

Inspection of Go Train Limited

Inspection dates: 12 to 15 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Go Train Limited has offered adult learning programmes as a subcontractor since 1992. In November 2017, they received a direct funded adult education budget (AEB) contract. Devolved AEB contracts by West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater London Authority came into effect August 2020. The West Midlands Combined Authority contract concluded in Spring 2022. A small proportion of learners from these contracts were still in training at the time of the inspection.

Go Train offers face-to-face training at three centres in Kent and Medway and online training to approximately 700 learners nationally. At the time of the inspection, 42 learners are attending two-week, classroom-based employability courses and sector-based work academies, designed to support their entry into employment. Thirteen learners are following a full time, online programme leading to level 1 and level 2 computerised accounting and computerised payroll courses. Most online learners, study short, work-place skills courses, such as level 1 certificate in retail knowledge, level 2 functional skills and level 3 certificate in cyber security practices.

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

Learners' experience at Go Train is too variable and dependent on the programme for which they are training. Of those learners studying workplace skills courses, too few complete their programme in the planned timeframe. Too few learners on employability courses progress to a positive destination, such as into employment or further training. The small proportion of learners who started more recently are making better progress as a result of improvements that leaders and managers have put in place.

Learners enjoy their studies and grow in confidence because of their training. They apply their new skills and confidence in the workplace and in their everyday lives. Customer service learners feel better equipped to handle workplace situations, such as dealing with complaints. Learners in functional skills mathematics can now help their children with homework and manage their family budgets better.

Learners benefit from a comprehensive introduction to their course, which covers equality of opportunity, 'Prevent' duty, well-being, and life in modern Britain. Tutors embed these topics throughout their teaching. They revisit them at review meetings to keep learning current and relevant. On employability courses, learners can make links between customer service and equal opportunities legislation around protected characteristics. In functional skills English, learners debate relevant topics such as the British monarchy and the impact of plastic bags on the environment.

Learners feel safe. They know who to contact at Go Train and are confident about how to report concerns if they have them. Tutors provide clear instructions and guidance for learners on how to keep themselves safe while studying. For example, tutors discussed basic health and safety activities, such as how to set up their workstation and the importance of taking regular breaks, as well as online safety and cyber-crime. As a result, learners develop a better understanding of staying safe in their personal and working lives.

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

The newly appointed leadership team and board of directors recognise that many aspects of training are not yet of sufficient quality. Following a period of under-supported growth in which too many learners made slow progress, leaders have significantly streamlined their curriculum. They have revised their offer to focus on courses that enable learners to build appropriate employability skills based on their starting point. They have introduced new employer engagement roles and improved staff accountability to focus on quality improvement. As a result, learners who have started more recently are making better progress. However, leaders and governors have not yet made sufficient improvements to ensure all learners will make appropriate and timely progress or secure employment after their training.

Leaders have not ensured that online learners benefit from well-structured programmes. Too few learners studying online courses receive timely feedback on assessments. As a result, they do not understand how to improve their work, which significantly slows their progress.

Leaders have not ensured that teaching is of a high standard. In a small number of classroom-based courses, tutors do not consistently provide sufficiently challenging activities for learners to make progress against their starting points. On some level 3 courses, tutors are too quick to provide model answers and do not use questioning effectively to check learners' understanding. Tutors do not help learners to commit knowledge and understanding to their long-term memory. Leaders have recently strengthened their observation of teaching, learning and assessment to support this area of quality improvement, but it is too early to see the impact of these actions.

Leaders and managers have planned courses logically, so that learning builds on what learners know and can do. Functional skills mathematics learners consider whole number calculations before moving to negative numbers. Learners on employability courses begin by sharing their job interests and aspirations before identifying how to look for work. Learners develop and apply new skills and knowledge appropriately. Accounting learners understand the stages of buying and can raise orders and pay invoices. Functional skills English learners can confidently explain the differences between facts and opinions and how to identify them in work they read.

Tutors maintain a strong and effective focus on attendance and punctuality in the classroom-based employability programmes. Tutors take swift and effective action to ensure that learners attend well. As a result, attendance is high. Learners studying online programmes are clear about their responsibility to catch up on work they have missed, and they make good use of the self-study resources provided.

Leaders provide very good support for learners' career planning. Staff provide learners with clear advice and guidance at enrolment, which ensures that they select courses that fit appropriately with their career goals. Staff help learners on employability programmes with CV writing and provide daily bulletins of live vacancies. Tutors discuss career aims with learners at each review session, reflecting on how well experiences on and off the course are changing or confirming their career aims. As a result, learners focus on their employment plans from the outset and regularly consider how their plans are being developed by the learning they are completing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make safeguarding and well-being a high priority for the company. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy are highly experienced and well qualified. They have put in place appropriate policies, including a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan. These policies help to keep learners and staff safe.

Board members review and approve updated policies annually to ensure they remain current.

Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures and provide annual update training, which ensures staff are safe to work with learners. Tutors are confident to make referrals to the DSL. The DSL ensures that the recording of referrals, monitoring of support and interventions are rigorous.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is well planned and structured to enable learners to successfully complete their programme in the time originally planned.
- Leaders must ensure that their observation of teaching, learning and assessment procedure focuses appropriately on making sure that all learners benefit from high-quality teaching.
- Leaders should ensure that learners receive timely feedback on assessments, which enables them to understand how to improve the standard of future work.
- Leaders should improve learners' progression into work following employability related courses.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1270861
Address	Sussex House, 21-25 Lower Stone Street Maidstone Kent ME15 6YT
Contact number	01622 693141
Website	www.go-train.co.uk
CEO	Marco Ferrara
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief operating officer, 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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