

Citrus Training Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1280302

Name of lead inspector: Paul Cocker HMI

Inspection dates: 12–13 December 2018

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 639 Stanningly Road
Stanningly
Pudsey
Leeds
LS28 6NB

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Citrus Training Solutions Limited (CTS) employs two members of staff, the chief executive officer and the finance director. The chief executive officer is the only shareholder. CTS subcontracts provision to four other organisations either owned or co-owned by the chief executive officer of CTS. These organisations include Pavilion Admin Services Limited and Pavilion Contact Centre Limited, which provide administration and marketing for CTS. The other subcontractors are JT Development Solutions Limited, which provides the operational management of the provision, and Assess to Progress Limited, which provides training services to the CTS apprentices.

CTS trains approximately 188 apprentices, most of whom study apprenticeship frameworks, with the rest studying apprenticeship standards. Around four fifths of apprentices enrol on programmes at levels 2 and 3. Most of the remaining apprentices study level 5 programmes. Training is available in a wide range of sector areas including health and social care, construction, business administration, business and facilities management, childcare, customer service, marketing, information technology, security, sales and warehousing, storage and logistics, and financial services. These apprenticeships are available nationwide through a network of regionally based assessors.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not ensure that they meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Too many apprentices do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours due to the infrequent and poor off-the-job training. Leaders' and managers' knowledge and understanding of apprenticeship training are underdeveloped; as a result, the quality of training that apprentices receive is poor.

Leaders and managers have failed to recruit apprentices with integrity. Too many apprentices enrol on inappropriate programmes. Consequently, these apprentices do not learn anything new, and the programmes merely accredit their existing

knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, apprentices on level 2 construction programmes complete their apprenticeship within the first four months of a 12-month programme, following very little training. Assessors readily acknowledge that they will not submit a claim for the completion of the apprenticeship for another eight months, even though they do not plan any further training. They state that this is to comply with the minimum apprenticeship duration that is set by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the quality of training that apprentices receive or the progress that apprentices make on their programmes. While managers monitor the completion of units, they are unaware that many apprentices do not learn anything new. Furthermore, managers are not fully conversant with the funding requirements of an apprenticeship and so claim funding for apprentices who have not completed any learning.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that appropriate and effective quality assurance arrangements are in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Observations of training and assessment are overly positive and focus on what teachers do rather than what apprentices learn. Consequently, observers fail to identify that many apprentices do not acquire new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders have failed to ensure any supervisory oversight of the performance of the organisation by a suitably experienced governor, trustee or non-executive director. This lack of oversight has had a demonstrably negative impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that apprentices receive. Leaders and managers have not had to account for the poor performance of CTS. The chief executive officer is right to acknowledge that this is a failure of leaders and hopes to recruit an appropriately qualified professional in the near future.

The management of subcontractors is ineffective. Leaders and managers fail to ensure that they hold their delivery partner, Assess to Progress Limited, to account for the poor experience that their apprentices receive. Furthermore, leaders and managers have not gained permission from the ESFA for Assess to Progress Limited to provide training on behalf of CTS. Consequently, Assess to Progress Limited is not on the list of declared subcontractors.

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

A significant minority of apprentices do not complete any form of assessment at the start of their programme. Where assessment does take place, assessors do not use the results of the assessments to ensure that apprentices are on the correct level of programme. This has resulted in many apprentices being on an inappropriate level of apprenticeship. For example, apprentices who are senior directors in the group of companies owned by the chief executive officer and who have extensive experience

of management complete modules on the importance of email that focus on knowledge and skills that they already possess.

The quality of training that apprentices receive is poor. Too many apprentices do not receive their entitlement to high-quality off-the-job training. Assessors place a disproportionate emphasis on the assessment of existing knowledge and skills, as opposed to developing new ones. Consequently, apprentices move from one assessment to another without learning anything new.

Assessors' use of progress reviews to plan learning and monitor apprentices' knowledge and skill development is weak. Assessors do not record how well apprentices are progressing on their apprenticeship. They place a disproportionate emphasis on the completion of units, as opposed to the development of substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Assessors' comments in progress reviews are cursory. They do not help apprentices to improve the standard of their work or develop the skills of which they are capable. For example, level 3 apprentices do not improve the standard of their written work because assessors do not help them to develop their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Consequently, apprentices make the same mistakes and the quality of their work does not improve.

Assessors do not construct a curriculum to meet the specific requirements of the apprentices or their employers. They do not plan or sequence learning to ensure that apprentices develop the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to progress in their careers. For example, level 2 financial services apprentices, who have been in the same job role for many years and have extensive experience of working in the financial services sector, do not learn anything new based on the results of the assessments completed at the start of the course.

Assessors do not challenge apprentices sufficiently to produce work of a high enough standard or develop the knowledge and skills of which they are capable. Too often, assessors do not give apprentices the opportunity to answer questions or solve problems by themselves. This impedes the development of apprentices' independent learning skills and, in a few cases, decreases their confidence.

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

Leaders and managers have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures which staff and apprentices understand. All staff receive annual training on these procedures and other pertinent information in relation to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. On the only occasion when a safeguarding concern arose, staff used these procedures effectively and swiftly to support an apprentice.

Leaders ensure that the designated and deputy designated safeguarding officers receive training to the appropriate level to allow them to execute their role in line with CTS's safeguarding procedures.

Apprentices have an appropriate understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and they know how to identify potential threats online. They are aware of the names of the designated safeguarding officer and her deputy and know how to contact them should they have any safeguarding concerns. Apprentices feel safe and are safe in their workplaces.

Leaders and managers promote safer recruitment practices when employing staff. They complete appropriate checks prior to their starting employment, such as pre-employment checks, Disclosure and Barring Service checks and employees' rights to work in the United Kingdom.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that they have made the necessary links with external agencies to identify the risks that apprentices may face in their local communities around the country, including in 'Prevent' priority areas.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019