

# Prospect Training Services

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316762

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Employability skills

## Description of the provider

1. Prospect Training Services (PTS) is a private training provider based in Gloucester. It was established in March 1997 and became a private limited company in April 2001. It offers private training and government-funded work-based learning programmes for adults and young people. Foundation programmes for young people run throughout Gloucester and are primarily funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) but also through the European Social Fund (ESF), Connexions and the Reintegration Services. This represents about 60% of the provider's business.
2. PTS is led by a managing director and management team supported by administration, tutorial staff and delivery staff amounting to a staff team of 44. The staff team includes eight fully qualified assessors and two qualified verifiers with other staff working towards these awards. Two staff have qualifications in information, advice and guidance and five are working towards management qualifications. Three staff are qualified health and safety advisors and 90% of staff have achieved a health and safety award at level 2.
3. All training and assessment is delivered by full-time tutors. Unemployed learners attend the training centres for 16 hours a week for the 22 weeks duration of the training. At the time of inspection, there were 20 learners on construction programmes, 16 learners on childcare programmes, six learners on a course for young mothers to be, 10 learners on health and social care programmes, and 11 learners on programmes in hair and beauty.
4. In Gloucestershire, general levels of literacy and numeracy are above the national average, but there are still significant numbers of the population lacking these skills. The unemployment rate for Gloucestershire is 1%.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

## Sector subject area

Employability skills	Good: Grade 2
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### **Good: Grade 2**

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, the quality of provision is good and leadership and management are good. Equality of opportunity and social inclusion are good.

### Capacity to improve

#### **Good: Grade 2**

6. PTS has demonstrated that it has good capacity to improve. Since it was last inspected positive outcomes for learners have been maintained. However, there has been a significant increase in the number of qualifications which learners have achieved. PST is responsive to feedback from partners and learners with many examples of changes in the provision to meet the needs of learners. Actions to improve the quality of provision are well planned and focused on learners' needs. Staff training and support are very good and linked closely to quality improvement and the promotion of learner welfare. The provision matches changes in the local employment market as well as the changing demands of learners. Action to improve quality is successful.
7. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. Views of staff, employers and learners all contribute to the self-assessment process. The report is well written and provides a largely accurate assessment of the provision. Inspectors agreed with most of the grades given in the report. PTS gave a higher grade for achievement within the subject sector area. The self-assessment report is closely linked to the development plan and effective systems exist to monitor progress.

## Key strengths

- Well managed and highly individualised curriculum
- Particularly effective links with other agencies and specialist organisations
- Strong strategic vision and leadership
- Very good management of resources
- Strong commitment to social inclusion and diversity

## Key areas for improvement

- Poor target-setting for construction learners
- Incomplete recording of information, advice and guidance and learners' support information

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Learners make good progress in developing their practical and employability skills. Construction learners achieve good standards in a well resourced, realistic work environment, or by taking part in projects for other organisations. For example, some learners' were fully involved in creating the new Building Skills Academy which is constructed to a particularly high standard. Most learners gain relevant vocational qualifications including the a construction skills certification card necessary for working in the construction industry, health and safety, manual handling and a certificate in the control of hazardous substances. Over 68% of learners achieved a qualification in 2006-07 compared with 55% in 2005-06. Attendance and punctuality is monitored thoroughly. Self-assessment is thorough and includes feedback from all partners, staff and learners. The judgements made in the self-assessment report are largely accurate as is the grade for the sector subject area.
9. The progression rate into positive outcomes of further education, training and/or employment is satisfactory. In 2005-06 52% of learners progressed into a positive outcome and the current figure for 2006-07 is 46% but these are not comparable figures for this year. The progression rate into apprenticeships is good with 28% of learners with positive outcomes entering full national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes or apprenticeships. This is significantly above the LSC local target for the area.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

10. Learners are very responsive to the well managed and individualised curriculum. Initial assessment in literacy and numeracy identifies individuals requiring additional support. The thorough induction system provides good personal support for learners' individual needs. Good use is made of peers to introduce new learners to practical activities in the Care 4 Life and Childcare programmes. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. Tutors are well prepared and resourceful. Individual learners enjoy their sessions and have a good understanding of how activities can improve their chances of starting a work placement or gaining employment. Key skills are well integrated with the practical and theory teaching.
11. Links with other agencies and specialist organisations are particularly effective. The course for young mothers to be has excellent contact with the midwife and health visiting service and with local children's centres. Good practical and emotional support is provided by other agencies in, for example, leaving care, housing issues, mental ill-health, substance misuse and for those who are ex-offenders. Staff make excellent use of their contacts and local resources to provide a high level of support for learners, often accompanying them to interviews or acting as advocates where appropriate.
12. The self-assessment correctly identifies the good and improving involvement in training by some local employers. The work placement and progressions officer has established very positive and effective links with some local employers. Information, advice and guidance is delivered effectively to learners, providers, parents and other key partners. All employers involved with providing work placements work effectively with the work

placement and progressions officer to provide a positive experience for learners and help them make informed choices about their future careers. In cases where the work placement is not successful PTS staff respond quickly and appropriately, providing the necessary support for learners and employers. Employers confirm that PTS learners are well prepared for work placements and offer jobs when available. In each programme any learner ready for a work placement is offered one. At the time of the inspection the proportion of learners on work placement was 46% in childcare, 36% in construction and 15% in hair and beauty.

