

Huddersfield Textile Training Limited

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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REINSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Huddersfield Textile Training Limited (HTTL) is a not-for-profit training company based in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. It was formed in 1976 to meet the training needs of local textile manufacturers. Training at HTTL is funded through contracts with the Yorkshire and Humber Skills Funding Agency. HTTL delivers training for apprentices and advanced apprentices in manufacturing textiles, mechanical and electrical engineering and print and printed packaging. HTTL also offers Train to Gain programmes and commercial training.

HTTL was inspected in December 2009. Capacity to improve, outcomes for learners and the quality of the manufacturing technology provision were graded as satisfactory. Leadership and management, equality and diversity and the arrangements for safeguarding were judged to be inadequate. The overall effectiveness of the provision was inadequate.

This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit, which include the two mandatory themes of outcomes for learners, self-assessment and improvement planning. In particular, inspectors explored the progress made in improving both the arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has HTTL made in the implementation of the post-inspection action plan and the use of learner and employer feedback? Reasonable progress

HTTL has appropriately prioritised the post-inspection action plan. Frequent meetings are held to monitor the implementation of this plan and drive forward improvement. The pace with which most of the improvements have been tackled is satisfactory; however, in a few cases it has been slow. For example, the use of revised individual learning plans is not yet implemented. Most staff have now been observed delivering training and assessment sessions. These observations are suitably planned and the provider now grades each one. However, some sessions appear, from the observation documentation, to be graded too generously.

HTTL has revised the use of employer and learner feedback to more effectively improve the quality of its provision. A survey of employers' views has been completed and the results analysed. The company now makes better use of this information; for example it has led to the development of a more extensive information pack about the services which HTTL can provide. HTTL has revised learner questionnaires and analyses learners' views. Plans for responding to learners' views are progressing satisfactorily. HTTL has a clear understanding of its progress

since the previous inspection; it acknowledges that until recently progress in some areas has been slow.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has the provider made in improving success rates, particularly success rates within the agreed time? Reasonable progress

In 2008/09 apprentice success rates were high and the number of learners who completed within agreed timescales was also well above the national average. However, the previous inspection in December 2009 identified that retention of learners, on both apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes for 2009/10, was low. Of the 31 learners following the apprenticeship programme in 2009/10, 16 had already left without achieving. Of the 90 Train to Gain learners due to complete in 2009/10, 12 had completed in the planned timescale and 15 had left without achieving. Since then HTTL has started to put into place a more rigorous system for initial assessment and monitoring learner progress, which is beginning to bring about improvement. For example, no more learners on the 2009/10 Train to Gain programme have left early nor have any of those who started their programme in 2010/11.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in improving learners' and particularly Train to Gain learners', development of fundamental skills to support the attainment of their main learning goal? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, HTTL has made reasonable progress in improving arrangements for the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. The number of Train to Gain learners on literacy and numeracy programmes has doubled to eight. HTTL's own data show that these learners are making satisfactory progress. A clear strategy has been developed to support learners, for example learners who are at entry level 2 or who require language support are now referred to other specialist providers. HTTL uses subcontracting arrangements to support learners' literacy and numeracy needs. HTTL staff have received some training in assessing and supporting learners' literacy and numeracy skills; however, they do not have formal literacy and numeracy skills qualifications. Too few Train to Gain learners, who are identified as requiring literacy and numeracy support, access this provision.

What progress has been to better prepare learners for the requirements of their programmes? Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, guidance given on evidence collection and portfolio building was not sufficient for all learners. Learners now have access to an exemplar completed portfolio and some also receive a single information sheet on portfolio layout. The introduction of a comprehensive learner support pack designed to

provide information at the start of programme, as well giving support throughout the programme, includes much fuller guidance on portfolio building and evidence gathering than was previously available. The provider has taken external advice and has reduced the amount of evidence required, placing a greater emphasis on the quality of the evidence in the portfolio. Trainers set targets for learners, identifying the work which they need to complete for the next visit. However, the process for monitoring learner progress, particularly at the beginning of the course, is still not sufficiently rigorous to identify all those who are making slow progress.

Leadership and management

What improvements have been to the safeguarding arrangements?

Reasonable progress

The arrangements for safeguarding were inadequate at the previous inspection. In January 2010 HTTL identified a new designated safeguarding officer and a new safeguarding policy was developed and introduced. The company initially had difficulty accessing information from local safeguarding boards but has now made links with local colleges and other employers. A range of safeguarding topics is now discussed during learner reviews. More information on safeguarding is now made available in the centre. The designated safeguarding officer has completed some training but this is still not sufficient to enable him to deal confidently with all aspects of safeguarding. Further training, which will focus more on learners in the work place, is to take place in the summer. The initial training for assessors, which had taken place at the time of the previous inspection, is to be reinforced during the next few months.

What progress has HTTL made in improving learners understanding of equality and diversity?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection the promotion of equality and diversity was inadequate. The company has now introduced a comprehensive learner support pack, which contains more practical information, to help learners understand practices and behaviours that could constitute discrimination. Equality and diversity topics are now discussed with learners during their reviews throughout the year. HTTL has made contact with Wakefield College and other training organisations to share information and resources. Equality and diversity are now included on the course evaluation form completed by learners on all courses funded by the Skills Funding Agency. However, the further staff training provided was insufficient to give them the required knowledge and confidence to discuss all aspects of equality and diversity with learners. The company plans additional training for staff.

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