

# NextStep Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 2626838

**Name of lead inspector:** Saher Nijabat, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** 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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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.

NextStep Training Limited is an independent training provider based in east London. The provider has experience in teaching apprenticeships and traineeships as a subcontractor and started training apprentices on their direct contract in February 2020. NextStep training offers standard-based apprenticeships in the subject sector areas of information and communication technology (ICT), business, administration and law and health, public services and care.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the provider was training approximately 50 apprentices, of which 34 apprentices were on adult care level 2, 3 and 5 programmes. Currently, the provider is following a blended teaching approach, with most of the training activities taking place online. 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**

The experience of apprentices on different programmes, and with different employers is markedly varied. This reflects the extent to which leaders and managers have not been able to establish effectiveness across all programmes in their oversight of the apprenticeships. They have been more successful with apprenticeships in business administration and ICT, than in care sector apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers do not adequately ensure that the requirements of apprenticeship programmes are met. They do not ensure that apprentices and employers have a good enough overview of what the different components of an apprenticeship entail. For example, they do not plan well enough when the off-the-job training will take place. Too many apprentices do not have a clear plan of when they will complete their coursework.



result, apprentices do not have sufficient opportunities to put their learning into practice in the workplace.

Tutors and assessors discuss with apprentices any emerging changes in their jobs and adapt their teaching accordingly. For example, tutors make sure apprentices learn about topics such as managing change early on the programme. They focus on teaching communication skills and emotional intelligence for apprentices going through changes in the workplace. Employers recognise the improved personal skills and confidence which apprentices apply successfully in the workplace.

Staff do not prepare apprentices effectively enough for their final assessments. They do not ensure that apprentices know well how they will be assessed at the end of their apprenticeship. Most apprentices who are a few months away from completion are not clear about what they need to do to pass or get distinctions.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place suitable arrangements to ensure the safety of their apprentices. They make sure that staff they recruit are safe for working with their learners. They have two named designated safeguarding leads who are appropriately trained for their role.

Staff complete suitable online training on safeguarding and related topics. They have established useful links with external agencies such as the local safeguarding team to ensure apprentices have access to appropriate specialist support when needed.

Although leaders and managers have a reasonable understanding of the emerging risks specific to their apprentices, such as false propaganda around the COVID-19 vaccine, they do not update their risk assessments to reflect relevant safety measures.

Apprentices feel safe and know who to contact if they have any safety concerns. They revisit safeguarding with their tutors in their progress reviews. For example, they discuss topics such as online safety and know how to stay safe online.

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