

Ensis Solutions Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1276475
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ensis Solutions Limited was last inspected in July 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, when the provider was not open to all learners and there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?

Insufficient progress

What we have found at the provision is not as a result of the pandemic but a failure by senior leaders to put in place many of the fundamentals of apprenticeship training. The provider continued to recruit new apprentices even though they knew they were unable to meet all of the requirements of an apprenticeship.

Senior leaders and managers have been too slow to rectify the areas identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection. Most of the actions put into place have only been put in place recently. None of the areas for improvement identified have been fully resolved.

Governors, senior leaders and managers do not have an accurate oversight of the quality of education or of the progress that apprentices make. Leaders do not set clear and measurable targets to improve. Governors are unable to assess accurately the progress that leaders make to improve the quality of education. The reports they receive do not provide a clear picture of performance.

While the number of apprentices who leave their programme before completing has decreased since the previous inspection, there are a significant number of apprentices who are either on a break in learning or who have low attendance. The progress of most apprentices is too slow. Senior leaders do not take swift enough action to ensure apprentices attend, despite being informed by managers and tutors of their concerns.

Employers do not receive sufficient information or guidance from senior leaders about the requirements of an apprenticeship and the level of commitment needed by the employer. As a result, employers are unaware of the need to provide sufficient on- and off-the-job training to apprentices.

Senior leaders have been slow to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff. Several tutors have left the business which has disrupted apprentices' learning, particularly those on health and social care programmes. Leaders have recruited a new curriculum lead in this subject who is implementing new curriculum plans and learning resources. These changes have not yet had a positive impact on apprentices' experiences.

Senior leaders have not ensured that tutors receive sufficient training to help them fully understand the requirements of an apprenticeship and the end-point assessment process. Consequently, apprentices do not receive an ambitious enough curriculum, nor are they prepared well enough to complete their end-point assessment.

Senior leaders have not ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of most of their apprentices. They have provided tutors with a fixed scheme of work to follow for all health and social care apprentices. As a result, learning is rarely individualised, and most apprentices follow the same order of topics regardless of their job role or prior experience. Most apprentices are set tasks to complete research or are set a unit to complete on their own with very little teaching from their tutor.

Apprentices' on- and off-the-job training is poorly planned, and learning activities are not linked to apprentices' work tasks and job roles. Employers are not routinely involved in the choice of topics informing their apprentices' curriculum. Very few employers are involved in their apprentices' review of progress with their tutor. Consequently, apprentices are unable to put the knowledge and skills they are learning during their apprenticeship into practice in the workplace.

Many apprentices do not develop substantial new knowledge and skills. A few apprentices develop a limited number of new skills relevant to their job role. For

example, apprentices working with residents with dementia learn about different methods of communication, such as the importance of eye contact.

In a few instances, tutors work with apprentices to identify which topics will best suit their needs. For example, apprentices hoping to gain promotion or more senior positions in a care home are able to choose topics such as legislation which will assist them to progress in their career.

All learning is currently being taught through one-to-one online sessions due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place in care settings. Tutors have not had training on how to teach online. Tutors have had training on the use of online learning platforms and how to use these safely. Tutors have made sure that all apprentices have completed additional training in staying safe online. Apprentices are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of potential health and safety hazards they may come across in care settings.

Tutors contact all apprentices once every two to four weeks to check on their progress and well-being. Tutors give clear guidance to apprentices on what support is available for them, for example, additional support sessions and how to contact their tutor via email at any time. Apprentices receive helpful feedback which enables them to improve their work.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- implement a robust quality assurance process which accurately measures the quality of education to ensure apprentices receive high-quality training and progress through their programme
- rapidly ensure that employers participate in the development of their apprentices' curriculum, including the coordination of on- and off-the-job training and are involved in the review of their apprentices' progress
- provide training for tutors to develop their teaching skills so that they are able to effectively deliver training linked to the development of substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours for apprentices.

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