result, most learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the progress they make. However, targets set and agreed with apprentices concentrate too much on activities to meet qualification outcomes rather than the development of skills and knowledge. As a result, a few apprentices make slow progress.
- Managers and staff have ensured that resources for teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners and apprentices have good access and use well the practical resources they need to make appropriate progress with their learning. Tutors ensure that learners work well individually and collaboratively in pairs and groups to gain the skills and self-reliance they need to work effectively in the gas installation industry. For example, learners produce a good standard of practical work such as ensuring that pipes are bent appropriately to meet industry standards.
- Learners and apprentices make good use of the comprehensive and high-quality online resources as part of their learning and revision activities. They use the online tutor support effectively, where their questions and queries are responded to quickly. Tutors, learners and apprentices embrace technology well in developing good independent research skills. Learners routinely use mobile devices in lessons to research data and information to help them to complete questions in their workbooks. Learners use online mathematics tutorials in order to perform specific calculations and apply adeptly formulae that are relevant to their work.
- Learners and apprentices improve their mathematics skills well. Tutors rapidly and accurately identify the need for support. Consequently, learners who need to improve their skills benefit from the provision of dedicated one-to-one tuition. This means that learners with a variety of previous learning experiences soon become confident to carry out industry-specific calculations and go on to achieve their qualifications. For example, apprentices learn very quickly to alternate between imperial and metric measurement and understand the calibration of meters and how to conduct purge tests for different models.
- Managers and tutors ensure that the induction at the start of learners' and apprentices' learning is effective. Learners and apprentices are challenged successfully to consider the impact they make on the lives of others. For example, when thinking about preparing for work in a commercial environment, learners have to consider what arrangements they need to make to work safely in a retirement home, a school, a nursery or a hospital. Assessors and tutors take every opportunity to promote good customer care. Apprentices understand well that personal recommendation is key to the success of their workplace

and that the businesses they work for often rely on good feedback from previously satisfied clients.

- Tutors set high expectations of safe working practices in all aspects of learning. As a result, learners and apprentices have a robust understanding of the importance of working safely, within strict regulations, while caring for those in or around their working area.

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

## **Outstanding**

- Learners and apprentices, many of whom have had previously poor experiences of education, very quickly form highly effective relationships with their peers, gain confidence and become committed learners. They are very proud of their work, their tutors and the training they receive. They make valuable contributions to their workplaces and during their training sessions. Their attendance and punctuality are very good while completing their training and at work.
- Learners and apprentices very swiftly gain high-quality personal and work skills, such as working as part of a team, good communication skills and gas installation and testing skills. Learners work very collaboratively and form exceptional relationships with their peers and tutors. Apprentices take initiatives, such as discussing options with their clients on gas boiler installations and contribute well to their employers' businesses. Learners take immense pride in their achievement and value very highly the support they receive during and following their time at the training centre.
- Learners and apprentices demonstrate exceptionally high standards in their practical and theory work and almost all produce work which meets British standards gas regulations. Learners keep accurate and detailed information in their workbooks; they take pride in their written work. They are very keen to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge, and express with confidence the development of their skills. Learners and apprentices demonstrate a very good attitude to learning. For example, a high proportion of learners who have completed their gas assessment and gained employment readily return to gain further experience and qualifications, which broadens their chances of advancing in their job roles.
- Learners and apprentices demonstrate very high levels of respect for each other and their tutors. They work cooperatively in pairs and groups to achieve tasks their tutors set. Learners form lasting relationships with each other. They help and communicate extremely well with their peers outside of their training sessions by offering support when revising or learning new concepts. They form highly positive relationships with staff. Consequently, they become mature and reliable learners and provide excellent support for each other.
- Learners benefit from high-quality guidance and support, which encourages them to progress and gain employment on completion of their programme. They profit from a highly inclusive and comprehensive recruitment and induction process which informs them very well of the expectations of employers in the building services gas industry. This ensures that they are ready to take on appropriate job roles on completion of their programme. Tutors and staff provide very reliable support and guidance for learners and apprentices on their progression opportunities. Consequently, this results in the large majority of learners gaining permanent and sustainable employment on completion of

their programmes.

