

University of The West of England

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 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 231 apprentices studying on a level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship standard. Just over a third of these were based at the University Centre Somerset (UCS) under a subcontract with Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC). The first cohort of apprentices started in April 2018 and they are due to complete their end-point assessments during the summer of 2020.

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 worked well with regional employers, national agencies and BTC to provide an apprenticeship that develops apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours in healthcare. After the first cohort, leaders recognised they needed specialist apprenticeship expertise. They recruited an apprenticeship team to support academic colleagues at UWE. This is contributing positively towards the development of a successful apprenticeship programme.

Apprentices are taught by knowledgeable and highly qualified lecturers one day a week at UWE and UCS. UWE lecturers teach alongside their BTC colleagues at UCS to provide specialist knowledge to apprentices studying there. Managers ensure that lecturing staff remain up to date with their clinical knowledge and teaching skills. University and college staff inspire apprentices, who are motivated to do well.

The apprenticeship provides new career opportunities for many apprentices who had previously been healthcare assistants with little or no chance of promotion. Around a quarter of apprentices are new to healthcare. Almost all are new to this level of study and many have not been in formal learning for some time. Staff teach apprentices how to write academically, conduct research and use referencing correctly. Managers have adapted the content of the apprenticeship to meet the different starting points of apprentices and support them effectively.

The training programme ensures that apprentices experience a variety of different settings as part of the apprenticeship. These placements inform them of the differing roles and routes available. As a result, many apprentices are considering careers in other disciplines or moving on to a full degree apprenticeship when they complete their level 5.

The range of governance and quality assurance processes in place at all levels ensures that apprenticeship information is shared effectively within UWE. This provides appropriate scrutiny of the progress of apprentices and ensures most issues that arise are dealt with swiftly. This level of oversight does not extend to the subcontracted provision and consequently UWE staff have less knowledge about the progress and experiences of apprentices at UCS.

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 useful new knowledge, skills and behaviours that improve their clinical nursing practice. For example, an improved understanding of pharmacology allows apprentices with little previous experience to check that drug dosages are correct and to explain prescriptions to patients who are being discharged from hospital. Apprentices apply their new skills and knowledge well in their workplaces.

Apprentices enjoy their learning and appreciate the chance to share experiences with peers from different healthcare backgrounds. For example, they share information on various ways of communicating with patients in different settings.

Most apprentices receive good support from staff and employers to ensure they link knowledge in theory to a practical workplace situation. Staff ensure that employers and apprentices know what progress apprentices have made towards completing their apprenticeship, and when they are due to complete their end-point assessments. Most employers are involved in regular reviews of their apprentices' progress.

Staff use assessment effectively. They allow apprentices to reflect on their clinical practice and provide useful feedback on areas for improvement. They ensure that modules build on previous knowledge. For example, apprentices learn about anatomy and physiology before moving on to learn about pharmacology. Staff listen carefully to employers' and apprentices' feedback. Managers amend the course to ensure that apprentices and employers gain the most benefit from what is taught and when.

The most recent apprentices, who started in October 2019, are the first on the new Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registered standard. Staff are ensuring that apprentices who started their apprenticeships before this undertake additional work to become NMC accredited and are therefore not disadvantaged.

Staff support most apprentices' development of English well through academic writing. They focus on relevant mathematical topics, such as the use of statistical data in research. The few apprentices from 2018 cohorts who do not already have a level 2 qualification in English or mathematics have not been supported well enough and have not yet achieved these qualifications.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty in their workplaces. Apprentices are trained well by employers and UWE staff in safe working practices and are aware of their responsibilities regarding topics such as whistleblowing.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear commitment to safeguarding. They implement appropriate policies and procedures to keep apprentices safe. They identify potential risks of radicalisation and extremism to apprentices and ensure that these are minimised. The designated safeguarding lead is an experienced social worker and highly experienced in safeguarding matters. Separate UWE teams manage welfare concerns effectively. Staff need to strengthen the oversight of safeguarding practices for apprentices who study with any subcontractors.

Managers follow safe recruitment practices when they appoint new staff. Staff receive appropriate training and regular updates about safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

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