

# Inspection of Introtrain & Forum Limited

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Introtrain & Forum Limited (IFL) is a privately owned hairdressing and beauty therapy training provider based in Oxford. It offers apprenticeships mainly in Oxfordshire, with a smaller number in West London. In January 2018, IFL received funding directly from the ESFA to train apprentices.

IFL focuses on apprenticeships in hair and beauty, with a small number of learners doing customer service or business administration apprenticeships. The provider has 123 apprentices studying standards-based apprenticeships at level 2 and level 3. Apprentices following the classroom-based route attend taught sessions in the training salons at Oxford, Feltham, or Witney. Apprentices following the open learning pathway are coached by salon-based assessors.

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

Apprentices enjoy their learning. They rightly appreciate the high-quality support they receive, which enables them to build their confidence and achieve their qualifications. Apprentices value highly the professional environment in which they learn and the skills and expertise of the staff who teach them.

Well-qualified specialist trainers ably support apprentices to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices following the classroom-based routes for hair and beauty benefit from learning in well-equipped training salons. Apprentices following the open-learning pathway receive timely support and coaching from salon-based assessors in the workplace, which enables them to develop high-quality practical skills.

Apprentices receive clear and useful targets from trainers which indicate the skills they need to develop and how to improve. Apprentices work closely with salon-based assessors, who maintain strong focus on the development of confidence, customer care and professional dress. As a result, apprentices quickly develop professional working behaviours and confidence in their practical skills.

Apprentices use their new knowledge and skills well to make a positive contribution to their employer's business. Hair and beauty apprentices carry out thorough client consultations to carefully inform the service or treatments they provide. Business administration apprentices use the skills and confidence they have built to give effective online presentations to new clients and to speak at careers events in local schools.

Apprentices feel safe and talk with clarity and confidence about the arrangements to keep them safe. Apprentices know how to mitigate health and safety risks, for example when mixing and using chemicals or when providing massages. As a result, they know how to keep themselves and their clients safe.

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

Leaders and managers have planned their apprenticeships to meet a clearly identified local need. Managers work closely with local schools to inform potential applicants about employer vacancies. For example, IFL staff teach informative lower-level hairdressing courses at local schools to alert potential apprentices to the opportunities available to them in the future. More than half of these learners move on to do a level 2 apprenticeship at the provider.

Leaders and managers have planned a logical curriculum which builds the knowledge, skills and behaviours of apprentices effectively. On level 2 hair professional, apprentices learn cutting skills early in the programme and practise them frequently to enable them to gain mastery of this practical skill. On level 3

customer service, apprentices learn about business strategy and the importance of mission statements before looking at how to use this in competitor analysis.

Trainers work closely and skilfully with salon assessors to inform apprentices' skills development. Apprentices receive timely support and tuition in the workplace and in the training salons. Trainers use frequent reviews well to establish and improve apprentices' understanding and progress. Apprentices are clear about the progress they are making and the actions they need to take to improve.

Leaders and managers have created a culture of high expectations for the workplace behaviours of apprentices. Training staff, most of whom have been trained by IFL, model professional ways of working well. Apprentices' attendance is good and they display high levels of professionalism in lessons and their workplace. Beauty apprentices are clear about the expectations around their appearance and presentation. They greet customers with politeness and respect and demonstrate high levels of customer service.

Trainers develop apprentices' knowledge of British values through a sensibly planned curriculum, linked well to apprentices' job roles. Most apprentices can explain the importance of these values and the relevance to their customer-facing job roles. For example, apprentices know how to respect clients' modesty and they understand how to adapt their approaches to meet specific needs, before and during treatments.

Apprentices' understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism is too varied. Too few apprentices know in detail about local risks such as knife crime or county lines. This means not all apprentices are aware of the signs or action they need to take if they are at risk.

Trainers use their experience effectively in order to provide apprentices with sound guidance on careers in the hair and beauty sector. Apprentices understand their potential next steps within the industry, such as moving to higher levels of learning, working on cruise ships or becoming assessors. Apprentices do not benefit from wider advice and guidance in order to enable them to understand how their learning could lead to different career routes beyond the hair and beauty sector in the future.

Directors, who form the senior leadership team of IFL, provide appropriate governance and ensure the provider meets its statutory responsibilities. Monthly meetings, focused on learners' progress, enable them to swiftly identify and effectively support apprentices at risk of dropping out or falling behind. They ensure that apprentices at risk receive individualised action plans and additional support to help them get back on track.

Although leaders have a good overview of the strengths of the provision, their understanding of weaknesses is less well developed. The self-assessment report does not focus sufficiently on quality improvement of education. Governance meetings provide too few opportunities for challenge. Leaders have very recently

introduced an external member into their governance structure to strengthen it, but it is too early to see the impact of this external member.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report concerns in the classroom and at work. Leaders ensure that well-trained safeguarding leads are in place at each training centre. Staff run frequent campaigns to raise apprentices' awareness of topics such as drink spiking, how to keep safe and sexual health.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to identify safeguarding concerns. Staff understand how to report safeguarding concerns, including incidents of potential homelessness and self-harm. However, in too many cases, follow-up entries recorded on the log are not sufficiently focused on actions taken in relation to the safeguarding concern or the impact of those actions.

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

- Leaders must ensure that apprentices better understand local risks around radicalisation and extremism and know the actions to take if they are at risk.
- Leaders and managers should provide impartial careers guidance so that apprentices are fully aware of career options beyond the hair and beauty industry.
- Leaders should review governance processes to increase the focus on quality improvement of education.
- Leaders should improve the way that safeguarding incidents are recorded and tracked to their conclusion, so they can fully understand the impact of actions taken and be assured apprentices receive the support that they need.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Carolyn Howard
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	N/A

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the new provider monitoring visit 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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