

LD Training Services Limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	1237124
Name of lead inspector:	Saher Nijabat 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 students and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and disabilities. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

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

Information about the provider

LD Training Services Limited (LDT) is an independent training provider based in Edgware, Greater London. The company offers adult learning programmes at levels 2 and 3 in business administration, health and social care, childcare and hospitality. It also provides apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 5 in health and social care, childcare and customer services. LDT operates from centres in London, Birmingham and Nottingham. Around 254 adult learners are currently in learning, including 33 apprentices.

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 took steps to move the entire curriculum online at the outset of the pandemic. They provided information technology systems, tools and equipment for staff and learners to continue teaching and learning online. Leaders remove any barriers to these changes through regular communication with their staff, learners and employers. Teachers received training on the use of online teaching technology. Leaders report that their decision to move the curriculum online has resulted in a growth in learner numbers.

Leaders continue to offer the same programmes as they did prior to the pandemic. They work closely with the awarding bodies and employers to adapt the sequence and assessment of their courses. For example, staff have brought forward teaching of knowledge-based units, such as on infection control, for apprentices who are working in care homes. They have included an enhanced wellness course on the effects of COVID-19. Learners, including key workers, have the option to attend early morning, evening or weekend sessions. Employers and learners report that the curriculum meets their needs.

Staff identify learners who are vulnerable due to changes in their personal circumstances. They signpost learners to information and support sources, such as an online counselling service. Learners with limited access to technology can book appointments to use computers at all of LDT's centres for completing their work. Managers report that these facilities and online resources are well used.

Staff report that leaders have been very supportive throughout the pandemic. Staff were able to work due to the technology provided, even when a couple were stuck abroad for months due to restrictions in those countries. Leaders are readily available to their staff, who can ask for impromptu meetings anytime. Staff feel informed, consulted and looked after.

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 report that the frequency of feedback to teachers and assessors has increased because they can visit online lessons more easily. They say that teaching staff improve their practice through individual feedback from managers on their teaching skills and techniques. For example, managers advise teachers on strategies to manage group discussions via video conferencing. Teachers and assessors are enthusiastic about using technology for teaching. They use different features such as file sharing, screen sharing and group activities in online breakout rooms to keep their learners engaged.

Teachers and assessors regularly check learners' understanding and revisit topics to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills. They put on extra support sessions for learners who have fallen behind due to pressures of work. For example, learners who struggle with fractions or spellings attend additional English or mathematics sessions.

Learners who miss lessons can attend a repeated session and receive help from a personal tutor. Staff report that online attendance is the same as before the restrictions when providers closed. Managers use online systems to track learners' progress. Staff continue to check and mark learners' course work and assignments online. Managers report that as a result, the standard of learners' work is maintained.

Staff continue to provide careers advice and guidance to learners throughout the duration of the course. Speakers from industry and further and higher education visit lessons to talk about opportunities for learners' next steps.

Leaders recognise the challenge of apprentices achieving final assessments, due to continued uncertainty around awarding body requirements and workplace closures. Teachers and assessors use this time to prepare apprentices through online professional discussions and tests. They have developed their learners' confidence through practising examination skills for qualifications in English and mathematics. Leaders report that the recent results for these qualifications were good.

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

Leaders have taken steps to secure their campuses against COVID-19. Learners use an app on their mobile phones to check if they are safe to attend the campuses. Teachers follow safety measures during workplace visits.

Learners receive guidance on how to stay safe online at the start of their programme. They know who to contact if they have a concern. Staff educate learners continually of the risks they may face, including from online grooming and radicalisation. They explain rules for safe online learning at the start of lessons.

Leaders work closely with external stakeholders, such as regional 'Prevent' coordinators, to keep updated on emerging local risks. They have recruited more staff to support learners with their anxieties, such as increased workloads and furlough situations. Staff check if learners are safe through weekly phone calls to those who they have concerns for.

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