

SBC Training Limited

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

Unique reference number:	54277
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

SBC Training Limited was inspected in January 2023. 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.

Themes

What progress have leaders made in ensuring that the starting points of apprentices are measured and used effectively to plan learning which supports them to meet their full potential?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have revised the induction procedures used by trainers to ensure that the vocational starting points of apprentices are more closely assessed, and the information gathered from these assessments is used to plan apprentices' learning. To support this, leaders and trainers now work more closely with employers at the start of apprentices' learning. Trainers ensure that the expectations of employers to support apprentices to make sustained progress from these identified starting points are met.

Trainers now assess apprentices' starting points using various methods, including skills scans and discussion when they begin their apprenticeship. In conjunction with the apprentices' line managers, trainers review apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and experience to determine what they know and can do at the start of the apprenticeship and where there are gaps in their knowledge. Trainers focus on planning more effectively what individual apprentices will learn and how this learning will support them in achieving their short- and long-term career aspirations.

However, in a minority of cases, trainers do not routinely revisit or update the information gathered from apprentices' initial vocational skills scans to measure their progress from their starting points. As a result, a few apprentices are not set clear development actions and targets by trainers to help them improve their practice and performance over time so that they reach their full potential.

What progress have leaders made in ensuring that apprentices' progress reviews are completed consistently so that apprentices' next steps are identified accurately, and apprentices' progress is carefully monitored?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have improved their quality assurance processes to give them a clearer oversight of the progress apprentices are making. They have moved the majority of apprentices to their e-portfolio system, which allows for more insightful information and reporting when monitoring their apprenticeships. As a result, leaders are clearer on the progress apprentices are making and the regularity and quality of reviews, enabling them to act swiftly on the information they receive when needed.

Most apprentices now benefit from regular reviews involving the trainer, apprentice and employer jointly reviewing the impact of planned learning activities and the progress apprentices are making towards their targets. Leaders have improved the format and content of reviews to ensure that apprentices have a clear and accurate record of their progress and know what they need to do next.

Employers contribute significantly to the planning and delivery of individual apprentices' learning. Most employers participate fully in reviews of apprentices' progress and, as a result, can provide effective support to apprentices to enable them to develop their skills further in the workplace. For example, employers contextualise on-the-job learning opportunities to the apprentices' specific targets. This supports apprentices to make sustained progress and to make an increasingly valuable contribution to their employer's business.

Nearly all apprentices undertake valuable off-the-job training, which trainers record and track effectively. Apprentices routinely log the hours they complete, including what they have learned and how they will put this into practice in the workplace. However, in a small minority of instances, trainers do not ensure that apprentices routinely record all the learning they undertake in the workplace or review the impact this learning has on their progress.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that all apprentices have access to impartial careers advice and are aware of the full range of progression opportunities available to them?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have supported staff in developing approaches which allow them to provide appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance to apprentices. They have focused more on including careers discussions within the curriculum, in taught sessions and workshops. They have increased the frequency at which staff discuss potential next steps, routinely including these in reviews and monthly discussions.

Leaders have improved the advice and guidance apprentices receive before starting their apprenticeship. They have worked with employers to ensure that the job roles apprentices undertake align closely with the advice and guidance apprentices receive. As a result, the number of apprentices who leave their programmes at an early stage is low.

In most cases, apprentices now receive useful careers advice which supports them to make informed decisions on their next steps. For example, level 3 digital marketing apprentices benefit from visits from external professionals, who provide insight into industry opportunities beyond those typically associated with the apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices develop a wide understanding of the potential career and education opportunities available to them as they progress through their course.

Leaders recognise that this is not yet the case for all apprentices, and a small minority of apprentices are not yet fully supported with the same level of careers advice their peers receive. Leaders are currently working with staff to further develop the careers advice to ensure that there is a consistent approach to careers advice for all apprentices.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices' understanding of life in modern Britain and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism is developed throughout their apprenticeship so that apprentices can apply this to their daily lives?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have sought training for staff to develop their understanding of the topics related to life in modern Britain, the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and other related topics. They have modified the curriculum to include topics such as mental and physical health, social awareness and British values on a more regular basis to support apprentices in developing their understanding further.

Apprentices articulate how teachers regularly discuss these topics in workshops. Tutors highlight current issues in the media and actively encourage apprentices to share their views in a safe and supportive environment. Apprentices recognise how some of these topics, such as knife crime and drink spiking, relate to their personal and working lives. Teachers regularly revisit these during reviews and link workshop discussions to apprentices' contexts.

More recently, leaders have engaged external expertise to develop a stand-alone course which is taught during workshops and covers in detail issues including knife crime, personal safety and drink spiking. A minority of apprentices have attended this course, with more scheduled over the coming months. However, as this course is new, the full impact cannot yet be seen.

Leaders have also started to develop further workshops to develop apprentices' understanding of healthy sexual relationships. However, it is too early in their implementation to see the impact.

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