

Ensis Solutions Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number:	1276475
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ensis Solutions Limited was inspected in August 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Ensis Solutions Limited (Ensis) is based in Leigh, Greater Manchester. Leaders provide apprenticeships at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5, mostly for the health and social care sectors. At the time of the monitoring visit, Ensis had 193 apprentices in learning, all of whom were following apprenticeship standards. There were 71 apprentices on the level 2 adult care worker standard, 89 on the level 3 lead adult care worker standard, eight on the level 4 lead practitioner in adult care standard and 21 on the level 5 leader in adult care standard. Three apprentices were following the level 3 team leader or supervisor standard and one apprentice was following the level 3 business administrator standard.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that skills coaches provide consistent and helpful feedback to apprentices and that they effectively use apprentices' starting points to tailor apprentices' learning?

Reasonable progress

Since their previous inspection, skills coaches have received training on how to provide helpful and consistent feedback to apprentices, and how to use apprentices' starting points to tailor their learning effectively.

There is still inconsistency in the quality of feedback that apprentices receive. In the small minority of instances where feedback is effective, apprentices benefit from detailed recorded feedback. As a result, their work improves over time. However, in too many instances, skills coaches provide unhelpful feedback to apprentices. Consequently, not enough apprentices know what they specifically need to do to improve their work sufficiently to achieve their potential in their final assessments.

As a result of the training they have received, the large majority of skills coaches use apprentices' starting points effectively to tailor their learning. Apprentices who study the level 5 leader in adult care apprenticeship who have no prior leadership experience greatly improve their time management skills. This helps them to be efficient and successful managers at work. Apprentices who study the level 3 lead

adult care worker apprenticeship receive additional training to enable them to effectively supervise staff in their teams at work.

To what extent have leaders further developed the English and mathematics curriculum to ensure that all apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications on time? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have not made further developments to the English and mathematics curriculum to ensure that all apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications on time.

Senior leaders have created a new job role for a dedicated functional skills specialist tutor. They have plans for this specialist tutor to provide weekly tutorials to apprentices. However, this has yet to be implemented. This is because managers have not been able to recruit a specialist tutor with the necessary skills and experience.

In the absence of a specialist functional skills tutor, leaders continue to routinely provide training for skills coaches. This enables skills coaches to provide ongoing functional skills support to apprentices. Although a significant number of apprentices have successfully achieved their functional skills qualifications since the previous inspection, only four were achieved on time.

How much progress have leaders made towards ensuring that employers release their apprentices for training, including off-the-job training, and that skills coaches link on- and off-the-job training explicitly to ensure that apprentices can practise and apply what they learn in a timely manner? Reasonable progress

Since their previous inspection, leaders now ensure that more apprentices are released from work to complete their off-the-job training. This is because leaders have implemented a new process. When apprentices do not attend their training due to the demands of work, leaders now intervene more quickly to make immediate contact with apprentices' line managers. Leaders discuss, plan and agree on alternative training sessions for apprentices to attend. This means that apprentices receive the required theory that they need so they can apply this at work.

Leaders ensure that most apprentices receive timely opportunities to apply their skills at work. For example, apprentices who study the level 2 adult care worker apprenticeship complete training on medication. Very soon after their training, apprentices apply what they have learned at work. They accurately and confidently dispense medication to people in their care. Apprentices who study the level 5 leader in adult care apprenticeship receive training about the importance of making deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS) assessments for people with dementia. They then apply their learning at work in a timely manner. Apprentices accurately

complete a DoLS assessment for people in their care who have dementia. Most apprentices swiftly develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful at work, and in their final assessments.

To what extent have leaders improved the information they provide to apprentices to ensure they have a full understanding of the requirements of their final assessments, as well as the grades they can achieve; careers information, advice and guidance to help them in their next steps; and the risks of radicalisation and extremism in their locality? This includes ensuring that employers also have a full understanding of their apprentices' final assessments.

Reasonable progress

Skills coaches ensure that most apprentices know the requirements of their final assessments. Apprentices know the grades they can achieve. They know that they will have the opportunity to complete practice assessments to help prepare them for their final assessments. However, not all employers sufficiently understand what is expected of their apprentices when they undertake their final assessments.

Leaders have improved the careers information, advice and guidance that they give to apprentices. In most cases, apprentices receive appropriate information that helps to prepare them for their next steps. Many apprentices aspire to be social workers and nurses or to gain promotion within their own organisations. They know what progression opportunities are available at work as well as their options for further learning.

Apprentices complete training on radicalisation and extremism at the beginning of their apprenticeship. Leaders provide monthly newsletters to update apprentices on a wide range of topics such as grooming, human trafficking and right-wing extremism. The large majority of skills coaches routinely discuss these topics with apprentices at their progress reviews. Consequently, the large majority of apprentices know the risks of radicalisation and extremism in their locality, for instance about animal rights activists, local protests and animosity towards migrants and refugees.

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