

# Stanford Management Processes Limited

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 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.

Stanford Management Processes Limited (Stanford) began delivering vocational training, including apprenticeships, in August 2008. It started training apprentices using levy funding in May 2017. This provision was in scope for the monitoring visit. Stanford currently delivers training to 65 levy-funded apprentices, of which 60 are on standards-based programmes in adult health and social care. Two apprentices are following programmes related to the hospitality sector. Standards-based apprenticeships are offered at levels 2 and 3. The remaining three apprentices are enrolled on management framework programmes at levels 4 or 5.

### Themes

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the contribution that standards-based apprenticeships can make to the sectors they serve. The director has implemented a clear strategy aimed at reducing skills shortages, particularly within adult health and social care. Leaders and managers have established detailed plans for the development of the provision so that it meets the needs of apprentices and employers. In support of their stated objectives, senior managers have invested significantly in relevant information and communication technology and staff training to support apprentices' success.

Senior managers have raised assessors' professional competence so that they can prepare apprentices confidently for their endpoint assessment. Managers have made pertinent assessment arrangements. They continue to adapt processes and procedures appropriately, as clarity on the final form of the assessment emerges.

The senior management team ensures that it contracts with employers who are committed to delivering all aspects of the standards-based apprenticeships. Managers and assessors check carefully that apprentices are suitable for the proposed training programme and understand what is required of them to complete an apprenticeship successfully. Apprentices participate in programmes that challenge

them appropriately to learn new knowledge, skills and behaviours so that they become more effective in the workplace.

Managers have carried out very thorough cross-mapping of employer-provided in-house training to identify where it meets the requirements of the apprenticeship. Employers and assessors use this very effectively to help apprentices succeed. The majority of apprentices are making the expected or better progress.

Managers collect a wide and varied range of relevant data that they utilise effectively to monitor apprentices' and assessors' performance. They usually intervene swiftly to resolve underachievement. Managers recognise that the monitoring arrangements are often too complex and burdensome. For example, the majority of apprentices routinely receive their on- and off-the-job training entitlement. However, arrangements for checking this adherence limits managers' capacity to act rapidly when deficits in apprentices' training attendance occur.

Leaders and managers now have a realistic appreciation of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. Until recently, the self-assessment report overemphasised the evaluation of Stanford's subcontracted work with a local college. This limited managers' decision-making and subsequent prioritisation of actions to raise standards for all apprentices. Managers routinely collect stakeholders' feedback but fail to use it fully for quality-improvement purposes.

**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**

Apprentices' training is of a good standard. Apprentices develop the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours required to make them more effective in the workplace. For example, apprentices within social care settings learn quickly to effectively support service users who exhibit challenging behaviour. They are able to describe how the apprenticeship programme has helped them in their work. For example, health and social care apprentices can explain adeptly how they have learned to manage risk more effectively. This gives them the confidence to improve the life skills of vulnerable individuals undertaking daily tasks, such as crossing a busy road.

For the majority of apprentices, assessors plan the content and timing of off-the-job training successfully to maximise learning. Assessors ensure that lessons enhance the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need to become more competent in their work role. Apprentices speak positively about these sessions. They find them relevant and engaging. Most apprentices successfully develop their independent learning skills using relevant online resources. However, in a few cases, assessors and workplace supervisors do not plan the content of on-the-job training sufficiently. This delays the progress of a small minority of apprentices.

Apprentices have an adequate understanding of what the endpoint assessment entails. Most are aware of the grades they can achieve. An electronic learning and development system provides apprentices with a helpful indication of the progress they are making. As a result, they have a good understanding of their current rate of achievement. In addition, they have a sound appreciation of where and how they need to improve.

The majority of apprentices benefit from regular and frequent workplace assessment visits. Assessors work closely with apprentices and employers to ensure that these visits minimise disruption to workplace operations. Assessors are particularly sensitive to the needs of social care service users. For example, they put in place alternative arrangements for observations when they could detract from the quality of a service user's care.

Assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced. They provide good support to apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful employees. Apprentices value highly the help they receive from their assessors.

Prior to starting their programme, all apprentices receive a suitable assessment of their English and mathematical skills development needs. Apprentices who are required to obtain qualifications in English and mathematics receive adequate support that includes access to useful online lessons. First-time examination pass rates for English and mathematics are high. Currently, apprentices' digital skills are not assessed adequately to identify skills gaps and where training is required.

A small minority of workplace supervisors are not involved sufficiently in apprentices' progress reviews. Not all supervisors receive apprentices' progress reports that Stanford sends to their organisation. Consequently, these supervisors have a weak understanding of their apprentices' progress. In a few cases, supervisors fail to contribute effectively to the coordination of on- and off-the-job training to fully support apprentices' achievement.

Senior managers use comprehensive quality-assurance procedures to raise standards quickly. They ensure that the work of geographically dispersed assessors is subject to quality assessment using direct observation. This process results in the detailed recording of outcomes that managers use at monthly meetings with assessors to improve performance. However, managers recognise that the evaluation of taught sessions gives insufficient attention to the quality of apprentices' learning.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders and managers have ensured that suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place and used to protect apprentices and staff. Managers have established an appropriate safeguarding policy and associated procedures that are subject to systematic review. Apprentices report feeling safe while undertaking training. They know how to report any safeguarding concerns. Apprentices are confident that managers will resolve effectively any issues they raise.

The designated safeguarding officer is appropriately qualified and competent to carry out the role. The safeguarding officer works closely with employers to check apprentices' safe working practices and deal with potential risks, for example those associated with lone working.

Leaders and managers are suitably conversant with current legislation and regulations. They apply this understanding to effectively raise apprentices' and assessors' awareness of their rights and responsibilities. All staff receive an adequate range of relevant update training. Assessors also participate in suitable development opportunities to equip them to identify and deal with safeguarding issues. Leaders and managers use appropriate recruitment and vetting practices to check employees' suitability to undertake their work roles.

Apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of fundamental British values and the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation. They have an appropriate appreciation of how to apply this knowledge to their work and personal lives, for example to stay safe when using social media and the internet. Apprentices employed in health and social care settings have a very good understanding of their duty of care to vulnerable service users.

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