

Care-Ex Services Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Andrea Shepherd, Her Majesty's Inspector

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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.

Care-Ex Services Limited (Care-Ex) is a private training provider that delivers apprenticeship programmes under the trading name of Concerto Training Services. Care-Ex specialises in the delivery of training to the care and children's services sectors. It works with two large employers to deliver their apprenticeships. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 74 apprentices, 69 of whom are studying standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 to 5. A further five apprentices are studying apprenticeship frameworks in subjects linked to children's or adult services at levels 3 and 5.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders do not have an effective strategy for the delivery of apprenticeships. They have a well-established relationship with two large employers. However, this is not used well enough to design a curriculum to ensure that apprentices swiftly develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. As a result, no apprentices have completed their programme, despite around a third being past their planned end date.

Leaders do not have enough oversight of the progress that apprentices make. They rely on feedback from assessors recorded in individual apprentice progress review documents. The feedback is too focused on the completion of the qualification elements of the apprenticeship and does not review apprentices' progress in developing the skills and behaviours required for their programme.

Leaders do not carry out effective checks on the previous experience of apprentices. They consider prior qualifications but do not consider the skills that apprentices already have. Too many apprentices are not learning new skills and are gaining accreditation for their existing skills.

Leaders are aware that apprentices do not get sufficient time at work to complete their training. They take steps to encourage employers to provide the necessary

time, but this has been unsuccessful so far. As a result, too many apprentices complete their learning in their own time.

Leaders do not make adequate plans for apprentices to take the end-point assessment needed to complete their apprenticeships. They do not provide employers and apprentices with enough information about the assessment requirements or arrange for apprentices to take the assessment. Consequently, no apprentice who has reached, or who is soon to reach, their end date can yet complete their apprenticeship.

Leaders recruit staff who are well qualified and experienced. They provide useful updates to keep assessors up to date with developments in the care sector.

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

Leaders and assessors do not use apprentices' progress reviews effectively enough to monitor the progress that apprentices make. Targets set by leaders and assessors in the reviews do not reflect the existing skills of apprentices or the skills and behaviours that they need to improve. Consequently, apprentices do not develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to achieve their apprenticeship.

Leaders and assessors do not work with apprentices or their supervisors to plan what training apprentices need to do or when they can do it in the workplace. Apprentices record their training activities, but the time spent is often overstated. They also include activities which are part of their job role and do not constitute training. As a result, too many apprentices carry out research and learning in their own time.

Assessors visit apprentices frequently in the workplace but, in too many cases, they do not meet with the employer to discuss their apprentices' progress. As a result, employers are unaware of what apprentices achieve or what they need to do to complete their apprenticeship.

Assessors provide useful feedback to apprentices on how to complete the qualification elements of their apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices know what they need to do to improve their written work. Most apprentices produce assignment work of a high standard. Most apprentices who need to pass functional skills examinations in English or mathematics do so.

Apprentices enjoy their programme and have a strong commitment to their own professional development. The majority develop confidence in working with adults and children with challenging behaviours.

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

Leaders implement appropriate policies to safeguard apprentices. They apply suitable checks when they recruit staff. All staff have undertaken training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders and assessors receive regular, industry-specific updates on safeguarding through their work in the care and children's services sectors.

Apprentices feel safe in the workplace and they know who to contact if they have a concern. The training that apprentices receive at work provides them with a good understanding of safeguarding and how it applies to them at work and in the wider community.

Leaders carry out holistic risk assessments of the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults, including exposure to the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Leaders and assessors provide apprentices with appropriate information on these risks at the start of their programme. However, only a few apprentices receive updates on the 'Prevent' duty during their training to further consolidate their understanding.

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