

# Inspection of CERT Ltd

Inspection dates: 26–28 October 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Apprenticeships **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

CERT Ltd was established in 1997 and is based in North Lincolnshire. It began providing levy-funded apprenticeships in 2017. CERT Ltd specialises in training in business administration, customer service, digital marketing and learning and development for social enterprise businesses and voluntary organisations in the Humberside region.

At the time of the inspection, there were 17 apprentices studying across three standards-based programmes. Nine of these were on level 2 customer service apprenticeships, seven on level 3 business administration apprenticeships and one on a level 3 fundraiser programme. Around a half of apprentices are aged between 16 and 18, and the rest are 19 years old or above.

CERT Ltd does not have any subcontracted provision.

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

Coaches have high expectations of their apprentices. They model positive behaviours so that apprentices develop the positive attitudes that they require at work and in their studies. Apprentices report high levels of enjoyment and satisfaction with their training.

Apprentices value the knowledge that they gain and the skills that they develop through their learning. They show dedication to their learning programme and produce work of a high standard.

Apprentices gain confidence in their job roles. Their attendance and punctuality at work and at training sessions are good. They are highly motivated. When at work, apprentices are professional and well mannered, even in challenging situations.

Apprentices become highly skilled, resilient and valued employees. They receive helpful support which prepares them well for the challenges they may face in their chosen career. Most apprentices secure permanent full-time employment.

Coaches know their apprentices well and care about their learning and welfare. Apprentices feel safe and know how to stay safe in training, at work and in wider society. They show positive and respectful attitudes towards their employers and coaches.

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

Leaders take care to ensure that apprentices study a vocational curriculum that is appropriately sequenced and adapted to meet apprentices' and employers' needs. This enables apprentices to develop skills in an order which is relevant and meets the priorities of their employers. For example, the fundraiser apprenticeship includes bid writing at the start of the programme, which is a high priority for employers.

Leaders work successfully with employers and recognise the need to be flexible to meet employers' business needs. For example, during COVID-19 restrictions, they moved to weekly online teaching, which both apprentices and their employers valued. This flexibility contributes to ensuring that apprentices attend well and make good progress.

Leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation. They have responded positively to the findings of the previous monitoring visit to improve weaker aspects of their provision. Leaders have ensured that employers are more fully involved in the apprenticeship programme and support their apprentices to achieve well.

Leaders and coaches are highly skilled in their vocational areas. They use their knowledge of the subjects they teach to support apprentices well. They help apprentices to remember their learning by asking relevant and probing questions to

enable apprentices to recall information and topics. Apprentices produce written work of a high standard. The feedback that coaches provide identifies how apprentices can improve their work. For example, apprentices are taught how to proofread their work carefully and how to reference correctly.

Coaches know their apprentices well and very quickly identify apprentices who may need additional support. They help apprentices to develop strategies to develop their resilience, and they support their physical and mental well-being. For example, apprentices learn how to deal with rejection if their funding bid is not successful and how to look after themselves when returning to work after COVID-19 restrictions.

Apprentices' training programmes extend beyond their vocational qualifications. Coaches cover safeguarding topics at their weekly meetings with apprentices and ensure that each topic is relevant to apprentices' working environment. For example, they discuss 'cuckooing', which is a particular issue for apprentices working in housing. Other apprentices learn Makaton when studying communication skills, which helps them better communicate with clients with hearing loss. Some apprentices use their new social media skills to promote their business, including at national exhibitions.

Apprentices benefit greatly from their weekly individual online sessions, where staff set apprentices useful learning activities and apprentices acquire new knowledge and skills that they can apply in their job roles. Apprentices develop their confidence, take on more responsibilities at work and achieve their qualifications well. Coaches respond quickly to apprentices when they need additional help following online learning sessions, which helps apprentices to continue to make progress during their off-the-job training. However, a few apprentices commented that they would value more face-to-face interaction with other apprentices and exposure to different organisations.

Coaches successfully help all apprentices, including those with learning difficulties, to develop their understanding of topics. They teach apprentices a range of learning strategies so that they can select those which help them most. However, staff do not support well enough apprentices who need to develop their mathematical skills. They do not provide structured training to develop these skills or signpost apprentices quickly enough to other providers who would be able to meet their needs.

Coaches prepare apprentices well for their next steps. They encourage them to discuss with their employers what will happen at the end of their apprenticeship. Most apprentices have aspirations to stay with their current employer. However, too often apprentices are not fully aware of the careers and opportunities available to them outside of their current employment.

Coaches successfully help apprentices to prepare for their end-point assessment. They ensure that apprentices get the opportunity to practise their presentations. Coaches ask helpful questions and guide apprentices appropriately. Business

administration apprentices can talk confidently about their projects and how they have benefited the organisation that they work for.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have appropriate policies in place covering how apprentices are to be kept safe in their learning. They ensure that all staff complete a comprehensive range of safeguarding training. Coaches provide apprentices with helpful and relevant information following their training.

Leaders have a detailed 'Prevent' duty action plan and risk assessment in place. They have appointed a suitably qualified designated safeguarding lead. Leaders receive regular updates and communications from external networks, and they share this knowledge with coaches and apprentices appropriately by producing an informative quarterly newsletter. Coaches talk to apprentices about topics in the newsletters during weekly meetings, which apprentices find helpful.

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

- Ensure that the development of mathematical skills is planned and structured to become an integral part of the apprenticeship programme.
- Provide apprentices with high-quality, independent careers advice and guidance so that they understand the range of opportunities available to them.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1278564
<b>Address</b>	Suites 15-16 Waters Edge Business Centre Malkiln Road Barton-Upon-Humber North Lincolnshire DN18 5JR
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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Christine Manson
<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

Hayley Lomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynne Paxton

Ofsted Inspector

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