

Inspection of London Cactus Limited

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 June 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

London Cactus Limited (LCL) is an independent training provider based in north-west London. They provide apprenticeship training in health and social care for a small number of apprentices. At the time of the inspection, there were seven apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2, 3 and 5. There were five apprentices on the level 5 leader in adult care apprenticeship. Most apprentices are employed at a care agency which is a sister company of LCL.

At the new provider monitoring visit in March 2021, inspectors judged LCL to have made insufficient progress in their leadership and management of the apprenticeship programmes, and in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Following the monitoring visit, the director recruited new operational staff and took on the direct management of the apprenticeship training.

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

Apprentices have experienced much disruption to their training since they started. As a result, they are behind in their studies. However, over the last year the director and staff have provided apprentices with intensive support that has helped them to catch up on their studies and make progress.

Apprentices receive frequent support from assessors individually and in small groups. This support takes place at times that suit apprentices' personal circumstances and work commitments. As a result, apprentices attend well, gain and remember the knowledge they need to complete their studies.

Apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to make a valuable contribution at work. Employers recognise how well apprentices apply what they have learned in the workplace. For example, apprentices organise and chair meetings effectively and become more effective team leaders. They learn strategies so that they can meet the different care needs of clients and treat them with dignity. They grow in confidence in their roles, and a few achieve promotion at work.

Apprentices benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities. For example, they complete additional qualifications such as in end-of-life care, dementia awareness and dealing with challenging behaviour. Consequently, they carry out their duties with more confidence. However, apprentices have limited opportunities to develop their talents and interests outside the core curriculum.

Apprentices feel safe and know who to turn to should they have a concern about their own or others' welfare.

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

The director and staff ensure that the training meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship programme. Apprentices' line managers are frequently involved in reviewing the progress their apprentices make. They are aware of their responsibilities towards apprentices. As a result, apprentices receive the time they need during work to complete their studies.

The director and staff have successfully tackled the key weaknesses identified at the monitoring visit. However, there is a lack of management capacity at operational level. This means that not all the areas for improvement have been addressed. For example, there is not a comprehensive and effective schedule of activities to improve all aspects of the quality of education that apprentices receive.

The director and staff have put in place effective support so that apprentices build their knowledge securely. For example, assessors compare the content of apprentices' assignments to the assessment criteria in order to identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge. They discuss these with employers and apprentices. They

then revisit taught content with individuals and in small groups. As a result, apprentices make reasonable progress in their studies.

The director and assessor have significant experience and expertise in the health and social care sector. They use this well to make links between theory and practice. For example, they link aspects of the health and safety legislation to domiciliary risk assessments that apprentices complete at work. They give clear explanations of topics and repeat taught content when apprentices do not understand. As a result, apprentices remember what they are taught.

The director and assessors ensure that apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance. They provide up-to-date information to apprentices about their next steps. As a result, apprentices have a good understanding about further learning and jobs in the health and social care sector.

Apprentices with additional needs, such as dyslexia, are supported effectively so that they achieve. For example, they are given recorded audio feedback that helps them better understand key concepts and they are given more time, when appropriate, to complete written assignments.

Apprentices do not have sufficient knowledge of their progress on the course and do not receive good enough feedback following reviews. As a result, they are unclear of what grades they are working towards or how they achieve high grades.

The director has been slow to put in place effective support for apprentices to develop their written English. Assessors do not correct apprentices' spelling or grammatical errors in their written work. As a result, apprentices keep making the same mistakes.

Governance arrangements are underdeveloped. The director meets frequently with the staff team to review the operational delivery of the provision. Consequently, the director understands most of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, the director has been too slow to implement plans to develop a board of directors to provide further scrutiny of the provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that they have suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan. They have suitable guidance for staff on what to do to respond to safeguarding concerns. Leaders undertake all the necessary pre-employment checks to ensure that new staff are suitable to work with apprentices.

Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding. They know what to do should they identify apprentices with any safeguarding or welfare concerns. However, there have been no incidents of safeguarding, so the policies are untested.

Apprentices develop a good understanding of safeguarding and the dangers of radicalisation. As a result, they can spot the signs that indicate a vulnerable service user is being groomed.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

Leaders should:

- increase the capacity at middle management level to provide effective management of the training provision and thereby avoid disruption to apprentices' learning and progress
- put in place effective support for apprentices to develop their written English
- ensure that staff provide apprentices with feedback at reviews so that they know what progress they are making
- develop governance arrangements so that they provide effective scrutiny and accountability of the provision.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1237111
Address	1st Floor Spectra House 10 Spring Villa Park London HA8 7EB
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Website	www.mycccollege.com
CEO	Edith Fongho
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, 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

Jon Bowman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Agnes Joseph

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