

Softools Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2654197
Name of lead inspector:	Carolyn Brownsea, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection date:	26 October 2022
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Greenlands Hambleden Henley-on-Thames RG9 3AU

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 follow-up safeguarding monitoring visit has been carried out consequent to the provider being found to be making insufficient progress with respect to safeguarding at their previous monitoring visit. It follows the arrangements outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook'.

The focus of this visit is only on the safeguarding theme below.

Softools Limited is an independent learning provider based in Henley-on-Thames. It has held a contract to teach apprenticeships for levy-paying employers since 2019. At the time of the visit, there were 11 apprentices across two employers, all of whom were over the age of 19. Ten were following the operations or departmental manager standard at level 5, and one apprentice was following the team leader or supervisor standard at level 3.

Theme

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

Leaders have acted swiftly to complete a full review of their safeguarding arrangements. They have produced an effective action plan for improvement. Many of these actions have already been implemented. For example, all staff have completed an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, and safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training.

A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy are now in place and have recently completed suitable training. The DSL has developed external links with partners such as the local further/higher education 'Prevent' duty coordinator. They have benefited from support and guidance that have enabled them to implement an apprentice-focused reporting system. As a result, staff and apprentices know who to contact if they have any concerns.

Tutors' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding have significantly improved as a result of the actions taken by leaders. Tutors use topics such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs to debate scenarios and case studies that promote apprentices' understanding of issues such as bullying or harassment that may arise in the workplace.

Leaders do not yet have a good understanding of regional and local risks. Consequently, apprentices do not have a secure understanding of local threats or how safeguarding applies to them in their personal lives.

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