

# Omega Training Services Limited

Independent learning provider

**Inspection dates**

9–12 July 2019

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not fully supported the development of standards-based apprenticeships in care. Too many standards-based apprentices are making slower than expected progress.
- Managers did not fully prepare staff to deliver high-quality adult learning. As a result, too many adult learners do not achieve their qualification on time.
- Too many apprentices do not receive impartial careers advice and guidance. A small number of adult learners are taking courses that have not taken account of their prior knowledge and experience.
- Too few teaching and learning assessors (TLAs) have teaching or training qualifications. They do not have the depth of expertise they need to plan and deliver programmes that develop learners' skills, knowledge and behaviours consistently.
- TLAs do not consistently assess learners for additional learning needs or prepare appropriate support plans. As a result, learners do not receive the additional learning support to make the progress that they are capable of.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have established strong relationships with employers, which lead to good on-the-job training for apprentices.
- TLAs provide a caring and supportive service for learners, many of whom are returning to learning after unsuccessful education experiences. TLAs support learners and apprentices, helping them develop their confidence.
- Apprentices and learners, many of whom work shift patterns, benefit from TLAs' willingness to provide flexible learning opportunities and support with their studies.
- Governors, leaders and TLAs have successfully developed a culture which places the safety of learners, staff and service users at the heart of their work.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Omega Training Services Limited (Omega) is an independent training provider, with offices in Birmingham and Wakefield. Omega serves apprentices in the West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside regions. The company was established in Birmingham in 1996. The Wakefield office opened in 2010. Four directors, including a chief executive officer and a non-executive director, lead Omega. They are supported by five managers and a senior team leader who coordinates a total of seven delivery teaching and learning assessors working across both sites.
- Omega provides intermediate, advanced and higher-level apprenticeships. The vast majority of apprentices are taking health and social care, with a few taking business administration. In the current year, over 500 apprentices have been completing their framework, with just over 100 still to complete. The majority of the 150 apprentices who have started in the current year are enrolled on standards-based apprenticeships. Since September 2018, Omega has offered short adult courses to 100 learners working in the care sector.

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

- Managers need to ensure that TLAs are better prepared to deliver the new standards-based apprenticeships, by:
  - providing further training on how to develop and track apprentices' skills and behaviours
  - ensuring that TLAs plan learning more effectively so that apprentices make rapid progress in terms of what they know and can do
  - improving TLAs' ability to develop apprentices' English skills in a planned and systematic way.
- Managers need to ensure that apprentices receive impartial advice and guidance to ensure they are on the right courses and that they are clear about their options on completion of the course.
- Governors and leaders need to review the rationale for delivering adult learning. Managers need to put strategies in place for learners to catch up, by ensuring that they have challenging targets that help them achieve on time.
- When appointing new staff, managers need to ensure that they have training experience or a teaching qualification as a requirement for the job of teaching and learning assessor. Leaders should encourage current staff to become qualified teachers and trainers.
- Leaders and managers should train staff to assess learners' additional learning needs appropriately or refer them to specialists from other organisations. They should ensure that they assess learners' additional learning needs at the start of the programme and produce an appropriate support plan. They should make sure that all staff working with learners with support plans have access to them and know how to support learners appropriately.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have addressed some of the recommendations from the previous inspection. In particular they have improved governance and their use of management information. However, they have not ensured that apprentices and learners benefit from consistently good teaching, learning and assessment which enable them to make good progress.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision for the company. They deliver training to businesses in the care sector. Leaders and managers monitor the quality of TLAs' performance closely and provide support when they underperform. As a result of declining learner numbers and performance management actions, a high proportion of TLAs have left the organisation. Managers have replaced them with new TLAs. However, too many of the current TLAs do not have the knowledge and skills to plan effectively for the standards-based apprenticeship programmes.
- Managers have developed appropriate quality improvement processes. These include internal observations of teaching and learning, appraisals, regular supervision and extensive staff development programmes. However, these have not yet secured consistent improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The availability and quality of management information have improved. Managers know which learners are making slow progress. As a result, they target support for those at risk of not achieving in the planned timescale.
- Managers have not managed the introduction of standards-based apprenticeships effectively enough. TLAs and their apprentices focus on the completion of the underlying diploma qualification and units. They do not plan enough for apprentices to develop new behaviours and attitudes. Nor do they extend their existing English and mathematical skills sufficiently.
- Too many apprentices do not understand what they need to demonstrate to achieve the highest grades. A few apprentices find it difficult to ensure they have enough time for off-the-job training.
- Managers did not plan carefully enough for the introduction of short courses for adult learners in care homes. As a result, managers placed learners on courses with insufficient guidance and little ongoing support. Despite more-recent management actions, the progress of too many learners is slow. Although a few learners have moved into apprenticeships, it is too early to gauge the full impact of the programme.
- Leaders, managers and governors are ambitious for all learners. They work hard to provide training and support which fit in with learners' working patterns and employers' needs. Managers inform employers about the progress that apprentices are making.
- Leaders, managers and governors have a broadly accurate understanding of the areas that require improvement. They are aware of the need to improve the progress of current learners.

