

Recalvi Enterprise

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.

Recalvi Enterprise Limited, trading as Apprenticeship Connect, was founded in 2012. Based in the City of London with regional offices in Manchester and Birmingham, it provides apprenticeships to the recruitment sector at levels 2 and 3. Apprenticeship Connect has been providing apprenticeships from level 2 to level 5 through subcontracting arrangements since 2012 and became a prime-contract holder in May 2017. Thirty apprentices are on programme, working towards level 3 standards in recruitment consultancy and business administration.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have set a clear strategic vision to provide the best-quality learning experience for apprentices in the recruitment and business services sector. Leaders and managers have made excellent use of the knowledge and skills they acquired during their time as highly effective subcontractors to develop a successful apprenticeship programme providing good-quality teaching and learning.

Managers understand correctly the difference between providing framework qualifications with an emphasis on assessment and the demands of the new standards. They have moved rapidly towards developing a programme that has teaching at its centre. Thorough professional development and coaching enables tutors to make the transition successfully from providing assessment of an apprentices' capabilities to becoming providers of the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of the standards.

Leaders and managers use their very strong partnerships with employers to benefit apprentices by providing good-quality jobs with good career opportunities. Managers ensure that high-quality employers, whom they scrutinise rigorously prior to working with Apprenticeship Connect learners, provide apprentices with job roles that meet their learning requirements extremely effectively. Managers ensure that they recruit both employers and apprentices carefully, ensuring that each understands fully the requirements of an apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers focus on the quality of teaching and learning and have implemented thorough quality assurance and effective staff performance management at every level of the business. Managers underpin their decision-making and all aspects of provision contributing to good-quality teaching, learning and assessment with detailed data reporting. Managers analyse data effectively to ascertain the potential impact their own business decisions have on apprentices. Leaders meet frequently to monitor the performance of managers, staff and apprentices, and take rapid action to correct any underperformance. Managers monitor the contribution each member of staff makes to the quality of learning. For example, staff responsible for recruiting new employers and apprentices receive stretching targets that include most apprentices being retained in employment and completing their standard to a distinction level. These targets also include that they should make a positive impact on business profitability, resulting from apprentices doing their job to a high standard.

Managers have designed teaching and learning to focus precisely on ensuring that apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship programme and to become valued employees. Employers and apprentices have a good understanding of apprentices' entitlement to off-the-job learning. Apprentices take part in a range of learning activities, including monthly lessons with tutors, to provide the theoretical understanding that complements the knowledge, skills and behaviours they develop while at work.

Employers work closely with tutors to plan and review workplace training. Tutors monitor closely the individual training apprentices receive at work and ensure that workplace learning matches closely the relevant standards studied.

Leaders and managers ensure that all apprentices benefit from the same good opportunities to secure employment and succeed. For example, during the recruitment and selection of a new apprentice, employers receive guidance to provide paid work experience, rather than extended unpaid work experience that disadvantages applicants from low-income backgrounds.

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 are at an early stage in their learning, since many started their programme within the last three weeks. Apprentices develop strong interpersonal skills, such as communicating confidently to new clients and managers, and managing phone call systems. Apprentices make their expected progress towards understanding and developing the 10 codes of professional standards expected.

Apprentices are extremely motivated and enthusiastic to become highly skilled members of the workforce. Most work for recruitment companies, where work is

fast-paced and dynamic. Apprentices quickly become valued employees with their own sales targets to meet. Managing their own workload and time is a key skill they acquire early in their employment. Workplace supervisors provide effective individual coaching and mentoring to apprentices and inculcate rapidly the professional behaviours expected by the profession.

Training staff provide good initial advice and guidance to prospective apprentices and are careful to identify those with the self-motivation and determination to succeed in a highly pressured working environment. They ensure that apprentices receive good preparation for job interviews with potential employers and understand fully how they will develop the required knowledge, skills and behaviours while at work and in lessons. Training staff and tutors clearly identify the potential career opportunities within the recruitment industry to apprentices.

Managers and tutors have worked successfully to develop a programme that meets the requirements of the standards. Tutors and employers use documentation and tracking systems effectively to record the teaching, learning and progress apprentices make. Apprentices have regular and frequent contact with their tutor.

Tutors are confident and knowledgeable about their subject and teach lessons that they manage well, that are lively and that apprentices enjoy. Managers rightly acknowledge that tutors require additional training to enable them to provide learning that gives apprentices the opportunity to work independently in lessons. They also need training to set activities for the more able apprentices that encourage them to excel. Tutors are not yet confident in lessons to provide effective guidance to the small proportion of apprentices who need extra time and attention to make good progress in their learning.

Within lessons and learning plans, tutors set clearly defined and appropriate English and mathematics skills. Managers recognise that tutors need more professional development to focus on apprentices developing their English, mathematics and information and technology skills.

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

Leaders and managers have established an exemplary culture of safeguarding that ensures that apprentices are safe while at work, studying and accessing information online.

Managers' actions to identify potential risks to apprentices' information, personal data and safety online have strengthened the existing comprehensive safeguarding and protection arrangements.

Leaders, managers and staff across the organisation have the appropriate skills and knowledge to take effective action to keep apprentices safe. They have a good understanding of the wider social, economic and mental well-being factors that are potential indicators of individual apprentices' vulnerability. Staff recognise when apprentices are at risk and take prompt action to protect them. Tutors ensure that apprentices develop the necessary skills to recognise possible abuse and to understand what appropriate action they should take to keep themselves and their peers safe.

The designated safeguarding lead reports monthly to the board all ongoing management actions to keep apprentices safe. Safeguarding champions reflect closely the gender and ethnicity of apprentices, giving them confidence to disclose any issues of concern. The safeguarding board meets quarterly to review safeguarding cases and the impact of actions taken and makes recommendations for any changes required to existing arrangements.

Managers have well established and very extensive staff recruitment practices. Leaders have recently instigated a thorough risk assessment of potential employees' personal circumstances that would pose a likely threat to apprentices. They have taken appropriate action, including not taking applications further. Leaders have strengthened the induction of new employees into the company to ensure that staff at all levels understand their role in promoting apprentices' safety and well-being.

Managers and tutors provide good advice to employers to help them keep apprentices safe. Employers receive very effective training to be clear in their role of safeguarding apprentices while at work and going about company business. Employers recognise the characteristics that would lead to apprentices being vulnerable and receive useful help and advice that improves their understanding. Leaders have met their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices understand the risks posed by those who promote extreme ideology.

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