

Priory Central Services Limited

Employer

Inspection dates		02–06 March 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate-4
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate-4
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is inadequate because:

- outcomes for learners have declined significantly over the last two years; the large majority of apprentices do not complete their framework successfully and too few complete within the planned time
- the provision does not meet the needs and interests of apprentices because they do not develop additional skills or enhance further their skills in English and mathematics as the result of their apprenticeship training
- managers have failed to identify and narrow the performance gaps between different groups of learners
- trainers are not sufficiently ambitious for apprentices; they plan to teach only to the minimum standard which the qualifications demand with the result that learners do not produce a good standard of work
- trainers do not review and record adequately the progress of individuals
- apprentices' line managers and supervisors do not prioritise sufficiently apprentices' training; they do not give them sufficient time during their working day to ensure apprentices can meet with their trainers or gather good evidence of their competencies
- senior and middle managers have not developed effective quality improvement systems and the self-assessment process is weak; they do not have an effective, detailed plan for improvement
- leaders and senior managers have failed to improve the provision; since the last inspection learner outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have all declined.

This provider has the following strengths:

- this provider does not have any significant strengths.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase rapidly the number of apprentices achieving their framework within the planned time by ensuring that trainers set clear detailed targets which link on- and off-the-job training. Monitor apprentices' progress against these targets and record them well to ensure that apprentices make good or better progress towards completing their qualifications.
- Ensure apprentices' line managers and work supervisors are involved fully in the planning and monitoring of training, learning and assessment so that apprentices make faster progress.
- Put effective measures in place to ensure that apprentices' training is given a high priority and monitor that they are supported well by their line managers and supervisors. Hold all staff, including the line managers and supervisors, to account for the progress and performance of apprentices.
- Improve significantly the planning and delivery of learning sessions so apprentices are stretched and challenged to develop good skills and knowledge beyond the minimum which is required by qualifications. Ensure that trainers use the information from the initial assessment of apprentices' English and mathematical skills and their existing knowledge in care settings well to plan their individual training.
- Ensure apprentices have good access to high-quality training resources, including on-line resources.
- Ensure trainers have high expectations of learners and extend their vocational skills and knowledge by the good use of questioning techniques, high quality training and detailed written feedback on their work so that learners know how to improve.
- Ensure trainers use effective strategies to develop apprentices' skills in English and mathematics well.
- Rapidly increase the effectiveness of quality improvement arrangements by developing systems so that the quality of all aspects of the provision are monitored and improved.
- Develop and implement a detailed and comprehensive quality improvement action plan so that the pace of sustained improvements in the quality of the provision for learners is increased significantly.
- Review and improve the arrangements for self-assessment to develop an accurate view of the provision that informs robust action plans that rapidly improve provision for learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
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- Priory Central Services Limited (Priory) offers apprenticeship training to its employees in health and social care, and early years and playwork. Around 360 apprentices work in settings for people who require physical care and/or support for mental ill health. Apprentices also work in specialist education and drug rehabilitation centres. Around a third of apprentices are on level 3 courses and the majority are aged 19 years and over; around two thirds are female. The number of apprentices increased significantly since the last inspection. Priory also offers provision for a small number of workplace learners.
- For two consecutive years, following the previous inspection, the proportion of apprentices who completed their frameworks declined and is poor. Of the small number of apprentices who are successful, too many take much longer than planned to complete their framework. Too few workplace learners complete successfully and within the planned time.

