

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY HANDBOOK



**Policy Group:** Quality and Support

**Effective:** March 2023

**Approved:** Rachel Butt, Director of Excellence

**Responsible Officer:** Gary West, Head of Quality

**Next Renew Date:** March 2024

**Ref no:** 4.1



# GUIDANCE

## Vision

Transform lives through learning

## Values



**PASSIONATE** - We're passionate about everything we do, especially creating as many opportunities as we can for both young people and adults to gain new skills.



**UNSTOPPABLE** - We are committed to continually exploring ways to improve the service that we offer for the benefit of our learners, partners, and employers.



**RIGHT** - We endeavour to be open, honest and fair in our dealings with learners, employers, partners and stakeholders. We also aim to get it right first time.



**PARTNERSHIPS** - We continually strive to deliver excellence through strategic and sustainable partnerships with a wide range of FE organisations, employers and wider stakeholders.



**LEARNERS** - We keep our learners at the centre of everything we do and we are driven by the desire to provide life-changing opportunities for them.



**EMPOWERMENT** - We are passionate about supporting Purple People at all levels, empowering them to realise their full potential and progress.

## Tone of voice

Our tone of voice takes its direct influence from our core values. We are passionate about people and learners and are driven to get the best out of everyone by understanding them. We are caring and supportive, as well as being determined and striving for growth. We talk with purpose and enthusiasm in a way that connects and empowers people. Innovation is at the heart of Learning Curve Group and we're always thinking about what's next!

## SUMMARY CHANGES

| Date       | Page       | Details of Amendments   |
|------------|------------|---|
| 01/04/2019 | All        | Full procedure review to bring all policies and procedures into a handbook and in line with EIF |
| 06/04/2020 | All        | COVID-19 Changes  |
| 08/05/2020 | All        | Reflect agreed standardise procedures between LCG and LHAA                                      |
| 01/03/2022 | All        | Annual Review   |
| 16/12/2022 | All        | Addition of Appendix 2  |
| 23/01/2023 | Appendix 1 | Extended Appendix 1   |
| 10/03/2023 | Appendix 3 | Annual Review and Addition of Appendix 3  |

## INTRODUCTION

Learning Curve Group (LCG) is one of the largest national training providers in the UK, providing education and training nationally. All companies within the LCG family uphold the same company Vision, Mission and Core Values and follow our group policies and procedures.

We want to ensure that our core values take priority when conducting quality assurance activities. This policy is designed to fit together as a set of arrangements which support compliance, consistency and continuous improvement within the business and are in line with the requirements of the Education Inspection Framework and other stakeholder expectations.

The continuous improvement and quality handbook and supporting framework are driven by the expectations of the EIF and refer to:

- Analysis of data of all groups of learners and targeting under performance
- Self-Assessment reporting
- Quality improvement planning
- Consistent guidance through handbooks, policies, procedures, and documentation
- Sampling of the customer experience
- Internal audit and quality sampling
- Quality monitoring of sub-contractors
- Internal Quality Assurance and moderation of assessment
- Observation of the customer journey (face to face and remote)
- Coaching and Mentoring (face to face and remote)
- External quality and improvements report and assessments
- Exchanging good practice internally and externally
- Feedback from learners, employers, sub-contractors, and staff
- Internal and external comparisons of performance data
- Deep dive reviews to look for opportunities to improve

## Applies to

All Staff

## Reason for policy

These activities will be carried out to ensure that we drive continuous improvements of the company in order to maintain and achieve internal Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as well as Ofsted, ESFA and Awarding Organisational standards.

We are committed to assuring and continuously improve our provision, the drive always is to enhance our services to our customers, to set high expectations and do all we can to reach them. Our philosophy also translates to the expectations we have for our learners where we support their learning and facilitate them in reaching their potential. Our vision statement is 'transforming lives through learning' and one of our values is learners are at the centre of everything we do; we are driven by the desire to provide life-changing opportunities for our learners.

This policy and procedure does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment and can be changed at any time as we deem appropriate.

