

Maxine Mayer
Building C
Cumberland Place
Nottingham NG1 6HJ

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

TELEPHONE: 01926 624534
MOBILE: 0776 4838726
EMAIL: Maxine.mayer@ofsted.gov.uk



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Richard Wade
Ufi Ltd
Dearing House
Sheffield

Dear Richard

Ofsted Good Practice Survey Programme 2008/09

An evaluation of adult progression in learning

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on the 17th of February 2009. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up a great deal of time during the visit to meet with me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

The visit provided much useful evidence which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting for the Adult Progression survey, as well as a wider survey we are carrying out on progression, titled 'Moving Through The System'.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made on this one-day visit included: interviews with staff, scrutiny of the examples of good practice provided and a review of a range of documents.

Overall, the progression rates and arrangements to facilitate adult progression provided by Ufi are outstanding. I agreed to provide a summary of the good practice seen and to identify some areas for development, and I outline the main findings as bulleted points below.

The main strengths are:

- Well defined adult progression which is understood both internally and externally

Clear definitions and key performance indicators (KPIs) for adult progression are agreed with the learning and skills council at national level. The KPIs are aimed at ensuring that learners progress to a full level 2 qualification in other provision\learning. Internal definitions of progression for instance achievement of a second learning goal after achieving the initial one complement this. These enable UFI to measure learners' progress, following their first course, to further learndirect courses which are part of level 2 pathways. Progression to employment and other further learning has a high focus. However, progression within Train to Gain programmes is not as well understood.

- A corporate commitment which ensures learning is focussed on progression for all learners

UFI have completely revised and resourced its strategy regarding adult progression. All aspects of the curriculum from induction to exit have a strong focus on adult progression. All key stages of the learners' experience have been analysed in order to identify good practice and barriers to progression. Learner progression is celebrated very well.

- Extensive collection and analysis of progression data

UFI have extensive systems in order to collect and analyse progression data. These are wide ranging and include data at individual learner, course, centre, regional and national levels. Data is also collected through a variety of surveys of current learners and those who have completed courses. Management information reports are also extensive with significant analysis in order to determine performance and identify trends.

- High level performance monitoring of progression activities

Progression data is provided to the regions on a monthly basis and is used in order to inform the performance reviews and subsequent rating of centres. An independent annual survey measures UFI against the externally agreed progression definitions in order to ensure and measure progress to the learning and skills council KPI. This data is also used to measure the effectiveness of the range of provision.

- Strong partnership working

National agreements, for example with Jobcentre plus and OLASS, provide referrals to learndirect programmes. These agreements are further developed at regional and centre levels in order to promote learning for these participant groups. Centres have strong referral processes and local arrangements to other learning opportunities that are available in order to ensure the most appropriate progression offer to learners.

- Fully integrated information, advice and guidance in the curriculum

All centres are required to have the Matrix award for information, advice and guidance (IAG) with staff working towards qualifications in IAG. All interventions with learners have IAG as an integral component. In particular, very comprehensive and rigorously monitored exit procedures ensure that all learners receive appropriate IAG regarding progression opportunities at the end of their course.

- Very good emphasis given to staff development

UfI has identified that highly effective relationships between tutors and learners are essential to learner progression. The national and regional structures at UfI are used well in order to develop centre staff. Much encouragement and cooperation encourages the sharing of best practice both within UfI and between centre staff. Much training has been provided to the network in 2007/08 through the progression module. This modular training included partnership working, signposting, referrals and good use of IAG. Much material is available on the providers' portal for centres to develop their knowledge of adult progression.

Areas for further development

- None identified

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your adult provision. If there are any points or aspects of the visit you wish to discuss, please contact me. As we will be evaluating the survey, you may be contacted in the future to find out your views. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted Website.

Yours sincerely

Maxine Mayer HMI