- Managers have failed to analyse and develop strategies to narrow the performance gaps between male and female apprentices; men do not achieve as well as women. Too many of the current apprentices are not making enough progress towards completing their qualifications.
- Trainers do not do enough to promote the good use of English and mathematics in learning sessions or in apprentices' work. Apprentices do not develop the English skills they need in their job roles well enough. For example, in order to update care plans for care-home residents to a good standard. They also do not develop skills in mathematics to enable them to apply them in their day-to-day work, such as referring to exact measures of medicine.
- Apprentices have extensive experience of working in health and care settings, such as in mental health treatment and care centres. They do not develop their practical skills much beyond the levels when they started on their programmes. Only a minority of trainers encourage apprentices to develop these skills beyond the minimum required by their programmes.
- The standard of apprentices' written work varies significantly; often it lacks sufficient depth and evaluation. Some apprentices include information from sources such as the internet without indicating that the work is not theirs, because trainers do not check apprentices' work well or teach them to reference information sources accurately.
- Apprentices' depth of understanding of treating individuals fairly and their respect for an individual's preferences vary significantly and are not good enough. Some apply their understanding of diversity well, such as when supporting residents with different religious beliefs. However, others are far less confident to deal with the matters arising from the diversity of their clients.
- Apprentices benefit from a wide range of additional courses, such as 'dementia awareness' and 'person-centred risk assessments' which help them to progress at work and take on additional responsibility.
- Only a small proportion of apprentices progress to higher level qualifications, as information and careers advice is not good enough. Some apprentices feel demotivated and frustrated in their studies as they cannot balance work, life and study because their managers do not support their learning and training at work sufficiently well.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Ineffective planning and delivery of training for the large majority of apprentices, weak support for them in different Priory work places, and inadequate review of their progress have led to poor outcomes for apprentices. Very few trainers have sufficiently high ambitions for and expectations of apprentices and, therefore, they do not achieve high standards.
- Support for apprentices to help them achieve their learning goals is not effective. Apprentices' line managers and supervisors often do not allocate sufficient time for apprentices to complete assignments or seek evidence for their competencies. As a result, most complete their learning tasks to the minimum standard required by their qualifications. Many who are unable to do this fall behind in their training.
- Trainers do not plan and deliver individual training for apprentices, a weakness identified at the last inspection. They do not use apprentices' initial assessment information to build on their existing knowledge and experience in the care sector. Apprentices receive a wide range of staff development training, for example through 'Priory Foundations for Growth' range of courses, to meet the needs of their job roles. However, the coordination between on- and off-the-job training, including the company job-related training, is weak. As a result, apprentices duplicate aspects of their training.
- Trainers and apprentices' line managers do not work together well to set clear, measurable, realistic and time-specific learning targets for apprentices, a weakness found at the last

inspection. As a result, line managers and supervisors often have little knowledge of the tasks that apprentices must complete. Not all apprentices' line managers recognise the operational benefits of the training that apprentices receive and therefore, do not prioritise their training sufficiently.

- Trainers do not review apprentices' progress adequately and action plans following progress review meetings require improvement. During the meetings, trainers do not clearly monitor and record apprentices' progress against the agreed learning targets from the previous review. Too often trainers or apprentices miss the scheduled review meetings or they are hurried because of business demands. Progress review documents, uploaded to an electronic portfolio system, are often not accurate and do not facilitate the monitoring of learners' progress over time. This weakness was identified at the last inspection.
- Assessment practices are weak. Verbal feedback is constructive but written feedback on apprentices' work does not give clear information on how they can improve. Trainers do not use questioning techniques well to extend apprentices' knowledge and practices in line with best practices in the care sector. This contributes to the standard of evidence of apprentices' competencies meeting only the minimum required by the framework.
- As identified at the last inspection, trainers do not develop apprentices' skills in English. For example, they do not correct spelling mistakes in learners' work so that they can identify their errors and improve their spelling and grammar. They do not plan for apprentices' development of skills in mathematics to ensure that they can apply mathematics effectively in their work. Most trainers focus only on preparing apprentices to take functional skills tests.
- Trainers do not provide a good range of learning resources for apprentices. There is an insufficient range of learning material on the electronic portfolio system. They do not direct apprentices to good resources on the internet, or teach them how to use the internet effectively. For example, an apprentice used out-of-date care guidance in an assignment without correction from the trainer. Not all apprentices make adequate progress, as they are unable to gain suitable access to computer facilities during or outside of work time.
- Apprentices do not receive sufficient information, advice or guidance prior to starting their programmes. They do not receive guidance about possible progression routes from their trainers. As a result, a significant number of apprentices view the apprenticeship training as compulsory. They do not understand any advantage they could acquire from following apprenticeship training, hence they lack motivation.
- Apprentices' understanding and application of fair treatment in recognising individual differences and how these apply to their work and life is variable, and not good enough. Trainers do not develop apprentices' understanding well and, therefore, not all apprentices have sufficient confidence in applying good equality and diversity practices in their work settings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers have failed to improve the provision since the last inspection; all aspects have declined. The number of apprentices has increased almost four-fold, without any effective planning for their success. Recommendations made in the last inspection have not been implemented effectively. Senior managers do not set staff demanding targets to raise standards and performance. Staff turnover and interim appointments in the senior leadership team have resulted in a lack of clear direction for managers, who have received insufficient challenge and support.
- Operational management is weak and hampers apprentices' progress, a weakness identified at the last inspection. Not all apprentices' line managers allow apprentices sufficient time to complete their studies during working hours. Despite this expectation written into the enrolment form and guidance, senior managers do not monitor this to assure compliance with this policy.

