

# Inspection of PLT Training Ltd

Inspection dates:

2 to 4 March 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

PLT Training Ltd, under the name PLT Business Ltd, is a private training provider based in Wolverhampton. The provider has had a contract to run apprenticeships since 2019. At the time of the visit, there were 137 apprentices in learning on standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 91 were studying adult care at levels 2, 3 and 5. All apprentices studying care-related programmes work in domiciliary care, providing care within service users' homes. Exactly 39 apprentices were studying the team leader standard at level 3. The remaining seven apprentices were studying the customer service specialist standard at level 3 and the operations or departmental managers standard at level 5. The vast majority of apprentices are based in the West Midlands and East Midlands. Almost all apprentices work within the care sector. PLT Training Ltd does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Although apprentices develop some new, useful knowledge that supports them in their day-to-day job roles, the curriculum is too narrowly focused on the completion of a qualification as part of the apprenticeship. Apprentices are not supported well enough to develop their wider skills and behaviours.

Senior leaders have not taken the required steps to ensure that employers are sufficiently involved in the planning and ongoing teaching of the apprenticeship. Too many apprentices face challenges in having sufficient time to focus on their learning. Too many apprentices complete work in their own time, on evenings and weekends, to catch up with their work.

Apprentices do not receive impartial and useful careers advice and guidance. Apprentices do not understand fully the wide range of careers and roles within the care sector. Their understanding of this is limited to the immediate environment in which they are employed.

Apprentices highly value the support they receive from their coaches, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apprentices have reacted positively to recent changes brought about by leaders and managers to make teaching sessions more frequent and shorter. Apprentices' attendance has improved as a result of such changes.

Apprentices feel safe. They develop their confidence and resilience over time.

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

Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum they provide. They offer apprenticeship standards in care to support apprentices new to the care sector, and to support apprentices to move into management. Since the new provider monitoring visit (NPMV) in May 2021, new senior leaders are now in place. Although they have started to take the steps needed to improve the quality of education that apprentices receive, progress has not yet been sufficiently rapid to ensure that all apprentices benefit from a coherently planned and well-taught curriculum.

Senior leaders and skills coaches do not ensure that all apprentices benefit from a well-planned programme. The emphasis of skills coaches is too narrowly focused on the completion of an embedded qualification within each apprenticeship standard. Skills coaches teach the content within the units of the qualification and then assess apprentices' knowledge of this. However, skills coaches do not revisit content frequently enough so that apprentices develop long-term knowledge.

Skills coaches do not focus sufficiently well on developing apprentices' skills and behaviours. Although apprentices do develop some useful new knowledge, such as developing their understanding of key legislation within the care sector, apprentices

are not supported well enough to improve their behaviours and skills. As a result, apprentices are not prepared well enough for their final assessments.

Senior leaders and skills coaches do not clearly identify what apprentices already know and can do when they start the programme. Senior leaders do undertake a 'skills scan' with apprentices, but this is not sufficiently thorough. Senior leaders and skills coaches do not use the information they gain from skills scans to plan learning. Where apprentices already have experience working within the care sector, skills coaches do not support these apprentices to make more rapid progress.

Senior leaders work well with employers at the beginning of the apprenticeship. For example, senior leaders work with employers involved in the level 3 lead adult care worker standard to select optional units which closely match apprentices' job roles. However, senior leaders and skills coaches do not involve employers well enough in the ongoing teaching of the apprenticeship. Employers are not routinely involved in apprentices' reviews. Employers do not know well enough the progress that apprentices are making.

Skills coaches do not link on- and off-the-job training well enough. Skills coaches too frequently teach knowledge in isolation from what apprentices are doing in the workplace. Consequently, apprentices are not making as rapid progress from their starting points as their potential would indicate.

Senior leaders and skills coaches do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of apprentices' English and mathematics skills. Senior leaders have invested in an online platform to support apprentices to use learning resources to help address any gaps in learning. However, skills coaches do not review and track apprentices' progress. Apprentices do not get access to enough support outside of the online learning platform to help them. As a result, apprentices do not improve their English and mathematics as quickly as they could, particularly in mathematics.

Skills coaches do not provide precise and developmental feedback to apprentices on their work. Skills coaches focus on whether apprentices' work has met assessment criteria. Where skills coaches judge this to be the case, feedback is very limited. As a result, apprentices are not supported to produce high-quality work. In too many cases, the standard of apprentices' work does not improve over time.

