

A&T Training Limited

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Health, public services and care

Description of the provider

1. A&T Training Limited (A&T) is a private training company established in 2005 to offer work-based learning. The company funds Train to Gain programmes through a contract with the North East and South East regional LSC. Based in Stockton-on-Tees, A&T has learners in Stockton-on-Tees, London and Hastings. Learners are recruited after nomination by their employers. Currently 11 learners are following National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in care and 54 are taking NVQs in security. Of these, eight learners are from a minority ethnic background and 31 learners are female. A&T has two directors, a full-time assessor and a part-time administrator. Alongside their managerial roles, both directors are also assessors. The company also offers privately funded accredited training courses. LSC funded training accounts for 80% of the provider's current business.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

2. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are good. The quality of provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Provision in security is also satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

3. A&T has demonstrated that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Success rates are good. A&T has introduced good initiatives to raise success rates. The organisation makes very effective use of feedback from learners and employers to improve the provision. Learners and employers report high levels of satisfaction. Staff are experienced and their performance is managed well.
4. The self-assessment process is very new but satisfactory. Inspection findings matched a number of the key strengths identified in the self-assessment report. However, the updated self-assessment report does not identify a number of key areas for improvement. Inspection findings matched the self-assessment grades for achievement and standards, leadership and management and equality of opportunity. The report does not include a grade for overall effectiveness, the quality of the provision or the organisation's capacity to improve. A&T has a number of plans but has not yet completed a quality improvement plan linked to the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- High success rates
- Good development of learners' vocational skills
- Particularly thorough and frequent NVQ assessment
- Very responsive programme meeting the needs of employers
- Strong management of staff performance
- Good use of feedback to improve quality

Key areas for improvement

- Individualised planning of learning
- Quality improvement arrangements
- Target-setting
- Referral arrangements for learners with skills for life support needs

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

5. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high with little variation in terms of gender or ethnicity. During the period 2006-2008, success rates were high at 100%. The self-assessment report accurately identified this strength.
6. In-year retention is very high and learners are making satisfactory progress. The low timely success rates are almost entirely attributable to unrealistic completion targets for the NVQs. This has now been resolved. The planned end dates for current learners are challenging but realistic.
7. The development of learners' vocational skills is good. Learners are highly motivated and apply their skills well to fulfil their work roles. Learners on concierge duties demonstrate good reception and customer care skills. They provide helpful information, advice and guidance to their customers. Learners have a good understanding of risk assessment when dealing with security incidents in public areas such as shopping precincts, car parks and housing estates. Directors place particularly high emphasis on health and safety. A&T regularly monitors health and safety at its office and at employers' premises.
8. Learners enjoy their programme, feel safe and are proud of their achievements. Employers report that their employees display a more professional image to their customers and have improved their personal performance at work.
9. Progression to other qualifications or training is satisfactory. Many learners have completed useful additional training in the use of close circuit television, customer service and NVQ assessment.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The quality of provision is satisfactory. NVQ assessment is particularly thorough and frequent. The self-assessment report accurately identified this strength. Assessors adopt a flexible approach to supporting learners. They visit learners at least once every three weeks and in many cases more often. Assessment visits take good account of learners' varying shift patterns and employers' needs. Assessors often visit learners at unsociable times when required.
11. Assessors provide learners with clear verbal instructions, encourage them to work independently and prepare them well for assessment. Individual coaching for the knowledge requirements of the NVQ is good. Assessors are very effective at interpreting technical language and help learners to develop good technical knowledge of their job and their qualification. Monitoring of learner progress through the NVQ is also thorough. Assessors effectively use a chart to record learners' progress against each aspect of the qualification. Records are then transferred to a useful database that is closely monitored and quality assured by

the internal verifier. At monthly meetings assessors closely review each learner's progress.

