

Inspection of Realise Learning and Employment Limited

Inspection dates:

11 to 14 July 2023

Overall effectiveness**Good**

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

Information about this provider

Realise Learning and Employment Limited (Realise) provides apprenticeships for over 1,000 employers nationally. It also offers adult learning programmes in community locations across England, including through funding from four mayoral combined authorities in Tees Valley, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Liverpool. At the time of inspection, there were 4,190 apprentices, with the majority studying early years, health and care, and transport. Around a sixth of apprentices are aged 16 to 18. There were 1,252 adult learners on a range of programmes, with the majority on courses in health and care and preparation for employment.

Realise works with industry-specialist subcontractors for passenger transport apprenticeships, providing teaching for the first six weeks of the programme. It also works with two subcontractors for adult learning programmes, providing courses in Liverpool.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from welcoming and respectful environments where they feel valued as individuals and which are conducive to learning. They develop positive professional relationships with their trainers, who support and motivate them to strive highly and achieve. Most apprentices and learners attend their programmes well and are punctual.

Learners and apprentices successfully develop professional skills and behaviours during their programmes. Passenger transport apprentices receive commendations and rewards based on their performance at work and positive feedback from members of the public on their customer service. Learners and apprentices become more confident and resilient as a result of their training.

Learners and apprentices develop a sound understanding of life in modern Britain. Trainers embed cultural themes and experiences into the curriculum successfully, incorporating them within the context of the subject being taught. For example, early years apprentices learn the importance of respecting children's different cultures and backgrounds, providing equality of opportunity and the need for rules and routines.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in the places where they learn and in the workplace. They know how to report concerns through an online platform or by contacting trainers and the safeguarding team directly. Trainers discuss risks in the workplace and communities, and learners and apprentices develop a broad understanding of topics such as sexual harassment, online radicalisation and modern slavery.

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

Leaders develop their curriculum carefully to ensure that it is ambitious and career-focused, targeting areas of local and national skills shortages, such as early years and passenger transport. They design their curriculum with integrity, with a focus on social mobility. For example, they have established a vibrant learning hub in a disused building on an estate in Bradford, which is re-engaging the local population successfully in learning and community activities.

Leaders work closely with stakeholders to design adult learning and apprenticeship programmes that meet well-defined purposes. Learners and apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that support them in their chosen careers and their lives. Examples include bespoke programmes such as training police community support officers in West Yorkshire and adapting retail apprenticeships for large building suppliers.

Leaders and managers sustain strong, positive relationships with the wide range of employers on their apprenticeship programmes, working closely with them to ensure

that the curriculum meets the needs of employers. Employers value the frequent communication they have with staff at Realise, including monthly reports to keep them up to date with their apprentices' progress.

Leaders have successfully established a positive culture in which staff feel valued, involved and proud to be part of the organisation. Leaders support the well-being of their employees by ensuring that trainers have manageable workloads, encouraging flexible working and providing staff with many routes of support for their employment and their personal lives.

Governors work effectively and openly with leaders through their education excellence board. They have high levels of expertise in education and a deep understanding of the work of Realise. They often visit sessions to review the quality of teaching and assessment and speak with learners and apprentices. Governors provide expert challenge to leaders and make valuable contributions to strategic and operational direction to benefit learners and apprentices.

Leaders and managers have established effective procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of their provision, including that provided by their carefully chosen subcontractors. They use a range of methods to improve the quality of the provision, including scrutiny by external experts, drop-ins to observe teaching and gathering frequent feedback from learners and apprentices. These lead to useful development plans, which target specific areas for improvement and result in tangible changes.

Leaders and managers have suitable oversight of most of their national offer. They handle the complexity of the breadth of programmes adeptly and have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses across their provision. However, leaders do not have sufficient oversight of attendance on adult programmes, which prevents them from identifying any patterns of poor attendance. Leaders have recently developed a system to improve attendance monitoring on adult programmes, although it is too early to see the impact.

Expert trainers use their industry experience effectively to enhance their teaching and share their authentic experiences of working in their sectors. Trainers are supported well to keep their vocational knowledge and skills up to date. For example, passenger transport trainers practise driving newer, energy-efficient buses and electric vehicles. Trainers benefit from helpful and current professional development to enhance their teaching.

