

# Inspection of Agility People Services Limited

Inspection dates:

12 to 14 January 2022

**Overall effectiveness****Inadequate**

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The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</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**

Agility People Services Limited is a provider of training and human resources services based in Middlesbrough. It is part of the Unity Limited group of companies. Before securing its own agreement to deliver apprenticeships in 2020, it was a subcontractor to other providers. At the time of the inspection, 15 apprentices were enrolled on standards-based apprenticeships. There were 11 apprentices on a level 3 team leader/supervisor programme, with the remainder on a level 5 operations departmental manager programme or a level 2 customer service practitioner programme. Agility People Services Limited provides apprenticeships to small businesses in Middlesbrough.

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

Trainers do not provide effective initial advice and guidance to prepare apprentices for the requirements of their apprenticeship, including how they will be assessed and how they practise their skills in the workplace. This results in too many apprentices leaving their programme early.

Trainers do not set clear enough expectations of behaviour for apprentices at the start of the programme. They do not ensure that apprentices develop the behaviours that they need to study independently. As a result, apprentices do not organise their time well enough, including when completing project work.

Because trainers provide only limited guidance on what apprentices need to do to achieve a high grade, too many apprentices lack ambition for their apprenticeship other than achieving a pass grade. Too many apprentices are not well motivated and do not challenge themselves beyond meeting the basic requirements of their programmes.

Apprentices show courtesy and respect to their peers, trainers and employers. Level 5 apprentices have a positive attitude to their learning and take responsibility for those they manage.

Apprentices feel safe and know whom they can contact should they have any concerns. They are confident that staff would take swift and appropriate action if they reported any issues or concerns.

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

Managers do not take effective action to ensure that apprentices receive a good quality of education. They do not identify weaknesses in the provision accurately enough or put in place effective actions to improve the teaching for apprentices. As a result of weak quality assurance arrangements, the quality of education that apprentices receive is inadequate.

Managers do not have high enough expectations for apprentices to be successful on their programmes. They do not ensure that apprentices receive adequate support to stay on and complete their programmes. Too many apprentices leave their programmes without reaching and completing their end-point assessment successfully.

Too many apprentices do not acquire significant new knowledge, skills or behaviours. Team leader/supervisor apprentices often already have the knowledge, prior to commencing their programme, that is covered through the qualification that they study alongside their apprenticeship.

Trainers do not plan or sequence the curriculum for team leaders and operational managers well enough to ensure that apprentices can apply in the workplace the

knowledge that they gain on their programmes. As a result, too many apprentices are unable to connect and apply the knowledge that they gain to the skills that they need in their jobs, and this hinders their development.

Trainers do not support apprentices well enough to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace. They do not devise appropriate learning activities. For example, instructions for workplace projects are poorly expressed and do not provide sufficient guidance. As a result, apprentices do not know how to apply their knowledge fluently, develop their understanding further or extend and improve their skills in the workplace.

Trainers do not use assessment effectively. They carry out little assessment, other than recording apprentices' completion of units of the qualification. In too many cases, apprentices do not receive guidance or feedback about the quality of their work, which means that they do not know how well they are doing or how to improve their work.

Trainers do not develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills effectively. They do not identify apprentices' starting points in English and mathematical skills beyond establishing prior qualifications, and they do not identify opportunities where these skills might be improved further. Apprentices who need to pass functional mathematics examinations for forthcoming end-point assessments do not receive support until very late in their programme and, for a considerable period, had no support at all.

Trainers do not monitor apprentices' progress well enough. They do not adequately record or revisit information about apprentices' progress during reviews and are too slow to put measures in place when apprentices have fallen behind. Too many apprentices do not know what their strengths or weaknesses are or what they need to do to improve. As a result, they make slow progress and are insufficiently prepared for the demands of their final assessments.

The few apprentices on the level 5 operations and departmental manager apprenticeship acquire appropriate new knowledge that they use in their management roles to become more effective in their workplaces. They learn how to adopt different management styles to manage people more effectively and how to delegate work to make departments run more smoothly.

Staff provide apprentices with relevant information linked to local risks and how to stay safe through 'hot topics' sessions. Apprentices know about the risks that they face locally, including knife crime, county lines and the risks of terrorism and extremism. As a result, apprentices can apply their understanding in their roles as team leaders and in their communities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers have put in place appropriate policies and procedures to keep apprentices safe. Staff responsible for safeguarding have appropriate experience and have participated in relevant training to support them in their role.

Managers ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices. They carry out appropriate background checks on new staff and regularly update staff Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Staff complete useful training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They keep up to date with local risks through helpful sources, including the local and national press and websites, and share this knowledge with apprentices.

Staff effectively supported apprentices who were working remotely during periods of COVID-19 restrictions. They provided helpful support and advice on how to stay mentally and physically healthy.

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

- Establish effective quality assurance procedures to identify and remedy weaknesses and ensure that apprentices benefit from a much better quality of education.
- Ensure that apprentices benefit from a well-sequenced, planned and organised curriculum that enables them to develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Ensure that trainers assess the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours effectively and accurately, and provide support to help apprentices to improve.
- Provide apprentices with helpful initial advice and guidance to prepare them for their apprenticeship effectively.
- Ensure that staff set high expectations for apprentices to stay on their apprenticeship and aim for highest possible grade at end-point assessment.
- Provide much more opportunity for apprentices to practise and develop their skills in the workplace.
- Ensure that trainers accurately monitor the progress that apprentices make and that they quickly take action to help apprentices who have fallen behind to catch up.
- Ensure that trainers support apprentices to develop and improve their English and mathematical skills.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58762
<b>Address</b>	Brunel House Brunel Road Middlesbrough TS6 6JA
<b>Contact number</b>	01642 697690
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.agility.uk.com">www.agility.uk.com</a>
<b>CEO</b>	Carolyn Scotchbrook
<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 managing 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

Jonny Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cath Jackson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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