

Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Rebecca Jennings Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Wyastone Business Park
Wyastone Leys
Ganarew
Monmouth
NP25 3SR

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 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training Limited is a small specialised independent learning provider based in Monmouth. Abbeydale gained a contract to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships in May 2018. The provider delivers veterinary nursing apprenticeships, alongside provision for independently funded and subcontracted learners. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 20 apprentices directly funded by the levy. Eight of these apprentices were on the level 3 veterinary nursing apprenticeship framework. All other apprentices who started after September 2018 are on the level 3 veterinary nursing standard.

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 delivering veterinary nursing apprenticeships to meet a national shortage. Directors hold veterinary nursing and teaching qualifications. They work closely with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to ensure that the curriculum meets the standards required by industry.

The programmes meet the requirements of apprenticeships. Apprentices attend high-quality off-the-job training for one day per week at the training centre.

Directors promote a strong culture of lifelong learning for veterinary nurses. On completion of their qualification, some apprentices become 'clinical coaches' for new apprentices and continue to work with the organisation. Tutors and directors work in veterinary practices to maintain their professional registration and clinical skills. Tutors take part in frequent training. For example, they have completed a course to understand the difficulties faced by learners with dyslexia to be able to support apprentices.

Directors and tutors have recently recognised the need to learn more about apprentices' starting points when they join the programme. They use the results of a

new, more detailed assessment to develop training. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this on the apprentices' experience. Directors and tutors have updated the programme to prepare apprentices for end-point assessment.

Directors closely monitor the quality and capacity of employers to ensure that apprentices are suitably recruited and supported throughout their programme. As a result, most apprentices remain on programme and achieve well.

Directors take positive action on feedback from apprentices to improve facilities. For example, directors have installed high-speed wi-fi to improve the existing on-site library research resources. Apprentices use the internet appropriately to conduct more in-depth research for their assignments.

Directors recognise the need to develop a structure of governance to scrutinise the quality of provision. They have developed partnerships and held their first meeting. It is too early to measure the impact of this.

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 clearly understand the requirements of the course and the expectations from the provider and employer before they start their programmes.

Tutors work very effectively with clinical coaches within the veterinary practices to ensure that apprentices gain the appropriate skills and knowledge required by the industry. Theory taught in classrooms relates directly to practical skills, for example the reasons to give injections and the impact on the animal's body. As a result, apprentices identify why practical treatments are given, and this develops their confidence and communication skills as they have a clear and insightful understanding of the holistic impact of these treatments.

Tutors' experience and skills inform well-structured programmes that increase in complexity. Employers benefit from their apprentices gaining skills. This helps apprentices to enhance their career prospects on completion of their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices have moved into further learning, becoming clinical coaches and running clinics.

Tutors use a range of questioning techniques to reinforce apprentices' knowledge development. Apprentices must demonstrate that they fully understand anatomy to be able to move on to further study. As a result, apprentices retain knowledge and make good progress.

Directors and tutors recognise when apprentices fall behind or require additional support and act quickly. Tutors' instructive feedback on assignments helps most apprentices to improve further and to build knowledge. However, this feedback is not

consistently strong. Not all English errors are identified and corrected. Tutors' reviews of apprentices' progress are not sufficiently detailed to clearly identify areas for further improvement. This is particularly relevant in English and mathematics. As a result, a minority of apprentices are not clear about what they need to do to improve.

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

Apprentices feel safe and work safely. They know about health and safety and apply their knowledge at work. Apprentices know their individual responsibilities for safeguarding and are able to discuss the 'Prevent' duty and radicalisation – specifically, around animal rights. However, directors need to detail the risks to the apprentices and develop additional policies to meet the 'Prevent' duty guidance in full.

Designated safeguarding leads hold safeguarding qualifications and make good use of their strong networks to stay up to date with local and wider safeguarding issues. These issues are discussed informally but directors do not ensure that tutors use opportunities in one-to-one reviews to discuss relevant safeguarding topics.

Directors recognise mental health as a specific safeguarding issue in the sector. A nurse conducts quarterly reviews with apprentices, and directors act swiftly to implement any further specialist support where necessary.

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