

EMA Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1278626

Name of lead inspector: Julie Gibson

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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 themes set out below.

EMA Training Limited (EMA) is a small company based in Derby specialising in financial services training. It started its business in 2013. EMA has offered directly delivered levy-funded apprenticeship provision since February 2018. EMA has 28 apprentices funded through the employer levy. Of these, 27 follow standards-based programmes for train conductors at level 2 and train drivers at level 3. Southeastern Trains employs these train conductors and drivers. One apprentice is on a standards-based programme in accountancy at level 3.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Programmes are poorly planned. Although apprentices benefit from an extended period of training at the start of their programmes, they receive no further time during work hours to develop or practise their skills and knowledge. This means that they have little opportunity to prepare for end-point assessment, which occurs several months after they finish off-the-job training.

Leaders and managers do not monitor the delivery of apprenticeships effectively. They do not understand fully the quality of apprentices' experiences or the slow progress that they make. Leaders and managers are not fully aware of the arrangements for off-the-job training. They do not fully understand the requirements of end-point assessment or how apprentices are prepared for them. For example, they are uncertain about whether these assessments are graded or not. They have been slow to make improvements.

Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the quality of the provision is inaccurate and fails to identify key areas for improvement. Leaders have not responded sufficiently to concerns raised by apprentices.

Governance and oversight arrangements are weak. Board members do not robustly challenge leaders. Board meetings are informal, and result in few actions which are

not subsequently reviewed. Members lack knowledge about the requirements of apprenticeships. They do not explore key issues appropriately.

Leaders and managers recruit apprentices with integrity. They assess apprentices carefully before they start their apprenticeship, to ensure that they have the appropriate skills to achieve. Applicants undertake a range of aptitude tests, as well as an assessment in English and mathematics, to determine their suitability.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that apprentices benefit from high-quality apprenticeship training that leads to positive outcomes. Following an initial two- or four-month block of training, apprentices receive no further time for study during work hours. Apprentices complete all further apprenticeship work, including meeting with the learning support coach, entirely in their own time, usually just before the start of a shift or just after they complete a shift. This gives them little opportunity to develop or consolidate their knowledge or prepare for end-point assessments. Most apprentices do not understand the structure of end-point assessments. However, the initial training is high-quality and apprentices enjoy it.

At the time of inspection, over half of the apprentices had not received a visit from the learning support coach within the six weeks stipulated in their apprenticeship agreement. The learning support coach struggles to visit each apprentice often enough, because of constraints on their availability. This contributes to apprentices' slow progress. However, apprentices value these visits when they take place and they support the apprentices appropriately to complete their tasks.

Apprentices develop a wide range of occupationally specific skills and behaviours. Train conductors develop good customer service skills, including how to deal with passengers who have a disability, such as a visual impairment. Train drivers learn how to check equipment and engines before starting a journey, follow signalling instructions, make passenger announcements and control automatic doors.

Apprentices receive suitable advice and guidance about the structure and content of the apprenticeship programme. Almost all apprentices intend to remain with their employer after completion of their studies.

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 are committed to ensuring that apprentices are safe in the workplace. They implement appropriately

the safeguarding and health and safety policies and processes. Leaders and managers review and update policies and processes to ensure that they remain current and effective.

Leaders have recently introduced a system to ensure that all new employees receive appropriate background checks, such as previous workplace references and the right to work in the United Kingdom, before they receive a contract of employment. Apprentices know how to stay safe, and what to do if they feel unsafe or at risk of harm. They have a suitable understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and of the importance of British values within their workplace.

Leaders ensure that appropriately trained designated safeguarding officers are available to support apprentices. During induction and throughout their training, apprentices benefit from reminders about how to stay safe and how to raise a safeguarding concern.

Leaders and managers know how to deal appropriately with safeguarding incidents and disclosures. They understand the relevant policies and processes. They know when they should refer a case to external agencies. There have been no safeguarding disclosures within the last two years.

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