

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Access Training (East Midlands)  
Limited  
Date of visit: 5 November 2008

### Context

The one-day monitoring visit follows the inspection in August 2007 at which all aspects of the quality of the programmes within health, public service and care and preparation for life and work were found to be satisfactory. In addition, inspectors judged leadership and management, equality of opportunity and the capacity of the provider to improve to be satisfactory.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in improving the success rates for all learners?	Reasonable progress
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Access Training (East Midlands) Limited (Access) has made reasonable progress to improve learner success rates. Most work-based learners are following an apprenticeship programme. Since the previous inspection, overall apprenticeship success and timely success rates have shown an improving trend and are satisfactory. Success rates for advanced apprenticeships have improved and are good for 2007/08. However, the Learning and Skills Council has not yet validated the provider's data for 2007/08.

Progression rates for Entry to Employment (E2E) learners have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory. Learners' achievement rates have improved and were satisfactory in 2006/07. Unvalidated data for 2007/08 indicates that achievement rates are now good. Success rates for literacy and numeracy qualifications were identified as a strength at the previous inspection. They have improved and remain good. Success rates are similar for different groups of learners. Success rates for Train to Gain programmes are satisfactory overall, but are high for learners on road passenger transport programmes.

## The quality of the provision

How much progress has been made in improving the effectiveness of progress reviews?	Reasonable progress
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Access has made reasonable progress in improving the effectiveness of progress reviews. Review meetings, carried out six weeks following induction, include the employer and a suitable range of staff who work together to guide the learner. Unlike at the previous inspection, assessors for apprenticeship programmes now carry out the progress reviews. Access focuses appropriately on building good relationships between the assessor, learner and employer. It observes progress reviews as part of its quality assurance arrangements. The quality manager audits the outcomes from this process. Departmental managers receive appropriate information to bring about actions for improvement. Suitable identification of reviewers' development needs leads to the provision of appropriate support and training. Access has implemented a new progress review process for E2E learners. Monitoring of target completion has improved. Plans to introduce an objective and target tracker process are well advanced. However, staffing issues have slowed the introduction of some other new initiatives. At the previous inspection, inspectors judged the strategies to improve the timekeeping and attendance of E2E learners to be unsatisfactory, but the arrangements have improved and are now satisfactory. Recently, the provider has introduced better monitoring of learners' attendance during induction classes. Access uses the information during progress reviews effectively to assess learners' performance and to identify opportunities to attend future classes to replace any missed sessions.

## Leadership and management

How much progress has the provider made to improve its approach to equality and diversity?	Significant progress
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There has been significant progress in improving the provider's approach to equality and diversity. Access has implemented a wide range of very effective actions to promote and increase staff and learners' understanding of equal opportunities and diversity. The provider has planned and carried out a good variety of themed initiatives each month. Examples include 'celebrating culture and diversity' and 'African history'. Promotion of these activities is good. Staff question and challenge learners' personal experiences of equality and diversity appropriately during progress reviews. They use an appropriate range of methods, including quizzes and questions, to check and reinforce learners' understanding. Access works with 130 different local partners to deliver qualifications to hard to reach learners. It uses an informative prospectus to promote the courses and qualifications it offers. The text and images used promote equality of opportunity well. All staff attend training in equality of opportunity and diversity and most have achieved or are working towards qualifications to enhance this training. Equality and diversity are fixed agenda items at monthly staff meetings. The provider loans laptop computers to learners who do

not normally have access to computers. Voice recognition software is available for learners who have language difficulties.

What progress has been made in improving the analysis and use of management information?	Reasonable progress
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Access has made reasonable progress in introducing its analysis and use of management information. At the previous inspection, inspectors judged there to be no overall process through which the provider reviewed all parts of the learners' training. A satisfactory process is now in place. The provider has introduced a comprehensive spreadsheet to record and monitor learners' progress and staff now monitor learners' progress appropriately. A 'traffic light system' identifies learners who have failed to meet agreed targets. Staff discuss learners' progress at team meetings and implement remedial action as required. The provider now routinely records staff turnover. It has completed some analysis of this data and has introduced strategies to reduce the turnover rate. Access has adopted a more thorough approach to recruitment, appraisal and staff development. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these changes. At the previous inspection, Access did not carry out sufficient analysis of the grades for teaching and lesson observations. The provider now appropriately identifies trends and acts to make improvements. As identified at the previous inspection, data used to monitor success and retention rates remains good.

How much progress has been made in introducing effective quality assurance arrangements?	Reasonable progress
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There has been reasonable progress to introduce effective quality assurance arrangements. Access monitors the quality of teaching and learning effectively through the use of a structured scheme of lesson observations. Quality processes identify and challenge poor quality training appropriately. Trainers receive additional training to meet identified needs. The provider monitors the quality of assessment and progress reviews through direct observation and analysis of records. Staff carry out appropriate checks of learners' understanding of both equality and diversity and health and safety. Access analyses trends in learner progress and targets those learners at risk quickly to give them additional support. The analysis of success rates for different genders and ethnicities has now improved. The provider monitors the quality of the induction process appropriately through the use of learner feedback. Managers use the recommendations for improvement identified at team meetings to improve the learners' experience. Access holds external verifier reports centrally and implements actions to resolve any issues highlighted. Suitable internal verification procedures are in place and are implemented well. The provider conducts employer surveys regularly and analyses the results in detail, but does not use this analysis sufficiently to bring about improvements.

## Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made to ensure the self-assessment process and development plan bring about improvements?	Reasonable progress
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Access has made reasonable progress to ensure the self-assessment process and development plan bring about improvements. Since the previous inspection, Access has improved the way it formulates the self-assessment report. Better use is now made of learner and employer views to inform judgements. Quality arrangements ensure that staff are more involved in contributing to the report's contents. A useful summary of the self-assessment report is available to employers. However, Access has yet to assess the effectiveness of this initiative.

Managers monitor the self-assessment report on a quarterly basis. Departmental managers carry out regular and frequent updating of the associated action plan. The provider monitors progress towards completing targets effectively. The identification and instigation of suitable improvements is satisfactory. Targets in the action plan are relevant and usually have appropriate timescales. However, there is little use of meaningful short or medium-term targets to guide detailed assessment of progress. The report and development plan are generally evaluative and Access has resolved the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.