

Sheffield Trainers Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 54619

Name of lead inspector: Victor H Shafiee HMI

Last day of inspection: 12 March 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Sheffield Trainers Limited (STL) is an independent training provider. Established in 1984, STL became part of the Employability and Skills Group in August 2007. STL offers apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes in health and social care, construction, engineering, retail and commercial enterprises, retailing and wholesaling, hairdressing, hospitality, business administration, management, customer service and marketing and sales.
2. STL contracts with the Yorkshire and Humber Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and offers training in the following Government office regions: Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, North West and North East.
3. The company's head office and administration functions are based in Sheffield. Since the previous inspection, the company has grown significantly. The number of learners has increased drastically from 1,300 in 2005 to 13,652 in 2009. The company employs 234 full-time staff, of whom 196 are home-based assessors and trainers.
4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
 - Summit

The quality of the provision at this organisation was not directly inspected during this inspection.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	7,880 learners
Apprenticeships	5,772 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2

Subject Areas	
Health and social care	2
Hairdressing	2
Hospitality and catering	2
Business administration	3

Overall effectiveness

- Learners enjoy their programmes, make good progress and achieve their qualifications in good time. The achievement of learners receiving additional learning support is low except in hairdressing. STL works well with employers to provide good training at work. Learners value their off-the-job training and enjoy their practical on-the-job training. Employers speak highly of the skills that their employees develop with STL's help. Arrangements to assess learners at work are good. STL listens carefully to the views of learners and employers and uses these findings well to raise standards. Personal support for learners is good and there is a strong culture of mutual respect. Learners feel safe in their workplaces. The promotion of safeguarding is satisfactory. Managers provide a clear strategic direction and staff at all levels understand well what needs to be done to improve further. STL is in a good position to make further improvements.

Main findings

- Learners achieve well and enjoy their programmes. A high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications within the agreed timescales. Learners make good progress. The standard of their work is good and they acquire a good range of skills that enhance their employment or increase their chances of further promotion at work. On some apprenticeship and Train To Gain programmes learners achieve at a satisfactory rate.
- Overall, the performance of different groups is similar. However, the gap in achievement of learners receiving additional learning support indicates that they are not improving their standards of literacy and numeracy as quickly as they could. The achievement of learners on government programmes to improve literacy, numeracy and the use of language is low but improving.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners' progress reviews cover all aspects of the learning experience thoroughly. During each review, staff thoroughly explore health and safety, and equality and diversity aspects with learners.
- Assessors use coaching techniques effectively to improve learners' confidence and understanding. Good work packs support individual learning between visits. However, assessors do not always adapt the standardised materials sufficiently to meet learners' individual needs.
- STL is highly responsive to employers' needs. Partnerships with employers and external organisations are good. The range of provision meets the needs of most learners well. Flexible programmes effectively fit into, and complement, learners' work patterns and activities. A good range of progression opportunities is available. Staff keep employers fully informed of learners' progress.
- Learners receive good support from assessors and employers. STL has developed well-designed additional support materials for use by trained staff. However, programmes are not sufficiently individualised to meet the needs of a small minority learners. Additional learning support activities do not sufficiently help a few learners to acquire good literacy and numeracy skills.
- Learners at STL receive a thorough induction where they receive good information, advice and guidance (IAG) about their programmes. However, some learners do not receive sufficient IAG throughout their programmes. STL has a comprehensive strategy for the delivery of IAG but this has not been fully implemented.
- Senior managers provide clear leadership to raise standards and set adequate targets for learner achievement. However, target setting is not sufficiently specific. Operational management is generally good. Managers are very supportive and foster good teamwork to make and sustain improvements. Managers and staff make good use of data to plan and manage the provision.
- Learners feel safe, secure at their workplaces and feel they are valued as individuals. The arrangements to promote the safeguarding of learners are satisfactory. Procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are clear and appropriate.

- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners and staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity. Staff promote a strong anti-harassment and anti-bullying ethos. STL takes good action to recruit learners from underrepresented groups.
- STL makes good use of learner and employer feedback and responds well to learners' and employers' suggestions for improvements. Quality arrangements are good. Self-assessment is good and the self-assessment report is largely accurate.
- Resources are managed effectively. The use of technology to support learning is good. Learners have access to a good resource library. Resources at employer premises are generally good. Accommodation is generally satisfactory.

