

EQV (UK) Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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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.

EQV (UK) Ltd (EQV) is a small company based in Leicester specialising in information technology and management training. It started its business in 1992. EQV has offered directly delivered levy-funded apprenticeship provision since July 2017. EQV has 106 apprentices funded through the employer levy. Of these, 81 follow standards-based programmes for managers at level 3 and 25 at level 5. Apprentices are employed in a range of businesses in the public and private sectors.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders do not have sufficient oversight and understanding of their apprenticeship provision. They do not ensure that the programmes meet the principles and requirements of apprenticeships. Leaders have been slow to check how well apprentices are progressing and have not taken decisive action where performance is weak. Consequently, too many apprentices do not make appropriate progress and do not complete their apprenticeship by the expected date.

The apprenticeship programmes are poorly planned. Leaders concentrate on apprentices achieving management qualifications rather than their apprenticeship. Around half of apprentices have not received an appropriate review of their progress. Leaders have not ensured that the small minority of apprentices taking English and mathematics qualifications receive support early enough in their programme. As a result, apprentices are delayed completing their apprenticeship.

Links with employers are weak. Leaders have not ensured that employers fully support their apprentices in the workplace. Too many apprentices make slow progress or are no longer on the programme as a result of the low priority employers give to their studies.

Leaders do not effectively monitor the quality of apprenticeships or identify areas for development accurately. They are slow to address weaknesses. Leaders have

recently started to monitor employer involvement and the progress of the apprentices. It is too early to judge the impact of these changes.

Leaders recruit with integrity. During recruitment, leaders monitor existing skills of apprentices appropriately. As a consequence, apprentices are placed on suitable programmes to develop their existing skills further and develop new skills. For example, apprentices use new techniques when managing appraisals and their teams, with positive outcomes for apprentices and their businesses.

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**

Assessment of off-the-job training is weak. It does not provide apprentices with a clear understanding of the quality of their work and how they can improve. Apprentices are insufficiently prepared for final assessment. Around half are late completing their end-point assessment. Leaders do not monitor assessment sufficiently well to raise the quality of provision for apprentices.

On-the-job workplace reviews are planned for all apprentices but only a few have taken place. Apprentices receive insufficient support to catch up where their progress is slow. Apprentices only have a basic understanding of how they will be assessed and do not know how to achieve higher grades.

Quality assurance arrangements require improvement. Lesson evaluations concentrate on the qualification specification and not sufficiently on the quality of teaching and learning. Actions to support improvement are not routinely identified.

Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Tutors deliver training that is linked closely to the content of management qualifications. They deliver this training at the right level and pace. Group discussions are inclusive, lively and informative. As a result, apprentices enjoy learning.

The few apprentices who do not have English and mathematics qualifications are provided with relevant support to help them achieve at the required standard. It is too early to know if this is helping apprentices to achieve their qualifications.

Most apprentices develop new and relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours that they can apply in the workplace. They make useful connections between off-the-job theory sessions and how this can make a positive difference in their workplace, particularly when managing individuals and teams.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding **Insufficient progress**

arrangements are in place?

Safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. Leaders do not fully understand their safeguarding duty. The designated safeguarding lead has not had appropriate training. Training for staff in safeguarding is insufficient to enhance professional practice. For example, staff do not know how to manage an incident effectively should it occur. Apprentices are not sufficiently informed how to make a disclosure and what would happen if they did.

Leaders do not carry out sufficient background checks on staff. They do not check that staff have the right to work in the United Kingdom and workplace references are not routinely collected prior to employment.

Leaders are not aware of their responsibilities to protect apprentices from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They have not had appropriate training in the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders do not ensure that apprentices have sufficient information about these dangers during their apprenticeship. Apprentices have a basic understanding of British values and know how to stay safe through their workplace.

Leaders do not carry out sufficient checks to ensure that apprentices are working in an appropriate environment. There are limited routine checks on health and safety in the workplace, such as emergency evacuation procedures.

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