

# CQM Training and Consultancy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1276409

**Name of lead inspector:** Russ Henry HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider  
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## 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 funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was first announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

CQM Training and Consultancy Limited was awarded a contract to provide levy-funded apprenticeships in May 2017. Previously, it had provided apprenticeships through subcontracting agreements with further education colleges, commencing in 2011. Most of its apprentices are process operators, team leaders and managers in the food and drink manufacturing sector, with smaller numbers in the non-food manufacturing sector and the service sector. The company works with a number of high-profile employers across the whole of England. At the time of the visit, the provider had 298 apprentices, of whom 64% were following standards programmes and 36% were following framework programmes.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a clearly defined vision for their apprenticeship offer. This is based around programmes for the food and drink manufacturing sector that include apprenticeships for food process operators, team leaders, and managers. Leaders guard jealously the brand image of CQM. Consequently, they plan all programmes very carefully, in partnership with a range of committed employers, many of whom are household names. Although leaders have aspirations to diversify into other sectors and increase the number of apprentices they work with, they are proceeding at a pace that enables them to maintain the quality of their programmes.

In almost all cases, programmes meet fully the requirements of apprenticeships. Apprentices are either new entrants to their job role or are on programmes that prepare them for promotion. Managers work with employers to develop detailed training plans, and this ensures that apprentices participate in an appropriate amount of high-quality off-the-job training. Training includes formal taught sessions, self-study activities and a range of interesting projects that help apprentices to develop excellent vocational skills. Staff assess the existing English and mathematics skills of apprentices and provide appropriate teaching and support to help them gain functional skills qualifications, where this is necessary.

Most employers have a good working knowledge of the principles of apprenticeship programmes and their managers take a personal interest in the progress and achievement of their apprentices. As a result, apprentices feel valued. Employers work well with CQM staff to ensure that they provide on-the-job training, mentoring and support that coordinate well with off-the-job training. Employers see apprentices as their future high-flyers and they rightly describe substantial gains in apprentices' skills and knowledge.

Apprentices receive appropriate advice and guidance that ensure that they are on a programme that meets their needs and aspirations. CQM staff assess apprentices' job roles so that they match the requirements of their programmes and apprentices' existing skills to ensure that they are likely to benefit from the training. However, in a few cases, apprentices have been in their existing roles for some time and, although they benefit significantly from their training, the contribution that the programme makes to their long-term career progression is doubtful.

CQM training staff, known as 'business change facilitators', conduct all training activity on employers' premises. As part of initial processes to determine the suitability and capacity of employers, CQM managers review the available resources for training to ensure that they are sufficient and fit for purpose. Business change facilitators make use of high-quality learning resources and, increasingly, make good use of online tools to support apprentices. They are well qualified, both in their vocational area and in teaching and assessing. They all have substantial experience of working within their sector, and apprentices and their employers rightly regard business change facilitators highly.

Most apprentices are proud to be part of their company's apprenticeship programme. A few apprentices are interested in going on to a higher-level apprenticeship programme after their studies, but have not received any detailed guidance from their business change facilitator about such opportunities.

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

Business change facilitators provide apprentices with clear and detailed explanations of the requirements of their programmes. As a result, apprentices understand the commitment that they need to make, the training that they will undertake and the assessments that they will complete. Apprentices know how much progress that they have made and can explain what they still need to complete.

Business change facilitators use their considerable expertise to help apprentices to develop new skills and behaviours that help them carry out their roles more effectively. Employers build on this training to develop the specific expertise and knowledge that apprentices need for their job role. As a result, apprentices can describe and demonstrate the knowledge and skills that they have developed and

how their approach to work has changed for the better. Apprentice section leaders gain the confidence to recommend business improvement processes to their managers. Junior staff develop a much-improved understanding of the contribution that they can make to increasing efficiency and developing better ways of working.

Business change facilitators help apprentices to link their learning to the work that they undertake on a day-to-day basis through well-organised projects. For example, a project team at one firm is working on a complex food manufacturing problem relating to the amount of sherbet coating on a well-known brand of sweet. Another project team at a different company is developing cost-saving strategies related to the use of heat, light and air to facilitate the ripening of avocados in a controlled environment. These projects yield significant cost and commercial benefits for employers and help to develop apprentices' problem-solving and team-working skills.

Managers work well with employers to monitor closely the quality of programmes and the progress of apprentices. They adapt programmes as necessary and intervene appropriately when the progress of apprentices is too slow. As a result, apprentices develop their skills and knowledge rapidly. One employer delivers a small component of its apprenticeship programme and CQM staff manage this subcontracting arrangement well.

Business change facilitators are knowledgeable about the end-point assessment process for apprentices on the new standards-based programmes and have adapted their practice to prepare apprentices for these assessments.

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

Leaders and managers take safeguarding very seriously. They adhere to appropriate processes for checking the backgrounds of new staff and they keep clear and detailed records. All new staff undertake safeguarding training and subsequently complete courses that help them to understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. However, a small number of staff have not had any recent updates to their initial training. Although the provider has a safeguarding policy and a staff handbook that provides guidance, this is brief. It does not, for example, provide instructions on how to deal with a safeguarding disclosure or give clear guidelines on appropriate relationships with apprentices via social media.

On the rare occasions when safeguarding concerns arise, staff take appropriate action in conjunction with employers. Managers record carefully the concerns raised, the actions staff take and their outcomes. The designated safeguarding lead enjoys a positive working relationship with the higher and further education 'Prevent' duty lead for the East Midlands region with whom he is able to obtain advice on matters related to radicalisation and extremism.

Apprentices receive guidance and training from business change facilitators that help them learn how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Business change facilitators use a range of appropriate learning materials to promote apprentices' understanding of British values. Most apprentices can outline these values in a basic way and explain how they might apply in their place of work. However, they struggle to recall any detailed information.

Apprentices feel safe in their workplaces and know to whom they should report any concerns. All apprentices spoken to report that their colleagues take health and safety extremely seriously and behave appropriately and respectfully towards each other.

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