What does STL need to do to improve further?

- Ensure success rates continue to increase for all learners, particularly those on government programmes to improve literacy, numeracy and the use of language, by ensuring programmes match more closely the needs of individual learners.
- Swiftly identify the reasons for the gap in performance across subject areas for learners who receive additional learning support. Extend the best practice in curriculum areas where this is working well and put in place an action plan and associated review activities to resolve this.
- Ensure target setting is more precise and set more specific and challenging targets for all subject areas. Focus sharply on programmes where performance is low and set ambitious expectations for high performing programmes.
- Ensure programmes are highly individualised by promoting effective modification to the standardised materials to meet each learner's needs.
- Continue to develop the expertise and qualifications of all staff involved in providing support for those on government programmes to improve literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Review the effectiveness of the different delivery methods used, to ensure a consistently positive learning experience for all learners.
- Accurately define learners' information, advice and guidance needs at each stage of their programmes and ensure the strategy to deliver these is fully implemented.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the skills they develop to get jobs and valuable experience
- the ability to work in a small group
- the ability to work at their own pace
- the very helpful support they receive with their training and studies.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more information about recruitment procedures onto apprenticeship and better careers advice.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the increase in employees' skills, confidence and enthusiasm
- the highly skilled assessors
- the professional approach of STL staff
- the regular contact with STL assessors and the flexible approach that fits with their business needs
- the feedback they receive on the performance of their employees.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more comprehensive information about new apprentices
- more and better training in information technology (IT) skills for their employees
- the time taken from initial marketing contact to recruitment.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

6. STL has a sound track record of sustained improvement and has tackled all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Strategic management and direction remains highly effective and the direction of the company is clear. Since the previous inspection, STL has increased drastically the number of learners and has maintained high achievement rates in most subject areas. Quality improvement arrangements are good. Managers and staff at all levels know what they need to do to sustain improvement and to raise expectations for all learners. Staff and managers are motivated and highly enthusiastic. They manage resources well to benefit learners. Target setting is well established and managers use targets extensively to monitor and manage staff and learner performance. However, a few targets are not sufficiently appropriate.
7. Self-assessment is well established and good. STL makes good use of learner and employer feedback. All training staff are involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is evaluative and accurate in almost all areas. However, the report did not identify some areas for improvement in the business administration subject area.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Learners achieve well and enjoy their programmes. The proportion of learners who complete their programme within agreed timescales is high, has consistently improved and is significantly above national averages. For example, 70% of hospitality and catering learners complete their programme within agreed timescales. This is 17 percentage points above the national average. The overall success rate for apprentices in 2008/09 was satisfactory at 73% and above the national average. The achievement of learners on government programmes to improve literacy, numeracy and the use of language is low. Overall, the performance of different groups is similar. However, the gap in achievement of learners receiving additional learning support indicates that they are not improving their standards of literacy and numeracy as quickly as they could.
9. The majority of learners make good progress against their starting points. The standard of their work is good and they acquire a good range of skills that enhance their employment or increase their chances of further promotion at work. Learners develop effective industry-standard skills. The focus on learners gaining a good level of trade skills is strong. Most apprentices progress well towards working independently.

10. Learners feel safe and secure at their workplaces. Training centres for health and social care, and hairdressing learners provide a welcoming environment. Learners show very good awareness of health and safety in centres and on employers' premises. STL places a very strong focus on anti-bullying.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

