

Aspire-Igen Group Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	51025
Name of lead inspector:	Jacquie Brown, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection date:	16 November 2022
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	City House 21-27 Cheapside Bradford BD1 4HR

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit focused on safeguarding arrangements and was undertaken with reference to the 'Further education and skills handbook'.

Themes

How well do leaders and managers ensure that learners are kept safe at the subcontractor? Insufficient progress

Leaders, managers and governors do not have effective oversight of their subcontractor, QPD Forces Preparation College Doncaster (QPD Doncaster). Although they hold frequent meetings with leaders at the organisation to discuss safeguarding, they do not consistently receive important information about safeguarding concerns. As a result, they are not aware of the serious safeguarding concerns that a number of learners have raised.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that learners are safe at QPD Doncaster. Too many female learners do not feel safe. Female learners have little confidence that staff at the provider will address concerns about their safety, particularly in relation to sexual abuse and harassment from their male peers. When female learners have made complaints, they feel that their concerns are not taken seriously and that the issue leading to the complaint is too easily excused or dismissed.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff at QPD Doncaster follow appropriate processes for reporting and dealing with reports of harmful sexual behaviour. Staff at QPD Doncaster do not take concerns seriously and do not deal with them swiftly or appropriately. Staff do not record allegations or incidents clearly enough and do not indicate well enough how issues have been resolved.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that learners are safe from bullying at QPD Doncaster. Too many learners do not have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. The attempts of staff to educate learners are in reaction to incidents, rather than proactive. As a result, learners do not take bullying seriously enough, seeing it as 'banter' rather than as inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

Leaders and managers at QPD Doncaster do not do enough to protect learners from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Too many learners have very little understanding of the risks that they face. Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff sequence the curriculum so that learners quickly understand how to keep themselves safe. If learners start their course at a point other than the beginning of term, they miss out on the part of the course that deals with safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism. As a result, learners may attend for several months without any formal advice on how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, with a clear reporting process. However, staff at QPD Doncaster do not follow these procedures well enough and, too often, do not pass on important information to the designated safeguarding lead. As a result, the designated safeguarding lead is not kept informed of safeguarding issues in a timely manner and cannot be confident that appropriate actions are taken.

Leaders and managers do not have effective oversight of whether appropriate safe recruitment practices are implemented at QPD Doncaster. They check whether new members of staff have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate and satisfactory references. However, they do not assure themselves that staff have the right to work in the United Kingdom or whether the children's barred list has been checked.

Leaders and managers do not provide staff with training in de-escalation and physical restraint to ensure that staff are aware of strategies to de-escalate potential challenging behaviour.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff complete mandatory training in safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty during induction and that they complete annual refresher training to develop their understanding of the potential risks that learners face.

Leaders and managers have recently introduced dedicated professional development time to give teaching staff further training on safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism, and equality and diversity. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this training.

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