Trainers plan the curriculum logically to enable learners and apprentices to build their knowledge, skills and behaviours steadily during their programmes. For example, on the level 1 preparing to work in schools course, learners gain an understanding of the different roles and responsibilities within a school setting quickly, and then build their knowledge about child development, safeguarding, equality and inclusion. Level 3 adult care apprentices start with the 'six Cs', which ensures that they have secure foundations in duty of care, personal well-being and

agreed ways of working. The programme then builds through a series of topics, such as person-centred practice and infection control.

Learners and apprentices benefit from effective teaching in face-to-face and online sessions. In level 3 team leading, apprentices take part in interesting discussions, skilfully facilitated by trainers, who use careful questioning to encourage apprentices to link theories to experiences in their own workplaces. In level 2 understanding autism, trainers deepen the knowledge of adult learners by discussing practical strategies that learners can use for children who struggle with transition between activities.

Trainers use assessment effectively to check learners' and apprentices' understanding and provide them with helpful feedback. Passenger transport apprentices improve their driving skills and understanding of safety following specific feedback on topics such as hazard perception and checking blind spots. Learners and apprentices produce work of a good standard and make sustained progress from their individual starting points.

Most learners and apprentices are supported well by their trainers to develop their English and mathematics skills. Level 3 team leading apprentices develop their writing to a professional standard and use their mathematical skills to calculate percentage discounts for customers. Apprentices who need to achieve English and mathematics qualifications benefit from effective support, which targets their gaps in knowledge and skills. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices pass their English and mathematics examinations at the first attempt.

On most programmes, learners and apprentices receive appropriate advice and guidance about future career and training opportunities. For example, health and social care apprentices understand how they could become paramedics or work in hospital settings. However, a few learners and apprentices, such as in level 1 hair, do not receive sufficient advice to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Too many apprentices leave the level 2 passenger transport and level 3 early years educator programmes early. Factors leading to these withdrawals include national staffing shortages, resulting in many apprentices receiving alternative job offers for higher salaries. Leaders at Realise are actively engaging with large organisations and public bodies in these sectors to mitigate these issues. Leaders are dedicated to continuing to offer training in these areas of skills shortage and have adapted their curriculum offer, such as increasing their provision of sector-based work academies and skills bootcamps.

Leaders have very recently introduced a skills bootcamp in passenger transport. Trainers have developed a comprehensive curriculum to enable learners to become skilled bus drivers, including gaining a passenger-carrying vehicle driving licence and understanding the realities of driving buses for members of the public. On completion of the training, learners have a guaranteed interview with a bus operator in Greater Manchester, which was involved in the design of the programme.

Apprentices who complete their programmes are prepared well for their end-point assessments. The vast majority achieve and, on most programmes, a majority gain merit or distinction grades. Most adult learners complete their programme successfully. A high proportion of learners and apprentices move into positive destinations, such as employment and further learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take effective steps to ensure that learners and apprentices are kept safe. They implement their comprehensive policies effectively, including for safeguarding, 'Prevent' duty and safer recruitment. The designated safeguarding lead is very experienced and supported by a well-trained safeguarding team. Each member of the team has particular areas of speciality, which they use to provide support for issues such as bereavement and domestic abuse.

Staff undertake appropriate training in safeguarding topics and know how to report concerns, including well-being issues. The safeguarding team follows concerns up swiftly and thoroughly. The team has good links with external agencies, both locally and nationally, and use these to enhance the support for learners and apprentices and provide information about support services and groups in the local area.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Maintain a strong focus on reducing the number of apprentices who leave their programmes early, including through continuing to work with employers in specific sectors.
- Ensure that all learners and apprentices receive timely and useful careers guidance throughout their programmes to empower them to make informed choices and prepare for their next steps.
- Improve the oversight of the attendance of adult learners so that action can be taken quickly to improve attendance when needed.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59094
Address	12 Europa View Sheffield Business Park Sheffield S9 1XH
Contact number	0333 444 5055
Website	www.realisetraining.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Gregg Scott
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2013
Main subcontractors	Three Dimensional Training Limited GTG Training Limited Clear Solutions Training Limited Stagecoach group of operating companies

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief learning officer, 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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