

# Oasis Care and Training Agency

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1271308

**Name of lead inspector:** Jane Hughes, 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.

Established in 2014, Oasis Care and Training Agency (OCTA) is based in South London and provides domiciliary care services across nine London boroughs. Previously, and still, a subcontractor for adult learning and apprenticeship programmes, OCTA gained a direct contract for adult learning and apprenticeships in 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit, OCTA had fewer than five apprentices enrolled on the level 3 lead care worker standard. In the academic year 2020/21, there were 32 learners on adult learning programmes. OCTA had no adult learners at the time of the monitoring visit.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a clear rationale for offering the apprenticeship programme. They have considered carefully the most suitable apprenticeship standard to help their staff develop as care leaders and prepare to move to a higher-level qualification. Apprentices work in appropriate job roles where they apply their learning. For example, apprentices complete initial assessments of service users' care needs and support service users with additional needs.

Staff supporting and teaching apprentices, including in English and mathematics, have suitable experience and qualifications. This includes staff with extensive knowledge in health and social care. Support staff have qualifications to help apprentices make informed choices about their careers. Apprentices have a clear understanding of their next steps to progress to a level 5 management programme. Staff complete frequent professional development to keep themselves up to date.

Leaders and staff check sufficiently the prior knowledge and skills apprentices have before they enrol on the apprenticeship. This includes their knowledge of English and

mathematics. They use this information correctly to place apprentices on the right level of programme. However, they have not used the information about apprentices' specific skills to ensure the curriculum challenges apprentices in areas where they are more competent. Nor have they included in the curriculum topics to help apprentices personally develop, such as leading a healthy lifestyle. Leaders have ensured, through the curriculum, that apprentices understand fundamental British values.

The governance arrangements are not sufficiently robust. Leaders, and those responsible for governance, have not challenged and supported staff well enough in the past. As a result, leaders have been slow to put in place their planned improvement actions in areas such as the quality assurance of the programme. Leaders have recently recognised that the management of the programme needs closer attention and more specialist support.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?**      **Reasonable progress**

Trainers support and teach apprentices effectively. They ensure apprentices deepen and retain their knowledge. Apprentices gain detailed understanding of the importance of handling and storing service users' personal and sensitive data. They use this knowledge to advise care workers under their supervision how to keep information secure and to ensure it is accessed appropriately. In support sessions, trainers use well-thought-through questions to check apprentices' understanding of, for example, key topics such as the difference between equalities and equal opportunities. Apprentices competently describe how they are more aware of how to speak to a range of service users.

Managers recognise that apprentices' behaviours and skills have improved. For example, apprentices have more confidence when they communicate with other professional services, such as social workers. They have improved their writing skills and have been successful in writing a professional bid for extra work for the company.

Trainers give apprentices helpful feedback on their work and during their progress reviews. This helps apprentices improve on the answers they give in their assignments. Apprentices' line managers read and comment on the feedback in progress reviews. However, they are not fully involved in discussing apprentices' progress.

Leaders now monitor closely apprentices' completion of assignments and their online portfolio work. They have recently given apprentices more study time to help them catch up on areas where they are behind.

Apprentices have access to a range of high-quality learning resources. These include well-designed tutorial videos, presentations, reading materials and activities to extend learning. Resources are highly relevant and link well to the content trainers teach each week. However, trainers do not ensure apprentices use these frequently enough to support their learning.

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

Leaders have placed sufficient focus on safeguarding apprentices. The designated safeguarding leads have completed suitable training and have enough knowledge to carry out their role. During the pandemic, they checked frequently on apprentices' well-being. Leaders have put in place external support for apprentices to access.

Apprentices feel safe. They know how to identify, record and report concerns about themselves or service users in their care settings. Apprentices understand the importance of protecting themselves and others from those who hold extreme views. Apprentices attend a variety of training sessions about safeguarding, the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and how to keep safe online.

Staff supporting apprentices receive appropriate safeguarding training. This includes online safety training and training on the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders have put in place appropriate policies and procedures and considered the specific risks in their sector, such as peer-on-peer abuse.

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