

Partnership Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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.

Partnership Training Limited (Partnership Training) was formed in 2012, specialising in provision for adults in social care and child care. Since then, it has been a subcontractor to four other providers. Currently, 35 apprentices are completing their training with the company as part of its subcontracting arrangements. Partnership Training became registered to offer levy-funded apprenticeships in May 2017. The first group of levy-funded apprentices started training in August 2017.

Currently, there are 330 apprentices of whom 159 are completing apprenticeship frameworks and the remainder are on the new apprenticeship standards. Two-hundred and eighty-seven apprentices are levy funded. One-hundred and forty-four apprentices are training at level 2, 161 at level 3 and the remainder at level 5. The majority are enrolled on health and social care and adult care worker provision.

The company offers apprenticeships throughout England. At the time of the monitoring visit, around two thirds of apprentices were in the north west and the remainder were in the west Midlands and south-east England.

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 strong strategic direction and determination to provide high-quality training for apprentices in the health and social care sector. They use their extensive knowledge and experience in health and social care very effectively to design, develop and deliver the provision that meets apprentices' and employers' training needs. Leaders and staff have an effective partnership working with employers. This has contributed to the quality of the teaching, training, learning and assessment that apprentices receive and to their much-improved knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders ensure that the apprenticeships that they offer meet the apprenticeship requirements. They record and monitor carefully and in detail apprentices' off-the-job training and the amount of time that they study during working hours. Leaders ensure that all apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. They have established and implemented appropriate measures that help apprentices to

improve their use of English and mathematics, for example through ensuring that they have clear individualised learning targets and access to high-quality resources specific to health and social-care settings.

Leaders and managers have developed a management information system that enables them to access a wide range of information about apprentices, including their progress towards completing their apprenticeship. They use this system effectively, to ensure that a high proportion of apprentices make the expected progress. Where apprentices fall behind, leaders and managers take swift action to help them to catch up. Leaders have implemented an e-portfolio system that most apprentices and vocational trainers use effectively.

Apprentices receive appropriate information, advice and guidance before enrolment and during their training. This has resulted in most apprentices starting their training at an appropriate level. Leaders and staff are vigilant and ensure that apprentices start on programmes that benefit them and equip them with knowledge, skills and behaviours to be successful at their end-point assessment. When they identify apprentices who are not on the correct programme, they support them to transfer swiftly to the most suitable programme, for example from level 2 to level 3. As a result, apprentices are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours, and they improve their employment prospects considerably.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths of the provision and where improvements are required. They are very eager and ambitious to make improvements quickly. In their self-assessment, leaders have identified most areas that require further improvement, for example to collect more extensive information on the impact of the training. However, in their self-assessment, they do not use evidence of impact routinely to inform their judgements. For example, in their observation of teaching, training, learning and assessment, they focus too much on what vocational trainers do and not enough on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop.

Leaders have made arrangements for 'critical friends' to challenge their performance and support them to make improvements. However, they do not have robust governance arrangements in place.

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**

Vocational trainers' comprehensive induction helps apprentices to understand the requirements of their apprenticeship, including information about end-point assessment and the standards expected of them. Apprentices receive a detailed induction booklet which introduces them to the standards or framework requirements and the English and mathematics requirements.

Vocational trainers use clearly defined information about apprentices' starting points in relation to their existing knowledge, skills, work-related behaviour, healthcare standards, English and mathematics. They make good use of this information to plan their on- and off-the job training. The learning plans include relevant activities that prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment and take into consideration their busy periods at work.

Vocational trainers use their relevant vocational expertise and information about apprentices' starting points to set them appropriate learning targets and tasks. As a result, apprentices develop the occupational knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their job role in health and care settings, such as in adult social care, young people's care and residential homes. Apprentices benefit from high-quality learning resources and the e-portfolio system.

Most employers contribute appropriately to apprentices' training and development. They work cooperatively with vocational trainers to identify the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices require in the workplace and to satisfy their apprenticeship requirements. Apprentices enjoy their programmes and recognise the value of their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices carry out detailed reviews of service users as part of person-centred planning. They review progress in maintaining healthy eating and physical exercise, managing personal finances and developing skills for independent living.

Vocational trainers review apprentices' progress regularly during their visits to employers. Most apprentices have an accurate understanding of the progress they make and the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they develop. A minority of apprentices do not make the expected progress. They do not receive accurate and regular information about their progress and they are not clear about the tasks that they need to complete to catch up.

Apprentices benefit from appropriate assessment practices. Most apprentices receive useful feedback on their completed work and are clear about what they need to do to make improvements. Vocational trainers help apprentices to understand what is expected of them at their end-point assessment. For example, in their feedback vocational coaches highlight clearly where the learning matches the requirements of end-point assessments.

Leaders and managers undertake regular observation of teaching, learning and assessment for all vocational trainers. They have also appointed a manager to focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All staff have monthly supervision meetings to review their practices and identify individual needs. However, managers in their evaluations do not focus sufficiently on apprentices' progress and on the development of their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Consequently, the improvement actions are not good enough. When vocational trainers are required to improve their practices, managers take too long to re-observe them to judge whether teaching, learning and assessment have improved.

Vocational trainers provide feedback to apprentices routinely on the standard of their written English. Feedback focuses on the areas for improvement in spelling, punctuation and grammar within written assignments and workplace activities. Apprentices who require English and mathematics functional skills are signposted to relevant online resources. They receive effective support from their vocational trainers to develop their English and mathematical knowledge and skills through assessed work and feedback.

Apprentices who have the necessary functional-skills qualifications receive good support to continue to develop their English and mathematical knowledge and skills through their main qualification. For example, apprentices are set relevant tasks that involve using positive and negative numbers in calculating or using clear sentences when writing reflective practice and descriptive statements. A minority of assessors do not develop apprentices' spoken language skills. Consequently, not all apprentices develop sufficiently their oral communication skills relevant to their job role. This hinders these apprentices and may prevent them gaining merit or distinction and achieving at a level of which they are capable.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and well established. Staff and apprentices receive comprehensive information about safeguarding and the risks associated with violent extremism and radicalisation. They also receive detailed information about the safe use of the internet.

Leaders follow safer recruitment practices when employing staff. All staff have appropriate security checks before they work with apprentices and visit them in their workplaces.

The designated safeguarding officer, who is a senior leader, has completed safeguarding training at an appropriate level and has established suitable arrangements for external support. All staff complete appropriate safeguarding, 'Prevent' duty and Channel training.

Reporting and referral procedures for apprentices who have concerns are clear. The designated safeguarding officer deals swiftly with any referrals. The referrals are recorded meticulously and the agreed actions are specific.

Apprentices articulate confidently how to recognise the signs of risks and abuse, and to whom they should report them or make referrals.

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