

# Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited (The)

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	53721
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Kim Bleasdale, His Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate Lees Road OL4 1JP

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited (The) operates under the name of Oldham Training Centre (OTC) and was inspected in August 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 107 apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships at levels 3 and 5 and five apprentices on level 3 apprenticeship frameworks. On the standards-based apprenticeships, there were 31 apprentices on level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician. The remainder were on level 3 engineering technician, fitter, metal fabricator, engineering design and draughtsperson, plate welder, team leader or supervisor and business administrator and level 5 operations or departmental manager. There were 31 apprentices aged 16 to 18 years of age.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant change in leadership within OTC. Following the chief executive officer's departure from the business earlier this year, there is currently a board trustee providing support on a part-time basis to senior leaders as they await the newly appointed business manager to imminently take up their position.

### Themes

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring they prioritise the implementation of effective quality assurance processes so that they can accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of education?      Insufficient progress**

Following the previous inspection, leaders have not implemented effective quality assurance processes to accurately identify all the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of education that apprentices receive at OTC.

Leaders do not measure whether on- and off-the-job training is effective for apprentices. They do not know whether training advisers systematically involve apprentices' managers to arrange opportunities at work for apprentices to practise and hone their skills. Leaders have not provided training to ensure that training

advisers know how to routinely plan and coordinate on- and off-the-job training. Consequently, apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders have not been swift enough to ensure that all apprentices know about their final assessments early enough in their apprenticeships. Too many engineering apprentices still do not know what they will be expected to do in their end-point assessment or the grades they could achieve. However, this is not the case for the few apprentices who study business and management apprenticeships.

Leaders have been too slow to identify where the weaknesses lie in teaching. Very recently, leaders completed observations of teaching, where they identified a few areas for improvement. For instance, trainers and training advisers do not routinely embed topics such as fundamental British values into apprentices training and ensure that apprentices are aware of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. To rectify this weakness, leaders subsequently provided training for staff. However, leaders do not yet know whether this training for staff has had a positive impact on apprentices' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

The process that leaders have in place to help them accurately monitor apprentices' progress is effective. Leaders now hold more regular meetings with trainers and training advisers to discuss and agree on appropriate interventions when apprentices fall behind. As a result, the number of apprentices who have not completed their apprenticeships on time has significantly reduced.

**How much progress have leaders made in providing the board with accurate information to enable them to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the quality of education that apprentices receive?**

**Reasonable progress**

The information that senior leaders now provide to trustees has improved since the previous inspection. Trustees now receive more accurate and detailed information such as the progress that apprentices make, qualification and apprenticeship results and identifying those apprentices who have not completed their apprenticeships on time. This has enabled trustees to provide effective challenge to senior leaders for these aspects of the provision. For instance, trustees challenged leaders to select a robust system to enable leaders to monitor apprentices' progress. This has just recently been agreed and implemented.

There are a few areas for improvement from the previous inspection that senior leaders do not inform trustees about. These are in relation to whether all apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements of their final assessments and the grades available and whether leaders are successfully improving the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training with employers. This means that trustees are unable to challenge and hold leaders to account to improve these weaknesses.

**To what extent have leaders established rigorous processes to help them accurately monitor the progress that apprentices make on their apprenticeships?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have strengthened their progress-tracking process since the previous inspection. They have implemented more frequent meetings with trainers and training advisers to discuss each apprentice in detail. This enables managers, trainers and training advisers to identify learners who are falling behind in their learning more swiftly than they previously did. For the small minority of apprentices who are currently behind in their learning, leaders, trainers and training advisers agree on appropriate interventions, such as more frequent coaching or attending additional classroom or workshop sessions. Leaders now have a more accurate oversight of apprentices' progress.

Immediately following the previous inspection, leaders began an extensive process to plan and agree on a new electronic system that will enable them to track and monitor apprentices' progress towards the development of their knowledge, skills and behaviours more rigorously. Leaders have taken a considered and cautious approach to ensure that their system of choice fully meets their needs as well as those of their apprentices. Since receiving board approval in February 2023, leaders embarked upon the lengthy process of manually migrating all the apprentice information into their new system. This is not yet complete.

