

Inspection of Quest Vocational Training Limited

Inspection dates:

9 to 11, and 16 and 17 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Information about this provider

Very occasionally, Ofsted must pause an inspection because of an outbreak of COVID-19 or the need for personnel to isolate. For this reason, Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted Inspectors began this inspection 9 November, paused on 11 November, and completed activities between 16 and 17 November.

Quest Vocational Training (QVT) is a training provider based in Ferndown. QVT provides training for apprentices employed in health and social care, residential care, early years practitioner and, most recently, information technology technical sales (IT technical sales). Apprentices are taught and their skills assessed by trainers on their employers' premises.

At the time of the inspection, QVT had 675 apprentices, around two thirds of whom were studying an adult care programme at level 2 to 5. The remainder of apprentices were studying early years, residential care, or IT technical sales. A total of 187 apprentices were studying programmes at level 2, 331 at level 3, 120 at level 4 and 37 at level 5. Ninety-four apprentices were on a break in learning. One hundred and forty-eight apprentices had self-declared learning difficulties or disabilities. Almost all apprentices were adults over 18 years of age.

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

Far too many QVT apprentices, particularly the majority who work in adult care settings, are not making good progress at learning enough new knowledge or participating wholeheartedly in their programmes of learning. For example, apprentices are not consistently improving their English and mathematics skills, largely because they do not have enough direct support from trainers to enable them to use the online learning system effectively.

Apprentices' knowledge of fundamental British values, and the risks associated with radicalisation and exploitation are not routinely revisited by trainers during the apprenticeship. This means apprentices do not always remember or understand fully, such knowledge. Young apprentices have an insufficient knowledge of what sexual harm is and what constitutes a healthy relationship. Apprentices do not recall being provided with information, advice and guidance about their career paths during their programme.

However, many apprentices have grown in resilience, confidence and strength of character because of their apprenticeship. This is despite the continuing pandemic. Apprentices' knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusive working is nurtured well by trainers during one-to-one taught sessions and in the reviews of the progress they have made. Apprentices understand the importance of treating those in their care with respect and act accordingly.

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 must complete their studies in their own time, contrary to funding rules.

Leaders have not ensured that the training for adult care apprentices is good enough. While QVT staff are passionate about the adult care sector and understand well the challenges faced by apprentices and employers due to Covid 19, they have not planned, adjusted, or implemented the curriculum well enough. Leaders have not ensured that all employers provide apprentices with enough time to study and learn. Leaders have not yet implemented the new curriculum devised for level 2 and level 3 care apprentices, which means apprentices are not all developing the new knowledge and skills they need.

Leaders recognise that teaching and improvement of most apprentices' skills in functional English and mathematics have not been and are not yet effective. Their overall action plan for improving this provision has only recently been implemented and has had little impact. As a result, apprentices are not improving these essential skills quickly enough. This is also leading to delays in them completing their apprenticeship in the required time.

Training for care apprentices is based too much on training them to pass units of their qualification, rather than developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. Too many apprentices who already have extensive experience of the care sector are not learning anything new. Most care apprentices do not enjoy learning online, which is their main form of teaching. Trainers provide apprentices with online learning because employers are not providing them with sufficient time off work to participate in face-to-face learning sessions. As a result, these apprentices have become unenthusiastic and demotivated about learning and are making slow or little progress.

Almost all care apprentices are not getting their apprenticeship entitlement to off-the-job training. Instead, they complete assignments at home in their own time, which is sometimes in addition to working very long hours.

Employers are not routinely involved in the review of care apprentices' progress. As a result, they are not providing apprentices with the opportunities for training, which would help them achieve their qualification and develop further their skills and knowledge.

Leaders and managers recognise that they cannot easily identify how much progress care apprentices make from their starting points. Apprentices have an individual learning plan but are unsure what they are used for. Consequently, they have not been completed for some time. A new system has been introduced to capture apprentices' own views on what they have learned over time in work and training, but it is very new and has had no impact.

