

# Inspection of 1st Care Training Limited

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 December 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

1st Care Training Limited (1st Care) is a medium-sized independent learning provider offering training in the care sector. It began providing directly funded training in 2016. Learners are based in care home and domiciliary care settings across Norfolk and Suffolk.

1st Care has approximately 95 apprentices, 20 of whom are on a temporary suspension of learning. Most apprentices are on level 2 and level 3 apprenticeship programmes. There are 29 apprentices on the level 2 adult care worker and 28 on the level 3 lead adult care worker programmes. Nine apprentices are training on level 4 lead practitioner in adult care and eight apprentices on level 5 leader in adult care.

1st Care has 15 young people on traineeship programmes. 1st Care works in partnership with youth advisors and work coaches in Norfolk, Suffolk and Fenland local authorities to provide traineeship programmes.

There are currently no learners in receipt of high needs funding. 1st care does not work with any subcontractors.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Apprentices benefit from the calm learning environment that assessors create. They value the face-to-face teaching and review meetings with assessors. Most apprentices are punctual and well prepared for their learning sessions and review meetings. Staff know apprentices well and identify any progress issues on an individual basis. Assessors support apprentices effectively with strategies to improve their attendance and time management. However, on the level 5 course, assessors do not ensure that they develop apprentices' commitment to learning.

Apprentices and trainees develop their confidence, resilience and improve their mental health. Apprentices and trainees are polite and professional. They are confident to seek support from their assessors. Level 2 apprentices act as 'buddies' for others taking English and mathematics examinations. Level 3 apprentices use their professional discussion skills to advocate for their patients.

Many trainees suffer from social anxiety. The encouragement they receive from their assessors improves their ability to communicate. Trainees are better able to leave the security of their homes, and for the first time they are positive about their ability to succeed in their studies. Trainees are proud of the progress they make, such as reading with confidence and the standard of their written work. As a result, they are motivated to seek employment.

Apprentices feel safe at work and while studying online. They know how to report a safeguarding concern and are confident to do so. Assessors provide them with helpful information about how to safeguard their residents and clients. For example, if they have concerns about a manager at work, apprentices would contact the multi-agency safeguarding hub. Apprentices and trainees have a good understanding of healthy relationships. They understand the meaning of consent. Trainees also feel safe. However, they are not always clear about who to report concerns to.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders do not ensure that the quality of the apprenticeship programmes is consistently good. Leaders strive to develop a skilled workforce for the adult care sector, which has a significant shortage of staff. However, they do not have a clear rationale for how the apprenticeship curriculum will help to achieve this. Leaders do not ensure that employers fully understand their commitment to the apprenticeship. Too many apprentices struggle to cope with the challenges of workplace duties and their studies. Leaders and assessors do not always sequence the order of the topics to support apprentices in their workplace role. For example, they do not prioritise leadership theories in the curriculum for apprentices in senior roles. As a result, a minority of apprentices are unable to articulate how they have benefited from the course.

Leaders do not involve employers effectively in the planning and review of the curriculum. They do not consistently plan with employers to identify learning opportunities for apprentices in the workplace. Leaders do not use apprentices' existing knowledge and skills effectively at the start of the programme to individualise the curriculum. For example, apprentices with substantial experience and skills in the sector are on a level 2 course. As a result, too many apprentices are making slow progress and repeating what they already know and can do.

Leaders and assessors have high ambitions for the trainees. Leaders have planned the traineeship to equip young people with mathematics, English, digital and workplace skills. Leaders plan very effective individual programmes. They tailor the learning and work placements to meet the interests of trainees. These include working with animals, caring for older people or painting and decorating. As a result, trainees develop skills to progress successfully to further education and employment.

Apprentices benefit from the good sector expertise of assessors. They learn about the latest skills and concepts in care. Assessors make effective links with the workplace to deepen apprentices' understanding. Leaders and assessors take part in a broad range of sector and awarding organisation update training. Leaders ensure that staff maintain current knowledge of mandatory training, such as safeguarding.

Apprentices benefit from clear and high expectations from assessors. Apprentices appreciate the flexibility and adaptations that assessors make to lessons. For example, assessors accommodate workplace priorities and interruptions that apprentices face. Where this may happen, apprentices quickly refocus and re-engage upon their return.

