

Mercedes-Benz Cars UK Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 58456

Name of lead inspector: Peter Cox, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 10–11 June 2021

Type of provider: Employer

Address: Delaware Drive
Tongwell
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit focused on safeguarding arrangements and 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.

Mercedes-Benz Cars UK Limited (MBUKL) is an employer provider that has been in place since 1995. MBUKL offers apprenticeships in parts operations specialist, retailer, retailer team leader, light vehicle technician, heavy vehicle technician and customer service specialist to its franchised retail dealership network across England. Apprentices attend block release training in Milton Keynes, during which they stay at a local hotel. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were approximately 430 apprentices.

This was an unannounced safeguarding monitoring visit, following concerns identified during a methodology pilot inspection of the provider. The purpose of the visit was to assess whether safeguarding arrangements at the provider are effective.

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

Theme

How much progress have leaders and managers made to comply with and apply relevant safeguarding requirements, policies and procedures so that apprentices are kept safe? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have made sure that safeguarding arrangements follow statutory requirements. Senior safeguarding staff receive appropriate training for their roles. Leaders ensure that they receive sufficient time to support and monitor apprentices. Following the methodology pilot, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy are currently updating safeguarding policies to reflect recent legislative changes. As such, it is too early to see the impact of these changes.

When necessary, the DSL and deputy work effectively with external agencies, such as local authorities and charities, to help apprentices who have safeguarding concerns. For example, the DSL works closely with the Terence Higgins Trust to teach apprentices about sexual health and consent. Senior safeguarding staff understand local risks for apprentices when they are in the training centre. However, they do not know enough about risks where apprentices work and do not help them understand how to keep safe from these local threats.

The DSL completes appropriate checks to make sure that staff are safe to work with apprentices. The DSL and deputy ensure that staff know how to identify and report safeguarding concerns correctly. They provide staff with useful training on a range of general safeguarding topics. For example, the DSL has recently taught staff about the background to, and indicators of, female genital mutilation. Staff are confident in discussing this subject with apprentices sensitively.

Senior safeguarding staff respond to safeguarding referrals in a timely and effective manner to support apprentices. They record and monitor safeguarding incidents accurately. They use information about safeguarding referrals to plan useful and relevant staff training. For example, they have recently introduced compulsory training to help staff support apprentices who may be struggling with mental health issues.

Leaders and managers use effective procedures to keep apprentices safe while staying at the hotel during their training. They work closely with hotel managers to ensure that apprentices are safe while in the hotel. They train key hotel staff to make sure they understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.

Staff provide useful and relevant training to apprentices on a range of safeguarding topics. For example, staff teach apprentices about the dangers of online grooming to help keep them safe, particularly when staying at the training academy. However, staff do not check carefully how well apprentices understand or remember these topics. Consequently, staff are not aware of any gaps there may be in apprentices' knowledge about these topics.

Staff work closely with employers to help keep apprentices safe. They discuss the well-being of apprentices frequently, so that employers can help support them. All apprentices feel safe in their training, at work and when staying at the hotel. They know whom to contact in the event of a safeguarding problem. Apprentices spoke enthusiastically about the useful initial and ongoing training they receive to keep safe in the workplace.

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