

Fresh Training Services (UK) 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 themes set out below.

Fresh Training Services (UK) Ltd provides training for 25 apprentices on programmes at levels 2, 3 and 5. Ten apprentices are on standards-based programmes at levels 2 and 3 in health and social care and 15 are on level 5 frameworks in business administration (leadership for the care industry).

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not recruit apprentices with integrity. They do not ensure that prospective apprentices are employed appropriately to enable them to complete an apprenticeship. They do not ensure that employers carry out sufficient checks during the recruitment process to confirm that prospective apprentices are suitable for an apprenticeship programme. They have not made employers fully aware of the commitment needed to support the training and learning. Leaders and managers have recognised these weaknesses and that they need to make improvements. They are planning to cease delivery of their health and social care apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the requirements of an apprenticeship are fully met. For example, apprentices do not receive their entitlement to off-the-job training. Leaders and managers do not plan, monitor or record accurately the elements of the off-the-job training. Just under a half of current apprentices are on zero-hour contracts; therefore, off-the-job training for these apprentices cannot be planned as a proportion of their contracted hours.

Leaders and managers have been slow to intervene when apprentices are at risk of falling behind and, as a result, too many apprentices are beyond their planned end date. Around a quarter of apprentices are between nine and 15 months past the date that they expected to complete the apprenticeship. Leaders and managers have recently recognised this issue and made interventions. However, it is too early to assess the impact of these actions.

Managers have identified areas for improvement in the quality of provision but have been slow to make improvements in apprentices' progress and achievement. They do not monitor the progress of apprentices who need to gain a functional skills qualification. For apprentices who already hold qualifications in English and mathematics, tutors do not develop these skills further.

Leaders and managers have made effective arrangements for the end-point assessment for apprentices and have communicated this well to staff, employers and apprentices.

Staff are well qualified to deliver across the range and levels of apprenticeship programmes.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Insufficient progress

Tutors do not establish the skills that apprentices have at the start of their programme and, therefore, are unable to meet the individual needs of apprentices. They do not identify the new skills that apprentices need to develop. Tutors focus appropriately on developing apprentices' knowledge about the theory elements of their programme and its application to work role roles.

Tutors do not review well enough apprentices' learning in their off-the-job training. They do not plan programmes carefully enough to ensure that apprentices gain sufficient off-the-job training. They monitor overall progress towards completion of apprentices' programme as a percentage but do not monitor how new skills are acquired from the off-the-job training or make sufficient reference to this training in reviews. As a result of weak planning and monitoring, apprentices make slow progress in developing new skills.

Tutors do not focus sufficiently on the development of new skills when providing feedback following assessments. They do not identify where apprentices can develop their English skills other than by reference to spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Recently, leaders have appointed new assessors to support apprentices in completing their programme. Assessors have taken a number of specific actions to support and provide feedback to apprentices who have fallen behind. This includes one-to-one meetings in which they develop individual plans to support apprentices. In a few instances this has helped apprentices to increase their pace of progress, but there are still too many apprentices who have passed their planned end date.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding is prioritised, and that staff are appropriately trained. They have designated staff for safeguarding who have had further in-depth training. They have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and review them regularly.

Leaders and managers undertake risk assessments as part of the employer induction. Apprentices have a good understanding of how to be safe in the workplace and know whom to contact if a concern arises. Apprentices are informed about safeguarding at their induction and their understanding is checked during reviews.

Leaders have a well-developed 'Prevent' duty action plan that identifies local risks and they have good links with the regional 'Prevent' coordinator. They have not yet identified the risks that relate to the wider geographical areas in which they operate.

Leaders and managers carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all staff and record staff information in a single central register. They have been trained in safe recruitment practices and implement pre-employment checks for all new staff.

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