

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY HANDBOOK



Policy Group: Quality and Support

Effective: April 2024

Approved: Rachel Butt, Director of Excellence

Responsible Officer: Gary West, Head of Quality

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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 and internationally. All companies within LCG uphold the same company Vision, Mission and Core Values and follow our group policies and procedures.

LCG ensures that core values take priority when conducting quality assurance activities. This policy is designed to support compliance, consistency and continuous improvement 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.
- Quality improvement planning.
- Consistency 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 decisions and feedback.
- 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.

Scope

This handbook applies to any staff working with learners on any LCG programme, nationally or internationally.

Purpose

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, Estyn, ESFA and Awarding Organisational standards.

This policy handbook sets out the committed to assuring and continuously improve the provision, seeking always is to enhance the customer experience and to set high expectations. The LCG vision and values places the learner, their needs, and experiences, at the centre of all activities.

This policy and procedure do 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 are integral parts of organisational success. Staff work collaboratively within all operational management, delivery, and quality teams, and external stakeholders, enabling processes to be adapted and improved quickly and efficiently.

In line with the LCG value to 'do the right thing' and to continuously improve, LCG aim to support and challenge appropriately where the positive impact on the learner is at risk, or there is an identified training need to improve and develop practice. LCG will engage in all relevant forms of communication to drive improvements and celebrate successes. Monthly reports, using appropriate data sets are provided to the Executive Team and Board Members, provide focus on areas of high and low performance, and inform quality improvement planning.

Compliance

LCG quality improvement arrangements are continually reviewed to ensure that they meet the required compliance of a range of organisations that influence and guide provision. These requirements include those that are laid down by UK Government, funding bodies, and by awarding organisations or qualifications authorities. This includes 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 Executive Team. Reporting is enhanced by additional data, such as external quality assurance reports from awarding organisations and provider performance reviews from funding bodies.

Continuous Improvement and Development

LCG uses 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 learners receive the very best experience. Staff exchange good practice identified across the provision, 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 continuous improvements.

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.

LCG develops and empowers others by using the 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 inform self-assessment activities based in 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.

A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is prepared using the findings of the self-assessment activities and reports, or after the receipt of a formal inspection or audit reports. The QIP is a long-term improvement tool and is 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 LCG with the remit of ensuring a state of readiness should we get notice of an external review, inspection, or audit. 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 the Prevent agenda.
- Health and Wellbeing.

Internal Audit

LCG has 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. The outcome of all audits will be reported at the Management Team Meetings.

Verification of Assessment

Quality Assurance is a key activity for ensuring learners' achievements are valid. Quality Advisors undertake learning visits, learner interviews, sampling learner progress, and the verification of assessment decisions, against a planned schedule. Quality Managers support the Quality Advisors to plan robust quality development and assurance activities.

The relevant Heads of Quality oversee the LCG verification activities in line with the qualification authorities, awarding organisations and Codes of Practice. Practices are outlined in the Internal and External Quality Assurance handbook.

RELATED POLICIES

Group 4

IQA and Moderation Policy and Procedure

Developing Professional Practice Handbook

APPENDIX 1

Feedback and Quality Process

For Learners

- Ongoing sampling activities is used to collect learner feedback, such as learning visits, quality monitoring, internal quality assurance, health checks, and process reviews.
- Telephone and online focus groups are conducted to explore specific areas.
- Learners on short courses receive a feedback questionnaire that covers all aspects of the course from initial advice to exit guidance.
- Feedback on long courses is collected at induction, on programme and exit on all the key elements of the learner journey.
- Academy learners can participate in face-to-face focus groups as part of learner consultation.
- Learners undertaking training by subcontractors can provide feedback during the quality monitoring process and through engagement in surveys.
- All feedback and consultation activities result in analysis and appropriate action planning within 10 days of the process being concluded.
- Significant or sensitive matters are fed back directly to the individual learner and employer.
- Learners are encouraged to take part in the external stakeholder's surveys.
- Learners who are unable to participate in written feedback mechanisms have the opportunity to provide feedback in a way that suits their needs.
- 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 is encouraged through the progress review process and analysed on a quarterly basis. On instances where concerns are highlighted this is investigated immediately by the appropriate manager and noted on the complaints log, if deemed appropriate the Executive team can 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 collect feedback on an ongoing ad-hoc basis and provide this to the Quality Team for analysis.
- Employers are informed of improvements made to the service on an individual basis if appropriate and through a regular employer liaison newsletter.
- Feedback received from employers is celebrated and promoted.
- Employers are encouraged to participate in the external stakeholder surveys.

Service Users

- Regular surveys are conducted to obtain internal customer satisfaction feedback, which in turn support the departments improvement to their service.
- The analysis of feedback informs how well the department are performing against present targets and the aims of LCG values, mission, and vision.

Review and Evaluation Process

Deep Dive Reviews

- Deep dives are 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 and an appropriately experienced Head of Quality.

Customer Feedback Review

- Appropriate provision areas 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 use learner voice in the evaluation of teaching and learning as part of the observation process. They conduct additional sampling activities to identify any further improvements, and link this in as part of deep activities.
- A variety of activities are 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 is undertaken systematically across a range of activities, approaches and corroborative evidence depending on provision detailing key trends and themes to key stakeholders.
- Monthly reporting measures 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 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 events.
- Monthly tracking and analyse the reasons for withdrawal allows LCG to offer alternatives to learners that can support further from progression opportunities particularly for the transition 'from unemployed to employed.
- From the start of learning, the initial set up and ongoing monitoring allows staff to establish learner destination and intended destination. As well as signpost further education or employment to learners.

Desk Based Sampling

- Quality Advisors will conduct desk-based reviews, and these are determined by emerging development needs and feedback will be provided to managers and actions agreed.

Thematic Project Groups

- The quality activities trigger improvement projects throughout the year. The range of projects will be based on a range of indicators including achievement rates, learning visit findings, outcomes, 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 LCG responds appropriately to the issues identified to shape the learners' environment, opportunities, and outcomes.

LCG must empower our learners and parents to engage with all aspects of the organisation. The aim is to put the voice and aspirations of the learners at the heart of the 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 consults and follows 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 prior 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	