# Inspection of Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited (The)

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 September 2024

| **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 | Requires improvement |

## Information about this provider

The Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited (OTC) is an independent learning provider based in Oldham, Greater Manchester. It provides apprenticeship training in engineering, administration and business management for around 75 employers in Oldham and across the Greater Manchester area.

At the time of the inspection, there were 75 apprentices in learning, most are over 18. Apprentices study almost exclusively at level 3. There were 70 apprentices on a range of level 3 engineering standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 23 were on maintenance and operations engineering technician (MOET), 13 on metal fabricator, 11 on engineering fitter, 10 on machining technician, with smaller numbers on engineering design and draughtsperson, engineering technician and plate welder. Additionally, there were a few apprentices on the level 3 business administrator, the level 3 team leader or supervisor standards and the level 3 mechanical manufacturing engineering framework.

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

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours because of their apprenticeship training, enabling them to make good progress in the workplace. MOET apprentices interpret wiring diagrams and explain their understanding of 3-phase motor systems. This has increased their confidence in working on motors in the workplace. Engineering fitter apprentices build and maintain vacuum metallisers that are used to print currency. They complete maintenance on aircraft doors, rudders and components.

Apprentices develop their character, confidence and competence as early career engineers. They complete tasks independently, plan their own work schedules and work as part of a team in the workplace. Apprentices develop their knowledge of health and safety and apply appropriate behaviours in training and at work. They learn advanced skills in electrical fault finding, such as half-splitting circuits to narrow down the location of the fault. Apprentices become valued employees.

Most apprentices are proud of their work and produce showcase portfolios of a high standard. They enjoy their training and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Apprentices' attendance at work and in training is high.

Apprentices learn in an inclusive and positive environment. There is a culture of mutual respect between tutors and apprentices. Apprentices learn how to keep themselves safe at work, online and socially. They know who to contact with any concerns about their safety and welfare.

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

Leaders set high expectations and articulate a clear vision to provide high-quality training for their apprentices. They have made significant changes to staffing and have used performance management effectively to increase the pace of improvement to the quality of training since the previous inspection and monitoring visit. Staff unwilling, or unable, to improve have exited the organisation. Leaders now ensure that they offer ambitious curriculums to meet the skills needs of employers and apprentices in the engineering sector.

Leaders and managers have strengthened and implemented effective quality assurance and improvement processes to secure an improving oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They work closely with employers and apprentices to ensure that curriculums are bespoke, meet needs and benefit from effective planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training. Tutors and trainers ensure that apprentices benefit from opportunities to practise, improve and master their new knowledge and skills in the training centre and at work.

Tutors plan and teach the curriculums effectively so that apprentices build on prior learning and apply their new knowledge and skills to more complex work. Metal

fabricator apprentices work on foundation engineering skills and welding principles before moving into bespoke work-specific skill development, selected in liaison with their employers. Fitter apprentices begin with health and safety, method plans, risk assessments and using tools. They progress to band saw training, deburring machined metal, marking out and drilling blind holes, counter bores and counter sinks to complete precision tasks.

Tutors use their subject expertise and industry experience to enhance apprentices' learning. They ensure that most apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to become effective engineers. Most apprentices make their expected progress. Tutors use their knowledge of electrical maintenance operations on modern conveyor systems to create industry standard examples for apprentices to work on.

Leaders and tutors monitor and track apprentices' progress much more closely since the previous inspection. Tutors use initial skills scans to check what apprentices already know and can do. They plan individualised programmes so that apprentices develop engineering skills aligned to their specialist role in the workplace. However, a few apprentices on the machining technician standard have made slow progress. Leaders and managers have put in place plans, including new specialist tutors, to ensure that these apprentices catch up swiftly.

Tutors provide clear explanations and use effective questioning to check apprentices' understanding and recall of prior learning. Apprentices learn theoretical concepts before applying their learning through observation, practise and assessment in practical workshops. Tutors make sure that apprentices remember what they learn and develop practical fluency and accuracy in their work.

Most tutors and trainers provide effective developmental feedback in theory and workshop sessions, as well as progress reviews, that helps apprentices to improve the quality of their work. Engineering apprentices benefit from verbal feedback that helps them improve their fault-finding techniques and understanding of power units. However, tutors do not routinely provide useful feedback on apprentices' written work. In a few written assessments, apprentices make multiple uncorrected spelling and grammatical errors that they then repeat in subsequent work.

Tutors and trainers now ensure that apprentices understand the requirements of their final assessments. Most engineering apprentices aspire to achieve distinction grades. Employers support apprentices with their final workplace projects, such as helping apprentices analyse a palette of repair processes and identify if they are mechanically and commercially viable.

Apprentices are well prepared for life and work in modern Britain. Most apprentices have access to additional opportunities. This includes driving awareness courses, industry event visits, participation in enterprise activities and access to online resources on safeguarding, healthy lifestyles and mental health. Most apprentices complete additional qualifications that improve their employability and progression

opportunities. They gain first aid and health and safety awards and complete the Aircraft Maintenance Licence to inspect and sign off aircraft.

Apprentices receive informal careers advice and have access to online resources relevant to their career aspirations. Many have a clear understanding of their next steps in education or employment, such as careers in aviation engineering, spring making for the nuclear energy sector, working on oil rigs, careers in underwater welding or progression to further and higher education. However, too few apprentices routinely access these resources.

Teaching staff benefit from effective staff development that helps them to improve their teaching practices and enhance their industry expertise. Leaders use a variety of quality assurance and improvement processes, including lesson observations, learning walks, self-assessment, and drop-ins with apprentices to check on the quality of teaching and learning. They use this information to plan responsive and targeted staff development.

Leaders and managers have taken effective actions to increase the number of apprentices who stay and pass their apprenticeship. However, on a few apprenticeships in 2022/23, too many apprentices left their programme early. A few machining technician apprentices will complete their apprenticeship later than planned.

Governance arrangements have strengthened since the previous inspection and are now effective. Senior leaders have secured new board membership. Board members now receive useful and accurate reports. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Board members use their extensive experience of industry and of successful governance to support and challenge leaders and managers at every level. They hold leaders to account for the quality of training that apprentices receive.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Ensure that machining technician apprentices, who have made slow progress, catch up quickly.
- Ensure that tutors consistently provide developmental feedback on apprentices' written work so that apprentices improve their written English skills.
- Ensure that all apprentices benefit from effective careers advice and guidance.
- Increase the number of apprentices who remain and achieve their apprenticeship on time.

## Provider details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Unique reference number** | 53721 |
| **Address** | Oldham Training Centre<br>Lees Road<br>Oldham<br>OL4 1JP |
| **Contact number** | 0161 624 5360 |
| **Website** | www.otctraining.co.uk |
| **Principal, CEO or equivalent** | Peter Sherry |
| **Provider type** | Independent learning provider |
| **Date of previous inspection** | 23 to 26 August 2022 |
| **Main subcontractors** | n/a |

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the general manager, 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

| | |
|---|---|
| Alastair Mollon, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Scott Cubitt | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jo Hornby | Ofsted Inspector |
| Suzanne Horner | His Majesty's Inspector |

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted