

# Inspection of Mainstream Training Limited

Inspection dates:

13 to 16 June 2023

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

**Information about this provider**

Mainstream Training Limited is an independent learning provider based in Sittingbourne, Kent. It is part of the Mainstream Group, which provides a range of services for the transport and logistics industry, including commercial training and recruitment. Leaders at Mainstream Training Ltd specialise in providing adult employability courses and apprenticeships in heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driver, forklift truck operative and warehouse and highways maintenance. On adult employability courses, leaders work with learners who are soon to be released from prison, as well as people who are unemployed.

Inspectors completed a full inspection of Mainstream Training Ltd in 2014, at which time they judged provision to be good. Inspectors completed a subsequent short inspection in 2017 and found provision to have remained good.

Since 2021, Mainstream Training Limited has significantly expanded the HGV driver training it offers through the government's skills bootcamp programme. It provides HGV training in a growing number of locations across the country to novice drivers and those transport drivers who wish to upgrade their licences.

At the time of the inspection, there were 458 learners enrolled on HGV skills bootcamp training. Of these, 410 learners were in the knowledge stage of their

course and attending online teaching sessions. A further 48 learners were receiving practical HGV instruction in Sittingbourne and in Hull. There were 18 learners on two-week employability courses in forklift and warehouse and highways maintenance. There were six level 2 large goods vehicle (LGV) driver apprentices. Of these, five had completed their final assessment.

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

Learners and apprentices are highly motivated and committed to their learning. They rightly appreciate the high-quality teaching and support from knowledgeable training staff. Learners and apprentices have high levels of attendance. They arrive punctually and often early to their sessions. HGV driver learners who are in employment appreciate greatly the flexibility of live online teaching sessions, which enables them to attend around their work commitments. As a result, they attend well, pass their HGV tests successfully and increase their earning potential considerably.

Learners and apprentices build their confidence and self-esteem significantly in the supportive, inclusive and calm learning environment that leaders and staff create. For example, learners soon to be released from prison improve their communication skills, timekeeping and vocational skills effectively. Consequently, these learners are well prepared for employment and re-entry back into the community.

Apprentices value the helpful guidance from staff for their next steps. Learners benefit from comprehensive preparation for work. Staff in the company's recruitment services help them to progress into employment quickly at the end of their courses. For example, newly qualified HGV drivers complete relevant and timely work experience by driving for the company's agency fleet. As a result, they gain employment in supermarket distribution and other transport and logistics companies successfully.

Learners participate in constructive activities beyond their training, such as charitable fundraising and social action projects. For example, highways maintenance learners refurbished a sports hall car park in partnership with a local construction company successfully. Consequently, these learners contribute to their communities well and, in so doing, gain valuable work experience.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and know how to report concerns. They benefit from a comprehensive focus on health and safety and hazard management in the industry they study. As a result, they know how to stay safe in their practical learning environments and can apply this understanding to real work contexts very successfully.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision: to support employers experiencing skills shortages in the transport, logistics and highways maintenance sectors. They work closely with the government and Ministry of Defence to support the national recruitment of HGV drivers. For example, they have negotiated the use of Ministry of Defence training sites to expand HGV skills bootcamp provision effectively. Consequently, in the past 18 months, over 1,100 learners have gained HGV licences successfully.

Leaders and staff are passionate about promoting social mobility. They work closely with Jobcentre Plus, local prisons and charities to provide beneficial training and preparation for work for adults with significant barriers to employment. As a result, unemployed people and ex-offenders develop valuable employability skills, and around half gain work quickly upon completion of their courses.

Leaders have high expectations for their learners and apprentices, including those with support needs, to develop substantial new knowledge and skills, which almost all do. Leaders have planned for learners to complete useful additional qualifications to help them progress in their careers. For example, highways maintenance learners achieve certification on the Street Works Qualifications Register successfully. Subsequently, learners have valuable skills needed by employers, and the majority progress directly on to sustained employment quickly.

Leaders recruit specialist staff, who are experts in the transport, logistics and highways maintenance industries, carefully. They provide valuable mentoring to new training staff to support their teaching practice.

Leaders invest purposefully in high-quality, industry-standard resources. For example, learners benefit from using large goods vehicles, counterbalance and reach forklift trucks and highways maintenance tools. As a result, staff prepare learners for work and employment exceptionally well.

