

Retail Motor Industry Training

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58614

Name of lead inspector: Joy Montgomery HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Retail Motor Industry Training (Remit) is the training arm of the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMIF) and provides employer-responsive training to the automotive sectors in England, Scotland and Wales. The present company was established in April 2008 taking on 2,700 learners and 34 staff from a large work-based training provider that went into administration. Remit took on more learners and staff from another failing provider in August 2008 as well as starting a Train to Gain contract and new apprenticeships. Remit has two offices in Nottingham, one in Scotland, one in Wales and a training centre in Leicestershire. The company currently employs 124 staff and the provision is managed by a small team of senior managers.
2. Remit contracts with the Learning and Skills Council on a national basis with London Central to fund Train to Gain learners and apprenticeships in England; the Welsh Assembly Government to fund Modern Apprenticeships in Wales; and, the Skills Development Scotland. All learners are employed in the automotive industry in the subject areas of motor vehicle or business administration. This is Remit's first inspection and the provision in England and Wales was included in the inspection.
3. Remit works with 83 further education colleges in England and three in Wales to deliver off-the-job training for apprentices. Technical off-the-job training is delivered in the workplace for certain qualifications. Training for learners employed by Pendragon PLC is delivered at the training centres in Leicestershire or in the workplace. Two specially adapted vans are used to deliver motorcycle training to learners employed by Piaggio. All assessments are carried out at the learners' workplace.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	543 learners
Apprenticeships	1,373 apprentices
Modern Apprenticeships (Wales)	92 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	Grade
Motor Vehicle	2
Business administration and law	3

Overall effectiveness

- The overall effectiveness of Remit's provision is satisfactory. The company has good capacity to improve and, following its creation, Remit has worked hard to address the many uncertainties and confusion created when the previous training providers failed. A large majority of learners exceeded their original expected end dates, however most continued in training and are completing their qualifications. New learners are making good progress. Learners gain a good range of knowledge and practical skills. They say they feel safe and demonstrate a good awareness of safe working practices. Arrangements for the safeguarding of learners are satisfactory. Training and assessments are of high quality and most learners enjoy their time learning in the workplace and at college. Remit works well with a large number of colleges and employers. The support provided to learners by Remit throughout the training is good. Learners' progress towards completion of their NVQ is reviewed regularly. However, equality and diversity and health and safety are not sufficiently reinforced when assessors carry out the reviews. Leadership and management are good with effective systems established to ensure high quality provision is available to all learners.

Main findings

- The overall success rates for all motor vehicle learners are just above national averages. There are significant variations in the performance of different groups of learners. In 2008/09 the overall success rate for 16 to 18-year-old apprentices was high at 87%. However, for 19 to 24-year-old advanced apprentices the overall success rate was below the national average. There are variations in success rates across the regions and for different qualifications.
- On business administration programmes the overall success rates were outstanding for 54 Train to Gain learners at 100%. However, the overall success rates for apprenticeships were low at 60%.
- Timely success rates in 2008/09 were low on all apprenticeship programmes at 34% due to the large number of learners who transferred in from other providers and the lack of availability of specific types of work needed to complete the NVQ.
- Learners feel safe and generally demonstrate a good awareness of safe working practices. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Risk assessments have not been completed for some activities in the workshops at Remit's training centre.
- Training in the workplace is good and carefully tailored to the need of learners. Resources used to support learning are good. Learners enjoy their training and demonstrate increased confidence in the workplace. However, in business administration employers are not always sufficiently involved.
- Remit's specialist team provide high quality literacy and numeracy support. Good attention is paid to the needs of individual learners and support is highly personalised.
- Assessment is very good. A wide range of assessments methods are effectively used to check learners' understanding. Feedback to learners is informative and useful. However, assessment opportunities are not always available when needed.
- Reviews ensure learners and employers are aware of progress, particularly on the NVQ. However, some targets in business administration are too general and health and safety and equality and diversity are insufficiently promoted.
- Remit has developed strong partnerships with employers, colleges, Connexions and industry bodies. Training programmes have been developed to meet specific industry and cultural needs. Welsh learners are offered training and assessment in Welsh, although there is little take up.
- Directors and senior managers provide clear strategic leadership and they are very experienced in the retail motor industry sector. Staff have contributed very effectively to the strong vision and values for the new company. Good management systems are in place.
- Arrangements for self-assessment and quality improvement are good. Comprehensive quality assurance systems and management information systems are used well to focus on areas for improvement.

