

Bespoke Consultancy & Education Limited

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 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.

Bespoke Consultancy & Education Limited (BCE) is an independent learning provider that was established in 2013 to provide training to the social care sector. BCE began offering apprenticeships to levy-paying employers in January 2018. Currently, 82 apprentices are on programmes, with around two thirds on apprenticeship standards and a third on frameworks. The apprenticeship standards programmes are adult care worker at level 2 and lead care worker at level 3. The framework programme is leadership in health and care at level 5. Most apprentices work in care homes within the south west of England, with a few in the south east. The vast majority of the apprentices are over the age of 18.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Directors develop and implement an effective curriculum to contribute to meeting the workforce development needs of care homes within the south west of England. The provision offers a clear career progression route from care worker to a management role within a care home. This is helping employers to meet their priorities to retain and upskill their workforce.

Leaders and managers recruit apprentices on to courses which enable them to progress on to permanent employment. Apprentices receive helpful information, advice and guidance at the start of their programme. This includes guidance on selecting the most appropriate courses and optional units. Apprentices are encouraged to view the apprenticeship as an opportunity to develop a career within the care sector.

Leaders and managers structure the curriculum skilfully to ensure that all apprentices develop significant new skills, knowledge and behaviours. As a result, apprentices become accomplished in their caring roles and contribute extensively in their settings.

Leaders and managers have established good-quality assurance arrangements. For example, they undertake detailed reviews of each of their courses. As a result, they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and are implementing improvement plans.

Leaders and managers monitor the progress of apprentices closely through monthly meetings with assessors. They identify those who are falling behind with their studies and ensure that tutors prepare action plans to help them catch up. For example, leaders identified that apprentices on the leadership in health and care course were making slower than expected progress. They provided additional support and extra training for these apprentices, resulting in significant improvements in progress made.

Leaders monitor programmes to ensure that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job learning. Apprentices benefit from frequent and flexible training, which is of a high quality. Apprentices on the standards programmes are being well prepared for their end-point assessments.

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 make good progress in developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be considerate carers and managers of care. Care workers learn how to treat clients with dignity. Many apprentices undertake training to develop skills in caring for clients with particular needs, such as dementia and epilepsy. They learn how to apply medication safely. Care managers learn how to plan budgets and develop skills in managing large teams.

Tutors are well qualified and have considerable vocational experience that they use to support learning. Trainers make use of course materials that are of a high quality and assist apprentices' independent learning effectively. The materials reinforce learning through a variety of tasks that help apprentices to remember key concepts. Knowledge is built up in careful steps.

Apprentices benefit from good on- and off-the-job learning provided by their employer. They attend training in topics such as life support, moving and handling, fire training, challenging behaviour, dementia care, and food hygiene. They also shadow more experienced colleagues undertaking a range of tasks.

Most apprentices enjoy the training provided by BCE and most make good progress. However, tutors do not consistently ensure that the training is personalised early enough in order to take account of apprentices' prior learning and experience. As a result, a small number of apprentices find the early off-the-job training to be repetitive and uninteresting.

Tutors provide good support for apprentices. They assess the apprentices' written work and their knowledge, skills and behaviours frequently. Tutors provide helpful feedback and apprentices are clear about what they need to do to improve.

The standard of apprentices' coursework is appropriate for the level of programme they are studying and has improved over time. Apprentices' written work demonstrates that they are becoming reflective practitioners. Apprentices' extended written work is structured well.

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

Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, including for the 'Prevent' duty. All staff receive appropriate annual training.

A designated safeguarding officer has links with local safeguarding bodies. Senior leaders receive a report on safeguarding at their monthly meetings. Leaders carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on applicants to ensure that they can work safely with apprentices.

Apprentices are trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, they know how to keep themselves, and the clients they care for, safe. Apprentices understand how to recognise the signs of radicalisation. They speak knowledgeably about the relevance of this when caring for vulnerable adults and adults in recovery from mental health conditions.

Apprentices have a clear understanding of varying forms of abuse and they know when and how to report concerns. Apprentices have a clear understanding of whistleblowing policy and the importance this procedure has within the care sector.

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