

Training to Practice 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:

- Social care

Description of the provider

1. Training to Practice Limited (TTP), based in Havant, Hampshire, has been trading since 2006 and is a subsidiary of the Havant Housing Association. Initially set up as a privately funded training provider, TTP's first Train to Gain learners started in January 2008.
2. TTP offers training and assessment in social care awards. Most TTP provision is funded privately through a single client however, the Train to Gain provision is funded through a contract from the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight LSC. This was recently varied to limit it to run down status for 2009/2010. TTP employs two staff, a training manager assisted by an administrator. Two trainers and assessors and an internal verifier, who are all self-employed, support the delivery of the programme. TTP uses an external assessment centre for the registration and certification of learners.
3. At the time of inspection 25 learners are working towards NVQs, 10 at level 2 and 15 at level 3. All learners are employed in the social care industry. TTP staff deliver off-the-job training at TTP premises in Havant or at employers' premises for learners who are based a distance from Havant. In addition to formal training sessions, learners attend portfolio building workshops. All learners are aged over 19. None have a declared learning difficulty and/or disability and 12% are from a minority ethnic group. The local area has an unemployment rate of nearly 6% and, according to 2004 data, has a minority ethnic rate of 3%.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject area

Social Care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision in Train to Gain is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Current learners make satisfactory progress and develop good social and work based skills. Teaching and learning are good and assessment practices are appropriate. Courses meet the needs and interests of learners adequately, and they receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance. Support to develop learners' knowledge is good. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. TTP's capacity to improve is satisfactory. This is the previous inspection of the Train to Gain provision, which has only been running since January 2008. Success rates for learners are satisfactory. TTP has developed very effective working relationships with employers. Some quality processes to improve the provision are good, however some require further development. Although the self-assessment process is very new, TTP makes good use of learner and employer feedback to improve its provision. TTP has clear plans to address the identified areas for improvement.

Key strengths

- Good quality training
- Good support for knowledge and portfolio development
- Very effective management of employer relationships

Key areas for improvement

- Ineffective learner progress reviews
- Insufficiently developed induction and initial assessment
- Ineffective arrangements for additional learning support
- Unsatisfactory internal verification

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Of the 15 learners who started their programme in January 2008, 10 have now left the programme. Five achieved their qualification, four left the industry and one is on maternity leave. Five learners are awaiting final internal verification of their portfolios. Twenty learners started the programme in January 2009, 19 remain on programme and are making satisfactory progress. Timely success rates are satisfactory. However, poor communication between TTP and their external assessment centre has delayed accreditation of some learners' achievement. Learners are developing good vocational skills and knowledge. TTP provide learners with an extensive training programme in addition to their NVQ, some of which is certificated to national standards. The programme has enhanced and developed learners' practice in the workplace and the effectiveness of the support they offer to service users. Learners demonstrate a satisfactory standard of work in their portfolios. Within the small numbers of learners no discernible difference exists in the performance of different groups.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The quality of provision is satisfactory. This agrees with TTP's own self-assessment. The quality of training is high. Learners are able to make effective links between various training events they attend. Trainers make very good links between theory and practice within the specific services in which learners work. Training sessions are also attended by more experienced learners and are effective in meeting the needs of all levels of knowledge and ability. All learners are encouraged to actively participate in training events. Trainers have a very good knowledge of the specific services from which learners are drawn. Trainers improve the learners' ability in their job by promoting good and well focused professional discussions on real issues. Learner surveys confirm a high level of satisfaction with the training.
8. Support for knowledge and portfolio development is good. Learners enjoy their knowledge and portfolio building workshops. Staff in the workshops provide very good support to help learners understand the knowledge requirements of their qualifications. Learners produce well written evidence for their portfolios. Most learners demonstrate good knowledge over and above that required for the NVQ. TTP also provides a wide range of additional training which enhances learners' self-confidence and enjoyment of the programme. The training, which includes lone working and how to work with service users, is delivered on a rolling cycle and learners attend refresher training on an annual basis. Learners new to social care demonstrate good levels of knowledge development. The support is tailored to reflect the needs of the specific settings in which most learners work.

Employers provide good support to learners and enable them to attend the extensive training programme and to participate in the portfolio building workshops which take learners away from the workplace for significant periods. TTP has insufficient learning support resources, such as text books, internet access and other learning materials, to assist learners who wish to study independently.

