

London Borough of Hackney (Workstep)

Inspection report

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343719

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on participants and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

HRP was inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) in April 2005, and then reinspected in May 2006. At the reinspection, the Workstep provision and all aspects of leadership and management were judged satisfactory. HRP was making reasonable progress at a monitoring visit carried out by Ofsted in August 2007.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on Workstep provision in:

- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. Hackney Recruitment Partnership (HRP) manages the Workstep contract on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney. HRP is part of the learning disabilities services based in the borough's community services directorate. They provide an employment and progression service to Hackney residents with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Five members of HRP's staff are involved in the Workstep programme. They include a part-time Workstep coordinator and a Workstep employment adviser, reporting to the two development managers, who work as a job share and report to the borough's head of learning disabilities services. HRP's Workstep contract with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is for 15.5 full-time equivalent places. Currently there are 15 participants on the programme.
2. Hackney is a borough in East London where most employers are small local businesses or voluntary organisations. The unemployment rate in Hackney in June 2009 was approximately 10% compared to 6.9% nationally. The London Borough of Hackney is ranked as the most deprived local authority in the country in the government's index of multiple deprivation. According to the 2001 census, 40.6 % of the residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the third highest proportion in the London boroughs.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. The overall effectiveness of HRP's Workstep provision is good. The quality of provision and its leadership and management, including equality of opportunity, are good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory.
4. Participants make good progress in their jobs and develop particularly good employability skills. They receive outstanding individual support, which is sensitive to their needs. Reviews are thorough and clear targets are set.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. The provider demonstrates good capacity to improve. There have been good improvements made to the provision and there is a strong commitment to improving the experiences of participants. Particularly effective employer engagement has contributed to positive experiences for participants. Participants make good progress on the programme and achieve a broad range of qualifications relevant to their needs, although progress into sustained employment is slow.
6. The steps taken to improve the quality of provision, since the previous inspection, are good. HRP has maintained or improved its strengths, and areas for improvement are now satisfactory or better. Internal and external communications are now good and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Quality assurance processes have significantly improved and there is clear recording of observations of teaching and learning leading to improvement. HRP demonstrates good value for money.
7. The self-assessment process is open and inclusive and good use is made of data. HRP effectively uses feedback from participants, employers and parents or guardians in the report. The report is evaluative, judgemental and accurate. This has led to effective development planning with clear targets to improve the provision. Inspectors awarded higher grades for leadership and management and for equality of opportunity than those proposed by the provider.

Key strengths

- Very good development of participants' vocational and social skills
- Good range of vocational training courses undertaken by participants
- Very effective planning to guide participant development
- Outstanding support for participants
- Highly effective partnership working
- Good leadership and management
- Good promotion of equality, diversity and safeguarding

Key areas for improvement

- Slow progression into unsupported employment for some participants

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory. Participants develop very good vocational and social skills to help them in their jobs, and they improve in confidence and self-esteem. They gain a good range of vocational qualifications in subjects such as food safety, manual lifting and handling, first aid and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 and 2. Success rates are high at 80% to 100% and participants enjoy their work and learning. Participants demonstrate good employability skills, and are punctual for work and appropriately dressed for their job. There is no significant difference in the performance of different groups of learners. Attendance at work and on courses is mostly good.
9. HRP staff work closely with employers to ensure that participants can perform their jobs well. This includes well-planned job shadowing and the effective use of job coaches. There is extensive use of written or pictorial job guides and colour coding of tasks to help participants carry out their work more efficiently.
10. For a small proportion of participants, the progression into unsupported employment is slow. Using the DWP measure, HRP achieved a progression rate of 20% during the last year. Some participants successfully obtain work experience, work placements and part-time work and HRP staff help participants with regular job applications. However, three participants have been on the programme for a long time and are ready to move into sustained employment. Although this is recognised through self-assessment, actions taken to engage local employers and find unsupported work have not yet proved successful.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. Quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good and good use is made of a broad range of resources. Particularly effective planning aids participants' development, and progress reviews are comprehensive. Target setting is effective and helps participants sustain and/or improve their performance. Participants and employers are thoroughly involved in reviews, and understand the targets well. Good use is made of diaries, with easy-read labels to aid participants' understanding of the importance of dates and timekeeping, and this has led to improvements in attendance. Information, advice and guidance are very good. Induction and initial assessment are thorough, with good reinforcement of equality and diversity.
12. There is good development of participants' literacy and numeracy skills. Particularly good use is made of local colleges, community provision and in-house courses delivered by

