



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION FOLLOWING A DEFERRAL (Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

ORGANISATION: Performance with Zing Limited

ADDRESS: 16a Parade
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV32 4DW

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: Mr Wynford Dore

DATE OF INSPECTION: 13 February 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Accredited 22 March 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Performance withZing (the Provider) was set up by its owner and Managing Director (MD) in November 2010. It was initially called Stageahead Limited (Ltd). The name was first changed to Zing Performance Ltd and, in April 2017, it was changed again to Performance withZing, which is the current name.

Overall governance is exercised by the MD, who is supported by a Director of Business Operations, a Programme Director and an Executive Assistant. The MD is in the process of handing over the day-to-day running of the company to the Director of Business Operations.

The Provider aims to be the global leader of applied and innovative learning, which is geared to improving individual performance and skill ability, through the provision of online personalised learning regimes. In order to achieve this aim, the MD has worked over a number of years to develop a programme which enhances the function of the cerebellum and the hippocampus within the brain, leading to the development of core skills such as visual and auditory processing and social skills. Separate programmes have been developed for children, women, men and athletes. The programmes have been developed on the basis of scientific research.

The Provider has a Learning Advisory Board, which includes professors at Edge Hill University, neuroscientists, a specialist in psychiatry and a specialist in educational assessment. The specialist knowledge of the members of the board informs the development of the programmes.

The development of the programmes has also drawn on the similarity, experience and staff input of a programme run in Denmark called Detox dig Smuk. The head of the organisation, which owns and distributes this programme is known to the MD of Performance withZing but the organisation is a separate legal entity. Mentors, who play a key role in the Performance withZing programme, work from Denmark and support both organisations.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers four online programmes. These are called Women withZing, Men withZing, Sport withZing and Kids withZing. The Kids withZing programme has different content to reflect different age ranges, for example for children aged between seven and eleven and between twelve to eighteen. The Kids withZing programme is aimed at children with issues, such as difficulties with reading and writing, inability to concentrate or feeling awkward in groups. The adult programmes aim to help participants cope better with stress, time management, making decisions, reaching targets and increasing well-being and happiness. The sports programme aims to improve the connection between brain and body to achieve optimum performance.

These programmes consist of a 26 week series of practical balance exercises, which are designed to develop aspects such as auditory working memory, switching and controlling attention and memory recall.

The programmes can be undertaken using a variety of platforms, including tablets, smartphones and computers. Examples of the types of innovative exercises that form part of the programmes include word memory exercises. There are accompanying videos to explain the rationale and science behind the activities. Progress is monitored by mentors, who provide support to participants or to parents in the case of the Kids withZing programme. Further support is offered through social media pages, additional exercises and a maintenance or extension programme for those who want more advanced exercises.

To date, there have been in excess of 4,000 participants undertaking the programmes. These have come primarily from the United Kingdom (UK) and Denmark. During the year to date, 616 participants have enrolled, of whom a minority are under the age of 18. Most enrolled adults are female, whilst there is an even mix of male and female participants for the junior programme.

Participants complete a 30 minute online assessment at the start of the programme and improvement targets are set on the basis of their initial assessment. The same assessment test takes place every 30 days.

3. Inspection process

A supplementary half day inspection was carried out by one inspector to follow up on the action points and recommendations identified in the full inspection report. Interviews were held with the Managing Director, the Director of Operations, the Channel Communication Manager and the Executive Assistant. The inspector was given access to data, company files and personnel files relating to the action points.

4. Background to supplementary inspection

Following from the initial inspection, the Accreditation Committee's decision on accreditation was deferred due to the number and nature of the issues identified. Several of these issues related to safeguarding and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, monitoring of mentors and reference checks.

5. Inspection history

First inspection: 18-19 September 2017

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The Provider remains in the same premises but intends to relocate locally in the next six months due to the landlord's redevelopment plans.

Following from the resignation of the Denmark based Mentor Manager, the Provider has been able to make a new appointment of a Channel Communication Manager, who is based in the UK.

The role of the mentor is also undergoing a change in focus. Previously mentors had been drawn from participants who had completed the Danish Detox dig Smuk programme. This programme required mentors to provide a degree of emotional support to participants. The Provider has experienced significantly fewer enrolments from Denmark and greater take-up from countries such as the United States of America (USA), Canada and Australia where the nature of support required differs from the Danish model. The focus of the withZing programmes is now on providing motivational and practical support. A new team of mentors has been put in place with three based in the USA, two in the UK and one in Denmark. Other mentors have been coached and are available if needed.

There have been no changes to the provision of programmes, however numbers of enrolments have increased significantly with 3,015 participants registered, compared with 616 recorded at the last inspection. The greatest increase being in the Kids withZing programmes in America and Canada.

Marketing has now been assigned to two local companies, Adgen and Fly Agency. A new website is being prepared and is under construction.

2. Response to action points in last report

2.5 The Employee Handbook and the Mentor Code of Practice must include the organisation's Safeguarding Policy with reference to juniors and vulnerable adults.

The Employee Handbook and the Mentor Code of Practice include the Safeguarding Policy with reference to juniors and vulnerable adults.

3.1 References must be secured when recruiting new members of staff.

New staff members' files have copies of appropriate written references.

3.2 Copies of qualifications, countersigned to confirm sight of originals, must be kept on file.

Copies of qualifications were appropriately countersigned and filed.