## POLICY

### Management of Process

The management of the continuous improvement and quality assurance processes is an integral part of our framework success. We strive to work collaboratively with all operational management, delivery teams and external stakeholders. In line with our LCG values 'do the right thing' and 'continuous improvement' we aim to support and challenge appropriately where the impact on the learner is at risk, or there is an identified training need to improve and develop practice. We will engage in all relevant forms of communication to drive improvements and celebrate successes. We directly report monthly to the Executive Team and Board Members, focusing on highlights, lowlights, and action planning, using appropriate data.

### Compliance

Our quality improvement arrangements are continually reviewed to ensure that they meet the required compliance of a range of organisations that influenced provision. These requirements include those that are laid down by Government, funding bodies (ESFA), and by Awarding Organisations and qualifications authorities (assessment and verification). This will include any short-term requirements linked to periods of disruption.

### Consistency

To maintain consistency and the quality of training, we use several quality sampling approaches, which culminate in the annual self-assessment. These include internal audit, verification of assessment, observation of activities and deep dive themed reviews. Trends are used to make improvements, including additional training and changes in processes. Trends are collated monthly and reported to the Senior Management Team.

We also use external tools to report consistency. External quality reports from organisations such as awarding organisations and provider performance reviews from funding bodies.

### Continuous Improvement and Development

We use all the quality tools outlined above to identify areas for improvements and takes appropriate action using consultation and collaboration with others. Deep dives and quality review, including performance boards all focus on identifying good practice and hot spot areas that require improvement to ensure our learners receive the very best experience. We exchange good practice identified across our provision with the LCG family, to proactively develop the best possible learning experiences and achievements for each learner. Feedback from learners, employers, sub-contractors, and staff is systematically gathered to ensure that we meet the needs of primary stakeholders in the business and to make improvements ongoing.

Internal and external comparisons of performance data including EDIMS are carried out and challenging targets set to strive for continuous improvements. Destinations of learners are systematically

monitored using an early leaver questionnaire to evaluate reasons why learners leave and to attempt to address any shortfalls or weaknesses.

In line with our LCG value 'develop and empower others' we use our development matrix to identify and track the training needs of the individual and offer development pathways which include coaching, training, and peer mentoring to upskill and enhance any knowledge and skill gaps to raise standards of practice. Available as part of our pathway offer is the Teaching Excellence Programme. This is a four modular approach focusing on upskilling and sharing best practice in applying: the Education Inspection Framework, English, mathematics and digital skills, and equality and diversity, including British values and coaching and mentoring.

## Review and Evaluation of Quality Improvement Arrangements

Quality Improvement Arrangements culminate in a self-assessment using the EIF criteria, accurately evaluating all programmes and identifying strengths and weaknesses. The input of a range of staff is included, as well as using Quality Improvements Arrangements to include input from learners, employers, and sub-contractors. Each area of learning and leadership and management is graded. All staff will be asked to validate the final draft.

A Quality Improvement Plan is prepared because of the findings of the Self-Assessment Report or after the receipt of a formal inspection report. The Quality Improvement Plan will act as a long-term improvement tool and will be managed, regularly reviewed, and updated to record progress and impact. Additional items will be added as improvement actions are identified and triggered.

The External Review Steering Group is made up of key stakeholders from across the business, and the remit of the group is to ensure a state of readiness should we get notice of an external review such as an inspection. The group also oversees post inspection action planning, which cover the addressing of any areas for improvement but also the sharing and celebration of good practice.

## Deep Dive Reviews

We conduct thematic reviews on a variety of topics depending on where our improvement needs are. These could include but are not limited to:

- Career, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
- Onboarding and Induction
- Individual learning planning
- Additional learning support
- Work readiness
- Progress Reviews
- Use of data to inform change
- Exit advice and guidance
- Destination and progression
- Internal Quality Assurance and moderation
- Performance Management
- Technology and adapted delivery models
- Maths and English
- Enrichment and non-qualification activity
- Equality and Diversity, British Values and Functional Skills
- Safeguarding and Prevent

- Health and Wellbeing

## Internal Audit

We have a systematic internal audit to ensure its compliance with funding requirements and documentation control. A summary report is provided after each audit which identifies the percentage errors and the subsequent implications for extrapolation. The outcome of all audits will be reported at the Management Team Meetings.

