

Total People Limited

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

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Total People Limited was inspected in May 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.

Total People Limited (TPL) is an independent learning provider based in Macclesfield, Cheshire. It has training centres in Crewe, Openshaw and Wythenshawe. TPL provides education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and provision for learners with high needs.

TPL offers apprenticeships at levels 2 to 7. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 1,146 apprentices studying standards-based apprenticeships, of which 194 were aged 16 to 18, 350 were aged 19 to 24 and 602 were aged 25 and over. Most apprentices study at levels 2 and 3. There were 14 learners on education programmes for young people and 154 adults on vocational courses. TPL works with a wide range of employers across England.

Themes

To what extent have leaders strengthened their governance arrangements to ensure they are held to account for the quality of learners' and apprentices' education and training?	Significant progress
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Leaders have strengthened their governance arrangements since the previous inspection. Governance arrangements are now effective. Since the previous inspection, leaders have recruited three external governors with the appropriate skills and expertise in education and industry to provide support and challenge to leaders on the quality of education that apprentices receive. There is a board member responsible for safeguarding.

Leaders provide governors with detailed, high-quality reports so that they have a clear oversight of all aspects of the apprenticeship provision. For example, governors receive reports on apprentices' progress, achievement rates and quality assurance. This enables them to scrutinise and challenge leaders to make improvements swiftly. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Governors challenge leaders to improve the scope and quality of the curriculum that they provide. For example, governors have ensured that the number of apprenticeships offered has been reduced so that there is a clear focus on the quality of apprenticeships offered in line with the local, regional and national skills needs.

To what extent have leaders and trainers improved the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training to ensure that apprentices can practise, improve and master their knowledge, skills and behaviours at work?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have implemented a working group to review and adapt the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training for apprentices. For example, level 2 custody and detention apprentices complete a ten-week initial training course at the beginning of their apprenticeship to equip them with the knowledge they need to progress to the wings and landings of a prison. This results in apprentices being able to swiftly apply their knowledge to develop the skills they need to deal with vulnerable prisoners, key safety, or escorting and moving individuals safely.

Learning coaches work closely with employers to plan the order of each curriculum to meet the needs of apprentices and employers. For example, level 2 scaffolder apprentices learn about health and safety at work at the beginning of their apprenticeship. This ensures that they can work safely when they move on to working on building sites.

Apprentices benefit from tripartite progress reviews with their employers and learning coaches. Learning coaches adapt the curriculum to ensure that the curriculum is individualised for apprentices. For example, level 3 early years educator apprentices who work with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) complete training on SEND early in their apprenticeship, as apprentices need to use these skills in the workplace. Level 5 human resource consultant partner apprentices complete training in Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Rights and redundancy legislation before applying this knowledge at work. However, in a few instances, learning coaches do not always ensure that the on- and off-the-job training plan is sufficiently detailed so that apprentices and employers have a clear oversight of what training is taking place.

To what extent do leaders use assessments completed at the start of the programme to develop an ambitious curriculum that challenges all apprentices to achieve their potential?

Reasonable progress

The assessment of apprentices' starting points has been strengthened since the previous inspection. Members of the initial assessment working group have

implemented a range of effective strategies to accurately identify apprentices' starting points when they begin their apprenticeship. This enables learning coaches to plan and teach individualised curriculums for apprentices across the provision. For example, level 5 human resource consultant partner apprentices have their work-based projects individualised based on their prior knowledge. This ensures that the projects that apprentices complete are ambitious.

All apprentices now complete a comprehensive assessment to identify their areas of strength and weakness in English and mathematics. Most learning coaches use this information to help apprentices improve their English and mathematical skills. For example, where apprentices' score is low on certain areas, such as percentages and ratio, they are provided with specific teaching to improve this. Level 5 human resource consultant partner apprentices use their mathematical skills well to analyse data for wages, sickness and annual leave entitlement.

Teaching of functional skills in English and mathematics is tailored effectively based on the starting points of apprentices. For example, apprentices have three different teaching options for functional skills: intensive, one to one and block delivery. This ensures that apprentices receive the most appropriate training to allow them to make swift progress in preparation for their functional skills examinations.

Apprentices complete a vocational assessment to check that they have the aptitude and commitment to undertake an apprenticeship in their chosen area. This information is used to plan an ambitious and personalised apprenticeship. However, in a few instances, apprentices and their learning coaches do not revisit the vocational assessment until the apprentice nears the end of their apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices and learning coaches do not identify the incremental progress that all apprentices make in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours from their starting point.

How well do leaders ensure that tutors receive the training and support to enable them to successfully provide consistent and effective feedback to help learners and apprentices know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their knowledge, skills and behaviour, as well as their English and mathematics?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve the provision since the previous inspection. A working group has been established to rigorously review and implement assessment and feedback processes. For example, leaders and managers complete marked work audits to check the quality of feedback that is provided by learning coaches to apprentices. Feedback now identifies what apprentices need to do to improve their work.

Leaders and managers provide learning coaches with training to enable them to provide effective feedback to apprentices. This ensures that most apprentices know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, feedback remains inconsistent in a few vocational areas. For example, level 2 scaffolder apprentices do not have errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) picked up by their tutors, which means that these apprentices continue to make the same mistakes. Conversely, level 3 custody and detention apprentices use feedback to improve their SPAG and produce work of distinction level.

Apprentices value the feedback they receive from learning coaches. Feedback supports most apprentices to improve their work. Apprentices studying the level 5 human resource consultant partner apprenticeship develop their academic writing and Harvard referencing skills well.

Most learning coaches have high expectations of apprentices. They challenge apprentices by providing them with further activities to complete in the workplace to consolidate their knowledge and practise their skills. Conversely, a few learning coaches do not always provide feedback that encourages apprentices to expand on their basic answers to questions so that they can demonstrate the depth of their learning.

How well do leaders ensure that their careers guidance helps learners and apprentices to understand the full range of next steps and career opportunities available to them?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have improved the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for apprentices. The CEIAG programme has been thoroughly reviewed by the careers working group. Apprentices have access to a range of online resources about prospective careers. However, the changes that leaders have put in place have only recently been introduced and are not yet fully embedded.

Learning coaches discuss career plans with apprentices to identify their knowledge of the different pathways that are available to them at the beginning of their apprenticeship. Learning coaches use their own vocational knowledge and expertise to inform apprentices of the potential careers in their chosen sector.

Initial advice and guidance meetings have recently been introduced for new apprentices. These provide apprentices with useful information about their potential next steps on completion of the apprenticeship. However, apprentices who have been on their apprenticeship before the changes being put in place do not benefit from these meetings or the formal documentation that accompanies them.

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