

Training Plus Merseyside Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 50244

Name of lead inspector: Pamela Blackman HMI

Last day of inspection: 9 December 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Training Plus Merseyside Ltd (TPM) is a private training provider based in Liverpool city centre. The company was formed in 2001. TPM contracts with the Skills Funding Agency for apprenticeships and Train to Gain. Current learner numbers are 353 of which 20 are on Train to Gain programmes and 87 learners are on programmes with a subcontractor. TPM offers apprenticeships in hairdressing, barbering, child development and well-being, and business administration at levels 2 and 3. TPM has a well-resourced training centre in Liverpool city centre.
2. Apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes represent approximately 97% of the current business portfolio. The company employs 32 full and part-time staff, a number that has reduced by a quarter over the last year. Three shareholder directors each have a specific leadership role and defined areas of strategic responsibility within the company.
3. Liverpool has the highest rate of unemployment in the north west at 12.8% compared to 8.2% in the region and 7.8% nationally. Liverpool has some of the poorest wards in the country; many feature in the top 10% most deprived. Some 75% of TPM learners come from these wards. In 2010/11, 56.5% of Liverpool's school pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, matching the national rate.
4. The minority ethnic population in Greater Merseyside is 4.1%. In Liverpool, this rises to 8.1%. TPM currently has 4% of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Participation by learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability is 20%.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Employer provision: Apprenticeships Train to Gain	333 apprentices 20 learners

5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of TPM:
 - Mode Training Limited

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Child development and well-being	2
Hairdressing	2
Business administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

6. Training Plus Merseyside is a good training provider. Most learners gain their qualifications within the expected completion time. Those with specific learning needs, or who are at risk of leaving before the end of their programme, are actively supported to stay in learning and succeed. Learners report that they feel safe working and learning in a secure environment where good attention is paid to health and safety including e-safety.
7. Learners' experience at TPM is good. Training in the workplace enables them to grow in confidence and develop good practical skills that help them progress in their employment. Learners have the opportunity to gain additional qualifications; assessment and review arrangements are generally highly flexible and help learners understand what they still need to. However, not all learners get sufficiently involved in planning their own learning. TPM has particularly good external partnerships that benefit learners, helping them develop functional skills and providing support for those with specific needs.

8. The directors at TPM provide good leadership for the company and have high expectations for their staff and learners. Equality and diversity are actively promoted and any differences in achievement between groups of learners are closing. Managers check the quality of the provision carefully to promote improvement. They make good use of data in this, but do not make enough use of feedback from learners and employers. Inspectors found that the company provides good value for money and is committed to using its resources sustainably.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Apprenticeship success rates have been above national rates for the last three years, although there are variations in performance across the subject areas. While remaining above national rates for business administration and childcare learners, the success rate has remained close to the national average for hairdressing learners in 2010/11.
- Outcomes for learners with additional learning and support needs are high and above national rates in all three subject areas. Learners' achievements and progress are good when compared to their prior educational attainment.
- Learners make significant improvements in their personal and social skills, and in their confidence levels. They develop good practical skills to prepare them for progression to other courses and for employment.
- Teaching and learning in the workplace are good. Learners are set clear targets for improvement. Assessment of work is thorough and learners have a good understanding of how to improve. Learners, especially in hairdressing, do not take enough responsibility for planning their learning during progress reviews.
- Strategies to identify students who are at risk of leaving their programmes early without qualifications have been strengthened and appropriate management action follows.
- The range of programmes meets the needs and interests of learners very well. TPM is extremely flexible in its approach to meeting the needs of learners and employers. Learners have access to a good variety of coherent progression routes.
- TPM uses partnerships very effectively for the benefit of learners. The company works with a wide range of employers and other strategic partners, sharing good practice across the region. Employers speak highly of the flexible and bespoke service they receive.
- The personal and social support provided to learners is good and helps them to succeed. TPM staff provide helpful advice and guidance. TPM works extremely well with those learners who have additional learning needs.
- Leadership and management of the programmes are good. Directors create an inclusive, supportive and appropriately challenging culture, which successfully raises ambitions for staff and learners. The company provides good value for money and uses its resources sustainably.

- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. Learners feel very safe. TPM promotes health and safety very effectively with learners and employers. It prioritises safeguarding across the company and provides good e-safety advice and support for learners. Staff respond to all incidents quickly and appropriately and actions are fully recorded.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and TPM endeavours to attract a wide range of learners. TPM undertakes careful analysis of its activities in relation to equality and diversity and this work is beginning to narrow achievement gaps between different groups.
- Quality improvement arrangements are generally good and effective use is made of data to identify issues and trends. TPM observes its staff teaching and assessing frequently. However, there is insufficient rigour in the judgements made on the quality of teaching and learning. Quality improvement plans are realistic and their implementation is reviewed regularly. The self-assessment process is inclusive; however, the ways in which feedback is collected from learners and employers and how feedback informs self-assessment are underdeveloped.

What does Training Plus Merseyside Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all staff continue to improve outcomes across all programmes by consistently applying the 'at risk' process.
- Improve the quality of the review process, particularly in hairdressing, by encouraging learners to take a more proactive part in the discussions that plan further learning and assessment.
- Develop the observation of the teaching and learning process by providing staff with professional development so that they are able to make more accurate judgements on the quality of learning.
- Increase the ways in which feedback from employers and learners is collected and use it better to inform self-assessment.

Summary of the views of learners as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the good support from assessors
- the fact that TPM takes health and safety seriously
- assessors making sure the workload is manageable
- the advice offered by staff
- the very welcoming centre
- the chance to make new friends
- being treated like a grown-up
- the good support from TPM staff to find jobs.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more practical lessons
- more varied tasks in lessons
- more time to complete portfolios in lessons
- better communication with TPM office staff
- extra lessons to revise for exams
- more visits from assessors.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good communication with the centre and the assessor
- the reliable and professional assessors
- the effective communication from TPM
- frequent visits from TPM staff
- receiving feedback on the progress of learners and being involved in the review process
- the good calibre of learners sent for interview
- helpful advice regarding health and safety and equality and diversity.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more opportunity for learners to develop practical skills in the centre
- more involvement in the programmes.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

9. TPM has a good capacity to improve. The proportion of apprentices who are successful is above the national rate and completions within planned timescales are also above the national rates for most learners.
10. The three directors have set clear priorities for the organisation, focusing on continuous improvement and raising standards. The recent reorganisation and reductions in staffing have been managed exceptionally well and staff morale remains high. Most quality assurance processes are thorough, well established and understood by staff. Self-assessment is broadly accurate and inclusive. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements.
11. Targets set for staff are realistic and challenging, and their implementation is closely monitored. TPM collects the views of learners and employers but does not use them sufficiently well to inform further improvements or to shape the curriculum. Feedback following observations of teaching and assessment does not always clearly identify the areas for improvement or the aspects of good practice.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

12. Outcomes for learners are good overall. Learners' success rates on business administration and childcare provision are good and consistently above national rates. Success rates for hairdressing learners are satisfactory and in line with national rates. Successful management action is bringing about improvements in success rates for all learners.
13. Attendance and punctuality are good and carefully monitored. Learners achieve and make good progress compared to their prior educational attainment. Those with additional learning and social needs achieve particularly well across all areas. The small numbers of learners from minority ethnic groups have above average success rates.
14. Most learners make good improvements to their personal and social skills, and to their confidence levels. They develop very effective workplace skills that enable them to make good progress in their careers. Business administration learners quickly develop very effective skills in office practice and reception duties and childcare learners rapidly identify and plan age-appropriate play and learning activities. Hairdressing learners demonstrate good skills in salon work and benefit from the additional opportunities provided by the barbering course.
15. Learners develop good communication skills. They take part in lively discussions and generally express their opinions fluently. Many learners, who join the programme with no clear plans for their future, raise their aspirations and

identify realistic career aims. Younger learners enjoy the well-structured hairdressing programme provided by the subcontractor and many of these learners progress onto the apprenticeship programme. Most learners progress into further learning or employment.

