

Tendring District Council (Career Track)

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Sambit Sen, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Town Hall,
Station Road,
Clacton-on-Sea,
Essex
CO15 1SE

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.

Tendring District Council (TDC) commenced providing directly funded apprenticeships in May 2017. The council department providing apprenticeships is known as 'Career Track'. Currently, there are 36 apprentices. Most are on standards-based apprenticeships in business administration and customer service at levels 2 and 3. TDC does not subcontract any of the apprenticeship provision.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have an extremely good strategy for their apprenticeship provision. They have a very good understanding of how the training they provide helps to meet wider local authority objectives. Leaders and managers make very good use of their experience and knowledge to design highly effective training programmes which effectively meet apprentices' individual needs.

Leaders and managers work successfully with employers to recruit suitable apprentices. They take appropriate action to recruit apprentices who are new to their post and will benefit fully from the new knowledge, skills and behaviours included in the training programme.

Leaders and managers have extremely good oversight of their apprentices' progress. They ensure that assessors monitor apprentices' progress closely and take effective action should apprentices fall behind in their learning. Apprentices make good progress in acquiring the skills they need to perform their job roles effectively.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of what makes for a good apprenticeship programme. They communicate this very successfully to apprentices and employers. Managers work closely and effectively with employers to plan and oversee the workplace element of apprentices' training. As a result, apprentices benefit from training that meets the business needs of their employers and enhances their own career development. Leaders ensure that apprentices are prepared

thoroughly for their end-point assessment. As a result, a small proportion of apprentices have already passed their assessments and gained distinction grades.

Leaders manage staff performance skilfully. Assessors' action plans following on from reviews of their work focus very effectively on improving their teaching skills. As a result, assessors provide very good training and support for the apprentices.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. Apprentices are clear about their career options and are prepared effectively for their next steps.

Governance arrangements are effective. The delegated council member holds leaders and managers successfully to account for the quality of training provided.

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

Apprentices develop new, substantial and occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours that benefit their employers' business. Apprentices develop high levels of confidence in dealing with their clients and customers. They quickly become skilled in dealing efficiently with a wide range of customers. As a result, their managers and colleagues value them highly.

Apprentices make good progress from their starting points. Apprentices complete a detailed skills scan on commencing their programme of learning. Staff make good use of this information to plan an appropriate individual learning programme. Assessors monitor apprentices' progress very systematically. Consequently, tutors have a good knowledge of the progress apprentices make.

Apprentices develop very good knowledge and skills in mathematics, and information and communication technology, to support them in their employment and personal lives. For example, they collate and report on complex financial data and reconcile accounts. However, apprentices do not always develop or extend their written English skills. Their written communications often do not reflect their good verbal communications skills, and assessors pay limited attention to correcting common errors in apprentices' written work.

Because of their training, apprentices gain additional responsibilities and progress in their careers. For example, a significant proportion of apprentices who completed their programme last year are now in more senior roles.

Assessors plan ongoing assessments of apprentices' skills and knowledge acquisition very carefully. For example, they work closely with the employers to provide ample opportunity for apprentices to practise and perfect their skills. Assessors encourage apprentices to take responsibility for their own learning and skills development.

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 apprentices. Their procedures include the involvement of the district and county council safeguarding officers. Staff carry out appropriate risk assessments of the workplace and individual apprentices. As a result, apprentices work in a safe environment. Staff are appropriately trained and know how to respond to any concerns raised by apprentices.

Staff explore apprentices' potential vulnerabilities thoroughly. They use a wide-ranging and in-depth questionnaire to provide a clear action plan to help apprentices make progress and overcome any potential barriers to learning.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe. They have a clear understanding of safeguarding and they apply safe working practices. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe when working online.

The provider takes reasonable action to meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. However, assessors do not reinforce sufficiently or develop apprentices' understanding more fully during progress reviews. As a result, apprentices often have little recall of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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