

Adult Training Network Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Lynda Brown, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Address: Unit 3
Triangle Centre
399 Uxbridge Road
Southall
Middlesex
UB1 3EJ



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. 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 to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

The Adult Training Network (ATN) started its newly funded adult learning provision in September 2017. It provides courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and in functional skills English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) from entry level to level 2.

The majority of learners enrol on short courses that provide them with qualifications to access employment. ATN has 128 learners studying in 2018/19. The majority are from within the London boroughs of Hounslow, Ealing and Hillingdon.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? Significant progress

Leaders and managers at ATN have established a curriculum that closely meets the needs of learners and employers in the local area. The main rationale for this curriculum is to provide learners with qualifications so that they are well prepared to enter the labour market and to develop their confidence and self-esteem. A high proportion of adults who have completed courses have achieved their qualifications.

Managers work very effectively with Job Centre Plus (JCP), from where a large proportion of learners are referred. They ensure that the curriculum is structured so that learners can progress easily onto further learning or into employment. As a result, a high proportion of learners continue to study at ATN so that they are ready to enter the labour market. A few learners continue to study at ATN after they have secured employment.

Leaders and managers understand the main strengths and weaknesses of their provision. They have put in place robust processes to evaluate their programmes and have taken appropriate actions to meet targets set in improvement plans.

Leaders have ensured that members of the board of trustees have relevant skills and experience to provide good support to the business. Trustees scrutinise managers' judgements of performance and quality improvement documents carefully. They work effectively with leaders to establish targets for improvement.

Leaders and managers have effectively built on their positive relationships with local employers to support learners to gain work placements, volunteering opportunities and paid employment. For example, learners have benefited from work placements as teaching assistants and as dental nurses. Former learners often return as volunteers to the centre, which helps them to gain in confidence and to secure future employment. Employers value the skills that learners have acquired during their time with ATN and recognise the progress that learners make while studying there. Learners are frequently offered paid employment because of their work placements.

Leaders ensure that teachers and trainers are well qualified at the appropriate levels and in the appropriate subject areas. Managers monitor accurately the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through an annual observation process and frequent learning walks. They provide teachers with detailed feedback on observations and identify clearly areas for improvement which are linked well with the staff development programme. Teachers access relevant courses and training to improve their practice.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? Significant progress

Staff provide effective initial advice and guidance to learners to ensure that they place them on the appropriate level of course. They support learners well to understand the courses that they enrol on. For example, they hold open evenings which current learners attend to discuss their experiences. As a result, prospective learners feel well informed about their future learning.

Staff evaluate accurately learners' knowledge at the start of their courses. Teachers use this initial assessment to set appropriate targets for learners, which they monitor frequently.

Teachers skilfully address learners' anxieties and help them to develop their self-confidence quickly. Teachers provide a supportive and caring learning environment. They are positive and constructive in encouraging learners to recognise and learn from their mistakes and to share their knowledge with other members of the group. Teachers are particularly adept at designing lesson activities to cater for the different speed with which learners make progress. For example, teachers provide additional tasks for those learners who complete lesson activities quickly, so that they can develop their skills further.

Teachers review learners' individual progress frequently and provide clear feedback to them about how they can continue to improve. They provide effective additional support to learners who are at risk of falling behind, or of not completing their programme. Teachers maintain timely and accurate records of these reviews.

Teachers build valuable job search and work preparation skills into the curriculum. As a result, learners develop relevant English skills and understand what they will need to do to apply for jobs.

Many learners study more than one subject, including English, mathematics and functional ICT. On completion of their programme, a high proportion of learners choose to return to the provider and to progress to the next level of the course. A high proportion of learners who have achieved their level 2 qualifications successfully gain employment.

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

Leaders and managers place safeguarding as a high priority within the organisation. They have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, including for lone working, online safety and the conduct of staff. They implement these effectively to keep learners and staff safe.

Managers ensure that the staff they recruit are safe to work with their learners. They carry out appropriate checks and update these frequently.

Managers ensure that staff carry out extensive training for safeguarding. They have put in place an effective induction programme at the start of employment and all staff are provided with frequent update training. The safeguarding team, consisting of a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and four deputy DSLs, have attended appropriate and up-to-date training, including 'Prevent' duty training in relation to their roles.

Staff consider learners' safety well. They risk assess learners for safeguarding issues at the recruitment stage, which enables them to monitor students' welfare during their programmes. Staff are vigilant in monitoring learners' well-being and put interventions in place swiftly where they are required. Staff provide good support to learners with personal and welfare issues, including access to counselling services.

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