

London Professional College Ltd

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	1247994
Name of lead inspector:	Gerard McGrath, Her Majesty's Inspector
Visit dates:	19 to 20 November 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 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

London Professional College Limited (LPC) was formed in 2007. LPC has provided a range of different training programmes for learners, focusing predominantly on unemployed learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. LPC was awarded its own direct funding contract in 2016 and currently has 99 learners on level 3 programmes. All learners access learning through adult learning loans. Almost all study business administration, with a minority of learners studying health and social care. Most learners at LPC speak English as an additional language.

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 safe, uninterrupted provision of the curriculum the focus of their actions throughout the pandemic. Senior leaders report that, as LPC was already moving towards online learning, the transition has been straight forward. Learning continued throughout the government restrictions. Senior managers introduced additional learning resources through their Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for use by both staff and learners.

Managers ensured that teachers were trained on the features of online platforms, including the use of virtual meetings, chat rooms and video recordings of lessons. Teachers and learners report that they are becoming more confident in working and learning online.

Senior managers worked with staff to review the curriculum. They monitored the progress made by learners to ensure that it met their needs. Senior leaders

recognise the importance of wider digital skills for life and work, especially during periods of isolation. To ensure that the curriculum continues to support the development of such skills, senior managers report that they are investigating how they might broaden the curriculum further, to include digital marketing qualifications and level 4 apprenticeships.

Senior managers reviewed staff roles to take account of new ways of working. This included working from home and the need to contact learners more frequently to support them to develop new methods of learning. Senior managers report that staff are working in more environmentally friendly ways with significant reductions in business costs.

Managers ensured that staff continued to provide help to the large number of learners for whom English is an additional language. For example, by providing resources through the VLE, which support learners to develop their English skills, and by providing extra support sessions, where required.

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 have ensured that teams work together very closely to plan and provide learning. Leaders have invested in information and technology systems that enable staff to work from home. Leaders, managers and staff use digital communication to keep learners informed of curriculum changes.

Teachers report that the flexibility for learners to access the learning at any time, and twilight tutorial support sessions, have increased attendance rates. Teachers use an online tracking system, as well as quiz and test scores, to check learners' recollection of key knowledge. They use the results of these activities to identify and act to remedy any gaps in individual's learning.

Teachers report that they have increased their focus on learners' well-being and mindfulness. All staff have completed training on e-safety, mental health and well-being, and health and safety. They offer advice on healthy eating and the risks arising from social isolation, and signpost to current government guidelines and support. Teachers have increased the frequency of their contact with learners who experience high levels of anxiety, to provide them with guidance and reassurance. Where required, managers have referred learners to a charitable organisation that offers a befriending service.

Leaders and managers have carried out observations of learning sessions to review how teachers are implementing online learning. They provided feedback to staff on how to improve. Senior managers report that the proportion of learners who respond to regular surveys has increased significantly. They use this feedback to agree staff training and development plans.

Teachers have maintained frequent contact with learners at risk of redundancy, on furlough or seeking work, to provide individual career advice and guidance. They help learners to revise their CV's and guide learners towards existing job vacancies.

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

Managers recognised that most learners are adults with English as an additional language. Many learners live very far from their families and without long-standing relationships with neighbours or established local friendship groups. Learners say teachers contact them frequently to monitor their well-being. Senior leaders report that they have worked with external agencies to provide prompt support for any learners that they identify as being at significant risk of social isolation.

Learners and teachers have completed relevant training about e-safety and safeguarding responsibilities. They can identify the senior manager with responsibility for safeguarding and they report that they are confident in their understanding of what to do to keep themselves safe when online.

Learners and teachers are confident in their knowledge of how to get advice and guidance, if the need arises.

Managers ensure that safeguarding, as well as learners' understanding of the potential risks associated with online learning, are included in the formal sampling of online training sessions.

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