

Total Training Company (UK) Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1270920

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Inspection dates: 23–24 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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency (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 themes set out below.

Total Training Company (UK) Limited (Total Training) was established in 2010 as a family-owned training company. The provider delivers training as a subcontractor and also privately funded training. Total Training was registered as a new apprenticeship provider in March 2017. It recruited its first adult learners in November, and its first apprentices in December of the same year. The provider operates in two regions, with its head office in Birmingham and a further office in Hartlepool.

At the time of the monitoring visit there were 77 apprentices following an apprenticeship framework and 12 on apprenticeship standards. Three quarters of the apprentices were following a general construction qualification and the rest were following a business administration and management programme. All apprentices were doing a level 2 or level 3 qualification. Approximately half of the apprenticeship programmes are delivered to levy-paying employers. In addition, 32 adult learners were following an employability short course in the areas of construction or business administration.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have decided, after several years as a subcontractor, to deliver under their own contract to capitalise on the relationships that they have built with successful and reputable employers in the construction industry. Leaders are very knowledgeable about construction matters and the training and employment opportunities that are available in the sector and, more specifically, in the regions where they operate. They use this knowledge well to identify their clients' workforce training needs and to deliver a programme that meets them.

Managers deliver a number of well-regarded professional qualifications in the construction sector to private clients. Learners on the public-funded apprenticeships and adult learning programmes benefit greatly from accessing these at no extra cost, as these are qualifications that enhance learners' employment prospects. Managers make good use of strong links with employers to seek employment for adult learners on completion of their course.

The process of recruiting apprentices is fit for purpose. Approximately half of the apprentices join the programme with little or no prior experience in the construction industry. Staff find employment for these learners. They explain appropriately the training model that apprentices are about to follow and the existing progression opportunities available with their employers. However, leaders and managers do not set targets to increase the number of women or learners from specific ethnic minority backgrounds participating in learning. Managers have recently begun to consider how to promote apprenticeships in construction to women, but it is too early to evaluate success in this area.

Leaders and managers have used their knowledge as long-standing subcontractor providers to ensure that the length of each of the apprenticeships is appropriate and realistic. In the cases where apprentices have made good progress and completed their programme earlier than planned, staff have introduced units of knowledge from a higher-level qualification to ensure that apprentices utilise the planned length of the programme to maximise their learning.

Leaders and managers have introduced the apprenticeship standards in business administration and management where the end-point assessment is already in place. They ensure that apprentices have access to all the necessary stages to complete their apprenticeship standards programme.

Off-the-job training is planned well for all apprentices. The provider offers a series of learning activities and courses that employers, learners and tutors can choose to complement the apprenticeship qualification. Learners track the off-the-job training they have undertaken, but they do not specify what have they learned in such sessions. Managers do not track the delivery of the off-the-job training correctly for every cohort of apprentices and cannot provide leaders with an accurate, overall view of the progress that apprentices are making.

All apprentices complete an appropriate initial assessment of their existing levels of English and mathematics. Leaders have appointed a functional skills specialist teacher who promptly identifies the apprentices' gaps in knowledge in these subjects. Apprentices can access further learning via an online English and mathematics programme with the help of their assessor. However, leaders and managers monitor too narrowly the progress that apprentices make towards developing these skills, concentrating only on whether apprentices pass or fail their test.

Leaders' and managers' use of data to evaluate the outcomes of the provision and to inform their managerial decisions is weak. Inspectors found a lack of clarity on when the provider had started the contract and the exact learner numbers and cohorts that they had managed since becoming a prime contract holder. Leaders and managers monitor mostly the progress that apprentices make against the achievement of qualification units. Therefore, they do not have a sufficiently good understanding of the progress that apprentices make in learning and acquiring new knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours.

The self-assessment report does not disaggregate sufficiently the provision of its own contract from the provision that Total Training delivers as a subcontractor. This contributes to an imprecise view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the provider's work under its own contract.

The effectiveness of the provider's governance requires improvement. A consultant provides support to the leaders of the organisation and advises them on how to manage their contract. However, leaders and managers acknowledge that the part of governance that involves holding leaders to account requires further development and is work in progress.

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

Total Training designs and delivers apprenticeships that allow apprentices to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours that their employers demand. Employers value their apprentices and help them develop their vocational skills and technical knowledge considerably. For example, a business apprentice in the banking industry, who was implementing changes in procedures, realised the implications of these changes on other departments as a result of their training.

Apprentices benefit from a thorough initial interview process, discussing aspects of the course and its benefits, but they do not become aware of other options which are not available through Total Training, including the full range of progression routes available to them on completion of their programme.

Staff use an initial assessment of mathematics and English appropriately to identify apprentices' starting points in their learning. They use this information to plan for apprentices' development needs and continue to work on these skills during their programmes of study. However, they do not measure progress in these subjects effectively to know how well apprentices are developing these skills.

Apprentices join the most appropriate level of course. Where they are not in employment, Total Training finds them an appropriate placement. Apprentices on construction courses greatly benefit from a number of additional qualifications and licences to operate, such as their Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)

card, which enables them to work on construction sites. They also take additional qualifications such as Streetworks, which enables them to work on the public highway, and licence training to drive forklifts and dumper trucks. Apprentices and employers rightly value these additional qualifications.

Most assessors are well qualified and experienced in their vocational areas. They share best practice and gain new ideas to improve their assessment practice through regular standardisation meetings and as a result of any areas for improvement identified in their teaching and learning observations. However, too often, assessors do not set apprentices sufficiently clear and measurable targets to help them extend their knowledge and skills and ensure that they make the amount of progress of which they are capable.

