

# Care First Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 58852

**Name of lead inspector:** Robert Hamp, HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

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.

Care First Training (CFT) was established in May 2003 to provide apprenticeships and work-based learning in the care and business sectors for colleges of further education. A direct contract from the Skills Funding Agency was awarded in September 2016 for higher apprenticeships at level 4 and 5 and a full contract to deliver apprenticeships at all levels in December 2017.

CFT has 763 apprentices, 562 of whom are non-levy funded, the remainder are levy funded. Roughly half are on frameworks and half are on standards. The large majority are females studying care programmes at level 2 and 3.

## Themes

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

### **Reasonable progress**

Directors have worked hard to implement successfully a management structure and information systems that will support the delivery of new standards-based apprenticeships. They are committed to ensuring that apprentices benefit from well-planned and well-organised training programmes. Many improvement initiatives have recently been introduced and it is too soon to judge their impact. Early indications suggest that apprentices are making at least the progress expected.

Managers have close working relationships with a broad range of employers, particularly in the care and business administration sectors. They ensure that programmes meet individual and business needs well and that apprentices are recruited with integrity.

Communications with, and support for, employers are good. Employers benefit from CFT managers' advice and guidance when planning training. Apprentices receive a thorough induction and most have a good understanding of their qualification and how it can help them to progress in their careers. Managers monitor the progress of different groups but analysis of their progression to higher levels and apprentices' awareness of career options is underdeveloped. As a result, directors and managers do not have this information to help them plan the curriculum.

Apprenticeships meet the Institute for Apprenticeship requirements. Employers provide enough off-the-job time for apprentices to work on their studies. Managers monitor this to identify and deal with any shortfalls. Tutors work well with the end-point assessment organisations to prepare apprentices for their final tests. As a result, apprentices are well prepared for their tests. However, too many are unaware that their apprenticeships are graded.

Directors and managers ensure that tutors have the expertise to provide apprentices with high-quality training that delivers the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected in the workplace. Most training resources are of a good quality.

Arrangements for governance of the provision are effective. Executive and non-executive board members receive detailed management and performance reports. Monthly management meetings provide additional oversight of the business. As a result, directors and managers have a good understanding of the quality of provision and the progress apprentices make.

Managers make good use of feedback from apprentices and employers in their evaluation of the quality of the apprenticeship programme. Their self-assessment report is comprehensive and focuses on delivery of the apprenticeship programmes.

**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 talk confidently about the new skills, knowledge and behaviours they develop and how this helps children, clients and their employers. For example, early years education apprentices produce explanatory charts that help train young children to use the toilet. Adult social care apprentices can identify the importance of personal care plans. A few apprentices gain additional responsibility when taking on new clients or when given a specialist role in the care of an adult or child.

Off-the-job training is well planned. The recording of the time spent and activity undertaken is now logged centrally to provide managers with a clear picture of the provision at each employer. As a result, most employers are engaged well in providing apprentices with relevant tasks to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviour needed to make progress. However, in a few instances, employers are not involved in the apprenticeship programme. In these instances, off-the-job training is not clearly identified and apprentices' progress is hindered.

At the start of the programme, tutors assess thoroughly apprentices' skills in English and mathematics. Apprentices who need to improve their skills in these subjects receive good tutor support when using workbooks and completing mock examinations. All tutors receive training in functional skills to support

apprentices, but a few lack the confidence to help apprentices improve their skills rapidly.

Tutors are well qualified and have relevant expertise in their subject areas to develop the necessary skills and behaviours. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out annually and support the development of teaching practice well.

Apprentices produce work of a suitable standard for the qualification they are studying and most make appropriate progress. They are aware of their end-point assessment. However, they do not know what they need to do to achieve higher grades, and tutors do not set targets to help them reach their full potential.

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

Directors and managers ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The designated safeguarding officer and two deputies are suitably qualified. Staff have received training in safe recruiting practices to ensure suitability of individuals for their roles. Managers maintain an up-to-date central register. They monitor the incident recording process closely and deal effectively with reported incidents.

A suitable safeguarding and risk assessment action plan is in place. Directors and managers ensure that all members of staff complete frequent training to refresh their understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty, British values, and equality and diversity. As a result, apprentices have an adequate awareness of the 'Prevent' duty and of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Safeguarding is at the centre of most activities, particularly in the care sector. As a result, staff reinforce apprentices' understanding of safeguarding issues throughout the apprenticeship programme. Apprentices feel safe and have a good understanding of what to do if they have concerns.

Apprentices understand British values and demonstrate their understanding through their behaviour in the workplace and during learning sessions. For example, they demonstrate these values when they work sensitively with residents in care settings.

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