



Quality Assurance Reviews Analysis 2022/23

Analysis of 21 Quality Assurance Reviews of Modern
Apprenticeship (MA) providers

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Overview

Outline of Report

During 2022/23, 21 Quality Assurance Reviews of providers delivering Modern Apprenticeship provision were carried out. This report outlines the combined findings from the 21 reviews, providing a breakdown of the Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and identifying selected examples of effective practice.

This report has been developed for providers delivering Modern Apprenticeship provision to help support continuous improvement in the delivery of training provision. AFIs and examples of effective practice were extracted from the 21 quality reports completed by Quality Assessors after review visits.

There were over 195 AFIs noted across the reviews. In addition, there were many strengths observed, including over 50 areas of highlighted effective practice. Based on the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework 2022/2023, findings within the reports were divided into the three quality standards which were then categorised by the 22 quality themes for this analysis.

Following the categorisation of the report content, each quality theme was analysed separately, producing an in-depth breakdown of the development issues found among providers within each individual theme.

Effective practice examples have also been identified to inform continuous improvement actions. **The small selection of effective practice in this report is not a comprehensive list of all the areas in which providers are doing well.**



Overview

Note on AFIs

Whilst the high-level results broadly reflect the quality themes requiring the greatest improvement, the themes with a low number of providers demonstrating an AFI should not necessarily be interpreted as areas where all other providers are performing strongly (and vice versa, relating to effective practice).

The actions relating to some quality themes may only be proportionate or relevant to a certain number of providers, depending on the size and nature of individual SDS contracts. Therefore, the results in certain quality themes may be applicable to a smaller number of providers and the quantity (or lack) of areas of improvement does not necessarily demonstrate a strong performance across the provider network.

The three quality themes in which most providers had an AFI in 2022/23 are as follows:

- SDS diverse recruitment
- Effective self-assessment and continuous improvement
- Achievement and analysis of SDS KPIs

It is important to note that the majority of AFIs around 'SDS diverse recruitment' are due to providers' statistics being below the benchmark for one or more of the SDS key equality groups or result trends declining. This does not necessarily mean that providers are not taking positive action. AFIs relating to the lack of positive action being taken to address equality initiatives come under the theme 'Diverse recruitment'

The disruption caused by the pandemic meant that training opportunities across some occupational groupings experienced additional challenges.

This report, and in particular the AFIs identified, should also be considered in this context, and we acknowledge that many of the circumstances which may have impacted the providers ability to effectively deliver training were out with their control.

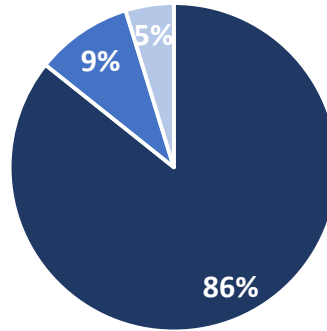
SDS reviewed key performance indicators in line with the provider's particular portfolio of provision and caveated statements regarding outcomes in relation to the effects of the pandemic. Provider reports were graded, giving proportionate consideration to how the provider has adapted to the particular circumstances that have affected them to deliver their work-based learning provision.

Overview

Size of Providers

reviewed in 22/23 Quality Assurance Reviews

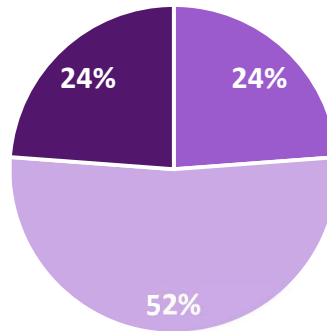
- Provider
- Employer
- Local Authority



Type of Providers

reviewed in 22/23 Quality Assurance Reviews

- Large: 100+ In-training at Review
- Medium: 50 to 99 In-training at Review
- Small: up to 49 In-training at Review

