

# Inspection of Nova Payroll Management Services Limited

Inspection dates:

24 to 26 May 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Nova Payroll Management Services, trading as Pinpoint Training, is an independent learning provider based in Gateshead. It started recruiting apprentices in 2017. At the time of inspection, there were nine apprentices enrolled on adult care and business administration and management programmes. All apprentices are aged 19 and over, and are based in Gateshead, Middlesbrough and Cheshire.

Since the previous monitoring visit, leaders have largely paused recruitment onto apprenticeships in order to review the provision strategically. They have enrolled fewer than five apprentices onto level 3 programmes in recruitment, team leader and business administration and a level 5 programme in operations manager. This is in anticipation of the planned relaunch of their apprenticeship provision in September 2022.

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

The majority of apprentices have positive attitudes to learning, resulting in a high level of commitment to their programmes. They build mutually respectful relationships with their skills coaches. The small number of apprentices recruited recently speak highly of the support that they receive from their coaches and consider that they go beyond their expectations to broaden their knowledge.

Apprentices have built their resilience effectively through the support of skills coaches, managers, leaders and employers. This has made them more able to deal with change. For example, apprentices on business-related programmes have grown in confidence and become more able to manage the significant changes to their roles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Apprentices in care demonstrate these skills in their own workplaces, supporting adults with complex learning difficulties, and in their determination to stay on programme with the aim to complete.

Apprentices feel safe. They know how they should report concerns and are confident that such concerns would be dealt with promptly. Skills coaches frequently discuss safety and well-being with apprentices in one-to-one meetings and reviews.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that apprentices in care benefit from a high-quality personal development curriculum. These apprentices have not received sufficient careers guidance and are unclear about their potential next career steps. They have been deterred from seeking further training due to their experience on the apprenticeship programme. Conversely, apprentices recruited more recently have a broad knowledge of topics related to their personal development and apply this in their workplaces. Many of these apprentices are eager to do further training.

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

Leaders did not plan the curriculum effectively for standards-based apprenticeships in care when they began to offer these programmes. They did not have the necessary understanding and oversight to identify issues quickly and, consequently, they did not intervene soon enough when apprentices began to fall behind. The slow progress that apprentices in care have made was evident before the pandemic, but was further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, and all apprentices are past their planned end date. However, new leaders, managers and skills coaches have recently taken effective action, and these apprentices on these programmes are now making more rapid progress towards completion of their apprenticeships.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices in care have experienced a consistently high quality of training during their time on the programme, and this has contributed to apprentices' slow progress. New skills coaches are helping apprentices to fill gaps in their knowledge and update topics where their knowledge is out of date. For example, skills coaches teach apprentices about the General Data Protection Regulation as the legislation has changed since apprentices were first taught about it.

Leaders have developed positive working relationships with a wide range of employers and external bodies across different sectors and communicate frequently with them. They use the knowledge that they gain from their discussions to inform curriculum decisions that are responsive to the skills needed locally and regionally.

Leaders and managers have now devised a clear curriculum strategy, focusing on developing the skills, knowledge and behaviours that apprentices need to be successful in their current job roles and future careers. Managers and skills coaches adapt the order of the curriculum to individual apprentices' needs and interests, such as bringing the teaching of the recruitment process forward for apprentices who are about to recruit new staff.

The few apprentices who have been recruited recently are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours, and they use them confidently in their job roles. They often take on more responsibility in the workplace. For example, apprentices on business-related programmes learn about managing finance and have begun to be involved in tasks such as budgeting and invoice management. These apprentices are making expected progress and developing the professional and personal skills that they need in their jobs and future careers.

Skills coaches for English and mathematics have recently developed and are beginning to use high-quality resources in their teaching. They have developed curriculum plans which they adapt appropriately based on their effective assessment of apprentices' knowledge and skills.

The new leadership team has a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision. Their recent actions demonstrate decisiveness, integrity and ambition for their apprentices. There is now an established culture of improvement for the organisation. Leaders learn from their experiences to improve the provision and from the mistakes of previous leaders.

Recently, leaders and managers have recruited new skills coaches with experience in their sector and relevant teaching qualifications. Leaders and managers have a supportive approach to staff well-being and implement effective training for learner-facing and office-based staff. This includes the monthly 'Pinpoint Reflect' sessions about local risks and relevant current affairs, which is shared with apprentices, staff and employers, and discussed in reviews and staff meetings. Skills coaches have two 'back to the floor' days to update their sector knowledge.

The arrangements for governance are relatively new. Those in a governance role provide scrutiny by asking pertinent and challenging questions of leaders. Governors meet quarterly and are focused on learners, the quality of provision and the strategic goal of securing and sustaining long-term employment. They undertake relevant training in topics such as safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and equality and diversity.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead and designated safeguarding officer have appropriate training to be effective in their roles. They work well with a range of partners, such as regional safeguarding boards and the regional 'Prevent' coordinator. They circulate monthly updates to apprentices, staff and employers about local and national risks.

Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding policies in place, with clear reporting procedures. Apprentices know how to report concerns. Leaders and managers implement safe recruitment practices to ensure that staff are appropriate to work with apprentices.

Staff complete effective training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They use information from the training well to ensure that apprentices understand safeguarding and potential risks in and out of the workplace.

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

- Ensure that apprentices on care programmes make good progress and achieve their qualifications quickly.
- Ensure that the new processes for monitoring progress are effective and that staff intervene swiftly if apprentices fall behind.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive appropriate careers guidance.
- Continue to implement the new curriculum in English and mathematics so that apprentices develop their knowledge and skills in these subjects.

## Provider details

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<b>Managing Director</b>	Stephen Hall
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the employability and skills director, 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

Karen Anderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Keen

Ofsted Inspector

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