

Short inspection of Training Strategies Ltd

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Training Strategies Ltd continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Training Strategies Ltd (TSL) is an independent learning provider that was established in 2008. The head office is in Bootle, Liverpool. TSL provides training to apprentices in the Liverpool City region, Merseyside and the north west. The company also provides education and training to adult learners as a subcontractor.

At the time of the inspection, there were 26 apprentices enrolled on programmes from level 2 to level 5. The vast majority follow apprenticeship standards in the care sector. There are 14 apprentices following the level 2 adult care worker standard and eight on the level 3 lead adult care worker standard. Fewer than five apprentices are enrolled on the care leadership and management standard at level 5 and the business administrator standard at level 3. Learning takes place mainly in the workplace and online.

At its previous inspection in March 2015, TSL was judged to be good.

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

Apprentices enthuse about their learning. They value their apprenticeship and are proud of the knowledge and skills they are developing.

Apprentices benefit from a personalised programme of training and support from knowledgeable tutors with extensive experience in the care sector. Tutors provide effective one-to-one training and guidance to ensure that apprentices develop the substantial new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours they need. Apprentices develop the confidence and skills to provide better care for their clients.

Apprentices appreciate the support and enthusiasm of their tutors, who take the time to keep them motivated and on track. Apprentices feel well supported and cared for. They demonstrate resilience and persist with their studies even when their work roles can be challenging. Most apprentices make good progress on their apprenticeship.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have. They develop a strong awareness of how to keep themselves, and the vulnerable adults and patients they work with, safe.

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

TSL is a good provider. Leaders have developed a clear rationale for the curriculum they offer. They have developed a well-thought-out vision to train apprentices in the health and social care sector. Leaders link their curriculum to the skills strategies for the Liverpool City region to meet social, economic and community needs.

Tutors and employers work effectively with apprentices to agree a well-planned and sequenced curriculum that meets the individual needs and progression goals of apprentices and their employers. Tutors teach the curriculum in a logical order so that apprentices develop their knowledge and skills incrementally. For example, apprentices complete key modules in duty of care, health and safety, and safeguarding at the start of their programme. They then select optional units that are well matched to the demands of their current or future role, such as leadership, mental health, stroke awareness or end-of-life care.

Apprentices are well supported to develop their applied English and mathematical skills. Tutors use initial assessments well to plan a programme of training and resources that contextualise content, and help apprentices to improve the standard of their mathematics and written work. For example, apprentices use volume and measurement to calculate and administer medicines accurately. They develop their speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively with colleagues, and clients and their families.

Tutors, employers and apprentices are fully aware of the assessment requirements for their programme. Tutors put in place effective arrangements to support and prepare apprentices for assessment. For example, they use regular knowledge checks, practice examination questions and mock discussions. This helps to develop apprentices' long-term memory and recall of what they have learned. As a result, apprentices feel confident to undertake their final assessments, and most apprentices achieve merit or distinction grades.

The link between on- and off-the-job training is too informal. Tutors do not routinely plan the programme of wider training activities and experiences. As a result, apprentices complete useful off-the-job training, but sometimes have limited opportunities to apply and extend new learning in the workplace in a timely manner.

Since the start of the pandemic, employers do not routinely participate in apprentices' progress reviews due to their workloads, staff shortages in the sector and the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Managers have rightly identified the need to involve employers fully in the review process to maximise learning opportunities for apprentices by setting relevant targets and planning off-the-job training.

Staff provide high-quality initial information, advice and guidance to ensure that apprentices are on the right programme. They use information about apprentices' existing knowledge and skills effectively to develop individualised learning plans. Tutors provide ad hoc personalised careers guidance for apprentices about their potential progression and career pathways throughout the apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices are aware of the opportunities that are available to them for progression and promotion within their workplace.

Leaders have not put in place formal careers guidance arrangements to ensure that all apprentices are fully aware of the wider range of career opportunities available to them beyond their current employer, for example in nursing.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the provider's strengths and areas for improvement. New board members have a wealth of experience in the sector that they use to bring greater structure to governance and oversight of the quality of training that apprentices receive. Governors hold senior leaders to account for the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers work effectively with the local authority and external partners to maintain up-to-date knowledge of any emerging issues related to localised dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and to safeguarding. They have recently expanded their network of contacts in mental health, welfare, homelessness and financial support to refer and support their apprentices when necessary.

Leaders use appropriate procedures and systems to record, action and follow up on safeguarding issues and incidents.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that tutors improve the coordination between on- and off-the job training so that apprentices maximise their opportunities to practise, apply and extend new learning in the workplace in a timely manner.
- Leaders should ensure that employers routinely participate in progress reviews to help plan and adapt targets and training opportunities for apprentices.
- Leaders should formalise the careers guidance they provide to ensure that all apprentices are fully informed about their potential next steps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59129
Address	22 Oriel Road Bootle Liverpool L20 7AD
Contact number	0151 523 9655
Website	www.trainingstrategies.co.uk
CEO	Stephen Crewe (Director of Operations)
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	10 March 2015
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Training Strategies Ltd was judged to be good in March 2015.

The inspection team was assisted by the director of learning, 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 apprentices' work, seeking the views of apprentices, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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