

Right Track Social Enterprise Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1270880

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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 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.

Right Track Social Enterprise Limited was established in 2009 and is an independent learning provider. It began delivering vocational training by means of levy- and framework-funded apprenticeships in January 2018. This provision was in scope for the monitoring visit. Right Track Social Enterprise Limited has three standards-based and 20 framework-based apprentices. They are working towards a childcare, business administration or customer services intermediate or advanced apprenticeship. Apprentices are employed at sites within the East Midlands. Apprentices undertake all their training in the workplace.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not effectively monitor how well an apprentice's training meets the requirements for an apprenticeship. Managers have been too slow in responding to data that clearly shows that the majority of apprentices spend insufficient time in personal study within working hours. Consequently, most apprentices complete a large majority of the programme in their own time. This does not meet the requirements of apprenticeship programmes.

Managers do not have adequate records of the training apprentices receive from vocational coaches. As a result, they do not have effective oversight of the apprenticeship. This hinders their ability to assess whether training is appropriately sequenced and comprehensive to meet apprentices' and employers' needs. Suitable recording of standards-based apprentices' achievement of new skills, knowledge and behaviours has only recently begun. This has impeded managers' ability to identify and address performance shortfalls.

Managers and vocational coaches do not liaise with employers sufficiently well to ensure effective delivery of apprenticeship programmes. Managers are careful to only contract with employers who commit to meeting the requirements of the apprenticeship. This is clearly outlined in the associated service level agreement. However, managers have not ensured that employers release apprentices to undertake off-the-job training as needed. Too often, employers cancel vocational coaches' workplace visits at short notice. As a result, apprentices do not receive appropriately synchronised training and assessment.

The planning of training session observations fails to ensure that a suitable range of practical, theory and assessment practice are considered. Observers place insufficient importance on the evaluation of the quality of learning experienced by apprentices. This hinders the contribution of the outcomes of observations to improving session quality rapidly.

Managers do not make adequate use of learners' and employers' views to assess the quality of the programme. They use the associated quality improvement plan well to promote changes that benefit apprentices. However, key weaknesses identified during this visit were not identified and included in the plan. This weakens managers' ability to improve training quality.

The careers information, advice and guidance received by apprentices is not sufficiently good. Leaders and managers have recently invested in computers and internet access for vocational coaches to use for online learning and access careers resources in the workplace. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this improvement initiative.

Leaders and managers recruit with integrity. They ensure that all apprentices participate voluntarily in their programme. They successfully use the apprenticeship programme to implement their mission of helping individuals not in education, employment or training to reengage with learning.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Insufficient progress

The planning and linking of apprentices' on- and off-the-job training is weak. Vocational coaches make insufficient use of apprentices' identified development needs as a starting point to plan and update training schedules. Employers are not routinely involved in the planning and review of apprentices' progress and training. The quality of training received by apprentices does not always take adequate account of their job tasks and responsibilities or the specific needs of employers. Apprentices' personal and professional development is overly reliant on the experience of undertaking work roles rather than the apprenticeship programme.

Consequently, around a third of apprentices are making slower than planned progress in achieving their learning targets.

Apprentices' English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT) skills are not developed to a high enough standard. The scheduling of activities to raise apprentices' competence in these areas is not adequately planned and implemented from the start of the programme. This hampers the development of the skills and knowledge that apprentices need to complete tasks. As a result, apprentices make slower progress in achieving their learning targets. A significant proportion of apprentices start their training with a level of English and mathematics needed to comply with the apprenticeship's minimum standards. Where it would benefit them, apprentices are not offered the opportunity of additional study to extend their skills further. Most apprentices who have undertaken English, mathematics and ICT examinations were successful at their first attempt.

Feedback received by apprentices is not always sufficiently detailed to help them develop further. This is particularly the case for framework-based apprentices. For example, feedback on apprentices' written work does not consistently ensure that they develop the relevant strategies to avoid repeating errors. Guidance from vocational coaches too often focuses on the collection of evidence rather than helping apprentices to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be more effective employees.

Apprentices benefit from attendance at a good range and variety of training programmes offered by their employers. Examples include workplace-specific safeguarding, first aid and customer care training. This has contributed well to apprentices' development of personal effectiveness through, for example, improvements in their time-management, problem-solving and analysis skills. As a result, employers hold apprentices and their contributions within the workplace in high regard.

The very small number of standards-based apprentices are well supported by their vocational coaches to prepare them for the end-point assessment. Apprentices have a sound understanding of the assessment, what standard they are currently performing at and how to achieve a high grade.

The personal well-being of apprentices, many of whom have additional learning needs, is given a high priority by managers and vocational coaches. They make very good use of the outcomes of neurodiversity assessment arrangements to identify and provide alternative training methods that help apprentices learn, for example through the use of computer technology to improve apprentices' communication skills. In addition, managers have introduced more frequent and additional workplace visits by vocational coaches. This has effectively supported apprentices to build their personal confidence and overcome barriers to participating in learning.

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

Leaders and managers have established a caring culture that prioritises the protection of apprentices and staff from harm. Leaders, managers and vocational coaches have a very good awareness of their safeguarding duty. Managers have successfully implemented comprehensive and detailed safeguarding policies that are subject to frequent review to improve their effectiveness. As a result, apprentices report feeling safe at the workplace and when undertaking their training.

The designated safeguarding officer (DSO) is appropriately trained and knowledgeable of the responsibilities required of the role. In addition, all relevant staff have received appropriate training to increase their effectiveness in securing apprentices' well-being. During training sessions and progress reviews vocational coaches make good use of their learning to promote apprentices' awareness of pertinent safety topics. All staff are subject to pertinent recruitment checks before beginning their duties with apprentices.

The DSO has established and uses a good range of external links, including through collaboration with local safeguarding boards to enhance safeguarding arrangements. This ensures that staff and apprentices are kept fully informed about the specific dangers in their region. For example, vocational coaches effectively raise apprentices' awareness of the dangers posed by criminal gangs' exploitation of individuals in the transportation and selling of illegal drugs.

Apprentices have a good appreciation of how they can raise any concerns, including through the use of the telephone helpline, available throughout the year. Managers and vocational coaches are skilful at identifying and responding to safeguarding issues. Associated records are detailed. Managers swiftly resolve the relatively few cases that arise. The DSO acts quickly to refer apprentices to external organisations that provide appropriate specialist help.

Apprentices have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Apprentices can explain how to apply their learning, and respond effectively, to scenarios they may encounter at work or in their personal lives. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. Those in the caring professions exhibit an appropriately good understanding of safeguarding as it applies to their work.

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