9. Assessment is satisfactory. Assessment plans are discussed with learners and are effective. Assessors use appropriate assessment methods. Direct observations are well recorded and referred to a range of NVQ units. Learners receive good feedback that is both constructive and positive. TTP provides good assessment support for learners. In addition to the portfolio building workshops learners have ready access to assessors who provide a rapid and informative support service through email, telephone or visits. Assessors are confident in their professional roles and knowledgeable of the subject area. Learner progress is monitored closely on a monthly basis.
10. Learner progress reviews are ineffective, being too informal and focusing too much on immediate short-term targets. Learners are not afforded the opportunity to discuss their progress and any barriers that may exist to the achievement with their assessor and employer on a regular basis. Assessors do not set longer term targets which enable the learner to monitor their overall progress. Individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed and are not used in reviews to record learner progress, changes in programme arrangements and learners' needs.
11. The provision of information, advice and guidance is satisfactory. Learners receive suitable information about courses and are advised on appropriate progression opportunities. Where necessary, staff refer learners to appropriate support agencies. However, information, advice and guidance is not delivered on a sufficiently systematic basis. Some learners are provided with good levels of support. For example, one learner has a clear career development plan which includes the achievement of an assessor award and a management qualification in the future. Other learners are not sufficiently aware of the specific support which is available.
12. Induction and initial assessment are insufficiently developed. TTP does not systematically assess learners' additional learning needs. TTP's over reliance on informal systems is not always effective in identifying additional learning needs, such as dyslexia. Assessors are not always aware of learners' additional learning needs. Induction is effective in giving learners a good understanding of the programme requirements, assessment and evidence collection. However, induction does not ensure that learners are provided with, and understand, information on TTP's policies and procedures. Induction does not give learners an adequate understanding of the role of the internal verifier or the role that the external assessment centre plays in their registration and certification, or inform them what they should do if they have a complaint in relation to the assessment centre.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management and board discharge their responsibilities effectively. A small strategic board drawn from the parent organisation oversees the work of TTP appropriately. Management is satisfactory. Management information systems are fit for purpose and are well suited to organisational requirements. TTP manages its resources satisfactorily. Premises are light and well maintained and provide a suitable learning environment. They are located to provide easy access for most learners. TTP recruits trainers and assessors with good qualifications and appropriate experience. The style of leadership is supportive while giving clear direction. Assessors and trainers are well motivated and are committed to developing learners' understanding of current best practice. TTP encourages employed staff to increase their skills. However, its systems for ensuring the continual professional development of associate trainers and assessors are ineffective. The programme is managed satisfactorily. TTP carefully supports learners' progress through their qualification. Internal communication is generally satisfactory. The provision of information, advice and guidance is managed satisfactorily. TTP has achieved the Matrix standard. Some elements of the programme are insufficiently developed, for example initial assessment and review.
14. TTP manages its relationships with employers very effectively. Communication between TTP and employers is good, with strong formal and informal links. TTP's frequent evaluation reports and quarterly meetings keep employers well informed. Employers value the bespoke, professional training that TTP offers. Attendance at meetings by employers in the past was unsatisfactory, and TTP has taken effective steps to remedy this. TTP meets regularly with employers to review the appropriateness and relevance of its training, to identify training priorities and to make the practical arrangements necessary to facilitate attendance of those learners working diverse shift patterns.
15. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements, and arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults are satisfactory. Staff receive good awareness training on safeguarding and all are enhanced CRB checked. Staff are knowledgeable about the correct way to respond in the event of any issue arising. Staff have dealt with inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively where it has occurred.
16. TTP's arrangements to identify and meet learner's additional literacy, language and numeracy needs are ineffective. TTP has not developed a formal strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support, nor the procedures to advise or guide staff on its provision. TTP offers no formal initial assessment and has an over reliance on information from employers. However, TTP has suitable arrangements in place to address any literacy, numeracy and language support needs identified. TTP recognises this area for improvement.

17. The provider makes good use of informal employer feedback and frequent learner satisfaction surveys. For example, course content and materials were improved in response to learners' comments. TTP are also very responsive to the comments of employers. However, some aspects of quality improvement are insufficiently developed. Although observation of teaching and learning is in place, it is insufficiently focused on improving the quality of learning. Self-assessment is a new process, and although TTP recognised the areas for improvement identified during the inspection these have not been collated into a formal development plan. However, TTP has taken appropriate action to address these issues.
18. Internal verification is unsatisfactory. Feedback to assessors is insufficiently detailed and informative. Links with the external assessment centre are ineffective. Regular standardisation meetings are insufficiently focused on improving assessment and verification. The lead internal verifier from the assessment centre does not attend these meetings and TTP's internal verifier does not routinely attend the assessment centre standardisation meetings. TTP has recognised these issues and has suitable plans in place to address them.
19. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate training at the start which is regularly reinforced during the programme. Staff and learners demonstrate good knowledge and awareness of equal opportunities and broader diversity issues. Access to the training centre and facilities is excellent for those learners with limited mobility. Learners feel very comfortable and valued on the programme and inappropriate behaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. For example language which might possibly offend is not tolerated. Learner success is celebrated well through letters of congratulation and through bonus payments and publicity material displayed in host employers. TTP carries out little promotional activity, and relies on its reputation and learners referred from one major employer to attract learners from other employers. Those from a minority ethnic account for 12% of learners, which is significantly higher than that found in the local area.
20. TTP has suitable policies and procedures in place for equality of opportunity, and learners are informed about these at the start of their programme. However, learners do not routinely receive copies. Most learners have an insufficient recollection of the policies and procedures, for example, the complaints procedure. TTP recognises this and has put appropriate measures in place to address this.

What learners like:

- 'It's good fun'
- 'Everyone in sessions gets involved'
- Good links between practice and theory
- Accessible location
- Very friendly and supportive staff
- Excellent training

What learners think could improve:

- 'Earlier starts'
- 'Full days of training are too much'
- Too few textbooks