

# Inspection of Absolute Care Training and Education Limited

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 2024

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Information about this provider

Absolute Care Training and Education Limited is an independent learning provider that provides training to apprentices across the United Kingdom. Its head office is in Gateshead. At the time of the inspection, there were 286 apprentices. Of these, 142 were on level 3 lead adult care worker, 47 on level 3 content creator, 37 on level 2 adult care worker, 37 on level 5 leader in adult care, eight on level 4 children, young people and families practitioner, six on level 4 lead practitioner in adult care, five on level 3 team leader and supervisor and fewer than five on level 5 operations and departmental manager. Most apprentices are aged 18 years and over.

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

Too many apprentices do not attend their planned training sessions. Apprentices enrolled on care programmes are frequently required to cover additional shifts at work and are unable to attend training. Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of attendance and do not know when apprentices miss sessions or whether tutors have arranged follow-up sessions. Too often, tutors do not rearrange sessions quickly enough, and many apprentices do not attend the rearranged sessions. Apprentices on the level 3 content creator programme have not been made aware of the required commitment to attend training sessions.

Apprentices do not have sufficient access to off-the-job training. Tutors provide only one or two hours of training each month, which is supplemented by self-study. This means that apprentices have insufficient opportunity to develop the knowledge that they need to be successful on their programme and, as a result, they make slow progress.

Tutors do not set high expectations for apprentices. Too often, they do not set deadlines for the completion of assignments. This impedes the progress that apprentices make in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Apprentices do not benefit from a sufficiently comprehensive personal development curriculum. They do not cover topics such as well-being and physical and emotional health, which would be of particular benefit to those working in demanding occupations such as roles in the care sector. Tutors do not raise awareness of the risks of sexual harassment and violence for the very few apprentices who are aged under 18.

Apprentices do not benefit from effective careers information to enable them to plan their next steps. Tutors do not consistently provide information about the broader careers opportunities available in the care and digital sectors. For example, apprentices enrolled on the level 3 lead adult care worker programme who are interested in becoming nurses are not aware of the range of options available to them, such as degree apprenticeships.

Most apprentices display a positive attitude to their learning when they attend training sessions. They are attentive and participate well in their learning activities. Apprentices show mutual respect towards each other and their tutors. They appreciate the knowledge and advice of their tutors. For example, tutors on the level 3 lead adult care worker programme give valuable information on how to work with service users who have autism and display challenging behaviour.

Apprentices feel safe. They understand what constitutes safeguarding and know to whom they should report any concerns. Apprentices on the level 3 content creator programme are clear about online safety and why this is important in their working lives. Apprentices have a good understanding of the potential risks of extremism and radicalisation and how these risks might affect them in the workplace and in their personal lives.

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

Leaders and managers do not have effective enough oversight of the quality of education. Although they complete activities such as reviews of the quality of training, they have only done this for a small number of tutors who teach on care programmes.

Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to ensure that apprentices make at least expected progress in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours and achieve their qualification. Too many apprentices have passed their planned date to complete their programme, many of them substantially. Too many other apprentices are not on track to achieve by their planned end-date, including those recently recruited to the level 3 content creator programme.

Leaders and managers have been too slow to address the concerns about English and mathematics that were identified at the previous inspection and the subsequent monitoring visit. They have recruited specialist English and mathematics tutors, who have recently begun to teach these subjects to apprentices. There are early indications that the new tutors are having a positive impact, with first-time pass rates improving for functional skills qualifications, particularly for levels 1 and 2 writing tests. However, too many apprentices who are past their planned end-date have not achieved their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that tutors review apprentices' progress. Too many apprentices do not participate in progress review meetings. Where review meetings do take place, too often employers do not attend and are not informed about apprentices' progress. As a result, there is little joint planning between tutors and employers to provide appropriate opportunities for apprentices to participate in on- and off-the-job training.

Tutors do not make good enough use of the information that they collect about the prior knowledge and starting points of applicants to ensure that new apprentices are placed on appropriate programmes. A few apprentices enrolled on care programmes have substantial experience in the care sector before commencing their programme and are completing an apprenticeship only to accredit their existing knowledge and aid future promotion.

Leaders and managers recruit tutors with substantial knowledge and experience in the subjects that they teach. Tutors who teach on care programmes have worked in the care sector, often working with a wide range of service users. Tutors who teach on the level 3 content creator programme have extensive industrial experience and technical knowledge. However, leaders and managers have been too slow in recruiting suitably qualified tutors to this programme, which has had a significant negative impact on apprentices' progress.

On the limited training that takes place, tutors use a wide range of appropriate teaching methods. For example, on the level 3 content creator programme, tutors

introduce and explain topics to apprentices, hold group discussions and recap on information from previous sessions. In English and mathematics, tutors make complex concepts clear by breaking information down into small parts, which supports apprentices' understanding.

Tutors attend valuable training to update their subject knowledge. For example, they attend training in the prevention and management of violence and aggression. However, tutors do not attend training to develop their teaching skills.

Tutors support apprentices well to develop their personal and professional confidence at work and, as a result, apprentices become more confident in their roles and are able to take on greater responsibility at work. For example, apprentices on the level 3 lead adult care worker programme are more able to manage staff and the planning of care.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have implemented a useful 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan. However, they do not identify clearly enough staff who have responsibility for actions or deadlines for actions.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Improve oversight of the attendance of apprentices at training sessions and rapidly improve attendance.
- Improve oversight of the quality of education that tutors provide to apprentices.
- Ensure that apprentices have access to sufficient off-the-job training.
- Ensure that tutors carefully review apprentices' progress, together with employers, so that apprentices are aware of their progress and employers know how to support apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace.
- Take swift action to address the slow progress made by too many apprentices.
- Ensure that tutors use the information gathered about apprentices' starting points to plan an effective programme of learning.
- Ensure that tutors attend training to improve their teaching skills further.
- Ensure that tutors provide apprentices with effective careers information that helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps and future careers.
- Ensure that tutors provide a personal development curriculum that teaches apprentices how to keep emotionally and physically healthy and includes topics such as the risks of sexual harassment and violence for apprentices aged under 18.

- Ensure that leaders and managers further develop the 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan to identify staff who have responsibility for actions and agree deadlines for actions.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1270884
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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Neil Wray
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 to 6 August 2021
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, 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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