

Antrec Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by ESFA. 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 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Antrec Limited received its first publicly funded contract for adult education in November 2017. Currently, 33 learners are on pre-employment courses. Courses run for between one and 11 weeks. These include an introduction to the role of the professional taxi driver and private-hire driver, introduction to construction, and functional skills English at entry levels 2 and 3. The company also runs adult learning courses for two further education colleges under subcontracting arrangements. These were not in scope for this monitoring visit.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a very sound curriculum strategy. They make very good use of information about local and regional skills needs and job opportunities. Leaders and managers design all pre-employment courses with employers' involvement to ensure that training is highly relevant to current vacancies and skills shortages. As a result, learners acquire the knowledge and skills they require to gain employment.

Leaders and managers work very effectively with Jobcentre Plus staff. They also liaise successfully with agencies that help unemployed people to find vocational training courses or work. Jobcentre Plus and referral agency staff are right to state that leaders and managers offer courses that are very relevant to job seekers.

Leaders and managers use their funding productively to recruit hard-to-reach learners and those with low skill levels. They engage them in stimulating and purposeful vocational learning. As a result, learners gain the knowledge and skills that employers require.

Leaders and managers have very good working relationships with a wide range of employers. Learners who complete a course successfully receive the guarantee of a job interview with a participating employer. Many learners, a significant proportion of whom are long-term unemployed, obtain employment as a result of the interview.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of the progress that different groups of learners make. They intervene appropriately when learners do not make the required progress. Leaders and managers monitor learners' progression into employment and/or further learning closely. They are right to acknowledge that they need to monitor the length of time learners remain in employment.

Leaders and managers place a strong emphasis on learners' welfare needs as well as on their training. They provide incentives and inducements to facilitate successful course completion and entry into employment. For example, learners on the taxi driving course receive funding to cover background checks, a medical examination and the first-year taxi drivers' badge. Learners on the construction course receive funding for their health and safety qualification and construction skills certification scheme (CSCS card), and towards site-required equipment.

Leaders' and managers' self-assessment report is insufficiently incisive and judgemental. They do not have a clear enough understanding of the pre-employment provision's strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment. Their quality improvement plan does not focus sharply enough on identified weaknesses and strategies for reviewing and rectifying them as quickly as possible.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that adult learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? **Reasonable progress**

Tutors use their knowledge and experience skilfully to plan and deliver relevant lessons. They prepare learners very effectively for employment and/or further learning. For example, learners on pre-employment construction courses increase their awareness of health and safety. They identify the risks associated with asbestos and the actions they can take to reduce them.

Managers and tutors assess learners' suitability for particular courses accurately. Learners enjoy their lessons. Tutors use a range of high-quality learning resources to engage learners and support learning.

Managers make good arrangements for learners whose standard of English is too low to meet the demands of a pre-employment vocational course. They enrol on an English course before a vocational course.

Learning and pastoral support for learners are good. As a result, learners' self-confidence increases, and they achieve their learning goals. Mentors identify the individual needs of the less able learners quickly and ensure that they provide additional support to help them to progress.

Learners can enrol on an introductory course for professional taxi drivers and private-hire drivers which runs for a longer period of time if the shorter course is too demanding for them. As a result, the vast majority of learners complete their courses and achieve their qualifications.

The majority of learners produce work of an appropriate standard for the level of their qualifications. Tutors' feedback to learners is helpful. Learners know what is good, such as their accurate application of knowledge to solve problems, and what they need to do to improve their work. Tutors support learners effectively to identify their spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Their support helps learners to develop their written English.

Managers and tutors use their very good links with employers to increase work opportunities for learners. For example, learners on the pre-employment construction course receive high-quality information on careers available in the industry from guest speakers. Construction companies provide learners with good work experience opportunities to help them make informed choices about their longer-term career plans.

Leaders and managers have an appropriate range of quality assurance processes in place. However, they acknowledge correctly that these are not rigorous enough to ensure high standards across all programmes. For example, learning and assessment activities do not provide sufficient challenge routinely for the most able learners.

Managers carry out frequent observations of teaching, learning and assessment. However, they focus too much on what the tutor does and not enough on learning and learners' progress. As a result, the feedback that tutors receive does not highlight the quality of learning and ways to improve it.

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

Leaders and managers place a high priority on safeguarding learners and staff. They create a culture of security, equality and well-being for everybody. Leaders and managers risk assess all learners appropriately, before they enrol on a course, to judge their suitability for the vocational areas they wish to join.

The two designated safeguarding officers' training is appropriate for their role. They implement the detailed safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures systematically and effectively. They ensure that learners are safe and feel safe. The designated safeguarding officers take reported safeguarding or safeguarding-related issues seriously. They follow up known incidents immediately. They track and record incidents systematically until they reach a satisfactory conclusion. Governors receive relevant information about safeguarding.

Leaders and managers implement safe recruitment practices appropriately when engaging staff. They carry out the required background checks and ensure that applicants are suitable for working with learners. Members of staff receive Disclosure and Barring Service checks that managers renew periodically.

Staff training is good. New members of staff complete appropriate online safeguarding training when they join the company. All members of staff have relevant mandatory training annually. Staff receive regular updates about topical issues, for example female genital mutilation, enforced marriage, and the illicit transporting of so-called 'recreational drugs'.

Most learners have a basic awareness of the importance of safeguarding, including e-safety. However, managers and tutors do not check sufficiently the extent of learners' awareness of safeguarding, e-safety and the 'Prevent' duty towards the end of their courses.

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