

Consortia Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		12 – 15 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Learners develop a very good range of skills for work and their personal lives. Staff help learners effectively to focus on their future careers and progress well in their job roles.
- A high number of learners find employment at the end of their programme.
- Much good and inspiring teaching develops learners' hairdressing skills to a high standard.
- Tutors provide good support for learners which encourages them to make good progress. Most overcome barriers to their learning, a minority achieving management roles or self-employment.
- Directors and managers have made good progress in establishing and developing the consortium by drawing on the strengths of the four lead providers and through very effective collaborative work.
- Managers plan learning programmes very effectively to respond flexibly to the needs of both learners and employers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Success rates, which were very high in 2011/12, have declined.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of provision mean that not all learners benefit from the good practice within the consortium. The identification of learners' additional needs, the provision of functional skills and the promotion of equality and diversity need to be improved in most centres
- Directors were too slow to tackle the declining success rates in 2012/13.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase learners' success rates to their previously high level by:
 - better promotion of functional skills
 - continuing to develop initial assessment and the identification of additional learning needs
 - further developing the sharing of good practice across all provision to ensure all learners benefit from a consistently high-standard programme
 - clarifying and formalising the responsibilities of directors to improve accountability and that they ensure learners' achievements receive urgent priority across the consortium.
- Make better use of data to plan improvements, particularly the gathering, analysis and use of data on learners' attendance and punctuality.
- Better promote equality and diversity by sharing existing good practice and by linking hair and beauty therapy teaching to explore fully different cultures.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. In 2011/12, success rates were very high and markedly above national averages. Success rates for learners completing by their target end date were also very high and in a minority of cases up to 40% above national averages. Principally because of issues impacting on learners' retention, success rates declined in 2012/13, but they remain, overall, slightly above national averages. The director of one of the lead providers, where a significant number of learners left the programme, is taking action to resolve this issue.
- In 2011/12, success rates for male and female learners were equally high although the number of learners completing successfully by their target end date was lower. Success rates for the small group of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities were below those for learners with no declared disability, but were above the national rates for all learners. However, in 2012/13 learners' success rates were not consistent across all lead providers and sub-contractors within Consortia Training (CT). Managers have recognised this variation in performance in the current self-assessment report.
- Learners develop very good vocational skills. Learners' work in classes and in the workplace is good and a minority very good. Most learners find employment in their placement salons and progress well in their job roles. One employer, for example, appointed a learner aged 21 as a manager of a new salon. The number of learners progressing from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships is satisfactory and the number gaining employment at the end of their programme is high.
- Staff at CT are ambitious for their learners; they prepare them very well for work and learners develop good employability skills. Learners appreciate the support staff give them and describe how staff help them to focus on their future and define clear and realistic career aims.
- Learners develop very good personal skills and high levels of confidence and pride in their achievements. They describe how this has influenced their performance at work and in their personal lives. One learner who started on a foundation programme overcame significant barriers to her learning and progressed through a series of vocational and assessor qualifications. She has now joined the teaching staff of one of the lead providers.
- Learners' attendance varies between lead providers as do systems to record and monitor attendance and punctuality. The best lead provider has a strategy, records of punctuality for

individual learners and clear actions to deal with poor performance. At other lead providers this is less systematic. Managers do not collect and analyse data on attendance across CT and it is not possible to measure change or improvement. However, during inspection learners' attendance was good.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, enabling learners to develop highly appropriate vocational skills and make good progress in most learning sessions. Learners effectively improve their social skills through a range of industry events and promotions.
- Highly experienced and dedicated tutors encourage learners to achieve well. A few tutors have a high profile within the industry and provide good role models, effectively inspiring learners to develop good quality artistic hairdressing skills. Learners speak highly of their tutors and assessors and feel safe in their training and at work. Individual support for learners is good. Staff meet learners' personal needs effectively and they help them to progress to higher levels of study.
- Tutors plan teaching well. In the many good sessions, tutors provide different types of practical tasks to meet effectively learners' individual needs and help them reach their learning targets. All learners benefit from structured training in their salons where they have a good range of suitable clients. In the minority of very good sessions, learners respond enthusiastically to the very challenging tasks that tutors set to develop, particularly effectively, their advanced colouring skills and fashion styling techniques.
- The majority of on and off-the-job training environments are good. However, in one centre these do not fully reflect current industry standards, with cramped conditions and minor examples of poor hygiene. Most tutors make limited use of electronic learning materials. However, one centre has an easy to use, friendly and stimulating virtual learning environment.
- Learners receive a thorough induction, including initial assessments and diagnostic tests. Improved systems ensure that in almost all cases tutors promptly identify any learners with additional learning needs. Levels of additional learning support are appropriate and, when needed, include increased levels of individual coaching and readers for examinations. In a few instances, induction materials are uninspiring.
- Individual learning plans are detailed and most include good action plans. In better examples, tutors plan learners' programmes and track their progress very effectively. However, the quality of individual learning plans is inconsistent across different lead providers. Reviews are well structured, include employers' views and learners' comments, and set learners challenging targets.
- Learners' written work is good and tutors check work appropriately. Portfolios contain a suitable range of evidence. Staff plan assessment well and most learners have assessors in their salons who effectively help them to progress. Tutors and assessors monitor learners' work rigorously and regularly and use questioning well.
- Most teaching of functional skills is good, but it is not fully developed. Tutors do not always take opportunities to improve learners' skills during theory and practical classes, such as the reinforcement of angles during cutting or estimating skills for foiling. Readability of a minority of internally produced learning materials requires improvement to support learners fully with lower levels of English. In a better example, a tutor made good use of measuring to explore the balance between cultural use of imperial and metric systems.
- Learners work in a range of good salons and when needed, staff from lead providers assist in salon recruitment and interview planning. Staff give learners appropriate advice and guidance and learners cover employment rights and responsibilities. Staff fully inform learners about careers and a minority have successfully progressed into teaching and business roles.

