

# NHTA Ltd

## Reinspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 53671

**Name of lead inspector:** Julia Horsman HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 30 March 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## REINSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency (NHTA) is a private training company based in Nottingham. Their head office and administrative functions are located in the suburb of Sherwood and their salon and training rooms are in the Krowns salon and academy in Nottingham city centre. NHTA has provided work-based hairdressing apprenticeship training since 1983. The current owners bought the company in 2007. NHTA contracts with the Skills Funding Agency.

Currently there are 94 apprentices and 37 advanced apprentices who are employed in approximately 100 salons in Nottingham city centre and surrounding areas. NHTA delivers off-the-job theory and practical training. Learners attend Krowns fortnightly. NHTA assessors visit learners in their work-place salons for practical assessments and progress reviews.

In March 2010, the unemployment rate in Nottingham was 13% compared to the national average of 8%. The number of school pupils achieving GCSE grades A\* to C is 65%. Around 33% of the school pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

At the September 2010 inspection, all grades awarded were grade 4, inadequate.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

<b>What progress has been made in using the self-assessment process and quality improvement plan in addressing the areas to improve identified at the last inspection?</b>	<b>Reasonable progress</b>
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At the last inspection the self assessment process was not inclusive. It has improved. Staff are involved and effectively review progress at monthly meetings. The self assessment report more accurately evaluates NHTA's performance, but the strengths identified are too general and are insufficiently evaluative.

At the last inspection managers did not make use of a broad range of evidence such as data and the views of stakeholders. The use of data to inform self assessment has improved. Learners' involvement is improving but needs further development to be fully effective. Formal arrangements to engage employers in self assessment are insufficient.

At the last inspection NHTA did not use a quality improvement plan. This is now in place, but does not always clearly set out the expected outcomes of actions. Staff understand how they can contribute. The senior management team meet fortnightly to review the quality improvement plan. Progress is adequate in addressing areas for improvement.

The lesson observation programme focuses well on improving teaching and learning and staff value the support they are receiving. NHTA has still to introduce graded lesson observations. Their draft quality calendar does not show how the quality of key learner processes is evaluated or how these activities contribute effectively to quality improvement.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**Since the previous inspection what progress has been made in improving the pace of learners' progress on-programme?** **Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection target setting was weak and learners made slow progress, most taking two years or more to complete their apprenticeship, much longer than the industry norm. This has improved. Learners' end targets have been revised, taking better account of their prior skills and knowledge. Seventy-eight of 122 reviewed learning plans now have earlier planned end dates. Some learners are due to complete 12-16 weeks earlier than originally planned. Short term targets are completed in a minimum of every four weeks at salon assessment visits. The improved pace of assessment has also enhanced progress. Involving employers more has resulted in better support for an improved rate of learners' progress.

The system for monitoring learners' progress is up-dated monthly and reported on at quality meetings. The use of data to check learners' progress is now effectively linked to a 'traffic lights' alert system. Teachers now have targets for learner groups. These are effectively monitored at their weekly line-manager supervision meetings. A revised learner induction programme is due for introduction in 2011/12 for new starters to implement improved individualised target-setting at the beginning of their programmes.

### **Quality of teaching and learning**

**What progress has been made in improving the quality of the NHTA teaching/learning sessions?** **Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection theory sessions were inadequate. Now they are much improved; well-planned, noting individual learning support appropriate to the topic and ways to link topics to work-place salon activities. Aims and objectives are shared with learners and checked to ensure learning has taken place. Learning is stimulated by the use of a good variety of learning strategies and aids, including laptops, visual presentations, and effective questioning. Learners speak highly of the improvements.

At the last inspection staff development was insufficiently focused on improving teaching and learning, now it is. Recent staff training has successfully improved lesson planning. Effective observations provide teachers with detailed evaluative

feedback, and team meetings provide regular opportunities to share good practice. Further staff development activities are planned for April 2011.

Staff now reinforce the use of protective gloves and aprons in the Academy salon. They are aware of how Academy resources such as the dim lighting, learners having poor posture when bending to reach equipment and in one theory room trip hazards from damaged flooring, adversely impact on health and safety. The second floor theory rooms are dim, drab and bare with dirty paintwork. Some have heat-stained walls and some windows, when opened have, sharp edges too close to learners. The academy's refurbishment is planned for April 2011.

### **The range, frequency, target-setting and effectiveness of assessment**

**What progress has been made to improve assessment of learners' work?** **Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection intervals between assessments were too long and salon assessments were too often cancelled. The frequency of assessment for the NVQ has improved. Assessment is now available on-demand at Academy sessions, and in learners' work-places. NHTA assessors no longer only assess learners specifically on their own case-load, increasing assessment opportunities for learners by the now effective team-work of assessors. This has resulted in more flexible assessment opportunities and decreased time intervals between assessments for learners and in better staff time utilisation. Internal verifiers have supported assessors in improving standardisation and learners are positive about this. NHTA assessors work well in partnership with employers and attend work-place salon evening sessions to assess learners against NVQ competences. Interest by salon-based staff in becoming assessors has increased.

At the last inspection NHTA assessors were inefficient and unaware of how to group NVQ competences to make the most of assessment opportunities. Assessment practice has now improved. However, an area for improvement at the last inspection was to increase numbers of clients at Academy salon sessions, but NHTA still relies too much on learners bringing their own friends and family for treatments.

### **Management Information Systems**

**What progress has been made in improving the use of MIS data and information to effectively inform management decisions?** **Reasonable progress**

At the time of the last inspection NHTA did not collect or use data to set targets on key performance measures to plan and review the training provision or, to evaluate the performance of different groups of learners to narrow the achievement gap.

From early in 2011, NHTA is producing a set of helpful monthly management information reports which analyse key aspects of performance by different groups of learners. Analysis includes those who start, leave, achieve, or are out of funding learners. Tutors are provided with their own performance reports. NHTA produce other analysis including assessor workloads and learners travel to work distances. All data recording is being transferred to the company's central MIS database to improve accuracy and ensure management reports help improve business performance. NHTA plans to set up a group of staff to evaluate management reports to improve their effectiveness.

Reports on attendance are still in the process of being developed. NHTA's use of trend and performance analysis against key performance indicators to identify actions to improve is underdeveloped. The use of data to monitor learner progress has been improved and is effectively linked to an alert function. A further upgrade is due to be introduced in April 2011.

## **Safeguarding**

### **What progress has been made in implementing safeguarding arrangements and reinforcing these with learners? Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection NHTA did not meet the government requirement for safeguarding learners. All staff have now completed Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and a central register is held securely. NHTA has a designated safeguarding officer who has effective links with the local safeguarding board. All staff have received recent and appropriate training. They receive regular updates on safeguarding topics and are well aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding learners. However, the monitoring of actions to resolve concerns identified through health and safety risk assessments are insufficient.

Safeguarding is promoted during learner inductions, and guidance is set out in the learner handbook together with bullying and harassment and health and safety. Tutors complete good health and safety and safeguarding checks at progress reviews with both learners and employers. A central list of topics for discussion and a safeguarding 'hot topics' notice board for salons are being produced. Safeguarding is promoted in NHTA's newsletter. It is too soon to assess the impact of these measures.

Employers' awareness of safeguarding is reinforced through placements visits by the health and safety officer. Employers are provided with a Safe Learner guide. They are also required to ensure apprentices are aware of their safeguarding policy and procedures.

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