

NC Training Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first focused monitoring visit to NC Training Ltd following publication of the monitoring visit report for new apprenticeship providers in September 2018. Safeguarding was ineffective in September 2018.

The findings of this visit are outlined below.

Theme

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers reflected carefully on the weaknesses for safeguarding identified at the previous monitoring visit. They carried out a swift and thorough review of the safeguarding processes following the monitoring visit and implemented an improvement action plan. Leaders and managers have rectified almost all of the weaknesses through their actions. The governor responsible for safeguarding has a firm date booked next month to conduct an audit on the impact of safeguarding policies and processes. This completes all the actions in the plan.

Leaders and managers work closely with key partners to strengthen safeguarding within NC Training Ltd. Key partners' critical reviews of safeguarding processes and the associated documentation provide leaders and managers with good advice and guidance about further improvements that are needed. Consequently, safeguarding processes are appropriate. They ensure that apprentices are kept safe. Key partners and staff at NC Training Ltd meet frequently to share good practice in safeguarding.

The designated safeguarding officer's (DSO) recording of formal actions taken to follow up referrals or disclosures has improved significantly. Staff record initial disclosures made by apprentices diligently. Consequently, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) receives comprehensive and accurate information about the disclosures submitted. The DSL is then able to make suitable referrals to external agencies when necessary.

Leaders and managers track and record the progress of safeguarding disclosures effectively through an electronic system. They risk rate each concern according to the severity of the disclosure, the time the case has been open and whether it has been referred to external agencies. This ensures that the DSL has effective oversight of active safeguarding cases.

The DSL rightly acknowledges that the extent of external agencies' involvement is not clearly identified in the recording of every case. During this monitoring visit, the

DSL revised the recording documentation to ensure that information about work with external agencies is now identified clearly. The DSL stores paper-based case-review notes securely. For enhanced security, arrangements are in place to scan all documentation and transfer it to the electronic encrypted safeguarding folders.

The DSL, the deputy DSL and the managing director completed designated safeguarding officer training at level 3 in October 2018. The DSL has also completed a wide range of training to complement her DSL role and provide a greater understanding of working with external agencies, for example a multi-agency approach to safeguarding and early help. Six managers have completed safer-recruitment training. They are yet to put this training into practice.

Staff benefit from a range of staff-development activities to extend their understanding of issues associated with safeguarding. These include, for example, the dangers of knife crime. Staff receive weekly updates with relevant and current information about safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. For example, these include Street Angels, drug and alcohol misuse and grooming of children and vulnerable adults.

All staff have completed qualifications in safeguarding at level 2. Staff understand the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism as a result of attending external workshops with specialist staff. These included the Department for Education's regional coordinator for 'Prevent' and police officers from Cumbria Constabulary Counter-Terrorism Team.

Apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They know to whom they should report any issues or concerns both at NC Training Ltd and in their own workplace. Apprentices discuss confidently the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism in their locality and nationally.

Assessors introduce safeguarding early in apprentices' programmes and reinforce this during progress reviews. Assessors ask apprentices routinely the 'question of the month', for example on personal financial safety. Apprentices' progress reviews include safeguarding questions aligned closely to apprentices' job roles, for example mental health awareness for health and social care apprentices. However, progress review documentation does not provide sufficient space to record apprentices' responses. Assessors do not record routinely how apprentices apply their learning in the workplace.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that any actions identified by the governor responsible for safeguarding are implemented swiftly and effectively.
- As noted in the DSL plan, scan and transfer documentation associated with safeguarding referrals into relevant encrypted electronic files to ensure that all information is retained securely and is easily accessible by authorised personnel.

- Ensure that documentation for progress reviews has enough space to enable assessors to record accurately apprentices' responses to safeguarding questions and how apprentices' learning is applied in the workplace.

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