

Assurance Report

Absolute Training and Assessing Ltd

Address: Ty Cynon, Navigation Park, Abercynon, CF45 4SN

Date of Assurance Visit: 04th & 05th April 2018

NSAR Assurance Manager: Jan Hindhaugh

Educational Observation: 19th April 2018

NSAR Educational Specialist: Alan Brockbank

Overall Effectiveness of the provider:

Previous Inspection: **GOLD**

This Assurance Visit: OVERALL: GOLD

Leadership & Management: GOLD

Learner Outcomes: GOLD

Quality of Provision: GOLD

Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare: GOLD

DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING:

This was the second visit to this provider and the first report under the third version of the NSAR assurance framework 2018.

Absolute Training Ltd is an independent company formed in 2011 to provide safety and skills training for staff employed by companies associated with the rail industry. Training takes place in modern premises on a local business park and on a track location at Pontyclun well served by roads and there is a rail station close by.

The provider's premises have five training rooms which are able to accommodate up to 12 learners at any one time. The Training team are led by the Training Director who holds Level 7 and IQA Manager who holds Level 5 in teaching and a Level 4 IQA, they are effectively supported by the Training Manager, and 3 Trainers all at Level 3. The provider trains under Sentinel requirements and provides OTP & Track Safety courses.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE ASSURANCE VISIT

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

GRADE: GOLD

Leadership and management are Gold standard.

The Training Director models best practice and leads by example, he is effectively supported by an experienced IQA Manager, Training Manager and an efficient administrative team, together they work to ensure that training is of the highest quality and that learner's needs are at the forefront of thinking for all the trainers.

Clear policies and procedures have been developed to inform practice and ensure consistency of quality. Organisational systems are well planned, with staff clearly informed to ensure they understand the company's aims for growth and development.

Regular review meetings are held to ensure that all staff are aware of, engaged in and can contribute to the ongoing development of consistently high quality training. Thorough pre course procedures are in place, including identification checks and joining instructions, enabling sponsors and trainees to receive them in good time.

Internal verification procedures are effective as is the observation of the trainers. A thorough observation guide structure which mirrors the NSAR assurance framework ensures that the feedback provided from the observations is detailed and leads to on-going improvements. CPD for all trainers is monitored by the Training Manager with timely submissions into Skills Back bone.

Premises and physical resources are excellent. Equality and diversity is well Promoted.

The SAR has been used effectively in conjunction with the QIP to build a solid foundation to enable ongoing improvements as the business continues to grow and expand.

Learners opinions are sought at the end of each training session and are highly positive. Feedback is carefully analysed including reference to gender, age, ethnicity and learning difficulties

The providers Mission Statement is displayed in the training centre.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

GRADE: GOLD

Learner Outcomes meets Gold standard

The provider confirmed the identity and eligibility of every learner before they started their training. The provider records all of the checks completed, the testing undertaken and the outcomes of the training.

This provider has started to record effectively the progress that learners make and have captured this in the learner journey. This shows how learners make progress over time while they are with the provider. However, for some learners the starting points are quite high and therefore the trainer needs to capture this through the contextualised statements or progress forms. At present these forms are used to show the starting points but do not make comparisons when completing the course. This is important especially when measuring the higher end learners.

The learner experience is outstanding with this provider as they not only achieve on the courses studied, at present 98%, but also benefit from experienced trainers and managers who offer career advice which is embedded in the delivery of the course. There are no achievement gaps in different groups of learners which is evidenced by the hard work the trainers put into preparation and delivery to meet the learners needs.

It was seen in the delivery of all three sessions that learners were set goals to achieve which were connected to the career plans of the learner. During the observations learners were given work higher than the course level and was consolidated with questioning. Learners working at higher levels than the courses studied need to produce work so that feedback from trainers and internal verifiers can be used to inform learners of what needs to be done, it can also be used to

evidence high standards of work. Learners spoken to and observed clearly like their time with this provider and felt they receive a lot of guidance as well as a qualification, for example the skills and knowledge that will enable them to progress to their chosen career/pathway.

QUALITY OF PROVISION

GRADE: GOLD

Quality of provision meets Gold Standard

The detailed preparation for the assurance visit by all staff reflects the standards that Senior managers have set and expect of them. It also confirmed the excellent communication that exist within Absolute Training. Another example of good communication by managers is the information contained in the team office. Quality plans are displayed on the walls for example, observations, CPD dates and 1:1s which happen quarterly. Also found in this office were quality files prepared by senior managers for the Assurance visit.

The main building where delivery takes place is clean and tidy. The classrooms are all of a good size, equipped with resources used in the delivery of sessions and have pictures and informative notice boards. Each room has an organisational chart explaining the roles and responsibilities of each member of staff. For example, any learner wanting career guidance should contact the nominated member of staff. Staff explain to learners about careers advice, but it is advised that this chart is embedded as part of the introductions to the course.

During discussions Senior managers outlined enthusiastically and knowledgably about their provision explaining what they had done and were going to do. This was all outlined in various planning documents. Evidence was found to explain what had happened in the past but for the progression, in the future it is advised that the QIP should be used to set the proposed targets with SMART dates set. A team briefing takes place daily, minutes were recorded and filed. If this is to continue important information that requires targets should be set and recorded. These should then be fed into the QIP for monitoring and identifying what has been

achieved. Working relationships between staff and learners are exemplary which was evidenced in and out of the classroom.

