

# Enabling Development Opportunities Limited

Interim visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1236712

**Name of lead inspector:** Sharon Dowling, Her Majesty's Inspector

**Visit date(s):** 14 to 15 December 2020

**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 and apprentices in this period, including learners 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

Enabling Development Opportunities Ltd is an independent learning provider based in the West Midlands. At the time of the visit, there were 117 learners following advanced learner loan-funded programmes, with a further 89 learners pending enrolment following a recent recruitment activity.

The provider offers a range of courses, including adult social care, beauty therapy, personal training, and education and training, with the largest of these courses being nail technology. Most learners were studying level 3 diploma courses.

### **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 explained the modifications they made to the curriculum, moving the teaching online and, where necessary, delaying some practical assessments until they could restart face-to-face teaching. They explained that, where learners have achieved their qualification under relaxed awarding-body criteria, they are teaching confidence-building sessions at the training centre, to support the learners in using their skills in the workplace.

Leaders outlined new provision that had been introduced in response to the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions, such as in level 4 teaching qualifications aimed at beauty therapy and sport practitioners. For these practitioners, the national lockdown has had a significant impact on their ability to work. The aim of the new provision is to develop their

skills to enable them to apply for teaching and training jobs.

Leaders did not identify any loss of skills since the change in delivery. Instead, they had seen an improvement in areas such as English and mathematics, which they attribute to learners having more flexible time to study.

Leaders explained that – following feedback from teachers and learners – they plan to adopt a blended learning approach moving forward, increasing the classroom contact when this is possible, while maintaining online delivery for knowledge aspects of courses. They also plan to continue to work remotely as a management team.

They stated that they are working hard to ensure staff feel supported both emotionally – with twice-weekly meetings and daily catch-ups – and with equipment to enable them to teach from home.

Employer stakeholders explained the move to online learning and said that they and their staff found the flexibility enabled learners to continue to develop new skills and – where appropriate – move on to additional training. They outlined a close working relationship. This consisted of clear communication regarding the changes to teaching, learners' progress and the identification of skills gaps. Both parties were able to target learners with additional support and training, where this was needed.

### **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 say they routinely monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by checking video recordings and completing classroom observations. They discuss learners' progress with teachers during profile and standardisation meetings, identifying at-risk learners and agreeing support needed.

Managers and teachers say that they survey learners' views after each lesson to check what they have learned and how the session could be improved to make it more interesting or productive.

At the start of the pandemic, learners received face-to-face teaching. During the initial period of restrictions, teachers had to adapt quickly and were supported by leaders to use online classrooms and videoconferencing to teach their lessons. They were able to translate most of the teaching online, including presentations, group activities, questions, quizzes, and assignments. Some learners found it difficult to learn online due to work commitments and fear of using online tools. They were supported by teachers to access learning and grow in confidence.

Teachers discussed how they use information about learners' starting points to plan learning, so that learners have the appropriate support to understand and consolidate their knowledge. Teachers use 'stretch' exercises and tests to check and

recap on knowledge, research tasks and activities, and use mnemonics to help learners understand processes such as foot-health hygiene. Teachers use video assessments to help learners demonstrate their understanding and generate evidence for their course.

Teachers recognise that online practical training has restricted learners' development of their practical skills. This is due to a lack of clients for them to practise their skills on in areas such as facials and massage treatments.

Managers and teachers say that the move to remote teaching has improved attendance at sessions by removing the need for travel. However, they have seen a reduction in attendance at on-site practical sessions due to the varying impacts of COVID-19.

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

Leaders say they recognised and acted quickly to mitigate the risks from COVID-19. When in the training centre, learners received training to help them keep safe and were clear about the expectations in personal hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) and working with clients in their 'bubble'.

Leaders explained that they had identified an additional deputy designated safeguarding lead to support learners. They also included time in all meetings to discuss staff and learners' well-being.

Teachers stated they reinforced learners' understanding of safeguarding during induction and when using social media. This included implementing group rules such as keeping cameras on during teaching sessions and being respectful to each other. Further training included the safe use of Wi-Fi connections and learners' knowledge of using remote learning tools safely – including passwords, 'phishing', 'spam' and the potential threats from radicalisation and extremism.

Learners know about the threats posed from radical and extremist groups in the community and online and know who to contact if concerned about their well-being.

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