

External review of Modern Apprenticeship delivery by

Tigers (STA) Ltd

A report by HM Inspectors

08/08/2023

CEO/Principal	Pauline Scott
External review date	20th June 2023
Provider type	Independent Training Provider
Lead HMI	Dr John Laird
Apprentice numbers	134

1. Background

External reviews of Modern Apprenticeship providers are planned collaboratively between the provider and HM Inspectors. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provide information regarding provider performance including key data to support this process.

During the review, a team of HM Inspectors evaluated the quality of training provision and the experiences of apprentices and key stakeholders such as employers. During the visit, the team met with staff, learners and other stakeholders and explored the quality of training delivery, how well the needs of apprentices are met, and approaches to improving quality of provision.

This report summarises the findings from the visit, award grades for the three elements and highlights areas of positive practice, areas for development, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider, Scottish Government, and SDS. For colleges, the report will be shared with the College Principals and Board or Regional Strategic Body, and SFC. An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland’s website.

2. The provider and its context

Tigers STA (Tigers) was formed in 2008 to provide training and employment opportunities for young people in the Construction industry. They are a small/medium employer based in central Glasgow with 47 employees who operate throughout Scotland. Tigers STA use a Relationship-Led Practice model which aims to offer a safe environment to learn and address social issues impacting young people. Tigers deliver a range of programmes including Foundation Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships, and commercial training as well as a schools programme across Scotland. In 2021, Tigers and Morgan Sindall Construction engaged in a joint venture to deliver MAs. The project is supported by partners such as the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, the Construction Industry Training Board, the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, and Digital Construction Skills Scotland.

3. Outcomes of external review

The grades for each of the three elements are:

Leadership and Quality Culture	Very Good
Service Delivery	Very Good
Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices	Very Good

4. Summary of review findings

A summary of the findings of HM Inspectors are set out below.

4.1 Leadership and Quality Culture - Grade: Very Good

4.1.1 Securing improvement of quality and impact of training

Areas of positive progress

- Tigers staff regularly gather input from employers to support evaluation of the MA programme. They receive feedback through surveys and conversations held with employer staff. This approach helps ensure the MA programme meets industry needs and demands and also contributes to the continuous improvement of the experience of apprentices.
- Staff work closely with employers to ensure the apprenticeship programme is appropriate to their needs and it supports apprentices to attain their award.
- Tigers staff communicate well with apprentices using a variety of approaches, including informal discussion, focus groups and surveys. The recently implemented three-stage survey is proving useful in obtaining clearer feedback from all apprentices to ensure their training needs are being appropriately met. This approach supports continuous programme improvement well.
- Apprentices engage in 12 week reviews, led by assessors, which also involve contributions from employers. Staff use this process well to receive feedback, monitor progress and reflect on any operational improvements that could be made.
- All apprentices confirm the Modern Apprenticeship programme has helped them grow in confidence within their job role, and that the training received has equipped them well with the knowledge and skills required to be a competent employee.
- Managers have implemented a useful range of improvements in the current year, with a specific focus on induction, core skills and the quality of programme delivery. These interventions are built on user feedback and are well supported by professional learning opportunities for staff, and monitoring of employer feedback.

Areas for development

- Although feedback from employers and apprentices and data on positive employment outcomes is collected, it is not used effectively to inform strategic improvement.

