

# Trainspeople Limited

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

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.

Established in 2013, Trainspeople Limited (Trainspeople) is part of Shorterm Limited (Shorterm). Trainspeople provides a wide range of specialist commercial training for the rail and utilities sectors. Trainspeople was awarded a contract to deliver apprenticeships in 2017. The company began delivering the level 2 gas network team leader standards apprenticeship to eight adult apprentices in 2017. They all successfully completed their qualification in 2019. At the time of the monitoring visit, 41 adult apprentices were in learning on standards-based apprenticeships, 28 on the level 3 principles of management and leadership and 13 on the level 5 principles of management and leadership.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a clear vision to provide high-quality skills training for the rail and utilities sectors. By offering apprenticeships they aim to provide more comprehensive solutions to employers and meet their skills needs more effectively. Leaders ensure that their apprenticeship programmes are planned and delivered to meet apprenticeship requirements. For example, all apprentices are in permanent employment.

Managers ensure that apprentices develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their current and future roles. Many gain promotions at the end of their apprenticeship. For example, the first group of gas apprentices have either become, or are taking up, team leader roles, having completed their apprenticeship. Leaders ensure that apprentices have the required off-the-job training time. Apprentices use this time effectively to complete their apprenticeship successfully. All of the first group of eight gas apprentices passed and one achieved the first and only distinction for the new standard.

Leaders work effectively with employers to ensure that the apprenticeships they offer meet employers' and apprentices' needs. The apprenticeship programme covers all

the required skills for further career progression with their employer. For example, gas apprentices develop the necessary skills, through additional qualifications, to take up team leader roles on completing their apprenticeships. Leadership and management apprentices have their training on budgeting applied to their individual business circumstances by the finance manager from their employer.

Managers maintain regular communication with both employers and subcontractors. The progress of each apprentice is discussed in a weekly meeting between managers from all parties. As a result, managers understand comprehensively the progress that apprentices make with their assessments. However, staff do not always intervene swiftly and take appropriate action when issues are identified. They rely on apprentices contacting their individual skills coaches and asking for help.

Leaders have put appropriate quality arrangements in place to ensure that learners complete their training to a high standard. Leaders and managers work closely with subcontractor partners to monitor the quality of their programmes. However, managers' observations of teaching and learning do not always evaluate the progress that apprentices make in developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours, or whether learning activities meet the needs of individual apprentices. As a result, few actions are identified to improve teachers' skills.

Governance arrangements through the board of Shorterm are effective. The board approves all new apprenticeship programmes. In the process, they effectively support and challenge leaders to ensure that planned apprenticeships meet apprenticeship standard requirements while remaining financially viable.

**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 make good progress in developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours. The new skills they gain help them to improve within their job roles. For example, gas apprentices were recruited to the apprenticeship with none of the specialist skills that they have developed quickly through their programme. Apprentices on leadership and management programmes manage colleagues with whom they were once peers very effectively. They ensure that working relationships and business efficiency are improved as a result of learning about and applying leadership and management techniques.

Apprentices effectively learn the skills they require for their future career plans. For example, leadership and management apprentices recognise their individual areas for development in leading teams, such as skills in being assertive and in conflict resolution. They use self-reflection effectively to implement personal development plans with their line managers to improve these skills.

Staff provide highly constructive and useful feedback to apprentices on their assessed work. Staff clearly identify what apprentices have achieved and how they can improve their work further. Apprentices use feedback well to improve the standards of their work. Feedback also helps apprentices to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Apprentices benefit from useful peer learning. In workshops, the more experienced apprentices effectively help their peers with concepts that are new to them. For example, apprentices who have accountancy experience help their peers to be successful in completing the budgeting unit. In addition, leadership and management apprentices have started their own peer support network through social media where they provide additional help and resources for each other.

Staff reviews of apprentices' progress have improved and are effective. Staff hold detailed discussions with apprentices on the knowledge they have acquired and how they have applied their skills at work. Line managers are routinely involved in reviews and usefully support apprentices' progress at work. They ensure that apprentices have opportunities to practise the new skills they have learned. For example, apprentices carry out tasks that are not formally part of their job roles, such as chairing team meetings.

The standard of apprentices' work is high, and in a few cases is above the level of their programme. Apprentices have good literacy skills and make few errors in their writing. Work produced demonstrates that they have made good progress in developing new knowledge.

Apprentices on leadership and management programmes do not receive enough support between their reviews to make good progress. Too few apprentices attend the optional skills coaching sessions provided. Staff do not discuss apprentices' ongoing progress between reviews.

Staff do not make good use of the information on leadership and management apprentices' starting points to ensure that all make rapid progress in developing new skills and knowledge. Individual learning plans had not yet been completed for most of these apprentices. As a result, the most able apprentices are not challenged to extend their skills further.

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

Leaders and managers are very focused on keeping staff and apprentices safe in the hazardous environments in which many of them work.

For example, gas apprentices complete detailed risk assessments for all their assessed activities to ensure that they can identify and avoid all potential risks. Apprentices on leadership and management programmes are aware of the

importance of understanding vulnerabilities in adults and how this links to good management skills. Apprentices feel safe in their learning and at work.

Senior managers and governors oversee safeguarding arrangements, including those of subcontractor partners effectively. They review and approve relevant policies and procedures and ensure that managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks through safer recruitment practices.

The designated safeguarding officer is suitably qualified and knowledgeable about her role. Appropriate arrangements to handle disclosures are in place. Staff are aware of the current policies and procedures for safeguarding and for meeting the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty and ensure that apprentices are also suitably aware. Staff working with apprentices, including those employed by subcontractors, have completed online training on the 'Prevent' duty. However, staff do not benefit from more specific training to ensure that they understand fully how the latest guidance on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty is relevant to their own apprentices.

Apprentices have a good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They are well informed of processes for reporting concerns through the provider and their employer. However, apprentices do not always understand how to keep themselves and others safe when working online.

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