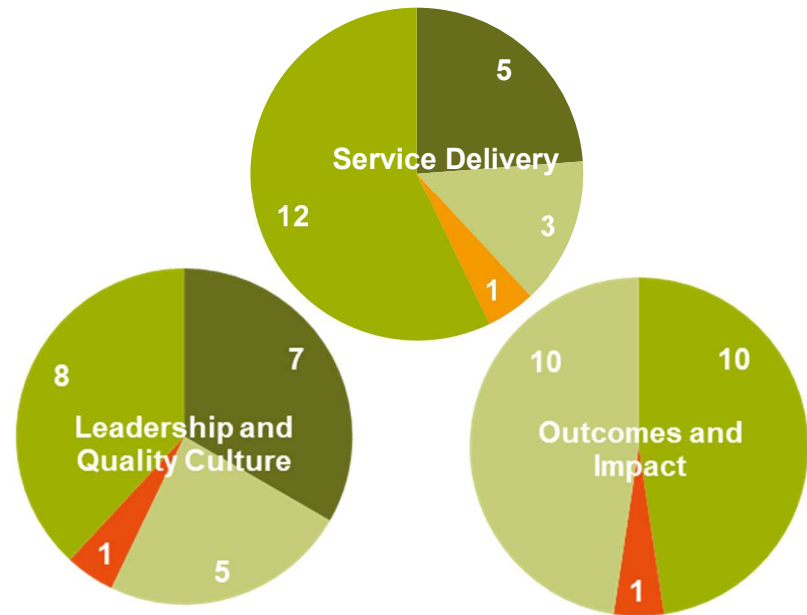


Please refer to the Grade Descriptors in Appendix 1 for an outline and description of each grade.

Grades Received by Providers

Each individual provider report received a grade for each of the three Quality Indicators. The list of possible grades is shown below:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory



Summary of AFIs

This chart outlines the collated number of AFIs in each Quality Theme from the 21 Quality Assurance Reviews. In instances where there are fewer AFIs under a theme, this is only an indication of the number of times it was mentioned in the QA reports. This does not necessarily mean that SDS considers that theme as less important than those with a larger number of AFIs.

The high-level results give an indication from these reviews where we found AFIs. It is a useful guide to where providers may wish to consider their own practice but care should be taken in overinterpretation as some issues belong to more than one theme. For example, employer involvement is an issue that covers multiple themes and relates to a significant number of AFIs. It is also important to note that expectations of providers in relation to themes will be proportionate to the size and nature of the provider. This document will give a more in-depth analysis of the findings in relation to each theme.



Service Delivery

Initial Assessment and Recruitment

1.1.1: How effective are our processes for recruitment and initial assessment of learners?



Areas for Improvement

- Inconsistent approaches in the initial assessment of apprentices.
- Insufficient promotion of apprenticeship programme to prospective apprentices and employers
- Employers have limited success in recruitment for apprenticeship vacancies
- Sharing of recruitment and initial assessment information from the employer is insufficient

SDS is undertaking a specific thematic review on initial assessment. The national report will be published in May 2023.

Effective Practice: Cairn Training (Aberdeen) Ltd

Initial assessment of apprentices is conducted as part of a six-week induction process. Throughout the six-week induction process, apprentices receive all relevant information about the programme. Apprentices complete the initial assessment pack, which involves completing three tasks over the six-week induction period.

One task is completed every two weeks, and the apprentice's assessor meet them bi-weekly to provide feedback and set out requirements for the next task. When the induction period is concluded, the decision is made on whether the apprentice is suitable for the programme and onboarded to complete the qualification. This decision is made in a three-way partnership between the apprentice, employer, and assessor.

All learners interviewed expressed that this process provided them with a great understanding of the requirements and expectations of the qualification which prepared them for the programme. From the assessors' perspective, this process is appropriate to assess the suitability and sustainability of the candidate through the completion of the initial assessment pack, allowing them to assess their skills and strengths; areas of personal development; recognised previous learning; and additional support needs. Overall, it allows assessors to consider whether apprentices have the aptitude to commit to the programme with regards to time management, commitment to their role and whether their role is suitable to gather evidence for the qualification.

Induction

1.1.2: How effective are our processes for each learner's induction?

Areas for Improvement

- Employers are not involved in the induction process
- Induction resources fail to provide clarity about programme expectations for apprentices
- Lack of systematic approach to gathering apprentice feedback on induction
- Approach to induction is ineffective for apprentices (e.g., too detailed, heavily paper based)
- Approach to induction was inconsistent

Effective Practice: PA Training

Employers interviewed have positive longstanding relationships with the provider and although not all participate in the apprentice induction session, they are fully aware of the programme requirements.

Post induction, all employers receive an email with an overview of the session content, and they appreciate this as it helps keep them informed.

