

Complete Lean Solutions Ltd

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 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.

In May 2017 the EFSA awarded Complete Lean Solutions Ltd (CLS) a contract to provide apprenticeship training. CLS started delivering level 2 apprenticeships in improving operational performance, business improvement pathway in January 2018. CLS currently has 136 apprentices across seven local authorities on the programme. All apprentices are undertaking frameworks. One hundred and sixteen of these apprentices are levy funded.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear strategic purpose and strategy. The apprenticeship programme builds on the expertise of the managing director and manager in lean production techniques. The programme is highly tailored to meet the needs of employers across different sectors, including the national health service and manufacturing industries.

Leaders and managers have built a team with the industrial experience to deliver the framework. Since receiving the contract, they have recruited key staff with an education and training background. All current assessors either have, or are working towards, assessor qualifications.

Trainers and assessors deliver the programme through a mixture of workplace assessments, reviews and classroom-based sessions. The balance of these are adapted to each individual employer. Apprentices and assessors record the off-the-job training carried out. Managers monitor this closely to ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement.

CLS has appropriate systems in place to monitor apprentices' progress. In-year data indicates that most apprentices are making at least the progress expected of them. Most apprentices are on track to complete their functional skills mathematics and

English successfully. Apprentices are encouraged to undertake functional skills mathematics and English at a level higher than required for the framework.

It is too early to collect destination data formally. In a few instances, apprentices have gained promotions while undertaking the programme. This is in part due to the improvements they have made to their business as a result of the course.

The co-director in Australia currently carries out the governance function for the apprenticeship provision. This is not formalised but does offer the managing director in England a sounding board for strategic decisions. Leaders acknowledge the need to improve this further. Leaders are in the process of formally inviting two of their key employer links onto a committee that will fulfil the governance role of scrutiny and challenge.

Leaders, managers and all staff attend a monthly team meeting which acts as the main driver for improving the quality of provision. At these meetings staff discuss the performance by company and by individual in detail. Managers take appropriate actions to address identified underperformance. The meetings are also used to share best practice. As a result, most apprentices are making at least the progress expected of them.

Managers acknowledge that other aspects of their quality assurance arrangements need improving. The company's first self-assessment report draws well on the views of the staff team. It identifies strengths and weaknesses from learner surveys. However, it does not evaluate sufficiently the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The quality improvement plan is matched in detail to the common inspection framework. However, it does not identify sufficiently the impact of actions on the quality of learning.

Leaders and managers currently monitor retention, achievement and attendance. They are in the process of developing key performance indicators that are focused on the quality of education and training.

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 are enthusiastic about the management tools and strategies that they are learning on their programme. Most apply their newly acquired skills to benefit their place of work. Apprentices in management roles use established methods such as Kaizan and the 5S to identify projects to improve effectiveness within their workplace. This enables them to produce cost savings, increase efficiencies and helps them become more effective managers. For example, in an NHS Trust, an apprentice identified more streamlined ways to work that has increased the number of patients that can be seen during a clinic.

The projects that apprentices carry out within their workplaces form a significant part of their off-the-job skills development. These highly tailored projects enable apprentices to develop individualised competences in specific areas of interest to

them. They seamlessly integrate these valuable projects into their work patterns. Employers value the benefits the projects bring to their organisations. In a few instances apprentices' line managers are not routinely involved in reviews. This results in those apprentices making slower progress in the completion of their project and qualification.

All apprentices complete online diagnostic assessments in English and mathematics at induction. Those who need to undertake functional skills English or mathematics. Assessors work closely with those who already have their qualification to develop and extend their existing skills.

Trainers and assessors integrate English, mathematics and digital skills development into the programme well. For example, apprentices produce written reports and eye-catching posters which capture the benefits of their project well. They also give presentations where they develop further their communication skills.

Trainers and assessors have extensive vocational and industrial experience. They use this experience to enthuse and motivate their apprentices to apply their new knowledge in their workplace. They also use effective coaching techniques to help apprentices develop new skills. Assessors provide good support to apprentices.

Managers carry out observations of teaching, learning and assessment regularly. However, observations focus too much on compliance to exam board requirements and do not identify sufficiently the impact of teaching on how well apprentices develop new skills and make good progress.

Managers monitor the progress of apprentices effectively. Apprentices understand the progress they are making in their framework. They can show the impact it is having on their working practices. Assessors carry out regular reviews. They intervene quickly if an apprentice begins to fall behind. They provide good support to ensure that they catch up on their work.

Target setting is not consistently good. In too many instances targets set are bland or not specific enough. As a result, a few apprentices do not make more rapid progress in achieving their learning outcomes.

Managers recognise that the initial advice and guidance and careers advice provided to apprentices need further improvement. A few apprentices in the first cohort did not fully appreciate the level of commitment required to complete all aspects of their qualification. Managers are now carrying out a range of open events and workshops so that all apprentices are clear about the demands of apprenticeship programmes. It is too early to gauge the impact of this.

Careers guidance does not yet include a wide enough range of information about potential progression routes for apprentices. Managers are in the process of revising the guidance they give to apprentices to address this.

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

CLS has an appropriate safeguarding policy that includes the 'Prevent' duty. It has a designated safeguarding officer who has received enhanced training. All staff have received safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training, which they are required to update annually. Managers have an appropriate single central register. All staff have had Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Managers are aware of who to contact in the regions they work across if they have any concerns regarding the safety of learners. Managers have devised an incidence log. To date there have been no incidences to report.

Apprentices receive information on safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and fundamental British values at their induction. Assessors raise discussions on these at reviews to reinforce their learning. Discussions on these are recorded well in review documents.

Trainers and assessors build on apprentices' current levels of understanding well. As a result, apprentices working in the NHS trust have a good understanding of safeguarding. Most other apprentices have an adequate understanding.

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