

Chrysos HR Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Pat Hornsby, Ofsted 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.

Chrysos HR Solutions Limited was established in 2007. It is based in Finningley, near Doncaster. Its apprentices are employed in the private, public and voluntary sectors by companies throughout the country. Chrysos started to deliver apprenticeships for levy-paying employers in April 2017. Currently, 83 apprentices are on standards-based programmes in human resources, learning and development, team leading and management. Over three quarters of apprentices are in human resources. Fifty apprentices are on level 5 programmes and the remainder are studying at level 3.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Senior leaders have implemented a clear strategy for apprenticeships that builds on the company's considerable background and expertise in human resources. Staff work closely with employers to ensure that programmes are challenging and that apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Managers provide flexible programmes that are responsive to employers' and apprentices' needs. Apprentices can attend workshops in Doncaster or learn in the workplace, either individually or in small groups. Apprentices benefit from completing professional qualifications, which provide opportunities for career progression.

Leaders and managers have appropriate quality assurance processes to improve the provision. Evaluation of tutors' performance through direct observation leads to improvements in teaching and learning. Managers obtain feedback from apprentices, employers and staff and act on it. For example, apprentices commented that the sign-up process took too long, so it is being simplified.

Leaders and managers monitor the progress of apprentices satisfactorily and identify those who are at risk of not completing their programmes on time. Staff take suitable action to support these apprentices and to accelerate their progress, often in conjunction with workplace mentors.

Leaders and managers have implemented a thorough self-assessment process, which has enabled them to identify accurately the main strengths of the provision and areas for improvement. However, the quality improvement plan lacks measurable success indicators to enable managers to evaluate the impact of their actions precisely.

A few employers do not provide their apprentices with sufficient time to study during working hours, particularly during busy periods. Managers are liaising with these employers to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities.

Managers do not have complete and accurate data to enable them to monitor all aspects of apprentices' programmes effectively. Staff do not log accurate records of their contact with apprentices centrally. On occasions, managers do not identify concerns, such as overdue progress review meetings, swiftly enough.

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**

Staff liaise closely with workplace staff to plan learning effectively. Line managers and workplace mentors support apprentices well and provide opportunities for them to develop and practice their skills at work. For example, one apprentice has become involved in shortlisting and interviewing for new staff for the first time.

Apprentices benefit from sufficient and high-quality off-the-job learning. Many attend workshops and benefit from the opportunity to work with peers from other organisations to gain a broader understanding of how different companies work. Tutors provide very effective individual coaching for those who study in the workplace.

Apprentices successfully develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that make them more effective in their current roles and prepare them for career progression. They gain a good understanding of theory topics such as coaching, employment law, tribunals and the Equality Act, which is essential for their roles. They develop confidence in their leadership skills and take on more complex responsibilities at work, such as planning recruitment campaigns.

Staff have extensive subject knowledge and experience, and they use this well to ensure that learning reflects current commercial practice. They share their experience of real work situations with apprentices and ensure that theory learning is linked well to its practical application.

Apprentices develop their English skills effectively, particularly when writing assignments. They develop their academic style and use skills such as Harvard

referencing confidently. As a result, they are more proficient and confident in writing reports at work.

Staff ensure that apprentices and their employers are fully aware of the end-point assessment arrangements. They prepare apprentices very effectively through holding practice interviews and professional discussions. However, many apprentices and employers are not aware that the final assessment is graded.

Apprentices do not develop their mathematical skills sufficiently. Staff do not encourage them to develop their skills when planning and reviewing learning. Apprentices have access to online learning resources for English and mathematics but too few use them.

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

Leaders and managers give a high priority to the safety and wellbeing of staff and apprentices. 'Providing a safe place to learn' is one of the company's core values.

Leaders and managers follow safe recruitment practices and ensure that checks are carried out on all new staff before they work with apprentices. Managers maintain accurate records of staff training and ensure that it is updated frequently.

The designated safeguarding officer deals appropriately with any safeguarding or welfare concerns raised. He maintains detailed records of concerns and action taken, and monitors situations closely until they are resolved.

Leaders and managers have responded appropriately to the 'Prevent' duty and have completed a risk assessment and action plan. However, partnership working with external agencies to ensure the safety of apprentices is not well established.

Apprentices' understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to raise a concern is generally good. However, their understanding of the risks posed by those who hold extreme and radical views is superficial.

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