

Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	55074
Name of lead inspector:	Saher Nijabat Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Not for profit organisation
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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.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the provider.

Information about the provider

Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust Limited (Training Trust) is a small, not-for-profit organisation based in Ilford, in the London Borough of Redbridge. Training Trust offers both framework and standards-based apprenticeships to a range of employers. They work with two subcontractors. Around 203 adult and 16- to 18-year-old apprentices are currently enrolled on programmes, primarily at levels 2 and 3 within the construction, business administration, health and social care and engineering sectors.

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?

In the first weeks of national restrictions, leaders and managers worked with staff and stakeholders to plan how best to support their apprentices. Leaders recognise that working from home has not been easy for staff and learners. They provided technical and emotional support to both groups through regular contact. As a result, they have retained staff and learners.

Leaders report that the pandemic has had a significant impact on their working practices. Most lessons now take place at the training centres, as preferred by most employers, especially those in construction. However, leaders still plan to explore the use of technology to develop online learning. For example, in childcare, managers plan to use video recording and live streaming for teaching. They continue to adapt their teaching and

communicate with awarding bodies and employers to overcome barriers such as access to workplaces for assessments. Staff benefit from training provided by professional bodies, so that they are informed about current developments.

Leaders report that the number of learners starting courses in sectors such as construction are low. However, the number of learners starting courses in childcare has increased, despite the difficulty of finding employment in this sector due to the pandemic. Leaders remain forward looking and plan to offer pre-apprenticeship programmes, and to offer a business administration course.

Stakeholders, including sub-contractors, speak positively about their relationship with the liaison officers, who continue to keep them informed of the changes in teaching arrangements. Staff provide regular updates to employers on their apprentices' progress through emails and phone calls. The provider and its delivery partners remained open throughout summer, so that staff could prepare apprentices for examinations and final assessments. As a result, many apprentices took their examinations and final assessments in the recent months and have now completed.

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?

Teachers have changed the way they teach to allow apprentices to make progress. For example, in construction, teachers make use of video calls to carry out assessments of practical work on construction sites. In electrical installation, learners email photographs of their mathematical calculations as part of their assessment. Teachers give written feedback via email. Off-the-job training is changed to one week a month instead of one day a week. As a result, apprentices get more time between sessions to build knowledge and practical skills through hands-on practice.

Staff report that apprentices' attendance and progress remain the same as before the pandemic due to regular tracking and monitoring. Leaders and managers check apprentices' work and their progress to evaluate the quality of teaching. Progress reviews are more frequent now and take place once a month instead of once every two months. Employers release apprentices to attend catch-up sessions if they fall behind in their learning.

Most learners appreciated the time when they were learning from home. Some enjoyed having more time with family, whereas others say they were glad that they had lessons they could get on with. For example, in carpentry and joinery, learners watched tutorials on making cutting lists from design drawings to cut timber in precise sizes. Learners apply this knowledge now that they are back in work to make tables, chairs and cabinets. Some learners have missed the social contact and learning from others through discussion.

At the end of their apprenticeship, learners receive a final careers advice and guidance session from their liaison officer. Apprentices talk through their career options and their ambitions. Staff provide information about vacancies with local businesses to learners.

Staff gave examples of construction apprentices who moved into permanent jobs and some started their own business at the end of their apprenticeship.

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

Most apprentices now attend lessons at Training Trust and its subcontractors, and follow the rules implemented to stay safe. For example, they use face masks and follow social distancing rules. Teachers provide information on how to travel safely to the centre for those worried about using public transport. Apprentices carry cards with contact details of the safeguarding team and other support groups.

Apprentices appreciate the support they receive from their liaison officers who are trained mental health first aiders. Liaison officers provide one-to-one support to learners struggling with anxieties and mental health issues. Staff work with young apprentices' parents and employers to address concerns around well-being and job security.

Teachers discuss how to identify online scams and phishing, and advise learners on cyber bullying. Although not all learners inspectors spoke with can recall any specific information given to them about the risks of online learning, they are aware of how to stay safe online.

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