

Careshield Limited

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first reinspection monitoring visit to Careshield Limited (Careshield) following publication of the inspection report on 30 September 2022 which found the provider to require improvement overall.

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

Careshield is based in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, and has apprentices in training across the UK. At the time of the monitoring visit there were 932 apprentices, with just under half on level 3 leader in adult care standard programmes. The remainder are on level 2 adult care worker, level 4 lead practitioner and level 5 leader in adult care standards programmes. There were 16 apprentices on a framework in leadership and management. Most apprentices also study for English and mathematics qualifications. The provider does not work with any subcontractors. There are no learners in receipt of high-needs funding.

Apprentices carry out a variety of roles such as care worker, supervisor and manager, caring for residents and service users in hospitals and care homes.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices complete their apprenticeship within planned timescales, including those apprentices who have already passed their planned end dates. Insufficient progress

Too few apprentices complete their training within planned timescales. Many apprentices become disengaged with learning and subsequently leave their training programmes. Leaders have taken positive action to remedy this by recruiting experienced staff and managers. These approaches are starting to secure an improved rate of achievement. However, leaders' actions have yet to make sufficient impact on the high proportion of out-of-funding apprentices.

Leaders now have a good understanding of the proportion of apprentices who are past their planned end dates. Leaders set actions that aim to decrease the proportion of apprentices who leave their training early. These actions are improving the experience of newer apprentices, but they have yet to achieve sufficient impact on those apprentices who have been in training for longer. As a result, around half of all apprentices exceed their planned end date.

Many apprentices and their employers experience frequent changes of coaches. This creates a lack of continuity in apprentices' learning that has a negative impact on their progress. Apprentices who experience several changes of coach often lose interest or make very slow progress. Apprentices who have a consistent coaching experience during their programme are well supported and make steady progress.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that employers plan effectively for apprentices to receive time to complete their off-the-job training, including studying for their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications.

Insufficient progress

Apprentices still experience too much variation in receiving off-the-job training time. Too few employers understand, or meet, their responsibility to provide off-the-job training time for their apprentices. Apprentices do not always understand that they are entitled to time away from work to study. Apprentices often complete their learning and study in their own time. Consequently, too few apprentices, particularly those in training for longer, complete their studies in a timely manner.

Leaders ensure that new employers and apprentices have an effective understanding of the need for off-the-job training hours. Coaches now provide a thorough induction for apprentices that explains their entitlement to time away from work to study. Most newer apprentices are completing helpful off-the-job training activities. They undertake a range of interesting learning opportunities, such as e-learning, shadowing, research and webinars. As a result, those apprentices who receive their entitlement to time away from work to study make steady progress.

Leaders have improved arrangements for teaching functional skills. Leaders provide teaching for those apprentices who are significantly past their end dates or who require additional help. Apprentices attend useful virtual training sessions in English and mathematics in preparation for examinations. Apprentices studying mathematics develop their understanding of how to do calculations, use mathematics terminology and practise examination techniques. However, too few apprentices have sufficient time to complete their English and mathematics.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that apprentices have a good understanding of the broad range of career options that are available to them on completion of their apprenticeship programmes.

Insufficient progress

Apprentices do not benefit from sufficient ongoing, impartial careers advice and guidance. Consequently, apprentices do not have a good enough understanding of the range of career options available to them on completion of their apprenticeship programmes. Coaches have recently participated in professional development to support them in carrying out effective careers advice. However, coaches have yet to

use their improved knowledge routinely to support apprentices. During progress reviews, coaches seldom refer to next steps or career options, including for those apprentices at the point of completion. Apprentices cannot recall discussions regarding careers advice and guidance.

Too few apprentices benefit from a wider curriculum beyond the apprenticeship standards. Too few apprentices develop the skills they need to support their future careers. Leaders have recently introduced a series of educational online modules to help apprentices develop their understanding of subjects such as safeguarding and careers guidance. Apprentices also have access to a range of informative careers development resources on the provider's virtual platform. Coaches have produced helpful training resources that explore career options within the health and care sector. These include useful guidance on employment skills, such as CV writing. However, too few apprentices make use of these resources.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that employers are fully involved with planning apprenticeship programmes and supporting apprentices, including attending reviews and aligning off-the-job training with working practices.

Reasonable progress

Coaches keep employers well informed about the progress of their apprentices. Employers receive useful communication and feedback from coaches. Leaders have improved the information available to employers about their apprentices via a helpful online hub. Employers who have started to use this hub value being able to see the progress that their apprentices are making.

Employers provide considerable opportunities for apprentices to develop skills and knowledge at work. Employers enable apprentices to attend work at different time slots to provide them with access to different learning situations. For example, apprentices develop a good understanding of how to apply end-of-life care or support their service users in physical activity. As a result, apprentices develop their confidence because they routinely apply their learning at work.

Coaches link apprentices' on- and off-the-job activities effectively. Coaches ensure that apprentices are set appropriate tasks at work that deepen their understanding and develop their skills. For example, apprentices study the theory of conditions such as diabetes and this supports them when working with service users with these conditions. Apprentices dispense medication and use different types of hoists to support their service users' diverse needs. Consequently, apprentices increase their usefulness at work.

Too few employers attend apprentices' reviews or provide feedback for the apprentice and their coach. Although supportive employers provide useful feedback for their apprentices at scheduled meetings or via email, too few do so. Leaders recently updated electronic systems to enable employers to provide their feedback at

another time if they are unable to attend progress review meetings. This strategy has started to encourage employers to provide developmental feedback. However, too few apprentices benefit from receiving employers' feedback consistently. As a result, coaches are unable to use specific work-based feedback to set meaningful targets for apprentices.

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