

Willing and Able Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Jane Hughes, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 6 Lanark Square
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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.

Willing and Able Limited (WAA) is a training provider based in London Docklands. Established in 1999 as a healthcare recruitment agency, WAA began to offer apprenticeship programmes to levy-paying employers in July 2018. Currently, WAA has 36 apprentices on associate project management at level 4; 21 apprentices on facilities manager level 4; 22 apprentices on HR (human resources) support at level 3; and 18 apprentices on a selection of standards in management, accountancy and junior content producer at levels 3 and 5. All apprentices are over 18 years of age.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have not implemented all the apprenticeship programmes correctly. Too many apprentices and employers are unhappy with the service WAA provides. Employers are not involved sufficiently with the planning of their apprentices' individual programmes. Apprentices do not receive clear information about the English and mathematics qualifications.

Leaders have been extremely slow to implement effective internal quality-assurance arrangements. Leaders and managers do not check the quality of mentors' work and their teaching and assessment methods. Managers do not react quickly when mentors inform them that apprentices have left the programme. As a result, they have not withdrawn a small number of apprentices in a timely manner.

Leaders and staff do not use the management information systems effectively to support and track apprentices' progress. Apprentices are very frustrated with the problems related to the online system. For example, apprentices often must resubmit work even though they have already submitted it.

Leaders recognise that they need to improve the programme. They have recently recruited a more experienced team. The mentors who teach apprentices have appropriate experience in the subjects they teach. However, leaders do not

performance manage mentors closely enough or support them sufficiently to develop and share best practice.

Leaders and managers do not act quickly to address the actions set at management meetings. They have engaged an external partner to add scrutiny and challenge to what they do. However, they have not implemented fully the sensible actions set by the partner.

Leaders and managers enrol most apprentices onto programmes that match their jobs and their career aspirations. Leaders have identified a range of suitable programmes that meet the needs of the employers with whom they work. Staff work with employers to ensure that most apprentices receive sufficient off-the-job training. However, a small number of apprentices do not receive their entitlement.

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

Staff do not assess enough of what apprentices already know or can do at the start of their programmes. Mentors do not adapt the content and duration of the training to suit apprentices' individual needs. This applies particularly where apprentices hold higher-level qualifications relevant to their apprenticeship programmes, or have extensive knowledge and experience.

Too many apprentices do not gain substantial new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours. Those experienced employees on associate project-management and facilities-manager higher-level apprenticeships joined the programme to gain a professional qualification. These apprentices develop their theoretical knowledge. For example, they understand the legal and regulatory requirements for this industry. However, they are unfamiliar with the wider competencies required by the standard.

Managers and mentors do not prepare apprentices sufficiently for their end-point assessment (EPA). They have not explained the requirements fully and apprentices are unaware of the grading and assessment criteria. Some apprentices on the HR support standard who are approaching their EPA have discovered that the assignments they have completed are not required.

Arrangements to support apprentices who need to achieve English and mathematics qualifications are not implemented fully. Too many apprentices do not know when they will take their examinations and feel anxious about this uncertainty. However, the new English and mathematics tutor has started to make arrangements for apprentices and this is having a positive impact. A few apprentices have now passed their examinations.

Apprentices do not receive enough information about their progress or feedback on their work. Staff do not complete the progress reviews frequently. They do not

discuss with apprentices how they have developed specific behaviours they need for their apprenticeships. As a result, many apprentices do not know how much progress they have made, and too many make slow progress.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard adult apprentices. Leaders ensure that staff working with apprentices are safe to do so. They complete relevant training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

The designated safeguarding lead has appropriate qualifications and experience in safeguarding vulnerable adults. Leaders have recruited staff specifically to support apprentices' well-being. Apprentices are not sufficiently aware of this or do not understand how this support will help them in the future.

Staff ensure that apprentices receive effective safeguarding training during induction and at progress reviews. Apprentices feel safe at work and in learning. Most know who to contact should they have any concerns. However, apprentices' knowledge and understanding of the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation are underdeveloped.

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