11. Learners value their off-the-job training and enjoy their practical on-the-job training. Assessors use coaching and professional discussion effectively to improve learners' confidence and understanding. Effective resources include detailed work packs that support and reinforce training. Key skills training sessions are well structured and topics relate well to learners' vocational contexts. Trainers' vocational expertise enhances learning. The use of technology during assessment and training is good.
12. Staff plan assessment activities well. Assessors use questioning well to check learning and provide learners with constructive feedback about future action points. Staff promote equality and diversity well during visits to workplaces. Staff do not always adapt the standardised materials sufficiently well when planning for individual needs. The results of initial assessment are not consistently taken into account and individual learning plans are not always sufficiently detailed. Occasionally, learning resources are not appropriate or at the correct level.
13. The range of provision meets the needs of most learners well. Programmes are flexible, effectively fit into learners' working patterns and complement work activities. A good range of progression opportunities is available.
14. Partnerships with employers and external organisations, such as Connexions, are good. Communication with employers is good and they are regularly involved in the planning of training. Assessors negotiate well with employers to meet learners' and business needs. Employers value the contributions that learners make to their business. Many employers contribute well to the learner progress reviews.
15. Personal support for learners is good. Learners value the regular contact they have with assessors. Any problems they experience are promptly resolved. The number of learners assessed as needing additional learning support has grown significantly in the last three years but, with the exception of hairdressers, they achieve less well than other learners. STL has developed a wide range of well-designed additional support materials for use by trained staff and assessors. However, only a small team of staff have specialist literacy and numeracy qualifications. A few learners do not receive sufficient specialist support. STL is piloting a new approach to providing additional support but it is too soon to judge its effectiveness.
16. The quality of IAG, provided during the thorough induction is good. Assessors provide some IAG within learner progress reviews but a few learners do not

receive sufficient IAG throughout their programmes. STL has recently defined its IAG strategy but this has not been fully implemented. The IAG needs of learners at each stage of their programme are not clearly defined to meet the needs of those learners with more complex barriers to learning.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

17. Senior leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction for STL. They promote ambition and have been successful in developing a positive culture of teamwork. Business planning is good and has a clear focus on learners' experiences. Operational management is good on most programmes. Communication across STL is good. Management of staff performance at all levels is thorough. Continuous professional development for staff is good and has a high priority.
18. The arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are clear and appropriate. The designated senior manager ensures that all appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are communicated effectively to learners, employers and staff. Learners are fully aware of the procedures for reporting any concerns. The provider has appropriate links with relevant agencies. STL has worked well to create a safe environment for learners and staff, including a robust system of risk assessments. The provider carries out its legal duties with regard to criminal record checks and it maintains a single record for all appropriate staff. The health and safety management system is appropriate. The arrangements for staff recruitment are robust. Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training.
19. The promotion of equality and diversity is good and integral to the ethos of the organisation. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Staff and learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. STL promotes a culture of mutual respect throughout its organisation. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are updated regularly. The impact of these is clearly evident in training and learning activities and within the learner progress reviews. Staff receive good equality and diversity training during a comprehensive induction and have useful regular updates to reinforce their understanding. Most staff use a good range of well-designed training resources to enhance learners' and employers' understanding of equality and diversity. STL has a comprehensive equality and diversity action plan.
20. STL takes good action to recruit learners from under-represented groups. The provider has been effective in narrowing the achievement gap for most learners. The analysis of information about the participation and performance of different groups of learners is good. Managers accurately identify programmes where learners were not doing as well as expected and put in place good robust actions to narrow the gap between success rates in different subject areas. There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of learners on the basis of ethnicity or gender. However, the achievement of

learners receiving additional learning support is lower than other learners, but it is improving.

21. STL has good arrangements to engage with learners. Managers use a well-established and effective system for collecting stakeholder views. An independent organisation works well to collect the views of different groups of learners and employers. Learners have a good range of opportunities to provide feedback to STL including reviews, forums and at various stages during their programmes.
22. Self-assessment is good in securing improvements in provision. Managers know what to do to raise standards. Action planning is effective. Managers use target setting extensively. However, a few targets are not sufficiently appropriate. Managers monitor closely learners' achievement and use data well to monitor and improve performance. Staff use a good range of data reports to monitor performance. Assessors and learners have good access to a well-developed online assessment and monitoring system.
23. Resources are managed effectively. Financial management is good. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. Good progress has been made to improve staff training and increase the number of suitably qualified teaching staff. However, not all programmes have sufficient specialist support.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 2

