

# Arriva London North Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1278663

**Name of lead inspector:** Helen Flint, Her Majesty's Inspector

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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 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.

Arriva North London Limited (Ltd) is part of the Arriva London region, one of five operating regions which form the company Arriva UK Bus. Arriva North London Ltd provides engineering apprenticeship training for four of the five regions, and to one other employer. Currently, 68 apprentices study level 3 bus and coach engineering technician standards apprenticeships. Most will take around three years to complete this. Apprentices undertake two weeks of intensive off-the-job training every eight weeks. Fifty-eight apprentices attend the Arriva Engineering Academy in Edmonton, London. The remaining apprentices study in the newly opened academies in St Helens, Lancashire and in Derby. Around a fifth of apprentices are under the age of 18 at the start of their apprenticeships.

Arriva North London Ltd started their own apprenticeship training, funded through the apprenticeship levy in September 2017. Prior to this, they used colleges in various locations to provide off-the-job engineering apprenticeship training. A small number of apprentices transferred from one of these colleges to Arriva North London Ltd, and are currently in the fourth year of their apprenticeship.

### 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 lack the expertise to provide successful apprenticeship provision. Managers have failed to implement quality assurance processes to identify and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of training. They have relied on external consultants to help with this but have failed to act on many of the recommendations provided, or they have been slow to do so. Managers do not know whether actions they take have a positive impact on the experience of apprentices or their employers, because they do not monitor this effectively. Managers' monitoring of the progress apprentices make is not good enough. Their record-keeping and management of data are poor.

Senior leaders have been too slow to implement arrangements to oversee apprenticeship provision effectively. They fail to provide sufficient guidance and challenge to academy managers and staff. A senior manager has recently taken over

these responsibilities, and a new academy manager, until very recently one of the trainers, is now in post. These new managers are right to accept that there is much to do to improve the management and quality of provision.

Managers have failed to provide any teaching or learning in English and mathematics, since September 2017, for the large minority of apprentices who need to gain functional skills qualifications in these subjects. Managers did not identify which apprentices needed functional skills qualifications early enough in their apprenticeships. Staff have not entered any apprentices for their functional skills' examinations. As a result, apprentices who are now at the end of their apprenticeship cannot complete their end-point assessment, because they have not gained the required functional skill qualifications.

Managers and staff have significant experience in the engineering and automotive sectors. They have designed useful engineering training to improve the skills of apprentices and benefit Arriva UK Bus garages. New trainers are technically knowledgeable, but they have little or no teaching experience. Managers are supporting them to start an award in training, but they do not monitor trainers' development well enough to help them improve their teaching skills quickly.

Almost all apprentices join Arriva UK Bus as new employees, and the most have little or no engineering knowledge when they start. They gain useful new engineering skills and knowledge through their training. Many apprentices come from deprived areas of England and value the opportunities the company provides. Arriva UK Bus managers expect that apprentices will join the permanent workforce when they complete their apprenticeship.

**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**

Managers' and staff's expectations of what apprentices can achieve are not high enough. They do not ensure that apprentices make progress towards important milestones and targets, which many apprentices have not met. Managers and apprentices are unaware whether apprentices are aiming for the highest grade they can achieve. Apprentices' development of English and mathematical skills is too slow because they have not received the knowledge they need early enough.

Managers do not plan training well enough to ensure on- and off-the-job training are properly coordinated. They do not communicate the content of the training at the academy to apprentices' employers and mentors effectively enough. This does not allow employers to provide apprentices with relevant jobs in the garage. Too often, reviews of apprentices' progress take place without employers or mentors present, so that information is not shared well enough.

A change in training staff has resulted in apprentices receiving the same lesson more than once, or having to rewrite assignments, which slows their progress. Apprentices have access to an online portfolio, but staff do not make sure they use it effectively.

Too many apprentices do not upload their work for assessment by the date they should, and too often trainers do not assess work quickly enough.

Staff fail to use information gathered at the start of the apprenticeship to plan an appropriate programme to suit each apprentice. Consequently, apprentices who start on the same date are given the same length of time to complete their apprenticeship irrespective of their previous qualifications, knowledge or experience. Apprentices who need additional help due to learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not receive this and apprentices who need English and/or mathematics functional skills qualifications are not taught the knowledge they need.

Staff do not provide enough practical training in the academy to allow apprentices to master technical skills as quickly as they should. When practical training does occur, trainers make good use of the main commercial workshop. Most apprentices enjoy their training in the academy. As a result, apprentices develop relevant skills which are useful in their workplaces. For example, third-year apprentices repair head gaskets and strip and rebuild gearboxes. Apprentices in their second year carry out a full bus service to the satisfaction of their supervisors. Apprentices gain a licence to operate as semi-skilled engineers towards the end of their second year. They become advanced technicians during their fourth year.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to develop their knowledge of safeguarding well enough. They do not foster a culture of vigilance towards protecting their apprentices, particularly those who are under 18 years of age. Managers who are also the designated safeguarding officers have not completed appropriate training. Their knowledge of how to identify or deal with safeguarding issues is too limited. This is especially so for apprentices who are most vulnerable due to their age or circumstances. Managers' recording and monitoring of safeguarding concerns and staff training are poor.

Leaders and managers fail to ensure that younger apprentices, who stay in private accommodation while completing their off-the-job training at the academies, are safe. Managers have no processes or procedures in place to check that the accommodation is suitable, or to support their apprentices when they are away from home.

Leaders and managers are too slow to ensure that they fulfil their responsibility to promote the government's 'Prevent' agenda. They do not identify the potential threats and risks to their apprentices and staff, despite the location of the centres, and the nature of apprentices' work. The 'Prevent' duty action plan is not in place to help managers ensure the safety of their apprentices. Apprentices receive information on the dangers of radicalisation and extremism at induction and during their programme. Most apprentices demonstrate a basic awareness of these topics.

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