

# The Chief Constable of Sussex

Monitoring visit report

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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.

The Chief Constable of Sussex (Sussex Police) began training apprentices in March 2019. There are currently 98 apprentices, all aged over 19, studying on the level 4 police community support officer (PCSO) standard. All apprentices are employed by Sussex Police as PCSOs at police stations across the county. Sussex Police has commissioned an external provider to teach functional skills in English and mathematics to the relatively small number of apprentices who need to achieve these qualifications. Sussex Police also has around 143 learners on a level 6 Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship; this provision was not in scope for this monitoring visit.

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**

Leaders and managers take an active role in national police educational and training developments. This has influenced their strategic decision to offer the level 4 police and community support officer (PCSO) apprenticeship to meet the needs of their workforce and their county.

Leaders and managers have selected and developed an effective curriculum which prepares apprentices for the role of PCSO. Most apprentices achieve their apprenticeship, with a high proportion gaining distinction grades.

All staff involved in training apprentices are passionate about their role in developing apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Training staff are well qualified and benefit from appropriate and frequent training. Leaders, managers and trainers work well with apprentices' managers to adapt the off-the-job training to meet the needs

of the role. For example, they have added additional activities, such as statement writing and evidence gathering.

Leaders have worked to ensure that their apprenticeships are of a high quality and meet the requirements of successful apprenticeships. This includes an initial block of well-planned, off-the-job training which ensures that apprentices develop their confidence, knowledge and skills rapidly. The subsequent periods of on-the-job training are also very helpful, and apprentices continue to learn new skills. However, the on- and off-the job training are not fully aligned so that all apprentices have the opportunity to put their initial learning into practice in a timely way.

Leaders have implemented a detailed monitoring structure so that they review all apprentices and their progress monthly. However, leaders' and managers' overall assessment of the quality of training is not yet a fully effective process. They have identified most of the areas for improvement, but they have not taken rapid action to improve these. For example, they have identified the need to improve careers advice and guidance, but actions to improve these are not yet in place.

**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**

Apprentices gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours rapidly, which prepare them well for the role of PCSO. Training staff and apprentices' managers plan high-quality on- and off-the-job training which they teach well. This enables apprentices to become competent and confident in their jobs quickly.

Apprentices benefit from an initial block period of off-the-job training at a central training centre, where they learn about the professional code of ethics and develop important new skills and behaviours. This helps them to apply this learning with confidence when they move on to the next stage of their training, which is on-the-job training in police stations across the county. For example, one group of apprentices learned how to support a potential witness to a crime when providing a written statement. They practised different questioning techniques so that a witness would give an accurate and detailed statement.

Apprentices are well supported by their managers. They also benefit from a peer-mentoring coaching scheme, where newly qualified PCSOs coach and support the current apprentices. Together, this helps apprentices to gain confidence and they value the support highly.

Assessors provide detailed and useful feedback which helps apprentices to achieve to the highest possible standard. Apprentices, assessors and their managers have a full understanding of the final assessments and the requirements for merit- and distinction-grade achievement.

The small number of apprentices studying English and/or mathematics benefit from helpful, weekly functional skills lessons, which improve their knowledge and skills. However, apprentices do not receive feedback on their spelling and grammatical errors in the written work they produce for their apprenticeship. These are essential skills for PCSO apprentices to develop, as accuracy in written records is essential for their professional role.

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

Apprentices benefit from a strong culture of safeguarding in and across the police teams they work with. They have a very good awareness of working safely and of the process of radicalisation for themselves and the public with whom they work.

All staff have attended basic safeguarding training and two managers have benefited from more advanced training. Managers have identified the need for more frequent training to ensure all staff remain up to date in their understanding of current risks.

Leaders monitor safeguarding concerns at their monthly meetings, but they recognise that their records are not thorough enough. They do not have a comprehensive oversight of the safeguarding issues that apprentices experience while they are doing their on-the-job training. While apprentices' managers in their police stations support them well and make sure they get the support they need, leaders do not review or learn from these in a timely way.

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