

15 July 2022

Anna Searle
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Dear Ms Searle

Lead provider monitoring visit (LPMV) of Education Development Trust

Following my visit with Di Mullan, Kim Hall, Deborah Mosely (Her Majesty's Inspectors) and Gill Hickling (Ofsted Inspector) on 10 May 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the LPMV findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you have taken to date.

This inspection was the first LPMV since the start of your delivery of the early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) programmes. It was carried out under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that, at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are not taking effective action towards ensuring that the ECF training and NPQ professional development are of a high standard.

The lead provider should take further action to:

- implement quality assurance processes and systems to ensure that leaders have an accurate picture of the quality of training and materials that delivery partners provide
- ensure that trustees are given up-to-date information, so that they can hold leaders to account
- ensure that the planned adaptations to the online platform and portal are readily and easily accessible to all relevant stakeholders
- review and improve the guidance and training offered to delivery partners, so that they can further support mentors to fulfil their role effectively
- improve communication systems, so that delivery partners are fully informed about the lead provider's responsibilities and how it will support them to deliver the programmes.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Context

Education Development Trust works with 37 delivery partners across all regions. At the time of the inspection, there were 4,138 early career teachers (ECTs) on the ECF training programme and 2,367 participants on NPQ programmes. The provider was involved in the early roll-out of the ECF during 2020/21, delivering it remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been significant changes to the leadership team in recent weeks. An interim programme director is temporarily in post. A quality assurance lead took up post eight weeks ago.

Report

- Leaders have designed effective ECF and NPQ curriculums that reflect fidelity to the programmes. NPQ training blocks are designed to develop mastery over two years. Delivery partners are encouraged to contextualise and adapt the training programmes to fit their local needs. However, the lead provider does not have clear oversight of these adaptations, and leaders cannot be assured of the quality or consistency of the programme contents.
- Systems for managing the day-to-day delivery of the programmes have been established, but have significant weaknesses. Leaders have been aware for several months that there are numerous glitches in the system, particularly in the delivery partner portal, which has several flaws. It is not accessible to all the relevant stakeholders, including some facilitators. It does not provide clear, up-to-date, precise and accurate information to delivery partners about the progress that participants are making. Leaders' response to stakeholders' concerns has not been swift enough. Many stakeholders and participants still do not have access to the information they need. Leaders are now in the process of addressing these issues in order to make the system fit for purpose.
- Self-evaluation processes are splintered and lack cohesion. Different teams and individuals undertake self-evaluation activities, but findings are not pulled together in a coherent way to inform improvement planning.
- Delivery partners are given clear direction from the lead provider about the quality assurance processes that they must undertake themselves. However, the lead provider does not provide equal clarity in terms of its own role in quality assurance. The lead provider does not moderate or check delivery partners' quality assurance systems or outcomes.
- Some delivery partners joined the provider because of the promise of autonomy, and they value the trust placed in them to deliver their adapted programmes. Other providers want more guidance and support. There have been no visits to delivery partners to quality assure training. There is no requirement for delivery partners to submit the adaptations they make to training to the lead provider for moderation or evaluation. There has been no clear guidance for facilitators on effective quality assurance processes. A recent draft policy and guidance

document has not yet been implemented. As the lead provider has not observed the quality of training, delivery partners have not benefited from any feedback to support improvement.

- Some aspects of the governance structure, such as the delivery partner advisory board, are relatively new. The board consists of highly skilled and committed delivery partner leaders. Education Development Trust has secured some expert trustees who have begun to support and challenge the work of the lead provider. However, it is too soon to see how effective these recent changes to the governance structure will be.
- Education Development Trust's collaboration with delivery partners is extremely variable. A significant number of delivery partners highlighted poor communication and organisation as barriers to successful collaboration. Some delivery partners struggle to identify ways in which the lead provider works with them or supports them, and were not aware of the new quality assurance documents. Some stated that they have not been given overviews of the whole NPQ training programme. Many of them expressed concerns about access to key information relating to participants. Many are frustrated with the online platforms. Other delivery partners have a much more positive view and feel that they have a positive relationship with the lead provider.
- Some mentors are concerned about their workload. The lead provider recognises that it needs to work more closely with delivery partners, so that mentors are better supported to work effectively with ECTs. Some mentors, for instance, report that they have to access materials on behalf of ECTs as they cannot access the online platform themselves. This impacts on the mentor's capacity to fulfil the mentoring role effectively.
- Participants on NPQ programmes and ECT training are generally happy with their experience of training and believe that it helps them to improve in their roles. This reflects the positive feedback given on the impact of the work of local facilitators and trainers who were recruited by the delivery partners.
- Education Development Trust has made one recent appointment to the leadership team and is in the process of recruiting a further senior leader. This added capacity should enable the team to drive forward improvements.
- The lead provider ensures, alongside delivery partners, that the statutory guidance relating to equalities is met. There are clear and established systems for reporting any safeguarding concerns.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the lead provider's work, scrutinised documents and met with lead provider representatives. They also met with delivery partner leaders and facilitators, ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants to discuss the ECF training and NPQ

programmes. The lead inspector met with some trustees and representatives from the two advisory groups.

Inspectors joined an online training sessions led by the lead provider and observed some recorded training sessions.

Inspectors took account of the responses of delivery partner leaders, ECTs and NPQ participants, mentors and school leaders to Ofsted's inspection survey about the ECF training and NPQ programmes.