

Sodexo Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2691459
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Type of provider:	Employer
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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.

Sodexo Limited (Sodexo) is a food services and facilities management company which employs over 400,000 people and operates in more than 50 countries. Leaders were successful in their application to join the register of apprenticeship training providers in January 2018 but did not start training apprentices until September 2021. Sodexo offer the level 3 custody and detention officer apprenticeship to support and train prison custody officers recruited to work in their prisons. At the time of inspection, Sodexo had 80 apprentices enrolled, of which 42 apprentices were based in HMP Bronzefield and 38 in HMP Northumberland. All apprentices are over the age of 19.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Although leaders have put in place a governance board, the board does not provide effective challenge to leaders or hold them to account for the quality of education that apprentices receive. Furthermore, the board does not have a sufficient oversight of safeguarding referrals to assure themselves that leaders are responding swiftly and appropriately to these concerns.

Leaders and managers provide apprenticeship programmes that meet their needs as an employer provider. Leaders were included in the trailblazer group to design the apprenticeship programme. As a result, the apprenticeship fits the needs of their organisation and the sector well. The training that apprentices receive on their apprenticeship helps to increase the level of expertise in their prisons and enables Sodexo to have a more skilled and qualified workforce.

Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make on their apprenticeship. This means that they do not intervene swiftly to support

apprentices, when they fall behind, to catch up or to make adaptations to the curriculum to enhance their learning. As a result, too many apprentices do not pass vital examinations quickly enough to achieve their qualifications and to enable them to progress to end-point assessment (EPA). Leaders' tracking of apprentices' progress does not give a realistic picture of apprentices' current progress or what their progress should be.

Leaders' quality assurance processes are ineffective. They do not result in the changes required to improve skills coaches' teaching and assessment practice. Learning coaches' feedback to apprentices does not help them to improve the quality of their work over time, including the accuracy of their writing.

Leaders and managers recruit highly experienced and qualified staff to train apprentices. Staff enjoy working for Sodexo and many remain in employment with the organisation for many years. Leaders and managers support staff to update their professional competence up to master's degree level.

Skills coaches do not ensure that apprentices have a good understanding of EPA or what grades they could achieve. Therefore, they are not fully prepared for these assessments until they are very close to the completion of their apprenticeship.

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

Insufficient progress

Learning coaches plan and deliver the curriculum in a logical order. Initial training focuses on the development of specific skills, including violence reduction strategies, escorting and cuffing prisoners, and body searching, which apprentices then apply in the workplace. As a result, apprentices are sufficiently prepared to work, while being supervised, in a prison environment after an initial nine-week induction period.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices benefit from an assessment of their work or useful feedback on how to develop their skills over time. Learning coaches do not correct punctuation or spelling errors in apprentices' assignments. This impedes the progress that apprentices make in their written work in readiness for their EPA project. Learning coaches make punctuation and spelling errors in their feedback on apprentices' work.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices' line managers attend tripartite progress reviews. As a result, line managers are not aware of how well their apprentice is progressing. Therefore, line managers cannot offer relevant support to help apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills in the workplace.

Apprentices do not receive the training required to improve their English or mathematical skills. Leaders have been too slow to recruit staff who have the

necessary skills to teach English and mathematics, impeding apprentices' ability to pass their functional skills examinations. As a result, apprentices are held back from the successful achievement of their apprenticeship.

Learning coaches do not prepare apprentices well enough for EPA. They do not set ambitious targets and are unclear about what apprentices need to do to achieve a pass or distinction and the weighting of each part of the assessment. As a result, apprentices and line managers are not sufficiently informed to allow for effective planning and preparation of apprentices' learning.

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

Leaders and managers have relevant and useful policies and procedures in place to keep apprentices safe in a particularly high-risk environment. The designated safeguarding lead and deputies are qualified and trained. They monitor safeguarding referrals and deal with them swiftly and appropriately. Apprentices are signposted to appropriate support if they witness traumatic incidents.

Leaders and managers have strict vetting procedures for recruitment of staff and apprentices. These checks include security clearance to work within a prison environment. As a result, they recruit apprentices who are suitable to work with prisoners, and appropriate staff to work with apprentices.

Apprentices are trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty at the initial training part of the apprenticeship, which includes how to identify and prevent radicalisation, coercive behaviour and bullying. However, leaders do not currently have in place processes to ensure that apprentices' safeguarding knowledge is updated on a regular basis to ensure that it is up to date.

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