

Care Assessment Training Services Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Alison Humphreys, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 1 Richmond Road
Lytham St Annes
Lancashire
FY8 1PE

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.

Care Assessment Training Services Ltd (CATS) started to receive funding to deliver apprenticeships in February 2018. CATS is an independent learning provider that delivers apprenticeships, in the care sector, across the North West. At the time of the monitoring visit, 102 apprentices were on an apprenticeship programme, most of whom study apprenticeship standards in care. Nearly three quarters of apprentices study on standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3. Of the remaining apprentices, 20 study on the apprenticeship framework in care at level 5 and six study business administration frameworks at levels 2 and 3.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not use integrity when recruiting apprentices. For example, apprentices on the level 5 programme complete their courses early but remain on programme until the planned end date. Many apprentices do not know that they are apprentices or why they are on an apprenticeship programme.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that employers are aware of the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. As a result, the majority of apprentices on level 2 and level 5 programmes do not receive sufficient time to complete their off-the-job training.

No one holds leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of the apprenticeship programme. The external scrutiny of policies, systems or quality arrangements does not exist. Consequently, leaders and managers have been slow to put changes in place. For example, leaders and managers were right in identifying that they were too slow in recruiting assessors. As a result, apprentices do not receive the full support they need throughout their apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that employers and apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships are aware of the end-point assessment. They do not plan effectively in preparing apprentices for the professional discussion and tests. Assessors do not encourage apprentices to work towards merit or distinction grades. Consequently, apprentices do not achieve within the planned timescale or at the level of which they are capable.

Assessors have the appropriate knowledge and expertise in the care sector to carry out training and assessment.

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 do not receive their entitlement to high-quality off-the-job training. Assessors frequently leave apprentices to research new topics without first delivering the basic knowledge. For example, apprentices select work-related units such as autism spectrum disorder and complete their work independently without any input from assessors.

Assessors do not plan or sequence learning to ensure that apprentices develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to progress in their careers. Assessors do not routinely work with employers to coordinate on- and off-the-job training.

Assessors do not use the results of assessments to ensure that apprentices are on the correct programme. Consequently, assessors place too many apprentices on an apprenticeship incorrectly. For example, apprentices at level 5 state that they are undertaking a diploma qualification and apprentices on programmes at levels 2 and 3 state that they are completing an NVQ. Many employers do not know that their staff are on an apprenticeship programme.

When they plan the curriculum, assessors do not consider the English and mathematical skills that apprentices need to develop in the workplace. For example, if apprentices are weak at number conversions or percentages, which they need in order to administer medication, their mathematics plan does not reflect this.

A few apprentices develop new skills. They increase their confidence and communication skills. They use the knowledge and skills they develop to adapt how they communicate with clients and residents. For example, apprentices at level 3 use electronic translation tools to aid their communication with residents who do not speak English.

Apprentices on the level 5 programme undertake useful research projects to complement their job roles. For example, apprentices research topics such as using

assistance dogs in care settings and planning holidays for service users. This provides new strategies to support service users.

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

Leaders and managers have appropriate policies and procedures in place to keep apprentices safe. Staff use these procedures effectively and swiftly to support apprentices when safeguarding concerns arise. The designated safeguarding lead has undertaken appropriate training.

Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment practices. They complete suitable checks prior to staff starting employment.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to keep safe online. All apprentices know how to safeguard residents and clients in their care. Apprentices at level 5 know how to report safeguarding concerns. Apprentices at levels 2 and 3 have a weak understanding of safeguarding in relation to themselves.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that assessors are suitably knowledgeable in their understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, most apprentices are not clear about how the 'Prevent' duty applies to them. They have weak knowledge of the threats of radicalisation and extremism.

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