

Inspection of Zenith People Limited

Inspection dates: 25–27 January 2022

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

Zenith People Limited is located in South Shields. It began delivering apprenticeships for levy-paying employers in January 2018. Most apprentices are on business administration and customer service programmes. The company also offers apprenticeships in digital marketing, food manufacturing, team leading and sales. The provider delivers both apprenticeship frameworks and standards. Currently, 68 apprentices are on programmes, of whom 14 are aged 16 to 18.

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

Apprentices benefit from helpful initial advice and guidance that prepares them well for their apprenticeship. They understand the requirements of the apprenticeship, including on-and off-the-job training, how they need to apply their skills in the workplace, and how they will be ultimately assessed.

Apprentices take pride in producing a good standard of work. They receive helpful support and advice from trainers on how to improve their work, in most cases to distinction standard. Apprentices value this support highly and act on the feedback that they receive to make improvements to their work.

Apprentices feel safe and report that they would feel comfortable speaking to staff if they felt unsafe or had any concerns. They are confident that something would happen as a result and that staff would deal with the situation appropriately and sensitively.

Apprentices develop their communication skills well and some become the first point of contact for customers within the employer and represent their employers professionally. Employers value highly the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop as a result of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices' attendance at work, training sessions and reviews is high. Apprentices show a positive attitude to their learning and aspire to be the best they can be, aiming to achieve distinction at end-point assessment.

Apprentices benefit from useful additional training and courses as part of their apprenticeship to enhance their skills further. For example, digital marketing apprentices complete a vendor qualification to improve their knowledge and their employability skills beyond the qualification. This qualification is well regarded by both apprentices and employers.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the organisation, which is based on and reflects the values of the team and is linked to a stringent business planning process. They have established useful partnerships to meet local demands.

Leaders have in place an advisory panel that provides appropriate strategic support and external challenge. Members of the panel hold senior managers to account effectively.

Leaders and managers plan their growth well. They recruit experts from the sector and work with employers over time and in depth to ensure that their programmes will have a positive impact on apprentices and employers and support the local economy.

Leaders and managers set high standards for what they expect from the employers with whom they work. They only work with an employer when they are confident that the employer can clearly meet the expectations of the programme. For example, leaders have turned down opportunities to work with some organisations when they consider that the organisation's values do not match their own and that the organisation is not working in the best interests of apprentices.

Leaders and managers have effective arrangements in place to ensure that apprentices receive a good standard of training. Trainers have developed a curriculum effectively for apprentices that enables them to develop and build on their skills over time, in line with the apprenticeship standards. Trainers closely involve employers in the sequencing of the apprenticeship to enable apprentices to develop the fundamental skills that they need for their job roles.

Trainers liaise well with employers to ensure that apprentices benefit from good quality on-and off-the-job training that helps them to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours and to apply and practise these in the workplace. This includes access to work shadowing and coaching opportunities.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are appropriately trained for their roles. Staff are well qualified and highly experienced in their sectors. Leaders and managers support their staff well. For example, staff are provided with a programme which includes access to resources relating to issues such as mental health and financial management. Staff are confident that the organisation places a high priority on their well-being.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of apprentices' progress. Managers meet with delivery staff frequently to monitor apprentices' progress and ensure that they are on track. When necessary, short-term targets are put in place for apprentices, and these are monitored frequently. This ensures that apprentices benefit from effective support, when needed, and that employers are updated on any potential issues.

Trainers prepare most apprentices well for their end-point assessment throughout the apprenticeship. They provide apprentices with helpful guidance on the different aspects of the assessment, including presentation skills and how to achieve a distinction.

Trainers promote equality and diversity effectively as part of the apprenticeship and explore British values well with apprentices. Apprentices successfully develop their knowledge of these topics and apply it in the workplace. They promote different protected characteristics at work and apply their knowledge of legislation, including GDPR, in their job roles. They demonstrate a high level of respect for their customers and take into account the needs of customers from all backgrounds when communicating with them.

Trainers provide useful training to apprentices on how to keep safe and how to recognise local risks. Most apprentices know about the dangers of drink spiking, sexual harassment, online radicalisation and the risks of right-wing and other forms of extremism. However, digital marketing apprentices are unclear about local risks, including radicalisation and extremism.

Around a third of apprentices have gone beyond their planned end date due to an increased workload or illness, including in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and trainers have put in place effective support to help apprentices who have fallen behind to help them catch up. This includes extra visits and contact with their employer to ensure that apprentices complete their work. As a result, almost all apprentices are catching up, and some are nearing completion of their apprenticeship.

Managers have not replaced the specialist tutor who has recently left the provider. As a result, few apprentices who need to pass mathematics examinations to complete their apprenticeship do not receive helpful enough support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place to keep apprentices safe. They have appointed an appropriately trained designated safeguarding lead who liaises with useful contacts in the local area. Leaders have recently created a safeguarding team to extend this knowledge and support throughout the organisation.

The system for recording causes for concerns and actions taken ensures that apprentices are safe.

Leaders and managers have in place an effective 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan.

Leaders ensure that they recruit staff who are safe and appropriate to work with apprentices. They ensure that staff receive appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training which is updated every two years.

Leaders have been too slow to raise proactively younger apprentices' awareness of the risks of sexual abuse and harassment and how they should report any concerns that they may have.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Take proactive action to raise younger apprentices' awareness of the risks of sexual abuse and harassment and how they should report any concerns that they may have.
- Provide better support for all apprentices who need to pass mathematics examinations so that a higher proportion are successful.
- Ensure that all apprentices are aware of the requirements of end-point assessment and are prepared well in advance of this.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1280344
Address	South Shields Business Works 201 Henry Robson Way South Shields NE33 1RF
Contact number	0191 490 6768
Website	www.zenithtraining.org.uk
CEO	Angela Anderson
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of operations, 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

Glenise Burrell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonny Wright

Her Majesty's Inspector

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