

# Apprenticeship Recruitment Service Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Steve Ingle, Ofsted Inspector

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**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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency (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.

Apprenticeship Recruitment Service Limited began trading in 2015. The company received a contract to deliver apprenticeships in March 2018. Currently, 84 levy-funded apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeship programmes, ranging from level 2 to level 5. Just over half of current apprentices are on the team leader/supervisor apprenticeship. The remaining apprentices follow programmes in business administration, business improvement techniques, customer service, human resources support and project management.

### 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 an appropriate apprenticeship strategy. They work well with a small number of employers to develop a curriculum around the individual needs of each business and its workforce. For example, apprenticeships in supply chain management have been developed to better support the needs of employers and provide a leadership pathway for employees.

Leaders and managers foster effective working relationships with employers to ensure that apprentices are recruited on to apprenticeship programmes where they develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Leaders and employers liaise successfully to ensure that the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship are met. Employers provide the support that apprentices require to successfully progress through their training. For example, managers work productively to resolve operational matters so that apprentices' duties and responsibilities at work do not impact adversely on their learning. This ensures that apprentices receive the on- and off-the-job training they need to develop the vocational skills that employers need.

Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced to support apprentices and to develop and assess their knowledge and skills. Leaders and managers ensure that tutors reflect on their teaching practices and use their professional development to improve their practice.

Leaders and managers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their provision and have an appropriate understanding of the areas that require further improvement. For example, leaders have rightly identified the need to improve the effectiveness of existing information management systems to ensure that apprentices' progress is consistently and accurately recorded and shared with managers.

Leaders have very recently established a governance function to provide support and challenge to senior leaders to further improve the quality of apprenticeships. Leaders have rightly identified that current arrangements are underdeveloped and recognise the need to recruit more governors to provide appropriate external scrutiny, monitor improvements and hold leaders to account.

**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 are recruited on to programmes that enable them to gain new skills and progress in their job roles or move to higher positions. Tutors make good use of the business needs of employers, and their understanding of apprentices' starting points, to design a curriculum that allows apprentices to develop the skills that employers require. For example, business administration apprentices are involved in designing quality systems that improve efficiency within their departments.

Apprentices benefit from the support of experienced and knowledgeable tutors who are passionate about what they teach. Apprentices receive meaningful on- and off-the-job training that helps them to develop the knowledge and behaviours needed to progress at work. For example, team leader apprentices lead projects developing the processes to dispatch goods to clients in a cost effective way. Customer service apprentices can confidently communicate to a range of stakeholders and use their knowledge and skills to better meet the needs of their clients.

Apprentices feel well supported by their tutors who respond quickly to their queries. Most tutors meet frequently with apprentices and their managers and provide feedback on progress that informs the apprentices' next steps. Tutors provide prompt and useful feedback on apprentices' work. Most apprentices use this feedback to improve the quality and standard of their written work.

Tutors and employer managers provide effective support to apprentices to ensure that they have a good understanding of the requirements of their endpoint

assessments. For example, apprentices undertake mock interviews and presentations to build their confidence and understanding of assessment requirements.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices are consistently supported to develop their English writing skills beyond the qualifications being completed. In a small minority of cases, assessors do not sufficiently plan the curriculum to challenge the most experienced apprentices to extend their skills further.

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

Leaders and managers implement appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that apprentices are safe. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has been trained to an appropriate standard. Tutors and managers receive regular safeguarding training and updates about the 'Prevent' duty. Tutors carry out health and safety checks on employer premises to ensure the suitability and safety of training venues used for workshops and reviews with apprentices.

A clear process is in place for recording, reporting and monitoring any safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding issues are regularly considered by senior leaders at management and governance meetings. Leaders and managers follow appropriate recruitment processes including relevant pre-employment checks.

Apprentices are safe and feel safe. They understand who to contact if they have any safeguarding questions or concerns. However, not all apprentices demonstrate a secure understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

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