

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Charter Training Services Ltd  
Date of visit: 28 August 2008

### Context

Charter Training Services Limited (Charter) is a privately owned company based in Macclesfield. It also has offices in Altrincham, Chester, Crewe, Hanley, Northwich, Warrington and Widnes. Charter has 78 learners in business administration and customer service apprenticeship programmes, 11 learners in management and professional apprenticeship programmes and eight learners in engineering and manufacturing apprenticeship programmes. The company also has contracts with Jobcentre Plus, learndirect and it also offers private training.

Charter Training was last inspected in October 2006. The overall effectiveness of the provision, leadership and management, equality of opportunity, quality improvement and its provision in business administration and customer service were all satisfactory.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made towards the further improvement of success rates on apprenticeship frameworks since the previous inspection?	Significant progress
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Overall the provider has made significant progress in improving success rates for apprentices. The trend is one of continued improvement. Success rates have risen from 31.5% in 2005/06, to 88.3% in 2006/07. Data covering the period up to period 9 in 2008 shows success rates at 84.8%, well above the national rate of 63.1%.

The trend for timely success rates is also one of continued improvement. Timely success rates have risen from 27.2% in 2005/06, to 52%% in 2006/07. Latest information, covering the period up to period 9 in 2008, shows timely success rates as being 72.4%, well above the national rate of 45.5%.

The number of work-based learners rose from 102 in 2005/06 to 113 in 2006/07 and the number of leavers so far in 2007/08 is 89. Most of these are business administration apprentices.

Several developments have supported this rise in success rates since the previous inspection. The management and use of data has improved, communications with assessors has been strengthened, and considerable efforts have been made to

improve the monitoring of learner progress through frequent individual meetings. The work-based learning manager meets each month with individual assessors to discuss the progress of every learner and identify issues hindering progress and threatening achievement. The monitoring of learner progress is supported through the use of the improved management information system and regular meetings between the work-based learning manager, assessors and internal verifiers. Standardisation meetings have started to be used effectively to share good practice. The organisation has increased its focus on engaging employers.

### Quality of provision

What progress has been made towards improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning through focused staff development?	Reasonable progress
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Improvements have been made to the effectiveness of teaching and learning. A staff performance appraisal system is effectively linked to staff development planning. Suitable teaching and learning development programmes have been identified for most staff, some have already enrolled on suitable courses. Staff have monthly individual assessor progress review meetings with the work-based learning manager, monthly team meetings and a formal annual appraisal. Managers use these well to identify areas for professional updating in teaching and learning. Up-to-date professional development logs are used to effectively record the wide range of training activities carried out by all the provider's staff. Regular standardisation meetings ensure that staff are aware of new developments in teaching and learning.

What progress has been made in improving the monitoring and recording of trainees' progress against targets, and in improving support systems, including the involvement of employers?	Reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made in improving the monitoring and recording of progress and support, including the involvement of employers. Staff have a good understanding about how to set demanding targets, and check progress at subsequent reviews. Measurable targets are now set for qualifications and personal skills. Audits of learner reviews are carried out every month to ensure staff complete reviews accurately. Learners' progress and performance reviews are effectively managed and monitored.

The provider has adequate action plan support procedures in place for at-risk learners. Computer software is used to provide assessors and managers with clear information about learners' progress. Employers make an adequate contribution to target-setting and the planning of training.

<p>What progress has been made towards promoting learners' understanding of equality and diversity including the promotion of equality of opportunity in teaching and learning and the development of procedures to assure the standard of employers equality and diversity practices?</p>	<p>Insufficient progress</p>
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Insufficient progress has been made towards promoting learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Procedures are now in place to assure the standard of employers' equality and diversity practices are good. Learners carry out a number of training sessions on equality and diversity matters. The provider has a satisfactory range of policies. However, staff have had insufficient training in developing their awareness. Some progress has been made to reinforce learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity. Progress reviews include a section on equality of opportunity and health and safety. However, insufficient recording of discussions prevent the provider from measuring the level of learners' understanding.

#### Leadership and management

<p>What progress has been made towards implementing planned improvements to the quality improvement systems and the quality assurance of training through observations of teaching and learning?</p>	<p>Reasonable Progress</p>
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Some improvements have been made to the quality improvement systems. Since the previous inspection the quality manager has left the organisation. The roles and responsibilities have subsequently been shared between the senior managers. Quality assurance procedures focus on audits and observations of performance. The audit process is thorough and includes most of the key stages of the learner process. The quality of review materials and documentation is monitored by the work-based learning manager through audits of paperwork and observations of staff. All assessors are observed in the workplace at least every six months, or more frequently for new or inexperienced staff. However, observations do not lead to formal action plans to drive improvement. Observations of teaching and learning are insufficiently planned or followed up to check improvements. The provider has an adequate quality assurance system that is contributing to improvements in achievement and standards. Good monitoring systems enhance learner outcomes but follow-up of observations to ensure improvements are implemented is insufficient.

Further quality improvement initiatives are required to assure improvement in sector subject areas which have been assessed as satisfactory at inspection.

## Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in implementing planned improvements to the adequacy of the self-assessment process and development plan?	Insufficient progress
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As at the previous inspection the inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process. The process is satisfactorily managed. Consultation with staff to discuss strengths and areas for improvement is good. These are then effectively integrated into planning across centres but this is insufficiently linked to action plans and insufficiently focused on work-based learning.

Communication between managers and staff is now good. However, learners' and employers' views are not collected and analysed for inclusion within the report or to contribute to its content.

The most recent report insufficiently focuses on maintaining increased success rates as a key priority although this is identified within the associated development plan.

The provider is starting to establish key partnerships with other providers and colleges to enhance the learners' opportunities to do well and progress. The provider has made progress in resolving some of the key issues raised at the previous inspection but weaknesses in quality improvement remain.