

# UFI Ltd (North West Region)

Partial reinspection report

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Type of provider: Independent Learning Provider

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## Introduction

UFI Ltd (North West Region) was inspected in August 2009. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas except health, public services and care, which was judged to be inadequate. Ofsted is responsible for reinspecting all provision that is inadequate.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Subject area	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Health, public services and care	4	3

## Context

UFI Ltd (North West Region) currently has 61 learners training in health, public services and care. After the induction, learners are visited in the workplace every two weeks for vocational training and assessment and for the development of their literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. Learners can access online learning via learndirect or workbooks provided by the subcontractors. All training and assessment is carried out by one of three subcontractors; International Learning Centre, Learning Links or Pinnacle College.

## Key findings

- Overall achievement and success rates are good across health and social care programmes. Provider data show that for 2009/10 overall success rates are 84%, above the national overall success rates of 79%. Provider data also show that overall timely success rates are also good at 82% compared to a national timely success rate of 61.8%.
- Delivery of underpinning knowledge is satisfactory but is undertaken in a variety of ways across sub-contractors. Some learners have access to good formal teaching sessions and workshops with good use of direct questioning linked to learners' professional practice; others access training through the learndirect portal and handbooks whilst others use workbooks which are written and provided by the sub-contractor. Theory is not always appropriately or sufficiently linked to practice.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory and meets the awarding body requirements. Learners are visited frequently in their workplaces for assessment, feedback and planning, although the quality of these varies between sub-contractors. For some learners assessment and feedback are developmental; identifying appropriate skills and competence and feedback is evaluative. For many learners the assessment process is mechanistic and some feedback is mainly descriptive and not evaluative. Internal verification is satisfactory.
- The quality of learner reviews remains variable. The best reviews provide guidance and direction for learners; targets are challenging and promote the development of professional skills and development. However, many do not

identify long-term goals and do not challenge or extend learners' knowledge, skills and understanding. For many, targets do not appropriately recognise learners' current competence. The scope of reviews is often limited and does not consistently involve employers or develop learners' professional practice.

- The promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity and safeguarding is good for some learners. They are able to link this effectively to their work roles and identify challenges that they encounter. However, some learners have only a basic understanding for the level and stage of their current programme.
- The promotion and attainment of Skills for Life qualifications are variable across subcontractors. Some learners recognise their value as a positive contribution and development tool for progression and promotion but others less so. Learner up-take and attitude reflects those presented by the sub-contractor and many learners do not access the training because they do not understand the full benefits of doing so and are unaware that it can be embedded within their NVO programme.
- Employers are well supported by the sub-contractors. They recognise assessors' visits as a positive contribution to the workplace. Assessors inform employers about learners' progress frequently and employers are well informed of how they can support their learners towards attaining their qualifications. Employers' views are collected by the subcontractors on a regular basis but many employers have not had direct contact with UFI Ltd (North West Region) or have a full understanding of its role in training.
- Working relationships between UFI Ltd (North West Region) and subcontractors are good. Senior managers from sub-contractors are responsible for working with UFI Ltd (North West Region) and building appropriate service level agreements with employers. Opportunities are presented by UFI Ltd (North West Region) for sub-contractors' representatives to attend standardisation meetings and share good practice. However, assessors, learners and employers are not part of this process and dissemination of the outcomes from these meetings is not monitored by UFI Ltd (North West Region).

What does UFI Ltd (North West Region) need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of learner progress reviews by providing further training and support to assessors on the setting of precise and challenging targets, individualised to meet learners' needs.
- Further improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by providing further training and support to assessors, establishing closer links between theory and practice and ensuring that outcomes from teaching and learning observations lead to informed judgments and clear actions for improvement.
- Further improve the consistency and effectiveness of assessment practice by increasing the variety of approaches to evidence collection, providing wider access to on-the-job training and assessment opportunities and improving the quality of formal feedback following assessment.
- Improve participation rates in Skills for Life qualifications through better promotion and commitment to the available Skills for Life training and assessment as a means to career progression.

## Additional Themes

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this reinspection.

### Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has UFI Ltd (North West Region) made in improving the effectiveness of the self-assessment process and the quality improvement plan to bring about improvements? Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, self-assessment was judged to be satisfactory. Since then UFI Ltd (North West Region) has improved its self-assessment processes to include increased involvement of subcontractors. All subcontractors attended a training event to identify key strengths and areas for improvement for the Train to Gain provision. Access to improved data allowed evaluative judgements to be made on the performance of each subcontractor and each area of learning. Judgments were subject to scrutiny and moderation by UFI Ltd (North West Region) managers and other subcontractors. The resultant report clearly identifies key strengths and areas for improvement for the Train to Gain provision. A rating is applied to each grade to indicate improvement or decline and clear quality development plans are used to drive and monitor progress. The outcomes from the revised self-assessment process have allowed UFI Ltd (North West Region) to take action to develop and support contractors. However, the self-assessment report is not sufficiently informed by the views of employers and learners. Evaluation questionnaires and an online questionnaire were used but response rates from employers and learners were low. The subsequent analysis of responses did not sufficiently identify the stakeholders' views on key areas for improvement or lead to appropriate action. UFI Ltd (North West Region) is planning to introduce a system to further improve self-assessment in the near future.

### Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made with improving outcomes for learners? Significant progress

UFI Ltd (North West Region) has made significant progress in improving outcomes for learners. At the time of the inspection, overall success rates were satisfactory. Since then, they have improved and are now good. Provider data show that for 2009/10 overall success rates are 90%, above the national overall success rates of 83.1%. Provider data also show that overall timely success rates are good at 82% compared to a national timely success rate of 70%. Previously, success rates varied significantly between subject areas and were low in health and social care. They have increased in this subject area from 60% in 2008/09 to 84% in the current year and are now good. Performance monitoring has improved. UFI Ltd (North West Region) now generates an extensive range of management information to monitor success rates separately at each subcontractor and for each subject area. The data are used well by UFI Ltd (North West Region) and the providers to identify areas of weak performance and effectively action-plan to drive improvement. Better

monitoring of subcontractor performance by subject area has led to UFI Ltd (North West Region) contracting with new providers for health and social care training to replace some of the provision with previous low performance.

### Quality of provision

What progress has UFI Ltd (North West Region) made in improving employer engagement and consortia working? Reasonable progress

UFI Ltd (North West Region) has improved its relationship with its subcontractors since the last inspection. Communication is now good. Four full consortium meetings are held each year and sub-advisory groups have met to discuss common issues and share good practice. Subcontractors have also formed working groups to focus on specific issues. Communication between subcontractors and joint working is good. A collaborative environment has been established to benefit learners. Subcontractors appreciate the change in management style. They recognise the improved use of robust data to monitor performance and quality of provision and feel much better supported by UFI Ltd (North West Region) and by each other. However, UFI Ltd (North West Region) has not yet established effective relationships with employers. It is left too much to subcontractors to develop employer relationships. Many employers and learners are unaware of the roles and responsibilities of UFI Ltd (North West Region) in their training and assessment.

### Leadership and management

What progress has been made towards meeting government requirements to secure adequate safeguarding arrangements? Significant progress

At the inspection, the safeguarding arrangements for UFI Ltd (North West Region) were judged to be satisfactory. They met government legislative requirements. Since then, UFI Ltd (North West Region) has significantly improved its safeguarding arrangements and has raised the priority of safeguarding amongst its subcontractors. Their understanding of safeguarding issues has improved and is now good. UFI Ltd (North West Region) facilitated safeguarding training for its own and subcontracting staff. Staff are supported by further training at consortium meetings. An annual safeguarding health check has been introduced to thoroughly check subcontractors' safeguarding arrangements. It includes the risk assessment they carry out and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks where appropriate, staff training and development and the way they promote safeguarding to learners and employers. A director is the designated responsible officer at UFI national level and the Regional Performance Manager North West Region has specific responsibility for safeguarding in the North West. Both designated officers have received further appropriate training in safeguarding and safer recruitment practices. Good practice in safeguarding, particularly the annual safeguarding health check developed in the North West region, has subsequently been shared with other regions of UFI.

What progress has UFI Ltd (North West Region) made towards improving and embedding the systems for quality improvement? Reasonable progress

At the time of the last inspection some key aspects of quality improvement were judged to be inadequate. UFI Ltd (North West Region) has made reasonable progress in improving and embedding systems for quality improvement. Success rates have significantly improved. Processes for self-assessment are much improved. The sharing of good practice between subcontractors has improved and the use of information and data to support quality improvement at sector subject area level is now good. Monitoring of subcontractors by UFI Ltd (North West Region) now clearly focuses on their performance and the quality of their provision, replacing the previous compliance based audits. Observations of key learner processes have been introduced but these do not sufficiently lead to specific actions to drive improvement. Only eight observations in the workplace by UFI Ltd (North West Region) of subcontractor staff have taken place to date and these have not been sufficiently analysed to identify trends and take rectifying action. Assessment practices have been reviewed and improved, including better standardisation practices to improve consistency. Learners' progress reviews are still of a variable standard. Problems in the quality of recording and in the setting and monitoring of targets remain. UFI Ltd (North West Region) is planning to introduce a system to better monitor the quality of reviews in the near future.

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