What does Retail Motor Industry Training need to do to improve further?

- Complete risk assessments for motor vehicle practical training, especially in Remit's training centre.
- Ensure learners complete their qualifications within the agreed timescales through continued close tracking of learners' progress and by ensuring assessors are available when learners gain access to the work on which they need assessing.
- Complete investigations into the variations in performance between different groups of learners and continue to improve the success rates for all learners through the close monitoring of progress and sharing of good practice.
- Provide better reinforcement and improved understanding by learners of equality and diversity and health and safety as part of the formal review process. Complete staff training to improve assessors' knowledge in these areas.
- Improve employers' and learners' awareness of safeguarding through dissemination of guidance materials and discussion.
- Continue to promote bilingualism to meet with the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the supportive trainers and assessor who are very professional and helpful
- training that is challenging and covers a variety of tasks
- being able to work at their own pace
- the opportunity to gain a formal qualification
- the good organisation of the programme
- the great additional support which allows them to make good progress.

What learners would like to see improved:

- fewer changes in assessors and better communications when this happens
- more frequent and flexible visits by assessors and to be able to progress more quickly
- more practical activities at college to help develop skills
- earlier information about the range of work required for assessments.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the friendly, informative staff who have relevant knowledge of the trade
- the good levels of support and encouragement from the staff for learners and employers
- the additional support for apprentices with literacy and numeracy problems
- the extremely helpful and supportive staff
- programmes designed to meet our requirements.

What employers would like to see improved:

- better communication between employers, Remit, the learners, and college
- better opportunity for assessors to visit when the work is available
- fewer changes in assessors and more frequent visits
- assessors visiting sooner after the initial paperwork has been signed.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 2

5. Good leadership and management have placed the company on a secure footing. Senior managers and directors provide a clear focus for improving provision. Since its creation, Remit has planned and achieved improvements in such areas as the pace of completion for the significant number of unfunded learners, the timeliness of reviews, the additional support for learners, relationships with colleges and employers, assessors' workloads, and, internal verification.
6. The process of self-assessment is rigorous and uses an increasing range of evidence. Quality improvement planning and monitoring are good, with effective target setting. Managers and staff are clear about what needs to be done to make further improvement.

Outcomes for learners Grade 3

7. Overall Train to Gain success rates were good in period 9 2008/09 at 97%. Overall success rates are satisfactory for motor vehicle in 2008/09 at 72%. Success rates vary significantly between age groups, level of qualification, regions and specialisms. Success rates are high for younger apprentices who started with Remit, but low for older advanced apprentices who transferred in from a previous provider. Timely success rates are low on all programmes.
8. Learners develop a satisfactory or better range of technical skills and good interpersonal skills such as communication with customers. Many learners are confident and able to work unsupervised in the garages. Some, however, still require close supervision for safety critical work. Learners enjoy the training and see the skills they develop as useful to future employment.
9. Learners feel safe, wear appropriate personal protective equipment and adopt safe working practices. Most main dealers adopt good standards of health and safety, however, the standards of housekeeping in a few garages is poor. Health and safety matters are not always reinforced during reviews.

The quality of provision Grade 2

10. Training, learning and assessments in the workplace are good. Remit have developed good learning materials and resources in a variety of formats. Trainers make effective use of the employers' facilities when delivering technical certificate training on site. Training and support from Remit's specialist literacy and numeracy tutors are good. Sessions are carefully prepared and delivered to ensure learners with additional needs make good progress. Most colleges have well-equipped workshops and high-quality learning materials.

