

Peak Accountancy Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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.

Peak Accountancy Training Limited received a contract to offer directly delivered apprenticeships in September 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit there were 18 adult apprentices. Of these, eight are studying level 3 assistant accounting and 10 apprentices are on level 4 professional accounting and taxation technician. All apprentices are on standards-based programmes. Peak Accountancy Training Limited is planning to recruit a small cohort of apprentices to a standards-based level 2 accounts and finance assistant programme later this month.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Directors have an ambitious and clear rationale for the curriculum they offer. They are qualified accountants who are passionate about their profession. Directors work collaboratively with employers to plan each apprentice's programme carefully and ensure that the requirements of the apprenticeship programme are fully met. Directors develop innovative, bespoke, high-quality digital learning resources to support apprentices and their employers.

Directors establish excellent relationships with their employers. Apprentices and employers benefit from the high-level of commitment and help they receive from training staff. As a result, apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They are more effective in the workplace and can do their job with increased confidence. Apprentices gain promotion to positions such as finance manager as a result of the training they receive on their apprenticeship programme.

Directors demonstrate high levels of care for their staff's well-being. They invest greatly in beneficial professional staff development and training. They regularly review staff skills and technical knowledge to ensure that professional currency is

maintained. Apprentices benefit from the training delivered by well-qualified staff and their up-to-date expertise.

Directors and tutors plan for end-point assessment effectively and share this with apprentices and employers. This helps apprentices understand the assessment requirements of professional discussion from the outset and prepares them well for their final assessment.

Directors have a very good oversight of individual apprentice's progress. They ensure that quality assurance systems are used effectively to monitor apprentices' progress. Intervention for apprentices who fall behind or need further support is swift and effective.

Directors have recently introduced an advisory board to support and challenge the leadership team. They have recruited two highly experienced accounting and education professionals to provide external expertise and challenge. It is too soon to judge the impact of the board. Directors have not clearly identified strengths and weaknesses or fully implemented actions to improve the apprenticeship programme further.

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

Directors and tutors use the results of initial assessment to plan training that helps apprentices build on what they already know and can do. Consequently, apprentices make good progress from their starting points building on their basic book-keeping skills and knowledge of accounting principles. Most apprentices are successful in their examinations.

Directors and tutors use their expertise effectively to support apprentices. Apprentices benefit from clear explanations of accounting principles in classroom sessions. For example, tutors carefully explain the process of double entry book-keeping through structured sequencing of learning to build knowledge incrementally. As a result, apprentices grow steadily in confidence and enjoy value the training they receive that helps them learn more.

Apprentices develop new skills and professional behaviours as a result of their learning which they apply well in the workplace, for example the importance of keeping confidential data safe, especially when working with client information.

Apprentices are well supported outside of classroom sessions through regular reviews and contact from work-based advisers. High-quality and interactive digital resources, including webinars, provide the opportunity for apprentices to study independently and support each other.

Apprentices' work is of a high and professional standard; they develop a good understanding of accounting and ethical principles. They present their work appropriately for clients and are meticulous in work practices. For example, they review service-level agreements providing a more cost-efficient service. Consequently, employers benefit from the positive contribution that apprentices make to their businesses.

Employers are frequently apprised of apprentices' progress through a thorough review process. As a result, they support apprentices with recording off-the-job training and plan for on-the-job training opportunities.

Apprentices develop good mathematics skills in the workplace through their everyday work. For example, they use their mathematical skills accurately in payroll calculations. However, tutors do not plan sufficiently for the development of apprentices' English skills.

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

Directors and managers have put in place a designated safeguarding lead (DSO) and deputy who are appropriately trained. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to safeguard apprentices. Directors have created basic policies to safeguard apprentices which are regularly updated.

Directors ensure that the workforce is appropriately checked and trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Tutors and work-based advisers reinforce apprentices' understanding of safeguarding during progress reviews. This ensures that apprentices develop at least a basic understanding of safeguarding themselves and others. The safeguarding team provide timely communication to apprentices in response to any safeguarding concerns raised. Apprentices feel safe and know who to go to if they need help on site and in the workplace.

The safeguarding team have established links with a few regional safeguarding partners to raise apprentices' awareness of local safeguarding priorities.

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