

Rentokil Initial (1896) Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Employer

Address: Rentokil Initial Limited
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a series of monitoring visits to a sample of new apprenticeship training providers that are funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was first announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Rentokil Initial has its United Kingdom headquarters in Blackwater, Surrey and provides pest control and other services throughout the United Kingdom and many other countries. New employees in the pest control and a range of smaller divisions start their careers at Rentokil Initial on an intermediate apprenticeship in customer service. At the time of the monitoring visit, 178 learners were at various stages of a twelve-month, standards-based apprenticeship.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Recruiting staff assess carefully all new employees to decide if they could benefit from the customer service practitioner apprenticeship programme at intermediate level. Those that already have customer service qualifications or wide-ranging customer service experience are not placed on the intermediate programme as this would not provide enough challenge and help them develop new skills and knowledge. Managers are considering the introduction of advanced apprenticeships in 2019. This will give a progression opportunity to intermediate apprentices and an appropriate programme for those who join with relevant qualifications and experience.

Apprentices gain a good range of useful technical and workplace skills during their programmes. They benefit from extensive, high-quality off-the-job training to help them develop rapidly the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to perform well. During frequent progress reviews, assessors and managers help apprentices to reflect on and consider the application of the skills they have developed. As a result, apprentices gain confidence and are prepared well for their work.

Apprentices have a reasonable knowledge of British values and a basic understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Training staff give effective support to apprentices who need to take functional skills examinations in English and mathematics. They achieve this through good use of

online learning courses and half a day of tuition prior to the examinations. A high proportion of apprentices pass level 1 examinations at their first attempt. However, the small number who take examinations at level 2 would benefit from more support from their assessors or suitably qualified specialist staff.

Assessors are very experienced operators and/or managers within their divisions and are successful in developing apprentices' customer service knowledge and skills. Managers have plans to augment internal assessor training with courses that lead to qualifications to improve further assessors' training and assessment practice.

Managers need to ensure that apprentices know whether they are working toward a pass or distinction earlier in their programmes.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Apprentices who are near the end of their programmes receive good guidance and support to prepare for end-point assessments. Work prepared for assessments is of a high standard and reflects the good level of skills gained by apprentices.

Almost all apprentices are confident and ambitious. They can identify many areas of personal strength developed during the programme. Many apprentices aspire to progress in the company and aim for management roles in the future.

Apprentices value the training they receive. Managers and assessors check often that apprentices are making gains in their technical knowledge and customer service skills as a result of taking part in training activities.

Apprentices attend training sessions in a very well-resourced and vibrant learning centre. At the Power Centre, they benefit from contact with senior company staff, from visits to scientific and technical laboratories and from opportunities to meet peers and staff from regions beyond their own.

Assessors give apprentices clear and beneficial guidance about how to improve their work skills and extend their technical knowledge. Managers, including senior managers, also support apprentices well and help them to extend their knowledge and skills.

Managers and training staff ensure that learning materials, including those online, are well designed to challenge apprentices and extend their knowledge. Staff carefully and thoroughly assess apprentices' progress in working through paper-based and online learning materials.

Measures to monitor apprentices' progress are thorough and effective. Assessors, senior managers and governors review progress frequently and discuss at length the ways that apprentices are best supported to make good progress. Where apprentices are identified as falling behind, they are quickly supported to get back on track.

Arrangements to assure and improve the quality of training and learning require improvement. Managers do observe off-the-job training sessions, but these managers are not yet trained to evaluate accurately the quality and effectiveness of training and learning.

Managers have arranged for apprentices who do not have GCSE passes at A* to C or grade 4–9 in English and mathematics to undertake appropriate training with a subcontractor. However, assessors do not routinely confirm the ability of apprentices exempt from these subjects or help them to continue to develop these skills.

Measures to assure and improve the quality of English and mathematics functional skills training sessions run by a subcontractor require improvement. Managers visit the subcontractor's premises and observe training, but they have not received training in observation techniques. As a result, their evaluations of teaching and learning quality are rudimentary.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Managers have ensured that a clear and widely known safeguarding policy and arrangements are in place. Assessors, their managers and key senior leaders have completed appropriate training and have a good understanding of safeguarding requirements.

Effective arrangements to share information, for example between human resource staff and apprentice managers, ensure that any concerns over the safety and welfare of apprentices are known and acted on.

Apprentices have a basic awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and know who to contact if they have any concerns. Managers recognise that apprentices need a more in-depth understanding of these potential dangers, particularly related to the areas where they live and work. New training materials have been developed and will be used by assessors to improve further apprentices' understanding.

Apprentices benefit from a very strong focus on health and safety throughout the company. This pervades every aspect of the technical training which apprentices undertake alongside their customer service apprenticeship.

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