Assessors use effective teaching strategies to help apprentices learn new skills and concepts. For example, higher level apprentices benefit from a coaching style of teaching. Level 2 apprentices receive more instruction and information, where necessary, to meet their needs. As a result, apprentices and trainees can recall the knowledge and skills they learn on the course. For example, level 2 apprentices can link their learning to how they care for clients in the work setting.

Assessors use effective assessment strategies. They ensure that apprentices and trainees understand concepts before they move on to the next topic. Assessors use ongoing assessments effectively to help apprentices be confident and well prepared for their final examination. Most apprentices who stay on their qualification achieve high grades. However, assessors do not develop level 5 apprentices' study and academic skills effectively. For example, apprentices' report writing skills are not sufficiently developed to support their job role and future progression.

Apprentices with an identified learning difficulty or disability (LDD) progress as well as their peers. Assessors make effective adjustments for apprentices and trainees with an LDD. For example, assessors provide additional support sessions to develop proofreading skills and change computer settings, such as screen colour.

Trainees successfully gain confidence in their ability to secure employment. Assessors have high expectations of trainees. Where trainees may initially be reluctant to start a traineeship, staff continue to encourage them until they are ready. Trainees respond to the respectful and positive culture, which is role modelled by their assessors. As a result, trainees are polite, helpful and appreciate the learning environment. They find the sessions helpful, and they are confident to ask for help.

Apprentices develop a good understanding of the relevance and importance of British values. For example, level 5 apprentices demonstrate care and compassion for residents who suffer from dementia. They clearly understand the needs of residents based on their age, race and gender. Level 5 apprentices expect high standards of themselves and of their staff. Assessors use authentic topics to prompt discussions around legislation in the care sector. Assessors teach the promotion of equality of opportunity skilfully. They highlight how care workers promote diversity by observing personal preferences and religious beliefs. Apprentices reflect on how British values apply to their workplace. They understand respect and the need for residents' privacy, dignity and confidentiality. Trainees learn about democracy, tolerance and respect. They understand that these are skills they need for adult life.

Assessors have helpful discussions with apprentices and review their career options during apprenticeship reviews. They make effective links to the personal aspirations and level of learning of the apprentices. As a result, apprentices and trainees are keen to learn and develop their practice. They appreciate that their programme is supporting their career development. For example, apprentices who aspire towards qualified status at degree level discuss with assessors how the apprenticeship will support this. Apprentices can identify the steps they need to take to achieve this progression. Trainees receive impartial careers advice from their referring local authority. In addition, work coaches provide helpful sector-specific guidance in line with individual trainee's career aspirations.

Governors do not have a clear oversight of the strengths and areas for improvement across the organisation. They meet frequently with leaders to discuss performance; however, they are not sufficiently informed to challenge leaders to improve. Leaders, and those responsible for governance, do not have a clear oversight of in-year overall performance at programme level. For example, they are not aware of attendance data at programme level. They are unable to easily identify any trends or underperformance to be able to set in-year targets and drive timely improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have good external partnerships to ensure that staff are aware of local issues, such as county lines, in north Norfolk and Suffolk. Leaders have implemented appropriate safeguarding arrangements to ensure that apprentices and trainees are safe. They ensure that designated safeguarding leads and staff are appropriately trained and that their knowledge is current.

Leaders carry out thorough risk assessment to ensure employers operate a safe environment. However, staff could further improve aspects of safeguarding, such as monitoring well-being and low-level concerns. This would enable leaders to identify trends or concerns that may escalate over time.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders must ensure apprentices are training on an appropriate programme level. They must ensure the programme enables apprentices to develop substantial new knowledge and skills.
- Leaders must use apprentices' existing skills and knowledge to plan an ambitious and tailored curriculum. They must ensure that the planning enables apprentices to make swift progress.
- Leaders must involve employers in the planning and sequencing of the curriculum. They must ensure that apprentices can embed their learning and skills in their workplace practice to make good progress. They must prioritise the skills development apprentices need for their job roles.
- Leaders must ensure that level 5 apprentices develop the academic and study skills they need to be effective in their role and to prepare them for higher level qualifications.
- Leaders must improve their central monitoring of low-level safeguarding concerns to enable them to identify trends and provide early support for apprentices.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1247981
<b>Address</b>	Unit 1 Paxman Road King's Lynn Norfolk PE30 4NE
<b>Contact number</b>	01553 777152
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.1stcaretraining.org.uk">www.1stcaretraining.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Dr Julian Brown
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 to 13 September 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the contracts manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

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