## Verification of Assessment

The Quality Assurance Managers oversee the company's verification activities in line with the qualification authorities, awarding organisations and Codes of Practice. Our practices are outlined in the Quality Assurance Strategy and the Sampling Strategy and Rationale.

Quality Assurance is a key activity for ensuring learners' achievements are valid. Internal Quality Assurers undertake observations, learner interviews and sampling assessment against a planned schedule. The Quality Assurance Managers, alongside the Internal Quality Assurance Managers co-ordinate all schedules and standardisation activities.

## RELATED POLICIES

### **Group 4**

IQA and Moderation Policy and Procedure  
Observation Handbook



# APPENDIX 1

## Feedback and Quality Process

### For Learners

- Ongoing sampling activities will be used to collect ad-hoc feedback, such as observations, quality monitoring, internal quality assurance, health checks and process reviews
- Telephone surveys will be conducted from time to time to explore specific areas as directed by the Management Team
- Learners on short courses will receive a feedback questionnaire that covers all aspects of the course from initial advice to exit guidance
- Feedback on long courses will be collected at induction, on programme and exit on all the key elements of the learner journey
- Academy learners will have the opportunity to participate in focus groups as part of learner consultation
- Learners undertaking training by our subcontractors will have the opportunity to provide feedback during the quality monitoring process and through engagement in surveys
- All feedback and consultation activities will result in analysis and appropriate action planning within 10 days of the process being concluded. The findings will be presented to the Management Team quarterly
- The senior teamwork with the Quality and Operational Teams to ensure timely improvements are made
- A variety of methods will be used to promote feedback and improvements made back to learners
- Significant/sensitive matters will be fed back directly to the individual learner and employer
- Learners will be encouraged to take part in the external stakeholder's surveys
- Learners who are unable to participate in written feedback mechanisms will have the opportunity to provide feedback in a way that suits their needs
- The use of the Trust Pilot platform will allow our learners to build trust with our brand and will allow us to monitor key trends and themes from learner and employer voice
- Provide inspiring opportunities for learner next steps, progression and provide employment opportunities to retain and transfer skills through the value of learning
- Enable learners to make more informed choices about their progression choices follow the direction of the executive team and management (board members), staffing appointments to enhance the overall effectiveness of the customer experience

### Employers Involvement

- Feedback from employers will be encouraged through the progress review process and analysed on a quarterly basis. On instances where concerns are highlighted this will be investigated immediately by the appropriate company manager and noted on the complaints log, if deemed appropriate The Management team will direct a range of employer consultation and feedback activity such as an online paper survey, telephone consultation and visits to employers
- Members of staff liaising with employers as part of their role will collect feedback on an ongoing ad-hoc basis and provide this to the Quality Team for analysis
- Employers will be informed of improvements made to the service on an individual basis if appropriate and through a regular employer liaison newsletter

- Feedback received from employers will be celebrated promoted back to them using various mechanisms
- Employers will be encouraged to participate in the external stakeholder surveys

### **Service Users**

- Regular surveys will be conducted to obtain internal customer satisfaction feedback, which will in turn support the departments improvement to their service
- The analysis of feedback will inform how well the department are performing against present targets and the aims of our company values, mission, and vision
- Various feedback mechanisms will be used to establish how effectively our client facing departments meet the needs of their clients

## Review and Evaluation Process

### **Deep Dive Reviews**

- These will be planned termly and will be centre focused, dependent on the themes or hot topics at the time. The processes will consistently focus on improvements needed and being made
- These activities will be led, actioned and feedback given to the relevant managers by the Quality team

### **Customer Feedback Review**

- Appropriate provision areas will run monthly community forums which allow learners to share experiences and ideas
- Learner case studies and celebration of achievements is encouraged throughout the learner journey to formulate affirmation of a successful learner experience
- The Quality Team will involve learner voice in the evaluation of teaching and learning as part of the observation process. The Quality Team will take part in additional sampling activities to identify any further improvements, and link this in as part of deep activities
- A variety of activities will be used to establish satisfaction of our employers as well as capturing the impact that training has had on their business and obtain up to date learner progression