16. Learners feel safe at work and in the training centre. Induction is effective in promoting health and safety as well as learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Learners have a good understanding of procedures to keep themselves safe. Apprentices have a good understanding of safe working practices. Fruit and water are readily available to all learners.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

17. The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good overall. However, classroom teaching is satisfactory as there are times when not all learners are engaged sufficiently. Schemes of work and lesson plans are underdeveloped. Assessment in the workplace is very good. Learners are set clear targets for improvement that are well used to help learners make progress. Question and answer techniques are good, embedding knowledge and successfully checking learners' understanding. For learners on hairdressing programmes progress reviews are not always used effectively to plan for training and learning needs.
18. Learners understand how they are progressing and have ownership of their e-portfolios particularly in childcare and business administration. They receive good feedback from their assessors and are fully aware of the significance of the traffic lights system used to highlight their progress. Internal verification is rigorous. In business administration and childcare, internal verification is carefully planned and timely, and completed at times to meet the needs of learners who wish to work at a faster pace to complete their programmes early.
19. Learners have good access to well-equipped learning environments at the training centres operated by TPM. The subcontractor also provides good accommodation and resources. Tutors and assessors make effective use of a range of information and learning technologies to enhance learning.
20. TPM offers additional qualifications in equality and diversity, and safeguarding, which enhance the learners' experience. Learners have the opportunity to progress within the provider from level 2 to level 3 qualifications. TPM is highly supportive and responsive to employers' needs. Employers are consulted about their training needs and TPM is flexible in the delivery of technical certificates in the workplace, for example in business administration. However, employers and learners are not fully consulted about curriculum planning in all subject areas.
21. TPM works very effectively with a wide range of partners and engages in exceptional partnership practice across the region, sharing good practice with other providers, schools and the local authority. The company is designated by the Skills Funding Agency as a champion across the region in developing functional skills and working with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is highly respected. A long-standing partnership with the Dyslexia Foundation works well for the benefit of learners with dyslexia who receive specialist assessment by the Foundation. TPM has good partnership

arrangements with other providers through a peer review process in hairdressing that is effective in improving practice.

22. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Recruitment practice is highly efficient and particularly effective, with timely initial assessment and induction processes. Staff give good advice and guidance to learners, especially those with additional learning and social needs. Learners are very positive about the individual support assessors provide which enables them to remain in learning and succeed. Staff provide exceptionally good social and personal support to learners.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

23. Leadership and management are good. Directors set a clear strategic direction, helping to raise ambition, for both staff and learners, in a supportive and inclusive environment. The company has built on its strengths. Directors lead the company competently and senior managers provide challenge when necessary. The whole organisation meets monthly; staff are well informed by directors. Staff appreciate that their contributions are valued. Sound business planning links well to business and quality improvement plans. Staff enjoy good development opportunities that are linked effectively to business needs.
24. TPM has very secure safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding has a very high priority across the company and is supported effectively by comprehensive policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are made on all of its staff and those of the subcontractor. TPM promotes health and safety very effectively with learners and employers. It places a high priority on e-safety and a strong emphasis on ensuring learners understand and adhere to the policy on the responsible use of information technology (IT). A carefully recorded and confidential safeguarding log confirms that TPM responds to incidents appropriately and promptly. All staff are suitably trained and the two designated staff receive appropriate enhanced training. TPM has made good links with the local children's safeguarding board and other organisations that focus on ensuring learners' safety.
25. A comprehensive and regularly reviewed policy on equality of opportunity helps ensure learners and staff are protected from harassment, bullying and discrimination. All staff and learners complete an accredited equality and diversity training programme and staff undertake refresher training every three years. TPM works with a wide range of community groups and charities targeting the more disadvantaged areas across Merseyside. A complaints procedure is in place and any incidents of racist or abusive behaviour are dealt with promptly and appropriately. TPM undertakes detailed analysis regarding recruitment of different groups of learners. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve better than their peers. TPM is successfully managing to close these gaps. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively in progress reviews. TPM measures the impact of its work thoroughly through its discussions with learners and employers.

