

LJ Care Training Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52899

Name of lead inspector: Bob Cowdrey HMI

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Type of provider: Independent Learning Provider

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Information about the provider

1. LJ Care Training Limited is a private company with its head office in Swindon. The company was formed in 2000 and became incorporated as a limited company in 2006. Since its establishment the company has specialised in delivering National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) assessment in health and social care with clients from residential, nursing and learning disability care homes, and the domiciliary care sector. The company operates across Wiltshire and into north Somerset and south Gloucestershire. LJ Care Training Ltd, led by a managing director, has ten staff made up of assessors, internal verifiers and two administrative staff.
2. The company offers support for carers following NVQs at level 2 and level 3. It also offers NVQ level 4 for supervisors and managers. This qualification includes the leadership and management for care services in their own environment at level 4. Additional awards are provided, for example assessor (A1) and internal verifier (V1) qualifications and support services in health care. The company also provides support to employers for qualifications in team leading, customer services and business administration at levels 2 and 3. In 2008/09 approximately 115 learners were funded under Train to Gain. This represented some 80% of the company's income.
3. At the time of inspection there were 57 learners on Train to Gain programmes.

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2008/09 (previous year)
Employer provision: Train to Gain	115 learners

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 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2
Subject areas	Grade
Health and social care	2

Overall effectiveness

4. The overall effectiveness of LJ Care Training Ltd (LJ) is good. Senior staff provide good leadership and effective management. Over the last year several changes to contracts have been made by the funding agencies. This has been managed well. Staff have been working fewer hours but continuing to provide high levels of support to learners and employers. Overall success and success rates within the planned timescale have improved year on year above national averages. A dip in success rates in 2008/09 to around national averages was due to the inaccurate recording of learners' completion dates. Learners' achievements improved significantly in 2009/10 and at the time of inspection success rates were well above national averages. Progression on to higher level qualifications is good. Many move on to level 4 awards which are privately funded. Learners thoroughly enjoy their training and are well motivated. Many learners are using the electronic portfolio effectively for recording evidence for NVQs.
5. Assessment is well planned and in many cases assessors carry out observational assessments during unsociable shift hours. In a few care homes good work is done by employer's staff who are qualified assessors. Funding for literacy, numeracy and language support is insufficient and staff often refer learners to local colleges or local authority provision. LJ staff provide good informal support for those with support needs. However, the provider

recognises the need to do more. The range of programmes meets employers' and learners' needs well. Learners are well supported and feel safe. Safeguarding is satisfactory. Some staff have not received recent safeguarding training. Learners' review of progress is insufficiently thorough. Despite frequent changes to the documentation, some reviews still lack sufficient detail and target setting remains vague. Leadership and management have demonstrated they can improve their provision and success rates and have a satisfactory capacity to continue doing so.

Main findings

- Overall outcomes are good. Since the previous inspection, overall success rates have improved year on year and are high at 88% for the current year and significantly higher than the national average of 74% for 2008/09. Overall success rates within the planned timescale are also high at 79% for the current year against a national average of 70% for 2008/09.
- Learners are well motivated and enjoy their training. They develop and improve their work skills and interpersonal skills, such as confidence and self-esteem, and effectively apply the knowledge gained from their training. Many learners progress from level 2 to level 3 and some progress to level 4 which is non government funded.
- The quality of assessment and verification is good. Assessment is well planned and provided at times to meet both employer and learners' needs. Learners are encouraged to use electronic portfolios and many are using the technology to provide evidence for their qualifications. The use of electronic portfolios needs further training for staff and learners. The learner review process needs further development.
- LJ offers learners and employers good support for a range of additional accredited training opportunities. Partnership working is very effective. Communication with employers is frequent and good. LJ works well with employers to promote the benefits of further training. It is well respected and works closely with Skills for Care to develop standards for qualifications.
- Support for learners is particularly effective. Learners are well supported by assessors and in many cases they offer support and assessment during shift working hours. Senior LJ staff make arrangements for additional staff to cover absences to ensure that learners' progress is maintained. However, more work needs to be done to identify and support learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs.
- LJ senior staff set a clear direction with a strong focus on improving learner success rates. Managers, assessors and verifiers make raising success rates a priority during meetings in self-assessment and through performance reviews. LJ has a good system to identify those learners making slow progress. Managers use data well to identify issues and evaluate progress.
- Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. LJ staff place a high emphasis on health and safety and learners feel safe. Safeguarding policies, including Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for staff are appropriate. LJ staff have

good recognition of their vulnerable learners. Some staff have not had recent safeguarding training.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners have a very good understanding of equality and diversity. Assessors use questions effectively during progress meetings to reinforce and extend understanding. LJ uses data very effectively to monitor and improve success rates across different groups of learners. Some staff have not received recent training
- Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment process drives improvement. Managers and staff use informal quality improvement systems well to improve the learners' experience. Some quality improvement activities focus too much on compliance and audit rather than identifying improvements.

