

# Urban Education & Training Group Limited

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	2539267
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Andrea Shepherd, Her Majesty's Inspector
<b>Inspection dates:</b>	14–15 January 2020
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	Walker Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 2HL

## 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.

Urban Education & Training Group Limited (Urban) is part of Gradvert Limited, a talent-development business based in Newcastle upon Tyne. Urban started to deliver apprenticeships on behalf of levy-paying employers in September 2018. Currently, there are 249 apprentices who work with employers located in many different regions of the country. Almost half of the apprentices are studying the team leader/supervisor standard at level 3 and just over a third are studying the operations/departmental manager standard at level 5. Thirty-one apprentices are studying the customer service specialist standard at level 3. Urban has recently started to deliver the sales executive level 4 and process leader level 4 standards with a single employer. Seventeen apprentices are on these programmes.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders work successfully with employers to plan apprenticeship programmes that meet business needs. They work together to design and schedule the curriculum. For example, apprentices with one employer benefit from a bespoke programme that prepares them well for the work that they will carry out during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Leaders and managers recruit apprentices with integrity. They test the suitability of apprentices very thoroughly. Apprentices complete a relevant skills assessment. Assessors discuss the results of this in detail with the apprentices and their line managers to ensure apprentices are suitable for the programme. Consequently, the vast majority of apprentices stay on their programme.

Leaders benefit from external opinion on the quality of the apprenticeship provision that they offer. They receive effective support and challenge from three external governors who have appropriate skills and expertise. Governors receive enough information to enable them to build their awareness of the strengths and

weaknesses of the provider. Leaders now have plans to refine their reporting systems as a result of governors' feedback.

Leaders take appropriate action to meet the requirements of apprenticeship provision. They take decisive action when necessary. For example, the initial plan for external delivery of functional skills English and mathematics was not successful. This was due to the contracted organisation not following requests from the provider. Leaders now support the in-house delivery of English and mathematics. As a result, the first cohort of apprentices are about to take their examinations.

Leaders do not have a clear enough picture of the progress that apprentices make. Although they receive many reports about apprentices' performance at each employer, the reports are insufficiently clear to provide them with useful information and focus too much on compliance. As a result, leaders cannot identify easily the reasons why apprentices might be making slow progress. However, assessors track progress outside of formal systems and support apprentices to catch up when they fall behind.

**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 develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours which they apply effectively in their job roles. For example, operations/departmental manager apprentices at level 5 make good use of their new knowledge of situational management to solve problems in their workplace.

Leaders recruit staff with relevant qualifications and expertise. Assessors and facilitators are highly qualified and have significant industrial experience. They use their expertise effectively to support apprentices to apply their new knowledge, skills and behaviour to their workplace.

Assessors plan their delivery effectively so that individual apprentices know more and can do more. They expertly use information about apprentices' progress to guide them on what apprentices should do next and what they need to do to improve. For example, assessors challenge team leader/supervisor apprentices at level 3 who already have some experience of change management to extend their knowledge and apply both Lewin's and Kotter's models to their workplace.

Facilitators use high-quality learning materials skilfully during their workshop sessions. They supplement these with a range of online resources, such as videos, presentations and projects. Apprentices use these resources effectively to support their learning.

Assessors have a clear awareness of the requirements of end-point assessment (EPA). They use this appropriately to support most apprentices to achieve. They

provide relevant initial information to apprentices at the start of their programme and additional resources towards the end. All 12 apprentices successfully completing their EPA so far have achieved a distinction grade. However, a small number of apprentices are not fully informed about their EPA.

Managers and assessors do not involve apprentices' line managers sufficiently when they plan off-the-job training. They plan sufficient off-the-job training. However, too often they do not relate this well enough to on-the-job activities that are taking place.

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

Leaders and managers take appropriate action to safeguard apprentices. They provide assessors and apprentices with a wide range of resources to raise awareness of safeguarding issues. As a result, apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe. They have a secure understanding of topics such as online safety and modern slavery, which they apply to their workplace.

Leaders implement relevant safeguarding policies and procedures. For example, they implement rigorous recruitment practices and provide appropriate referral channels. Leaders also have a suitable 'Prevent' duty action plan. Leaders and managers review policies and procedures regularly to ensure that the information in them is current. However, in a few instances, they do not check thoroughly enough that staff are complying with the procedures.

All staff, including the designated safeguarding lead, receive appropriate training. Leaders and managers have identified the need for more workshops to supplement the online training that staff complete, but these are still in the early stages of development.

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