

# Active Learning & Development Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Bev Ramsell, Her Majesty's 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 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.

Active Learning and Development Limited (ALD) is an independent training provider based in Evesham, Worcestershire. In May 2017, ALD gained a government-funded contract to deliver apprenticeships. In December 2017, the first group of apprentices began the team leading/supervisor level 3 standard. At the time of the monitoring visit, ALD had 60 apprenticeships in learning. Equal numbers of apprentices were studying level 3 team leading/supervising standards and level 5 operations/departmental manager standards.

### 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 a clear vision for the delivery of apprenticeships in supervisory management and senior leadership which matches the demands from employers to their own expertise. However, they have made insufficient progress in the implementation of this intent.

Leaders have not made sure that apprentices receive the full entitlements of an apprenticeship. Too few apprentices receive on- and off-the-job training, or allocated time away from work, to complete their assignments. As a result, too many are falling behind in their studies, and a few have disengaged and no longer want to continue with the programme.

Leaders are ineffective in monitoring apprentices' progress and are too slow to intervene when they fall behind. For example, a few apprentices have not received the support they need to develop the English and mathematical skills required to pass functional skills examinations. As a result, apprentices who are nearing the end-point assessment have not passed the required examinations.

Leaders have not yet put in place governance arrangements to hold them to account for the quality of education.

Leaders work with employers to make sure they have a clear understanding of the requirements of the end-point assessment. For example, assessors and coaches run end-point assessment preparation days approximately two months into the programme for apprentices and mentor and managers.

Leaders ensure that all assessors and coaches hold the relevant qualifications required for their role. Coaches and assessors have a lot of experience in the delivery of leadership training. Two of the assessors work as end-point assessment assessors for awarding organisations.

**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**

Apprentices develop the skills and knowledge to enable them to become better managers. In a few instances, the apprentices have moved into management positions and use their newly acquired skills to manage their staff better. However, for too many apprentices, the speed of developing the new skills and knowledge is too slow, and too many are not making the progress of which they are capable.

Assessors do not use information on apprentices' prior experience to develop a learning programme that meets their needs, potential and aspirations. For example, current assessments focus solely on the apprenticeship standard, English and mathematics. Assessors do not check apprentices' prior knowledge of softer skills, such as listening, critical thinking, or confidence – or current management practices such as delegation and empowerment – to inform a broader curriculum that develops apprentices' wider skills, so that they are supported to reach their potential.

Assessors do not set clear development actions for apprentices. Targets set for apprentices are too generic, not time-bound, and are not detailed enough to help apprentices identify what they need to do. For example, assessors identified through a review process that apprentices were behind. However, no targets or actions are in place to state what apprentices need to do to catch up, or what support is available.

Apprentices' written work is mainly at the standard required. However, assessors do not provide feedback that is helpful enough to show apprentices what they need to do to improve. As a result, apprentices are not supported to meet their potential.

Leaders have not yet put in place effective arrangements for quality assurance and improvements. Leaders have identified areas that need to be improved, such as the tracking and monitoring of apprenticeship progression. However, they have been too slow with the implementation, so it has not yet had an impact.

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

Leaders appointed a designated safeguarding lead and assistant lead who are appropriately qualified and are senior managers.

Leaders have not embedded a culture of safeguarding or protection within the organisation. There are no plans or actions in place to make sure apprentices are safe. For example, leaders do not assess the vulnerability of any apprentices with whom they work. Consequently, they do not know if apprentices are susceptible to influence, or at risk of extremism or radicalisation. Leaders do not ensure that all apprentices complete their safeguarding training.

Leaders have not made sure the safeguarding policy is effective. For example, staff could not explain clearly what steps to take if a disclosure was made to them. The policy relates to out-of-date legislation such as 'Working together to safeguard Children 2010' and contains no information relating to the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are trained at induction but receive no further updates.

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