Comprehensive and thorough all day induction sessions take place three times per year and in order to meet everyone's needs, the provider hosts these on a group basis at the community college; via Zoom sessions; or face to face in employer premises if requested.

As part of induction, apprentices receive well documented information around areas such as familiarisation with the qualification and evidence requirements; core skills; policies and procedures including equality; complaints procedures; the workshop structure; and topics to be covered. Hosting induction on a group basis has many benefits, such as, apprentices who will be working together as part of monthly group sessions getting to know each other; introduction to assessors; and familiarisation of the electronic portfolio VQfolio. The provider works tirelessly to gather feedback on their systems and processes and at the end of each induction session.

Apprentices are invited to provide feedback and the data gathered used to inform improvements to delivery. Recent analysis determines that induction is "good or very good". Employers are also invited to provide feedback on areas they would like to see implemented or improved as part of the induction process. Analysis of the data led to a number of changes to induction and as a result the provider now includes discussion around mental health and workplace behaviours, specifically attendance, bullying and harassment and employers appreciate this.

Learning and assessment planning

1.1.3: How effective is our learning and assessment planning?



Areas for Improvement

- Lack of apprentice ownership of their own learner journey (including unit choice and assessment planning)
- Lack of dedicated time for off-the-job activities within the workplace
- Limited employer involvement in determining planned training (including learning plan, optional units)
- Ineffective learning and assessment planning (e.g., inconvenience to apprentices, insufficient workload to meet apprenticeship requirements, conflicts with employer plans)
- Lack of apprentice ownership of their own learner journey (e.g., unaware of their own training plan, unit choice, etc.)
- Opportunities to generate evidence are limited to general tasks, rather than vocationally specific ones

Effective Practice: East Scot Training Services Ltd (trading as Angus Training Group)

Learning and assessment planning during the first 44 weeks in the training centre is effective at preparing apprentices for moving onto their employer and continuing to progress through their apprenticeship. The detailed individual learning plan (ILP) produced for each apprentice includes details of the qualifications to be studied; training delivery and support arrangements; recognition of prior learning (RPL); hobbies; interests; and future career aims.

The three weekly reports, in addition to knowledge, practice and core skills progress on the award, also include graded performance on completion of the logbook (an essential part of the assessment process as they move forward into their employer's workplace), and meta- skills. The work carried out by assessors in improving these skills such as timekeeping, attitude, level of interest, conduct and awareness of health and safety is highly valued by employers.

When they join the workplace apprentices reflect on their improvement in these skills and how it has made the transition to the workplace much easier for them. Additional support for assessment and other skills is provided to ensure the apprentice is fully prepared to join the employer as a fully ioning member of the workforce. The three weekly reports are collated and feed into quarterly reports for the employer.

Equality groups

1.1.4: How well have we designed and prepared our provision specifically to meet the needs of different equality groups?



Areas for Improvement

- Not all apprentices receive the full support they require
- Materials and the terminology used do not promote diversity within apprenticeship programme
- Limited evaluation on whether equality focussed resources are valued by learners or making a positive difference

Effective Practice: Qtrain Ltd

The provider considers the specific needs of equality groups well across its programmes. Support requirements are actively sought and adaptations put in place with apprentices reflecting how inclusive assessors are in providing them with the capability and confidence to sustain a commitment to their qualification which, for some, is a first within an educational setting. While dyslexia is commonplace, the provider recognises there is no 'one size fits all' approach to the support required using variously voice recording and 'speak to text' apps, assessors scribing/reading, mind-mapping techniques as well as use of coloured paper / overlays. Other examples of effective practice include; providing hard copies of documents where preferred; breaking down assignments into smaller sections, allowing additional time to complete tasks, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) support using interpretation software.

To support an apprentice with autism and social anxiety who dislikes being observed in a live situation, the provider enables them to record evidence for future assessment. The pace of learning matches individual need and for one apprentice, due to go on maternity leave, the provider worked with them to complete their qualification. This nurturing environment ensures that apprentices feel confident that their needs are accommodated, and they can progress regardless of learning style or additional need.

Transferable skills (core, meta, and career management skills)

1.1.5: How well have we designed and prepared to deliver transferable skills?