Apprentices have a good understanding of their qualification, and the majority can recognise the skills and behaviours they gain during their programme. However, staff do not measure how apprentices are developing their skills, behaviours and attitudes from their starting points, to ensure that they are making good progress.

Apprentices' work is of the standard expected for their course and they are clear about what they need to do for their assignments. However, the feedback they receive on their assignments is not specific enough to help them to improve their work. For example, it does not identify sufficiently what the apprentices need to do to improve and how they should correct their English grammar errors.

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

Adult learners are enthusiastic and value their learning on the three-week employability course that includes English and mathematics functional skills. In 2017/18, almost all learners stayed on until the end of the programme and achieved their course. The provider promotes inclusivity well by recruiting many adult learners who are classed as vulnerable by having become long-term unemployed. A significant number are ex-offenders, and almost all have typically been away from formal learning for some time. However, women are under-represented within the adult learning programmes.

Tutors support learners well with the completion of learning activities and the achievement of their learning objectives. In this relatively short course, learners gain confidence in applying for jobs and preparing for interviews. As a result, a considerable number of adult learners gain employment or move on to further training on completion of the course. They access employment in a range of industries including construction, retail, security, and warehousing. However, the provider was unable to provide reliable data on detailed achievement and the continuation of learners into employment or further study.

Learners undertake an assessment day prior to starting the course. This determines their starting points and leads to a plan for training which meets their employability needs effectively. The provider works closely with the National Careers Service to agree individual career plans that are realistic and aspirational. Staff challenge learners effectively to agree behaviour targets and achieve vocational skills. However, tutors do not record the full range of agreed targets at the beginning of the course, although this shows some recent signs of improvement.

Tutors take appropriate account of learners' previous learning, time of unemployment and work experience when planning learning. However, too many learners are insufficiently challenged by the level of English and/or mathematics qualification, considering their prior achievement. As a result, learners do not achieve their full potential in these subjects. Managers have recognised this area for improvement and are working with staff to improve this.

Learners develop effective interpersonal behaviours, and respect and tolerance for their colleagues. The provider treats the learners with respect and has high expectations about their conduct while in learning. Tutors' feedback is constructive and helps learners to improve their work and be ready for employment.

Learners benefit from gaining additional qualifications in construction skills and health and safety, such as the construction green card, manual handling, abrasive wheels, cable avoidance, and dumper truck driving. These enhance their chances of getting a job interview. A learner who could not drive and had been in prison for many years was proud that he had learned to drive a dumper truck and had increased his chance of getting a job.

Learning sessions meet individual learning needs. The most able learners support the less able learners effectively. A learner had improved his numeracy skills after struggling for years. Tutors support learners well with additional needs, such as mental health and dyslexia. Tutors work well with managers to help learners to resolve personal problems. A learner in sheltered accommodation received help in becoming more independent and moved to local authority housing. His tutor helped him to understand and complete the required paperwork.

Tutors monitor learners' progress daily by marking the learners' workbooks and meeting them individually to identify what they need to do to achieve. Tutors are suitably qualified in teaching and functional skills. They share good practice to improve their quality of teaching and learning. They receive effective support from managers, who review their performance regularly.

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

Leaders and managers have not placed sufficient emphasis on ensuring that their safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and adhered to, to protect all their learners, in particular apprentices aged 16 to 18 and vulnerable adults.

Leaders and managers have not been sufficiently thorough in their identification of safeguarding risks to their learners. As a result, their safeguarding policies and procedures do not highlight the necessary actions designed to protect learners. For example, the attendance policy does not specify the appropriate actions staff should follow when a young apprentice or a vulnerable adult has failed to attend work or learning sessions. Similarly, policies do not state the supervised work arrangements for young apprentices. This is particularly important considering the construction environments where they work. Leaders and managers have not carried out the necessary checks to ensure that employers have sufficient understanding of safeguarding and that this is reflected in their own policies.

Leaders and managers have not demonstrated sufficient safeguarding knowledge when setting up their most basic safeguarding requirements. Those with designated safeguarding roles have not had the appropriate safeguarding training, commensurate with the role they fulfil. Safeguarding policies fail to highlight how often staff should refresh their safeguarding training, or how often Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be carried out. Several years have lapsed since these checks were obtained for a few trainers and managers. During the inspection, leaders and managers were not able to provide proof of this check for key safeguarding managers. The many policies held by the provider fail to describe the shadow and supervised work arrangements for newly recruited trainers awaiting their DBS check.

Leaders and managers have not developed a clear oversight of the safeguarding issues and concerns that learners may experience. They have not investigated why the provider received five safeguarding concerns in the last seven months, compared to none in the same period of months during the first year of delivery. Records of safeguarding incidents do not contain sufficient information to allow managers to assure themselves that the concerns are being dealt with appropriately. A recent safeguarding disclosure by a young apprentice had not been handled by the appropriate member of staff. Managers have not done enough work to minimise the chances of this incident being repeated. Although the provider's policy makes it clear that it will liaise with parents and carers in the case of safeguarding concerns highlighted by young learners, this has not been the case.

The provider has begun to test the apprentices' knowledge of basic safeguarding principles, including the arrangements for reporting their concerns. Early indications show that apprentices' knowledge of these matters is too variable. Managers have

not yet analysed this information to identify the areas where they need to raise learners' awareness.

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