11. Assessments are well planned and, whenever possible, good use is made of naturally occurring assessment opportunities. Assessments are fair and accurate and good use is made of questioning to check learners' understanding. Regular reviews of progress ensure learners have a clear understanding what NVQ evidence is required for the assessor's next visit. Target setting is satisfactory, although learners are not always aware of their targeted completion date.
12. The provision meets the needs and interest of users well. Learners and employers who transferred to Remit speak very positively about the improvements to provision. One-to-one training sessions are tailored to the particular needs of learners and employers. A specially designed van is used to deliver motor cycle training to Piaggio's learners. Where possible, assessors are flexible and try to respond to assessment opportunities. All learners in Wales are offered training and assessment in Welsh. However, there is low take up of this opportunity, even by those whose first language is Welsh.
13. Remit has built good partnerships working with a large number of colleges and employers as well as industry organisations and regional bodies. Bespoke training programmes have been developed for several employers including ATS and Pendragon. Remit works closely with high-performing colleges and are part of the motor industry skills consortium. Motor vehicle apprenticeships are promoted to young people through Career Wales and Connexions. Remit are represented on the Welsh medium strategy board.
14. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Remit helps employers source new staff. A confidential questionnaire helps identify learners who may require additional personal support. Particularly good attention is given to individuals who face personal problems and challenging circumstances, such as housing and financial problems. Remit continues to work with learners who are no longer funded to ensure they achieve their qualifications.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

15. Very experienced and able senior managers provide clear direction and strategy for Remit which are well understood by staff. Remit was established owing to the failure of a previous provider and this created insecurity and uncertainty for many staff. Senior managers were at pains to engage them in the creation of the new business. A succession of staff conferences have fostered the creation of a positive and supportive culture, where all staff work closely and effectively together in the best interests of learners and employers.
16. Remit's board of directors provides good leadership and oversight. They have an expert knowledge of the industry they serve. Remit's close association with the RMIF ensures that strategic and operational management are focused on meeting the needs and interests of the independent automotive industry and its learners. Directors and senior managers set clear targets and closely monitor performance against these. Company targets provide the context for

comprehensive staff targets, which are monitored through a scheme of performance and review.

17. Management arrangements, including regional management, successfully address the complexity of Remit's work. A carefully considered infrastructure of team meetings supports operational management. Managers and other staff have good access to, and make good use of, a range of learner and performance data. The information needs of the extensive number of staff working remotely are well catered for.
18. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Remit's safeguarding policy sets out clear procedures and guidance for staff. A recently developed leaflet on safeguarding learners is being distributed to, and discussed with, employers. A designated senior member of staff is in charge of safeguarding and has established links with the local safeguarding board. The human resources manager and child protection officer are aware of the requirements of the new vetting and barring scheme. All remit staff working with learners have completed enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks which are recorded in a single central record.
19. All staff have completed at least one module on an introduction to safeguarding online training programme and two staff have completed several modules at levels 2 and 3. Health and safety are well promoted by senior managers and appropriately supported and monitored. However, staff at Remit's training centre have not yet received the health and safety training planned for all staff and they have a poor understanding of risk assessments. Although various risk assessments are in place, the practical workshops in Remit's training centre have not been assessed.
20. Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are satisfactory. Updated equality of opportunity policies and procedures clearly state Remit's commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity. They are accompanied by an equality and diversity strategy and development plan. A new working group of senior managers is leading on the implementation of the plan. There is much work to fully implement the strategy and too many actions are incomplete. Measuring the impact of actions is in its early stages. Remit has recently started to analyse learners' success rates by the various equality categories and other groupings, but managers have not yet set targets nor identified actions to improve the performance for different groups of learners.
21. Staff have received initial generic training on aspects of equality and diversity. More is planned to take place, including qualifying some key staff to become 'equality and diversity champions'. Learners' depth of understanding of equality and diversity varies considerably. The recently published equality and diversity handbook is beginning to improve their understanding, and that of trainers. However, opportunities to cover aspects of equality and diversity in training are not consistently exploited, particularly during progress reviews.

