

# Azesta Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1278568

**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.

Azesta Limited (Azesta) is based in Pateley Bridge, North Yorkshire. It began delivering apprenticeships to levy-paying employers in November 2017. At the time of the monitoring visit, 62 apprentices were on standards-based programmes. Of these, 45 were on a level 3 team leader/supervisor apprenticeship and 17 were on a level 5 programme for operations/departmental managers. All apprentices are over the age of 18. Azesta works with three employers in the logistics, online retail and housing sectors. The company is owned and led by one director.

### Themes

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

#### **Insufficient progress**

Staff do not ensure that employers comply with the requirements for apprenticeships. They do not monitor closely enough the time that apprentices are given for off-the-job training. The company that employs around half of Azesta's apprentices does not allow sufficient study time during working hours. The director has taken a decision to cease recruitment with this employer.

Programme planning is not fully effective. The duration of the operations/departmental managers' programme, at 18 months for all apprentices, is too short. It does not allow enough time for apprentices to meet the requirements of the standard, which includes achieving a professional qualification. A large majority of these apprentices are not on track to complete their programmes on time.

Staff have a suitable oversight of the progress that apprentices are making. The director scrutinises monthly reports produced by tutors that identify clearly apprentices who are falling behind and records the actions and deadlines agreed. This information is communicated to learning and development managers at each employer. However, too often, apprentices fail to meet the targets agreed.

Staff provide a thorough recruitment process by working in close partnership with employers. Staff ensure that apprentices and their line managers are fully aware of what the programmes entail at the outset. The vast majority of apprentices are in suitable roles to enable them to use their new knowledge and skills in the workplace.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality resources to support their learning, including a comprehensive range of digital training materials to support their achievement of professional qualifications. Tutors have considerable knowledge and expertise in leadership and management and in delivering training workshops.

Staff have put in place effective arrangements for apprentices to achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. A high proportion of apprentices pass their external assessments at the first attempt.

**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**

Too many apprentices are making slow progress. Too many line managers do not release apprentices from their work for sufficient time to complete their studies. In a few instances, apprentices resort to completing course work in their own time. Around a fifth of apprentices have left their jobs and withdrawn from their programmes without completing.

Staff do not provide apprentices' line managers with sufficient information on apprentices' progress and targets. Line managers often do not attend apprentices' progress review meetings. They do not plan work tasks so that apprentices can practise and apply their learning at the most appropriate time.

Apprentices are aware of the arrangements for their end-point assessments and understand the process. They feel confident and prepared well for their assessments. The few apprentices who have completed so far have achieved distinctions and merits. Apprentices who have completed their knowledge tests have been awarded distinctions. However, too many apprentices are already beyond their planned completion dates but have yet to complete their end-point assessments.

Tutors determine apprentices' starting points in vocational learning effectively using a comprehensive self-assessment questionnaire. However, they do not assess the English and mathematics skills of apprentices who are not required to complete functional skills qualifications. These apprentices do not develop their English and mathematics skills further.

Tutors use their considerable knowledge and expertise to deliver workshops that inspire and motivate apprentices. To ensure that apprentices gain maximum benefit from the workshops, tutors set pre- and post-workshop activities, which focus on how to apply learning to apprentices' work settings.

Apprentices develop a wide range of new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, they learn about time management, emotional intelligence, coaching, change management, unconscious bias and how to produce Gantt charts. A high proportion of apprentices have been promoted to permanent or more senior roles.

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

Staff have completed training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They have also attended training in mental health to help them identify and support apprentices who may be suffering from issues such as stress or depression. They are vigilant in monitoring apprentices' well-being.

Apprentices know how and to whom they should report safeguarding concerns. Azesta's designated safeguarding lead deals with concerns promptly and appropriately. Staff work with apprentices' line managers or their employers' learning and development managers to ensure that support is provided and action is taken, where necessary. For example, one employer referred an apprentice for counselling through the company's employee assistance programme.

Apprentices complete online training modules on safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values during their induction, which provides them with a general understanding. However, staff provide insufficient further guidance. Apprentices, including those who work with vulnerable clients, do not have a good enough understanding of local risks that they may encounter.

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