

PLT Training Ltd

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2626824

Name of lead inspector: Martin Ward, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 25—26 May 2021

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Fallings Park Industrial Estate
Park Lane
Wolverhampton
WV10 9QB

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.

PLT Training Ltd – under the name PLT Business Ltd – is a private training provider based in Wolverhampton. The provider has had a contract to run apprenticeships since 2019. At the time of the visit there were 205 apprentices in learning. Of these, 121 were studying in adult care at levels 2,3 and 5. Some 65 apprentices were studying the team leader standard at level 3. The remaining 19 apprentices were studying on the customer service specialist, and safety health and environment (SHE) technician standards at level 3, and the operations managers standard at level 5.

Due to COVID-19 and the restrictions, apprentices in the adult care sector reported additional workload and changes to shift patterns at short notice. Apprentices in the customer services sector reported periods of working from home and furlough. A member of the senior team at PLT Training Ltd is currently working from abroad. Since March 2020 tutors have delivered training remotely.

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 have not identified, reported on, or monitored the key management information that is needed, to ensure that training is of a high quality and that apprentices make good progress.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices are making. Leaders are currently working hard to develop electronic tracking systems, but they do not bring the information from different sources together. They do not know if apprentices are participating in sufficient off-the-job training, completing planned assessments on time, or whether they are likely to pass – or do even better.

Leaders do not use the outcomes from quality assurance processes well enough. Leaders implement single-session observations of tutors, individual reviews with apprentices, regular discussions with employers, standardisation meetings for apprentices' work, but leaders do not coordinate the findings of these activities to establish strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. As a result, leaders do not intervene swiftly enough to rectify concerns.

Leaders have developed an improvement action plan, but it is not the product of the quality assurance processes and it does not include some key weaknesses which inspectors found.

Leaders have recruited many apprentices recently. Leaders were insufficiently involved in the recruitment process. Too many apprentices from the Health and Social Care sector have withdrawn.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices have access to independent careers advice and guidance during the apprenticeship.

Managers do not currently have any external governance arrangements and, therefore, do not benefit from additional support or challenge in relation to their strategy and operational effectiveness.

The small leadership team clearly has the ambition to deliver high-quality apprenticeships. The management team is struggling to demonstrate the capacity to manage an expanding apprenticeship provision.

Leaders have developed positive relationships with employers. Employers appreciate the openness of the communication channels and the flexible and understanding way that the provider has responded to business and apprentice needs during the pandemic.

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

Leaders and managers do not plan the content of the training well enough to ensure that apprentices are ready to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standards.

Curriculum leaders prioritise the teaching and assessment related to the achievement of an underpinning qualification. As a result, tutors are too slow to develop the full breadth of knowledge skills and behaviours required by the programme.

On the level 3 customer service programme, tutors do not plan early enough for the development of the skills that are required for success in the end-point assessment. Tutors have not designed learning activities which enable apprentices to acquire the complex skills required to complete the work-based project.

Tutors do not use assessment well enough. Within adult care apprenticeships, tutors teach the topic and then immediately apply the formal assessment. Tutors do not build up and re-assess knowledge over time to make sure that apprentices can remember what they have been taught.

Tutors do not use initial assessments well enough. For example, in adult care level 2, apprentices report that do not know enough about their duty of care. Despite the importance of this knowledge, tutors do not alter the order of their teaching and move this topic to the beginning of the course.

Curriculum leaders do not ensure that there is a clear link between on- and off-the-job training. For example, on the level 3 team leader course, tutors teach the principles of leading a project but do not ensure that apprentices can apply this knowledge promptly within the workplace.

Curriculum leaders do not plan well enough for the development of skills and knowledge in English through the course of the apprenticeships. Leaders do not ensure that apprentices start this learning soon enough, have clear targets and receive sufficient support. Apprentices who need this support make slow progress.

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

Leaders have developed an appropriate safeguarding policy with a clear focus on safeguarding vulnerable adults.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) has completed recent, relevant training and certification.

Leaders follow appropriate procedures when recruiting new staff. Leaders provide detailed training materials for staff when they join the organisation and they highlight the expectations within the adult care setting.

At induction, leaders and tutors ensure that all new apprentices understand how to keep themselves and others safe, and how to protect themselves from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Apprentices on the SHE and adult care apprenticeship standards have a detailed understanding of health and safety regulations and how they should be applied in the workplace. Apprentices on the customer service programme have a detailed understanding of diversity and how this enhances their ability to support customers.

The current DSO is relatively new in post and has not yet developed strong links with the local safeguarding board.

Managers do not routinely report on safeguarding issues within the management team.

Apprentices who are not enrolled on adult care apprenticeships find it more difficult to explain how safeguarding impacts on their personal and working lives.

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