22. Remit's external partnerships are used effectively to ensure that the needs of all learners are met. The views of key partners, such as colleges and employers, are systematically collected and analysed to help make improvements. Remit is working to improve the level of response to its satisfaction surveys and to engage partners more closely. Partner colleges are extensively consulted. Learners and staff are increasingly consulted.
23. Arrangements to assure and improve the quality of provision are good. A comprehensive quality system is in place, with an extensive and detailed quality manual. This computer-based manual and system is readily available to all staff and it is regularly updated following review of its effectiveness during team meetings. Remit is working to improve its quality monitoring of the work of its partners, especially colleges, to ensure that it can fully exploit the outcomes of their own quality assurance systems.
24. Remit's self-assessment process is good and inclusive. Staff have received training to help them consider their evidence for the self-assessment report. Team meetings, across the company, are part of the quality cycle. However, the developing range of evidence from Remit's scheme of staff observation is insufficiently used to frame judgements on the quality of training, learning and assessment. Remit has completed an 'education for sustainable development and global citizenship' self-assessment report for the Welsh assembly government.
25. Remit provides good value for money. Significant progress has been made with improving learners' outcomes. Financial management is very good. Remit manages its resources effectively. The quality and availability of resources are good. Trainers and assessors are well qualified and have extensive and relevant work experience which they use well to help their learners.

Subject areas

Motor Vehicle

Grade 2

Context

26. Remit has 1,806 learners on motor vehicle programmes. Of these, 998 are apprentices with 813 aged 16 to 18 years; 253 are advanced apprentices with 157 over 19 years of age; 466 are Train to Gain learners, and 89 are on modern apprenticeships in Wales. Around 5% of learners are female, 5% have a declared disability, 13% have a learning difficulty and 95% are White British. Programmes include training for service technicians, body repair technicians, heavy vehicle technicians, paint technicians, parts consultants and vehicle fitting technicians.

Key findings

- Overall success rates for 16 to 18 year old apprentices enrolled by Remit are high at 87% in 2008/09. This cohort represents the majority of learners. Success rates for advanced apprentices aged 19 to 24 are low at 66% in 2008/09. Initial data for 2009/10 indicates significant improvements.
- Success rate vary significantly between regions and specialisms. Overall success rates are above 90% in the South East, but low for apprentices in the South West at 50%. Overall success rates are low for advanced apprentices in the West Midlands at 52%. Success rates on vehicle fitting are high at 97%, but low on the old framework for automotive industry at 55%.
- Timely success rates are low on all programmes in England, but satisfactory in Wales. A significant number of Remit's learners have exceeded the planned completion date for their programme. Remit continues to support these learners and recognises that reasons include the large number of apprentices transferring from a previous provider and delays when the work required to complete the NVQ is not readily available for learners' assessments.
- The development of learners' skills is at least satisfactory. Many apprentices take on useful tasks at work and carry out commercial work with confidence. Employers are generally satisfied with the standard of learners' work.
- Learners feel safe. They all wear appropriate personal protective equipment and they are aware of potential hazards in the workplace. Most main dealers demonstrate good standards of health and safety, although at some garages the standards of housekeeping are poor. At the company's own training workshop housekeeping standards are high, but risk assessments for some of the key practical activities have not yet been completed.
- Training in the workplace is good. Some good resources have been developed by Remit and these are used effectively in one-to-one training sessions. Learners and employers speak highly of their satisfaction with the training. Trainers make good use of learners' allocated work to thoroughly check existing

skills and knowledge. New practical techniques are clearly explained and well demonstrated to learners by trainers.

- Support for literacy and numeracy is very good. Learning needs are identified at an early stage in the programme. Support provided by a specialist tutor is tailored to the needs of individual learners and this is particularly effective in helping learners successfully achieve their learning goals. The content for sessions and assignments is set in a vocational context and well integrated with other elements of the programme.
- Assessment is particularly thorough. Workplace assessments are completed well and include the good use of questions to check learners' understanding. NVO evidence is thoroughly checked with clear and comprehensive feedback on the standard achieved and what the learner needs to do to improve. However, employers find it very difficult to ensure suitable work is available for every assessor visit.
- Reviews are effective and learners have a clear understanding of the tasks they need to complete by the next review. Whilst monitoring of learners' NVO progress is particularly strong, the analysis of other components of the framework is less thorough. Review of learners' overall framework progress against their planned completion dates is ineffective. Health and safety and equality and diversity are checked at reviews, but not discussed in detail.
- Partnerships between Remit, partner colleges, the careers service, employers and the sector skills council are very strong and effective. Managers and assessors work well with employers. Specific resources have been developed to meet employers' needs. Some of Remit's better performing partner colleges belong to the Motor Industries Skills Consortium whose objective is to share best practice.
- Leadership and management are good. Effective management actions have enabled a significant number of unfunded learners to complete successfully. Performance management across all areas is strong. The performance of subcontracted partners is carefully and regularly monitored.