Context

24. Currently 1,429 learners are working towards intermediate and advanced level qualifications in health and social care. Of these, 15% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 15% receive additional learning support. Most learners are aged 19 years and above and the majority are women. Learning and assessment activities are carried out mainly in the workplace on an individual basis. Group teaching is carried out in training centres.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The proportion of learners who complete their programme within agreed timescales is high and above the national average. Most learners make good progress towards their qualifications. The success rate for apprentices in 2008/09 was satisfactory and just above the national average. Success rates in 2008/09 were high for Train to Gain learners. The achievement of learners receiving additional learning support is significantly lower than other learners, but it is improving.
- Learners enjoy their learning and develop good vocational skills, knowledge and confidence. Learners have a good understanding of the theoretical aspect of their programme. Learners' vocational skills often exceed the requirements expected for their job roles. Learners' written work is good; their portfolios are well organised and show clear progression through the programme of study. Attendance is good. Learners work well together in activities and group exercises.
- Learners feel safe and develop accurate and detailed awareness of safe working practices. They are knowledgeable about nutrition, protection of vulnerable adults, safeguarding and fire awareness. They apply their knowledge well to help their service users. Safeguarding topics are regularly discussed and particular attention is given to risk-assessment for vulnerable service users.
- Training and learning are good. Trainers use a good variety of interesting and challenging activities to interest learners, who participate enthusiastically in lessons. Learners apply their new knowledge well in role-play and discussion groups. However, initial assessment of the learners' individual learning styles are not always used effectively to meet the needs of all learners and a few tutors do not consistently mark learners' work regularly.
- Learner progress reviews are good. Reviews cover all aspects of the learning experience well. Staff are skilled at motivating learners and work well with employers to provide learners with challenging learning opportunities. Equality and diversity are discussed frequently at reviews. The arrangements for the identification of learners' additional learning support are appropriate.

- Assessment practice is good. Assessors use a wide range of assessment methods. Assessment activities are timely, detailed and well planned. Learners receive good verbal and written feedback and clearly understand what they need to do to improve work. Standardisation meetings are used effectively to share good practice and ensure consistency.
- Resources to support learning are satisfactory. Learners benefit from welcoming, bright and well-maintained buildings with good access to computers and training materials. However, there are too few written journals and textbooks in the resource centre for learners who might want to access opportunities for further reading or to research topical issues.
- Provision meets the needs of learners and employers well. Links with employers benefit learners. Staff work well with employers. Employers are supportive of learners and help them to do their best.
- Support for learners is particularly good. Staff are flexible, reliable and approachable. They are very encouraging of their learners and provide them with helpful, practical support to help them achieve. Learners receive good IAG to help them find and progress in their health and social care and nursing careers. This inspires learners to explore job roles and further training opportunities.
- Operational management is good. Staff are appropriately qualified and have valuable professional experience which contributes to motivating and inspiring learners. Use of data is very effective, particularly in monitoring and managing staff performance. Assessor performance is linked clearly to the learners' timely achievement. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process.

What does STL need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve overall success rates and increase the achievement of learners receiving additional learning support by identifying causes for underperformance and providing learners with good individualised support.
- Ensure that all tutors mark learners' written work regularly.
- Increase the volume of textbooks and journals available to learners to broaden the range of learning materials they have access to.

Hairdressing

Grade 2

Context

25. Currently 448 apprentices are working towards intermediate and advanced level qualifications in hairdressing and barbering. Of these, 9% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 23% receive additional learning support. Most learners are aged 16 to 18 years and the majority are women. STL delivers workplace training in salons across the Yorkshire and Humber and East Midlands areas.

Key findings

- Success rates for learners have continued to improve and are good. In 2008/09, overall success rates exceeded the national average by eight percentage points. The proportion of learners who complete their programme within agreed timescales in 2008/09 was high and 11 percentage points above the national average. Learners are making good progress towards their learning aims but success rates in the first six months of 2009/10 were low compared with national averages.
- There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of learners on the basis of ethnicity or gender. The achievement of learners receiving additional learning support is higher than other learners.
- Learners develop good vocational and employment skills. They display good levels of practical skill from an early stage, especially in cutting and colouring. Portfolio evidence indicates a good grasp of theoretical aspects. In many cases, standards exceed the level and requirements of the qualification. Learners increase their employability and work well to build a client base within their salons.
- Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe in the workplace. They give a high priority to good client care, health, safety and hygiene. Learners receive effective training on anti-bullying and speak confidently about safeguarding issues.
- Training and learning are good. Learning includes an effective mix of theory and practical activities. Learners receive good individual training with a variety of good activities. Learners have a good understanding of the theoretical aspect of their qualifications which is reinforced well during practical training. Learners receive good coaching support from work colleagues and their employers. Key skills training is provided through highly effective individual coaching.
- Learner progress reviews are good. Reviews cover all aspects of the learning experience thoroughly. Staff carefully evaluate learners' progress toward agreed targets. Employers take full part during the reviews and are fully informed of learners' progress. Staff make good use of well designed materials to promote discussion on equality and diversity topics.

