

Inspection of Partnership Training Limited

Inspection dates: 18–21 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Partnership Training Limited (Partnership Training) was formed in 2012. It is based in Wilmslow, Cheshire. Partnership Training specialises in apprenticeships in social care and childcare. It became registered to offer levy-funded apprenticeships in May 2017. The first group of levy-funded apprentices started training in August 2017. Prior to this, Partnership Training held subcontracts from four providers for its apprenticeship provision.

Currently there are 483 apprentices, of whom 160 are completing apprenticeship frameworks and 323 are on standards-based apprenticeships. Partnership Training offers apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 5; 179 are training at level 2, 242 are training at level 3 and the remainder at level 5. The majority are enrolled on adult care worker and health and social care programmes.

The company offers apprentices throughout England. At the time of the inspection, around two thirds of apprentices were in the north-west and the remainder around the West Midlands, the south and the south-east.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Most apprentices are highly motivated because they recognise the value of their training. However, they are often distracted from their studies by the demands of working in a busy care environment. This means that they take too long to achieve their apprenticeship.

Apprentices say that they enjoy their learning and that they feel supported by their trainer/assessor, who guides them through their programmes. Apprentices told inspectors that they have improved their knowledge and gained new skills which have helped them to become more competent in their job roles.

Apprentices quickly develop their confidence and become more independent in the workplace. They become more resilient in their job roles. This, coupled with their secure knowledge and skills, makes them valued employees.

That said, leaders and managers do not coordinate apprentices' off-the-job training carefully enough with employers. Consequently, there is a disconnect between apprentices' off-the-job training and what is expected of them in the workplace. A few apprentices feel that training activities are insufficiently challenging.

Apprentices feel safe in the workplace. They have a good understanding of safe working practices, particularly when caring for their service users. Apprentices demonstrate proficiency at checking medical profiles and administering medication at the correct dosage.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have a clear and aspirational vision to provide high-quality programmes for apprentices, but this is not yet fully implemented or realised. Leaders recognise the need to develop further their curriculum strategy. Leaders, with employers, have reviewed the content of the curriculum and the order in which it is taught. However, this new curriculum was only implemented recently.

Although leaders and managers have taken effective steps to improve the curriculum for apprentices, there is still much work to do. This is because leaders and managers do not monitor effectively the quality of education that apprentices receive. They are unable to identify sufficiently the areas of weakness. They have been too slow to implement the actions required to bring about swift improvement. Governors do not always challenge leaders well enough to improve the quality of apprenticeship provision.

Despite this, leaders and managers are highly committed to an apprentice-centred approach. They support apprentices to gain new knowledge and skills, to build their confidence and to achieve their personal and career goals. Apprentices say that they are pleased with the incremental gains that they make in their knowledge and skills.

Leaders and managers have recently introduced a 'learning accolade' scheme which recognises and rewards apprentices' achievements and learning goals.

Trainer/assessors are appropriately qualified and are highly experienced within the care sector. Focused staff development helps them to develop their training and assessment skills. For example, all trainer/assessors take education and training awards at level 3 and level 5. They regularly update their assessor qualifications and occupational skills.

In the workplace, most apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They develop their communication skills effectively because of the coaching that they receive from both their trainer/assessors and their employers. For example, apprentices told inspectors about the specific communication strategies that they use with services users who have autism spectrum disorder. Apprentices use the verbal active listening pattern to interact with service users, employing both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

Trainer/assessors use memorable examples and case studies to help apprentices remember more, deepen their understanding and apply their learning in the workplace. For example, learning about the signs and symptoms of diabetes helps apprentices to signpost service users who are displaying these indicators to relevant healthcare professionals.

Most apprentices value the one-to-one support, training and feedback from trainer/assessors that helps them to improve their work and to learn new knowledge and skills. However, this is not yet consistent for all apprentices, which means that not all apprentices make the progress that they could. As a result, too many apprentices do not complete their programmes within the expected time frame.

Leaders and managers do not have high enough expectations of all apprentices. Apprentices who fail to meet assignment deadlines do not receive any sanctions or support to help them meet future deadlines. These apprentices do not make swift enough progress through their programmes.

A few trainer/assessors do not check their apprentices' learning before moving on to the next tasks or topic. As a result, these apprentices have gaps in their knowledge, which results in them making slower progress than their peers.

Trainer/assessors have changed their approach to preparing for end-point assessment (EPA). They now prepare apprentices fully for their EPA. For example, they have practice professional discussions with their apprentices. Many apprentices who have recently taken their EPA have achieved merit grades.

Apprentices benefit from appropriate careers advice and guidance about the care sector. A clear progression route from level 2 to level 5 is in place. Apprentices progress to higher-level qualifications and/or gain additional responsibility or promotion in the workplace.

Apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves and their service users safe. For example, apprentices who are lone workers carry out appropriate risk assessments to keep themselves and their service users safe.

Apprentices demonstrate a professional work ethic and apply themselves confidently in their job roles. Apprentices are polite, friendly and respectful to peers, managers and their service users.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe in the workplace and know to whom they should report any issues or concerns about themselves or their service users.

Safeguarding concerns are dealt with swiftly and efficiently by the skilled and experienced designated safeguarding officer. Records of safeguarding concerns are thorough and detailed. The governor responsible for safeguarding receives regular reports about the actions taken in relation to safeguarding concerns.

Staff receive appropriate and frequent training and updates in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They are aware of the localised risks, such as knife crime and county lines criminal activity.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the quality of education and training that apprentices receive. Ensure that apprentices benefit from a well-defined curriculum that outlines clearly the knowledge, skills and behaviours that should be taught and in which order.
- Leaders, managers and governors must put into place systems to establish the quality of education that apprentices receive. This is so that leaders, managers and governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of the provision so that they can bring about swift improvements.
- Ensure that governors challenge leaders rigorously to improve the quality of the apprenticeship provision.
- Improve the planning and coordination of apprentices' off-the-job training, with employers, so that on-the-job training and off-the-job training complement one another and link clearly to the curriculum.
- Ensure that the education and training and the support that apprentices receive are of a consistently high standard for all apprentices so that they can complete their programmes in the planned timescales.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278611
Address	Pentland House Village Way Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 2GH
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Website	www.partnershiptrainingltd.co.uk
Managing Directors	Sharon Saund Christine Cook
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by Sharon Saund as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising apprentices' work, seeking the views of apprentices, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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