

Inspection of Gloucestershire Enterprise Limited

Inspection dates:

18 to 20 August 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Gloucestershire Enterprise Limited (GEL) is a not-for-profit social enterprise company based in Gloucester. Its main purpose is to provide training services to the business community of Gloucestershire, particularly leadership, management and business skills development. Courses are designed to help staff acquire the skills and confidence required to sustain and develop their organisations.

GEL first recruited apprentices in February 2018. At GEL's first monitoring visit in April 2019, inspectors judged the provider had made insufficient progress in two themes and reasonable progress in the third. At the second monitoring visit in October 2020, it was judged to have made reasonable progress in all three themes.

GEL's staffing structure includes trainers who teach the knowledge aspects of the apprenticeship, assessors who mark apprentices' assignments and reviewers who monitor apprentices' progress. At the time of inspection, GEL had two level 3 team leader/supervisor apprentices, 13 level 4 associate project manager apprentices and two level 5 operations/departmental manager apprentices.

GEL does not have any learners with high needs, nor does it subcontract any of its provision.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Well-qualified and experienced trainers ensure that apprentices learn the fundamentals of the curriculum. They use real work examples well to help apprentices contextualise and apply new knowledge to their own job roles. Apprentices support each other to develop solutions to improve challenging workplace problems. Apprentices learn how to manage work-based projects successfully and become more effective managers. Apprentices who work in the NHS have a particularly good understanding of the ethical impact of their work on patient care.

Trainers do not use the results of their initial assessment of apprentices' existing skills well enough. As a result, the curriculum offer is not tailored to apprentices' individual needs. Apprentices' learning plans do not include a required focus on developing their knowledge of appropriate behaviours at work. The careers guidance available to apprentices is too narrow in scope and lacks impartiality.

Reviewers' quarterly reviews with apprentices do not include line managers or identify the impact of off-the-job training on apprentices' progress. Apprentices receive effective personal support from staff outside of training sessions, but staff are often slow to identify apprentices who require additional help with their studies. As a result, a few apprentices fall behind because they have not received timely or sufficient support.

Even though apprentices feel safe, too many apprentices only have a basic knowledge of GEL's safeguarding arrangements. Nevertheless, they know how to report any concerns that arise within their workplaces.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have developed a very clear strategic intent for their apprenticeship provision. They work closely with employers to recruit staff who are suited to the apprenticeship programme. Apprentices studying at levels 3 or 5 who complete the programme also achieve additional useful management qualifications. Most achieve high grades and are promoted following completion of their apprenticeship.

Trainers ensure that most apprentices produce work which is of a high standard. Trainers set apprentices useful work-based projects which then have a positive impact on apprentices' work settings. For example, apprentices learn how to develop and use a range of performance management techniques which improve team performance. Such activities also help apprentices improve their confidence and become better managers.

Leaders do not provide apprentices with impartial careers advice and guidance. They do not have planned discussions with apprentices about their longer-term futures or help apprentices understand how they can gain jobs in other sectors. As a result,

most apprentices are not aware of other careers, outside of their current organisations, that are available to them.

Trainers do not assess how well apprentices apply new professional behaviours in their job roles because learning sessions focus too narrowly on qualification outcomes. Leaders have not included the behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standards in apprentices' learning plans. As a result, apprentices do not identify how they can further improve and apply their behaviours to their job roles more effectively.

Leaders do not use the information they gather through initial assessment of apprentices' existing skills and knowledge well enough. Leaders too readily accept apprentices' self-evaluation of their skills. Consequently, all apprentices study the same modules and at the same pace. Trainers do not actively plan challenging tasks for apprentices with more experience. As a result, a small number of apprentices, particularly those studying at level 5, do not gain substantial new skills and knowledge beyond what they already know.

Leaders provide insufficient guidance to help the few apprentices who fall behind in their training catch up quickly. Such apprentices receive a long list of tasks to complete but no specific instructions on how or by when to complete them. As a result, many of those who fall behind make slow progress.

Leaders do not know if recently enrolled level 4 apprentices understand what they need to do to achieve. Leaders have not been communicating well enough with level 4 apprentices to check they are making sufficient progress. Leaders do not check that these apprentices' work-based mentors are effective. They do not check why apprentices have failed to complete planned work in a timely way.

Staff who undertake apprentices' quarterly reviews do not always review all aspects of apprentices' training effectively. Reviewers do not involve line managers in these reviews. They do not link apprentices' on- and off-the-job activities sufficiently well. Reviewers do not discuss the impact of new learning on an apprentice's job role in enough detail. They do not identify what activities have the most impact on apprentices' progress. As a result, too many apprentices do not know if their off-the-job activities are useful or relevant.

Leaders have put in place an independent advisory board to help them identify how to improve. Members of this board are appropriately qualified and have relevant knowledge of education. However, leaders have not defined a clear role for the board, so its responsibilities and remit are unclear. Leaders do not record the impact of decisions taken by the board in enough detail to be meaningful. As a result, the advisory board has had little impact to date.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide apprentices with sufficient information about basic safeguarding arrangements during their induction and within course handbooks. Apprentices working in NHS settings receive more detailed training from their employers. However, leaders do not develop apprentices' wider knowledge or understanding of safeguarding, for example the 'Prevent' duty. This means apprentices cannot identify specific threats that may be relevant to their job roles or own lives.

Leaders provide good support for apprentices with any mental well-being issues arising from the pressures of their job roles. Leaders and assessors support apprentices well to manage workloads to help them stay in learning. However, staff often only identify which apprentices need additional help once they have fallen behind with their learning.

Leaders ensure that staff refresh their safeguarding knowledge annually. Leaders ensure that staff understand wider aspects, such as internet and online safety. Leaders include issues related to working from home and online etiquette in training sessions. As a result, staff work professionally and safely when working remotely with apprentices.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must include wider safeguarding topics, such as the 'Prevent' duty, in the apprenticeship programme to help apprentices understand how specific local and occupational threats might affect them and their families.
- Leaders must involve apprentices' line managers in apprentices' quarterly reviews. This is to ensure that apprentices, employers and assessors review the impact and usefulness of the on- and off-the-job activities that apprentices undertake, including how effectively apprentices apply the new behaviours and attitudes they develop within their job roles.
- Leaders must ensure that all apprentices receive planned and impartial careers guidance to help them understand what wider career opportunities are available to them upon completion of the apprenticeship.
- Leaders must use the information they gather about apprentices' prior skills and knowledge to plan learning that builds upon apprentices' previous experience and is relevant to their job roles.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices make more rapid progress by giving them clear and time-bound actions to help them catch up if they fall behind.
- Leaders must clarify the role of the advisory board to ensure that it is effective in helping to identify how to improve quality more rapidly.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58505
Address	Unit 3 Twigworth Court Business Centre Tewkesbury Road Twigworth Gloucester GL2 9PG
Contact number	01452 221777
Website	https://www.glosenterprise.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Kevin Holt
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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