### **Destination and Progression**

- Evaluation will be undertaken systematically across a range of activities, approaches and corroborative evidence depending on provision detailing key trends and themes to key stakeholders
- Monthly reporting will measure how successful the learners work experience and qualification has been and has progressed into a positive or an enhanced destination. For those that have not had a positive destination, we will offer an alternative way into further education and employment
- By productively working with Careers Coaches and delivery teams to establish learning career aspirations at the start, mid-point, and exit of the learner journey will allow us to provide clear next steps and track appropriate destination
- 'On demand' additional signpost offering skills via workshops, boot camps, coffee morning drop-ins and local skills events for further CV writing, jobs bulletins, interview preparation as well as networking and track the destination by liaising with the Careers Coaches

- Monthly tracking and analyse the reasons for withdrawal will allow us to offer alternatives to learners that can support further from progression opportunities particularly for the transition 'from unemployed to employed
- From the initial 'get go' the initial set up and ongoing monitoring will allow us to establish learner destination and intended destination. As well as signpost further education or employment to learners

### **Desk Based Sampling**

- The Quality Team will conduct various desk-based reviews, and these are determined by emerging needs and feedback will be provided to managers and actions agreed

### **Thematic Project Groups**

- The Quality Team will trigger improvement projects via the performance board, throughout the year and the range of projects will be based on a range of indicators including achievement rates, observation results, audit activities, moderation activities, external triggers and highlighted hot spots

### **Outcomes**

- The outcomes of review and evaluation activities will be presented to the leadership team and the Board and used to inform developments, Self-Assessment, and associated development plan

This has been reviewed and approved by the Director of Excellence:



## APPENDIX 2

### Learner and Parental Involvement

#### **Introduction**

LCG seeks to enable all learners and parents to express their views, needs and concerns. It is essential that we respond appropriately to the issues identified to shape the learners' environment, opportunities, and outcomes

We must empower our learners and parents to engage with all aspects of our organisation. Our aim is to put the voice and aspirations of the learners at the heart of our provision

#### **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, learners and parents or guardians of learners at LCG. It provides direction and guidance on the range of activities to improve the quality of provision at LCG.

The Head of Quality Services is nominated as the Learner and parent involvement champion.

#### **Learner and Parental Involvement**

The involvement of learners and parents in quality improvement activities benefits LCG in the following Centres:

- Improved quality of provision
- Development of trust and partnerships
- Identification and removal of barriers to access and success
- Improved participation, retention, achievement, and progression rates
- Increased levels of ownership and commitment to the programme
- Empowerment of Learners and parents in the decision-making process

#### **Impact of Involvement**

Robust application of this policy will create an open and transparent process for gathering opinions, observations, and valuable feedback on the provision. This will be used to inform the following quality improvement and operational activities:

- Strategic and operational decision making
- Self-assessment report (SAR)
- Curriculum review and development
- Recruitment and appointment of staff
- Preparing for HMI Inspections
- Prepare for Matrix Assessments

#### **Involvement Arrangement and Activities**

LCG will consult and follow this policy when developing and reviewing strategic priorities, operational objectives, organisational core values or wider operational decisions.

Key to the effective application of this policy is the preparation and training of learners and parents. This ensures they can contribute actively and positively in the process.

Learner and parent involvement activities are wide ranging, yet specific and targeted. Activities may involve learners and parents collectively or be conducted in isolation. Involvement activities are categorised as:

1) Learner activities. These include:

- Learner voice forums
- Learner voice surveys
- Safeguarding surveys
- Curriculum focus groups
- Operational focus groups
- Staff selection and competence-based interviews

2) Parent activities. These include:

- Parent view surveys
- Parent consultation on operational changes and developments
- Parent voice forums
- Communication via the newsletter and website

3) Combined activities: These include:

- Centre open days/evenings
- Centre and regional awards ceremonies
- Additional support meetings

## **Responsibilities**

All LCG staff have a clear responsibility to ensure learners are involved in the management, planning, delivery, assessment, and evaluation of the programme.

## APPENDIX 3

### Study Programmes – Work Placements, Experience and Tasters

#### **Introduction**

Central to the success of LCG study programmes is effective employer engagement, which leads to purposeful, challenging, substantial and relevant work experiences.