Areas for Improvement

- Lack of awareness of value and requirement for core skill development
- Missed opportunities to deliver core skills using naturally occurring evidence

Effective Practice - Experiential Play Ltd

Experiential Play has fully embraced meta skills, taking positive steps to successfully incorporate them into training delivery. While meta skills are not a mandatory requirement of the MA frameworks they deliver, the provider has designed a delivery approach that clearly adds value to the apprentices' learning experience and personal development. Staff knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, meta skills is evident, and this positivity is central to creating an organisational culture that puts meta skills at the heart of career development for apprentices. Staff understand the aims and objectives of the introduction of meta skills to the training programme and the positive impact on apprentice training. Staff spoke knowledgeably about the SDS meta skills e-learning module, having completed this as part of their own CPD activity.

Apprentices are introduced to meta skills during the induction process and also receive a helpful meta skills information sheet, outlining the 12 meta skills with a brief definition for each one. An online meta skills course is available on and all apprentices are encouraged to complete this at an early stage in their training.

Throughout their qualification, apprentices are encouraged to recognise and identify meta skills and reflect on how they are developing each of the 12 skills. To highlight the benefits of meta skills development, apprentices are asked to incorporate them into their responses when completing their portfolio reflective writing tasks. The provider has reviewed this approach and as a result has made improvements. Where previously apprentices were asked to write about meta skills development at the end of their writing tasks, they now incorporate their reflections throughout their responses. Several apprentices commented on this change noting it helps them to better identify which meta skills they are using and developing. Meta skills discussions are also incorporated into progress review meetings to further support apprentice understanding and identification of individual skills and their development.

Meta skills are included in the workplace mentor induction sessions to raise awareness of the concepts involved. Mentors are encouraged to plan training and experiences for the apprentices which will support them to identify and develop meta skills. Many apprentices interviewed reported increased confidence levels as a result of better understanding what meta skills were and how they used them in their day to day activity.

Employer Involvement

1.1.6: How effectively have we utilised the employer voice to inform the design and preparation of delivery?



Areas for Improvement

- Limited employer involvement in determining planned training
- No documented service level agreement (SLA) in place with employer
- Ineffective communication with employers on their role in delivery

Effective Practice: Hospitality Training

Employer engagement is strong with all valuing the flexibility in the design and delivery of their apprentices' training programme which aligns with their needs. Regular and informal discussions with employers helps shape the service offering. There is involvement in selecting the correct pathway and enhancements with some employers stretching and challenging apprentices to develop beyond minimum performance requirements, e.g., sourcing special ingredients to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Delivery staff provide employers with a strong understanding of apprentices' progress, via regular visits and reviews. A partnership approach is very much in evidence with interventions and adjustments made where required, which allows apprentices to progress in their qualification.

All on and off-the-job learning is effectively scheduled with employer and apprentice engagement being planned flexibly – these take account of rotas and peak service periods in the workplace to ensure evidence can be gathered effectively. This minimises the impact on day-to-day operations and encourages employers to offer qualifications to their staff.

Resources (delivery environment/ learning materials and technology)

1.2.1: How well do we plan resources to support effective delivery of work-based learning?



Areas for Improvement

- Apprentice learning styles are not considered (e.g. would like the option of face-to-face engagement, advance notice of learning activities)
- Apprentices are not fully confident using the learning platforms available
- Lack of employer access to digital learning/assessment platforms to optimise their input to delivery
- Limited use of digital platforms to support delivery
- Apprentices have a lack of awareness of support resources available

Effective Practice: Busy Bees Nurseries Limited

Excellent and accessible resources are in place which support effective delivery. Having introduced the electronic-portfolio system around a year ago, apprentices find it visually engaging, providing a clear breakdown of each element of their qualification and highlighting their progress made against targets. While some apprentices initially found difficulty in navigating, Development Coaches are adept at supporting them. The dashboard is informative and can be used as an effective communication tool. There is access to a suite of resources which equips apprentices to manage and develop in their learning. The provider offers employer access to the electronic portfolio system, enabling them to keep track of their apprentice's progress.

Busy Bees have also developed their virtual learning environment in order to implement learning strategies which meet business needs and align with its core values. Staff and apprentices find that the ability to access a wide range of e-learning at a time/place to suit them is beneficial. Development Coaches have been proactive in adapting and creating resources that are tailored for Scottish Vocational Qualifications including Safeguarding and Health & Social Care Standards courses. Access to desktops and tablets is available in the workplace with processes to alleviate digital poverty through the laptop loan facility, where required. Such approaches ensure that resources are suitable for every apprentice to develop their skills and experience.

