

Alpha Care Agency Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Alpha Care Agency was inspected in March 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Alpha Care Agency, trading as Alpha Gateway College (AGC), is an independent learning provider based in Waltham Forest. AGC offers qualification courses for 30 adult students in east, north and south London, all of whom are already in employment. All students study level 3 diploma courses in health and social care and are in receipt of advanced learner loans.

Themes

What progress have leaders made in establishing governance and scrutiny arrangements that challenge them to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment? Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, governance arrangements did not provide sufficient independent challenge and scrutiny of the management of the provision. In response, senior leaders have expanded the membership of the board and secured new board members with expertise in training, education and the care industry. The board now meets frequently to review the quality and outcomes of AGC's provision. Senior leaders now engage well with a wider range of external partners, including two college groups and consultants who provide additional external scrutiny and support. As a result, board members have a sufficient overview of the progress of learners and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

At the previous inspection, the managing director and one other director carried out significant operational roles, including direct work with learners. These responsibilities hindered their ability to fulfil their leadership roles. After the previous inspection, senior leaders acted swiftly to re-align their roles and responsibilities so that they no longer perform operational duties. This change enables them to provide the necessary leadership in managing the college and its development.

What progress have leaders and managers made in the arrangements to quality assure and improve the quality of teaching and learning? Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, the quality assurance arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment did not provide managers with a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Since the inspection, senior leaders have put

in place more comprehensive arrangements to identify where improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are needed.

Senior leaders have improved their evaluation of, and support for, the work of assessors. Assessors now use the assessment process more effectively to develop learners' skills and knowledge. Senior leaders meet regularly with assessors to review their performance. They cease to employ assessors who do not meet the standards required.

Through more frequent observations, senior leaders have a better understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. Training for tutors is designed to respond to identified weaknesses, for example in helping them to plan teaching that engages learners and builds on their prior knowledge, rather than repeating what they already know. However, in their written lesson observation reports, senior leaders do not focus enough on how well the learners learn. Their observation reports are too descriptive and do not evaluate the quality of the provision sufficiently.

Not all assessors provide effective feedback to learners on how to improve. For example, some assessors do not identify areas for improvement in written work or provide clear advice on how to improve.

What progress have leaders and managers made in developing students' understanding of British values, radicalisation and extremism? Reasonable progress

Assessors now have a better understanding of the concepts of British values and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result of training, they have grown in confidence in discussing these issues with learners. Assessors ensure that learners learn about these aspects during their induction and during lessons, where they use current affairs to prompt discussions.

Students' awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation is improving. Assessors now use a standard presentation that helps learners explore the ways in which radicalisation can occur, such as the grooming of vulnerable people. Students are alert to the signs that may indicate radicalisation and know what to do if they have a concern. They discuss British values and how their own values relate to their own upbringing. They understand the need to respect others who may hold different views to their own.

Through observations and records of progress reviews, senior leaders assure themselves that assessors are covering these topics with learners. However, senior leaders do not assess how effectively learners understand these topics.

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