

# Inspection of Freshfield Training Associates Ltd

Inspection dates:

15 to 17 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

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The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## **Information about this provider**

Freshfield Training Associates Ltd is a national independent learning provider based in Leigh, Lancashire and was registered as a training company in 2014. In December 2018, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) awarded Freshfield Training Associates Ltd an apprenticeship contract.

The provider currently has seven apprentices. Three apprentices are studying the level 3 business administrator standard, three apprentices are studying the level 5 operations or departmental manager standard, and one apprentice is studying the level 3 team leader or supervisor standard.

At the time of inspection, in-person learning had returned following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Apprentices have positive attitudes to, and enjoy, their learning. They value the support they receive from their tutors and workplace managers. Apprentices find tutors easy to talk to and feel listened to.

Employers value the contribution apprentices make to their businesses. They say that apprentices are polite and well-mannered members of their teams.

A few apprentices develop confidence as a result of their apprenticeships. For example, apprentices studying the level 3 team leader or supervisor standard confidently create rotas and hold team meetings to discuss and agree actions. Apprentices studying the level 3 business administrator standard confidently and effectively work with colleagues in different departments.

The large majority of apprentices, and their employers, think that they have almost completed their apprenticeship. However, apprentices have still got a significant amount of work to complete before being ready for their final assessments.

Apprentices feel safe. However, most apprentices know only the very basics of safeguarding, such as to whom they should report any concerns. A few apprentices do not recall anything at all about safeguarding. Most could not explain how to keep themselves safe from extremism and radicalisation. This is because leaders and tutors do not include and promote safeguarding within the curriculum.

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

Leaders do not ensure that they meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They have not made sure that all apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training. In some cases, apprentices have to complete their studies in their own time, contrary to funding rules. A few employers told inspectors that they have not ensured that their apprentices receive sufficient time to complete their studies throughout the working week. As a result, most apprentices are significantly behind in their learning.

Leaders have failed to develop a curriculum that is sufficiently ambitious to help apprentices develop new knowledge and skills beyond the apprenticeship standard. They do not focus on the development of apprentices' English and mathematics or broader personal knowledge and skills. For example, the curriculum does not include any content on how apprentices can maintain and improve their mental and physical health. Few apprentices can recall any information relating to fundamental British values.

Leaders do not ensure that their curriculums meet the needs of apprentices. Tutors do not use information about what apprentices already know and can do at the start of the programme to plan an individualised curriculum. Instead, they deliver the same curriculum to all apprentices. In response to employers' requests, leaders put

apprentices studying the level 5 operations or departmental manager standard on a 15-month programme without considering apprentices' specific needs. As a result, these apprentices have not completed their apprenticeship on time and remain significantly behind.

Tutors do not teach the curriculum in a logical order. This means that apprentices do not progressively build their knowledge, skills and behaviours over the course of their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices studying the level 3 business administrator standard begin their studies with a project on change management without exploring management basics first. Tutors have not included key topics in the level 5 operations or departmental manager curriculum, such as finance, contingency planning, data security and continuous improvement strategies.

Most apprentices are not aware of the range of career opportunities available to them. This is because tutors do not ensure that all apprentices receive high-quality, impartial careers guidance.

Leaders have not put in place effective processes to identify and improve the quality of education. They do not plan effectively to monitor the quality of training that apprentices receive. Staff who visit lessons to observe the quality of training have not received appropriate training. Leaders have not provided tutors with any training to help improve their teaching. As a result, leaders have not identified critical weaknesses in teaching and assessment.

Governance is not effective. Senior leaders are also responsible for governance. They have an informal and ineffective approach to governance. There is nobody who holds senior leaders to account to improve the provision. As a result, the quality of education that apprentices receive is poor.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have failed to prioritise safeguarding for their apprentices. They do not complete the appropriate checks when appointing new staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with apprentices. Leaders only provide apprentices with basic safeguarding information at the start of their course. They do not provide apprentices with information about how they can keep safe online, or make them aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) failed to provide evidence of appropriate qualifications for their role. The DSL did not know about recent updates to critical legislation, such as 'Keeping children safe in education' or statutory guidance such as 'Working together to safeguard children'.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Prioritise intensive training for the safeguarding team that will empower and enable team members to fully understand their roles, so that they are able to promote a positive culture of safeguarding confidently.
- Appoint a supervisory body to robustly challenge and hold leaders to account, so that the quality of education that apprentices receive is rapidly improved.
- Work closely with employers to ensure that, with immediate effect, all apprentices receive their off-the-job training entitlement.
- Ensure that the curriculum is planned and taught in a logical order and helps apprentices to build their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. This includes the development of English and mathematical skills, safeguarding, the wider aspects of personal development and British values.
- Provide clear action plans to help those apprentices who have not completed their apprenticeships on time to catch up and be fully prepared for their final assessments.
- Swiftly put in place effective processes that help leaders identify improvements in the quality of education. This includes providing training for tutors to develop their teaching skills further.
- Provide high-quality, independent careers guidance to all apprentices, so they understand the range of career opportunities available to them.

## **Provider details**

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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.freshfieldtraining.com">www.freshfieldtraining.com</a>
<b>Director</b>	Scott Lloyd
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the 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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