

KEITS training services limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	52838
Name of lead inspector:	Gerard McGrath, HMI
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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 in this period, including those 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

KEITS training services limited (KEITS) is an independent learning provider based in Elstree, Hertfordshire. KEITS started in 1997 as an equine specialist provider. It has expanded its curriculum offer since then, maintaining a land-based specialism.

KEITS offers apprenticeships as its core business, with 455 apprentices enrolled on a combination of framework and standards-based apprenticeships.

KEITS has 236 adult learners on skills for employment and vocational training. It also offers traineeships for unemployed young people through a subcontractor partner, SSG. This programme is expected to restart in the current academic term.

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 have made the safety of learners, staff and stakeholders the aim of their plans and actions throughout the pandemic. They say that they have ensured minimal disruption to the learning programmes.

Senior leaders had taken the strategic decision to introduce distance, and online, learning for administration, customer service and management courses prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the changing circumstances, they introduced additional online systems and created resources to provide all courses remotely.

Senior managers report that they worked with staff, sub-contractors and employers to review the curriculum. They agreed to change the order of subjects taught and designed innovative ways to support the assessment of learners' practical skills.

Senior managers reviewed staff roles to take account of new ways of working and the need to contact learners and apprentices more frequently. Managers report improved productivity by staff. Staff and assessors report that they have an improved work-life balance.

Senior leaders knew that staff were able to accommodate and adapt to new ways of working. Managers report that assessors and apprentices now use a much wider variety of assessment methods, using technological approaches such as live streaming.

Leaders, managers and staff recognise the delays to final examinations requiring practical assessments. They have worked with awarding organisations to agree new forms of assessment to ensure that learners and apprentices will achieve.

Senior managers have recently supported staff to restart essential face-to-face learning with apprentices and adult learners, within current government guidelines. They recognise the challenge of finding work placements for trainees and are working with their subcontractor to develop virtual work experience opportunities.

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 say they have ensured that teams work together closely while working from home to implement the changes to the curriculum. Leaders have invested in additional information and communications technology equipment to enable closer working. They have used digital communication to keep learners, apprentices and employers informed of changes to training programmes.

Managers have carried out observations of learning sessions to review how assessors and tutors are implementing online learning. Senior managers say that they have collected the views of staff, apprentices and learners and have used this to make further improvements.

Apprentices are happy with the individually planned support from assessors. They report that assessors relate the current government restrictions arising from the pandemic to their work practice, wider British values and their civic responsibilities effectively.

Leaders identify that digital poverty for apprentices and learners remains an area of concern. Leaders report they are still working to ensure that the small minority of learners and apprentices who have limited access to technology can benefit from online learning.

Staff say that managers have provided encouragement, training and help, so that they have become increasingly confident in providing remote learning. Staff now give video feedback to learners and apprentices on their assessments. They are confident

to manage teaching through live streaming and to use information and communication technology creatively. For example, they now can embed video and images into word documents.

Assessors continue to provide individual career advice, support and guidance to all apprentices during reviews.

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

Senior leaders are confident that they meet their requirements to safeguard learners.

Employers and staff say that senior managers kept them well informed of workplace-related risks and associated precautions. Assessors, staff, learners and apprentices have completed relevant training about e-safety and their safeguarding responsibilities.

Learners and apprentices say they are confident in how to use social media safely for work and in their private lives. They are secure in their understanding of what to do to keep themselves safe when online and in their work places.

Senior leaders and staff have identified those learners and apprentices who are most vulnerable, for example those with heightened anxiety due to social isolation or furlough. Staff have increased their monitoring and intervened to offer help and reassurance.

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