

# HIT Training Ltd

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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' monitoring 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:

- Hospitality and catering

A small proportion of HIT Training's recent provision includes programmes in cleaning, customer service and care. These were not inspected.

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## Description of the provider

1. HIT Training Ltd (HIT Training) was founded in May 2006. The company is financed by 40 founding employees finance who own 85% of the share capital. Invited suppliers and consultants to the company own the remaining equity. The head office is in Westminster, London. The company employs 199 staff and is expanding the business to meet a considerable planned increase in learner numbers.
2. HIT Training originally contracted directly with LSC's in London and the South West to deliver Train to Gain. Since August 2008, the company has secured direct contracts with LSC's across England to deliver Train to Gain nationally, and apprenticeships in London and the south east and west of England. The company subcontracted much of its original provision from training providers with direct Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contracts, and has 10 legacy subcontracts/consortia contracts in five regions that are due to end.
3. The company provides a range of hospitality programmes at national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 and level 3. Recently introduced programmes in cleaning, social care and customer service are mainly within the south east region and generally with employers serving the hospitality industry. These programmes were not directly inspected.
4. At the time of the inspection, HIT Training has 3,762 learners on direct contracts. Of these, 3,092 are hospitality learners with 2,300 on Train to Gain and 792 on apprenticeship programmes. Of the remaining learners, 307 are in customer service and 363 in cleaning and care. The provider works with 20 national hospitality organisations and mainly delivers training to learners working in small to medium sized hospitality businesses nationally covering 2,673 separate venues.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

## Sector subject area

Hospitality and catering	Good: Grade 2
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of HIT Training is good. Achievement and standards are good. Learners develop a good range of vocational, social and personal skills and improved confidence within their job role. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are overall satisfactory and improving, but vary significantly between regions and programmes. Timely success rates are low.
6. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Vocational training is well supported by good resources, including on-line tuition programmes for key skills and vocational knowledge. Trainer-assessors have good industrial experience and support learners well. Learners' induction to training is thorough. Assessment practice is good.
7. The arrangements to meet the needs of learners and employers are good. Partnership arrangements with industry are very good. Well-planned programmes effectively integrate in-house training with the requirements of the NVQ. Many employers play an active role in reviewing learners' progress and work closely with assessors.
8. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good workplace support. Information, advice and guidance are good. Skills for life support is underdeveloped. However, HIT Training has recently developed a comprehensive skills for life strategy and policy. London and the south east are piloting the improved support arrangements.
9. Leadership and management are good. The company has a clear vision and strategy to support the hospitality industry that permeates all aspects of the company's work. Personnel systems provide good support for managers and staff. Target setting, at all levels of the company, is well established and understood. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but insufficiently well promoted. Action planning in this area is weak. The company has a number of examples of good practice to ensure fair treatment for learners, but recognises the need for more work in this area.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

10. The capacity to improve is good. HIT Training is a young company but has a large number of managers and staff with many years experience in managing and delivering hospitality training and development across the country. Leadership and management are particularly effective. Growth has been rapid and resources are well managed. The organisations' regional structure reflects the commitment to working locally with small employers and driving up standards in the industry

they serve. Communications are good. Success rates are improving. Actions to improve the under developed skills for life support are in place. The self-assessment report closely matched the findings of the inspection team. Quality assurance procedures are generally effective although not all aspects of the learner's experience are appropriately monitored.

## Key strengths

- Good development of learners' skills
- Good vocational learning resources
- Very good partnership arrangements
- Good workplace support for learners'
- Particularly effective leadership and management

## Key areas for improvement

- Insufficiently developed skills for life support
- Insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards are good. Learners develop a good range of skills. These include vocational, social and personal skills. Learners gain improved confidence within their job role. In many cases, they have a better understanding of processes and procedures and provide a higher level of customer care. Some learners have gained promotion as a result of completing their qualification. Employers notice much improvement in learners' attitudes and standards of work.
12. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are overall satisfactory and improving. However, success rates between regions and programmes vary. For example, success rates in 2007/08 for Train to Gain in the south west are 83% and in London, 69%. Success rates in housekeeping are high at 87% but low for hospitality supervision at 49%. Retention rates for apprentices are good, although it is too soon to judge their success rates. Timely success rates are low for Train to Gain learners. This is recognised by the provider in their self-assessment. All learners currently on programme are making good progress towards achieving their qualification.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

13. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Resources to support vocational learning are good. Particularly effective workbooks guide learners through the knowledge and understanding required for their qualification. The learning resources are easy to use, illustrative and support learners who may have additional literacy, numeracy or language needs. Very good use is made of on-line tuition programmes for key skills and vocational knowledge. Individual training and learning are good. Trainer-assessors have good industrial experience and support learners well to improve their understanding of the hospitality industry. Effectively integrated in-house training with the NVQ supports learners' knowledge and understanding. The programme covers health and safety comprehensively.
14. Learners' induction to training is thorough. They have a good understanding of the qualification and their progress against set targets. Regular and frequent visits to the learners' workplace are well planned, productive and include a thorough progress review. Individual learning plans are regularly and clearly updated with appropriate targets set. Learners' progress is closely monitored and recorded well.
15. Assessment practice is good. Assessment planning is effective and well understood. Learners make good use of a diverse range of evidence to support



their competence including witness testimonies, supplementary questions and photographs of finished products.

