

Aurelia Training Limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number: 58250

Name of lead inspector: Richard Deane, HMI

Visit date(s): 28 to 29 October 2020

Type of provider: Independent Training Provider

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Interim visit

Context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We intend to return to routine inspection in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

Information about the provider

Aurelia Training Limited is an independent learning provider founded in 2005. It provides apprenticeship training and adult learning predominantly in the West Midlands region. At the time of the visit, 277 apprentices studied apprenticeships from level 2 to 5 in areas including, business administration, recruitment, teaching assistant, health and social care, team leading, management, and community sport and health. Most apprentices were on standards-based apprenticeships. There were nine adult learners on early years and education and teaching courses.

What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?

Leaders and managers reported that they acted quickly to adapt their curriculum before COVID-19 restrictions came into force because many of their employers in care settings had closed to external visitors. They used technology to continue teaching their learners and apprentices.

They trained staff in the use of digital tools to keep in touch with learners. Staff became more confident in using these tools to discuss, share and assess work on a variety of devices. Leaders asked staff to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends, to assess apprentices' current progress and give them specific training and targets based on their individual needs.

Many apprentices in care and educational settings had to change their working patterns and learn new knowledge and skills. Leaders recognised that their staff would need to adapt curriculum content to meet the changing needs of employers. They ensured that teachers included information such as the correct use of personal and protective equipment and activities to maintain residents' social interaction. This

helped apprentices take on new responsibilities at work, such as in infection control and as social activities champions, to support their clients' well-being.

Leaders worked with employers and awarding organisations to enable apprentices to continue with their qualifications. Apprentices conducted professional discussions and assessments in gazebos at the employers' premises to complete their examinations and reduce the impact on the care of their clients.

Leaders say that some apprentices experience barriers to learning, including access to electronic devices and the internet. Also, a few apprentices did not want to use video calls to record themselves. Leaders now help apprentices develop their confidence to use technology to complete their assessments. As a result of the added stress of COVID-19 restrictions, a few apprentices did not feel able to complete their end point assessment (EPA).

Leaders told inspectors they work closely with their governor and the wider sector to help them provide an appropriate curriculum for apprentices and learners.

What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?

Leaders have introduced a new online tracking system to record and monitor apprentices' progress. Teachers ensure that they record information about apprentices' starting points, completion of assessments and employment targets. Leaders say that all apprentices receive during induction the information and guidance needed for them to know more about their future career intentions.

Leaders have conducted session observations to monitor how well teachers are able to teach using online resources. They use this information to plan training for teachers to develop these skills further.

Teachers who have the requisite knowledge gave training on how best to use online learning platforms. As a result, those teachers who previously did not have the requisite knowledge now say that they have been better prepared to use functions such as screen and file sharing on various online learning platforms, providing apprentices with a greater variety of learning resources and activities.

Teachers have adopted a blended approach to teaching, including online virtual learning and some small-group and one-to-one face-to-face teaching. In care, teachers use more face-to-face methods to meet these apprentices' preferences.

Teachers adapt their curriculum to include new knowledge about COVID-19 in their teaching. In care, teachers focus on content relating to biosecurity to help apprentices know how to work safely and be clear about infection control in order to reduce the spread of the virus.

Teachers say that most apprentices and learners continue with their studies because teachers have adapted communication and teaching methods that fit with apprentices' work and home life. Consequently, apprentices' attendance has broadly returned to pre-COVID-19 restriction levels.

Teachers have identified a number of barriers to teaching and assessment. For example, delays to apprentices' EPA. Teachers help apprentices with past papers and mock tests to help them remember and reflect on their knowledge and skills to remain prepared for their final assessments.

How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?

Apprentices say they receive specific information about safeguarding, including online safety. In care and school settings, they use COVID-19 safety guidelines to ensure the safety of themselves and their service users.

Leaders continue to monitor safeguarding as normal but now use remote and online communication methods to ensure social distancing. Staff say that the safeguarding process is clear and completed through a secure referral form.

Senior leaders responsible for safeguarding continue to update their safeguarding training. They receive safeguarding updates, including on e-safety, which they then use to update staff. The provider is in the process of training a member of staff to deputise for the designated safeguarding lead.

During monthly 'operations' meetings, staff discuss a range of topics which includes changes to safeguarding practice and the well-being of staff, learners and apprentices.

Learners report they know who and where to go to report any concerns in relation to their safety.

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