3.3 All staff must have regular appraisals.

There is a systematic approach to appraisal procedures for employed staff. Appraisals are carried out by senior staff. Appropriate and well documented Performance Development Reviews (PDR) are conducted quarterly. The fourth review, as well as considering performance matters, has recommendations relating to remuneration. Consistent with good practice, copies of appraisal forms were signed and dated by those appraised with copies kept securely in personnel files. The appraisal forms seen at the inspection identified what had gone well, what might have gone better, how job descriptions or contracts for services reflect the role performed, what

development the staff member has undertaken and the impact of this. The form then identifies performance objectives and a personal development plan.

5.3 DBS checks, or any equivalent checks in other countries, must be carried out for all staff working online.

The Provider carries out DBS checks, and their equivalent in other countries, for all staff members, not only for those working online, and has further extended this to include those working online at their marketing agency. This represents good practice.

5.4 A formal system of record keeping must be implemented to monitor the mentors' performance.

There is a systematic approach to monitoring performance of contracted mentors. This is now the remit of the newly appointed Channel Communication Manager who regularly and effectively oversees the daily performance of the mentors and logs their input.

6.4 There must be regular appraisals of mentors.

Systematic and effective procedures are in place for the regular appraisal of mentors. All mentors have been appraised in the last month. As mentors work remotely, appraisals are carried out through online channels. There is a forward appraisal schedule in place. The appraisal procedure closely follows the format used for employed staff as described above and is appropriate for the mentors.

14.2 14.4 The organisation must compile annual reports and formal action plans.

Appropriate progress reports and minutes of planning meetings are effectively maintained. Meetings have centred on business strategy and planning, management review, new marketing initiatives and approaches. An external consultant had been brought in to contribute to the Provider's action plan. The Provider's business year runs from April to March and the production of the annual report is projected for the end of the business year. The reports and minutes of meetings relating to strategic, operational and management indicate considered assessment of progress over the year and purposeful planning for the future.

14.3 The data collected on satisfaction, retention and achievement must be systematically analysed so that it can be used effectively to identify trends over time and the results must contribute to annual reporting.

The Provider has established an effective data analytics policy to look at data such as the number of inactive participants or users per month, the percentage of highly engaged users and the level of commitment of other users. It also identifies the users who have set themselves new goals.

The policy is to carry out partial analytical studies throughout the year and to perform a full analysis at the end of the year with the results to contribute to the annual report.

As part of this policy, an effective programme trend analysis was carried out in December 2017 to identify the level of engagement by participants over the course of their programmes. This identified a period of lessening of engagement at a certain stage. The Provider has been able to use this finding to put appropriate motivational stimuli in place. An online questionnaire, which will be available on the website, will be used to collect data on satisfaction with the withZing programmes.

The evidence of this data collection and analysis indicates that the Provider has put in place an effective mechanism to address this action point.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that a member of staff is identified as being the strategic lead for Safeguarding and welfare throughout the organisation's operation.

The Director of Operations has formally taken on this role. His job description has been amended appropriately. His role is also clearly identified in the Provider's Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy and in the Code of Practice for Mentors. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and other key staff, such as mentors, have not yet undertaken any Safeguarding training courses.

It is recommended that a statement about the specific level of academic qualification, experience or proficiency in English is developed and used in the recruitment of future mentors.

Mentors are suitably qualified and experienced for the programmes with which they are involved and, therefore, support the learners well. They are required to have a degree or equivalent and a level of English at CEFR level B1/B2. At B1 a speaker has the ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations. At B2 a speaker has the ability to express oneself on a range of topics. At C1 a speaker has effective operational proficiency and the capacity to deal with unfamiliar topics. It is recommended that the level for mentors be raised to C1 given the need for mentors to provide a wide range of support to participants as well as producing daily posts and reviews and hosting live question and answer sessions.

The organisation should seek to extend its pool of mentors beyond its Danish team.

There are now three USA, two UK and one Denmark based mentors.

Technical support for programme users should be extended to cover evenings and weekends across all time zones where programmes are running.

Mentors provide appropriate technical support. This includes help with the software, navigating round the programmes and accessing the online forum. More technical issues including hardware problems are dealt with by the technical team at head office during normal UK office hours. A weekly schedule identifies which mentors are on call during the evenings and weekends. With mentors both in the USA and UK, a good range of time coverage is available for the support required.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
Administrative systems are robust with a staff file checklist to ensure references, qualifications, appraisals, DBS checks and other related documents are systematically requested and filed.				
The Designated Safeguarding Lead and other key staff have not yet undertaken any Safeguarding training courses.				
Creation of the new post of Channel Communication Manager, with a specific remit for monitoring mentors and learner wellbeing, is a positive step.				
Effective broadening of the mentor team to include USA and UK members.				

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Achievement (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
The introduction of data analysis to determine participant performance on programmes has had a positive impact on their progress.				

4.3 Learner Support (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
There is now a comprehensive schedule of mentors who are available to give support during the evenings and at weekends.				

4.4 Management of Quality (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
There is effective daily monitoring of mentors' communications with participants through the closed Facebook group.				

4.5 Premises and Facilities – face-to-face component (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be				
Comments				
Not applicable				

PART C – SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

INSTITUTION'S STRENGTHS
Steady growth in demand for withZing programmes.
Provider's expansion into markets in USA, Canada and Australia.
Comprehensive commitment to safeguarding checks throughout the organisation.

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
The Designated Safeguarding Lead and other key staff, such as mentors, must undertake appropriate face-to-face and online safeguarding training courses to include cyber-bullying.	M

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
It is strongly recommended that mentors be required to have a minimum competence in English at CEFR level C1.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	