Too many apprentices and trainers fail to attend their scheduled meetings in the workplace, owing to a variety of reasons including sickness, changed shift patterns and work demands.

- The number of apprentices allocated to each trainer is too high given the geographical dispersal of apprentices, resulting in some having very infrequent contact with trainers. Some apprentices have had their trainer changed several times during their programme causing disruption and delays. Data held by managers on apprentices and their progress is not always accurate so trainers do not readily identify and support those falling behind.
- Self-assessment was weak at the last inspection and has not improved. The process is insufficiently rigorous and does not involve all trainers or include the views of apprentices and their line managers. The self-assessment report is too descriptive and fails to identify clearly the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision. It takes insufficient account of data on apprentices' outcomes when making judgements and the self-assessment grades are higher than those awarded at inspection.
- The quality improvement plan is weak. It does not include precise actions with specific and measureable intended outcomes. Target dates for the completion of actions are too vague. However, middle managers have implemented several improvements that are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, two additional trainers have been employed to increase the capacity of the team.
- Performance management and professional development require improvement. Senior managers have not provided enough professional development to help trainers carry out their training roles confidently and effectively. Trainers hold relevant vocational qualifications and assessor and verifier awards but most have only introductory qualifications in teaching and learning.
- Despite some changes made to the observations of teaching and learning arrangements after the last inspection, the arrangements are not yet effective in improving the quality of provision. The observation process and paperwork focus too much on what trainers do, rather than the impact of their actions on learning. Action plans following observations are not sharply focused on identified areas for development.
- Managers do not collate and analyse the outcomes of observations, including strengths and areas for improvement, to provide an overview of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not link the outcomes of observations, annual staff appraisals and monthly individual meetings to manage staff performance effectively and do not set staff clear performance targets. Managers do not ensure effective training and support for trainers so that they improve their performance.
- The programmes do not meet the needs and interests of apprentices because many are already experienced and skilled in their job role when they start the programme. Apprentices do not see the value of the programme, because they do not enhance their skills. Managers have not developed policies and practices so that apprentices develop their English and mathematics skills sufficiently well outside the functional skills sessions. Therefore, apprentices do not appreciate how important these skills are to their everyday and working lives.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is not good enough. Managers do not use data well to close performance gaps between learners, such as between male and female learners, those over the age of 24 years compared with younger learners, and regional differences. They have not ensured that all trainers have a good understanding of fair treatment and different individual preference so they can explain these important areas within the care sector and challenge apprentices' misunderstandings.
- Safeguarding requires improvement. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place including training, staff checks and an effective system to record safeguarding concerns. For example, an apprentice who is pregnant, working in a high risk residential setting for people with autism, has had a risk assessment swiftly put into place and suitable action has been taken to ensure her safety. However, some reported safeguarding concerns are not investigated and resolved quickly enough.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Priory Central Services Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	4						4		
Outcomes for learners	4						4		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	4						4		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	4						4		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and Social Care	4

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	320								
Head of People Development	Ms Myra Cooke								
Date of previous inspection	October 2013								
Website address	www.priorygroup.com								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	0	0	4	63	0	1	0	0	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	0	0	0	201	0	108			
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A. 								

Contextual information

Priory Group of Companies (group) offers care and rehabilitation in mental health, support for learning disabilities and autism, specialist education, nursing and residential care. The group has a nationwide network of over 275 hospitals, clinics, care homes and schools. Apprentice training and adult learning are managed centrally in Leicester; the group recruits and employs learners nationally. All learners are the group's employees.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Shahram Safavi HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), and six inspectors of whom five were additional inspectors, assisted by the Group Learning and Development Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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