

G4S Care & Justice Services (UK) Ltd

First re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to G4S Care & Justice Services (UK) Ltd (G4S) following publication of the inspection report on 07 November 2013 which found the provider to be inadequate overall. The areas for improvement are: the success rates for learners and progress monitoring of apprentices; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and, the quality of improvement processes, including the rigour and accuracy of self-assessment. Public services and early years and playwork were judged to be inadequate.

Themes

What action has been taken to improve the amount of good and better teaching?

At the time of the inspection, inspectors judged the quality of the classroom teaching to be good during the company's initial training course. However, this affected only a very small minority of the apprenticeship programme. Individual coaching provided by assessors in the workplace required further improvement.

Since then, G4S has created several action plans to rectify this area for improvement. However, some of the actions do not have sufficient impact on swiftly improving the quality of teaching and learning. The current observation process does not focus sufficiently on measuring learning. The planned completion time for carrying out teaching and learning observations by July 2014 is insufficiently challenging to bring about improvement quickly in the quality of teaching and learning and the impact on learners and their learning.

Priorities for improvement

- Review and further develop the existing teaching and learning observation system, to ensure that it focuses sufficiently on measuring learning. Observers should receive sufficient training to allow them to identify good teaching and to highlight areas for improvement, measured against clear criteria, to offer an unequivocal view of the quality of learning at every stage of the learner's journey and for each teacher and assessor.
- G4S should utilise the best practice existing within the education provision in their children's secure settings to ensure that the teaching and observation system is robust. Activities such as allowing assessors to observe lessons delivered by good or outstanding teachers should be considered. Similarly, the provider should access completed documentation on graded observations to identify good practices both in teaching and in measuring learning.

- The provider needs to re-prioritise the timing of session observations urgently to ensure that improvements impact quickly on the experiences and outcomes for learners. Going forward, observations should be planned to ensure sufficient frequency and they should be commensurate with the identified development needs of each member of staff.

What action has been taken to improve the quality and frequency of work place assessment and to increase the number of work place assessors?

The provider had an insufficient number of qualified assessors at the time of inspection and learners did not meet their assessor with sufficient frequency. As a consequence, learners' work was not assessed regularly and quickly enough to promote good progress towards achieving the apprenticeship framework.

Assessors also had an operational role to deliver and frequently the business needs and demands constrained them from delivering their assessment role. In November, G4S began allocating a full-time lead assessor in each of its children's secure training centres whose role is to coordinate all assessment activity. Weekly meetings are now being held with the director in the centre to discuss any concerns affecting the assessment activity. The rest of the assessors deliver their assessment duties on a part-time basis.

A subcontractor, the City of Bristol College, is providing training and assessment for assessors to gain their assessor award. There have been delays in accrediting assessors which has delayed the assessment activities of G4S learners. According to the subcontractor, assessors will not be confirmed as fully qualified until sometime after the end of February 2014. However, G4S is confident that the assessors will be ready to gain their qualification by December 2013.

Priorities for improvement

- Update the forecast of the planned achievement of learners so that the provider can prioritise assessment activity in those centres where learners are making the slowest progress ensuring they achieve by their planned end date.
- A monitoring system that gathers information on the assessments undertaken by each learner should be developed immediately to include information about the progress learners make with each element of the framework against the planned end date. The system should also allow for the effective monitoring of the frequency of assessment in the workplace ensuring those learners who are identified as making slow progress receive increased assessment visits.
- Pilot the new initiative where learners are assessed for four hours every fortnight rather than for two hours on a weekly basis. Measure the effectiveness of this initiative to establish if it is a productive assessment activity that leads to learners making good progress.

- Continue to work with the subcontractor, the City of Bristol College, to ensure assessors to complete their assessor's award as soon as possible to enable them to assess their learners in the workplace.

What actions have been taken to improve the planning and monitoring of individual learning?

The provider does not use individual learning plans to plan and monitor the learning experienced by individual learners. They do not record the learner's prior experience and knowledge or the outcomes from any initial assessment activities to establish a starting point for learning and training. There are not sufficient opportunities for assessors, learners and supervisors to review the progress made by the individual learner for the whole qualification. The reviews undertaken by assessors and learners only focus on offering feedback on the assessment activities undertaken and planning for the next assessment activity.