- Staff make good use of learning resources including information technology (IT) and work packs. Hairdressing salons provide a welcoming environment. Trainers' vocational expertise effectively enhances learning. Trainers use discussion and questioning effectively to check learning and to enhance learners' knowledge and understanding of each topic.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. Learners have appropriate access to prompt assessment activities. Learners receive useful feedback and have appropriate assessment plans. Internal verification arrangements are effective.
- The range and content of provision are satisfactory and meet the needs of the majority of learners and employers. Provision includes both ladies' and gentlemen's hairdressing at intermediate and advanced levels. However, the range of specialist courses in Afro-Caribbean or Asian hairdressing is insufficient. This area for improvement was correctly identified in the self-assessment report.
- Partnership working with employers is good. Close working between STL and employers benefits learners and ensures in-salon training is highly effective. Learners have access to good opportunities to gain additional vocational experiences through visits to trade shows, competitions and manufacturer product training.
- Learners benefit from good individual support. Learners' programmes are flexible and adapted to take account of their individual needs, abilities and progress. Support for learners with additional learning needs is good. A well-managed award system for learner performance recognises achievement and personal development.
- Operational management is good. Communication and management of performance are good. Managers monitor staff performance well and the use of IT to monitor learners' performance is good. Target setting is well established but targets are not sufficiently challenging. Self-assessment is thorough and the self-assessment report is accurate.

What does STL need to do to improve further?

- Continue to increase success rates through setting more ambitious targets and ensure in-year success rates rapidly improve.
- Widen the curriculum offer by introducing specialist courses or options for learners to develop skills in Afro-Caribbean or Asian hairdressing.

Hospitality and catering

Grade 2

Context

26. Currently 912 learners are working towards intermediate and advanced level qualifications in hospitality and catering of whom 421 are on Train to Gain programmes. Over two thirds of learners are women, 5% of learners are from a minority ethnic background and 11% of learners receive additional learning support. All training and assessment takes place in the workplace. Most learners are employed.

Key findings

- Learners enjoy their programmes and success rates are high. Train to Gain and apprenticeship success rates are good and well above national averages. A high proportion of learners complete their programme within agreed timescales. The achievement of learners aged 25 and over is significantly better than other learner groups. The achievement of learners receiving additional learning support is satisfactory but lower than other learners. In the first six months of 2009/10 success rates were low.
- Learners make good progress and develop good skills. Learners develop particularly good vocational skills and take a pride in their work. They improve their knowledge of health and safety legislation. Their confidence improves greatly and many have progressed in their employment through promotion and greater responsibility. Learners on programme-led apprenticeships have gained jobs.
- Learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work and feel safe and secure in their working environment. They have a good understanding of health, safety and security in the workplace and adopt safe working practices. Assessors check learners' understanding of health, safety and equal opportunities regularly.
- The use of technology during assessment and training is good. Assessors use technology, such as digital voice recording, well to assist in recording extensive and detailed performance evidence. Good use is made of recorded discussions to help learners with additional needs.
- Teaching, training and assessment are satisfactory. Individual coaching is effective. Learners use effective resources, including detailed worksheets, during their training. However, some resources are not always appropriate or at the correct level.
- The delivery of key skills is adequate. Key skills are fully integrated into learners' programmes. Most learners and managers are fully aware of the relevance of key skills. Evidence produced for key skills is relevant to the industry and the learners' workplace. For example, projects around numeracy are related to ordering and stock control at the individual public house.

- Good use is made of management information systems to monitor learners' progress against targets; staff instigate prompt action to support learners identified at risk of leaving their programmes early. Reinforcement of equality and diversity during learner progress reviews is satisfactory.
- Individual action planning and target setting for some learners is insufficient. Individual learning plans lack sufficient detail and do not accurately reflect the learners' individual needs. A few learners have insufficient understanding of their targets. A few action plans contain poorly recorded information or have imprecise targets. Too many action plans and targets are the same for learners with differing needs.
- Partnerships with employers are good. Staff have developed very good working relationships with employers. Communication between STL and employers is good. Employers are regularly involved in planning training for learners. Employers are highly supportive and provide learners with good opportunities to complete their programmes. Most employers report clear business benefits from the programme and have a good understanding of the qualifications.
- Support for learners is good. Assessors and employers provide learners with good individual support. Learners receive good IAG before selecting their qualification. Assessors have close contact with their learners and are able to resolve any concerns swiftly. Learners who are identified as having additional learning needs receive useful literacy and numeracy support. Assessors have appropriate skills and experience to support individual learners well.
- Operational management is good. Most learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity and can apply this in their workplace. This is effective in supporting learners to identify and tackle barriers to learning and employment. Self-assessment is effective.