4.2 Service Delivery - Grade: Very Good

4.2.1 Delivery of training

Areas of positive progress

- Staff prepare learning materials to take good account of practices required in a professional working environment. Tasks are well planned, clearly demonstrated and appropriately explained.
- Apprentices are supervised closely by staff when engaging in practical tasks, with good account taken of health and safety requirements. Learning is contextualised and makes use made of staff professional knowledge and industry skills.
- Almost all apprentices participate in regular progress reviews held with their line manager and assessor. Assessors maintain good contact with their apprentices between these reviews to offer ongoing support and advice. Apprentices comment that having this support in place makes them feel confident in the progress they are making.
- Tigers staff collaborate closely with a significant number of employers to ensure the training provided aligns with sector occupational requirements. They work well with sector organisations in ensuring their MA programme is appropriate and relevant to meet regional and national needs.
- Apprentices engage enthusiastically in induction activities which prepare them well for their MA programme. These activities provide a clear understanding of what the programme entails and the specific activities that will be carried out. This helps them settle into their programme and increases apprentices confidence in their ability to succeed.
- Almost all employers receive useful updates from Tigers staff regarding the progress their apprentice is making. This approach ensures employers understand the assessment process and programme success criteria, and can support the development of their apprentice's knowledge, skills, and behaviours.
- Almost all employers are very positive about their relationships with Tigers staff. They are satisfied with the quality of the training provided and the progress their apprentices are making.
- Almost all apprentices have a positive relationship with their assessors who they consider flexible and willing to work around their schedules and availability. This helps ensure apprentices receive the necessary guidance, encouragement, and support to engage in their learning.
- Programme satisfaction surveys from employers indicate high and improving levels of satisfaction with the MA programme from apprentices and employers.

- All staff who engage in training and assessment activities undertake a wide range of useful professional learning to enhance their skills. Workshops and events provided for staff are based closely on meeting the needs of learners and enhancing effective teaching and assessment practices. These help underpin high quality learning experiences for apprentices.
- Managers and staff have a clear emphasis on wellbeing and care for apprentices, having engaged in significant and relevant professional learning activities. Apprentices confirm a high level of personal support from staff and demonstrate an enhanced level of personal resilience and confidence in their roles as employees.

Areas for development

- None identified.

4.2.2 Staff reflection on provision to improve training

Areas of positive progress

- Managers make good use of SDS quality assurance materials as a basis for quality improvement planning. They identify clear priorities and put appropriate interventions in place. Enhancement actions, such as more robustly promoting construction as a career for women, align well with the analysis of construction sector priorities.
- Assessors participate in standardisation and internal verification meetings which help them to monitor assessment decisions and support the verification process. This approach ensures assessors apply uniform and consistent standards which meet awarding body requirements. This practice also highlights areas for improvement.
- Staff engage in significant professional learning to more fully understand the needs of different groups of learners. Work conducted with prisons, organisations supporting ex-offenders, and groups representing ethnic minorities raises awareness of cultural and pastoral needs of some of the apprentices who engage in the MA programmes. Additionally, training around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Neurodiversity Awareness, dyslexia and other learning challenges helpfully feature within staffs' CPD programme.
- Through ongoing discussions held with employers and apprentices, assessors agree appropriate optional units to be included within the MA programme. Employers are satisfied with the options offered and the flexible approach of Tigers' staff to deliver an appropriate and tailored programme.
- Regular team meetings and monthly standardisation discussions provide appropriate opportunities for staff to identify and share good practice approaches. Teach meets, where all teaching staff get together to share good practice in teaching, also supplement these meetings to highlight new and innovative approaches to supporting apprentices. Practical examples of improvement such as the use of quiz software have emerged from this work.

Areas for development

- Arrangements for evaluating the impact of action plans for improvement are not sufficiently systematic.

4.3 Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices - Grade: Very Good

4.3.1 Achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery

Areas of positive progress

- Tigers STA successful completer/leaver ratio for the last three years is above the SDS target and is consistent with the sector average for these frameworks.
- When an apprentice leaves an employer, Tigers staff actively encourage individuals to complete their apprenticeship. During a recent period where a major employer closed, staff were highly successful in assisting around 80 apprentices to continue with their employment within the sector.
- Tigers STA have supported almost 90% of their apprenticeship candidates to gain permanent employment within the construction industry.

Areas for development

- Overall, the numbers of female apprentices, apprentices with a disability and ethnic minority apprentices are low. Although there are actions in place to address this, numbers are not yet improving.