12. Learning resources are satisfactory. Learners have a useful workbook to support their knowledge and understanding of security practice. The identification of additional learning needs is satisfactory.
13. The planning of learning is insufficiently individualised. The self-assessment report did not identify this area for improvement. All learners carry out an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and vocational skills at the start of the programme. However, learners' individual learning plans insufficiently take account of the results of these assessments and do not accurately record each learner's personal, social and vocational development needs. Evaluation of learners' progress is often verbal and insufficiently recorded. Learner targets do not take sufficient account of their individual needs. A&T has appropriate plans in place to resolve this area for improvement.
14. Provision is very responsive to the needs of employers, as identified in the self-assessment report. Staff have a good understanding of the security industry and are responsive to employers' requirements. Staff work well to identify employers' training needs and carry out thorough skills assessments for each learner. Learners are effectively matched to the appropriate NVQ units for their security roles. Employers provide learners with good support.
15. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners receive a detailed and thorough induction. Assessors provide learners with skills for life needs with appropriate support to help them achieve their qualification. However, the arrangements to refer learners with skills for life needs to suitable provision are not always effective. The self-assessment report accurately identified this area for development.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The arrangements for managing staff performance are good and are used effectively to develop staff expertise. A&T makes good use of existing staff. Managers regularly review staff performance. For the first three months of their employment, new staff receive weekly coaching to improve their practice and to review their progress. Managers use monthly meetings well to thoroughly monitor staff and learner performance. The arrangements for staff development are effective. Staff have good occupational experience, are well motivated and work well to help learners succeed. The company has made a significant investment to improve staff training qualifications. All staff have completed the preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector award and have progressed to other relevant qualifications. However, staff development in equality and diversity is insufficient to meet learners' needs.

17. The use of feedback to improve the quality of the provision is good. Training evaluations are used well to collect feedback from learners which is then analysed and acted upon. A&T acts promptly to resolve learners and employers' concerns and responds well to their suggestions for improvements. Feedback from learners and employers is generally positive.
18. Strategic planning is satisfactory. Planning to sustain the business is effective. The range of contracted work has expanded and the company plans further expansions. However, expansion plans are not yet sufficiently thorough. Communications are good. Staff understanding of the strategic direction of the company is good. External communication with employers is very good. The two directors meet daily to discuss operational issues. Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities.
19. The management of the care programme is satisfactory. Care learners are based in Hastings and London. These learners receive frequent assessment visits and have regular communication with the Stockton-based assessors. Care employers are very satisfied with the service provided by A&T.
20. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners feel safe, have a good understanding of equality and diversity and know how to deal with discrimination or harassment at work. Staff empathise with learners and have a good understanding of the difficulties learners face at work. A high degree of mutual respect exists between participants and staff. A&T appropriately checks individual employers' arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity. A&T has an appropriate equality of opportunity policy which refers to relevant legislation. A useful summary of this policy is included in the induction pack for new learners. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity but have not carried out recent training in equality of opportunity. A&T has little influence over the selection of candidates by employers, but works well to promote the recruitment of under-represented groups through discussion with employers. Data on learners, including their ethnicity, marital status and any disability, is collected during induction and collated on a central database.
21. The use of data is satisfactory. A&T produces a useful set of management reports and has well established plans to improve managers' access to reliable data.
22. Arrangements for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support are satisfactory. Assessors provide additional help to enable learners to meet the requirements of the NVQ. However, referral arrangements to help learners improve their transferable literacy and numeracy skills to enhance their future careers are insufficiently successful. Many learners who are identified as needing literacy and/or numeracy support at initial assessment do not access specialist support.
23. Procedures for safeguarding vulnerable learners do not currently meet government requirements. Staff have not recently undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks. The directors have carried out training in the protection of

vulnerable adults in the last year. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety issues.

24. Target-setting for staff is insufficiently specific. Short-term operational targets within the business plan are vague. Performance targets for staff do not take sufficient account of the assessors' experience or their caseload. This area for improvement was not identified in the self-assessment report.

25. Quality improvement arrangements are not fully developed. The quality assurance arrangements insufficiently cover learner induction, action-planning and progress reviews. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are at a very early stage. Observation of training focuses too heavily on the performance of the trainer and does not take sufficient account of learning, the learners' experiences and the quality of the learners' work. Development planning following self-assessment is incomplete.

What learners like:

- Very helpful assessors
- 'They are good at explaining things'
- 'Even if they are busy they find time for you'
- Gaining a valuable qualification
- Learning about the wider security role
- The helpful workbooks, which are good for reference

What learners think could improve:

- Better publicity about the programme