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Mr Adrian Woodhouse
CEO and Chairman
Training Futures (UK) Ltd
Trading as: The Skills People Group Ltd
22 Long Acre Close
Holbrook Industrial Estate
Sheffield
S20 3FR

Dear Mr Woodhouse

Short inspection of Training Futures (UK) Ltd

Following the short inspection on 27 and 28 February 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in May 2015.

This provider continues to be good.

You, senior managers and tutoring staff continue to provide good education and training in a number of vocational subjects across the midlands and east of England. The quality of your provision for apprentices and learners is good. The range of education and training programmes you offer successfully addresses identified local needs and offers progression opportunities for learners that encourage them to achieve further within their current work sector.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a good capacity to build on the recent significant improvements and continue to improve the provision. You and senior managers know the provision well and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. A number of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been effectively resolved. However, it is too early to judge fully the effectiveness of a number of recent actions.

Leaders and managers monitor assessors well to ensure that the majority of apprentices and learners make good progress and attain appropriately high standards. As a result, apprentices and learners develop good employment-related skills that improve their chances of progressing to higher levels of learning and support their continued employability.

The directors and senior managers have effectively implemented performance management arrangements to improve the quality of learning and drive up success

rates on the majority of apprenticeship programmes, particularly at advanced level. However, you acknowledge that the rate of progress by a minority of apprentices requires further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and support a caring culture that focuses strongly on protecting all apprentices and learners. Relevant policies are in place and safe recruitment practices are followed.

The designated safeguarding officer takes appropriate action when staff or learners raise concerns. Apprentices and learners know how to raise any concerns they have about their safety. They are confident that assessors and managers will deal with these quickly and effectively. However, the records of the management and resolution of individual apprentices' and learners' concerns are insufficiently detailed.

All staff receive suitable safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty update training. Managers appropriately reinforce staff's understanding of these and related topics at regular meetings. Assessors effectively improve learners' appreciation of equality and diversity topics and how fundamental British values apply to their learning and lives. However, apprentices have a less secure understanding and awareness of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- Directors and senior managers have improved the structures for governance of the provision. Lines of reporting have been strengthened. Improved use of data to monitor the performance of staff and the progress of different groups of apprentices and learners supports directors to provide a good standard of governance, challenge managers and improve the provision. Consequently, the quality of learners' experience has improved significantly in the months immediately prior to this inspection.
- Senior managers liaise with a range of external partners to ensure that the provision meets the needs of local employers and populations. This has included the introduction of construction and preparation for work courses for adult learners in areas of socio-economic deprivation.
- Managers monitor apprentices' progress each month and clearly identify when their progress with their learning slows. However, they have yet to formally agree appropriate early intervention strategies to apply when apprentices do not make the rate of progress expected of them. As a result, a minority of apprentices make slow progress.
- Different groups of learners achieve at a similar rate. Managers monitor the success of different groups of learners adequately but could do more to monitor specific groups. For example, managers closely monitor the progress made by learners with identified special educational needs and they are able to provide evidence of how effectively care leavers are succeeding, when asked to do so.

However, this analysis had not been used routinely to support improvement planning.

