

Inspection of PETA Limited

Inspection dates: 21 to 24 March 2023

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	Good

Information about this provider

PETA Limited (PETA) was established in 1970 as a group training association to meet the training needs of its member companies. PETA offers commercial and publicly funded training, specialising in engineering. PETA has been registered to offer apprenticeships since March 2017.

At the time of the inspection, there were 443 apprentices studying apprenticeship standards from level 2 to level 5. Of these, 31 were aged 16 to 18 years old, and 63 considered themselves to have a learning difficulty or disability. Just over half of the apprentices study standards in different pathways in engineering, such as engineering operative and technician. Just over a quarter of apprentices study standards in business and management, such as team leader or supervisor and operations or departmental manager. The remaining apprentices study standards in information technology, such as information communications technician and digital marketer.

Apprentices work for over 200 companies across the south of England and London, but mostly in and around Hampshire. They attend in-person training in block or weekly day release.

PETA works with one subcontractor, SETA, for the delivery of apprenticeships in electronics. There are currently fewer than five apprentices on this programme. Leaders and managers do not plan to continue subcontracting when this contract expires at the end of the current academic year.

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

Apprentices display high levels of professional conduct both at PETA's training centres and in the workplace. Apprentices attend their training sessions well, act with maturity and take good care of the equipment they use. They are respectful towards their colleagues, trainers and customers. Apprentices benefit from calm and orderly learning environments, where they work safely.

Apprentices confidently use the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they develop in their training to improve their working practices and efficiency at work. For example, operations or departmental manager apprentices use the Eisenhower matrix to prioritise work tasks. As a result of the fault-finding and customer service skills they have learned, information communications technicians apprentices resolve customers' problems without needing to escalate the issues to other colleagues. Consequently, apprentices quickly make a positive contribution to their employers' businesses, which employers value highly. On completion of their studies, most apprentices remain in employment or go on to study higher level programmes.

Most apprentices benefit from clear and effective information, advice and guidance on the opportunities available to them on completion of their apprenticeship. Trainers and learning development coaches make apprentices aware of options such as higher level studies and employment opportunities in different parts of the engineering sector. Staff also highlight opportunities for apprentices to develop their skills and knowledge beyond the apprenticeships they are studying. For example, apprentices find out how to gain additional qualifications in information technology or how to apply for membership of professional bodies. As a result, most apprentices are able to make informed decisions about their next steps. A very small number of apprentices are not aware of the wider options available to them in the engineering sector or where to find information about these.

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

Council members, leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of the current and future workforce needs in the engineering sector. They recognise the crucial role that apprenticeships play in training new generations of workers in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sectors. Leaders and managers promote apprenticeships in innovative ways in schools, which has resulted in an increase in applications from school leavers.

Leaders and managers apply very thorough processes to ensure that the apprentices they work with will be able to succeed in their training. They have strengthened their checks on prospective employers to ensure that they meet their high expectations for apprentices. Leaders and managers reject employers who would not be able to provide the necessary support and opportunities for apprentices in their workplace. As a result, a higher proportion of apprentices are continuing with their studies than in previous years.

Leaders and managers work very well with employers to plan and teach the curriculum. They ensure that it aligns with apprentices' job roles. As a result, apprentices gradually build the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need in order to be successful in their job roles and aspirational future careers. Apprentices produce work of a good standard and demonstrate high levels of skills in the workplace.

Leaders, managers and councillors frequently review the curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant and current in respect of employers' needs. For example, they have developed an accounting apprenticeship in response to the need of small- and medium-sized enterprises to replace the ageing workforce in their finance departments.

Qualified and expert trainers and learning development coaches use their extensive and current industry knowledge well to help apprentices understand key concepts and recall these over time. They provide apprentices with useful developmental feedback that enables them to improve the standard of their practical and written work. Staff use a range of carefully planned assessment techniques to help apprentices understand the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve further to achieve their targets. Employers participate eagerly in review meetings and contribute their feedback. They know how to support apprentices at work, so that they can make quick progress in their job roles.

Staff do not use the information they collect on apprentices' English and mathematical skills when they start their apprenticeships sufficiently well to ensure that apprentices continue to develop these skills in their training. For example, apprentices working at level 3 and above do not receive support to develop the analytical and comprehension skills they need to infer meaning from text or to summarise key points.

Leaders support trainers and learning development coaches well to continuously develop their subject knowledge and skills. Staff achieve technical and assessor qualifications, attend in-person and online courses, and benefit from industry placements. For example, digital marketing trainers achieve software coding qualifications. Engineering trainers benefit from placements with employers to enhance their industry knowledge, for example of machining skills. Leaders identified an increase in mental health issues among apprentices and low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons following the return to in-person training after the pandemic restrictions. To tackle this, they trained staff in mental health first aid and in dealing with disruptive learners. Trainers and professional development coaches value the professional development they receive that enables them to keep their skills, knowledge and qualifications relevant. Staff feel supported and valued as employees.

Leaders and managers have not provided opportunities for staff to develop the skills and confidence they need in order to support learners with additional needs. Consequently, a small number of apprentices with additional needs feel unsupported

and struggle with their studies. For example, learners with dyslexia find it difficult to access some electronic documents.

Leaders and managers have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship training. They have recently taken decisive action to reduce the proportion of apprentices who are behind with their studies. They have introduced additional training, portfolio-building days and sessions to prepare for final assessments. Through these, leaders and managers have reduced the number of apprentices who are behind in their studies by almost half in a short period of time.

Elected councillors from the member organisations provide effective governance. They challenge senior leaders effectively to ensure that PETA continues to offer the training that employers need. For example, councillors identified the need to invest in new lathes at the Havant engineering training centre. Consequently, apprentices train on the same equipment that is used in industry.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices rightly feel safe. They appreciate the measures that leaders and managers have put in place to keep them safe, such as access restrictions and compulsory use of lanyards in PETA's buildings, and thorough workplace risk assessments. Apprentices know to whom to report concerns and are confident that, should they need to report a concern, staff would listen to them and take appropriate action.

Safeguarding staff use the information they gather from attending external meetings, such as those of the local safeguarding board, to identify training topics for staff and apprentices. Staff support apprentices to understand local threats, such as misogyny and extremist far-right groups. As a result, most apprentices have an awareness of these threats and how to keep safe from them. Leaders have introduced informative newsletters to help employers support apprentices better in the workplace, for example by promoting the apprentice assistance programme.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers need to ensure that staff use the information that they collect about apprentices' English and mathematical skills when they begin their apprenticeships to plan relevant training for apprentices to continue to develop these skills during their studies.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that all staff receive relevant training to develop the skills and confidence they need to support apprentices with additional needs, so that these learners receive the support they require throughout their studies.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53861
Address	1 Access Point Northarbour Road Portsmouth PO6 3TE
Contact number	02392 538700
Website	www.peta.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Fiona Stilwell
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2017
Main subcontractors	SETA

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of 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.

Inspection team

Montserrat Pérez-Parent, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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