Priorities for improvement

- The provider should ensure that individual learning plans contain the relevant information including initial assessment outcomes and prior skills and experience gained by the learner to establish the learner's starting point and support needs. Each learner should be allocated an expected planned end date that is commensurate with their individual needs.
- Use individual learning plans to plan effectively the learning that needs to take place for all learners to achieve their full apprenticeship framework within the planned time. They should also include any on-the-job learning opportunities that learners can take part in and that might help them to progress faster.
- G4S should introduce periodic progress reviews where the assessor, the learner and their supervisor take part in reviewing the progress made so far towards achieving the apprenticeship framework. These opportunities should allow the provider to identify any barriers to the learner's progress and put the necessary steps in place to mitigate them. The learner's knowledge of topics such as health and safety and equality and diversity should be explored and further developed at these meetings.

What action has been taken to improve the delivery and learners' achievement of functional English and mathematics and to provide support to ensure that they achieve?

At inspection, the initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills was inadequate. Learners did not complete formal assessments of these essential skills until they started working on their functional skills towards the end of their programme. Therefore, timely and effective support to help learners with identified needs to achieve their framework was not available. No learners had completed the functional skills component of their framework.

In the last two months, the provider has rightly focused on conducting initial assessment retrospectively on all the enrolled learners in the children's services division. A considerable investment has been made in procuring a software system that delivers the initial assessment and further diagnostic assessment of English and mathematics. However, G4S has not yet devised a comprehensive strategy for the delivery of functional skills and, as a consequence, several key aspects of its implementation have not yet been agreed or planned. There is insufficient knowledge and understanding of functional skills within the apprenticeship programme team and the functional skills of the team have not been assessed. In addition, the provider does not have up to date information on the level of functional skills knowledge within the assessment team.

The provider is currently relying on learners to complete their initial assessment and functional skills learning electronically, unaided and in their own private time. This method of learning is ineffective and without direct support may slow the progress learners make.

Priorities for improvement

- The provider should rapidly compile a comprehensive strategy for the delivery of initial assessment, functional skills and good quality learning support. Furthermore, it should consider designating a dedicated coordinator for this aspect of learning who has sufficient knowledge about functional skills and can support the implementation of the strategy successfully.
- G4S needs to ensure current learners are allowed to undertake an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills during working hours. The provider needs to implement a strategy that supports the effective improvement of learners' functional skills over a period of time throughout their apprenticeship.
- As a priority, ensure all current learners complete their initial assessment as soon as possible. Assessors should identify those learners who have been assessed in English and/or mathematics at the highest level and plan a fast tracking learning programme to ensure they achieve the element of their

apprenticeship functional skills before their planned end date. Similarly, they should identify common areas for improvement highlighted by the diagnostic assessment process. These should be targeted and delivered as specific stand-alone modules or sessions in order to accelerate the learning process and to allow a good proportion of learners to undertake their functional skills tests successfully before they reach the planned end date for their programme.

- All assessors should undertake the functional skills tests at level 2 for English and mathematics. The results should be used to identify any areas for further development to ensure they are at least operating at their highest level.
- G4S needs to ensure that the learning materials that support the development of functional skills are contextualised, showing learners examples of the application of the skills in their workplace and life settings. Each learner should have the opportunity to work on their identified knowledge gaps throughout their qualification receiving the appropriate guidance and support to do so.
- Going forward, all newly recruited learners should undertake their initial assessment during the first few weeks of the programme. Their identified levels and areas for development within English, mathematics and information technology should be incorporated into their learning plan and used effectively to plan and coordinate any necessary support that will help them to make good progress. G4S needs to consider providing specialist support that can help learners improve their individual learning needs.

What action has been taken to support robust self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements?