The SAR is comprehensive detailing the expectations of leadership and management and all staff that work at Absolute Training. It is learner focused and details the achievements over the year. It also focuses on improving the learner experience in the coming year. The QIP is detailed showing progress during 2017 and setting targets for 2018. It is advised for ease of use that the format changes to this document from word to a spreadsheet so that additional targets can be added, and progress easily monitored. As with other quality documents this could be displayed on the staff room wall.

Teaching and learning is discussed regularly identify good practice and areas for improvement, which was seen in minutes and trainers spoke about the benefits of this and how it enables them to improve their delivery. This was also evidenced in a resource folder containing icebreakers and extension activities. Recommendations made at the last assurance visit had been acted upon, for example trainers produce contextualised statements, examples were produced. Progress forms could be used for this purpose in the future.

Performance management is regular, meetings are held every three to four months with formal appraisals every six months.

All rooms were clean and tidy, and each teaching room was designed to have power point flip charts and numerous resources to support teaching. Each trainer had prepared detailed paperwork to show the observer about the course and learners. Three courses were observed all at different levels from a PTS to a COSS and all were delivered to a good standard with trainers using assessments and questions to challenge all learners including the most able and those requiring support.

Trainers support learners to achieve their learning goals and staff identify learners' support and additional learning needs quickly and accurately through course induction icebreakers and interactive activities.

The trainers have qualifications from level 3 to level 5. However, the managers realise that the level 3 qualification is limiting in the delivery of sessions and have encouraged trainers to deliver to high standards through performance management and observations. This has been effective and can be seen by trainers using this experience, qualifications, subject knowledge and relevant experiences to plan and deliver learning appropriate to learners' abilities. Staff are aware of and plan for individual learners' needs and provide effective support, including making reasonable adjustments which was seen in the observations.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE GRADE: GOLD

Personal Development and Welfare meets Gold standard

Learners, regardless of level are treated with respect and have good accommodation to work in with clean and tidy restroom areas available. This helps the learners to settle in to their work and with good icebreakers build up the learners' confidence very quickly. As seen on the courses observed learners become self-confident, self-assured and know that they have the potential to be a successful learner and have a future in the rail industry.

In classroom activities and during practical delivery learners benefit from purposeful work-related learning, developing personal, social and employability skills.

English and mathematics is discussed, and learners are made aware of the importance of these subjects not only on the course of study but also in their career plans. This was observed in the classroom and there are notices on the classroom walls regarding support for English math and ESOL.

Learners were taught the importance of team work and challenging targets were set appropriate to their level of study to show they understand and can work effectively to realistically challenging academic or commercial deadlines and standards. There were many examples of learners who have progressed through the Princess Trust and through the HMP training route and have achieved PTS and then through to COSS,

staying in employment and making a difference not only for themselves but also for their families and local needs.

In all lessons observed career pathways and advice was given. The trainers used their knowledge of the industry to develop learners' realistic plans for their future career.

All learners understood the appeals procedure and responsibilities under equality and diversity which was evidenced by their replies to questions set to them.

Health and safety was clearly set out in sessions observed making sure learners understood the importance of being safe and how they can raise concerns if they do not feel safe when attending work activities.

Learners were punctual to all sessions and their behaviour throughout the day was excellent.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Leadership and Management

- Consider upskilling the Level 3 trainers to Level 4

Learner Outcomes

- Continue to measure progress during a course using the progress form to measure how far each learner has travelled from their starting points xxx

Quality of Provision

- It is recommended that the QIP is changed to a spreadsheet so that SMART targets can be added easily, and progress measured.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

- As many learners return to Absolute Training through various routes data should now be presented to show the progression not only in qualifications but also in gaining and keeping employed.

OVERALL JUDGEMENTS

Judgement	How the grade is achieved
Gold	Overall effectiveness will be gold standard when Leadership and Management, Quality of Provision, Outcomes for Learners and Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare are GOLD. Safeguarding is effective.
Silver	Overall effectiveness will be silver when all of the following Leadership and Management, Quality of Provision, Outcomes for Learners and Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare are at least SILVER. Safeguarding is effective.
Bronze	Overall effectiveness will require improvement when any of Leadership and Management, Quality of Provision, Outcomes for Learners and Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare are rated BRONZE Safeguarding is effective.
Inadequate	One or more of the following Leadership and Management, Quality of Provision, Outcomes for Learners and Personal Development and Behaviour are INADEQUATE Safeguarding is effective/ineffective. The provider will be suspended from delivery until it can demonstrate to NSAR that the areas for improvement have been addressed, which must be within 4 months. Where corrective actions are not implemented within 4 months Assurance to deliver training and/or assessment may be permanently withdrawn.
Next Steps	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The provider will receive their next Assurance Visit between 9 and 15 months from the date of their last visit. 2. NSAR operates an unannounced visit regime whereby the provider can be visited without notice at any time between assurance visits. 	

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