16. The arrangements to meet the needs of learners and employers are good. Partnership arrangements with industry are very good. HIT Training works closely with a broad range of industry organisations to support further developments to qualifications and industry standards. Continued development of centres across England supports a key HIT Training strategy to be a major hospitality training provider to support local communities. The provider responds to employers' needs particularly well. Presentations at employers' venues effectively promote the programmes on offer and support recruitment. HIT Training runs pilot schemes, where necessary, to illustrate the management of training programmes and give employers time to evaluate their effectiveness and suitability for their employees. Programmes are planned well to integrate in-house training with NVQ requirements. HIT Training provides a high level of service to employers. Many employers play an active role in reviewing learners' progress. They work closely with assessors and attend meetings with the learners and assessors. However, some employers are not sufficiently involved and sign the review documents without taking part in the process.
17. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good workplace support. Information, advice and guidance are good. From the outset of the programme, learners are advised of the wide range of support services offered by HIT Training and external organisations. Pre-entry advice and guidance includes an effective review of the learner's vocational skills to decide the most appropriate programme and level. Assessors use frequent workplace visits well to support learners and offer encouragement to those less confident. Information, advice and guidance is integrated well into the training programme. Regular monitoring of learners' experience helps review any future progression opportunities. A request for feedback from learners and employers is made at every review visit. The provider effectively collates this feedback on the management information system and regularly uses it to review the performance and progress of learners and assessors.
18. Skills for life support is insufficiently developed. HIT Training recognises this in its self-assessment report. Assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy takes place at the start of the programme and some are offered additional learning support. Training assessors have recently received training in how to support learners with additional learning needs. The provider has recently developed a comprehensive skills for life strategy and policy and is currently piloting improved support arrangements in London and the south east. Improvements include a good range of well-produced learning materials and the recruitment of skills for life trainers.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

## Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: satisfactory: Grade 3

19. Leadership and management are good. The company has a clear vision and strategy to support the hospitality industry. This vision permeates all the company's work, from its particularly effective links with the industry to its approaches to recruiting experienced practitioners and training them rapidly to become good quality assessors in their field. Communications across the company are good. Managers and directors are accessible and approachable. Meetings are purposeful and the outcomes and decisions are clearly recorded. Staff are well informed and show a strong sense of loyalty to the company and its mission.
20. Personnel systems provide good support for managers and staff. Recruitment procedures are fair and open. The company's academy provides a very good induction and training programme for new assessors. A very good range of ongoing training supports staff in their work. Financial management is strong. Well directed funding supports identified needs and the company strategy for business growth. Target-setting, at all levels of the company, is well established and understood. Targets are generally met or exceeded. Staff receive a number of very useful and practical resources to ensure a consistently good service for learners.
21. Quality assurance systems are generally effective. Comprehensive systems cover all aspects of the company's work and are available on line to all staff in the quality manual. Internal verification is particularly effective, well organised and maintains standards across the organisation. The company provides additional support for individual regions in line with the level of risk for each region's assessors experience and qualifications. For example, London rates as high risk due to changes in assessors, having been identified as having less experienced assessors and a higher proportion of new staff. Assessors and managers closely monitor learners' progress. Interrogation of a well-established computerised information system provides them with a very good range of monitoring information. Standards and achievements are analysed by region and reported to the directors regularly. The quality action plan closely links well to the self-assessment report, although some targets are insufficiently measurable. The monitoring of performance of trainer-assessors is insufficiently developed to inform management of key aspects of the learning process, for example, induction and training.
22. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The company has a number of examples of good practice to ensure that learners are treated fairly, but recognises that there is more work to be done in this area. The equal opportunities and diversity policy is clear. The provider collects and analyses performance data to ensure that learners from different ethnic groups are not underperforming. Staff and learners

receive appropriate equality of opportunity information at induction. However, there is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity. Action planning in this area is weak. For example, not all learners benefit from appropriate equality and diversity learning materials. Insufficiently detailed questioning of learners' understanding of equality and diversity sometimes takes place at progress reviews. The records of meetings and discussions generally make little reference to equality and diversity. The provider recognises that the current staffing profile does not fully reflect the learner profile.

23. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. HIT has a detailed policy for working with children and vulnerable adults that adequately meets legislation. Designated responsibility for safeguarding is at director level. HIT Training has checked all staff with the Criminal Records Bureau.

## What learners like:

- The opportunity to learn and go further
- 'It's made me question more what I do'
- Helps build confidence
- Provides challenge
- 'Learning how to manage my co-workers more'
- 'My training led to me being promoted'

## What learners think could improve:

- 'Computer training would be of help'

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006/07	Overall	444	71%
		Timely	136	31%
	2007/08 ( 12 months)	Overall	987	76%
		Timely	368	38%

(\*) A work-based learning table for apprentices is not included as learners have not been on programme long enough.

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 3 months or greater of the LSC contract year

- \* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned
- \*\* College/provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'
- \*\*\* Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'skills for life'