

Inspection of Workpays Limited

Inspection dates: 10 to 13 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Workpays Limited was established in 2010. It provides employability courses for adult learners in centres across the East Midlands region, and apprenticeships across the whole of England.

At the time of the inspection, there were 52 adult learners studying in Leicester and Derby. There were 136 apprentices, of whom 56 were on the level 4 associate project manager programme, 30 on the level 2 financial services customer adviser programme and 25 on the level 3 senior financial services customer adviser programme. The remaining 25 apprentices were on the level 3 business administrator programme, the level 2 customer service practitioner programme, the level 3 team leader programme, and the level 5 operations manager programme.

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

Learners and apprentices enjoy attending their lessons. Most are positive about studying, are well motivated and value their learning. They are very satisfied with the quality of the tuition that they receive.

Managers have created a culture in which staff care about their learners and apprentices and support them well. Tutors enjoy good relationships with their learners, and they continually focus on meeting the needs of each individual.

Learners and apprentices benefit from the good work that staff undertake with a number of stakeholders, including employers, the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus and local authorities. Because of this work, staff know what skills, knowledge and behaviours learners really need. As a result, a good proportion of adult learners gain the knowledge and skills that they need to move into employment, and apprentices are able to take on additional responsibilities and gain promotion.

Adult learners improve their social skills and confidence. Apprentices, especially those who are young and new to the workplace, develop their understanding of professional behaviours and etiquette.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They receive appropriate guidance on a range of safeguarding themes, such as sexual consent, and how to protect themselves when dealing with aggressive customers. They know whom to contact if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will deal appropriately and sensitively with any problems.

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

Managers and tutors plan most aspects of the curriculum well. Adult learning tutors focus their planning on the key skills and knowledge that each individual learner needs to develop. Apprenticeship staff carefully sequence the knowledge elements of courses, so that apprentices gain the insights that they need for later studies. However, tutors do not do enough to plan how they will improve apprentices' practical skills or how on- and off-the-job training will be linked.

Staff have high expectations of their learners. Adult learning tutors take care to understand learners' starting points and ensure that the curriculum challenges them. Tutors ensure that apprenticeship programmes contain a range of ambitious content, and they make use of work-based projects to challenge apprentices even more.

Adult learning tutors identify and support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they can make as much progress as their peers. Arrangements to identify apprentices with SEND are not clear enough, however. Managers rely on training and development coaches (TDCs) to provide support, but these individuals do not necessarily have the knowledge and skills that they require

to give apprentices the specific help that they need.

Most tutors and TDCs are appropriately qualified and experienced. They use their knowledge well to teach stimulating lessons. In particular, those working with financial services customer adviser apprentices have very good industry knowledge that they use particularly well to provide real-world examples that enliven their teaching.

Tutors use a wide range of approaches and materials that help learners to gain a clear understanding of topics. They provide clear explanations and help apprentices to remember a large amount of technical detail.

Adult learning tutors make good use of spoken questioning to check learners' comprehension. They give immediate feedback that helps learners to clarify their understanding. They also set and mark written tasks in learners' workbooks, but their written feedback does not always provide the right information to help learners to improve their work. Apprenticeship staff check learning effectively through homework and professional discussions during monthly support meetings.

Adult learning tutors review topics from previous lessons and set tasks that require learners to practise the things that they have studied. For example, in personal and social development courses, learners participate in small-group tasks and projects that build on their skills. TDCs set frequent written assignments for apprentices that revisit lesson content, and they ask questions about previous topics to reinforce learning.

A very high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications. Although no apprentices on the associate project manager programme have finished their course yet, many have passed their professional qualifications.

Staff work with many adult learners who have spent a long time out of education and who face multiple barriers to study. Consequently, their achievement of qualifications is mixed, with low achievement rates for a few qualifications. Nevertheless, most adult learners produce work of a good standard and demonstrate a clear understanding of topics. Most apprentices develop a good understanding of complex material and produce high-quality work.

Staff have a very professional approach and develop a good rapport with learners and apprentices. This, and their use of a range of interesting and engaging lesson activities, lead to a positive climate in lessons.

During initial briefings, tutors set clear expectations for adult learners in terms of attendance and behaviour. Staff who work with younger apprentices establish sensible ground rules that help apprentices to settle into constructive ways of working. Apprentices attend well, but a few adult learners do not, and arrangements to help them to catch up with missed work are not wholly effective.

Adult learning tutors use a set of resources about current affairs topics to foster

discussions that help learners to gain a greater appreciation of a range of themes related to British values. They also invite occasional guest speakers to talk to learners about themes such as sexual exploitation. Apprenticeship programmes embed these topics within apprentices' vocational studies.

Apprentices develop their confidence as they increase their skills and knowledge and learn to apply these in their workplaces. Adult learning tutors help learners to develop their confidence through recognising the skills that learners already have and by helping them to eliminate negative self-talk.

Most adult learners benefit from extensive careers information and guidance, which helps them to secure employment. Tutors work with Jobcentre Plus staff to ensure that learners receive good advice. Many vocational training courses have a focus on specific job openings, and learners have interviews with prospective employers at the end. On the other hand, apprenticeship staff do not do enough to provide apprentices with good careers advice. Although apprentices discuss their career plans with TDCs, these discussions often lack the detail that apprentices need to plan for their future.

Managers have established a range of mostly suitable quality assurance processes that include standardisation meetings, learner forums, observations of teaching and quarterly reviews of the self-assessment report and the quality improvement plan (QIP). However, not all of these processes work as well as they might. For example, lesson observations do not focus enough on the quality of teaching and do not result in appropriate development plans. Managers have recognised that the QIP is too large and unwieldy and have recently introduced a new, more focused replacement.

Leaders have recently established an advisory board that has a clear purpose and suitable terms of reference. Board members have a balance of finance, business and education backgrounds and have started to provide leaders and managers with a good level of challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have developed appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures and have implemented these to create an effective culture of safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead is suitably senior and all staff who have safeguarding roles undertake appropriate training. They deal appropriately with the few safeguarding cases that arise.

Managers follow safer recruitment procedures and provide training for new employees. Staff provide learners and apprentices with clear guidance on a range of safeguarding topics.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Staff who teach apprentices should give greater consideration to how they plan training that develops apprentices' practical skills and how this can be linked to practical activities in the workplace.
- Managers should strengthen arrangements to identify apprentices' additional learning needs, provide them with appropriate help and monitor the impact of the support that they give.
- Managers should provide training to help adult learning tutors to provide effective written feedback and better support for those learners who miss lessons.
- Managers should strengthen arrangements for providing apprentices with careers information, advice and guidance, especially in relation to how they can progress with their current employer, and in what they might do if they decide to pursue a different career.
- Managers should further develop those quality assurance processes that do not yet contribute sufficiently to improvement. For example, they should ensure that lesson observations focus more on the quality of teaching, and they should ensure that the replacement for the current QIP leads to a sharp focus on improvement.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1270891
Address	Floors 1 and 2 4 Babington Lane Derby DE1 1SU
Contact number	07860 956663
Website	www.workpays.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Anne Wright (Managing Director)
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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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