

# Venture Forward Limited

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Joanna Walters Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	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.

Venture Forward Limited (Venture Forward) is a national independent learning provider that specialises in training and developing animal technicians in the biotechnology, academic and pharmaceutical industries.

Venture Forwards offers standards-based apprenticeships in level 2 animal care and welfare assistant and level 3 animal technologist. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 40 apprentices.

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?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

The team at Venture Forward, made up of the senior leader and programme leaders, works effectively with employers to design a well-structured apprenticeship programme that meets the needs of the industry. Apprentices are all new to being animal technicians in the biotechnology, academic and pharmaceutical industries. The content of the curriculum suitably builds in complexity over time for both programmes which enables apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be successful in their roles.

The team ensures that apprentices benefit from time away from work to attend lessons and complete their studies. Programme leaders frequently liaise with line managers to ensure training activities align well with apprentices' job roles and workplace requirements and training.

Programme leaders provide apprentices with suitable information at the start of the training about the requirements and expectations of the apprenticeship programme.

They provide apprentices with information about potential progression opportunities. Apprentices find this helpful as it informs them about what they will learn.

For a few apprentices, programme leaders have been too slow to prepare them for their final assessments. Preparation for these assessments starts too late towards the end of the programme. As a result, a few apprentices are unclear on what the final assessment involves.

The team did not teach apprentices an English and mathematics curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team provides apprentices with access to English and mathematics resources, so they can maintain their skills while the team resolves issues around apprentices not able to undertake examinations due to COVID-19 restrictions. A few apprentices have not yet had the opportunity to sit English and mathematics examinations within the planned time. As a result, these apprentices are not able to complete 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**

Programme leaders use their knowledgeable and relevant vocational experience to structure carefully the apprenticeship programmes. They teach units on bio security and disease control simultaneously, so that apprentices can minimise the risk of animal disease when in the workplace. As a result, apprentices are able to link different topics well and build deeper knowledge. Apprentices progress well and become skilled and knowledgeable animal technicians.

The team designs the programmes so that apprentices have the opportunity to work in different departments within the laboratory. This enables apprentices to develop knowledge and skills in areas such as breeding and transgenics. Apprentices value the exposure to different areas which helps them to build their professional portfolio and decide on career pathways. Apprentices who work in a single-species laboratory have opportunities to complete virtual tours of multi-species laboratories so they can learn about the specific research projects that take place such as the impact of genes on diseases.

Programme leaders monitor the progress of most apprentices closely through frequent one-to-one meetings and share the information with line managers. This enables tutors and line managers to work together to plan meaningful activities for apprentices. Apprentices' line managers find the progress information they receive helpful and informative. On a few occasions, programme leaders do not monitor the progress that apprentices make sufficiently well enough. In these instances, apprentices are not clear on what they do well at and what they need to do to improve.

Programme leaders provide highly detailed feedback to apprentices on marked assignments. Apprentices value the feedback as it enables them to improve their work to a higher standard. For example, apprentices receive helpful feedback on how to improve a written debate in an ethics assignment on the pros and cons of scientific testing on animals.

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

The team has appropriate processes in place to safeguard apprentices. Apprentices receive appropriate safety advice from their programme leader and from their employer. Topics include the safe handling of animals and laboratory safety. As a result, apprentices feel safe at work and have sound knowledge of how to be safe at work.

Programme leaders ensure that apprentices learn how to protect themselves online. They teach apprentices to use correct terminology in their assignments and when searching for information on the internet, for example, in relation to determining the gender of animals. They also make sure that apprentices are alert to the potential search outcomes that may be triggered by specific words.

The team does not adequately plan with employers how apprentices will develop safeguarding knowledge, such as the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, apprentices cannot recall what training they receive and how it applies to them within the context of their work.

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