

Rita's Training Services

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 40 Westgate
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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.

Rita's Training Services (RTS) is an independent training provider based in Sleaford, Lincolnshire. It began delivering apprenticeships in its own right in March 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit, 97 apprentices were on standards-based programmes. Of these, 49 were on a level 2 adult care worker apprenticeship and 42 were on a level 3 programme for lead adult care workers. Six apprentices were on team leader or business administration courses. There were also 20 apprentices following a higher apprenticeship framework programme at level 5 in care and leadership. Most apprentices were females aged over 19.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Senior leaders have not planned effectively to meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They do not ensure that employers understand fully the on- and off-the-job training requirements of an apprenticeship. Leaders fail to monitor closely enough the time that apprentices spend in training away from the workplace. As a result, most apprentices complete their apprenticeship studies either wholly or partly in their own time.

Leaders work in close collaboration with employers in the care sector to develop apprenticeship programmes that meet their organisational skill development needs. They ensure that apprenticeship programmes help apprentices develop substantial new knowledge during their training. A few employers provide apprentices with time during working hours to develop this new knowledge. However, too many expect apprentices to complete their apprenticeship studies in their own time.

Senior leaders monitor effectively the quality of training and the progress that apprentices make. Managers meet each assessor every month to review apprentices' progress and to implement actions for any who are falling behind in their studies. As a result, almost all apprentices make good progress.

Assessors are well qualified and experienced in adult social care. They use their experience and expertise effectively to support apprentices to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours and to progress and achieve.

Leaders and managers have developed suitable processes for recruiting apprentices. Apprentices receive detailed information about the apprenticeship during induction that includes what they will learn and the arrangements that managers have made for end-point assessment. As a result, apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary in their work as care workers and care managers.

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 provide apprentices with sufficient well-planned and high-quality off-the-job training. Apprentices complete much of their apprenticeship study at home. As a result, they do not have enough time at work to consolidate and enhance the new knowledge, skills and behaviour they are developing.

Assessors use their considerable skills and expertise to help apprentices develop valuable new skills that they can deploy in the workplace that benefit their employer. They plan sessions well so that apprentices and their supervisor know what they will be studying next. However, they do not always communicate clearly with apprentices' supervisors to ensure that off-the-job learning relates to apprentices' job roles.

Managers ensure that apprentices enrol on a programme that matches their prior attainment and ability. As a result, most stay on the programme and are on course to complete on time.

Managers have a reasonably accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of training sessions gained through observations of assessors. However, managers do not provide assessors with sufficient feedback on what they need to improve, or how to do so.

Assessors provide apprentices with useful and supportive feedback on their work, which helps them to improve. Assessors communicate promptly with an apprentice's supervisor to monitor progress and to intervene where an apprentice has begun to fall behind.

Apprentices have a basic understanding of end-point assessment, including the opportunities to gain merit and distinction grades. However, apprentices and apprentices' supervisors do not have a detailed understanding of what the assessments will entail, and a few say that they feel unprepared.

Apprentices who need to develop their knowledge in English, mathematics and digital skills benefit from discrete individual sessions with a functional skills tutor. As a result, they improve their skills in writing reports and care plans and applying basic mathematical skills in the workplace.

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

RTS's designated safeguarding lead and managers have received suitable training to help them discharge their responsibilities effectively to ensure that apprentices are kept safe. They regularly update company policies to reflect changes in safeguarding practices.

The company's managers ensure that new staff are safe to work with their apprentices. All staff are subject to pre-employment checks. Managers provide mandatory safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training and as a result, staff know how to make a referral to the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns.

Apprentices know how and to whom they should report any safeguarding concerns. Most have a reasonably good understanding of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They apply this understanding well to their job roles as care workers, supervisors or care home managers.

Assessors extend and reinforce apprentices' knowledge and understanding of these topics as demonstrated in apprentices' ability to recall and articulate what they have learned.

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