What does Retail Motor Industry Training need to do to improve further?

- Improve timely success rates by continuing to monitor assessors' workloads to enable them to be available when assessment opportunities in the workplace arise.
- Prioritise and complete risk assessments for key aspects of practical training, especially in Remit's training centre.
- Ensure a consistent approach to reviews by assessors in order to increase learners' understanding and awareness of health and safety and equality and diversity matters.

Business, administration and law

Grade 3

Context

27. Remit has 202 learners in business administration and law. Of these 77 are Train to Gain learners with 67 on level 2 programmes and 10 on level 3 programmes. In England there are 117 apprentices and 5 advanced apprentices, and 3 foundation modern apprentices in Wales. Learners work towards qualifications in administration, customer services, vehicle sales and marketing and sales. All training and assessment takes place in the workplace.

Key findings

- Overall success rates on Train to Gain for period 9 2008/09 were outstanding at 100% for 54 learners completing their training. However only 60% completed their programme within the agreed timescales.
- Overall and timely success rates for apprenticeships were low in 2008/09 at 66% and 29% respectively. There were some significant variations in the performance of different groups. Success rates for 19 to 24-year-old learners on customer services programme were particularly low. Female learners on marketing and sales programmes are more likely to succeed than male learners.
- Learners develop good workplace skills. They feel more confident as team members and dealing with customers. The training has encouraged learners to think about their job roles and to better understand the contribution they make to their employers' business targets.
- Learners feel safe in the workplace. They feel able to share problems and concerns with colleagues and managers. A few assessors hold a level 2 qualification in health and safety. This training supports their roles with responsibility for the monitoring of health and safety in the workplace. Plans are in place to train further staff in this qualification.
- Action plans are satisfactory. They provide learners with the opportunity to plan their own learning and take responsibility for progress. Many targets, however, are too general and do not focus sufficiently on specific programme units and elements. This lack of clarity adversely affects learners' planning and contributes to slow progress between assessor visits.
- Assessment methods are used very effectively to establish each learner's knowledge, understanding and skills. Learners are clear about the importance of assessment in confirming their progress. Assessors use a good range of assessment methods. Good oral and written feedback help learners improve their performance.
- Employers are supportive of learners' participation in training programmes and regularly ask about progress being made. However, employers are insufficiently involved in learners' training and they are not pro-active in working with assessors to identify training and assessment opportunities. Employers are not

always involved in determining the selection of optional units for Train to Gain learners.

- Strong partnership links have been developed at local and national levels. Assessors are made welcome in learners' workplaces. They are sensitive to the demands of the work environment when arranging assessments or one-to-one training sessions and aim to ensure minimum disruption to work activities. In partnership with Pendragon, Remit provides support for the recruitment and training of technical staff.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are clear about their work roles and meet regularly with their line managers to agree and discuss progress towards personal and work targets. Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience and there is effective management support for staff development. Staff feel well informed and valued, and they are actively involved in the preparation of the Remit self-assessment report.
- Learners' understanding and knowledge of equality and diversity are not well developed and monitoring of these is insufficient. Equality and diversity are discussed as part of the induction programme, but this knowledge is not sufficiently consolidated during training. An informative equality and diversity handbook is available, but this has not been issued to all learners. There has been insufficient staff development in equality and diversity.

What does Retail Motor Industry Training need to do to improve further?

- Improve the timely success rates through continued tracking and monitoring of learners' progress and the sharing of good practice between assessors.
- Investigate the factors contributing to the variation in performance of different groups of learners and take appropriate action to address these issues.
- Encourage employers to become more involved in learners' training programmes and ensure they help select the optional units for Train to Gain learners.
- Provide more equality and diversity training for staff to enable them to develop and increase learners' knowledge and understanding through discussions linked to the equality and diversity handbook.

Information about the inspection

28. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors and two Estyn additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality and group services director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the provider was established.
29. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews in the workplaces. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Remit

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	2,008	2,008
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	3	
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3	
How well do learners progress?	3	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	3	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*		
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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