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Quality Director
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Dear Mrs Brown

Short inspection of Lifetime Training

Following the short inspection on 18 to 19 May 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Lifetime Training was judged to be good in July 2012.

Lifetime Training continues to be good.

Learners continue to experience good training and effective support. The majority of learners make good progress and complete their apprenticeship programmes within planned timescales. The proportion of learners gaining their apprenticeships has risen since the previous inspection.

In the majority of sector areas in which Lifetime Training provides apprenticeships and training, the proportion of learners who gain their qualifications is around national rates. In some areas, such as early years, learners' achievements are consistently above national rates. The improvements you and your senior managers have made since the previous inspection clearly demonstrate your commitment to improving the achievement of all learners. You are paying particular attention to improving the few areas, for example retail, that have not performed as well.

Learners benefit from the good, well-planned resources available to them. The significant investment in technology and online materials enables learners to gain access to the help and resources they need when they study on their own. These resources supplement the very positive help they receive from regional trainers, who support them attentively and effectively. The quality and availability of learning resources was an aspect that learners at the previous inspection wanted to be improved.

Senior managers have scrupulously carried out the recommendations made at the previous inspection. For example, they now monitor learners' progress closely. They provide focused and effective training and support for regional trainers, whose performance they now regularly review.

You have enhanced the capability of regional trainers and managers by making very well-considered changes. These include a refreshed and well-received induction programme, supportive observations of trainers, and effective mechanisms to share best practice through quality ambassadors. The changes have improved the quality of experience for learners.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. Learners are safe due to well-planned processes in place to look after them and follow up on any referrals about safeguarding or health and safety. Designated safeguarding managers keep a single comprehensive record of all concerns raised. Thorough internal records show that managers take swift and appropriate action when needed. Managers ensure that all staff who work with learners are appropriately checked.

Staff understand safeguarding well. There is a good range of mechanisms to report issues and use other agencies. Managers responsible for recruitment understand and follow safer recruitment practices well.

All staff have received appropriate training in how to make learners aware of the government's agenda for promoting fundamental British values and the risks posed by extremist groups. However, at the time of the inspection a few learners were not sufficiently mindful of what this meant for them.

Inspection findings

- Learners who do not have formal qualifications in English receive effective help to gain functional skills qualifications; they are improving their use of English and their communication skills as a result. Regional trainers carefully assess learners' skills at the start of their programmes and tailor exercises and training to learners' specific circumstances, such as the importance of explaining the calculation of medication to patients in clear and plain English. The majority of regional trainers effectively integrate the teaching of English into their assessment of learners, helping most learners to improve their English. This is an area that is still to be improved further.
- The recent appointment of two well-qualified trainers to teach English and mathematics at GCSE level and support regional trainers is already proving effective. Monitoring of reviews of learners' progress shows that learners are more confident about their communication skills. Where learners need more support, specialist functional skills tutors provide good revision and examination preparation sessions. However, not

enough learners improve their English skills above the level they had achieved on starting their apprenticeship. Those English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners who require help receive good support.

- Learners improve their mathematical skills as a result of regional trainers successfully integrating relevant and engaging examples which require learners to apply mathematics to the context of the work they do. Learners receive good individual help to overcome specific difficulties they have with mathematics from regional trainers and learning support tutors.
- Employers spoken to during the inspection state that their apprentices quickly develop new skills and knowledge during their apprenticeship programmes. Many commented that this development included improved English and mathematical skills, and broader personal and social skills. Those contacted had examples of apprentices who had been able to take on extra responsibility such as workplace projects or who had gained promotion.
- Through well-planned opportunities, learners review their next steps during their programmes. The 'Bridging' programme you have developed since the previous inspection helps learners to gain extra qualifications and improve their confidence, particularly in information technology, and to progress to programmes at the next level.
- You have engaged employers constructively and as a result they understand and contribute with interest to the apprenticeships. This was an aspect employers wanted to see improved at the previous inspection. Learners make good progress as a result of employers taking a positive part in their apprenticeships. The review process between regional trainers, managers and learners is effective and results in frequent updating and sharing of relevant information.
- Employers, ranging from high-profile national companies to charities and small enterprises, value the way you communicate with them and the organisation of apprenticeship programmes that ensures learners develop the skills and knowledge needed.
- You have improved the training, support and supervision of regional trainers since the previous inspection. They have frequent opportunities to take qualifications and improve their skills, particularly in English and mathematics. Effective back-up from internal quality assessors and help from internal support networks result in regional trainers assessing learners with confidence and accuracy.
- The case loads of regional trainers are appropriate and the system of performance management helps them to improve their performance. They have good promotion opportunities. Internal communication is good and staff express that they feel valued by managers and the company.
- The board of directors sets the ethos of high expectations for learners. Members regularly and carefully scrutinise learners' performance and communicate their ambitions for learners to all staff through senior managers.
- Sound, well-planned quality assurance and self-assessment processes lead to improvements being made quickly and decisively, such as the

induction programme for new learners, and the development of online resources and support for learners with English as an additional language. Monitoring and the support you provide for your two subcontractors are very effective.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- managers and regional trainers improve achievement rates in retail and active leisure to the levels of the higher performing sector areas such as early years
- regional trainers help all learners, regardless of the English qualifications and skills they possess on starting their apprenticeship, to improve their English skills throughout the duration of their apprenticeship
- all learners are familiar with and understand what the government's 'Prevent' duty means for each of them in the context of their work and local circumstances.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Green
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the quality director as nominee. We met with you, the non-executive director and founder of Lifetime Training, members of your senior management team, managers, regional trainers and learners. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to quality assurance, safeguarding and the performance of Lifetime Training. We analysed data on learners' achievements and progress relative to their starting points. We also analysed feedback from learners and employers, gathered during the inspection and from Ofsted's online questionnaires.