Leaders and managers sequence the curriculum carefully and logically to ensure that learners build their knowledge and skills very successfully. For example, staff tailor learning for HGV drivers to account for their prior experience. New HGV driver learners learn vehicle safety and hazard perception before progressing to off-road exercises and on-road driving instruction. Highways maintenance learners study health and safety in the construction industry before learning how to use hand tools, power tools and plant machinery for laying new surfaces and installing street ironwork. As a result, they develop the knowledge and skills they need to complete road repairs competently.

Training staff do not take LGV driver apprentices' prior knowledge and skills into account sufficiently when planning learning. They do not work closely enough with employers to coordinate apprentices' training. Staff do not ensure that employers understand apprentices' progress to support their training effectively. As a result, apprentices repeat learning, build new knowledge slowly, and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Training staff teach new concepts skilfully to help learners understand and apply new information very well. For example, in online sessions, HGV driver training staff use videos from real life scenarios to explain road hazards and risks clearly. As a result, learners achieve very well and can apply theory to their practical work successfully.

Training staff use repetition and recall effectively to consolidate learners' understanding and skills. For example, they encourage highways maintenance

learners to describe and repeat the process to install a manhole cover safely and competently. As a result, learners quickly develop fluency in their skills and apply them proficiently.

Training staff use a wide range of assessment activities very well to help learners understand their progress and what they need to do to improve further. For example, staff use video recording of forklift and warehouse learners completing stocktaking assessments. This usefully enables learners to self-assess their progress and improve their knowledge and skills quickly and effectively.

Leaders and staff check learners' progress carefully. For example, where HGV driver learners fall behind, leaders intervene quickly. As a result, almost all HGV driver learners make very good progress and achieve their HGV licences within four to six months of starting their course successfully.

Leaders and training staff ensure that values, such as democracy, the rule of law and environmental awareness, are included in the curriculum. For example, HGV driver learners and apprentices gain a thorough understanding of the working time rules for large goods vehicles. They fully appreciate the need for safe and fuel-efficient driving. As a result, learners and apprentices apply this understanding confidently in their current and future work roles.

Leaders have created a culture of staff well-being successfully. For example, they use an external professional to provide high-quality coaching to staff in groups and individually. Staff benefit from useful and ongoing professional development, which helps to improve their confidence and competence in their job roles significantly.

Leaders and training staff use effective quality assurance processes to improve the quality of training. For example, they use feedback from HGV learners' driving test failures to focus on learners' specific skills effectively, such as entering and exiting roundabouts. As a result, they have significantly increased the number of learners achieving HGV test passes on the first attempt.

The board of directors has a secure understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. Directors challenge and support leaders appropriately and effectively. For example, they ensure that leaders promote equalities by including women and ethnic minorities in course marketing materials. As a result, they support continuous improvement in the quality of provision well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures to keep learners and apprentices safe. They use suitable systems to identify, record and monitor concerns. The experienced designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff complete annual safeguarding training and know how to report concerns. Staff ensure that

learners who experience welfare problems, such as risk of homelessness, are well supported and referred to the relevant agencies.

Leaders ensure that thorough risk assessments are completed of high-risk prisoners before enrolling them on courses. As a result, staff maintain the safety of all learners effectively.

Leaders use a detailed 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan to help keep learners and apprentices safe. Staff help learners and apprentices to recognise the risks of radicalisation and extremism during induction. However, they do not check that learners and apprentices know how to stay sufficiently safe from local and online risks.

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

- Leaders must ensure that apprentices' starting points are appropriately assessed so that they build on existing knowledge, skills and behaviours and make rapid progress.
- Leaders must ensure that staff coordinate on- and off-the-job training effectively so that apprentices successfully develop and apply their knowledge, skills and behaviour at work.
- Leaders should ensure that all learners and apprentices understand the risks from the local area and online.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58362
<b>Address</b>	Mainstream House Bonham Drive Eurolink Business Park Sittingbourne ME10 3RY
<b>Contact number</b>	01795 418100
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.recruitandtrain.com">www.recruitandtrain.com</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Mark P Smith
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 December 2014
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	N/A

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of strategy and partnerships, 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

Sara Woodward, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Baz Wren	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Beale	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector



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