26. Arrangements to seek and respond to users' views are satisfactory. TPM seeks feedback from learners and employers with an annual questionnaire. The response rate is high. Feedback is analysed carefully and communicated well to staff. However, not all negative feedback is followed up systematically or recorded to ensure potential improvements are implemented. Feedback in the main is quantitative rather than qualitative. TPM has recently introduced other more focused and informal ways of seeking feedback from learners, including themed surveys, which are helping them measure learner satisfaction, particularly to changes that have been introduced. It is too soon to determine the impact of these new arrangements. Improved IT resources and changed timing of afternoon and evening sessions for hairdressing learners are examples of improvements made following feedback.
27. TPM links self-assessment effectively to business planning. Action plans are clear. They include realistic targets and TPM reviews their implementation regularly. Data are used skilfully to identify issues and inform staff and managers. Quality improvement arrangements are thorough and well understood by staff. However, insufficient use is made of feedback from employers and learners to inform self-assessment.
28. TPM provides good value for money. Outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching and learning are good. E-learning, including the use of e-portfolios, is reducing the need for printing and storage. An environmental and sustainability policy highlights TPM's commitment to ensuring value for money, including using its resources sustainably. The business and quality improvement plans identify this as a key feature.

Subject areas

Child development and well-being

Grade 2

Context

29. TPM provides apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision for 142 learners. Of these, 75 apprentices are working at level 2 and 58 are advanced apprentices. Nine Train to Gain learners are completing childcare learning and development qualifications. Sixty-nine learners are aged 16 to 18 years, 67 are aged 19 to 25 years and six are over 25 years of age. Five learners are male and 137 are female. Twenty per cent of learners have a learning difficulty and/or disability and 4% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. All learners are employed and attend training for half a day each week at TPM's training centre. Assessors regularly visit learners at work to provide assessment and to review their progress.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates are above national averages and most learners complete their training within their planned time. The very small number of Train to Gain learners achieve satisfactorily. In 2010/11 the success rate for level 2 apprenticeship programmes declined by 8% but it is still 13% above the national average. Advanced apprenticeship programmes have maintained high performance and learners on these programmes make good progress.
- Attendance and punctuality for level 2 and level 3 learners are good and improving. Learners gain additional qualifications in equality and diversity and paediatric first aid that help increase their confidence. Learners enjoy their learning.
- Learners develop a good range of employability and social skills such as communication, independence, listening and writing. Employers confirm that learners are able to work to a good professional standard. Many gain permanent employment with the organisations where they completed their apprenticeships.
- Learners feel very safe in the workplace and at the training centre. They are fully aware of the procedures TPM has to report safeguarding issues. Learners have confidence in their assessors who they can easily contact if a problem concerning safeguarding arises. They have a good understanding of safe working practices and can explain how to work safely.
- The quality of training and assessment in the workplace is very good. Assessment is well planned and effective; assessors use a variety of methods to assess learners' competence. Verbal feedback to learners, following assessment, is prompt, encouraging and constructive. Assessors make good use of questioning techniques. Most assessors make good use of differentiated questioning to elicit learners' knowledge and their understanding of its

application to their work roles. However, learners are not always sufficiently stretched and challenged.

- Progress reviews are carefully planned and learners' progress is monitored effectively. Learners are made fully aware of their attainment through the use of e-portfolios to track outcome completion. The target setting process is good and learners know what they have to do to make progress. Realistic targets are agreed at each review and progress towards their achievement is assessed at subsequent reviews.
- Learners have good access to assessment and review opportunities, with TPM assessors visiting them at least monthly and often more frequently. Some learners do not take sufficient ownership of the process of identifying what evidence they can collect at work in order to achieve the required competence.
- Classroom teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors have a good rapport with learners, show them respect and have a good knowledge of the subject area. Too few lessons are good or better. In some lessons, for example with level 3 learners, the more able learners are not challenged enough. Schemes of work and lesson plans include insufficient information on how teaching will meet the needs of all the learners in the group.
- Employer engagement is good. Employers feel they are a valued part of the training process and are highly satisfied with the service provided by TPM. Employers value the quality of the training and support the learners receive. They recognise the progress learners are making and the high standard of the skills they are developing. Employers receive reports on their learners' progress. However, they are not always sufficiently involved during the review and evaluation of learners' progress.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are very good. Recruitment practice is highly efficient. Learners are positively welcomed and are aware of their rights and responsibilities from the outset. Particularly effective and timely initial and diagnostic assessment highlights learners' support needs accurately. Assessment practices are designed to meet learners' specific needs and, where appropriate, learners are visited more frequently in the workplace.
- TPM has satisfactory arrangements for collecting and responding to the views of learners. TPM does not, however, collect their views frequently enough. The action planning to address issues identified does not indicate sufficiently clearly how improvements will be reviewed and monitored. Learners understand the complaints policy and procedure.
- The promotion of safeguarding, and equality and diversity is good. Learners complete a qualification on equality and diversity. Learners are routinely asked about equality and diversity, and health and safety during assessments and reviews.
- Internal verification of the assessment process is thorough, timely and well planned. TPM is very responsive to requests to fast track learners through their programmes. Frequent standardisation meetings take place with positive impact in improving practice. Quality assurance systems validate the rigour of the process, confirming the high standard of work the learners produce.

