

# Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Monitoring visit report

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**Type of provider:** Employer

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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 '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.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (the service) is part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The service has 41 fire stations and covers an area of approximately 500 square miles. It received its first apprenticeship contract in May 2017. The service delivers standards-based apprenticeships through the employer levy. Currently, 220 apprentices are studying operational firefighting at level 3 and 20 apprentices are studying team leading/supervisor at level 3. The service subcontracts English and mathematics tuition to another training provider.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers are very knowledgeable about the firefighting industry and the competencies that firefighters require. They made a carefully considered decision to discontinue team leader/supervisor apprenticeships.

Leaders' and managers' curriculum design enables firefighter apprentices to develop progressively relevant and substantial new vocational knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, apprentices learn how to move, position, extend and lower ladders, and how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders and managers monitor the provision continually to assess the extent to which it fulfils the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They have made reasonable progress in rectifying identified weaknesses since their contract began.

Managers follow appropriate processes for attracting and recruiting firefighting apprentices. They are keen to attract applicants who are underrepresented in the firefighting industry. They consider their applications fully during the recruitment process. Retention of apprentices is high.

Leaders and managers are very knowledgeable about end-point assessment (EPA) requirements. They make good provision for mid-point assessment by simulating EPA. Apprentices develop a good understanding of the EPA process.

Leaders and managers have invested in excellent training facilities to give apprentices experience of the full range of firefighting and related incidents and trauma. However, they acknowledge accurately that a minority of station-based staff require further development so that they can make a fuller contribution to apprentices' training.

Leaders and managers have a basic awareness of the progress that apprentices make. The new electronic portfolio system is not fully operational so it is too soon to assess its impact. Leaders' and managers' oversight of the quality of the subcontractor's English and mathematics provision is not rigorous enough.

Leaders and managers are accountable to the combined authority for implementing the apprenticeship provision efficiently. However, they do not receive sufficient support, challenge and scrutiny for specific aspects of the provision from authority personnel responsible for governance.

**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 benefit from effective on- and off-the-job vocational training. They receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training during working hours. Trainers have relevant experience and are suitably qualified.

Trainers plan and sequence learning appropriately to build on apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, firefighting apprentices carry out rope rescues and use breathing apparatus safely to conduct searches. Team leader/supervisor apprentices develop relevant knowledge of, and skills in, management and supervision. They have a positive impact on working practices in their departments. Trainers challenge apprentices successfully to think critically and work efficiently.

Apprentices benefit from using high-quality resources to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Firefighting apprentices have good opportunities to demonstrate and consolidate their competencies in simulated fire and road-traffic incidents.

Crew and watch managers provide firefighting apprentices with good levels of vocational and personal support in the workplace. Apprentices often present a

summary of the key techniques and procedures they have learned to their colleagues. They develop effective presentation skills and self-confidence.

Managers and trainers check apprentices' learning frequently. Most apprentices produce written assignments of an appropriate standard. Apprentices receive developmental feedback from their trainers to help them improve. Trainers provide good encouragement to apprentices to reflect on and evaluate their actions.

Most apprentices have an appropriate awareness of the assessment requirements of their apprenticeship. However, not all apprentices know what they must do to achieve a distinction.

Apprentices do not receive regular updates on their progress and how they can improve further. Too few apprentices and their managers are clear about how to track progress and record assessment evidence using the new electronic portfolio system.

Arrangements to support the development of apprentices' functional English and mathematical knowledge and skills are insufficient. Consequently, apprentices' progress is not yet rapid enough in these subjects.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that they implement the relevant safeguarding and safeguarding-related policies and procedures. They receive appropriate support for safeguarding from the corporate leadership team.

Leaders and managers check carefully and systematically the background of new staff, apprentices and volunteers. Staff training is frequent and appropriate.

Managers and trainers give a high priority to safeguarding apprentices. They place particular importance on their health, safety and well-being.

Leaders and managers have good links, and work collaboratively, with a range of organisations. These include the Greater Manchester Police and adult social services. They refer apprentices and staff, when necessary, for specialist support.

Most apprentices have an appropriate understanding of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices have a reasonable awareness of the diverse communities they serve and the specific needs within them. When apprentices identify a child or a vulnerable adult at risk, they follow the correct reporting procedures.

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