Skills coaches and apprentices have reacted with great tenacity in response to the pandemic. Many apprentices have responded with great resilience when met with increased working pressures. However, too many apprentices do not develop the aspirations to want to achieve as well as they could. Senior leaders and skills coaches do not communicate high aspirations to apprentices. Too many apprentices are not aware of the high grades they can achieve in their final assessments and do not know what they need to do to achieve them.

Senior leaders and skills coaches do not make sure that apprentices receive unbiased and high-quality careers advice and guidance. Senior leaders have not taken the steps required since the NPMV to address this. Apprentices do not

understand well enough the full range of job roles within the care sector, and what they need to do to work towards such job roles.

Senior leaders have taken some positive steps since the NPMV to improve the quality of education apprentices receive. For example, apprentices now benefit from shorter, more frequent teaching sessions. Where this is the case, apprentices benefit from recapping learning more regularly. As a result, they learn and know more. Apprentices told inspectors how the shorter sessions are more flexible around increased working demands.

Senior leaders have not yet taken the required steps to improve the quality of teaching apprentices receive. The current quality assurance of teaching focuses on the progress apprentices make in one lesson, rather than the progress that apprentices make over time from their starting points. Senior leaders recognise this and the need to revisit how they judge the effectiveness of teaching.

Senior leaders have ensured skills coaches benefit from some useful generalised professional development and training. For example, skills coaches now use a range of interactive technologies more effectively within their teaching to assess apprentices' progress. However, senior leaders do not ensure that skills coaches receive targeted professional development which is linked closely to the outcomes of quality improvement processes.

Senior leaders set out the actions they want to take to improve the quality of provision. However, too many actions are not precise enough. It is not always clear exactly what senior leaders need to do. Actions do not always have clear timeframes for completion. As a result, senior leaders have not always been sufficiently prompt in taking steps to improve the quality of provision. Too many apprentices still receive poor-quality teaching.

Since the NPMV, senior leaders have taken steps to improve governance. Senior leaders benefit from the support and scrutiny of a 'critical friend'. For example, a new self-assessment process is now in place. Senior leaders now have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provider. However, recently, this arrangement has stopped due to the critical friend becoming operational within the business. Senior leaders understand the need to fill this vacant critical friend role urgently.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and skills coaches make sure apprentices work safely within the care sector. All apprentices benefit from safeguarding training very early in their programme. For example, skills coaches support apprentices to understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. However, skills coaches do not support apprentices to be able to apply this understanding to their everyday lives. As a result, too many apprentices do not remember this information.

Senior leaders have a clear safeguarding policy and procedure for reporting any safeguarding concerns. A well-trained designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is in place. The DSL has taken positive steps to improve links with key local safeguarding agencies.

Senior leaders have in place a clear recruitment process so that they recruit only those who are safe to work with apprentices. Senior leaders undertake relevant pre-employment checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Senior leaders understand their responsibilities linked to the 'Prevent' duty. For example, senior leaders have clear processes in place if they need to refer any concerns to 'Channel'. However, senior leaders need to formalise their responsibilities urgently through a 'Prevent' risk assessment.

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

- Skills coaches must support apprentices to develop the full range of knowledge, skills and behaviours. They should provide more frequent opportunities for apprentices to revisit and recap their learning.
- Senior leaders must involve employers more closely in the ongoing teaching of the apprenticeship. Employers must be involved in the reviews that skills coaches undertake with apprentices.
- Senior leaders and skills coaches must revisit how well on- and off-the-job training are planned. They need to make sure that they are closely linked, in order that apprentices develop long-term knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Leaders need to prioritise the development of apprentices' English and mathematical skills, in order that apprentices start to develop these skills from the beginning of their programme.
- Senior leaders need to take the steps to ensure that they benefit from external challenge and scrutiny in the form of governance.
- Senior leaders and skills coaches must urgently revisit how they support apprentices to understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism in their everyday lives. Senior leaders must formalise their approach to the 'Prevent' duty through appropriate risk assessment.

## **Provider details**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | 2626824   |
| <b>Address</b>                     | Fallings Park Industrial Estate<br>Park Lane<br>Wolverhampton<br>WV10 9QB |
| <b>Contact number</b>              | 01902 862777  |
| <b>Website</b>                     | <a href="http://www.plttraining.co.uk">www.plttraining.co.uk</a>          |
| <b>Chief Executive</b>             | Steve White   |
| <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 operations manager, 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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