What does Training Plus Merseyside Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Improve schemes of work and lesson plans by including information on how teaching and assessment will ensure that all learners, regardless of their ability, will make good progress.
- Enable learners to take more ownership of their learning by teaching them to consider more critically what evidence can be collected at work and how it can be used to meet the required competences.
- Ensure that the views of learners are collected sufficiently frequently and ensure that the action plans developed to address issues raised are clear.

Hairdressing

Grade 2

Context

30. In total, 162 learners are on apprenticeship programmes; 75 are with TPM and 87 are with the subcontractor. One-hundred and nineteen intermediate apprentices and 10 advanced apprentices are on hairdressing programmes and the remainder are working towards an intermediate NVQ in barbering. TPM entered into a subcontracting arrangement in August 2011 with a Liverpool-based hairdressing provider. TPM currently works with 52 salons in the Liverpool area. Five staff are employed by TPM to work on the hairdressing and barbering programmes. The subcontractor has a training centre in the city, which learners attend weekly for practical and theory training and assessment. Learners training with TPM do all their practical training and assessment in the salons in which they work. Approximately 25% of the hairdressing learners are identified as having additional learning needs.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. Success rates are around the national average and have remained static for the last three years. While intermediate apprenticeship success rates have remained satisfactory, advanced apprenticeship success rates are good. They improved in 2010/11 and are above the national average. Learners achieve within their expected timescale. Success rates for learners with additional learning needs are good.
- Learners make good progress in the workplace and quickly develop good levels of hairdressing skill. They develop confidence and employability skills through working with clients who have a wide range of needs. Learners often progress in their career to become stylists and gain promotion. The proportion of learners progressing with TPM from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships is low at 5% in 2010/11, and has decreased since the previous year.
- Learners feel safe at work and at TPM and are clear about the action they should take to protect themselves and who they should speak to if they have any concerns. TPM has good arrangements for ensuring learners work in a safe environment.
- Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Learners have good access to learning and assessment in the workplace. Assessors' visits are frequent and effective in progressing learners through their qualification.
- Reviews of progress are of a satisfactory quality. Learners are set short-term targets but not all learners are sufficiently challenged or effectively involved in the review process. Assessors often dominate discussions and spend too much time completing paperwork, limiting the time available for learners to contribute.
- TPM meets the needs of learners and employers very effectively. Learning and assessment are arranged flexibly to meet the needs of the businesses. Relationships with employers are good and they speak highly of TPM and their

professional and supportive approach. Employers' views are not considered sufficiently in the development of learning programmes.

- Care, guidance and support are good. Learners undertake in-depth initial assessment at the start of their programmes. Additional support needs are identified early and support is put in place promptly. The support provided is closely monitored and effective.
- Leadership and management are good. Performance management focuses closely on learners' retention and achievement. Arrangements with the subcontractor are good and carefully monitored.
- Staff use data very effectively to monitor trends and identify the reasons why learners leave the programme without completing their qualifications. Strategies to identify learners who are at risk of dropping out have been strengthened and individually focused actions are being implemented to help learners remain on their training programmes. However, it is too early to judge the success of these measures.
- Self-assessment is effective in gathering a good range of evidence to allow managers to identify key strengths and area for further development within the provision. Improvement plans are clear and well understood by staff. However, insufficient use is made of feedback from employers and learners to inform self-assessment.

