

Compass Group UK & Ireland

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	58805
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Inspection dates:	15–16 March 2018
Type of provider:	Employer
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to Compass Group UK & Ireland following the publication of the inspection report on 17 July 2017. At that time inspectors found the provider to be inadequate for overall effectiveness and for each of the key judgements: effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; and outcomes for learners. The arrangements for safeguarding were effective. The focus of this second visit, some six months after the first, is to judge progress against the themes that the leaders, directors and managers have previously agreed to improve the provision.

Since the inspection, directors have voluntarily stopped recruiting non-levy-funded apprentices and focused their attention on the successful completion of the apprenticeship framework by the learners already on programme. Since the last monitoring visit, directors have made further appointments to the management team. A new post of apprenticeship delivery manager is now in place and a replacement quality manager has been appointed, to support the head of apprenticeship and early careers.

In October 2017, leaders and managers entered into subcontracting arrangements for levy-funded apprentices with two new providers, ReMIT Training (ReMIT) and The Skills Partnership (TSP). They also transferred a number of non-levy management apprentices to ReMIT, so that ReMIT holds the contract for those learners. They plan to transfer non-levy apprentices from 1 April 2018 to these providers after they end their subcontracting arrangements with Jigsaw Training on 31 March 2018. Managers have also hired the services of a specialist functional skills provider, Creative Learning Partnership (CLP), to support apprentices to gain their functional skills qualifications to achieve their framework.

Since November 2017, leaders and managers have continued to enrol levy-funded apprentices on new apprenticeship standards. Of the 119 non-levy apprentices in learning at the time of the monitoring visit, 79 are learning with Jigsaw Training and 54 of these have exceeded their allocated time in learning. In addition, 89 levy-funded apprentices are enrolled with ReMIT in management and hospitality programmes; a further 19 are with 3aaa on human resources and finance programmes, and 25 are on facilities and security programmes with TSP.

Themes

The fitness for purpose of the post-inspection action plan, reporting arrangements, rigour of senior leaders' and governors' scrutiny

Significant progress

Leaders and managers produced a comprehensive post-inspection action plan that was designed to deal with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They amended the plan in light of the feedback from the re-inspection monitoring visit in September 2017 with specific and measurable targets, including interim targets, to enable them to monitor progress more precisely. Leaders and managers have set up a strong management infrastructure to ensure that they have a firm grasp of apprenticeship training. This is significant progress from little or no management oversight at the time of the previous inspection.

Highly experienced managers have meticulously monitored the plan on a regular basis and have acted swiftly and decisively to ensure that apprentices receive high-quality learning experiences and progress rapidly through their learning. Managers have assured themselves of the capacity of their newly appointed subcontractors to deliver learning to the agreed standards. They conducted thorough checks on the subcontractors, including their track record and staff's and managers' qualifications and experience. By conducting rigorous quality monitoring meetings with the subcontractors every month, they have ensured that apprentices have much-improved learning experiences and achieve their qualifications successfully in the planned time.

Leaders and managers manage the performance of all subcontractors well, to ensure that apprentices do not continue to experience below-standard teaching, learning and assessment. For example, they transferred management apprentices who were making the slowest progress to ReMIT in October 2017. ReMIT now holds the contract for these learners. These apprentices are now making exceptionally strong progress and receiving a good-quality learning experience. Qualification achievement rates are improving and more non-levy funded apprentices are now making expected or better progress than at the previous inspection and since the re-inspection monitoring visit in September 2017. The number of apprentices making slow progress has declined rapidly.

To obtain a first-hand and accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within direct delivery and in the subcontracted provision, leaders and managers have swiftly implemented a programme of observations. This was a major weakness at the previous inspection. Observations of development coaches are thorough and have led to improvements, for example, better planning and delivery of learning, stronger learner engagement, improved questioning techniques to help apprentices reflect on their learning, and improved challenge and feedback to learners. Those staff who do not meet expectations are supported to improve their practice at a subsequent observation. Managers have a detailed overview of the skills and areas for improvement for each development coach. Observers evaluate the

impact of the sessions on apprentices and provide useful feedback, including hints and tips for staff on how to improve their practice.

Recently appointed directors in the governance role take a keen interest in developing the future workforce through apprenticeship programmes. During their visits to each business unit, they routinely speak to apprentices and their line managers to gain knowledge about the progress of apprentices and the challenges that the line managers face. They are highly committed to apprenticeships and have invested heavily to ensure that the apprenticeship programmes provide high-quality learning for the next generation of employees. By appointing experienced managers they have made significant strides in improving the qualification achievement rates in the planned period and in improving the quality of training. This has transformed the management of the apprenticeship programme since the previous inspection. Directors maintain their razor-sharp focus on the quality of learning and the success of apprentices through scrutinising regular weekly and monthly reports. As a result, they know their provision exceptionally well. Directors recognise the need to formalise the line managers' accountability within their job description for the training, development and progression of the apprentices they manage.

The planning of learning to ensure that apprentices make rapid progress and achieve their qualifications in the planned period

Reasonable progress

Managers now have accurate and reliable data on individual apprentices and cohorts of learners; this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. This includes detailed information on learners' status, job roles, locations and contact details. Consequently, at the click of a mouse, managers are able to identify clearly the progress each learner is making and respond quickly if any learner is at risk of falling behind or leaving their programme. This is done effectively and managers have a good knowledge of each learner. The new databases used for the levy-funded apprentices on apprenticeship standards are fit for purpose.

Assessment and programme planning are now much improved. Since the beginning of 2018, managers have ensured that development coaches have much greater face-to-face and remote online contact with apprentices to enable them to plan for and support their progress. Development coaches now make more frequent and in-depth visits to apprentices on-site, where they conduct reviews of activities, undertake observations and give verbal or written feedback on their work. Apprentices engage well in their learning programmes. They report that they have good working relationships with their development coaches and most are learning well and developing new skills, knowledge and behaviours that benefit them and their employers.

