

GTG Training Limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	1278597
Name of lead inspector:	Bev Ramsell, Her Majesty's Inspector
Visit dates:	10 to 11 December 2020
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Bearing Drive Wolverhampton WV11 3SZ

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 those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

GTG Training Limited (GTG) is an independent training provider based in Wolverhampton, Glasgow and Edinburgh. GTG was awarded funding to train apprentices in 2017. GTG teaches 223 apprenticeships at level 2 and level 3, in the automotive and logistics sectors. Most of the apprentices are aged 16 to 18, and 188 apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeships. A few apprentices remain on frameworks-based provision.

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?

Senior leaders explained that most apprentices and staff were furloughed at the start of the pandemic. They told inspectors how they supported apprentices through a variety of methods including texts, telephone calls and emails. At the end of each day, they held a round-up meeting to log the calls made and the conversations held. Additional support was then given to those in need.

Leaders, managers and stakeholders identified that the biggest impact to apprentices' progress was the lack of practical skills activity during furlough. As a result, they explained how they looked at which apprenticeship group needed to return to face-to-face practical teaching first. On returning to the centre, they reviewed the gaps in apprentices' skills, met with employers to identify practical skills goals, and changed the curriculum to meet the apprentices' needs. Stakeholders told inspectors how they worked with GTG to support apprentices in the workplace to meet their targets and make progress.

Leaders told inspectors how they started to use their sites in Scotland for teaching.

They explained the approach was to reduce the numbers in Wolverhampton workshops and give apprentices additional practical activity time. They discussed how they looked at the home addresses of apprentices and identified those who were within a reasonable travelling distance to Scottish sites. For example, apprentices who lived in Newcastle-upon-Tyne would have a similar travel time if they travelled to Glasgow or Wolverhampton.

Tutors identified the changes to advice and guidance. They explained that the focus is currently supporting apprentices through COVID-19 and advising them on a simple, healthy lifestyle. They told inspectors how they helped apprentices to have a regular routine and structure to their day while on furlough. They stated that this structure supported the apprentices to return to work more easily.

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 explained how they continued to receive regular information on learners' progress, through their existing quality assurance processes. They stated how using the combination of a virtual learning environment and an e-portfolio platform allowed them to have a complete understanding of the apprentices' progress, in both knowledge and competence. They believe this made the monitoring of apprentices' development more efficient.

Leaders discussed the use of existing technologies, initially to move to an apprentice-centred online learning approach including using an existing e-portfolio system and online knowledge modules. They further developed this method into instructor-led online teaching. Development coaches explained the use of quizzes and professional discussions with apprentices, to enable them to understand any gaps in learning. They reported that they put support in place where needed.

Leaders explained how they used the flexibilities offered by the awarding body – with remote invigilation – to make sure apprentices were able to achieve their Functional Skills qualification. As a result, apprentices were able to continue through their programmes of learning and complete their apprenticeships.

Leaders stated how they worked closely with employers to make sure apprentices had access to learning technology and were able to learn online. Employers supported apprentices by providing laptops and a dedicated space in the workplace to learn. Leaders also discussed their intentions to retain a blended learning approach post-COVID-19. However, they recognise the need to develop further the online learning approach.

Leaders and tutors reported the motivation apprentices have shown throughout the pandemic, to focus on their learning. They report that engagement has been high, and attendance, since moving to a blended learning approach, is improved. They

also told inspectors how development coaches intervene quickly to support apprentices where attendance or engagement is an issue.

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

Leaders indicated how they support learners with their health and well-being by discussing topics such as staying active and keeping safe online. They told inspectors how they supported the most vulnerable learners with additional contact, maintained a 'watch list' of these learners, and offered additional support.

Leaders discussed how they kept up to date with local and national guidance, relevant to both the provider and the locations of their learners. They explained the challenges of teaching across national boundaries when the devolved administrations took differing steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Learners stated that they felt safe returning to the training centre. They explained the additional procedures that are in place such as a one-way system, increased cleaning, and a reduction in the number of learners on site. They reported how the online training they had completed prior to returning had made them aware of the measures that were in place at the centre.

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