4.3.2 Adherence to statutory principles and guidance

Areas of positive progress

- All staff have appropriate disclosure checks in place, which are updated regularly. They complete mandatory safeguarding training as part of their induction, and the training is refreshed on an ongoing basis. The training outlines their responsibilities and the actions they should take if they encounter safeguarding concerns.
- All employers complete SQA's site selection checklist which ensures the workplace environment is safe and appropriate for assessing the award. This approach confirms appropriate adherence to health and safety, legal and insurance requirements.
- Staff are aware of general equalities legislation, and they work diligently to ensure their programmes are inclusive. They have particular experience of working with young people who have had challenging backgrounds, and staff are aware of research in areas such as ACES which help staff to better support apprentices.
- Staff work well with a range of external partners including schools, colleges, commercial partners and third sector organisations to promote construction career options to underrepresented groups. They make good use of their website and social media to promote success stories in areas such as women succeeding in construction.
- Staff pay close attention to the wellbeing and support needs of their apprentices, particularly of younger learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Apprentices are encouraged to develop their confidence and take responsibility for their own career options. Apprentices know who to contact about any wellbeing issues or support concerns.

Areas for development

- Although apprentices are offered the opportunity to retain their own portfolios, most leave them with the assessor. This limits the ability of the apprentices to understand the next steps and monitor their own progress between reviews.

4.3.3 Apprentice progress and achievement of individual outcomes

Areas of positive progress

- Staff ensure programmes are accessible and offer an appropriate degree of flexibility regarding timing and options to employers.
- Tigers staff participate productively in a range of career-focused engagement activities through attendance at schools and youth organisations. This helps raise awareness of the numerous career paths and prospects available within the construction industry.
- Managers decide on the appropriate MA programmes to offer primarily based on direct employer feedback received. The MA programme is one of many pathways into the construction industry supported by Tigers, which meet the demands of employers and the wider economy.
- Staff support learners well in their core skills development. The induction process and examining apprentices' SQA profile is used well by staff to identify those who may need more focussed core skill support. Core skills workshops ensure individuals benefit from tailored support to enable them to make good progress on their programme.
- Apprentices undertake initial assessments to determine current skillsets and programme preparedness. SQA navigator is used to collate prior qualifications achieved. Discussions take place with all candidates to ensure they receive credit for any prior learning and do not have to repeat any elements already achieved.

Areas for development

- Almost all apprentices are unclear on how their core skills are being developed further. They are aware that core skills are built into the programme but are unclear on how these have been enhanced or improved.

5. Main points for action

The following main point for action was identified

- None identified.

6. Examples of highly effective practice

- None identified.

7. What happens next?

Overall, HM Inspectors are confident that the provider has the capacity to continue to improve and will make no further visit as a result of this inspection.

Dr John Laird
HM Inspector

Appendix 1 Grades used in reporting

A common grading scale is used in making judgements for provider reviews:

- Grade 1 EXCELLENT – Outstanding and sector leading
- Grade 2 VERY GOOD – Major strengths
- Grade 3 GOOD – Important strengths with some areas for improvement
- Grade 4 SATISFACTORY - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- Grade 5 WEAK – Important weaknesses
- Grade 6 UNSATISFACTORY – Major weaknesses

Summary

- An evaluation of **excellent** applies to training which is of a very high quality. An evaluation of *excellent* represents an outstanding standard of training which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the current provision. It implies that very high-levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
- An evaluation of **very good** applies to training characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of *very good* represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide training without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the provider will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.
- An evaluation of **good** applies to training characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of *good* represents a standard of training in which the strengths have a significant positive impact. However, the quality of apprentices' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the provider should seek to improve further the areas of important strength but take action to address the areas for improvement.
- An evaluation of **satisfactory** applies to training characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of *satisfactory* indicates that apprentices' have access to a basic level of training. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of apprentices' experiences. It implies that the provider should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** applies to training which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of *weak* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish apprentices' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the provider.
- An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** applies when there are major weaknesses in training, requiring immediate remedial action. The training experience for apprentices is at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for training evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the immediate support given by the provider.

Appendix 2 Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.