specialists for this, and participants achieve well. Good planning of lessons and effective use of participants' work experiences lead to improvements to their reading, writing and numeracy abilities. There is good attention to job search and there is appropriate guidance given in interview technique and applications.

13. Outstanding personal support helps participants maintain a lifestyle that aids their continuing employment. HRP staff sensitively and effectively deal with routine issues such as poor personal health and hygiene. They are able to provide excellent support for participants' personal problems and complex benefit concerns through a broad range of external agencies. Staff provide particularly good support for participants with travel or housing issues. Travel training is provided where necessary along with effective training and support for personal finance, time management and communication skills. As part of the council's learning disabilities service, Workstep staff are able to access additional support effectively and promptly. Following self-assessment, this has been further strengthened. Staff visit participants regularly in the workplace, and deal with issues quickly. Involvement of parents and/or guardians, where appropriate, is particularly good and encouraged. Employers make effective contributions to the support of participants and often ensure that their needs are met by devoting additional time and effort. There are clear records kept of any interventions and help provided.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. Leadership and management are good. There is clear strategic planning, and challenging key performance targets are set to ensure the continued success of the programme. Managers provide strong leadership and staff are well qualified, enthusiastic, and committed to maintaining and further improving the high quality provision. Internal and external communications are good and there is easy access to a range of relevant information on participants from other council departments through a newly installed computer system. There is good promotion of the programme through a range of posters, leaflets, a calendar and a recently produced DVD.
15. HRP works particularly effectively in partnership with a wide range of external agencies and organisations including many local colleges and specialist training providers, community mental health and disability teams and Jobcentre Plus. Staff understand the needs of the local community well and work tirelessly to ensure links with community organisations and action groups are strong. Links with many local employers are also strong and employers value the help and support they receive from HRP staff. Staff work closely with these partners to ensure participants have access to a wide range of training programmes, employment opportunities and support.
16. Equality of opportunity is good. Promotion of equality, diversity and safeguarding are good. Staff have a thorough understanding of equality and diversity issues

gained through comprehensive training. There is regular reinforcement and checking of equality of opportunities and safeguarding with participants at reviews. Staff clearly record conversations and training with participants. Participants have good awareness of equality and diversity issues, complaints and their rights and responsibilities. They are suitably protected and supported and feel confident to challenge bullying and harassment in the workplace. There is suitable analysis and use made of equality data to inform improvements to the provision. Access to work and learning provision is good for those with limited mobility. HRP gives high regard to the safeguarding of all its participants and the promotion of safeguarding is good. There are very good links with external agencies and the council who share responsibility for the protection of vulnerable adults. HRP has recorded and responded to recent incidents well. Where bullying has occurred, there are prompt actions taken to ensure participants feel protected and secure. There are suitable risk assessments and frequent monitoring visits of work placements and subcontracted provision. HRP has completed obligatory Criminal Record Bureau checks and is well prepared for the future new legislation requirements. Staff have received training in safeguarding and are fully aware of their responsibilities.

17. Quality improvement arrangements are good. These have improved considerably since the last inspection. There is good monitoring of teaching and learning and staff development has led to improvements. The self-assessment process is robust and the report gives an open and honest account of the key strengths and areas for improvement, which has led to effective development planning. Learning resources are good and HRP provides good value for money.

What participants like:

- The very good support from HRP staff and employers
- 'I found the literacy course good – I enjoyed it'
- 'The training courses, they were fun'
- 'The support I had with my diary'
- 'They understand our problems and help us deal with them'

What participants think could improve:

- 'Nothing'
- 'Less changes to my work pattern'