

NTG Training Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Inspection date(s): 15–16 January 2019
Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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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 this visit was on the four themes set out below.

NTG Training Ltd (NTG) was registered as a training company in 2008. It offers apprenticeship training in six vocational areas. These areas are business and administration, customer service, digital marketing, health and social care, management, and team leading. NTG started training apprentices funded through the apprenticeship levy in December 2017. In February 2018, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) awarded NTG an apprenticeship contract. Previously, NTG trained apprentices for other training organisations as a subcontractor.

The company currently has 67 levy-funded and 131 ESFA-funded apprentices. Twenty-eight apprentices follow legacy framework programmes and 170 apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are offered at levels 2, 3 and 5. Twenty-one dental nursing apprentices and 141 health and social care apprentices are subcontracted to three other training providers.

The ESFA awarded NTG an adult education contract in November 2017. The provider delivers training in introduction to working in health and social care, principles of warehousing (including fork-lift truck training), and substance misuse. Each course runs for between five and seven weeks. Since November 2017, 436 learners have completed a course. At the time of the monitoring visit, no adult learners were in training.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have a good understanding of the principles and requirements of apprenticeship training. They work closely with subcontractors and employers to ensure that apprentices are employed appropriately and that they have adequate opportunities to develop relevant work-related competencies. Leaders place considerable importance on the need for all apprentices to develop relevant new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders set high expectations for staff, subcontractors, apprentices and learners. They create a respectful and tolerant environment. As a result, many apprentices and learners make good progress in their studies and in their careers.

Leaders monitor the progress of all apprentices regularly and systematically. They identify accurately those who are on or ahead of target and those who make slow progress. Leaders and managers take appropriate action when apprentices' progress is slow to help them to catch up as quickly as possible.

Leaders have good working relationships with the three subcontractors who deliver the health and social care, and dental nursing apprenticeships. Communication with them is frequent. Additionally, a senior manager meets with them monthly to monitor their performance. Detailed reports are produced after each meeting to show what has been discussed and the actions agreed. The senior manager monitors carefully the agreed actions at the next meeting. Leaders and managers manage subcontractors' performance effectively.

Most vocational tutor/assessors have adequate qualifications for their role. Most of them have qualifications in their subject area to at least the level of the programme they are delivering. A considerable number of them also have appropriate vocational experience. However, the expertise of a very small minority of vocational tutor/assessors is limited. This affects adversely the quality of the tuition they provide and the extent of apprentices' knowledge.

Leaders do not ensure that tutor/assessors are competent, confident and qualified to teach English and mathematics to apprentices. Consequently, a minority of apprentices do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable. Leaders rightly acknowledge this concern and are committed to improving the situation as soon as possible.

Leaders, tutor/assessors and apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements of end-point assessments. Most apprentices on standards-based programmes have a good awareness of these assessments and can describe what they will be required to complete before they can take the end-point assessment. Tutor/assessors provide good support to apprentices to help them to review their learning in preparation for end-point assessment.

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' starting points are identified appropriately. They develop a good range of new vocational knowledge, skills, behaviours and understanding. They become increasingly confident in applying these in their workplace. For example, apprentices working in adult social care develop their knowledge of procedures to control the spread of infections. This helps them to improve the safety of service users. Learning

and development apprentices develop an understanding of a range of learning theories that they apply appropriately when they are training staff in their organisations.

Apprentices become increasingly effective in their job role as a result of their on- and off-the-job learning. They have a positive impact on their employer's business which employers recognise and value.

The quality of off-the-job training is adequate. Apprentices have monthly meetings with their tutor/assessor in which they discuss a range of relevant topics. This is supplemented by independent study. Apprentices who are trained by NTG tutor/assessors have access to a wide range of good online learning resources which they use extensively. Apprentices who are trained by subcontractors also develop good independent learning skills through using workbooks and internet research.

The large majority of apprentices are released from their work for off-the-job learning. They make good use of this time to develop their knowledge, skills, behaviours and understanding. However, a very small minority of employers expect apprentices to study in their own time. Leaders and managers have not yet taken sufficient action to rectify this situation.

