

# University Centre Quayside Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Rachel Angus, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

University Centre Quayside Limited (UCQ) began offering adult learning programmes through their own direct contract in 2017. Managers have several years' experience of running adult learning programmes as a subcontractor. The short courses that they offer are at levels 1 and 2 in essential work skills for construction, retail and warehousing. At the time of the inspection, 10 learners were enrolled on essential work skills for manufacturing construction at level 2.

### Themes

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have successfully developed courses that enable unemployed adults to develop the confidence and skills that they need to enter the labour market in sectors where there are significant employment opportunities, such as construction, warehousing and retail. Staff focus on and work successfully with learners who have considerable barriers to learning and employment.

Leaders and managers work effectively with partner organisations, particularly Jobcentre Plus (JCP), whose customer referrals make up most of UCQ's learners. Managers communicate regularly with key staff in JCP branches to ensure that potential learners receive timely information about courses that meet their needs and aspirations.

Courses are carefully planned and many take place in community venues in the North East, close to where the learners live and where significant construction and economic development projects are taking place. Managers take appropriate steps to ensure that learning centres are of a high quality and provide a welcoming learning environment.

Leaders and managers have created an academic council, consisting of UCQ leaders, employers and student representatives, to provide helpful support and challenge to managers. Their oversight has ensured that learners who complete the construction

course obtain a useful additional qualification in health and safety and gain their construction skills certification scheme card, which increases the employment opportunities available to them.

Staff monitor the impact of the training on learners effectively. For example, they track the destinations of learners three months and six months after completion of their course. Almost all learners achieve their qualifications and develop useful skills as a result of attending the training. A reasonable proportion progress onto further study or employment but managers recognise that they need to increase this proportion.

Leaders and managers broadly understand the effectiveness of their provision but they do not consider a wide enough range of evidence to evaluate the impact of their work. For example, they place a great deal of emphasis on learner satisfaction and not enough on their own assessment of the progress that learners make. This has led managers to overestimate their current strengths. In discussion, managers demonstrate that they do understand the areas of their work that they need to improve, such as tutors' skills in developing learners' understanding of equality and diversity and in the checking of learning.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? Reasonable progress**

Learners benefit from well-equipped learning environments and from well-designed resources that tutors provide. For example, in a class on health and safety at work the teacher used a useful Health and Safety Executive poster to consolidate learners' understanding of health and safety law.

Most learners, many of whom speak English as an additional language or have low levels of literacy, benefit from helpful resources that reinforce key terms and help them to improve their specialist vocabulary. For instance, in construction learners use visually engaging resources that help them to acquire key vocabulary such as 'forklift' and 'pallet truck'. Learners increase their confidence and self-esteem as a result of the welcoming and supportive atmosphere that tutors create. Learners also receive beneficial student handbooks that further support the development of their literacy skills.

Learners enjoy their courses and value the training and support that they receive, which increases their opportunities to obtain employment in the local labour market. For example, learners on courses in construction are supplied with free personal protective equipment which helps them to demonstrate their readiness to work on a building site.

Tutors make helpful interventions when necessary to ensure that the very large majority of learners complete their qualifications within the planned timescale. For example, they provide additional learning sessions for learners who fall behind. A minority of tutors do not check learning in lessons sufficiently well and they do not identify learners who have not yet understood the topics. This slows learning for a few students.

Tutors provide encouraging feedback to learners, both in class and on marked work, and this helps to motivate learners. However, too much feedback focuses on task completion and is rudimentary. Not enough tutors provide feedback to help learners develop their knowledge and skills further, either in relation to their substantive course or their English and mathematics skills. Consequently, learners do not develop their knowledge and skills as much as they could.

Tutors do not yet use information about learners' starting points fully to plan learning that capitalises on existing knowledge and skills. As a result, learners do not make all the progress of which they are capable. For example, a few learners who speak English as an additional language already have degrees and advanced knowledge in relation to a wide range of academic and professional disciplines. Tutors do not challenge these learners sufficiently well to use their existing knowledge to develop their understanding in new contexts.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress**

Leaders have appointed three well-qualified designated safeguarding leads who ensure that comprehensive safeguarding policies are implemented effectively and that learners are safe. Managers follow safe staff recruitment practices and ensure that all staff are subject to appropriate pre-employment checks. Staff are trained in key safeguarding topics, including their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty.

Managers ensure that the venues they use to provide training are safe places for learners to study. Staff undertake thorough health and safety audits prior to agreeing to run a course in a community venue.

Tutors do not have sufficient knowledge to teach effectively topics relating to the risks of radicalisation and extremism. For example, too many tutors do not realise that radicalisation and extremism may be related to far-right political views. Consequently, training for learners in fundamental British values and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism is not yet fully effective. Leaders and managers have recently put in place plans to improve staff's understanding and confidence to teach about these issues but it is too early to identify the impact of these actions.

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