

Inspection of Compass Skills Training Limited

Inspection dates:

1 to 4 August 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Compass Skills Training Limited is an independent learning provider based in Chorley, Lancashire. At the time of the inspection, there were 153 apprentices studying standards-based apprenticeships. Thirty-eight study level 7 risk and safety management professional (degree), six study level 6 standard in construction site management (degree), 38 study level 4 engineer surveyor, 18 study level 4 standard fire safety inspector and 53 are on level 3 safety, health and environment (SHE) technician apprenticeship.

The provider works with two subcontractors. Heriot-Watt University teaches the level 7 Master's degree in risk and safety management to apprentices studying the level 7 risk and safety management professional (degree) apprenticeship. The Engineers Academy teaches the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in mechanical engineering to apprentices studying the level 4 engineer surveyor apprenticeship.

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

Most apprentices have a positive attitude to learning. They benefit from and value the training and mentoring they receive from their tutors, learning coaches and employers. They are keen to gain promotion in the future.

Apprentices develop their confidence throughout their apprenticeship. For example, level 7 risk and safety management apprentices apply the knowledge gained on the fire science module by talking to clients knowledgeably about fire safety measures.

Most apprentices complete additional qualifications as part of their apprenticeship. For instance, apprentices studying level 3 SHE technician complete National Examination Board of Occupational Safety and Health courses and level 4 engineer surveyor apprentices study for a HNC in mechanical engineering. The additional qualifications provide enhanced career opportunities for apprentices.

Most apprentices develop the English and mathematical skills they need for work. For example, level 3 SHE technician apprentices learn how to present information to others and communicate with their peers, colleagues and supervisors in a professional manner. Level 7 risk and safety management apprentices calculate accurately the stoichiometric air-to-fuel mass ratio.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Apprentices demonstrate a very good understanding of health and safety in the workplace. For example, level 3 SHE technician apprentices raise health and safety standards in their workplace by improving health and safety processes, training staff and monitoring compliance.

Not all apprentices benefit from a wider curriculum that helps improve their personal development. For example, apprentices do not learn about topics relating to healthy lifestyles. Not all apprentices have a good understanding of radicalisation and extremism or how it applies to them in their personal lives and while at work.

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

Leaders offer a small number of apprenticeships to meet employers' needs and to address the skills shortage in the health and safety sector. Leaders work closely with employers to plan a curriculum that includes additional qualifications that are recognised in the health and safety sector.

Tutors and learning coaches have the appropriate experience and qualifications to teach their subjects. Leaders ensure that tutors and learning coaches receive industry updates to inform their training, for example through professional memberships of organisations such as the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health.

The quality of training that apprentices receive varies considerably across the

apprenticeship programmes. The quality of education is better at level 3 than at levels 4 and 7. For example, on the level 4 engineer surveyor and the level 7 risk and safety management (degree) apprenticeships, apprentices do not receive sufficient teaching or support from tutors at subcontractors to help them learn and remember key concepts.

Most tutors sequence and teach the curriculum in a logical order so that apprentices can incrementally build their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. For instance, tutors on the level 3 SHE technician apprenticeship start by teaching about responsibilities and the importance of the technician role. They then move on to teaching the legislation that underpins the role before progressing to more complex work about accident investigation and prevention.

Most apprentices benefit from effective on-the-job training and professional development from their employers. For example, apprentices on the level 4 engineer surveyor apprenticeship benefit from the knowledge and experience of trainers who have considerable experience working in the industry as surveyors.

Not all tutors accurately assess apprentices' starting points to plan an ambitious and individualised curriculum. For example, most apprentices do not know how to write a scientific report at the start of the apprenticeship. Tutors do not identify this gap in their knowledge and do not ensure that apprentices learn the correct way to format a scientific report.

Not all tutors provide developmental feedback to ensure that all apprentices know what they need to do to improve their work or how to achieve a high grade. Not all tutors and progress coaches ensure that apprentices are well prepared for their final assessments.

Tutors and learning coaches on the level 4 engineer surveyor and level 7 risk and safety management professional (degree) apprenticeships do not work closely enough with subcontractors and employers to ensure that apprentices' off-the-job training can be applied in the workplace or practise the skills learned.

Too many level 7 risk and safety management professional (degree) apprentices take a break in learning or leave their apprenticeship early as they find their workload or the demands of the course are too high. A high proportion of level 4 engineer surveyor apprentices make slow progress and become demotivated.

Leaders do not ensure that all apprentices benefit from impartial advice on the wider options available to them, including further study when they complete their apprenticeship.

Leaders do not monitor rigorously enough the quality of education and the progress that apprentices make. They have put in place appropriate actions to improve apprentices' learning experiences. However, leaders do not ensure that these actions are consistently applied by all staff and subcontractors or measure whether they have a positive impact on apprentices. As a result, they have not fully rectified the

areas for improvement from the previous monitoring visit.

Board members and governors do not provide sufficient challenge to leaders and managers to improve the quality of training. Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and safeguarding officers are appropriately trained. They manage and resolve incidents effectively. The DSL uses links to external agencies to support apprentices to access additional help, such as for mental health issues.

Managers ensure that staff, including those for subcontractors, are recruited safely. Staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding.

Apprentices feel safe. They have a basic understanding of safeguarding and know how to report any concerns they may have. Apprentices have a very good understanding of health and safety in the workplace.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and governors should ensure that rigorous quality improvement strategies are implemented and closely monitored so that the inconsistency in the quality of education between the different apprenticeships is swiftly eradicated.
- Leaders should ensure that tutors accurately assess apprentices' starting points and plan an ambitious and individualised curriculum. Leaders should monitor apprentices' progress closely so that they make their expected progress within the planned timescales.
- Learning coaches should routinely involve apprentices' line managers and subcontractors in the planning and coordination of the off-the-job training so that apprentices can apply their knowledge or practise the skills they have learned from the off-the-job training in the workplace.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices learn about the wider options available to them regarding further study or wider career opportunities.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2643282
Address	Compass House Canal Side Cowling Business Park Chorley PR6 0QL
Contact number	03333580340
Website	compassskillstraining.mykademy.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Debbie Williams
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Heriot-Watt University The Engineers Academy

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of operations, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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 online learning sessions and progress reviews, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Andrea Machell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Candice Downie	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Higgins	His Majesty's Inspector
Alastair Mollon	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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