

KnowledgeBrief Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1278615
Name of lead inspector:	Joanna Walters, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	3–4 March 2021
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	85 Great Portland Street London W1W 7LT

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

KnowledgeBrief Limited received a new provider monitoring visit in July 2018. At that time, inspectors made progress judgements under three themes.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education and training 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

Leaders and managers have not sufficiently tackled the weaknesses identified at the previous new provider monitoring visit. For example, leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight to ensure that all apprentices receive their statutory entitlement to training during normal work hours. As a result, too many apprentices complete the training in their own time. A few apprentices do not engage well with their programme because they struggle to complete their apprenticeship work alongside their commitments at work.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices are prepared well enough for their final assessments. Professional learning advisors (PLAs) are too slow to provide apprentices with opportunities such as mock assessments before their final assessments. Although PLAs provide apprentices with information about the structure of questions and some example questions in the days before their external assessments, this is insufficient to help apprentices to achieve the very best outcomes. This results in not enough apprentices being fully prepared for their final assessments.

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the design of each apprenticeship curriculum which they offer. Each programme contains appropriate content which enables apprentices to develop new knowledge that builds in complexity over the duration of the programme. For example, level 5 operations department manager apprentices learn about the function of a business before moving on to the theory of how to deliver an operational plan. However, leaders and managers do not ensure that the curriculum is implemented well enough, with the involvement of apprentices' employers, so that apprentices can develop the skills and behaviours they need to excel at work.

PLAs do not involve apprentices' line managers in reviews and therefore do not capture evidence of the skills and behaviours which apprentices develop in the workplace. They are too reliant on apprentices' self-reflection to assess their progress. Line managers are unable adequately to plan tasks at work that support apprentices' development. There is no connection between what apprentices learn in lessons and at work. As a result, apprentices do not adequately know what they need to do to improve their performance at work.

PLAs have good subject knowledge and plan appropriate activities in off-the-job training sessions for apprentices that enable them to develop new knowledge. PLAs make good use of small group work opportunities in sessions, which allow for apprentices to work together and share information and experiences. For example, level 3 customer service apprentices learn new strategies to try at work when problem-solving, such as root cause analysis, so they can identify appropriate solutions.

Most PLAs provide apprentices with helpful feedback on their assignment submissions. A few PLAs include effective questions as part of their feedback in order to prompt apprentices to think more deeply about their work. PLAs have a strong focus to support apprentices to gain the knowledge they need for their qualifications. The majority of apprentices value the support which staff provide to them.

Apprentices receive safeguarding information at the start of their programme, but they do not receive any further training throughout their programme. The majority of apprentices cannot recall being taught about safeguarding, radicalisation or extremism and how it relates to them in the workplace. Apprentices spoken to do know which staff to go to if they need help.

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

- ensure that apprentices are well prepared for end-point assessments
- ensure that apprentices' off-the-job training is linked to their job roles so that PLAs and line managers can plan meaningful activities that enable apprentices to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace
- ensure that apprentices understand why the dangers of radicalisation and extremism are relevant to them and their work colleagues.

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