

# Inspection of Encompass Consultancy

Inspection dates:

21–24 September 2021

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Adult learning programmes

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

**Information about this provider**

Encompass Consultancy (Encompass) is an independent learning provider based near Hull. Encompass specialises in teaching apprenticeship standards relating to management and commercial procurement and supply. At the time of the inspection, there were 322 apprentices. Of these, 108 were enrolled on the level 3 standard for team leader, 100 on the level 4 standard for commercial procurement and supply, and 66 on the level 5 standard for operations and departmental manager. The remainder were enrolled on standards in accounting at levels 2, 3 and 4, business administration at level 3, customer service at level 3, procurement and supply at level 3, and learning and development consultant business partner at level 5. In addition, 76 adult learners were studying for qualifications funded through advanced learner loans. Of these, 46 were following programmes at level 3 to equip them to work in the beauty industry, including beauty therapy, nail technology and make-up artistry. The remainder were following accountancy programmes at levels 3 and 4. Encompass works with one subcontractor to provide examinations support for a small number of apprentices on the level 4 standard for commercial procurement and supply.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Apprentices and adult learners value the knowledge they gain and the skills that they develop through their learning. They show dedication to their apprenticeships and learning programmes, and produce work to a high standard.

Apprentices gain confidence in their ability to lead others in their roles in team leadership, commercial procurement, and management. They are well motivated to progress further in their careers because of their training. For example, level 3 team leader apprentices in the fire service aim for promotion from crew manager to watch manager on completion of their apprenticeship. Apprentices completing the level 4 commercial procurement and supply standard quickly move into lead buyer roles.

Adult learners who aspire to work in the beauty industry benefit from realistic and well-resourced learning environments that replicate those of commercial salons. Learners carefully practise correct techniques, including the use of personal protective equipment, when carrying out treatments. As a result, they develop confidence in conducting treatments, and do so in a safe and professional manner.

Adult learners studying accountancy gain insights from knowledgeable tutors on matters such as identifying fraud, different taxation rules and industry breaches. This prepares them well for the challenges they may face in their chosen career.

Apprentices and adult learners feel safe and know how to stay safe both in the workplace and in wider society. They show positive and respectful attitudes towards their peers, tutors, colleagues and clients.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers collaborate closely with employers to devise an ambitious curriculum that successfully develops apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices in the manufacturing industry develop their understanding of customer requirements and sustainability issues through working on projects to develop recyclable container caps. Apprentices understand how they can have a positive impact on their employers' sustainability targets and contribute to economic growth.

Managers and tutors devise courses that prepare adult learners well for employment or self-employment. The curriculum for beauty therapy meets the needs of adults who wish to study beauty therapy more generally or specialise in a specific area such as nail technician or make-up artist. Tutors teach adult learners about managing different aspects of self-employment, such as taxation, marketing and sustainability. As a result, adult learners who aspire to opening their own nail studio or bridal make-up business gain valuable insights into skills they need to establish their own businesses.

Leaders and managers recruit well-qualified and experienced staff for the adult learning and apprenticeship programmes that they deliver. Managers and tutors on beauty programmes work within the beauty industry and most have their own business. Tutors keep their subject expertise current and use their vocational experience and technical knowledge well to challenge apprentices and adult learners to reflect on their learning.

Tutors support apprentices and adult learners well to develop their English and mathematical skills. For example, adult learners benefit from glossaries of complex or technical words and assignment guides that help them to produce a good standard of written work.

Tutors support apprentices with additional needs well. They provide subtitled video resources for apprentices with hearing impairments that help them to learn effectively. Apprentices with dyslexia benefit from individualised support and specialist resources that ensure they can engage fully with their learning. Consequently, apprentices with additional needs make good progress and perform effectively in their work roles.

Adult learners receive appropriate advice and guidance that inform them about the vocational options open to them. Beauty therapy tutors reinforce employability throughout the course, and learning environments are designed and furnished to inspire and motivate learners through establishing realistic work environments. In a small number of instances, tutors do not highlight sufficiently issues of professional dress or practice, which could limit adult learners' employment prospects in the beauty industry.

Tutors carefully sequence the curriculum to allow apprentices and adult learners to build on previous knowledge and skills. Tutors focus initially on developing level 3 team leader apprentices' communication and presentation skills so that apprentices can then apply their skills to teamwork and problem-solving tasks. This prepares apprentices well for their roles in the workplace and their end-point assessment. Tutors for beauty therapy ensure that adult learners know about underlying anatomical and physiological structures so that learners can recall this knowledge when conducting lymphatic drainage massage.

In a few cases, tutors do not use the results of assessments or the outcomes of reviews to identify and set sufficiently challenging targets for apprentices and learners. As a result, a few adult learners and apprentices do not know what they need to do to improve beyond the expectations of their qualification.

Senior leaders maintain clear oversight of all parts of the provider's work. Leaders have established strong links with provider representative bodies to ensure that staff keep fully up to date with changes in the sector that affect their activity. Leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities for governance and benefit from working with an external management consultant who is also a non-executive director for other companies.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff, apprentices and adult learners benefit from safe learning environments. Apprentices and adult learners demonstrate safe working practices in workplaces and training salons, and when learning online.

Leaders and managers carry out appropriate background checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with adult learners and apprentices. The designated safeguarding officers are appropriately trained for their role.

Leaders and managers are well informed by updates and communication about safeguarding from external networks. Staff use a calendar of 'hot topics' to promote safety and well-being in their discussions with apprentices and adult learners.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Ensure that tutors consistently use the outcomes of assessments and reviews of progress to set challenging targets so that all apprentices and adult learners understand what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Ensure that tutors consistently reinforce high standards of professional practice and personal presentation with adult learners who aspire to work in the beauty industry.

## Provider details

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<b>CEO</b>	Lisa Blakey
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7–10 August 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Chamber Business Training

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

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