

Virgin Active Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2510862

Name of lead inspector: Saher Nijabat, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 30–31 October 2019

Type of provider: Employer provider

Address: 100 Aldersgate Street
London
EC1A 4LX

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.

Virgin Active Limited, part of the Virgin Group, provides health and fitness services for people in 43 clubs across England. Since May 2018, the organisation has delivered levy-funded apprenticeships to its middle managers. At the time of the visit, 65 adults are on a level 3 team leader supervisor standards-based apprenticeship. Of these apprentices, 51 work in London and the rest are in different parts of the country, including Sheffield, Brighton and Northampton.

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 have a clear rationale and strategic intention for the apprenticeship programme. The programme meets their aim of developing leadership and management expertise within the company. As a result of the training, many apprentices gain promotion to the role of assistant general manager.

Leaders and managers are committed to delivering a good apprenticeship programme. They have invested well in staff training and resources, such as the appointment of full-time apprenticeship tutors who provide frequent support to apprentices. Managers meet frequently with assessors to review the progress apprentices make.

Managers ensure that apprentices receive clear information about the expectations of the apprenticeship programme at the start of their training. For example, apprentices know their entitlement to off-the-job training. Apprentices are fully aware of the reasons why they are on their apprenticeship programme, which is to improve their abilities and career prospects.

At the start of the programme, leaders and managers did not have a good understanding of all the elements of the apprenticeship. This resulted in many apprentices leaving without completing. Leaders and managers have learned much since then and have taken action to improve the structure of apprentices' progress reviews and workshops. Apprentices enjoy the redesigned content in their workshops and

have more meaningful discussions in their reviews. As a result, a high proportion stay in training.

Leaders and managers have not established quality performance measures well. Consequently, a few apprentices are falling behind their targets. Leaders and managers do not have a clear enough overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision. For example, they are not clear on how well apprentices master the knowledge and skills on their programme. Consequently, a few apprentices have fallen behind with their studies. Leaders recognise they need to put together information to measure the effectiveness 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 benefit from a well-planned and structured curriculum which was designed in conjunction with sector experts. Tutors deliver the curriculum in ways that help apprentices build their understanding well. Most apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours through their apprenticeship. For example, they learn how to deal with difficult situations with the staff they line manage. They implement the new skills they learn in their jobs, which improves their confidence.

Tutors receive useful training on how to link aspects of apprenticeship standards to their teaching. They have appropriate experience as managers or trainers in the sector. They use this well to develop apprentices' vocational knowledge. They help apprentices to fill knowledge gaps by directing them to relevant course materials.

Staff provide good support for students who need extra help, such as those with anxiety or dyslexia. They also make sure those who need to improve their knowledge and use of English or mathematics receive the guidance they need.

Most apprentices benefit from good on- and off-the-job learning activities. For example, in training workshops on topics such as safeguarding and mental health, apprentices develop a deep understanding of relevant procedures. They make good use of online resources to carry out extensive research and study. Through attending action learning groups, apprentices identify gaps in their knowledge. Apprentices benefit from sharing experiences with their peers from different clubs in these group sessions.

Managers provide effective support for apprentices during their training. They give useful on-the-job coaching to apprentices. Apprentices value their contribution, because it empowers them to take responsibility for their development.

Tutors do not sufficiently help apprentices to identify how the coursework completed outside of taught sessions links to their individual skills and knowledge gaps. As a

result, a few apprentices are unable to explain what new knowledge and skills they have gained.

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

Senior leaders place a high priority on safeguarding apprentices and staff. They have developed a culture that promotes safeguarding across the organisation. Leaders and managers have implemented comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures. Appropriate checks take place on all applicants to ensure that they are suitable for their job roles. Leaders and managers review risk assessments frequently and put appropriate actions in place to minimise risks, such as from computer hacking and virus attacks.

Managers have established a suitable staffing structure to ensure the safety of their apprentices. Safeguarding officers are available on all employers' sites. Staff benefit from frequent and effective training on matters related to safeguarding.

Apprentices know who to turn to for concerns about their own or others' welfare. Through their training, apprentices develop a good knowledge of British values. Their training does not, however, enable apprentices to understand fully enough the dangers of radicalisation and extremism in relation to their work.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019