

# 8Point8 Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Chloe Rendall, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

8Point8 Training Limited is an independent training provider that delivers apprenticeships for the telecommunications sector. It received a contract to deliver standards-based apprenticeships in 2019 and commenced delivery in February 2021. There are currently 40 apprentices, of whom 20 are on level 2 wireless communications rigger and eight are on level 3 business administrator. The remaining 12 apprentices are on level 2 lean manufacturer, level 3 customer service specialist, level 3 team leader or supervisor, level 3 IT technical salesperson and level 5 operations or departmental manager. All apprentices are aged 16 or over and are employed nationally in the telecommunications industry.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a clear rationale to provide ambitious apprenticeships that train employees for specialist roles in the telecommunications industry. They work closely with employers to understand the unique needs of the sectors in which they work. Leaders then identify and select curriculum content that focuses closely on apprentices' acquisition of specific knowledge and skills that are needed in the telecommunications industry. Leaders and managers ensure that employers commit fully to apprenticeship programmes and understand their roles and responsibilities in providing well-planned on-the-job training and access to off-the-job training.

Leaders ensure that they have the resources needed to deliver specialist apprenticeships. Level 2 wireless communication rigger apprentices benefit from attending practical placement training at a dedicated learning facility and are trained to work safely at height before learning the skills and knowledge required for building and rigging masts and other telecommunications structures.

Leaders are held accountable for the quality of provision by a governance advisory board. Members of the board challenge leaders, ensuring that apprenticeships remain a key priority in strategic planning.

Leaders have sufficient understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. Following careful consideration, they take the actions needed to rectify aspects that they identify as needing improvement, such as apprentices' accuracy in recording the off-the-job activities in which they participate. However, leaders rightly acknowledge that they need to improve further their oversight, and that of tutors and trainers, of apprentices' progress towards achieving the highest possible grades at the end of their programme.

Leaders and managers recruit staff who have extensive experience in the telecommunications industry. Trainers are knowledgeable about administrative, managerial and technological telecommunications remits. They frequently participate in professional development activities in their areas of specialism to inform the training that apprentices receive. However, as leaders recognise, staff have insufficient access to appropriate training to enhance their teaching skills.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress**

Trainers identify apprentices' starting points well and ensure that they are on the right programme by carefully identifying gaps in knowledge and skills. They sequence learning effectively, ensuring that apprentices develop and consolidate strong work-related skills over time, which are valued by their employers. For example, level 3 business administration apprentices are carefully interviewed by trainers to determine the prior experience, skills and relevant qualifications that they have before enrolling on the most suitable apprenticeship. Trainers then plan on- and off-the-job training with employers to ensure that apprentices develop new occupationally specific skills which support administrative functions of the telecommunications industry.

Trainers coach and guide apprentices well to improve their effectiveness in the workplace. They plan training carefully to meet employers' needs and to ensure that apprentices benefit from learning about a wide range of aspects of their job roles, which make them more employable. For example, trainers on the level 2 wireless communications rigger apprenticeship teach about specific employer-preferred industry testing models when planning the curriculum. They then introduce apprentices to other sector testing models so that apprentices understand different methods, tools and systems used by other employers in the industry.

Trainers are mindful of apprentices who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide relevant support. For example, functional skills tutors help

apprentices who struggle to focus by providing them with coping strategies which help them to prepare for their examinations.

Apprentices and their employers are made aware of the requirements of the apprenticeship, including how to complete end-point-assessment successfully. Trainers use practical and theoretical assessment well to determine the progress that apprentices make. However, while most apprentices achieve at pass grade, the majority of apprentices do not know what they need to do to attain higher grades, as trainers do not provide apprentices with specific-enough feedback to help them to work towards achieving distinction grades.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress**

Leaders, managers and staff have developed a supportive and inclusive safeguarding culture and apprentices feel safe and are safe. They provide useful information to apprentices, covering topics such as keeping safe from risks of grooming, recognising inappropriate sexualised behaviour, and how to remain safe from being drawn into extremist behaviour. Designated safeguarding leads respond quickly and appropriately to safeguarding referrals made by staff and ensure that apprentices who are potentially exposed to safeguarding risks are kept safe.

Tutors ensure that practical workshops sessions are safely planned and implemented. Level 2 wireless communications rigger apprentices know how to operate safely in their roles when working at height.

Leaders take swift actions to reduce the risks that apprentices may face, in line with policies. Staff are recruited safely, and suitable arrangements are in place should any staff member disclose a safeguarding-related matter pertinent to working with young people and vulnerable adults.

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