What does LJ Care Training Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the overall and success rates within the planned timescale of learners by closely monitoring learners' progress and ensuring access to assessment when needed.
- Improve the review of learners' progress to ensure that learners' targets for improvement are clearly identified, recorded, shared with employers and monitored effectively.
- Improve arrangements for the identification of literacy, numeracy and language needs early in learners' programmes to ensure that learners' needs are fully met.
- Make better use of quality improvement tools, including sharing of best practice to increase consistency and of quality of self-assessment.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the opportunity to get a qualification which reflects their work in the care home
- friendly approachable assessors who are always available
- professional and helpful LJ staff
- help when learners partially completed with another organisation and some of their work was lost
- assessors making it easy to understand the NVQ.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more information on websites that could be useful for research
- text books would help with learning.

What employers like:

- LJ's professionalism and familiarity with care homes
- dealing with any problems quickly
- keeping employers updated on funding and other changes so that staff have opportunities to develop their skills
- assistance with sound guidance on achieving a good standard of training in their organisations
- the way that LJ works to a high standard.

What employers would like to see improved:

- better feedback on learner progress and whether they are on target
- advance notice if the manager is needed to get things signed as they are not always available.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

6. Managers place a strong focus on improving achievement. Despite changes in funding arrangements and delays in contracts, LJ has continued to offer a high-quality service and made year-on-year improvements in overall and success rates within the planned timescale. At the time of inspection, rates were significantly above national averages. Senior staff have carefully structured the provision, informed by effective partnership working and local priorities. The company has made improvements since the previous monitoring visit. It has significantly improved data collection and made good use of data, performance management and target setting to reduce underachievement. Inspection grades have increased since the last inspection. Assessment and verification activities are well organised. Assessors quickly identify and target for support learners making slow progress. However, target setting for training for many learners during their progress reviews is insufficiently thorough. Initial assessment of and support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs requires further development.
7. The self-assessment report is generally accurate, reasonably clear and concise. Most staff contribute to the process, which includes gathering learners' and employers' views. The report and subsequent quality improvement plan are clearly structured and form a key part of the business planning process. Managers closely monitor the business plan for improvement. Quality improvement systems, including those that are informal, are satisfactory. However, there is an over reliance on compliance and audit.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Overall learners' achievement of outcomes has improved year on year for the past three years and continues to be good. This was recognised as a strength at the previous inspection. Current success rates for 2009/10 are high at 84% for those achieving level 2 and 96% for those on level 3 programmes giving an overall success rate of 88%. This figure is 13 percentage points above the national average of 75% for 2008/09.
9. Success rates within the planned timescale for level 3 learners are high at 92%. Level 2 success rates within the planned timescale are satisfactory at 75%. Current overall success rates within the planned timescale are high at 79% against a national average for 2008/09 of 70%. There was a dip in recorded success rates in 2008/09 due to an administrative error where incorrect, shortened target dates were recorded for funding purposes and then could not be changed to reflect the accurate data.
10. Learners enjoy their learning and are well motivated. Current learners make good progress towards achieving targets, and some are making very good progress. Learners progress well from level 2 to level 3 and some progress

further on to privately-funded qualifications at level 4. Progression for many also means promotion and increased responsibility and salary.

11. Learners are developing good skills to support their work. These include practical skills and a wider understanding and better ability to provide for services users' needs and also lead to increased confidence and professionalism. Learners feel safe and understand that the NVQ process encourages them to work in a safe manner and be aware of their personal safety.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