Learner goal setting and progress

1.3.1: How effective are our approaches to setting learner goals and monitoring learner progress?



Areas for Improvement

- Too few effective and timely progress review meetings
- Apprentices are not clear on the progression routes available to them
- Apprentices are not clear on the purpose of the progress review or fully involved in the discussions
- Ineffective progress review meetings (e.g., completed via email, no scheduled meetings)
- Lack of genuine engagement from employers or inconsistent participation in the progress review process
- Inconsistent quality of progress review and support process in different frameworks / geographical locations

Effective Practice - On Track Training (Highland) Limited

Apprentices make excellent progress through their awards, and this is almost certainly due to the continued consistent support from assessors. Visits occur every one to four weeks, with most visits being carried out fortnightly. These regular visits create momentum, ensuring apprentices are constantly moving forward with their award. Assessor visits are carefully planned around specific apprentice activity, and this can sometimes involve extended visits to enable the assessor to capture all relevant evidence in one go. Planned assessments are driven by workplace activities and apprentices and employers are very clear on what they have to work on, and what they will cover in their next meeting.

Goals are discussed and recorded, and all stakeholders are aware of progress. In some cases, goals are defined and led by the apprentices, and this helps them to take ownership of their programme. Assessors encourage and guide the apprentices to succeed, and they go above and beyond the requirements of the qualification. There is a real, commitment from the assessors and the organisation not only to support the apprentices to complete their qualification, but to help them with their personal development and to see how this can benefit them as individuals. For the provider, the learning journey is a collaborative process between all stakeholders. This effective planning helps to support the progression of apprentices.

Quality assurance of practice leading to improvement and enhancement of service

1.3.2: How well do we review our delivery to ensure its standard and quality?



Areas for Improvement

- Missed opportunities to utilise peer expertise to build confidence in new staff

Effectiveness of partnerships to support transitions and/or progression

1.4.1: How well do we work with partners to support transition and/or progression of learners?



Areas for Improvement

- Missed opportunities to use expert partners to provide support, e.g., in equality matters, sharing information and good practice

Management of sub-contractors

1.4.2: How effective are we at managing our sub-contracted delivery?



Areas for Improvement

- External Verification reports by relevant awarding bodies are not shared with sub-contractor staff
- Sub-contractor assessors do not always receive timely feedback on progress of apprentices
- Limited mechanisms to ensure the quality of sub-contracted provision
- Provider does not ensure sub-contractor staff identify appropriate continuous professional development opportunities



Peyvand Alipoor (Somerset Nursery)

Leadership & Quality Culture

Diverse recruitment to support youth / employment

2.1.1: How well does our SDS contracted provision support the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee initiative?



Areas for Improvement

- Lack of effective partnerships with equality partners to promote vacancies to under-represented groups
- Lack of effective engagement with employers on recruitment from under-represented groups
- Limited evidence of inclusive practices in the recruitment of under-represented groups

Effective Practice: Lifetime Training Group Limited

Lifetime work pro-actively with their employers around supporting recruitment of a more diverse workforce. The provider works pro-actively with partners to promote and support diversity. Through effective partnership with Greene King and the Prince's Trust they were able to support individuals who were not in employment, education or training, and from a care experienced background, to gain the skills required to work in the hospitality industry.

So far this partnership has supported five individuals progress onto an MA, one of whom has been promoted to a deputy manager post.

This engagement has been positive in help recruit individuals from underrepresented groups. Further positive partnerships are fostered through this arrangement due to individuals being referred to Prince's Trust via S.A.M.H. and Enable.

Future focused strategy underpinned by Labour Market Information (LMI)

2.1.2: How well do we consider our own ecosystem in developing and delivering our work-based learning strategy?



Areas for Improvement

- Limited use of labour market information, such as Skills Investment Plans or Regional Skills Assessments

Effective Practice: Busy Bees Nurseries Limited

The provider utilises effective strategic and employer links to gather intelligence which informs their planning and provision of training delivery. At a UK level, an in-house lobbyist engages in various policy forums/ conferences to ensure the provider understands and influences the wider early years strategy. As the largest childcare provider across the four nations, there is a clear vision in relation to recruitment with apprenticeships a key pillar of its strategy.

