

# Elmhouse Training

Interim visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1236915

**Name of lead inspector:** Joanna Walters, HMI

**Visit date(s):** 8 to 9 October 2020

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 56A Cherry Close  
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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

Elmhouse Training is a small, private training provider based in Tulse Hill, in the London Borough of Lambeth. All training currently takes place online. The provider offers level 3 vocational programmes to adults who are training in early years, business, and health and social care. They offer level 2 and 3 teaching assistant programmes. The provider recruits learners throughout the year. Learners fund their study via the advanced learner loans scheme. At the time of the visit, there were approximately 40 learners.

### **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 and managers report that they made significant adjustments to the delivery model for all programmes in March 2020. Trainers now teach all subjects using online video software. Leaders and managers believe this way of teaching meets learners' needs. They report that learners continue to make good progress. Child care trainers explain how learners still benefit from activities such as role play and small group activities during online lessons.

Leaders and managers have confidence in their decision to move the curriculum online because they believe it enables them to have a more sustainable future. As a result of this move, leaders and managers recruit new learners from further afield, since they can now access the entire curriculum without the need to travel.

Leaders and managers involved employers in discussions about moving the training online prior to doing so. Employers appreciated being involved in these discussions and requested a few changes, such as moving lessons from the daytime to evening. This change allows learners who are keyworkers to go to work and study in the evening. Leaders and managers report that attendance is now high as a result.

Leaders, managers and employers report that the biggest challenge is learners' ability to use computers and other technologies. Leaders and managers have produced guidance videos and documents for learners on how to use the relevant computer programs. At the start of their course, trainers make sure that learners are able to use the technology they need to learn. Trainers meet with learners on a one-to-one basis to provide technology support and review individual learner's competencies. Trainers report that they see a positive difference in learners' abilities and confidence.

### **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?**

Since the move to online teaching in March 2020, assessors use activities such as quizzes, videos, simulation and case studies to enable learners to understand concepts and ideas related to their industry of work. Learners told inspectors that they prefer the online approach. They feel the classroom experience has not been different to the teaching they received face-to-face.

Leaders and managers have processes in place to monitor the progress of learners. Managers carry out lesson observations, sample learners' work and collect feedback from learners through lesson evaluations. Leaders believe that learners make progress as a result of the methods their trainers use, and the additional support they provide to learners.

Trainers use assessment methods, including professional discussions and employer feedback, to identify any gaps in learners' knowledge and skills. They say learners are supported through one-to-one tutorials to bridge those gaps.

Trainers provide one-to-one support to vulnerable learners to ensure their well-being. Staff identify and refer learners who are struggling with the current COVID-19 restrictions to the most appropriate support services. For example, learners are directed by staff to support services such as financial advice and counselling services.

Trainers provide careers advice and guidance to learners during their programme of study. This includes sharing job opportunities on a portal accessed by learners, one-to-one activities to prepare learners for job application, and mock interviews. Staff support learners with completing university applications and interviews, for those who want to progress to higher education.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place resources and training on the safety of staff and learners. They have revised the safeguarding policy and training to include information on COVID-19 safety measures. Learners receive information from trainers on COVID-19 during their one-to-one sessions.

Learners receive safety information from trainers at the beginning of, and throughout, their programme in one-to-one sessions. This includes guidance on how to search for information safely so that learners are not exposed to inappropriate sites. Learners are made aware of not giving out personal information online and how to stay safe at work. Learners told inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe when working online and in the workplace.

Learners feel that trainers provide them with the well-being support that they require. They know they can contact their assessor or the safeguarding lead at any time with any concerns they may have.

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