## The governance of the provider

- The new governing body has been in place for just over a year. Governors meet four times a year. They provide external challenge and support for senior leaders. They are keen advocates of sharing good practice within the sector.
- Governors have the appropriate skills and knowledge. They ask questions about the progress senior leaders are making with improvements to the provision. They request and receive information to improve their understanding.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers and staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Managers recruit staff safely. Leaders and managers assess risks appropriately. They act to prevent harm and report safeguarding concerns. Managers have strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the police. Managers raise awareness of safeguarding issues among staff and learners. They listen to and act on learners' concerns.
- Leaders protect learners from radicalisation and extremism. Managers keep staff and learners informed about current topics on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are confident and competent to encourage open discussion with learners. As a result, apprentices and adult learners demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Too few TLAs have the teaching qualifications or expertise to plan and deliver programmes that develop learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours consistently. Training plans lack detail and too many apprentices and learners are left to work at their own pace. Too many learners fall behind because they do not know how long it should take to complete work, or when they will need to be ready for tests.
- Adult learners on distance learning courses learn theory by reading from the internet or textbooks. They then independently answer questions in an assessment book. However, many learners copy answers directly from textbooks and internet sources. As a result, they do not develop a secure understanding of subjects studied. TLAs have been slow to address this. They have recently created additional opportunities to reinforce and consolidate learners' understanding of theory. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.
- Too many TLAs do not use information about adult learners' prior knowledge and experience in their planning. This leads to a few learners repeating work. As a result, they make slower than expected progress. For example, a group of adult learners were studying all units of a level 2 course in dementia. However, a few of them had significant experience and previous training in caring for people with dementia.
- Managers identify apprentices with additional learning needs early in the programme. However, a few TLAs do not prepare appropriate support plans for them. As a result, too many learners with SEND do not receive the additional learning support they need to

make the progress of which they are capable.

- Newly appointed TLAs do not review learners' wider progress sufficiently. Progress reviews focus on passing qualification units. TLAs do not place enough emphasis on the development of apprentices' skills and behaviours. Too many targets are not specific or challenging enough. Consequently, current apprentices are not making sufficiently rapid progress.
- Most learners want to improve their career prospects and they are keen to take qualifications to gain promotion at work. They are diligent and try hard to complete work to the best of their ability to achieve their qualifications.
- TLAs provide good support for apprentices and learners. They go out of their way to ensure that learners have access to learning opportunities. Many apprentices and learners work shift patterns and benefit from TLAs' flexibility. Learners value having a variety of study options including workshops, online resources, and distance learning materials. They particularly appreciate that TLAs make themselves readily available and are easily contactable when they need help with their work.
- Most TLAs promote equality and diversity effectively. Learners apply what they learn to the workplace effectively. For example, learners studying health and social care explain how they adapt their care to take account of the cultural differences of their service users.
- TLAs are positive and encouraging when they give learners verbal feedback. This improves their confidence. However, many do not provide learners with enough information about what they have done well and how they can improve. As a result, too many learners are not clear about how to extend their knowledge and skills and achieve high grades.
- Many learners make good progress in achieving their functional skills qualifications. They benefit from effective mathematics workshops where they perfect skills needed for the examination. Learners can apply what they have learned to their job role and everyday life. For example, health and social care apprentices can use what they have learned about percentages to assess fluid intake and output of residents with catheters. TLAs are less good at developing English skills. They do not consistently correct learners' work and fail to notice errors. A few learners who have achieved level 2 qualifications in these subjects do not have enough opportunities to extend their skills further.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Apprentices do not have good access to impartial information, advice and guidance. A few learners and apprentices do not receive detailed and useful information, advice and guidance prior to enrolment. As a result, they do not understand the levels of commitment, dedication and time needed to complete their course. A few apprentices are not aware of the possibilities open to them as a result of undertaking the apprenticeship programme.
- A small minority of employers are not involved in apprentices' initial advice and guidance meeting. As a result, they underestimate the levels of commitment needed to support their apprentice.
- At induction, apprentices complete a self-assessment plan. This identifies gaps in

behaviours, skills and knowledge they have at the start of the programme. However, TLAs do not follow this up to assess how apprentices' attitudes and behaviours have developed at work.