Tutor/assessors keep most employers fully informed about the progress of their apprentices. Their close communication and collaborative working with employers help to ensure that on-the-job activities support off-the-job learning and vice versa. In a few cases, employers do not manage apprentices' on-the-job learning. Despite efforts by tutor/assessors to involve them, they do not pay sufficient attention to their apprentices' learning and progress. However, inspectors found little evidence that this had a significant detrimental effect on apprentices' learning.

Leaders and managers have an appropriate range of quality assurance processes in place. In most cases, these processes are completed to a good standard. However, when leaders and managers observe teaching and learning sessions, they do not focus enough on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, they do not raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment quickly enough.

Tutor/assessors rarely comment on the quality of apprentices' writing. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are not identified systematically. Apprentices who produce low-quality written work do not always know that their writing is poor. Consequently, they do not take sufficient action to improve it.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals?

Reasonable progress

All learners are unemployed when they enrol on a course. Almost all of them are referred by Jobcentre Plus advisers, who place a high value on re-engaging adults in learning. Learners acquire relevant vocational knowledge, skills and qualifications as a result of their attendance. They also improve their career prospects.

Tutor/assessors ask learners to identify specifically their reasons for enrolling on the course and their career aspirations. The standard of their English and mathematics is assessed accurately at the start of the course. However, tutor/assessors do not make good use of this information routinely to match the learning to learners' potential and career aspirations. Consequently, a small minority of learners do not make as much progress as they could because their learning is insufficiently matched to their needs and abilities.

Many learners acquire a good range of basic knowledge and skills related to health and social care, substance misuse, and warehousing. They also improve their personal and social skills. For example, learners become more self-confident and more able to develop good interpersonal relationships. Learners on the warehousing course are given a very good opportunity to prepare for the fork-lift truck licence and most do so at no cost to themselves.

The quality of learners' written work ranges from very good to poor. Tutor/assessors do not give enough attention to making sure that all learners understand the questions and answer them accurately. Too often, they overlook the importance of identifying spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors that diminish the quality of learners' work. Nevertheless, almost all learners complete the courses successfully and achieve the qualification.

Tutors introduce learners appropriately to safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values early in the course. Although the topics are revisited periodically during the course, learners' knowledge and understanding are insufficiently developed.

Many learners do not receive sufficient information about more advanced training courses, apprenticeship opportunities and suitable job vacancies. Tutor/assessors do not place enough attention on ensuring that all learners have good careers information, advice and guidance so they can plan their next steps efficiently and effectively.

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

Leaders and managers place a high priority on safeguarding all apprentices and learners. The safeguarding policy and procedures are comprehensive. The designated safeguarding officer (DSO), the deputy DSO and the managing director have the appropriate levels of qualification for their roles. All members of NTG and subcontractors' staff are trained suitably and qualified appropriately. Their training is updated regularly.

Leaders, managers and tutor/assessors have a good understanding of the importance of safeguarding apprentices and learners. All NTG and subcontractors' staff who have contact with apprentices or learners are risk assessed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) periodically. No new members of staff are allowed to work with apprentices or learners until they receive an acceptable DBS check.

The DSO takes immediate action when a safeguarding or safeguarding-related concern is raised by an apprentice, learner, NTG colleague or subcontractor. The DSO monitors progress rigorously and maintains detailed records from initial reporting until successful completion. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is discussed at monthly meetings with subcontractors and tutor/assessors.

Apprentices and learners have good access to an NTG 24-hour telephone helpline. This is used when concerns arise outside working hours or if apprentices or learners do not wish to speak to their tutor/assessor or employer about an issue.

All apprentices and learners complete an informative introductory 'Prevent' duty and British values workbook when they begin their programme. They are alerted appropriately to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices and learners have a good awareness of how to report any concerns they have about themselves or other people.

Apprentices' knowledge and understanding are now extended during their off-the-job training through a 'topic of the month'. However, most apprentices and learners have only a basic understanding of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Many apprentices and learners do not have a sufficient grasp of British values. They do not understand fully the impact they have on their working and personal lives.

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