

New Meaning Foundation

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2691311
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Future Business Centre Kings Hedges Road Cambridge CB4 2HY

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. 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.

New Meaning Foundation is an independent learning provider that teaches adult learning programmes in construction skills, English, mathematics, digital skills and employability. It received a contract to provide adult learning programmes in 2021 and commenced delivery in October 2021. Learners are predominately recruited from the formerly homeless community in and around Cambridge. The construction-based programme is centred around building prefabricated self-contained homes (micro homes) for the homeless. At the time of the monitoring visit there were fewer than five learners enrolled and all were adults over the age of 19.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? **Insufficient progress**

Leaders have been unable to introduce all aspects of the planned curriculum. For example, they were unable to teach functional skills English or digital skills in the first year. The sequencing of the curriculum is heavily linked to the build stages of the micro homes. As a result, building projects are prioritised over teaching activity.

Senior leaders and governors have high ambitions for their learners. Leaders work effectively with the combined mayoral authority to design the programme. They intend for adult learners from the formerly homeless community to improve their life chances and gain employment.

Leaders work closely with a wide range of employers and charitable organisations as part of the 'Future In' network to enrich learners' experiences. For example, learners gain practical work skills through building projects such as a forest shelter for a local charity.

Leaders have ensured that learners have appropriate resources to develop their practical skills. Learners use workshop equipment effectively to develop a wide range of construction skills. However, learners have not had enough opportunity to develop their digital skills further.

Staff have relevant qualifications. Leaders ensure that teaching staff receive relevant training to enhance their teaching and safeguarding skills. Teaching staff complete suitable programmes to improve their skills in identifying and supporting learners with learning difficulties.

Leaders do not have enough oversight of the quality of education and training they provide. Leaders review aspects of education and training, such as observing teachers' practice in lessons.

Governance arrangements are insufficient. Trustees do not have a clear understanding of the quality of education. They do not receive sufficient information to hold leaders and staff to account. For example, they do not have adequate oversight of learners' progress in English and mathematics. As a result, they are unable to provide appropriate support and challenge to staff.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? **Insufficient progress**

Leaders do not ensure that learners recruited are suitable for the course. As a result, most learners leave without achieving a qualification. Leaders have reviewed their recruitment practices but have yet to take on more learners. As a result inspectors cannot judge the impact of these changes.

Vocational teaching staff do not develop learners' existing skills and knowledge fully in English and mathematics. Learners' English and mathematics skills are tested at the beginning of their course. However teachers do not use these to establish learners' starting points or to plan and teach their learning activities. Teachers identify most errors in written work. They encourage learners to amend errors, such as failure to use full stops and to write clearly.

Teachers sequence the curriculum for the level 2 multi-skills qualification appropriately. They prioritise the development of learners' health and safety knowledge and behaviours at the start of the programme. Learners develop significant new knowledge skills and behaviours related to construction skills, such as carpentry, plumbing and tiling. Learners value highly the variety of skills they learn and the breadth of trades they experience in building micro homes. As a result, learners are enthused and quickly develop their confidence in a real work environment.

Teachers use questioning effectively in practical sessions to test learners' understanding. Teachers give regular verbal feedback to learners on the quality of their practical work. They explain clearly how learners can improve. Learners value this immediate and helpful advice, which enables them to quickly improve their skills.

However, teachers do not provide sufficiently developmental feedback on learners' written work. Too much written feedback is cursory and unhelpful. As a result, learners are unclear what they need to do to improve.

Teachers do not provide learners with a comprehensive record of progress across the whole course. While learners understand their progress on the vocational elements they study, they do not understand sufficiently their progress on the wider skills. For example, their records do not contain sufficient details of future targets for English and digital skills development. Learners that remain struggle to complete the course on time.

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

Learners feel safe and are safe. Leaders have developed an effective culture of safeguarding. They ensure that staff have received appropriate safeguarding training, including about the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders have a strong focus on mental health support.

Leaders use the local services available to support their safeguarding practices. For example, leaders work closely with the local authority multi-agency safeguarding hub and mental health referral services.

Leaders use information they receive from the local authority to keep staff and learners informed. This includes the risks associated with county lines, which are prevalent in the area. Where safeguarding risks have been identified, leaders have taken appropriate action, for example referrals to outside agencies for drug abuse support, GP referrals and psychiatric referrals.

Leaders follow safer recruitment practices. Where adult learners are working alongside school-aged children, leaders ensure the safety of the children because older learners are DBS checked.

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