What does Training Plus Merseyside Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' success rates by closely monitoring their progress and making full use of the 'at risk' procedures.
- Improve the quality of the assessment and review process by encouraging learners to be more proactive during progress reviews.
- Use the good relationships that TPM has with employers to involve them more in developing and improving the learners' training programmes.

Business administration and law

Grade 2

Context

31. TPM provides intermediate and advanced level apprenticeships in business administration. Of the 49 learners on the programme, 55% are aged 16 to 18 years and 80% are female. There are 35 intermediate apprentices and 14 advanced apprentices. Currently 4% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Learners work in a range of businesses including solicitors and charities. Assessment of learner competence takes place in the workplace and assessors visit learners at least monthly. Learners attend the training centre for training in literacy and numeracy and to complete the technical certificate.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. In 2010/11, overall success rates were above the national averages. The rate declined in 2010/11, having improved over the previous three years. The percentages of learners who completed their programme by their planned end dates in 2010/11 exceeded the national averages. In the current year, most learners are making excellent progress and are on target to complete their programme.
- Learners enjoy their training and learning and are motivated and enthusiastic; they develop good levels of self-confidence and make good adjustments to the challenges of work. Career progression is good with many learners being promoted to positions of responsibility within their workplace. The skills and knowledge they gain enhance their capacity to work effectively. Most apprentices who completed their programme in 2010/11 progressed onto advanced apprenticeships.
- Learners feel particularly safe in the workplace and in the centre and have a good understanding of health and safety priorities. They have a good awareness of safeguarding matters and know who to contact to raise concerns if they need support.
- Assessment visits are made frequently and assessment is very effective at enabling learners to make good progress and achieve before their expected end date. Learners plan their work thoroughly and submit written assessments frequently online through the e-assessment process. Information and learning technology resources are used particularly effectively to support training, assessment and portfolio building.
- Assessors make excellent use of their occupational skills and knowledge to ensure learning and assessment are rigorous and accurate. Assessors' visits are planned carefully in order to avoid times when learners and employers have heavy work commitments.

- Internal verification is rigorous. Learners' work is thoroughly checked to ensure it meets awarding body requirements. It is a robust system that clearly shows learners' progress.
- TPM meets the needs of learners and employers successfully. Apprentices are extremely well matched to the available employers. A team of well-qualified staff, who have excellent links with local employers, carry out recruitment very efficiently. TPM works highly effectively with a range of employers and many return to the provider to recruit more apprentices.
- Very good use is made of partnerships to identify high quality work opportunities for learners. Communication with employers is excellent and most are involved in planning the learning.
- Support for learners is outstanding. They receive excellent information and guidance at induction and during progress reviews to help them make informed choices about further study and career progression. Learners are extremely positive about the highly personalised support assessors provide which help them to remain in learning and succeed. An 'at risk' system carefully monitors learners' progress and identifies when additional support would help them achieve.
- Programme management is good. Assessors are set targets for learner achievement, and good use is made of monthly performance meetings and weekly 'at-risk' meetings to track and monitor assessor performance carefully. Communication and teamwork are good and professional development fully supports staff.
- Self-assessment is thorough and inclusive. However, areas for improvement are not clearly identified so that improvement plans cannot easily be established. TPM collects employer feedback regularly but does not use it efficiently to inform improvement planning.
- Accommodation at the training centre and in the workplace provides professional and purposeful learning environments. Staff are provided with good IT resources to assist them with assessment in the workplace.

What does Training Plus Merseyside Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Improve apprenticeship success rates by robustly implementing the 'at risk' system.
- Improve the effectiveness of the self-assessment process by making better use of employers' feedback to identify areas for improvement and more clearly specifying what is to be done.

Information about the inspection

32. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's survey visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.
33. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Training Plus Merseyside Limited

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	353	353
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals? How well do learners progress?	2 2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a	
Quality of provision	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	
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
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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