

Thermal Insulation Contractors Association (TICA)

Monitoring visit report

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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 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.

Thermal Insulation Contractors Association (TICA) was formed in 1957 and is based in Darlington. It began to deliver levy-based apprenticeships in January 2018. Currently, the company has 62 apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 49 follow the standard for commercial or industrial thermal insulation technician at level 3, and 13 follow the standard for commercial or industrial thermal insulation operative at level 2. The large majority of apprentices are aged 19 years and over.

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 strategy for their apprenticeship programmes. Leaders have built on TICA's specialist experience in the thermal insulation industry to provide high-quality and well-planned training for apprentices. They work closely with employers to devise bespoke training that meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Consequently, employers benefit from and are right to value the training that their apprentices receive.

Apprentices make expected or better progress in developing new knowledge and skills. Managers and trainers thoroughly assess new apprentices' existing practical skills and experience to identify their starting points and plan learning. Trainers give apprentices helpful feedback on how to improve their techniques before attempting procedures in the workplace. As a result, apprentices quickly acquire the specialist skills and knowledge that they need for their job roles.

Leaders ensure that trainers have the knowledge and skills that they need to deliver high-quality apprenticeship training for the thermal insulation industry. Trainers liaise with other specialist practitioners to share best industrial practice. They use resources that are current and industry-specific to develop apprentices' knowledge. For example, apprentices learn how to fit a wide range of thermal

insulation materials including rock wool, foam glass and nitrile rubber. Consequently, they gain the knowledge and skills that they need to secure long-term employment across the industry.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices and employers are aware of the end-point assessment requirements. They have put in place assessment arrangements that meet the specialist needs of the industry well. Trainers ensure that apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to achieve high grades.

Leaders work closely with a governing council made up of industry representatives of the seven largest UK thermal insulation companies. This arrangement enables employer bodies to hold leaders to account effectively and to ensure that apprenticeship standards are fit for purpose.

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

Trainers are appropriately qualified. They have good industrial experience, which they use well to coach and guide apprentices. Trainers plan and teach the thermal insulation curriculum in a logical way to help apprentices build on what they already know and can do. They ensure that apprentices develop good hand skills on basic projects, using easier-to-handle materials such as rock wool, before developing more complex skills needed for their job role.

Apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. They attend structured blocks of training in TICA's thermal insulation training environment. Trainers ensure that apprentices develop industry-specific skills for tasks which they may not ordinarily carry out in their workplaces. For example, they coach apprentices in the use of a swage machine to cut and shape male and female couplings to fix at irregular angles. Consequently, apprentices feel confident to use this equipment in their training and their end-point-assessments.

Managers and trainers work closely with employers to support apprentices to develop their skills in the workplace. Trainers and employers use an electronic portfolio to monitor apprentices' progress in and outside of the workplace, including in off-the-job training. This means that trainers can quickly identify and support any apprentices who fall behind.

Managers ensure that apprentices can gain additional qualifications that the thermal insulation sector values. For example, apprentices take an online qualification on the safe use of asbestos. This means that they can obtain an industry-standard card which reflects demonstrable safe working across the sector.

Too few apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications at the first attempt. Managers have recruited a specialist tutor to improve the teaching of these subjects and help apprentices to prepare for assessment more effectively. This is having an impact, and apprentices' use of English and mathematics in the workplace is improving.

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

Apprentices are safe and feel safe. They know who to contact if they have any concerns, both in the training centre and in the workplace. Apprentices have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe online and in a potentially hazardous working environment.

Leaders ensure the safety and protection of apprentices. They have appointed an appropriately trained designated safeguarding officer and have policies and procedures for reporting and dealing with safeguarding incidents. Managers respond to incidents in a timely and appropriate manner. Leaders liaise particularly well with employers and local hoteliers to ensure that apprentices staying away from home are in suitable and safe environments.

Staff introduce apprentices to a range of topics during induction, including the dangers of radicalisation, extremism, the operation of county lines and British values. As a result, apprentices speak confidently on these issues and increase their understanding of their responsibilities in the workplace and in wider society.

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