

# The Association of Health Professions in Ophthalmology

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 2539296

**Name of lead inspector:** Nigel Bragg, Ofsted Inspector

**Inspection dates:** 19–20 February 2020

**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.

The Association of Health Professions in Ophthalmology obtained a contract to provide levy-funded apprenticeships in November 2017 and began enrolling apprentices in October 2018. It currently has 10 standards-based apprentices studying healthcare science associate apprenticeships at level 4. All apprentices are adults. The provider works with one subcontractor which delivers functional skills English and mathematical qualifications on its behalf.

### Themes

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders ensure that apprentices receive their full apprenticeship entitlement. For example, they effectively plan and monitor apprentices' use of off-the-job study time in paid work time. Consequently, apprentices usually achieve their learning aims within their expected timescale.

Leaders have a clear vision for the delivery of apprenticeships in ophthalmology that addresses skills shortages within ophthalmic care. The apprenticeship programme builds well on the extensive expertise of leaders within the sector. They have planned and implemented a curriculum that meets the needs of apprentices and employers. For example, leaders have designed the curriculum to allow apprentices to apply for higher-level qualifications on completion of their programme. This matches the career aspirations of apprentices who aspire to become healthcare science associates.

Leaders work effectively with apprentices and employers to make sure that they have a relevant understanding of the end-point assessment (EPA). Apprentices usually have an adequate appreciation of the standard they are working at and of the EPA grading criteria.

Leaders have put in place suitable governance arrangements so that governors can hold them to account for the quality of learning. Governors scrutinise and challenge

leaders' decision making appropriately. However, too often governors' poor attendance at meetings impedes the effectiveness of this process.

Leaders have recently established appropriate English and mathematics support arrangements with a subcontractor. Apprentices receive suitable support to improve their skills levels. This training is not yet subject to relevant quality assurance that raises standards quickly.

Leaders have an adequate oversight of the programme's performance and development. Leaders rightly acknowledge that they have been slow to check that all apprentices get reliably high-quality training throughout their programme. It is too early to judge the impact of the recently introduced review and quality assurance processes on the consistency of training standards.

**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 gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours because of their training. Very well-qualified and experienced workplace mentors and assessors usually support apprentices to develop quickly. For example, apprentices become more confident in using technical language when communicating with senior clinical staff. A small minority of apprentices do not get enough appropriately timed help from their workplace mentors. This slows the rate at which these apprentices achieve.

Assessors establish apprentices' starting points appropriately. They use this information to identify and review skills development effectively. Assessors provide useful opportunities for apprentices to observe professional staff. However, assessors fail to check that all apprentices access these opportunities promptly enough, or link with other learning, to maximise their value.

Apprentices' written and practical work is of at least the expected standard. Assessors usually give apprentices helpful feedback that promotes their success. Workplace mentors and assessors evaluate apprentices' completed assignments effectively. They do not consistently check all apprentices' understanding of topics throughout the programme. As a result, a few apprentices must resubmit their work.

Assessors frequently review apprentices' progress to ensure that they achieve their agreed goals. When apprentices fail to achieve their targets, workplace mentors and assessors work closely to establish actions designed to improve performance. Apprentices understand well how to use these actions and the available support to help them catch up with their work. Apprentices rightly value the good-quality e-books and online learning materials that they can access at any time to enhance their learning.

Apprentices are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. They receive detailed guidance on available career paths before, and during, their apprenticeships. This allows them to make informed decisions about their futures. Consequently, apprentices apply for, and gain, appropriate promotions that contribute fully to the attainment of their long-term goals.

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

Leaders have implemented relevant policies and procedures to protect apprentices from harm. Processes are up to date and include measures to ensure that the selection of staff meets appropriate safe recruitment standards. Effective arrangements are in place to deal with any safeguarding concerns raised by apprentices.

The designated safeguarding officer is adequately qualified and experienced for the role. Assessors know how to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns. They have an appropriate awareness of the 'Prevent' duty. However, assessors have not had recent updating training to raise their effectiveness in promoting apprentices' welfare.

Apprentices feel safe. They know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern, including any related to patients in their care. Apprentices are appropriately aware of British values and how they apply to their work and personal lives. They have a suitable understanding of how to keep safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

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