

Inspection of Qualitrain Limited

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

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Qualitrain is an independent learning provider with offices in Alfreton and Derby. At the time of the inspection, it provided training to just over 400 apprentices working for employers throughout England. Most apprentices study subjects related to lean manufacturing and continuous improvement techniques, with particularly large numbers of level 2 lean manufacturing operatives, level 3 improvement technicians and level 4 improvement practitioners. Qualitrain also works with a subcontractor to train a substantial number of level 2 adult care workers and level 3 lead adult care workers.

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

The majority of apprentices are enthusiastic and well motivated. They attend regularly, contribute to activities, take notes and join in discussions. They enjoy their studies and almost all are satisfied with the standard of training that they receive. However, a small number of level 3 team leaders, whose lessons are entirely online, are less happy with their experiences and find it difficult to participate fully.

Apprentices develop a good range of skills, which helps them to become more effective employees. Managers work well with employers to ensure that apprentices learn the specific things that they need to know for their jobs. As a result, almost all apprentices remain in employment on successful completion of their courses. A small number gain promotion or take on additional responsibility because of the skills and knowledge that they have gained.

Apprentices feel safe, both during their classroom activities and in their workplaces. Qualitrain's managers and trainers take their responsibilities for health and safety seriously and are also mindful of apprentices' general well-being. Apprentices know how to raise concerns about themselves or others, and when they do, Qualitrain staff take them seriously and deal effectively with their problems.

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

Leaders and managers have focused their apprenticeship programmes on lean manufacturing and continuous improvement, in line with their own expertise and regional and national demand. They also provide training in a small number of other, related subjects such as team leading.

The courses that managers and trainers have developed include the content that apprentices need for their jobs. In most cases, staff base the curriculum on comprehensive apprenticeship standards and make adjustments to meet the specific requirements of employers. For example, in response to an employer request, trainers emphasise the jidoka principle on the improvement practitioner course.

The vocational elements of courses are sequenced sensibly so that apprentices learn about underpinning concepts before combining and applying them in real situations. Trainers revisit topics regularly through questioning, multiple-choice tests and homework tasks. Frequent work-based projects allow apprentices to strengthen their understanding through the application of the things that they have been taught.

Most apprentices learn through a combination of in-person lessons and individual study. This works well for most apprentices, but a small number of level 3 team leaders who attend all their lessons online lack the skills to study effectively through this medium. As a result, they find it difficult to make progress.

Trainers have excellent vocational knowledge, which they use to provide good-quality lessons. They have extensive experience of working in the industries and

roles in which apprentices work. This enables them to give clear answers to apprentices' questions and to relate theoretical concepts to apprentices' work situations.

In lessons, trainers make effective use of questioning to check apprentices' understanding of topics. They provide clear feedback that enables apprentices to reflect on their answers and to improve their understanding. They use scenario-based activities to help apprentices link their learning to the workplace.

Vocational trainers do not always integrate English and mathematics well enough into training activities. In addition, although functional skills lessons are appropriately sequenced, they are not frequent enough and occasionally occur at unsuitable points in apprentices' studies. As a result, apprentices do not always develop their English and mathematical skills well enough, although most of those who take functional skills examinations are successful.

Apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from good care and support from trainers. However, although Qualitrain employs a specialist member of staff to provide support to such apprentices, this person does not always find out about apprentices who may need support. This may result in apprentices missing out on specialist assistance to help them learn more effectively.

Most apprentices complete vocational work to a good standard. Their project work often delivers tangible benefits to their employers. In addition, adult care apprentices develop their writing skills, becoming more confident and competent when completing service user records and care plans.

Although the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has had some impact, the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their courses is broadly in line with expectations. The large majority achieve high grades.

Managers share their expectations of apprentices' behaviour prior to enrolment. During enrolment, trainers ensure that apprentices also understand and subscribe to the core values of their employer. Those apprentices who feel unable to commit to these expectations are given time to reconsider becoming an apprentice. Consequently, the vast majority of those who start an apprenticeship are committed to their courses.

Managers and tutors have a strong focus on attendance. They have clear procedures for dealing with absence that include holding catch-up lessons. Where attendance becomes a concern, managers communicate with apprentices' employers to resolve any problems.

Managers and tutors are mindful of the importance of helping apprentices to maintain good mental and physical health. Tutors recognise signs of mental distress and refer apprentices to mental health first-aiders. Tutors also teach apprentices techniques to help them to relax and to focus before they sit examinations.

Throughout their courses, trainers provide most apprentices with information about careers and next steps. Trainers help apprentices to appreciate the availability of higher level courses and career progression with their current or other employers. Trainers provide this information on a mostly informal basis and a small number of apprentices do not receive enough advice.

A few trainers do not provide apprentices with enough information about a range of topics such as equality, British values and citizenship, despite references to these themes in curriculum plans. As a result, not all apprentices have a sound enough grasp of these subjects.

Managers have implemented thorough and effective quality assurance and improvement procedures. As a result, they have a good understanding of the strengths of apprenticeship training and the areas they need to improve. Relationships with their two subcontractors are positive and productive, and the quality of training the subcontractors provide is similar to that provided by Qualitrain itself.

Professional development activities for trainers focus principally on statutory themes such as safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Trainers do not have enough opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

Arrangements for governance are at an early stage. Although leaders have identified suitable external individuals to provide this function, they have so far met only once and have had little impact on the quality of training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead and deputy are suitably qualified and knowledgeable. Managers follow safer recruitment practices. All trainers undertake appropriate training in a range of safeguarding themes, including online safety. Managers ensure that subcontractors also follow appropriate procedures.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe, both in terms of workplace health and safety, and with regard to wider safeguarding matters. They receive guidance on a range of safeguarding themes through training sessions and course handbooks. Apprentices know how to raise concerns, and staff deal effectively with any difficulties.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should review the online learning approach taken with team leader apprentices to ensure that all of them are able to participate fully and learn effectively.
- Leaders and managers should examine how trainers incorporate English and mathematics into vocational lessons and consider how functional skills lessons

might be better scheduled so that apprentices develop better skills in these subjects.

- Leaders and managers should implement an appropriate professional development programme that enables trainers to refine their teaching skills further.
- Leaders and managers should strengthen processes for referring apprentices with SEND to the specialist trainer so that they always receive the additional help that they need.
- Leaders and managers should broaden processes for providing apprentices with impartial careers information, advice and guidance, so that all apprentices can learn about their post-qualification options.
- Managers and trainers should develop and implement an appropriate curriculum for apprentices' personal development that includes topics such as equality, British values and citizenship.
- Leaders and managers should further develop existing governance arrangements so that senior leaders receive sufficient support and challenge for their actions.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276415
Address	The Genesis Business Centre Kings Street Alfreton DE55 7DQ
Contact number	01773 417340
Website	www.qualitrain.co.uk
CEO	Richard Bates
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Arrow Care Training Limited Equals Training Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director (operations), 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.

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