

St Helens Chamber Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number:	54562
Name of lead inspector:	Kim Bleasdale, 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

St Helens Chamber Limited was inspected in February 2020. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Leaders have worked closely with employers throughout the period of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic to support apprentices in key-worker roles in early years settings and in care of the elderly. A small minority of apprentices have fallen behind in their learning because of the extra demands placed upon them at work, for example in managing COVID-19 outbreaks, covering for colleagues who are isolating, and working longer and more frequent shifts.

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

Themes

To what extent have leaders and managers and those responsible for governance ensured that apprentices who have fallen behind now make rapid progress towards achieving the required knowledge, skills and behaviours?

Reasonable progress

In the short time since the previous progress monitoring visit, leaders have been successful in helping most apprentices who have fallen behind in their learning to catch up. They hold weekly reviews with training advisers to agree how to support apprentices effectively. For example, training advisers have increased the frequency of coaching visits, observations of apprentices and the completion of mock assessments in preparation for apprentices' final assessments. Training advisers set apprentices effective action plans in discussions with employers that support apprentices to catch up. As a result, the large majority of apprentices who had gone past their expected completion date have now achieved their apprenticeship. Furthermore, most apprentices are now on target to develop the required knowledge, skills and behaviours in line with their training programme and employers' requirements.

Most apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. Apprentices studying level 2 adult care worker standard confidently care for clients who have dementia. They readily recall previous learning relating to how dementia affects different parts of the brain, causing some people to hallucinate. Apprentices develop a deeper understanding of safeguarding

and apply this at work, for example when reporting a safeguarding concern about clients. Apprentices studying level 3 early years educator standard behave professionally when managing child referrals to external services. They skilfully plan and coordinate activities in a safe environment for the children in their care.

How well do staff use the results of assessments completed at the start of the programme to plan an ambitious curriculum, so that all apprentices make at least their expected levels of progress?

Reasonable progress

Leaders continue to strengthen how they use apprentices' assessments at the start of their programme to plan the curriculum. Apprentices complete a 'score card' to identify what they already know and can do in relation to the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the standard. Training advisers have detailed discussions with apprentices and their employer regarding the scores. They agree an individualised plan of learning with the apprentice and employer. It is too early to assess the full impact of this.

In a few instances, leaders provide a curriculum that extends apprentices' learning. Apprentices studying level 2 adult care worker standard complete additional training in oral hygiene, ostomy care, and drug and alcohol misuse. A few employers in the early years sector do not feel that the apprenticeship curriculum is ambitious enough for their apprentices.

To what extent do leaders now involve employers in the planning and development of the apprentices' on- and off-the-job learning?

Reasonable progress

Training advisers effectively coordinate most apprentices' on- and off-the-job learning. They carefully ensure that once apprentices have learned knowledge, they are then supported by workplace mentors to practise and master these skills in the workplace. Apprentices studying level 2 adult care worker standard accurately record clients' care information on the electronic care-planning system. Apprentices studying level 3 early years educator standard learn about the importance of parental permission and following the first-aid guidance when administering medicines to children. They apply what they have learned about brain development in children to plan play activities that develop children's fine and gross motor skills. Apprentices skilfully design age-appropriate games such as water paintings on outside walls and bead-threading with pasta. In a few instances, training advisers do not set and monitor target dates effectively for apprentices. As a result, apprentices do not develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours quickly enough.

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