Care apprentices receive an extensive and well-resourced induction, which helps them understand their learning programme and its content. However, this is designed for apprentice self-study rather than being taught by trainers. Consequently, apprentices do not always understand the content in any depth. In addition, not all apprentices are sufficiently informed about aspects such as the length of the apprenticeship or what to expect during the end-point assessment stage. Apprentices are given extensive information on fundamental British values and the risks associated with radicalisation and exploitation. However, their introduction to safeguarding during induction is cursory. As a result, apprentices have limited recall of how to keep themselves safe.

Care apprentices who have difficulty learning and remembering knowledge of mathematics and English receive high-quality intensive, and usually individualised, support from a small team of specialist trainers. The feedback to learners is not an accurate assessment of their current skills levels. Consequently, too many apprentices have an unrealistic expectation about when they will be ready to take and pass their mathematics exam, particularly at level 2.

QVT's governance arrangements are not effective. Governors are aware of the provider's weaknesses, but they have not challenged leaders strongly enough to

respond to the challenges posed because of the pandemic and to make swift adjustments and improvements in the quality of provision.

Apprentices with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities who started in the past six months have received good support from trainers, which has helped them to learn and achieve. However, the majority who started earlier have not had the same good support throughout their programmes. Leaders and managers have not monitored their progress and are therefore unaware of how learners have been affected.

Trainers provide IT technical sales apprentices with coherent and well-planned on- and off-the-job training, using face-to-face and online teaching approaches. However, provider records show that most IT technical sales apprentices are not participating in meetings to review their progress. Consequently, apprentices are not always collating key evidence to demonstrate their learning, do not always know their overall progress or know what achievement grades they are likely to achieve.

The small number of early years apprentices are developing rapidly and learning new knowledge, skills and behaviours compared to their starting points. Leaders have designed a curriculum that is well taught. The curriculum has a logical sequence and is well resourced. As a result, apprentices are prepared well for higher levels of learning, to secure full-time employment and to take on additional responsibilities, such as becoming a room or pod leader.

Residential care apprentices have a largely positive experience of their programme. Leaders have developed a robust curriculum plan and English and mathematics are integrated well into learning and teaching. Each apprentice is involved in shaping their monthly training plan to ensure that it meets their individual development needs. As a result, apprentices are better able to deal with workplace challenges. For example, they are confident in dealing with on-call situations and incidents in the care home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed coherent policies for safeguarding. Staff understand and implement these policies effectively to ensure that apprentices are safe. Staff are appropriately trained and experienced to undertake their safeguarding roles. The senior leader responsible for safeguarding takes appropriate actions when a concern regarding an apprentice is raised, and the concern is dealt with well.

Apprentices safeguarding knowledge is not consistently understood and is not sector specific. They are introduced to safeguarding as part of their induction, and the curriculum includes topics such as staying safe in their daily lives. Trainers have recently introduced specific guidance for those learners that are 16 to 18 years old. All apprentices have access to online safeguarding resources on a self-directed learning basis. However, trainers do not routinely monitor whether apprentices have

accessed these resources or understand the content fully. Consequently, trainers do not know how much has been retained in apprentices' long-term memory.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should urgently implement their plans to tackle the significant weaknesses in the provision, continually measure the impact of the actions on the quality of education and training and ensure that governors hold them to account for the speedy success of these plans.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that staff implement the new curriculum effectively so that all adult care apprentices demonstrate high levels of motivation, become fully involved in their learning and make good or better progress in developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Leaders and managers should immediately involve employers in all aspects of the apprenticeship programme, and insist that employers provide apprentices the time they are entitled to and need to study and learn.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices make substantial and sustained progress compared with their assessed starting points and acquire the new skills and knowledge they need to be highly effective at work and prepared well for their career.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276417
Address	Ground Floor West Peartree Business Centre Cobham Road Ferndown Industrial Estate Ferndown BH21 7PT
Contact number	01202 237378
Website	www.quest-vocational-training.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Carolyn Maple
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	No subcontracted provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by Quest Vocational Training's performance and quality 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 apprentices' work, seeking the views of apprentices, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Russell Shobrook, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Crombie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Wardle	Ofsted Inspector
Ray Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Manning	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Deary	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Wills	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Paxton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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