Current apprentices, on levy-funded programmes, are making good progress and are well supported. Culinary apprentices, who were transferred back to Compass Group's control in October 2017, have since made accelerated and often very substantial progress towards completing their programmes, often from a very low

base. Managers are managing the transfer of non-levy funded apprentices to new subcontractors effectively and efficiently.

The rates of achievement of qualifications in the planned period have improved from the previous year. Apprentices are supported well to stay on programmes. It is too early to predict the overall improvement by the end of the year. Apprentices aged between 16 and 18, while relatively few in number, achieve at a much lower rate than older learners.

Teaching, learning and assessment including support for apprentices to develop high-level skills, confidence and qualifications in English and mathematics

Reasonable progress

To deal with this weakness, managers have recruited CLP, a specialist subcontractor with 17 well-qualified and experienced staff, to provide English and mathematics support to learners. They support apprentices well in developing skills in these subjects. First-time pass rates for functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved substantially since September 2017 to the end of February 2018 and currently stand at 96%.

Staff at CLP have a good understanding of the apprentices' areas for development, including their specific learning needs and barriers to learning. They support apprentices through providing specific workshops and develop learning resources and assignments relevant to each programme area. For example, an apprentice was able to see the relevance of mathematics to his work by successfully calculating the ratio of a cleaning product to water. Staff have increased the amount of face-to-face tuition and prepare apprentices well to pass their functional skills examinations, as well as to extend their skills.

Development coaches have not yet worked systematically with all the line managers and apprentices to identify the English and mathematics requirements of their job roles and plan assignments and tasks that challenge apprentices. This impedes the ability of these apprentices to make greater progress and be better prepared for their next steps.

Development of the understanding of apprenticeships among work supervisors and managers to enable them to support apprentices effectively

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have made concerted efforts to improve line managers' understanding of apprenticeships and how they can support their apprentices with a good degree of success. This is done through the production and dissemination of a useful and detailed line managers' guide which is helpful in identifying clearly the

role that apprentices play in the business and how they can support them to develop skills and progress at work.

Apprentices are now much more carefully selected for programmes using a structured and thorough sift and assessment application process. This ensures that new apprentices are placed on the right programme and level to enable them to gain new skills, knowledge and behaviours. The new approach requires line managers' close involvement to ensure that they understand and can support their employee before and during the apprenticeship.

Many line managers help their apprentices by releasing them more readily – as compared to the previous inspection – for their training, and devising work assignments to fit their job roles. However, this practice is not consistently good throughout the company, as business needs still take precedence over off-the-job learning.

The frequency and quality of assessment to help apprentices understand their skills development and next steps to improve further, and record their progress on the e-portfolio system **Reasonable progress**

As a result of managers' intervention, apprentices now benefit from more frequent and developmental face-to-face and online contact with their development coaches. This has helped apprentices understand the progress they have made and what they need to do further. For example, apprentices can recognise what they have learned and can now apply their skills with confidence to their work. They understand what more they need to learn, and how to do so. Apprentices feel very well supported. They benefit from the extensive skills and experience of most development coaches to enhance their learning and skills development.

Workplace supervisors have a good understanding of learners' progress because development coaches liaise with them routinely and thoroughly. Supervisors work closely with them to ensure that apprentices have good and timely opportunities to gain practical and theoretical experience relevant to their programmes of learning.

Development coaches and levy-funded apprentices on apprenticeship standards are now increasingly confident in using the recently introduced e-portfolio system. Apprentices can see the progress they have made and the work they need to do as well as receive prompt feedback on their submitted work. Development coaches can plan their programme and reviews to ensure that all apprentices are on track and offer feedback on the apprentices' submitted work.

Development coaches' feedback to non-levy apprentices on their individual learning plans is very detailed. Apprentices understand fully what they have done well. However, development coaches do not clearly specify what key action and

development points the apprentice needs to act on to complete units, or improve further.

The development of apprentices' knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation to protect themselves in their everyday lives and in the sectors in which they work. Reasonable progress

Directors, leaders and managers, as well as workplace supervisors, have a good awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation in society, as they have undertaken a range of training in these subjects. They are well aware of the steps they need to take to protect learners.

In recent months, to enhance learners' knowledge and understanding of these topics as well as of British values, leaders and managers have rolled out a comprehensive, interactive online 'Toolkit Talks' programme, designed and developed by a Compass manager. The toolkit aims to ensure that managers, development coaches and apprentices gain a detailed, practical understanding of the 'Prevent' duty, safeguarding, fundamental British values and equality, diversity and inclusion. The 'Toolkit Talks' require apprentices to engage in and contribute their own experiences and views during reviews with their development coach, for example on themes such as extremism and radicalisation. Learners' progress in understanding and knowledge is measured using a completion point assessment against their starting points. Although all development coaches and managers have undertaken training in the use of this toolkit, it is too soon to measure or evaluate the effectiveness of this resource.

Managers have devised and very recently launched a new and comprehensive safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty action plan. It is very detailed. It identifies practical and achievable actions to improve, and includes specific and measurable targets for achievement.

Managers have launched a new detailed and comprehensive safeguarding policy in recent months that specifically focuses on apprentices. Managers recognise that they need to ensure that the breadth of Compass Group's approach to safeguarding is explained more clearly, so that apprentices understand that safeguarding arrangements apply to all staff – and not just children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding arrangements for apprentices remain effective. The one referral recorded using a new system was managed very well and led to improvements in travel arrangements when apprentices travel to workshops or induction events.

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