The overarching aim of the programmes at LCG is to ensure that learners are work ready quickly and efficiently, whilst contributing to the local and national labour market needs. Work placement and experience activities have a direct impact on the outcomes for learners.

Employer engagement happens at both the strategic and operational levels. All staff have a responsibility to promote learners as excellent candidates for any employer.

#### **Partnerships**

Through strong influencing activities and an excellent reputation, LCG has developed a wide range of partners across the UK. Partnerships are further developed by well-planned employer engagement activities. Employer engagement activities are wide and varied and can be compartmented in to strategic or operational activities. The significant difference between strategic and operational engagement is the number of staff and resources that are allocated to each activity. The following, non-exhaustive list demonstrates the range of activities:

- College visits, displays and demonstrations
- Sports event hosting
- Dinner nights and lunches
- Regional employer engagement group (REEG) activities
- Regional and Local Award Ceremonies
- Regional partner network meetings
- Careers service meetings
- Regional recruitment events and job fairs

To support learner progression, there is considerable employer engagement activity with organisations that are able to provide work experience and placements.

#### **Work Placements**

Learners are allocated placements where they can experience real employment and workplaces. The range of work placements reflects the sectors to which learners aspire to progress in to and therefore provides a purposeful, challenging, substantial and relevant experience. These activities are funded and claimed against programmed employment, enrichment and pastoral hours (EEP).

Work placements must be safe, with vetting, health, safety, environmental and safeguarding policies and processes in place.

All work placements require careful planning and preparation if they are to be successful. Work placements provide an excellent opportunity for reflection on employment choices. A comprehensive case study is to be produced for each work placement by the Centre Manager.

## Work Experience

As part of their study programmes, learners take part in both internal and external work experience. These are real or simulated work situations and activities that are purposeful, challenging, substantial and, support learners to make informed decisions on their future employment routes and choices. This work experience is funded and programmed against EEP hours. Internal and external work experience is differentiated as follows:

- **Internal work experience.** This includes activities conducted within the centres or local training areas by vocationally current and competent staff. These activities primarily focus on military or public service work experience. Internal work experience is delivered and quality assured in line with the teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) and observation of TLA policies. All results of quality assurance visits are recorded on the quality monitoring plan (QMP). All appropriate risk assessments, personal protective equipment and resources are provided prior to the commencement of all internal work experience activities
- **External work experience.** These are significant activities delivered either within the centre, the local training areas or at an external organisation premise. These activities conducted are external employers and provide learners with experiencing work like situations in simulated conditions. These support occupational future aims. During these activities, staff remain responsible for the health, safety and well-being of the learners. All appropriate risk assessments, personal protective equipment and resources are provided prior to the commencement of all external work experience activities

All external work experience is to be recorded, acknowledged and celebrated. Work experience certificates are to be presented to learners on completion of the activity. These are also attached securely to the learner record on the learner's record for future audit or inspection.

Work experience sessions allow learners to reflect on their current employment route choice. Learner case studies are to be produced after significant work experience activities, to support the delivery of information, advice and guidance (IAG) to the wider learner community.

## Work Taster

Learners access a wide and comprehensive range of work taster activities throughout the programme. These activities are funded and programmed against EEP hours and form the framework for the learning programmes.

Work taster activities are used to prepare learners for the practical aspects of their employment and supports them to become work ready. These activities include:

- Parades
- Centre and equipment repair, cleaning and maintenance

These activities are delivered and supervised internally by staff and supporting learners to develop a positive work ethic. All appropriate risk assessments, personal protective equipment and resources are provided prior to the commencement of all work taster activities.

## Responsibilities

The following staff have responsibility for employer engagement and the development of work placements, experience and tasters:

| Ser | Responsibility | Action  | Remarks |
|-----|----------------|---|---------|
| 1   | ROM/ CM/LI     | Identify and agree work placement opportunities   |         |
| 2   | ROM/CI         | Ensure vetting and monitoring activities have been completed <b>prior</b> to work placement |         |
| 3   | CM/LI          | Ensure that attendance hours are logged for work placement                                  |         |
| 4   | CM/LI          | Ensure that Learner reflection and case study   |         |
| 5   | CM/LI          | Consolidate and publish case studies  |         |