

London College of Apprenticeship Training

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number	1274676
Name of lead inspector	Richard Pemble HMI
Inspection date(s)	27–28 February 2018
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Address	258 Harrow Road London W2 5ES

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a series of monitoring visits to a sample of new apprenticeship training providers that are directly funded through the apprenticeship levy. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

London College of Apprenticeship Training (LCoAT) commenced delivery in 2015 and trained apprentices as a subcontractor. It started training apprentices using levy funding in May 2017; this provision was in scope for the monitoring visit. LCoAT currently provides training for around 360 apprentices, of which about 80% are on standards-based programmes and the remainder on frameworks. Apprenticeships are offered at levels 2, 3 and 5, and most apprentices are on courses in team leading, customer service, business improvement and management.

Themes

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| <p>1. How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?</p> | <p>Significant progress</p> |
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Leaders and managers have worked highly effectively to ensure that employers and apprentices understand the requirements of an apprenticeship, both standards and frameworks. Employers understand clearly the requirements of apprenticeship standards for on- and off-the-job training and most support their apprentices well to meet these requirements. Managers ensure that apprentices complete sufficient off-the-job training time. Managers spend time with employers prior to enrolling apprentices to help them to understand the employers' priorities for training and also the culture of the employer in order to adapt training materials appropriately. In cases where training has not run according to plan and apprentices' progress has slowed, managers have intervened promptly and scheduled additional training sessions for current apprentices and improved the training plan for future apprentices.

Managers monitor the progress apprentices are making thoroughly at their bi-monthly meetings. They are aware of the employers where apprentices are most at risk of not achieving their qualification and they have put actions in place to remedy this that have been broadly successful. For example, they have worked closely with one employer to reschedule the time of year that apprentices start their course because current apprentices were unable to participate in off-the-job training sessions as a result of seasonal work pressures. Managers identify specific actions for improvement accurately and they monitor the achievement of these in subsequent meetings.

Leaders' and managers' self-assessment of the quality of their work is accurate and identifies most of the areas for improvement required. They have translated this well into a quality improvement plan, which senior leaders review frequently and use to hold managers to account for the progress they are making towards improving the quality of training.

Managers have ensured that skills coaches and training staff are suitably qualified and experienced to be effective in helping apprentices learn. They have taken on new staff recently to fill the gaps they had identified in the skills and experience needed to deliver standards-based apprenticeships.

2. What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?

Reasonable progress

Managers and trainers work closely with employers and potential apprentices to ensure that those who start an apprenticeship are suitable for the programme. Potential apprentices receive high-quality advice and guidance about the demands of the course they are considering. Once apprentices are enrolled on their programme, managers work closely with employers to develop training and assessment plans that take account of apprentices' prior experience and the demands of their job role.

As a result of well-organised teaching, training and assessment, most apprentices make at least good progress and achieve the milestones that their skills coaches have planned for them. Most apprentices enjoy group training sessions where they benefit from meeting other employees from different parts of their organisation. Occasionally, apprentices' attendance at training sessions is poor as they are not given the time away from their job role to attend. Managers have recognised this issue and have improved the information they give to apprentices and employers before they enrol on the course. Early indications show that this has helped to improve apprentices' attendance at training sessions.

Apprentices make good progress in acquiring important practical and vocational skills which are relevant to their qualification and job role; their skills coaches support them in doing this effectively. For example, business administration apprentices become adept at accurately preparing essential, paper-based documents for complex meetings early on in their course as a result of training from their skills coach and supervisor. Skills coaches and trainers use apprentices' work in off-the-job training sessions to evaluate effectively the progress apprentices make in developing their knowledge and understanding. Skills coaches communicate clearly and frequently with employers and workplace supervisors so that they are aware of what learning apprentices need to complete at work. Employers value this highly and recognise how this helps their apprentices to develop new skills in their job roles. For example, customer service apprentices working in an art gallery develop very good

presentation skills as a result of training from their employer. Apprentices working in a busy café learn stock-taking and ordering processes rapidly to ensure that sufficient quantities of essential supplies are always available.

Apprentices are not consistently sure what they need to do to improve their English and/or mathematics. In a few cases, managers have not planned for the training that apprentices require to happen early enough in their training programme to enable them to apply relevant new skills in their job roles. For example, business administration apprentices have improved their spelling, punctuation and grammar as a result of attending training sessions for functional skills qualifications in English, but these have not taken place until several months into their programme. They commented that the new skills they had learned would have helped them in their job roles previously. In several cases, where apprentices have to complete functional skills qualifications, assessors do not provide enough guidance on how to improve their poor spelling, punctuation and grammar.

3. How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers make safeguarding a very high priority for staff and apprentices. They have appropriate procedures in place for safeguarding apprentices that staff understand well and use effectively. Staff have received training in safeguarding recently to improve their understanding and they apply this well to identify any concerns about apprentices' safety or well-being. Managers have investigated the very few safeguarding incidents that have occurred thoroughly and recorded them in detail. Managers seek the advice of external experts, such as the local authority designated officer, when needed. The designated safeguarding manager has not completed any update training for this role recently, but managers had identified this and training is to take place shortly.

Apprentices feel safe in their workplaces. They know to whom they should report any incidents or occurrences that make them feel unsafe. Skills coaches are diligent in checking on apprentices' safety and well-being when they visit them in their workplaces.

Despite apprentices being directed by skills coaches to training to help them learn how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, very few have sufficient knowledge of this topic. What they can recall has been learned from their place of work or from the media, and not through relevant and meaningful training as part of their apprenticeship. Skills coaches have not received any training in the specific dangers or safeguarding topics that are relevant to the localities in which their apprentices live and work.

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