- Through effective performance management, leaders and managers have successfully reversed the fall in apprenticeship overall achievement rates in 2016/17. Timely achievement by apprentices remains low.
- In 2016/17 overall achievement rates increased on almost all programmes, except for the very small number of apprentices on higher-level programmes. Achievement rates for the small number of intermediate apprentices on business and administration and customer service programmes were high in 2016/17. Managers have recently introduced an improvement strategy and in the current academic year an increasing proportion of apprentices achieve all parts of their frameworks. However, managers accept that further improvement is required.
- Achievement by adult learners on education and training programmes is very high.
- A higher proportion of learners and apprentices now achieve their functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Apprentices benefit from the good-quality support they receive from the additional learning support tutor.
- Assessors have maintained the good teaching identified at the previous inspection. Assessors plan individualised coaching programmes and assessment activities to meet learners' needs very well. However, their written records of progress review meetings are insufficient. They do not all show individual apprentices' achievements and progress in sufficient detail to help them improve quickly.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and become more confident at work. They develop relevant work-related skills that help them take on greater responsibility in the workplace.
- Assessors plan activities that maintain learners' interest well throughout individual coaching sessions and help them succeed.
- An increasing proportion of apprentices on health and social care programmes are using their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to access the electronic portfolio, although in a small number of cases assessors are uploading evidence on their behalf. A minority of apprentices are not using available online learning resources due to their low level of ICT skills.
- Assessors provide apprentices with useful verbal feedback following observations and written assessments. However, written feedback is insufficiently detailed to provide apprentices with guidance on how to further improve the quality of their work.
- Many apprentices benefit from good-quality on- and off-the-job training provided by their employers. For example, apprentices in care settings receive particularly helpful additional training about the specific needs of service users with dementia, which helps them to more effectively meet the needs of these vulnerable people.
- A small number of apprentices have not received the coaching and assessment required to help them to progress, due to frequent changes of assessor staff or

insufficient support from their employers. As a result, they make slow progress.

- The vast majority of apprentices make good progress in the development of their English and mathematics skills. Apprentices demonstrate appropriate levels of speaking, listening and writing skills in carrying out their job roles.
- Learners develop good skills in mathematics. For example, apprentices in care settings demonstrate useful arithmetic skills in maintaining food and fluid balance charts for the service users in their care.
- Managers have revised the well-established self-assessment process. The most recent report provides an accurate overview of how the provision has developed over time and the current areas for improvement. Senior managers review the associated improvement plan effectively to ensure that they drive up the quality of training for all apprentices and learners. However, assessors do not have a good recall of their involvement in the process, or the key judgements shown in the report.
- Managers carry out regular formal observations of teaching, learning and assessment delivered by each assessor. The results of these observations are used to plan a wide range of staff training and development activities. However, the written records of the judgements arising from the observations are insufficiently detailed to identify all staff training and development needs.
- Assessors embed the promotion of safeguarding and British values effectively into taught sessions and most apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of relevant topics. However, apprentices' understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism requires improvement.
- Assessors provide apprentices and learners with appropriate careers advice and guidance to ensure that they enrol on the correct type and level of course to meet their current career plans. In many cases, assessors provide sufficient advice and information to help apprentices and learners identify longer-term career plans and plan their next steps.
- Managers collect data on the progression of individual apprentices and learners. This information has recently begun to be shared with assessors and used in their one-to-one meetings with their managers. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these improved management performance arrangements to accelerate the rate of apprentices' progress with their learning.
- Managers have insufficient information on the destinations of apprentices and learners to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision in preparing them for their future employment.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- managers rigorously apply performance management arrangements to ensure that all apprentices make good progress and achieve their qualifications within the planned duration of their programmes
- all apprentices receive the high-quality training, coaching and assessment that

helps them to succeed, through the provision of sufficient, qualified and experienced assessors

- assessors provide detailed, evaluative written feedback to all apprentices and learners to ensure that they clearly understand what they have to do in order to improve further the quality of their work
- assessors promote 'Prevent' so that apprentices and learners understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism
- progress reviews provide detailed summaries of apprentices' achievement, skill development and the contribution to their learning provided by their employers to help apprentices improve quickly staff at all levels are fully involved in the self-assessment process and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in carrying out the relevant actions identified in the associated improvement plan
- managers analyse all available data to monitor the progress and destinations of all groups of apprentices and learners, including care leavers.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gerard McGrath
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, your performance and quality improvement officer assisted us as nominee. We met with managers, assessors and employers and used individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners. These views are reflected within this letter. We reviewed learners' assessed work. We evaluated the effectiveness of key documents, including those relating to the planning of learning, quality improvement, performance monitoring and safeguarding. Inspectors took account of the organisation's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report.