- TLAs do not challenge apprentices and adult learners to develop their English skills enough. Apprentices using the e-learning platform to help with their English continue to make the same spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors. As a result, the standard of their written work does not improve. Adult learners do not receive enough developmental feedback to help them improve their English skills.
- Apprentices complete a range of additional training which enhances their prospects. They complete short, specific courses such as in death, dying and bereavement; dementia awareness; administering medication safely; the use of hoists; and catheter training. As a result, they become valued members of the workforce and the community. The training also supports their career plans and future promotions at work.
- Apprentices and learners develop a good appreciation of how to keep themselves and others fit and healthy. This supports their development of personal, social and work-related skills. They discuss topics of the month such as domestic abuse, modern slavery, prostate self-care, keeping personal data safe (the General Data Protection Regulation), and self-harm. The information they receive also supports their own health and well-being.
- Most apprentices and learners have good understanding of the prevention of radicalisation and extremism agenda and they know how to keep themselves safe. Learners understand health, safety and safeguarding and can apply their knowledge to themselves and a wide range of vulnerable service users, such as those with early onset dementia and those receiving end-of-life care. Apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe in the workplace. They are well-informed about safeguarding their service users. They know how to report safeguarding concerns at work and during learning.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- In the current year, standard-based apprentices are not making the progress of which they are capable. Those on frameworks are continuing to complete their programme successfully, although not always within the planned timescale.
- Nearly all adult learners who have completed their short course to date, achieve it. However, nearly half of all learners are not completing their course on time. In the last year, apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieved less well than other learners. In the current year, around a third of apprentices with SEND have already withdrawn.
- Over the last three years female apprentices have achieved better than male apprentices. However, the achievement gap has narrowed only slightly.
- Achievements of ethnic minority apprentices vary considerably. In the last year Asian and Black apprentices achieved significantly better than other groups. White apprentices achieved in line with the average. The few apprentices of 'mixed' ethnicity achieve consistently below other groups.
- Over the last three years older apprentices have achieved better than younger learners.

The few apprentices aged 16 to 18 have had significantly lower achievement rates.

- The proportion of apprentices achieving their framework within agreed timescales has improved steadily over the last three years. A high proportion of health and social care apprentices successfully complete their programme. Apprentices taking level 3 programmes achieve well. However, level 2 apprentices do not achieve as well as those taking level 3 or level 5 programmes.
- In 2017/18, achievement rates for functional skills English and mathematics at Level 2 were high. However, first-time pass rates for English were low and have not improved in the current year.
- Most apprentices who complete the programme remain in employment and often gain promotion, go on to take on additional roles, or take higher qualifications. One apprentice in health and social care is now undertaking a level 5, after completing a level 2 and level 3 with Omega. Over the time, he has progressed from a care support worker to team leader and now is an assistant manager.

## Types of provision

### Adult learning programmes

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have worked with employers to respond to the needs and skills shortages within the care sector. They have recently offered a range of short courses. These include courses on mental health, safe handling of medicines, infection control, dementia, and end-of-life care. However, managers did not plan and monitor the introduction of these courses carefully enough. As a result, too many learners are not completing their course on time.
- The initial advice and guidance for the short adult courses does not allow some learners to make an informed decision on the appropriateness of their programme to their current and future careers. Staff carrying out induction do not always know enough about the courses to support learners. Too frequently, learners are unaware of the commitment required. A small number of learners are taking courses that do not take account of their prior knowledge and experience.
- In a few instances TLAs do not use initial assessment to plan delivery that best meets individual needs and improves their knowledge and skills. TLAs use initial assessment more effectively for learners on discrete mathematics and English provision.
- Staff use their vocational knowledge and skills effectively to make regular links to the care context. This aids learners' understanding. Learners are aware of next-step opportunities. A few learners who have completed the short course have moved on into apprenticeships. Functional skills staff link learning to practical life skills effectively. This promotes learners' interest and aids their understanding.
- Almost all learners behave well and work cooperatively with peers, provider staff and their colleagues in the workplace. Learners demonstrate appropriate attitudes for employment within their chosen work in the care sector. On the rare occasions where behaviour is disruptive or inappropriate, staff challenge learners appropriately.
- TLAs have not been challenging learners to make progress at the rate of which they are



capable. Too often, work set, and progress reviews, are confined to completion of practice papers or workbooks. These are often completed independently, at the learners' own pace. Recently appointed TLAs have started to reverse slow progress on these level 2 courses. However, it is too early to measure the full impact of this change.

