

University of Plymouth

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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 131 apprentices studying on a level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship standard. The first cohort of apprentices started in September 2018 and they are due to complete their end-point assessments during the summer of 2020. All of the apprentices are based in the south-west of England.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have worked collaboratively with employers, such as the directors of nursing within the healthcare trusts, to develop a clear strategy for the apprenticeship programme for nursing associates. This ensures that the programme meets the needs of these employers, adheres to the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council and provides new career opportunities for many apprentices who had previously been healthcare assistants and seeking opportunities for promotion.

Leaders and managers have designed the apprenticeship programme with sufficient time for worthwhile off-the-job training. This includes one day each week for an academic programme at the university that provides the knowledge requirements of a foundation degree. In addition, apprentices' experience and knowledge are enhanced through shadowing experienced nursing practitioners on work placements and rotations between different departments.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices are well taught by very well-qualified and highly experienced health care professionals. Managers ensure that lecturing staff remain up to date with their clinical knowledge and teaching skills.

A range of governance and quality assurance processes ensure that leaders and managers are clear about the strengths and areas for improvement within the apprenticeship provision. However, managers have been slow to ensure that

university staff monitor the apprentices' progress at work frequently enough. As a result, apprentices made slow progress early in their apprenticeship.

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 highly effective nursing skills, knowledge and behaviours in a wide range of settings, such as child health, district nursing and end-of-life care. They apply their new skills and knowledge well in the workplace and, as a result, they are quickly given additional responsibilities on their wards. For example, apprentices are formulating patient care reports, identifying pain indicators and taking responsibility for bays on wards.

Apprentices enjoy their learning and are well supported by their tutors. They are motivated and highly ambitious and see the apprenticeship as a valuable opportunity for career progression and, in many cases, they aspire to become registered nurses.

The university staff work very closely with the clinical settings to plan a well-sequenced academic curriculum that supports the apprentices' practical skill development on the wards.

Lecturers monitor the academic progress of apprentices carefully and provide good feedback that supports academic improvements. They use questioning skilfully so that apprentices understand the relevance of the theories they learn and can apply these in the workplace. Lecturers offer thorough feedback to apprentices on their written assignments, which helps them to improve their knowledge and writing skills. As a result, almost all of the year one apprentices passed their first year and progressed onto their second year.

University staff, particularly in the early part of the implementation of the programme, did not review apprentices' progress in the work place frequently enough or in sufficient detail. As a result, they did not have a clear enough understanding of apprentices' overall progress on the apprenticeship programme. Recently, the review of apprentices' progress has improved. However, apprentices, including those in the second year, still do not have a sufficient understanding of the requirements of their final assessment.

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

Apprentices are safe and feel safe. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their patients safe and know who to report any concerns to.

Apprentices are trained well by employers and university staff in safe working practices, including infection control.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear commitment to safeguarding and implement appropriate policies and procedures to keep apprentices safe. They identify potential risks to apprentices of radicalisation and extremism and apply policies and procedures to mitigate these risks. However, apprentices receive insufficient training on how to keep safe online and their understanding of the dangers of radicalisation is not reinforced sufficiently.

Managers ensure staff receive appropriate training and regular updates regarding safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead is highly experienced in safeguarding matters and is trained to an appropriate level. When they appoint new staff, managers carry out checks to ensure that they are safe to work with apprentices.

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