

Inspection of Unique Training Solutions Limited

Inspection dates:

31 January to 2 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Unique Training Solutions Limited (UTS) started health and social care apprenticeships in June 2017. While the head office is in St Albans, apprentices are located at employers in Hertfordshire, Essex, London and West Berkshire. Most apprentices work with seven care sector employers. At the time of the inspection, there were 102 adult apprentices studying level 2 to level 5 care apprenticeship programmes. Six apprentices were on a break in learning. The provider has no subcontracted provision and no apprentices in receipt of high needs funding.

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

Apprentices have a positive attitude toward their apprenticeship and enjoy their time as an apprentice. They grow in confidence as they progress through their studies. For example, level 2 adult care apprentices gain a high sense of personal satisfaction at the difference they are making to people's lives.

Apprentices value the nurturing and supportive learning environment that coaches create. Apprentices receive effective support from their coaches and frequently contact them for extra support. Coaches support apprentices well to manage their conflicting work, study and personal priorities. Apprentices complete a helpful well-being module on managing stress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need promptly. As a result, very few apprentices fall behind with their studies.

Apprentices develop the right professional behaviours they need to be successful in their job roles and future careers. For example, level 3 lead adult care worker apprentices demonstrate high levels of empathy, sensitivity and respect. As a result, apprentices are appreciated by the individuals in their care and are highly valued by their employers. Most apprentices who complete their apprenticeship remain in employment within the sector at the end of their apprenticeship, and a minority of apprentices achieve promoted posts.

Apprentices develop a sound understanding of the importance of inclusive practice within care settings. For example, level 5 leaders in adult care apprentices apply the concepts of respect and tolerance when advocating for the individuals in their care and when managing their teams. As a result, apprentices know how to treat individuals with dignity and respect.

Apprentices are safe at work and when attending training sessions.

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

Leaders and managers have carefully selected an appropriate curriculum that provides clear progression routes from level 2 to level 5. The curriculum meets the local and regional need to recruit, retain and develop staff within the adult care sector. For example, leaders have worked with a local charity to design a level 2 apprenticeship. This has enabled people who were previously homeless, had suffered mental health difficulties or have experienced drug abuse, to gain access to education and improve their career prospects.

Coaches teach a curriculum that is coherently planned. Apprenticeship programmes build from foundation topics and skills through to more complex concepts. As a result, apprentices quickly develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours which they need to be successful in their job roles. For example, the level 5 care leader programme starts with the foundations of management and leadership before

moving on to service improvements. As a result, the programme prepares apprentices effectively to lead and manage in a care setting.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills while on their apprenticeships. For example, level 2 apprentices learn about the importance of person-centred care. They understand the need to tailor feeding plans to individual residents. Apprentices on the level 5 leader in adult care standard learn how to write a self-assessment report and an action plan for their department. As a result, they understand how to implement quality improvements.

Apprentices develop the workplace skills they need to excel in their roles as adult care workers. They are supported effectively by well-qualified coaches and trainers. Coaches have appropriate industry sector expertise. They undertake appropriate professional development. Coaches learn how to support apprentices with mental health concerns and explore the different approaches suitable when training adults.

Coaches use a range of effective techniques to help apprentices understand new concepts and apply these to their workplaces. For example, apprentices on the level 2 adult care standard research their organisation's health and safety policies and relevant legislation. Apprentices then share and discuss their findings with peers during their training sessions. As a result, apprentices develop a clear understanding of the underpinning knowledge they need to know. Apprentices can fluently apply these concepts to their own job roles.

Apprentices benefit from the high expectations of leaders, managers and coaches. For example, apprentices receive frequent, effective feedback which clearly outlines how to improve their work. Apprentices are well prepared for their final assessments and know what they need to do to achieve high grades. Consequently, most apprentices produce high standards of work. Most apprentices who reach the end of their programmes achieve high grades in their final assessments.

Coaches and trainers support apprentices effectively to achieve their English and mathematics qualifications. English trainers skilfully apply the concepts they teach to the care sector and apprentices' job roles. Level 2 adult care apprentices learn the importance of not using local authority jargon when communicating with the individuals in their care, and the importance of writing care plans correctly. Apprentices use their mathematical skills to help individuals budget their living expenses. As a result, most apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications first time and apprentices improve their English and mathematical skills while on their apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers provide frequent, effective feedback to employers about the progress their apprentices are making, for example on the level 5 leader in adult care. However, a minority of apprentices' direct line managers are not involved in the planning of the programme as it progresses. As a result, the on- and off-the-job training are not always linked effectively. These apprentices do not always have the opportunity to apply their new knowledge and skills in the workplace at an appropriate time.

Too many apprentices leave their apprenticeships before they reach their final assessment. Leaders have an appropriate plan in place to improve retention, but it is too soon yet to see the impact of this. Leaders ensure that apprentices who are at risk of redundancy are appropriately supported. These apprentices quickly gain new employment in the care sector. As a result, they continue their apprenticeship with minimal disruption.

Leaders have recently implemented a comprehensive careers curriculum. As a result, most apprentices have a clear understanding of their next steps in the wider health and social care sector. For example, coaches have supported level 5 apprentices to gain promotion, and other level 5 apprentices are planning to study at level 6. However, in a few cases, apprentices do not access, or receive, suitable information on a wide range of careers options. These apprentices are not aware of the breadth of careers outside of their current workplaces.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision. They provide appropriate challenge to senior leaders. For example, governors challenged leaders and managers to look at the impact of the actions they had introduced to develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They have ensured that there are suitable policies and procedures in place to keep their apprentices safe. Staff at UTS have received appropriate training. Staff work closely with local partners, and attend regional networks, to ensure that they are aware of the safeguarding risks in the areas in which their apprentices work and live.

Apprentices benefit from purposeful discussions about safeguarding during their progress reviews. They discuss topics such as the risks of lone working, county lines and cuckooing. Leaders ensure that apprentices receive effective training on sexual harassment, violence and online abuse. As a result, apprentices have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and the individuals they care for safe. They are confident to raise concerns.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers must ensure that apprentices have access to high-quality, ongoing independent careers advice and guidance. They must ensure that apprentices are aware of the wider career options available to them within the care sector.
- Leaders, managers and coaches must ensure that apprentices' line managers are fully involved in the planning of apprentices' training. They must ensure that apprentices have the best workplace opportunities to develop and apply their new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that apprentices are fully supported to remain in learning and achieve their qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278575
Address	10 Sandridge Park Porters Wood St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 6PH
Contact number	01727 733999
Website	www.uniquetrainingsolutions.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Michelle Hillier
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	27 to 29 March 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, 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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