

SCL Security Ltd

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

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

SCL Security Ltd (SCL) was started as an independent training provider by its current managing director in 2009. Since then, it has been a provider of adult education and apprenticeships as a subcontractor to two regional colleges and an independent training provider. It began to receive public funding in its own right in May 2017. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were a total of 27 apprentices on programmes, with a further six on breaks in learning. Most of these are over 24 years of age. All of the learners still in learning, except one, were taking level 2 or level 3 apprenticeships in health and social care in the Midlands. One apprentice was taking a level 2 apprenticeship framework in information technology in Kent. Seventeen level 2 care apprentices include five on frameworks and 12 on standards-based apprenticeships. Of the nine level 3 care apprentices, five are on the framework and four are on standards-based apprenticeships. SCL employs three part-time external quality improvement consultants to manage the provision.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers 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 programme they offer meets the requirements of an apprenticeship. Apprentices do not receive sufficient off-the-job time to complete their studies and do not know what progress they are making.

SCL staff do not plan apprentices' training programmes of study well enough to meet individual apprentices' needs. All apprentices are currently expected to complete their apprenticeships in the same timeframe irrespective of their previous experience, skills or level of training.

Leaders and managers do not check the quality of provision effectively or set targets to improve the training apprentices receive. They identify broad areas that need to improve but do not have a clear strategy to deal with them. As a result, their evaluation of the quality of provision is overly positive and the weaknesses identified by inspectors and agreed during the monitoring visit are not included in plans for improvement.

Quality assurance of the apprenticeship programme is not effective. Managers do not have a good enough oversight to hold staff to account or to know what progress apprentices make. They pay insufficient attention to the teaching of English and mathematics so that apprentices gain qualifications in these subjects and improve their work skills.

Leaders and managers have not implemented any governance arrangements and, as a result, do not receive sufficient challenge or scrutiny regarding the programmes of training.

Processes to improve the quality of teaching learning and assessment are ineffective. Managers complete observations of teaching, learning and assessment, but do not use the findings from these to support improvement or inform staff development. Staff, when observing and reporting on training sessions, focus too much on trainer activity and not on the learning and progress of apprentices. They do not identify actions for trainers to improve and do not use their reports for staff development or appraisals. Because of this, leaders' attempts to improve the quality of the apprenticeships are unsuccessful.

Leaders and managers have made sure that the apprentices they enrol are suitable for an apprenticeship and select them with integrity.

Tutors are suitably qualified, and they keep up to date within industry practice. They complete annual updates in care service placements. Managers have invested in an online portfolio and monitoring package, but this is not used effectively to support apprentices' learning.

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

Managers and staff, including assessors, do not take into account the skills, knowledge and behaviours that apprentices already have prior to starting their programme. Apprentices do not benefit from an individualised approach to their training and, as a result, they are not making the progress of which they are capable. Staff monitoring of apprentices' progress focuses only on assessment milestones and the completion of tasks.

Assessors do not set and record detailed training and development targets for apprentices to help them to make good progress. They do not concentrate enough on the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Individual training plans focus only on gathering and assessing evidence towards the qualification. Apprentices are not aware of the requirements of the end-point assessment or the different grades they could achieve in their qualifications. As a result, they do not aim for higher levels of achievement.

Assessors, in their progress reviews and other workplace visits, do not provide sufficient opportunity for apprentices to participate. These sessions are only used to reinforce existing knowledge or to mark and evaluate assignment work. Apprentices

do not benefit from any lessons to develop their knowledge and skills and extend their knowledge. Activities during workplace visits are not tailored to meet individual apprentices' needs and do not offer suitable challenge.

Leaders and managers do not involve employers and line managers sufficiently in apprentices' training. Employers are not included in the planning or delivery of training. In most cases, employers are not aware of the progress apprentices make and are not able to support them to develop new skills and knowledge at work. As a consequence, apprentices' training is not linked to the skills they need for their workplaces and jobs.

The planning and delivery of training to improve apprentices' English and mathematical skills is weak. Apprentices who need to complete functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics do not receive enough support or tuition. Leaders, managers and assessors do not emphasise the importance of good English and mathematics skills linked to work.

Employers benefit from the contribution that apprentices make to their businesses. For example, one health and social care apprentice helps residents develop their flexibility by delivering useful leg exercise and hand massage sessions. An information technology apprentice uses his hardware knowledge to improve systems in an automotive parts shop.

Health and social care apprentices develop their understanding of manual handling and dementia care well. They use the knowledge they gain from their workplace training to help them improve the standards of care for residents. For example, one apprentice improved her awareness of trip hazards and introduced safer working practices in the care establishment.

Although most apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable, they receive good personal support from their tutors. As a result, they gain confidence in their job roles.

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

Leaders and managers make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and that all apprentices are safe. They place a high priority on the safeguarding of apprentices and have suitable policies and procedures in place. Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding policies and procedures and use them well. Managers investigated the two safeguarding incidents that were reported in sufficient detail and recorded their actions and the outcomes effectively. They took appropriate and timely action to resolve the concerns.

SCL managers have a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan that is clear about potential threats to their apprentices.

Leaders and managers complete detailed and thorough recruitment checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks and reference checks before appointing new staff. These thorough checks make sure that individuals appointed are suitable to

work with apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead and officers have completed appropriate training to enable them to carry out their roles.

All staff complete online training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty to make sure they fully understand their responsibilities about how to keep apprentices safe and protect them from harm. Staff have recently completed refresher training to further develop their safeguarding knowledge; this included potential local threats of radicalisation and extremism.

Apprentices feel safe and there are effective procedures in place to keep them safe. As part of their induction they receive good information about safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, they know who to go to if they have any concerns and how to protect themselves and others from harm, including the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of how local threats of radicalisation and extremism might apply to them at work or in their everyday lives. Trainers and assessors do not explore or reinforce these topics well enough.

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