

# Inspection of CSM Consulting Limited

Inspection dates:

5 to 7 March 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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

## Information about this provider

CSM Consulting Limited trades under the name UCAN. UCAN provides apprenticeship training nationally in 14 standards. The training is a blend of online and one-to-one in-person sessions, often at employers' premises.

At the time of the inspection, there were 190 apprentices in training. The majority of apprentices study the level 4 child, young person and family practitioner, level 3 youth support worker, level 3 teaching assistant, level 3 early years educator and level 4 school business professional apprenticeships. A smaller number of apprentices study level 4 digital, level 3 business administration, level 2 playwork and levels 2 and 3 early years apprenticeships.

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

Apprentices receive good support from assessors who have expert subject knowledge and highly relevant industry experience. Apprentices know they can contact their assessor about their training and receive a prompt and helpful response. Apprentices have good attendance at their sessions. If they do miss a session, assessors swiftly rearrange a follow-up meeting. This helps apprentices to stay on track with their learning.

Apprentices have high levels of respect for each other and their assessors. Assessors make sure that in online sessions and face-to-face meetings, there is a calm, friendly and positive environment in which apprentices learn. Apprentices take part in discussions enthusiastically and are keen to share their knowledge and workplace experiences with their peers.

Apprentices become motivated to learn and have positive attitudes to learning because of the good-quality training they receive. They enjoy gaining new skills and knowledge that they put into practice at work. For example, school business apprentices create disaster recovery plans, negotiate equipment leases and introduce new breakfast and after-school clubs. Employers appreciate the new knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices acquire and the increasingly valuable contribution that apprentices make at work.

Apprentices develop a very good understanding of equality and diversity because leaders and managers make sure that this features prominently in the design and teaching of the curriculum. For example, assessors adjust timetables so that apprentices can attend prayers. Youth work apprentices understand well how equality legislation applies at work. They produce podcasts to explain how youth work supports young people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Apprentices feel safe. Through the curriculum, they develop a good understanding of safeguarding and how it applies to their job roles. For example, apprentices can effectively identify that changes in young people's behaviour can be a sign that they are being radicalised. Apprentices know who and how to report safeguarding concerns.

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

Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the apprenticeships they offer. They work well with a range of public bodies such as local authorities, schools and early years settings to increase the skills of the workforce. Leaders and managers make sure that apprentices enjoy a challenging curriculum that aligns well with employers' needs and meets skills shortages.

Assessors teach apprentices content in a logical sequence. For example, they teach teaching assistant apprentices about the roles of different professionals they need to

work with, and then look at how these professionals work together in multi-agency teams. Assessors revisit these topics to make sure that apprentices' knowledge is secure. They use questioning very effectively to assess how apprentices apply what they have learned at work. Assessors explain content clearly and signpost apprentices to extra resources. As a result, apprentices develop well their knowledge over time.

Assessors thoroughly evaluate what apprentices know and can do at the start of their training. They use this information very effectively to adjust the content and order of their teaching. Consequently, most apprentices benefit from a highly individualised curriculum. In a few instances, in particular on the early years educator apprenticeship, assessors do not use information from assessment to ensure that apprentices do not repeat prior learning.

Assessors give apprentices clear and constructive feedback when teaching, in reviews and on their assignments. This helps apprentices understand how well they have done in their assessments and observations. Assessors identify the specific areas where apprentices can improve. For example, they show apprentices how to add more depth to their answers with examples of impact on their children and young people. Consequently, apprentices produce work of a high standard.

Leaders and managers make sure that apprentices develop their knowledge and use of English and mathematics well. Those who need to gain qualifications in these subjects receive good support to help prepare them for their examinations. The majority of apprentices pass their English and mathematics examinations on their first attempt.

Assessors work effectively with employers to coordinate on- and off-the-job training activities. They consider carefully what tasks apprentices need to complete at work to consolidate their learning. For example, early years apprentices learn about the positive impact of physical activities on children and then apply this knowledge at work by designing activities for their children. Employers are well informed about their apprentices' progress. Progress reviews are planned and frequent. However, assessors do not always capture employers' feedback sufficiently in reviews and, on occasions, employers do not attend reviews. This means that for a few apprentices, their on- and off-the-job training is not as well coordinated.

Assessors give apprentices good support that prepares them well for their final assessments. Assessors prepare apprentices early in the apprenticeship for these assessments. They hold frequent professional discussions. Most apprentices know what they need to do to achieve a merit or distinction. The majority of apprentices achieve their apprenticeship and a high proportion achieve a distinction.

Assessors make sure that most apprentices receive suitable advice and guidance on their next steps and how to achieve their goals. For example, early years apprentices who want to have a career in working with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) know that they need to gain practical experience of working with children with SEND. Youth work apprentices are aware of

further opportunities to study in higher education. However, a few apprentices are not clear about their next steps.

Leaders and managers and those responsible for governance have maintained a good quality of education for apprentices over a long period when employers experienced severe disruption to their settings because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have effective measures in place to assure and improve the quality of the provision. They make sure that assessors benefit from frequent and effective training and development opportunities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Involve all employers routinely in reviews of apprentices' progress so that their views are captured and apprentices' on- and off-the-job training is well coordinated.
- Provide suitable careers advice and guidance to all apprentices so that they are aware of their options on completion of their course.

## **Provider details**

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<b>Address</b>	7 Castle Street Bridgewater TA6 3DT
<b>Contact number</b>	01278 452015
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://ucan.co.uk">ucan.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Rory Finlayson
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 to 9 March 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, 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

Jon Bowman, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ramin Narimani	His Majesty's Inspector
Debra Forsythe-Conroy	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Hughes	His Majesty's Inspector

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