

Inspection of Bridgeway Consulting Limited

Inspection dates:

14 to 16 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Bridgeway Consulting Limited (Bridgeway) is a rail engineering consultancy, established in 1995. They are an employer provider. Managers offer the level 2 rail engineering operative standards-based apprenticeship. At the time of inspection, 26 apprentices were in training, all over the age of 18.

Managers work with two subcontracted partners. Pro-start training provides the functional skills curriculum and Intertrain UK Limited provides the initial track induction course for apprentices.

At the time of inspection, Bridgeway did not receive any funding for apprentices with high needs.

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

Apprentices attend their training sessions well. They are keen to meet the demanding professional work standards established at Bridgeway and arrive at training and work activities well prepared.

Apprentices are highly satisfied with their training. They learn and work in a safe, supportive and highly professional environment. Experienced trainers provide apprentices with the teaching, care and support they need to build successful careers within the rail industry.

Apprentices want to learn and are keen to develop a career at Bridgeway. This motivates them to do well in their apprenticeship. Apprentices value the opportunity to further their careers by completing additional qualifications, which they all achieve.

Apprentices feel safe in training and at work and understand the importance of adhering strictly to health and safety regulations. They wear appropriate personal protective equipment and understand how to keep themselves, and others, safe at work.

Apprentices value the supportive culture at Bridgeway, where they can ask questions and seek support and advice. They are well supported by managers, who operate a 24/7 on-duty call line, available to provide immediate help and guidance to apprentices in the workplace.

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

Managers and trainers do not always ensure that the curriculum builds new knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally. For example, apprentices do not always complete the core components of the course, such as track induction, in a logical way.

Trainers do not complete reviews with apprentices frequently enough. Apprentices are not sufficiently clear about where they are in their studies or how individual components complement their training.

Managers and trainers do not always ensure that apprentices' training is prioritised. Mid-way through their studies, most apprentices successfully secure roles in departments such as planning, railway possession support and site investigation. These new job roles often take precedence over the apprenticeship course.

Trainers do not revisit complex topics, such as technical measurements and electrical calculations, frequently enough. As a result, apprentices do not have a comprehensive understanding of these topics. They often need to spend considerable time at the end of their apprenticeship recapping topics in preparation for final assessments.

Managers do not have suitable arrangements in place to review the quality of their apprenticeship course. They do not have access to key information such as curriculum plans, progress and outcome data. Managers do not understand, clearly enough, the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship provision. They are not sufficiently self-critical and do not use effective self-assessment processes to set suitable actions for development. As a result, they do not ensure that areas for improvement are appropriately identified and resolved.

Managers do not routinely monitor the standards of education and training provided by subcontracted provision. Consequently, they do not ensure subcontractors provide the best service they can for their apprentices. However, quality assurance arrangements to establish subcontracted provision are secure. Managers complete appropriate checks prior to working with subcontractors. They choose partners based on the resources and subject expertise of trainers to ensure that they meet the needs of the apprentices and the sector.

Managers have a clear vision for their curriculum. They offer an appropriate apprenticeship course to support the well-known skills shortage in the rail sector. This, in turn, supports and successfully develops a range of careers in the rail industry.

Trainers plan the first six weeks of the course effectively. All apprentices, helpfully, secure their independent working alone training early in their studies. As a result, they develop a secure understanding of rail services and health and safety procedures.

Apprentices benefit from a range of additional courses such as asbestos awareness, high-risk and confined spaces and controller of site safety. As a result, apprentices develop technical skills that add value to their workplace.

Trainers have extensive industry knowledge and are experts in their specialist areas of the rail industry. They carefully explain core principles to apprentices, give helpful guidance and support them to develop their theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Apprentices understand how theory applies to practice.

Staff benefit from professional development that has a clear rationale to ensure industry competence and improve teaching. Managers monitor staff professional development needs well. They are carefully linked with observation actions to ensure staff participate in useful development opportunities, which improve their teaching skills.

Managers prioritise staff's and apprentices' well-being. They have a range of support mechanisms and resources such as employee assistance programmes, external counselling services and access to mental health first aiders. As a result, staff and apprentices feel, and are, well supported by managers. They are confident to seek advice, guidance and support for complex personal matters.

Managers and trainers provide apprentices with suitable careers advice and guidance. Apprentices explore a range of careers through shadowing and taster sessions. They are well informed about the career options available to them within the rail industry.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers prioritise safeguarding apprentices. They use a helpful early warning system to flag any potential mental health or well-being concerns that could develop into safeguarding concerns. Apprentices receive a high level of support for a range of personal matters.

The designated safeguarding lead and deputies are suitably qualified and trained. They are well informed of the latest safeguarding information from local agencies, and successfully share this with staff and apprentices. They have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures for the reporting of any safeguarding disclosures.

Managers ensure that all staff complete mandatory safeguarding training, which enables them to support apprentices well.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Managers should implement effective oversight of key information to help them accurately identify, and improve, underperforming areas quickly.
- Managers must ensure that progress reviews are completed frequently and effectively so that apprentices understand their progress and how components of their apprenticeship link together.
- Managers should complete effective self-assessment activity which correctly identifies key areas of development for their apprenticeship provision.
- Managers should develop and implement a clear curriculum plan to improve the sequencing, timing and delivery of core components to support apprentices' learning.
- Managers must ensure that apprentices' new job roles do not prevent apprentices from receiving sufficient time to complete their apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2554027
Address	Bridgeway House 2 Riverside Way Nottingham NG2 1DP
Contact number	0115 919 1111
Website	www.bridgeway-consulting.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Pino DeRosa (CEO)
Provider type	Employer provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Pro-start training Intertrain Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the business change 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

Nikki Brady, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Woods

His Majesty's Inspector

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