- Learners are now starting to apply the knowledge they have gained from their short courses in their workplaces. Employers are positive about learners applying their new knowledge to benefit carers, service users and the business.
- Learners value their access to staff in between sessions. They can contact their TLA when they are having difficulties with their studies. For example, one adult on mathematics functional skills, who was behind due to shift patterns, emailed work queries. Staff supported her effectively and responded promptly to her queries. Learners value this improved support, following recent staff changes.
- Learners are starting to receive more useful feedback that allows them to rectify errors in their vocational work. However, errors in learners' written work are not routinely corrected. As a result, a few learners continue to make the same mistakes. Most learners produce work of the required standard.
- Learners are tolerant and value individual differences, aided by skilful discussions on equality and diversity. They have a good understanding of British values.

## Apprenticeships

## Requires improvement

- Apprentices undertake various initial assessments at the start of their programme. For example, self-assessment of personal skills, such as self-confidence, mathematics and English qualifications. However, TLAs do not use this information to plan an apprentice's programme effectively enough. For example, a business administration apprentice recorded on his self-assessment a low score for self-confidence, but the TLAs did not use this to plan appropriate measures to help him improve.
- TLAs' targets are focused on completing the units of the diploma. They do not include enough detail on how an apprentice can develop workplace skills and behaviours. TLAs do not involve employers sufficiently in setting and reviewing targets for apprentices at the start of and during their programmes.
- Leaders do not manage off-the-job training effectively enough for health and social care apprentices. TLAs record the number of hours that apprentices report completing training activities. However, too many apprentices and employers do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes off-the-job training and therefore this data is not reliable.
- Managers have not prepared their staff sufficiently to ensure that TLAs can provide good support to the minority of apprentices who are on care standards-based programmes. TLAs have insufficient knowledge of the requirements of standards qualifications. They do not have a good understanding of the end-point assessment. As a result, they do not motivate their apprentices to strive to achieve merit or distinction grades.
- The majority of TLAs do not have the depth and breadth of subject knowledge to stretch and challenge the most able apprentices. They rely too heavily on apprentices carrying out their own research using the internet. They do not use questioning effectively to test



and probe apprentices' knowledge.

- A few care apprentices who have been in their job role for some time do not develop significant new practical skills. However, they do develop their knowledge of the context they work in and use this to improve their professional practice.
- Managers have established strong relationships with employers, who value their responsiveness and support. Because of the programme, apprentices gain more self-confidence. Employers note that apprentices are more effective in their roles as they progress in their qualification.
- Employers support their apprentices with good on-the-job training. This develops their skills and enables apprentices to make a more effective contribution in the workplace. Some employers offer apprentices further opportunities to attend internal training courses. Many apprentices complete qualifications which enhance their career prospects within their company.
- TLAs provide good support for apprentices. They meet each month with their apprentices. They are flexible and responsive to apprentices' individual training and assessment needs, particularly caused by the shift patterns they work. They offer apprentices support through a range of media. This includes digital recording of professional discussions, workbooks and electronic learning.
- Apprentices are ambitious and motivated and the vast majority enjoy their training. They value the opportunities that gaining a qualification provides for them to progress in their career. The majority of apprentices on frameworks complete their qualification within their planned timescale. Many take up more advanced roles within their company.
- Apprentices achieve the mathematics, English and information and communication technology qualifications that they need for their programme. However, staff do not offer enough support to apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills beyond the requirement for their programme.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and know how to keep themselves safe. TLAs use a 'topic of the month' to generate relevant discussions with apprenticeships, such as modern slavery, and democracy.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	53729
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	793
Principal/CEO	Maureen Smith
Telephone number	01214 333548
Website	<a href="http://www.omega-training-services.co.uk">www.omega-training-services.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	-	-	111	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	3	74	6	125	0	64		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, 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

William Baidoe-Ansah, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Ward	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jacqui Deane	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Marks	Ofsted Inspector

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