13. The implementation of the skills for life strategy is satisfactory. All learners complete an initial assessment that adequately identifies their literacy and numeracy skills. A satisfactory individual programme is then agreed with the learner. Literacy and numeracy support is well managed and clearly focused on the vocational options chosen by learners. Many learners can identify how their confidence in literacy and numeracy has improved since they started Entry to Employment (E2E). Little use is made of data to measure the value added by the additional support provided or how effective the support is with different groups of learners. PTS has training planned to enable relevant staff to offer diagnostic tests to learners.
14. Every Child Matters outcomes are well integrated with the E2E programme. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is good, particularly for young mothers to be, childcare and care for life learners. Learners make a valuable contribution to the Gloucestershire information folder for pregnant teenagers and young mothers.
15. Target-setting at progress reviews for learners on the construction programme is poor. In many instances targets are simply a list of areas to be improved such as attendance, timekeeping, and literacy or numeracy skills. Progress is adequately recorded and further development needs are identified. However, targets contain insufficiently specific activities and completion dates are not agreed. Learners' comments on targets are generally not recorded. Target-setting for some learners is clear, specific and challenging. PTS has made some progress in resolving this weakness, which was identified at the previous inspection.



## Leadership and management

**Good: Grade 2**

### Equality of opportunity

**Contributory grade: Good Grade: 2**

16. PTS has been guided by the strong vision and leadership of the managing director and the senior management team. The organisation has a strong learner focus which is shared by all staff. Operationally, managers are responsive and communicate well. The provision is planned carefully to meet the individual needs of learners and the local employment market. Commitment to staff development is very good and is supported by a well established appraisal system which is managed very effectively. Induction is comprehensive and includes core training in equal opportunities, information, advice and guidance, child protection and a skills for life strategy. The core training for all staff is reviewed and updated each year. Risk assessments are completed each quarter to assess staff stress and the results are evaluated and used to plan their support and development needs. Tutors visit employers to maintain their occupational currency and are encouraged to carry out further continuing professional development.
17. PTS has further developed good partnership working with a range of outside agencies. These include specialist agencies who can meet the needs of learners with specific learning needs or support needs due to, for example, substance misuse or homelessness. PTS continues to be involved in local provider networks and plays a key role in promoting partnership working.
18. Resources are managed very well at PTS. Teaching resources are good with a range of teaching materials for the theory sessions including wordsearch activity sheets, quizzes, video presentations and good quality handouts. Materials available for the practical sessions are good and surplus building materials are obtained from local builders. Assessed finished work is systematically demolished and the materials recycled wherever possible. The acquisition and development of the building skills centre has been carefully planned to meet the needs of the learners and the administrative staff, with much of the work being completed by learners and tutors themselves. A shortfall in the number of computers at one site identified at inspection was rectified the same day. Electronic handsets have been introduced to facilitate interactive classroom learning and plans are well developed to implement more advanced e-learning for staff and learners. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced.
19. PTS has a strong commitment to social inclusion and diversity. The policies and procedures are up to date and throughout the organisation is a culture of awareness of equality and diversity. Promotional materials reflect appropriate aspects of diversity and teaching sessions include materials that explore diversity issues. Learners from PTS participate in building skills and hair and beauty workshops for disabled people at a local centre. PTS learners work with disabled people in the community on property maintenance and recycling projects. PTS runs three-day events promoting women in construction. Equality, diversity and impact measures have been agreed with the LSC over the last four years and are monitored monthly with targets generally being exceeded. One member of staff has designated responsibility for vulnerable learners. The safeguarding policy for young people provides appropriate and clear guidance and identifies the male and female named child protection officers.

20. Quality improvement is good at PTS. Developments have included systematic course reviews, planned observations of teaching and learning and the checking of progress reviews. Learner feedback is used effectively to identify changes in the way courses are delivered.
21. Recording of information relating to information advice and guidance and learners support is incomplete. No system exists to monitor overall delivery. Currently the quality and consistency of delivery cannot be adequately evaluated. Similarly there is no system to monitor the social support needs of learners even though many social needs are being met effectively.

## What learners like:

- 'Very supportive tutors'
- 'We actually get to do some real work'
- 'Friendly atmosphere'
- 'Have some fun as well as learn'
- 'Best provider of the four I have been to'
- 'Relaxed atmosphere but they still make us work'
- Key skills – 'it tells you how you are doing'
- 'Groups are small and everyone gets treated fairly'
- 'It is good to be in a place with people in the same situation'
- 'It has helped me with money and finding somewhere to live'
- 'I know what job I want to do now'

## What learners think could improve:

- 'Longer breaks'
- 'Better air conditioning'
- 'Need more computers'
- 'More toilets especially for the young mothers to be'
- 'Need a social base here in this centre'

## Learners' achievements

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
04-05	156	32	49
05-06	149	24	52

\* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

\*\* Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period