

Phoenix4Training LLP

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1280310

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Inspection dates: 6–7 November 2019

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 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Two partners established Phoenix4Training LLP in 2007, offering a range of commercial training and funded training to the health and social care and rail sectors. In March 2017, they received funding directly from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to deliver apprenticeships. Training takes place at employers' premises, through one-to-one coaching sessions. At the time of the monitoring visit, Phoenix4Training LLP delivered training to 59 apprentices, of whom 21 are funded through the levy. Of these, six apprentices are aged 16 to 18. The vast majority are on apprenticeship frameworks at levels 2 and 3 in a range of vocational pathways, including customer service, team leading and performing manufacturing operations. Eighteen apprentices are studying towards a level 3 apprenticeship standard. Almost half of the apprentices speak English as an additional language.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have insufficient oversight of the quality of the apprenticeship programme and the progress that apprentices are making. Consequently, apprentices make very slow progress in developing the vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for sustained employment and to complete their qualifications.

Leaders and managers have insufficient understanding of the expectations and requirements of an apprenticeship programme. They do not know whether their apprentices benefit from meaningful activities or receive the off-the-job entitlement of their apprenticeship. Leaders have not ensured that arrangements are in place for the end-point assessment for adult care apprentices on standards qualifications.

Leaders' management of quality assurance is insufficient to monitor, swiftly identify and address areas of underperformance. They make poor use of information available, such as that from apprentice feedback surveys. They rely too much on

informal conversations. Consequently, they are unable to set meaningful targets for improvement or develop plans to increase the quality of teaching and learning.

Leaders do not use their self-assessment review and quality improvement plan to provide a strong basis on which to identify, implement and monitor the improvements needed. Leaders do not benefit from independent scrutiny and monitoring of their work. They have no form of governance in place to hold them accountable for the quality of provision.

Leaders have been too slow in developing an English and mathematics strategy. Consequently, apprentices' success in gaining their functional skills qualifications is too low. As a result, a few apprentices withdraw from their programme.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices benefit from high-quality information, advice and guidance. Apprentices do not have access to suitably qualified staff or careers partners to help them realise their future employment aspirations.

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

Too few apprentices develop new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. For those who have been in their current job roles for many years, the apprenticeship largely accredits existing skills. Consequently, apprentices are unable to identify what new skills and knowledge they have developed and how they may apply them in their workplaces.

Assessors' assessment of apprentices' knowledge and skills is insufficient. They do not establish apprentices' starting points well enough to be able to plan learning activities or set targets for improvement. Consequently, apprentices do not make good progress and do not always apply their new knowledge and skills to their work roles. Assessors work well with adult care apprentices to select the most appropriate optional units to support their roles in the workplace.

Apprentices do not benefit from frequent, well-planned and high-quality off-the-job training. Assessors do not plan sufficiently with apprentices and their employers meaningful off-the-job activities that will help apprentices to deepen their vocational knowledge.

Apprentices' development of English and mathematics is too slow. Although assessors make an assessment of apprentices' existing knowledge, they do not use this to inform apprentices' programmes of study. They place too much reliance on apprentices studying independently through online resources and completing examination practice papers. Assessors do not ensure that all apprentices continue to develop their literacy and numeracy skills throughout their apprenticeships.

Apprentices' written work is mainly of the standard required for the apprenticeship. However, assessors do not provide feedback to apprentices in enough detail to make it clear what apprentices need to do to improve their work.

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

Apprentices do not have a sufficiently thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They do not receive adequate information on how to report concerns to Phoenix4Training LLP. Leaders expect apprentices to complete online training modules independently. However, their checking on whether apprentices complete this activity is insufficient. Many apprentices are unable to recall information, such as that about the 'Prevent' duty or county lines.

Leaders have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. However, the language they use is too complex, particularly for the large proportion of apprentices for whom English is an additional language.

The designated safeguarding officer and deputies do not hold a relevant qualification at the level expected for their roles.

Leaders follow safe recruitment practices, but they do not ensure that they update Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in accordance with their own safeguarding policy. An up-to-date 'Prevent' duty action plan is in place.

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