

Rove Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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 these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Rove Limited was established in 2008. It specialises in the delivery of business administration training in National Health Service (NHS) trusts, including training on a full-cost, commercially funded basis. From May 2017, Rove Limited started to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships, which was the provision considered on this monitoring visit.

At the time of the monitoring visit, 72 apprentices were enrolled on apprenticeship frameworks. Rove Limited works with two levy-paying NHS trusts to provide apprenticeship training for their employees. Around one third of apprentices are on business administration apprenticeships at level 2, one third at level 3 and one third at level 4. Four fifths of apprentices are employed by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust and the remainder are employed by Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders work in close and effective collaboration with employers to develop apprenticeship programmes that meet their organisational skill development needs. Through well-managed training programmes, apprentices improve their knowledge, skills and behaviours in administration. This enables them to become valued employees and make good progress in developing their careers.

Leaders plan off-the-job training effectively with employers to ensure that the large majority of apprentices receive the training and support that they need. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points and develop relevant skills for their job roles. Leaders ensure that assessors deliver effective training sessions for apprentices. In addition, they successfully engage with employers to make adequate provision for apprentices to have protected time at work to study and complete assignments.

The large majority of newly recruited apprentices receive good support and guidance from the progress mentors that are allocated to them in their workplace by their employer. Mentors help and encourage apprentices to engage in their learning and to make good progress. A small minority of apprentices who are existing employees and follow programmes designed to help them to gain promotion do not consistently use the time allocated to carry out off-the-job training due to other work constraints. However, leaders and assessors work effectively with employers to identify alternative times for apprentices to complete their training.

Leaders and assessors effectively monitor and record the progress that apprentices make. They quickly identify when apprentices are at risk of falling behind and put in place actions, in close consultation with the employers, to ensure that apprentices catch up. As a result, almost all apprentices are making at least the progress expected in developing new skills and knowledge. When apprentices complete their programmes, a high proportion gain permanent employment, and many progress to higher-level positions.

Leaders accurately self-assess the quality of provision and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. In their self-assessment, they consider a wide range of evidence to inform their evaluation, including the views of apprentices, employers and staff. Leaders use the findings of their self-assessment to implement effective actions to make necessary improvements. However, when carrying out observations of teaching and learning, leaders focus too much on the activities of the assessor. They do not consider sufficiently the impact that these activities have on the progress that apprentices are making in developing new skills and knowledge. The outcomes of observations do not accurately identify areas that can help assessors to improve their practice.

Leaders work closely with, and manage effectively, the performance of the subcontractor that they use for the delivery of English and mathematics qualifications. As a result, apprentices who need to achieve qualifications in these subjects make good progress in improving their English and mathematical skills.

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

Assessors carry out rigorous initial assessment activities to establish apprentices' suitability and the appropriate level of apprenticeship programme. They plan and deliver well-structured and effective learning activities that meet apprentices' individual needs. Apprentices are provided with challenging and engaging training at the NHS trust training centres by assessors and in the workplace by their employer. The training helps apprentices to develop effectively the skills and knowledge that are relevant to their job roles in administration.

Assessors carry out reviews with apprentices regularly to ensure that apprentices are making the progress of which they are capable. However, the comprehensive and helpful discussions about progress between assessors and apprentices are not recorded sufficiently well for apprentices and their employers to reflect on afterwards.

Assessors and workplace mentors ensure that apprentices develop new skills that they apply effectively in their workplace. This prepares apprentices well for future roles in the NHS. For example, apprentices develop their verbal communication and writing skills, enabling them to work confidently with medical professionals and patients accessing treatment. They also develop the skills to work with challenging customers effectively.

Assessors provide apprentices with good support. Based within the health trusts' training departments, they are proactive and flexible in responding to apprentices' needs. Assessors respond quickly and keep in regular contact with apprentices by email and telephone when apprentices need additional help. Assessors provide helpful and constructive feedback on practical work and assignments. They ensure that apprentices act on this to make improvements to their work and continue to develop their skills.

Apprentices who need to complete training in English, mathematics and information and communication technology to enable them to reach the required level receive good support to help them improve their skills and achieve their qualifications. They use their improved skills well in their job roles. For example, apprentices gain in skills and confidence to write error-free reports, formal letters and emails. They improve their confidence to deal effectively with patients on the telephone.

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

Leaders have ensured that a culture of safeguarding is well integrated into all aspects of apprenticeship provision. They have established effective procedures to safeguard apprentices in their workplace and everyday lives.

Leaders have ensured that the designated safeguarding lead officer is appropriately trained. The lead officer receives regular communications from the local safeguarding board and uses this information to ensure that staff are well informed about local issues. A secure log records any concerns and actions taken.

The designated safeguarding lead officer ensures that all staff undergo appropriate background checks to ensure that they are suitable for the role that they carry out. This includes obtaining references and confirming their eligibility to work in the country. The lead officer ensures that staff undertake appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This develops their knowledge well about how to keep apprentices safe and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders and assessors design helpful learning activities covering safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty as part of apprentices' induction at the start of their programmes. Apprentices also complete additional training in both safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty delivered by their employer as part of regular training within the NHS. As a result, the large majority of apprentices develop a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when online. They apply their knowledge well in their workplaces, for example they understand the importance of the safe storage of confidential documents. However, the knowledge of a small minority of apprentices about the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism is limited, particularly where they have not completed the required online training early enough in their programme.

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