Until the new system is fully in place, leaders continue to use their current progress monitoring system to track and monitor the progress that apprentices make effectively.

**To what extent have leaders improved the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training with employers so that apprentices can practise, improve and master their knowledge, skills and behaviours at work?**

**Insufficient progress**

Leaders have not put in place actions to improve the coordination of on- and off-the-job training for most apprentices. They have not provided training advisers with appropriate training following the previous inspection. Consequently, most training advisers do not routinely discuss and agree with apprentices' managers those opportunities for apprentices to practise and hone their skills at work to align in a timely way with what they are learning in their training. This means that most apprentices do not develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours quickly enough.

Despite this, apprentices develop a wide range of occupationally relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours at work. For example, in team-leading, apprentices confidently present the team briefing to the factory workers, chair management meetings and effectively manage conflict between members of their team. Engineering apprentices

safely isolate and lock off equipment, accurately solder components and convert lighting wiring to install a passive infrared system.

In a very few cases, training advisers effectively use the off-the-job training plan to discuss and agree opportunities with the apprentices' line manager for apprentices to develop their skills at work. For instance, apprentices shadow skilled work colleagues when they complete fault-finding activities on a motor. As a result, these apprentices swiftly develop the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours.

A significant number of employers told us that they do not receive enough information about what apprentices learn in their training. Furthermore, too many apprentices told inspectors that the apprenticeship is not reflective of their job roles. This means that many apprentices are unable to practise at work what they have learned.

**To what extent do leaders ensure that all apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements of their final assessments and the grades available early in their apprenticeship?**

**Insufficient progress**

There are still too many engineering apprentices who do not have a good understanding of their final assessments early enough in their apprenticeships. Almost all apprentices do not know about the grades available to them.

Trainers and training advisers do not ensure that most apprentices have opportunities to routinely practise the skills they will need in their final assessments, for instance presentation and interview skills. Trainers have recently started to prepare apprentices for their final assessments when they are 12 months from their planned end date. They explain and demonstrate examples of evidence needed for the portfolio of evidence and provide guidance to apprentices on how to compile and collate evidence. It is at this stage that available grades are discussed. Engineering apprentices complete practice tests and take part in discussions to develop their skills. However, it is too early to see the impact of these changes.

Following the previous inspection, leaders recruited new trainers to teach the small proportion of apprentices who follow business administrator and leadership and management apprenticeship standards. These apprentices have an appropriate understanding of the requirements of their final assessments and the grades they can achieve. They receive feedback from their trainers/training advisers that helps them to improve and know what they need to do to achieve high grades. Apprentices who have recently completed their business administrator apprenticeships have achieved distinctions.

**To what extent do leaders ensure that trainers and training advisers receive appropriate training to update their vocational knowledge and understanding of topics such as fundamental British values and the risks relating to radicalisation and extremism so that they can provide apprentices with appropriate training?**

**Reasonable progress**

Most apprentices have an appropriate working knowledge of British values. They know that it is important to demonstrate professional and respectful behaviours at work and in the training centre. Apprentices arrive on time to work and classes and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment to help them work safely in their high-risk areas. They ensure their work areas are tidy and that if they borrow equipment, they clean it and put it back immediately after use. Apprentices respectfully listen carefully during handover discussions at the start of their shift with the production manager.

Apprentices have recently completed a short online course on the 'Prevent' duty. Most apprentices have a broad understanding of the risks relating to radicalisation and extremism. However, most apprentices are not aware of the local risks or how they may impact them at work.

Leaders have only recently conducted observations of teaching. They identified that almost all trainers still do not plan to routinely incorporate topics such as the teaching of British values and the risks relating to radicalisation and extremism in their lessons. As a result of these findings, leaders provided training for staff on these topics. However, leaders do not yet know the full impact of this training.

Leaders have recently created resources on a range of topics such as the risk of radicalisation and extremism. They have created an online area for apprentices to access. It is too early to know whether these resources help apprentices to know more and remember more about these topics.

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