

Practice Managers Education and Training Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Address:	PMA House The Old Post Office 1 Macclesfield Road Alderley Edge Cheshire SK9 7BQ

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.

Practice Managers Education and Training Ltd (PMA) is a national training provider that is based in Cheshire. PMA received its own directly funded contract in July 2019. At the time of the visit, there were 162 apprentices on apprenticeship programmes between levels 2 and 5. Over half of all apprentices follow standards-based provision in level 3 team leader/supervisor or level 5 operations departmental manager. The remaining apprentices study apprenticeship programmes in business administration, dental practice management and healthcare support. All apprentices work in doctors or dental practices.

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 and managers do not consistently meet the principles of an effective apprenticeship. They do not always collect sufficient information about what apprentices know and can do at the start of their programme and use this to plan their learning. A few apprentices do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

The quality improvement arrangements do not focus sufficiently on the key priorities for improvement. They do not put in place actions quickly enough to bring about swift improvements. Leaders have been too slow to improve apprentices' learning experiences.

The directors identified significant issues with the leadership and management of its apprenticeship provision. Apprentices were not receiving high-quality training. Directors appointed a new leadership team in July 2020 with experience in leading and managing apprenticeship programmes. Leaders appointed new tutors in the last

six months with experience of providing apprenticeship training. Apprentices now benefit from regular structured training and support.

Leaders have a clearly defined purpose and strategy for their apprenticeship programmes. They provide apprenticeships for non-clinical staff in General Practitioner surgeries (GPs). Leaders develop the apprenticeship to meet the needs of GPs. Staff progressing to management positions needed training in leadership skills. Apprentices learn how to build effective relationships with patients. They now deal empathetically with patients and any complaints they may have, providing effective solutions.

Leaders ensure tutors are appropriately qualified. Tutors receive regular training to keep up to date with management practices in primary care. They complete a range of development courses which include new healthcare strategies. As a result, apprentices benefit from relevant industry expertise in their training.

Those responsible for governance are appropriately qualified and experienced in the education and healthcare sector to carry out their roles. They hold senior leaders to account for their actions and provide appropriate challenge to improve the standard of apprenticeship training.

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

Tutors teach topics in a logical order to progressively build apprentices knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. At the start of the programme, apprentices learn about how to lead and manage their team before moving on to project management. Employers support apprentices with short-term projects that develop their project management skills. For example, apprentices evaluate the effectiveness of their employer's telephone system.

Most apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They learn about how unconscious bias can impact on the recruitment process. Apprentices use this learning to recruit staff effectively. However, leaders and managers recognise the need to have a more detailed understanding of what apprentices know and can do at the start of the apprenticeship to provide training to meet each apprentices' training needs.

Tutors develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills. Apprentices analyse project performance using qualitative and quantitative data to measure performance. They carry out calculations on the number of staff hours required at the surgery. Apprentices apply these skills when writing business plans. This informs decision-making by partners at their practice.

During the apprentices' programme, tutors effectively identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge. They include additional training from an extensive online library of learning resources and through access to workshops, for example building teams and excellence in primary care finance. Through this extra training, apprentices broaden their knowledge of primary care.

Employers are highly supportive of their apprentices. They value the contributions apprentices make to their business. Level 3 team leader and supervisor apprentices skilfully identify solutions to problems. As a result, they sensitively manage team underperformance and confidently conduct staff appraisals.

Tutors do not consistently coordinate on- and-off-the job training. Most employers are not present at apprentices' progress reviews. Leaders and managers attribute this to the increase in workload because of COVID-19. As a result, a few apprentices do not always get the opportunity to practise newly acquired knowledge, skills and behaviours in a timely manner.

Tutors do not provide appropriate careers advice and guidance. Most apprentices do not receive information that helps them to decide their next steps in their careers.

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

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and designated safeguarding officers have received appropriate training to carry out their roles. At the time of the visit, there had been no safeguarding referrals.

All staff receive regular training and updates in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This includes topics such as COVID-19 psychological first aid, vaccine scams and domestic abuse. Apprentices know who to contact about concerns linked to safeguarding. They talk confidently about safe working practices in their job role, for example using clinical machines appropriately and wearing suitable personal protective equipment.

Tutors do not discuss risks regarding the 'Prevent' duty in apprentices' programmes. Most apprentices know about the specific threats from radicalisation and extremism because of the training they receive at work.

Apprentices benefit from additional support when they are struggling with their workload. They receive more frequent contact from their tutor. As a result, they remain on program

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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