

CERT 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 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 three themes set out below.

CERT Ltd (CERT) was established in 1997 and is based in North Lincolnshire. It began offering levy-funded apprenticeships in 2017 and specialises in training in business administration, customer service, digital marketing and learning and development. CERT currently has nine apprentices, five of whom are on level 2 and four on level 3 programmes. Four of the apprentices are aged 16 to 19 and five are aged over 19. It also delivers training as part of the Humber Learning Consortium as a subcontractor; this provision was out of scope for this visit. CERT works predominantly with a levy-paying social housing group to provide apprenticeship training for its employees. The Ongo Group, based in Scunthorpe, employs all the apprentices.

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 work with the most disadvantaged people in North Lincolnshire. They work effectively with employers and provide apprenticeships which meet community needs and fill skills gaps. Leaders ensure that assessors, in conjunction with employers, plan apprenticeships effectively to meet the apprenticeship principles and requirements. Managers work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices are on the correct programme to develop new skills and to meet their job role requirements.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive sufficient off-the-job training to develop their skills and knowledge. Apprentices follow personalised programmes that enable them to improve their skills and become more effective in their jobs. Leaders ensure that assessors are well-qualified and experienced and use their knowledge effectively to coach apprentices. They ensure that apprentices are in high-quality work placements and have effective structures to support them in their learning.

Leaders and managers provide apprentices with effective support to develop their English, mathematical and information communication technology (ICT) skills. Apprentices who have already achieved the required level of qualification for their programme are encouraged to develop their skills and apply them to their job role. For example, apprentices have progressed to a higher level in functional mathematics that is above the minimum requirement for their apprenticeship.

Leaders, managers and assessors monitor the progress of apprentices well and act swiftly to provide effective support and help when necessary. Consequently, all apprentices complete their programmes on time. A high proportion of apprentices progress to higher levels of study or gain extra responsibility or promotion with their employers.

Leaders and managers collect an extensive range of information about the provision. However, they do not use this information well enough to identify all the strengths and areas for improvement in their self-assessment report. This means that, often, they do not make improvements rapidly enough. Actions for improvement are not specific enough, time-bound or focused sufficiently on the impact of actions on the progress of apprentices. However, leaders react swiftly to feedback from staff and apprentices to implement their suggested improvements whenever necessary.

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 benefit from high-quality and well-planned on- and off-the-job training. Consequently, they improve their skills and knowledge well. Assessors work effectively with employers. These employers influence the curriculum and the optional units in order to complement and benefit their businesses.

Assessors monitor apprentices' progress through effective and frequent reviews. They track progress well and record it in detail. Apprentices are aware of their own progress, and what they have achieved and have yet to complete. However, employers are not consistently involved in progress reviews with assessors and apprentices, particularly when apprentices are making good progress.

Assessors provide good support to apprentices who have a wide range of personal challenges. Consequently, apprentices improve their personal skills such as self-confidence, time management and prioritisation of workloads.

Assessors provide feedback to apprentices that is comprehensive and informs progress and continued improvement. In written work, assessors highlight spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Apprentices make progress and improve as a result. Apprentices benefit from helpful targets to achieve between reviews. These are also useful in the apprentices' study day, when apprentices develop their skills

and knowledge in their off-the-job training. Apprentices appreciate their feedback. They act on it to make improvements to their work and skills.

Assessors and tutors support apprentices well to engage in, and to improve, their English, mathematical and ICT skills. Apprentices particularly value the small class sizes and the effectiveness of the teaching. They swiftly improve their skills and progress to higher-level functional skills qualifications.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that a culture of safeguarding is integrated into all aspects of the apprenticeship provision. They have established effective procedures and arrangements to safeguard apprentices in their workplaces and everyday lives. Leaders ensure that all staff undergo appropriate background checks so that they are suitable for the roles that they have.

Leaders ensure that the designated safeguarding lead and staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They receive frequent communications from the local safeguarding board and the regional 'Prevent' coordinator. They use this information effectively to ensure that they are well-informed about local issues. They maintain a secure log to record any concerns and actions taken. They ensure that any confidential personal information is stored securely.

Leaders and managers ensure that CERT meets the 'Prevent' duty requirements. They have carried out a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and subsequent action plan that is reviewed and updated accordingly to include honour-based crime, county lines, forced marriage and local issues related to North Lincolnshire, including extreme right-wing activity.

Apprentices understand how to keep themselves safe and to whom they should report any concerns. They have a good understanding of how to recognise signs of abuse and radicalisation and how to remain safe online. However, leaders have not provided sufficient guidance to employers on the safeguarding of apprenticeships or referral processes.

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