- Managers and staff at lead providers have not consistently embedded the promotion of equality and diversity. In the majority of sessions, tutors do not fully explore cultural diversity for example, through discussing techniques for different hair types. In one case, a discussion on role models did not fully reflect the diverse nature of the local community. However, in one centre, tutors effectively promote equality and diversity through monthly themed group sessions using a range of well-researched sensitive topics suitable for young people.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors and managers have a clear vision for CT. This they share with lead providers and subcontractors. The vision has a strong focus on collaboration, quality improvement and helping learners to progress. The recently written strategic plan captures clearly the culture, ethos and aims of the consortium. Directors and managers have made good progress in establishing and developing the consortium by drawing on the strengths of the four lead providers and very effective collaborative work.
- Directors were too slow to tackle declining success rates in 2012/13. The senior leadership team, comprising one director from each of the four lead providers, shares responsibility for leading and managing the consortium; no individual has overall responsibility. The responsibilities of each director are based on their strengths and skills. While the directors and their senior consortium staff know the responsibilities of each other, they have not recorded the responsibilities on any company documents or policies. No director has formal responsibility for managing learners' achievements.
- Management of staff performance is good. Each lead provider and subcontractor has its own staff appraisal system in place. The better systems place a clear emphasis on reviewing learners' achievements, as part of evaluating staff performance. Appraisals take good account of the outcomes of teaching and learning observations. The lead providers are working towards greater harmonisation of staff appraisal systems and paperwork. Staff are highly experienced and hold appropriate vocational, teaching and assessor awards.
- Observations of teaching and learning have improved provision and this has led to greater consistency across the consortium. The consortium's quality improvement team carries out additional joint observations to monitor the process and promote consistency. Observers record joint observations using a very detailed set of grading criteria covering a wide range of teachers' performance. A minority of development plans arising from joint observations are too brief and do not specifically tackle all the weaker areas of performance.
- CT's self-assessment is comprehensive and thorough. Each partner and subcontractor undertakes detailed self-assessment using an agreed template, the results of which directors and managers collate and moderate to form the overall report. Directors and managers gather the views of learners and employers and use them well to form judgements. Inspectors agreed with most self-assessment judgements, although in a minority of instances, the evidence did not support the judgements particularly well.
- The quality improvement plan includes actions to resolve weaknesses, but a few of these and success measures are not precise enough. The most recent quality improvement plan, updated in October 2013, places insufficient focus on learners' outcomes and fails to cover the marked decline in success rates in 2012/13.
- The quality improvement team, comprising a senior representative of each of the four partners, works well to monitor the quality of provision, share good practice and promote a consistently high-standard experience for learners across the consortium. Increasingly, the four partners are harmonising their systems and processes for learning. For example, the consortium has recently adopted a universal initial assessment process for learners. Partners have not ensured that all learners benefit from a consistently high standard of provision.

- Quarterly meetings of lead providers and subcontractors are very effective in updating senior staff on data on learners' achievements and a range of pertinent topics of interest. Through regular contact, monitoring and formal audits communication within the consortium is particularly effective and the management of subcontractors is good.
- Directors' use of management information requires improvement. CT's management information system has the capacity to capture a comprehensive range of data for directors. However, directors do not use all data fully to plan actions to improve provision. The consortium does not collate data on learners' attendance or punctuality.
- Managers plan learning programmes very effectively to meet the needs of learners and employers. Programmes are flexible, taking into account the commercial demands of employers' businesses. CT managers and staff encourage and support salon owners to develop their own employees to become qualified assessors, which improves learners' opportunities for workplace assessment.
- Managers promote equality and diversity well. Staff receive training to extend their understanding of equality issues and update their knowledge. Managers use data accurately to compare the participation and achievements of different groups of learners and report this information regularly to partners and subcontractors. Data show that learners of different ages, gender, ethnic groups and abilities achieve at a similar rate. However, the differences in the achievements of learners across lead providers and subcontractor organisations directors and managers have not fully resolved.
- CT meets its statutory duty to safeguard learners. It has good arrangements, including regular update training for staff, to ensure the safety of learners in its training centres and the workplace. Staff use the review process to check the safety of learners, and where appropriate, take action to resolve any concerns.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Consortia Training Limited

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2

Provider details

Consortia Training Limited									
Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16-18 and 19+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 401								
	Part-time: 0								
Principal/CEO	Giovanni Iannantuoni								
Date of previous inspection	N/A								
Website address	http://www.consortiatraining.co.uk/								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19			19+		Total			
	N/A			N/A		N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	146	29	48	52	N/A	N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								

At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:

- KM Training Limited
- Steffen Hair Design

Contextual information

Directors from CT formed the organisation in May 2011 in response to the government's requirement for contracts of a minimum value of £500,000. The consortium, which provides training in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire, consists of four lead providers and two sub-contractors, some of whom hold contracts in their own right. The four lead providers are: Academy of Hair and Beauty, Bassetlaw Training Agency Ltd., GeTaHead Training Ltd., and Positive Approach Academy for Hair. CT offers qualifications in five sector subject areas, although all but hair and beauty therapy recruit small numbers of learners. The senior management team of CT comprises the four directors of the lead providers. A member of the senior staff from each of the lead provider make up the quality improvement team.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Sandra Summers HMI

Five additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of one of the lead providers as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection reports of the lead providers. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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