

Safety Advisory Consultants Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2539240

Name of lead inspector: Jacquie Brown, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 23–24 March 2021

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.

Safety Advisory Consultants Limited is an independent learning provider based in East Boldon, South Tyneside. It works with two employers and provides training to apprentices in the north east. The provider first received funding to deliver apprenticeships in September 2018, and it currently has 33 apprentices enrolled on frameworks in construction, planning and the built environment. All apprentices are over 19 years of age.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders do not ensure that their programmes meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Too many apprentices already have the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected in their job roles, and leaders do not take account of apprentices' prior learning and experience. Several site supervisors have been in management roles for a number of years and already have substantial experience of supervising staff. They do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours on the apprenticeship.

Too many apprentices do not receive sufficient off-the-job training. Assessors have not provided adequate training opportunities to apprentices during the pandemic, and employers have struggled to release apprentices from work during busy times. As a result, apprentices have not been able to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need in the workplace.

Leaders do not provide sufficient resources to deliver training to apprentices. They do not ensure that appropriate cover arrangements are in place for staff who are self-isolating; consequently, many apprentices have not been visited for a significant

period. This has a negative impact on the progress that apprentices make in developing skills and knowledge that they need to help them improve in their job roles.

Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make. Leaders do not receive enough information from assessors on how well apprentices are developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours. This means that they are unable to ensure that assessors intervene quickly enough to support apprentices who fall behind.

Leaders do not have effective arrangements in place to evaluate the quality of the training that is being delivered to apprentices. Although they complete some audits and observations of training, these are not completed frequently enough. As a result, leaders are unable to identify areas that they need to improve.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? **Insufficient progress**

Assessors do not plan the curriculum in a logical order to enable apprentices to gain secure knowledge, skills and behaviours. They do not identify or plan what apprentices need to learn first to ensure that apprentices master basic knowledge and skills before moving onto more complex topics.

Assessors do not adequately assess the starting points of apprentices in terms of their existing work-related knowledge and skills or their English and mathematics skills. Although apprentices complete assessments at the start of the programme, assessors do not use this information to plan programmes that meet apprentices' individual needs or to measure the progress of apprentices over time. Too many apprentices who are enrolled on functional skills courses in English and mathematics do not know what they still need to do to achieve qualifications in these subjects.

Assessors do not use effective assessment activities to check the understanding of apprentices or to plan for future learning. Too often, assessors do not mark the work submitted to check if apprentices have developed secure knowledge and do not provide feedback to apprentices. Most apprentices do not know what progress they have made or what they need to do to improve.

Apprentices do not benefit from useful careers advice and guidance to enable them to make informed decisions about their next steps. Assessors occasionally talk to apprentices about career aspirations, but do not help them to plan their next steps.

Leaders ensure that assessors have relevant vocational experience and appropriate teaching and assessor qualifications to be able to provide effective support to apprentices. However, apprentices do not receive sufficient training to benefit from this expertise.

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

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices have a secure understanding of safeguarding and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices are not aware of local issues and how they might impact on the workplace and the community in which they live.

Assessors have completed useful training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. However, they do not pass on this information to apprentices so that apprentices can improve their knowledge of these topics.

Leaders have appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty policies in place, which provide a clear reporting process. The designated safeguarding lead has appropriate training and experience. However, apprentices are not aware of the reporting process or to whom they should report concerns.

Leaders have not implemented an appropriate 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan. While they have these in place, they have not taken appropriate action to mitigate the risks that they identify.

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