

Health and Safety Training Limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	58219
Name of lead inspector:	Cath Jackson HMI
Visit date(s):	27–28 October 2020
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Interim visit

Context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We intend to return to routine inspection in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

Information about the provider

Health and Safety Training Limited (HST Ltd) is a private company founded in 2003. It provides training in plant and machinery operations and workplace safety for the construction, transport and logistics industries. Based in North Tyneside, the company operates from two training sites and on employers' premises throughout the north of England. HST Ltd has three government-funded contracts to provide training for unemployed people, who take short accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. Approximately 60 per cent of company income comes from government-funded training, with the remainder from privately funded activity.

What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?

Leaders placed staff on furlough and put training courses on hold during the period when providers were only open to some learners due to COVID-19 restrictions. Staff and learners then returned on a phased basis to allow learning to re-start safely. Leaders told us that the number of learners attending each week is now back to pre-COVID-19 restriction levels.

Managers consider that they have managed any breaks in learning to minimise any negative impact on learners or the curriculum. After returning, managers needed to pause some training courses because a small number of instructors had to self-isolate. As soon as staff returned, learners joined the next available group to complete their training.

Leaders tell us that local Jobcentre Plus centres are referring fewer unemployed learners for training compared with the pre-pandemic period. Managers have

responded by marketing the training that they offer more widely. They now find that greater numbers of adults contact them directly about training.

Leaders recognise that fewer permanent employment opportunities are readily available to learners once they complete training. Prior to the pandemic period, managers could rely on their knowledge of the sector to signpost learners to employment. Managers now work more widely with recruitment agencies to help learners find temporary or permanent roles where they can put their new skills into practice.

Senior leaders described how they have adapted to meet changing circumstances in the local and regional job market. They are working with two devolved authorities in the region to develop the curriculum in logistics by offering a large goods vehicle driving course for unemployed adults.

Stakeholders are positive about the work that HST Ltd is doing to equip unemployed adults with the practical skills they need for employment in logistics and construction. They consider that HST Ltd provides a realistic training environment and that staff provide learners with the advice and guidance that they need to understand local employment contexts.

What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?

Leaders and managers consider that the curriculum that they offer has not been adversely affected by the pandemic. They tell us that reducing class sizes to ensure social distancing has meant that learners benefit from more individual support.

Instructors described how they identify and address any gaps in learners' knowledge and skills. Learners review their previous work experience and highlight their current skills training needs. They identify their existing knowledge during induction so that instructors can use this as a starting point. During practical activities, instructors check learners' progress and assess their skills. Learners told us that face-to-face learning in small groups enables instructors to explain as they go along and correct any misunderstanding.

Staff work with other organisations to identify any additional needs that learners may have, and to provide support. Instructors support learners who have additional needs, such as dyslexia, by allowing additional time for assessments or by reading questions and recording their answers. Staff refer learners to colleges or adult education providers in their locality for support with English or mathematics.

Leaders and managers do not currently use online learning for the courses that they provide. All learners follow short practical courses in construction or plant machinery operation. Managers and instructors recognise the potential benefits of digital

learning for some theoretical aspects of courses, particularly when face-to-face learning is not possible.

Instructors are receiving training in mental health first aid, to promote positive mental health throughout the organisation. Managers tell us that operating heavy machinery requires a degree of concentration and focus that can be adversely affected by stress. They consider that positive mental health has benefits for the curriculum and for the safety of staff and learners.

Leaders and managers provide impartial careers guidance and advice to learners. Careers guidance staff use recent labour market information to support learners to develop their job application skills.

How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?

Leaders carried out COVID-19-related risk assessments at the start of the pandemic to prepare for a safe return following COVID-19 restrictions. They provided staff and learners with industry-standard information about how to keep safe during the pandemic.

Learners and staff understand the arrangements made by the provider to keep themselves safe. They wear face masks in communal areas, use sanitising stations and disinfect equipment frequently. During induction, learners receive information about mental health, radicalisation and extremism to raise their awareness of wider potential threats in everyday life.

Learners said that they know how to keep themselves safe, including online, and know whom to contact if they have a safeguarding concern. Learners do not cover online safety during training as they do not use online learning activities. Managers recognise that if they make greater use of digital forms of learning in future, they will need to enhance online safety training with learners.

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