- Most learners have a highly developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe and many speak confidently about how they could identify any concerns they had around the threats from extremist groups and/or radicalisation. For example, an adult learner identified very confidently signs that would cause them concern when visiting a client's house in their future employment.
- Apprentices demonstrate a very good understanding of health and safety and they work safely. They demonstrate a very comprehensive and detailed understanding of the gas safety regulations affecting their work and the consequences of poor workmanship. They know how to keep themselves and their clients safe. They are considerate and thoughtful when dealing with customers, including the elderly or customers with a limited understanding of new technology.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- Learners and apprentices make good progress from their starting points and the large majority achieve their qualifications. Leaders' data indicates that the large majority of apprentices complete their qualifications within the expected timescales. However, the proportion of adult learners who achieve within the timescales of their programme, while improving, is too low.
- The large majority of learners complete their programmes and achieve valuable qualifications and develop good skills and experience which enable them to gain employment in the building services gas industry. Leaders have ensured that the proportion of learners who achieve their qualification has increased since the previous inspection.
- The large majority of apprentices achieve their qualifications in a timely manner and make good progress. Apprentices gain good, work-related practical and personal skills. They quickly become valued members of their employers' workforce.
- A high proportion of learners gain employment on completion of their programmes. For example, leaders have forged good relationships with employers in the building services gas sector where learners, following a focused interview process, benefit from gaining good-quality sustainable employment with large and respected organisations. Almost all apprentices remain in employment with their employer on completion of their programme with some apprentices gaining promotion at work or taking on extra responsibilities.
- The large majority of apprentices who require English, mathematics and information and communication technology qualifications achieve these. The large majority of apprentices pass their English and mathematics qualifications at the first attempt. Tutors promote the use of mathematics particularly well in accordance with the specific gas qualifications with learners and apprentices. Learners improve and support each other well in their understanding of calculating gas volumes and flow.

## Types of provision

## Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- At the time of inspection, a total of 239 adult learners were enrolled on training programmes lasting for six months. All were studying the level 3 gas installation diploma.
- Leaders and managers have a clear ethos of commitment to help learners achieve their qualifications and progress into sustainable employment. Support for learners is good. As a result, the large majority make good progress, complete their programmes and succeed in gaining employment.
- Tutors use their extensive knowledge well to plan learning. They enthuse their learners who work collaboratively to quickly develop and practise new skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, learners confidently apply their learning to check the condition and serviceability of gas appliances while analysing flue flow and spillage of a domestic gas fire.
- Most learners improve their English and mathematical skills. For example, learners calculate accurately areas of vent sizes and the amount of gas flow for individual appliances. The standard of their written English in their workbooks is good. Most learners take great pride in their workbooks and ensure that they are neat, readable and used well for revision activities.
- Leaders, managers and tutors provide adult learners with good, impartial information, advice and guidance on their possible employment prospects and any future training needs. Tutors support learners well. They ensure a positive learning environment which breaks down any barriers for learning and which helps learners to become more confident about their future employment.

## Apprenticeships

**Good**

- Leaders and managers have ensured that the principles and requirements of apprenticeships are met. All apprentices remain on a framework. At the time of the inspection, 37 gas learners, mostly adults, were following apprenticeships at advanced level.
- Leaders have ensured that the apprenticeship provision meets the specific needs of employers locally and regionally. The provision contributes well to meeting the skills shortages identified in the building services gas sector. Employers are involved fully in the training of apprentices. For example, employers ensure that activities undertaken at work match well with the training apprentices receive. Consequently, apprentices gain good work skills and become valued members of the workforce.
- Almost all apprentices make good progress. Most assessment decisions are fair and reliable, and include detailed feedback to enable apprentices to improve their practice. Assessors ask pertinent questions and observe practice carefully. For example, apprentices provide a verbal commentary on their work during assessments where assessors ask probing questions to ensure a deeper understanding. However, too many targets following assessments focus on unit completion. Assessors do not routinely include targets to support and further develop apprentices' wider personal and social skills



and learning beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship.

- Apprentices gain increased confidence in their use of mathematics, particularly when related to gas measurement and equipment calibration. For example, apprentices understand well how to carry out and take accurate and detailed measurements during purge tests and the calibration of gas meters.
- Apprentices demonstrate good customer care skills and develop good work-related personal and social skills and behaviours. They take great care when working in people's homes and respect their privacy. For example, apprentices explain to clients why they are isolating gas supplies and why there may be a temporary smell of gas during leakage tests and purging.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	59187
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	599
Principal/CEO	Mr Rob Purchase
Telephone number	01992 769696
Website	www.mpowertraining.com

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	239	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	7	30	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	N/A							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, 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 online questionnaires 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.

## Inspection team

Steve Hunsley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Bealey	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector
Ruth Harrison	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector

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