

Retail Motor Industry Training (Remit)

Focused monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 58614

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Last day of inspection: 29 November 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Focused Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

Retail Motor Industry Training (Remit) provides employer-responsive work-based learning provision in England, Wales and Scotland. The present company was established in April 2008 and during that year it took on over 3,000 learners from two failing providers. Remit's office is in Nottingham and its training centre is in Leicestershire. The previous inspection, in January 2010, was of Remit's work-based learning provision in England and Wales. Satisfactory grades were awarded for overall effectiveness, outcomes for learners, safeguarding, equality and diversity, and administration. Good grades were awarded for Remit's capacity to improve, quality of provision, leadership and management, and engineering.

The monitoring visit is of the provision in England and Wales where Remit now has 3,664 learners employed as advanced or intermediate apprentices, or employed and studying for stand-alone qualifications. Of these, 2,137 learners are working as trainee automotive engineers, 1,376 as administrators and 57 are on retail sales programmes. The remainder are involved in the work-based provision Remit has started since the previous inspection in construction, information and communication technology, leisure, travel and tourism, and education and training.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in using quality assurance systems more effectively, so that managers can identify weaknesses at an early stage and take swift action to tackle them?

Reasonable progress

Remit's self-assessment process was recognised at the previous inspection as being good and inclusive and it remains so. Remit has a clear and appropriately detailed self-assessment strategy aimed at evaluating the impact of its provision on every aspect of learners' programmes and meeting inspection criteria. Remit's self-assessment report is clearly written, informative and contributes effectively to forming the quality improvement plan. Data analysis and evaluation are used effectively to inform judgments. Responses to surveys by learners are too low (19.3%) and their parents/guardians (15.4%) and employers (5.4%). College staff responses were higher at 35%. Remit's staff input to self-assessment is good. Monthly focused reviews monitor progress against actions in the quality improvement plan, but these reviews are not always sufficiently evaluative in ensuring actions have the planned positive impact. Since April 2011, the widespread use of an electronic pen by Remit staff on workplace visits has enabled head office administrators to promptly quality assure completed documentation. Effective action is taken quickly to make improvements and learning points are discussed at regular monthly staff meetings. Observation of teaching and learning is annual for Remit

staff, with additional support followed by three-monthly observations for staff where improvements are required.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in improving learners' outcomes since the last inspection?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, outcomes for learners were satisfactory overall. This remains so. Since the previous inspection, apprenticeship programmes with high learner numbers (heavy vehicle technician, body repair technician and service technician) have significantly improved and there were good success rates at period 12 in 2010/11. Success rates against agreed timescales for these three programmes and for paint technicians are greatly improved and are good. Success rates have declined and are poor for a few apprenticeship programmes with lower numbers of learners. Those on vehicle sales have had success in gaining key skills and technical certificates prior to leaving programmes early, mostly due to economic and employment pressures. Motorcycle technician learners are reviewing their choices of optional National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units to better match skills in demand in the current changing economic climate. Remit analyses learner data extensively and uses results effectively to benefit learners. Reports by assessors showing their learners' progress are used at the managers' monthly assessor meetings to identify the best actions to support learners. Regional managers closely monitor their assessor team's data and provide experienced advice to aid improvements. Close contact is kept with colleges to monitor learners' progress, especially for those learners on programmes with block attendance such as the lift truck training.

Additional themes relating to the areas for improvement at the 2010 inspection

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in improving learners' low timely completion of frameworks, close tracking of progress and prompt assessment of naturally-occurring opportunities in learners' workplaces?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, the 2008/09 data showed success rates within learners' agreed timescales were low on all apprenticeship programmes at 34%. This related to the learners transferring in and the insufficient availability of specific types of work to meet NVQ requirements. Now, year 2010/11 period 12 data success rates within the time planned are greatly improved since 2008/09. In particular, these are now good on heavy vehicle technician (34% to 85%), body repair technician (46% to 71%) and paint technician (57% to 82%). Motorcycle technicians have declining success rates within the planned time from 71% (2008/09) to 36% (2010/11 period 12). Vehicle sales and vehicle fast-fit work has been affected by the economic decline and success rates within the planned time have declined since 2009/10 and

remain below national rates. Remit managers and internal verifiers now provide good support to assessors to benefit learners. Senior Remit staff hold frequent meetings with assessors to share good practice, including more efficient use of naturally occurring workplace opportunities. Employers are becoming more involved in learners' progress reviews and helping to identify work relevant to NVQ assessment requirements. Assessors now have improved understanding of how to assess across NVQ units on a workplace visit and identify naturally-occurring work to maximise assessment opportunities.

Quality of provision

What progress has continued to be made in promoting bilingualism to meet the requirements of the Welsh Assembly?

Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection the company continues to offer training in Wales and promote bilingualism. Remit continues to promote motor vehicle apprenticeships to young people through Career Wales and through membership of a consortium of learning providers within Wales at Cardiff and Vale. Remit is a member of the consortium's working parties and influences matters such as quality assurance, health and safety and equality and diversity. Recruitment processes and application forms are available in both English and Welsh. Currently, 97 learners speak Welsh, representing around 12% of the overall numbers of learners taking apprenticeships. The company offers assessment and coaching in Welsh from two assessors who are fluent Welsh speakers. However, no current learners have opted to carry out their assessments in Welsh.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made in investigating variations in different groups of learners' performance and the continued improvement in success rates, by close monitoring of progress and sharing of good practice?

Reasonable progress

At the 2010 inspection, the 2008/09 data showed success rates varied significantly between age groups, level of qualification, regions and specialisms. Since the previous inspection Remit has changed its computerised management information system and now produces a suite of reports for staff to use in discussions for making improvements benefiting learners. Investigations are comprehensive and use reports relating to individual assessors, Remit regions, learners' gender and ethnicity and the qualification studied. Remit staff now have processes for close monitoring of learners' progress. In their quality assuring of learners' progress reviews, administrators systematically check learners' progress against set targets as a percentage of the programme completed. Staff meetings are weekly and monthly with a very clear and well-recorded focus on learners. Variations in different groups of learners' progress are discussed and relevant employment factors considered in informing actions. Increased understanding of data by staff has improved practices and benefited

learners. Despite this, variations do remain and the improvement in success rates has not been across all programmes. What has improved is the sharing of good practice by Remit staff, which has been beneficial particularly for learners on programmes most affected by the current employment and economic climate.

What progress has been made in ensuring completion of risk assessments for motor vehicle practical training, especially in Remit’s training centre? Significant progress

At the last inspection all staff had completed training modules on safeguarding. Health and safety were promoted well by senior staff and appropriately supported and monitored. However, staff at Remit’s training centre had not received training and their understanding of risk assessment was poor. Risk assessments of the practical training workshops had not been carried out. The manager with responsibilities for quality and group services has now completed her health and safety qualifications and has thoroughly reviewed risk assessment procedures, rewriting and compiling a comprehensive set of risk assessments. These include detailed and easy to understand risk assessment for practical activities, such as tyre changing, carried out as part of the training in the practical workshops in the training centre. She also regularly reviews and monitors these procedures and has carried out monthly checks at the training centres including reviewing lessons to ensure learners use the laminated risk assessments sheets in their workshops to work safely. Staff training to understand the purpose of risk assessments is now part of induction and a separate training event took place to ensure trainers at the centre were aware and clear in their understanding of the process.

What progress has been made in improving employers’ and learners’ awareness of safeguarding through dissemination of guidance materials and discussion? Reasonable progress

At the last inspection arrangements for safeguarding were satisfactory and Remit had produced a leaflet to explain safeguarding procedures to learners and employers. Since then Remit has reviewed and strengthened its safeguarding policy with clear guidance and details about such matters as procedures, reporting and professional boundaries. Key managers have attended good external training which has subsequently been effectively cascaded to staff teams. Remit has created good communications through regular and frequent team meetings where safeguarding is routinely discussed and issues updated. As a result, Remit assessors and additional learning support staff, who work closely with learners, identify safeguarding matters very effectively in learners’ workplaces. Remit has had a large increase in the number of reported issues, indicating that learners have a greater confidence in reporting concerns to Remit staff. Remit has used its processes well in general in dealing with the reports and has involved external agencies appropriately. Despite Remit’s promotional activities and the circulating of the new leaflet and a well-designed informative quarterly newsletter, learners’ and employers’ understanding of specific safeguarding issues remains narrow.

What progress has been made in reinforcing and improving understanding by learners of equality and diversity and of health and safety, through improved assessors' knowledge of these areas and better progress reviews?

Significant progress

At the last inspection Remit had begun to improve aspects of promotion and training on equality and diversity. Assessors are now much better equipped to discuss matters with their learners, and review records show more in-depth and specific recording of the issues covered. Remit has created a lead role to bring a more detailed focus on learning and diversity. The post holder works closely with the operations manager to update staff teams, review practice more routinely, effectively analyse reports and set appropriate actions for improvement. Training for staff has been particularly effective and has covered a range of equality and diversity matters. Recent very effective external training has covered differences in religious practices and has contributed to the confident and positive way assessors feel able to extend and widen discussion with their learners on this aspect. Remit's new staff intranet has very good materials and monthly references to equality and diversity including a good staff training video. Remit's equality and diversity handbook is also helping guide staff to raise issues at a deeper level with learners. The well-designed, useful company quarterly newsletter is used particularly effectively with learners to promote issues and raise awareness further.

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