12. The quality of assessment and verification is good. Internal verifiers, who also act as team leaders, support new assessors well. Learners are encouraged to use electronic portfolios and many are using the technology to provide evidence for their qualifications. Many of the care homes do not have sufficient computers for learners to access at work. Learners often work from home and assessors visit them in their homes and provide good support to ensure that they achieve within the planned timescale. Verifiers effectively use performance data to monitor learners' progress and assessors' support to identify clearly any learners making slow progress. Staff and learners need further training in the use of electronic portfolios to enable learners to benefit from the diverse range of evidence gathering, for example voice and video recordings.
13. Learners' assessments are well planned and provided at times to meet both employer and learners' needs. Assessors use individual learning plans well to plan and monitor learners' NVQ progress. Learners have clear interim targets setting out work they need to complete between assessors frequent visits. Although employers do not routinely attend progress reviews, they have a reasonable awareness of learners' progress and any issues they may have. Some reviews focus too much on NVQ targets and insufficient attention is given to identifying training needs including personal development targets. This weakness was identified at the previous monitoring visit. LJ has recognised the need to do more about improving the quality and consistency of reviews.
14. Learners' and employers' needs are met particularly well by LJ staff. All aspects of the learners' programme are well coordinated, and activities in the workplace are used productively towards training and assessment. Learners and employers have high levels of satisfaction with LJ's support.
15. The company offers learners and employers good support for a range of additional accredited training opportunities, for example customer service and learning and development programmes including assessor and verifier awards. Approximately 20 learners have gained customer service awards at level 2 over the last two years. A few learners are following business administration and team working qualifications. Several have achieved a level 4 qualification in management and this has helped them progress to more senior positions.

16. Partnership working is very effective. Some employer staff are assessors and they effectively assess learners at work when the opportunities arise. Communication with employers is frequent and good. LJ works well with employers to promote the benefits of further training. LJ is well respected and works closely with Skills for Care to help develop standards for qualifications and to assist employers with accessing additional funds to support their training.
17. LJ staff have access to learning resources of good quality to support the introduction and use of electronic portfolios. Assessors make good use of laptops with learners during learning sessions. Employers provide good working environments and training that complement LJ's coaching.
18. Support for learners is particularly effective and learners are making good progress through their learning programmes. Learners are well supported by assessors. They offer support and assessment during shift working hours. Learners speak highly of assessors who support them, for example in times of bereavement. Senior LJ staff make arrangements for additional staff to cover absences to ensure that learners' progress is maintained. Funding restrictions have reduced the amount of literacy, numeracy and language support the company is able to provide. LJ has worked hard with local colleges to access support, but this has not materialised. Learners wanting support are guided well by LJ staff towards alternative support agencies and many have taken the opportunity to do this. The company provides good informal support and learners achieve well, but it recognises the need to do more to help learners.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

19. Senior staff set clear strategies that carefully match the company's aspirations to meet local funding and employers' priorities. All staff focus very strongly on improving learners' success rates, making this a priority during meetings and through frequent performance reviews. LJ has a good 'at risk' system alerting them to learners making slow progress. Assessors quickly follow through concerns and provide support to improve learners' progress. The collection of data has improved significantly since the previous monitoring visit and assessors use data well to identify issues and evaluate success. LJ operates a satisfactory appraisal scheme and staff are appropriately rewarded in line with their learners' success within the planned timescale. Communication is good and staff are involved and included in the running of the company through regular meetings. Information technology is used effectively to enable staff to participate remotely in meetings.
20. LJ has satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding. All staff who have contact with learners are CRB checked. The company liaises effectively with external agencies where appropriate, to help support vulnerable learners. Safeguarding is routinely discussed at staff meetings, but not all company staff have received recent safeguarding training.

21. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity, which they remember well from induction. Assessors make good use of questions during learners' progress reviews to reinforce and extend learners' understanding. They have successfully raised participation from men and minority ethnic groups despite the latter having a very low representation locally and in the sector. Managers use data very effectively to monitor success rates across different groups of learners. Managers noted that some learners from minority ethnic groups were making slow progress and implemented additional support that redressed this. Assessors use a variety of ways to support learners with gathering and recording evidence for portfolios. Those who wish can use the electronic portfolios while others can use paper-based records. Managers make effective use of their links with employers and care agencies to develop the provision and to meet the individual needs of the care homes. Many homes celebrate learners' achievements well with achievements displayed on notice boards, NVQ badges and regular award ceremonies where prizes are awarded to learners. LJ staff are invited to attend these occasions. Some LJ staff have not had recent equality and diversity training.
22. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and contributes to the overall business planning and quality improvement processes. Sharing of good practice is satisfactory and takes place through meetings and individual support by internal verifiers. However, the sharing of good practice to help consistency across staff with the self-assessment process needs to be further developed.
23. Staff have access to good resources. Assessors are supported well by managers. Staff training and development are generally good.
24. Value for money is good. Outcomes for learners have improved year on year and significantly in 2009/10. Contracts and funding for future provision have been secured in recent months.

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's managing 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 funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of the provider. They also visited assessment sessions, and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
LJ Care Training Ltd

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); 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	57	57
Full-time learners		
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
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?*	n/a	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	n/a	
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?*	n/a	
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?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
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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