

Advance Care Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Russ Henry, Her Majesty's 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.

Advance Care Training Limited is a small independent learning provider. Prior to gaining approval to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships, it worked as an apprenticeship subcontractor to a large further education college. It provides a small range of apprenticeships to employers in the care sector. At the time of the visit, it had six apprentices, five of whom were undertaking level 3 business administration frameworks and one who was taking the level 3 business administrator standard. Two apprentices had recently completed the level 3 framework in the children and young people's workforce.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Directors have a clear rationale for the apprenticeship offer. Both come from nursing backgrounds and are passionate about increasing the expertise of those working in the care sector. They offer programmes in health and social care, children and young people's workforce, business administration and customer service. They currently work with two care providers but hope to increase this in the medium term, at a pace that allows them to maintain quality.

Programmes comply fully with apprenticeship requirements. Apprentices are employed in appropriate roles, and receive their entitlement to study time during normal working hours. Off-the-job training is provided through monthly workshops, one-to-one coaching and independent study. The monthly workshops are well planned so that the requirements of qualifications are met. However, training to meet wider learning objectives, and learning activities other than the monthly workshops, are not planned in enough detail.

All staff involved in training and assessing are highly skilled and experienced in the subjects they teach. They hold suitable vocational qualifications and have appropriate teaching and assessing qualifications. All participate in relevant

professional development activity, which includes frequent standardisation meetings and discussions about programme quality.

Managers maintain excellent relationships with employers. Because they only work with two employers, they know them well and enjoy highly effective communications with them. They have made their expectations clear and employers meet them. However, tutors do not do enough to ensure that on- and off-the job training is well coordinated and consequently apprentices struggle to connect the two.

Staff recruit apprentices with integrity. Apprentices are new to their roles. Staff do basic checks to ensure that apprentices' jobs meet the requirements of the apprenticeship. They assess apprentices' existing English and mathematical skills, but they do too little to assess apprentices' existing vocational and transferable skills. As a result, they are unable to modify learning programmes to take account of these.

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

Apprentices develop a good range of new skills, knowledge and behaviours that fulfil the requirements of their apprenticeships. Because of their enhanced value to their employers, a number have gained increases in pay during their programmes. Learners enjoy their learning and grow in confidence as a result of their studies.

Tutors use their excellent subject knowledge and vocational experience to teach good quality monthly training sessions. They set tasks for apprentices to complete between training sessions and visit them to provide effective one-to-one coaching. They also provide support via telephone and email that apprentices find helpful. Tutors mark work frequently but they do not provide sufficiently specific feedback to help apprentices improve their performance.

Tutors help apprentices to develop their English and mathematical skills through their vocational studies. For example, they provide feedback on the quality of apprentices' writing and support them with finance tasks. All of the current apprentices have good GCSEs in these subjects and do not take functional skills qualifications.

Managers and staff have a reasonable understanding of the end-point assessment requirements for the business administrator standard. Plans to prepare for final assessments are timely.

Managers have yet to develop a clear set of formal quality assurance processes. Although they have documented a range of actions, there is little structure to this and no formal calendar of activities. Managers conduct lesson observations, but these are not mentioned in the quality assurance policy and those that have been completed provide little useful information to help tutors to improve. While the

current arrangements are adequate for the size of the operation, they are unlikely to prove sufficient should the number of apprentices grow as managers intend.

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

Managers place a high priority on safeguarding and consequently apprentices are safe both in learning sessions and in their workplaces. Safeguarding policies are mostly fit for purpose. However, guidance on staff use of social media to communicate with apprentices is not sufficiently clear.

Managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on staff. All those who work with apprentices are subject to enhanced disclosure and barring service checks, identity checks, and professional qualification checks.

Staff receive frequent updates on safeguarding topics through regular meetings and an annual programme of training. However, staff, including the designated safeguarding lead, have not completed safeguarding qualifications.

Apprentices receive guidance on safeguarding themes when they join their programmes and as part of their training. Their knowledge of safeguarding is mostly sound. However, their understanding of radicalisation and extremism, and of British values, is less well developed.

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