The inspection report identified that quality improvement processes did not support robust self-assessment. Since the inspection, the provider has developed a detailed post-inspection action plan to drive improvements against all the areas of development identified in the report. The provider is expecting the information and improvement outcomes from this plan to provide robust evidence for self-assessment. Some data reports currently available will give qualitative and quantitative information to inform judgements in the self-assessment report. However, quality processes such as the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, learner reviews, the collection and analysis of learner views and of robust performance data, for example, are not yet in place to inform judgements for self-assessment. No overview document is available identifying what information will be collected and by when, to provide strong evidence to inform an accurate and self-critical evaluation of provision through self-assessment.

Priorities for improvement

- As a priority, plan and implement a self-assessment cycle that identifies what actions, processes and information will be collected, by when, to inform the self-assessment report.
- As a priority, develop quality assurance processes to enable the measuring and monitoring of performance and identify areas for improvement. In particular, share good practice in quality improvement processes already in use in the secure training centres.
- Quickly implement systems to gather the views of learners on the quality of their learning experience at key times in their programme. Analyse their views and action plan for improvement where data identify potential areas of dissatisfaction. Use this information to inform the judgements in the self-assessment report.
- Collect and analyse data and information to compile a self-assessment report for this contract year.

What action has been taken to improve the use and management of data to contribute to improvement, particularly in ensuring that learners achieve their apprenticeships within the allocated time?

At inspection, the collection, analysis and use of management information to improve outcomes for learners was ineffective. Reports were produced and reviewed by managers but no action was taken to address the slow progress and poor attainment of learners. Current systems have been developed to review unit completion but start and end dates are not included and therefore managers cannot assess if the pace of learning is sufficient. In addition, information is collated on various spread sheets and cannot be analysed easily to provide managers with achievement and progress data by individual centre or by the various components of the apprenticeship framework. Headline performance reports are not easily available nor can staff easily disaggregate learners by different funded and non-funded programmes such as the employer-pilot apprenticeship and the apprenticeship programme. A central data base has the capacity to collect and analyse all of this information but is currently under-utilised. Plans are well advanced to provide two staff with training to enable this resource to be fully and effectively utilised. It is expected that it will allow assessors to access information from various locations in England and will provide senior managers with performance reports so that when slow progress or poor attainment is identified, intervention actions can be immediately applied.

Priorities for improvement

- Urgently implement planned training for staff so that the central data base is populated fully with learner information.

- Frequently provide staff, managers and senior managers with reports on learners' progress, centre performance and headline data that shows component and unit achievement against target completion dates and apprenticeship framework overall and timely success rate data.
- As currently planned, senior managers, centre directors and training staff should review performance data at least monthly and provide successful interventions for learners when they are identified as making slow progress.

What action have leaders and managers taken to secure good outcomes for learners and high quality provision?

At inspection, leadership and management were inadequate in ensuring good outcomes and good quality of provision for apprentices. When the apprenticeship programme was set up, managers in the organisation did not critically assess how it would be delivered in terms of the capacity of staff, the delivery timescale and the implications for the business. Since inspection, the senior leaders and directors have reviewed the findings of the inspection report and affirmed their commitment to provide and deliver high quality apprenticeship programmes in secure training centres. Senior leaders have taken a business decision to no longer offer apprenticeship programmes in the adult prison estate.

Decisive action has been taken to implement a governance system that monitors improvements against areas for improvement identified at inspection. The Director of Children's Services has taken the lead on managing and monitoring post inspection activities to effect swift improvement. Centre directors review assessor performance and their centre's performance frequently. The outcomes of these processes inform the senior team's monthly review of action taken to date. The senior team have met three times since inspection to develop plans to monitor actions and drive improvements. Senior staff and managers are working well together to ensure the successful implementation of these plans.

The improvement plans identify operational objectives designed to address improvements needed. However, while plans are detailed, they do not set milestones or targets to measure distance travelled or the achievement of the objectives. Overarching strategic management objectives are not included in the plan to set, measure and monitor management actions, although key strategies are being implemented.

Priorities for improvement

- Implement a strategic action plan to set key objectives and targets for senior staff to show how they intend to raise standards and outcomes for learners and add these to the current post-inspection action plan.

- As a priority, managers, directors and staff should critically review the post inspection action plan to ensure that the objectives will lead to improvement and that targets and interim milestones are set so that progress can be effectively measured and monitored.

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