What does STL need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve success rates for all learners, particularly for those learners with additional learning needs. Carefully identify, plan and monitor their individual needs and ensure in-year success rates rapidly improve.
- Improve the use of individual learning plans; ensure all action plans have precise targets to help staff, learners and employers monitor individual progress.

Business administration

Grade 3

Context

27. Currently 349 learners are working towards intermediate and advanced level qualifications in business administration of whom 177 are on Train to Gain programmes. Most apprentices are aged 19 years and above. Eighty seven per cent are women and 16 learners are from a minority ethnic background. Thirteen per cent of apprentices receive additional learning support.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. A high proportion of learners on the Train to Gain programmes complete their programme within agreed timescales. A satisfactory proportion of apprentices complete their programme within agreed timescales. Overall success rates for apprentices are low and below national averages. Success rates are low for apprentices aged 16 to 18 and for learners who receive additional learning support.
- Learners make good progress towards achieving their learning goals and are well ahead of their planned achievement dates. Learners enjoy their learning, develop confidence and achieve their key skills early in their programmes. A few learners gain key skills at higher levels than required for their apprenticeship frameworks. Learners develop a good range of vocational skills and are motivated to progress to higher-level training.
- Many learners have progressed well in their workplaces and a few have taken on extra responsibilities. Learners feel safe, are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities at work and know what to do if they have a problem. They are clear about health and safety procedures.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessors plan and record assessment activities effectively. Learners receive regular assessment visits and assessors provide learners with constructive feedback. Learners have clear action points and are able to work well independently in between assessment visits. The use of technology to support assessment activities is good.
- Resources are satisfactory. Assessors have access to a good range of resources to support learners. Assessors are appropriately qualified to assess national vocational qualifications and have a wide range of occupational experience. However, only one third of assessors have specialist business administration qualifications.
- Programme planning for a few Train to Gain learners is insufficiently challenging. A few learners take qualifications below the level of their existing job roles and existing qualifications levels. The level of their qualification does not sufficiently develop them in their work.
- The monitoring of learner progress is satisfactory. Most employers are fully involved in the review of learners' progress. However, a few employers are not

sufficiently involved in the review of Train to Gain learners. During progress reviews, assessors work well to enhance learners' understanding of equality and diversity and health and safety issues.

- The range of provision meets the needs of learners and employers. Visits to learners are highly flexible and effectively fit into their working patterns. A good range of progression opportunities is available to learners in different job roles. Partnership working with employers is effective. Staff encourage employers to play an active role in planning programmes.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. A motivated team of assessors provides learners with effective support in the workplace. Learners receive appropriate information advice and guidance. Employers are supportive of learners and arrange time at work for them to work towards their qualifications.
- Operational management is effective. Assessors and managers closely monitor learner performance and make good use of electronic systems. Staff have received recent training in equality and diversity and safeguarding. STL use learner and employer feedback appropriately to improve the provision. Self-assessment is mostly effective and well established. However, the self-assessment report did not accurately identify all the areas for improvement.

What does STL need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve success rates for apprenticeship programmes specifically for learners aged 16 to 18 and those learners who receive additional learning support. Identify the reasons for underperformance; set incremental and challenging targets for managers, staff and learners.
- Ensure programmes are appropriately matched to the needs of Train to Gain learners by clearly identifying their career aspirations, existing qualifications and employers' needs.
- Involve employers fully in the monitoring of learners' progress on Train to Gain programmes by sharing the good practice that exists amongst employers of learners on other courses.

Information about the inspection

28. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's managing director as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local LSC, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.

29. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas STL offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Sheffield Trainers Limited (STL)

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	4,614	4,614
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	3	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*		
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	-	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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