

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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.

Folkestone and Hythe District Council has been offering apprenticeships funded by the employer levy since February 2018. The apprenticeship provision was established to deliver leadership and management apprenticeships to existing members of staff who have been identified as potential candidates for promotion into more senior roles. Currently, there are 40 apprentices, all on standards-based apprenticeships at level 3. The vast majority are on the standard for team leaders and supervisors and two apprentices are on the standard for learning and development practitioners. Apprentices are based at the four key district offices in Folkestone, Dover, Canterbury and Thanet.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale and justification for the apprenticeship programme. They have carefully planned and designed it to meet the needs of the apprentices and of the business. The chief executive and personnel committee of the council provide appropriate governance and maintain effective scrutiny and oversight of the provision.

Leaders know their provision well and can accurately identify the areas that require further development. Where weaknesses are identified, they act swiftly to put interventions in place to ensure that the apprentices are not at a disadvantage. Managers use appropriate processes to monitor and assess the quality of the teaching and learning and provide helpful feedback to tutors.

Managers and tutors have appropriate qualifications, expertise and experience in leadership and management that they use effectively to deliver the programme. Where tutors do not hold teaching or assessor qualifications, they complete these swiftly. Apprentices have very good access to a wide range of internal and external

staff development activities, including taking formal qualifications and professional courses that enhance their learning.

Managers work closely with the apprentices' line managers to ensure that they fully understand the requirement for off-the-job training. Line managers benefit from the apprenticeship programme because of the positive impact it has on their workforce.

Apprentices apply internally for secondments, for additional responsibility through project work and for promotions. In addition, they access external impartial careers advice and guidance through the leaders' and managers' professional body portal and careers hub.

Leaders and managers do not yet record in enough detail the progression of those apprentices who have completed. They record promotions but do not capture the additional responsibility they may have been given within their roles.

Most apprentices understand the arrangements for end-point assessment but not all of them are aware that they could achieve higher grades.

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 follow appropriate apprenticeship standards that closely meet their professional development needs. All apprentices manage small- to medium-sized teams but have limited or no previous management training. Several of them are soon to take on more management responsibilities. Apprentices are very well motivated and gain huge benefit from completing the apprenticeship.

Tutors plan and deliver effective and relevant taught workshops. Apprentices benefit from a variety of good-quality materials and resources. Tutors provide detailed information to apprentices before the training workshops so that they can do pre-reading to support their learning.

Tutors provide additional monthly study workshops where apprentices receive extremely useful individual support and advice on completing their assignments. Apprentices' work is of a high quality and all those who have completed the standard have achieved distinction.

Staff are highly qualified in their specialist area and are very proactive in continuously improving the provision in response to learners' feedback and peer review support.

Apprentices develop substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours. They and their teams benefit from their improved management abilities. For example, apprentices can delegate more effectively and adapt their communication styles to cope with different situations. As a result, the efficiency and motivation of their

teams have improved, and they are better able to prioritise work, which has reduced stress and improved well-being.

Apprentices' line managers are very supportive of the apprentices and are keen to be involved in the development of their workforce. However, they do not currently attend review meetings but provide a written report. Therefore, they do not contribute to discussions about the individualised skills development needs of the apprentice.

Tutors carefully weave further development of English skills into the programme. However, they do not develop apprentices' mathematical skills so that apprentices gain the necessary confidence and ability prior to completing the budget management module of the course.

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

A keen awareness of safeguarding permeates the culture throughout the councils where apprentices work and, as a result, consideration of safeguarding is well embedded into the apprentices' daily activities. Apprentices and tutors demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values and can relate these easily to their job roles.

Apprentices feel safe in their workplaces and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. They have good access to an extensive range of support, which includes counselling and confidential services. Apprentices receive a comprehensive package of training which is thorough and includes frequent updates.

All council employees go through a rigorous recruitment process, which includes all necessary pre-employment checks and, where appropriate, disclosure and barring service checks. The designated safeguarding officer is experienced and well qualified. Managers have excellent relationships with external agencies and can access them effectively, if required, through an inter-agency referral process.

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