

Develop-U

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.

Develop-U has provided training on a commercial basis and as a subcontractor since 2005. The company started training levy-funded apprentices in June 2017; this provision was inspected during the monitoring visit. Develop-U currently trains 51 apprentices for three employers. Around 85% of apprentices are on apprenticeship frameworks at levels 2 or 3 in improving operational performance or operations and quality improvement. The remainder are on an advanced food operator standards-based apprenticeship.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the right candidates are recruited onto their apprenticeship provision. The task of recruitment is left to employers. As a result, leaders and managers are unsure about the suitability of apprentices on some programmes, including a minority of apprentices who behave in ways that are unprofessional and inappropriate to their status as apprentices. Leaders and managers are aware that they need to increase their involvement with the recruitment of their apprentices and have plans to address this issue. They have not yet put these plans in place.

Too many apprentices are not able to make informed decisions about their apprenticeships and their futures as they do not benefit from accurate information, advice and guidance before or during their apprenticeship programmes. Too many apprentices either do not know whether their apprenticeship will result in sustained employment or feel that it will have little impact on their career. Although most apprentices know that their programme has benefits for their employers, they are less certain about the benefits for their own careers. Several apprentices told inspectors that once their apprenticeship finished they would be back in the roles they had been in before they undertook their training.

Although managers identify accurately aspects of the apprenticeship provision that they need to improve, in too many cases they do not put in place effective actions to bring about these improvements. Inspectors found instances of directors resisting managers' recommendations for quality improvement actions. For example, managers suggested that regular quality meetings and formal performance management arrangements would be helpful, but directors preferred to keep informal arrangements which had hitherto had insufficient impact. This has slowed the pace of improvements in apprenticeship provision.

Leaders and managers have strong relationships with employers, who speak highly of the training that their apprentices receive and the positive impact that this has on their business. For example, apprentices develop ways to reduce waste in the rope-making process.

Leaders and managers work well with employers to ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. Apprentices are released from their usual roles one day each week for relevant training.

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

Tutors do not use information gathered about apprentices' starting points to plan learning effectively. As a result, they do not do enough to challenge those apprentices who have already achieved higher-level qualifications, such as degrees, to make the progress of which they are capable.

Too many apprentices, including several of those on level 3 operations and quality improvement frameworks, do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their programmes. In these cases, apprentices, some of whom have been working in the industry for over 20 years, recap existing knowledge and skills but do not learn enough that is new. While most of the small number of apprentices on the advanced food operator programme do learn substantial new skills and knowledge, their development of new behaviours is less positive.

Tutors do not address inappropriate behaviour effectively enough. Although tutors and managers complain that a few apprentices have poor behaviour, tutors do not set targets in reviews to encourage apprentices to develop a more professional approach. As a result, disruptive behaviour impedes the progress and prospects of these apprentices. Managers blame the apprentices for this slow progress; however, apprentices are not sufficiently motivated and engaged by the teaching they receive.

Too many apprentices do not make sufficient progress in developing their English and mathematical skills. In too many instances, apprentices repeatedly fail their

examinations. Tutors who teach functional skills English and mathematics do not, in all cases, have sufficient expertise to ensure that apprentices make the progress of which they are capable in these subjects.

Leaders and managers have not put in place effective arrangements to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observations take place infrequently and do not lead to clear plans to improve quality. As a result, pockets of poor practice persist. For example, too many tutors do not routinely provide feedback that helps apprentices know what they need to do next; this delays the progress that their apprentices make.

Most apprentices value the on-the-job training that they receive. For example, those on the advanced food operator standards-based programme have 'buddies' who support these apprentices well in the development of their skills in using different mixing machines. Apprentices also value and enjoy the 'knowledge workshops' that they receive on helpful topics such as communication, managing people and teamwork.

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

Arrangements for reporting safeguarding concerns are ineffective. During the visit, inspectors became aware of an at-risk apprentice about whom leaders were not aware.

Leaders and managers have not been successful in inculcating a culture of safeguarding. For example, too many staff have not had any recent training in relation to safeguarding or the 'Prevent' duty. Although staff who had not completed training swiftly undertook the latter during the monitoring visit, safeguarding training is infrequent and minimal.

Apprentices do not have a secure understanding of safeguarding, including in relation to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Although many apprentices have completed online training in relation to these dangers, hardly any of them can remember anything about it. As a result, apprentices have a limited awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders and managers have very recently produced a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment, which has clear reporting procedures.

Leaders and managers have put in place safer recruitment procedures that encompass any required checks on staff.

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