

Bespoke Professional Development and Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Rachel Angus Her Majesty's Inspector

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Address:
Navigation House
Ellerbeck Way
Stokesley Business Park
Stokesley
Middlesbrough
TS9 5JZ



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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.

Bespoke Professional Development and Training Limited (BePro) specialises in providing apprenticeships in human resources (HR) and learning and development. In August 2017, BePro began to train apprentices funded by the apprenticeship levy. There are currently 189 apprentices in training, almost all on apprenticeship standards. Around two thirds are on HR programmes and a quarter are following learning and development apprenticeships. There are small numbers studying other apprenticeships in areas such as recruitment, business administration, customer service and operations management. Two thirds of apprentices study at level 5 and the remainder at level 3. The large majority of apprentices are over 25 years of age.

Themes

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

The directors are implementing a well-developed strategy to deliver high-quality apprenticeships in HR and learning and development. They ensure that apprentices can achieve additional prestigious qualifications, even when this is not a requirement of the apprenticeship standard. Employers and apprentices value this opportunity highly and almost all apprentices take relevant additional qualifications.

The directors recognise the challenge of maintaining high quality while responding to the rapidly growing demand for training. They have recently implemented an operational strategy to manage recruitment more carefully. Rather than allowing apprentices to start programmes throughout the year, the directors are now planning specific start dates for new cohorts. They intend that this will ensure that staffing and resources are in place and that learning for other apprentices is not disrupted. It is too early to identify the impact of this new arrangement.

Reasonable progress

Staff are very well qualified and have significant occupational experience. Directors ensure that new tutors and assessors receive a comprehensive induction into their

roles and are clear about directors' high expectations of their performance. All staff receive training in teaching, learning and assessment to develop their skills further in order to meet the demands of the apprenticeship standards. Managers take effective action when staff do not meet their expectations.

Managers ensure that employers fully understand their role in meeting the principles of effective apprenticeship provision. Apprentices develop new knowledge and skills as a result of their training and they apply this knowledge well to the workplace. Managers also ensure that they plan training to meet employers' needs. For example, training and assessment at one large employer are scheduled to avoid busy trading periods.

The large majority of apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. Managers recognise that they need to monitor this more rigorously to enable early identification and resolution of any issues. They have recently appointed a new quality manager to tackle this area for improvement.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?

Tutors provide engaging training for apprentices through regular workshop sessions. Apprentices from different organisations attend workshops. This enables them to share ideas and good practice that they can apply in the workplace.

Tutors make effective use of interesting resources in training sessions. For example, they use mobile technology to check learning. Apprentices rightly appreciate the expertise of their tutors and enjoy the range of learning activities in workshop sessions. For example, apprentices discussed enthusiastically how the role of HR has evolved over time.

Tutors and assessors identify the starting points of apprentices well. They use this information to plan and deliver training that meets apprentices' needs. Staff ensure that apprentices who need to gain a qualification in English or mathematics are successful.

Apprentices benefit from regular meetings and telephone contact with their tutors and assessors. Assessors motivate apprentices to complete their work and provide evidence that they are developing their skills in line with the standards for the apprenticeship. Assessors respond quickly to apprentices' questions and provide helpful answers and guidance. Tutors and assessors provide useful feedback to apprentices, who respond well and produce work of a high standard.

Most current apprentices are making expected progress, and many are making good progress. Of the small number who have completed their end-point assessment so far, around half have achieved a high grade.

Tutors and assessors support most apprentices to receive high-quality off-the-job training. A minority of apprentices struggle to identify the activities they undertake as off-the-job training, and assessors do not provide enough clarification for these apprentices. For the few apprentices who are not receiving their full entitlement, tutors and assessors do not work well enough with apprentices' line managers to tackle the issue quickly.

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

Managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks when they recruit staff. Staff receive helpful safeguarding training and fully understand their responsibilities. Managers have made suitable arrangements to record any safeguarding incidents should they arise, although none have to date. Apprentices feel safe and know what to do if they have any concerns.

Most tutors and assessors discuss safeguarding issues with apprentices in workshops and during their regular meetings. The majority of apprentices have a sufficient understanding of safeguarding risks. Assessors are particularly effective at discussing issues that might impact on an individual's safety. For example, they discuss lone working and how apprentices in this situation should take steps to ensure their welfare.

A minority of apprentices have an insecure understanding of radicalisation and extremism. This is either because their assessor does not regularly discuss these important issues or apprentices do not remember what has been discussed.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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