In the current year, Project 700 sets out ambitious plans to recruit two apprentices in each nursery to secure and nurture new talent. A Training Needs Analysis is maintained at both organisational and nursery levels, enabling the provider to manage its skills requirements and fill gaps.

Communication between the Recruitment Team, Managing Director for Scotland and their Centre Directors as well as the STL and delivery staff is highly effective in shaping provision in line with their specific requirements. Such activities mean the provider is able to understand the needs of its markets and trends that affect them – in turn, this contributes to the sustainability of its business.

Management and support of staff

2.2.1: How effective are we at managing our staff to deliver SDS funded provision?



Areas for Improvement

- Ineffective contingency planning to ensure continuity of the MA programme in the event of unplanned absence/ staff leaving
- Lack of provider staff workload monitoring and management of staff
- Lack of staff awareness of SDS's expectations and requirements on delivery
- Limited opportunities for staff meetings and opportunities for standardisation
- No induction for new assessors

Effective Practice: Babington Business College

Staff feel informed, engaged and well supported in their roles. Communication within their small, close-knit team and across the organisation is open and there is transparency with information shared to build trust and engagement. Teamworking is strong, the delivery team having worked together for a number of years. The Head of Delivery (Devolved Nations) is recognised for providing effective leadership and instrumental in creating a positive working environment with all staff feeling their contribution is appreciated. While some Skills Coaches describe current caseloads as challenging, they are well planned and managed through a weekly Operations call and monthly one-to-one meetings. Where required, contingency is available in other teams.

There are monthly team calls and quarterly face-to-face meetings to review the balanced scorecard. Business Continuity plans and policies are clearly defined and subject to annual testing and review. While the recent period has been one of transition, the delivery team feel they have a voice within Babington and there is pride in seeing some of their practices adopted across the wider business. A range of formal and informal methods of communication are seen including regular staff surveys and there is a local representative on the "Peoples Forum" to drive positive change within the business. Other examples include weekly newsletters, Friday 'coffee and chat' with senior leaders and Winning Temp where success is recognised. These approaches support the staff's understanding of their part in the process which they find empowering.

Staff Development

2.3.1: How effective is our staff development to support successful delivery of SDS funded provision?



Areas for Improvement

- Lack of awareness by staff of development resources including those on SDS corporate website.
- No regular annual appraisal process for staff to discuss their performance



Usman Ishaq (Network Rail)

Effective self-assessment and continuous improvement

2.4.1: How effective are our approaches towards self-assessment and continuous improvement?



Areas for Improvement

- Staff are not aware of identified actions within the Quality Action Plan
- Lack of employer, sub-contractor or other stakeholder involvement in the self-assessment process
- Lack of staff involvement in the self-assessment process
- Self-assessment does not fully detail aspects of delivery

Effective Practice: Limelight Careers Ltd

An effective approach is in place to complete the annual SDS self-assessment and quality action plan. As part of the provider's annual planning activity and development of their business plan, a team approach is taken to discuss and reflect on service delivery, leadership and quality culture and outcomes and impact. At the annual planning event, the full team celebrate strengths and identify areas for improvement through the development of an action plan, which forms part of the provider's business plan.

This action plan fully aligns with the quality action plan associated with the SDS self-assessment and sets out planned improvements for the year ahead. Responsibility for carrying actions forward is delegated across the team, and staff feel empowered to lead on making improvements in the areas identified. Staff provide progress updates on the actions they are leading on at team meetings. The business plan is regularly reviewed to ensure it incorporates the current and future challenges and opportunities of the industry and maintains its relevance to meet the needs of stakeholders. As a result, all staff are involved in the discussion around the SDS self-assessment and quality action plan, and it is fully embedded and aligned to their annual planning activity.

Innovation and Change

2.4.2: How well do we seek innovation and ideas to enhance our provision?



Areas for Improvement

- No clear plan in place to evaluate development programmes that complement the apprenticeship



Ross Henderson (Scotrail)

Outcomes & Impact

Achievement and analysis of SDS Key Performance Indicators

3.1.1: How well are we performing and analysing our performance in relation to SDS key requirements?



Areas for Improvement

- Declining trends in achievement rates or they are below SDS target of 75%
- No analysis of key performance indicators to demonstrate trends or identify strengths and potential areas for improvement



Julie-Ann Murray (I&P Johnson)

SDS diverse recruitment

3.1.2: How well are we improving the representation of specific equality groups in our SDS funded provision?



Areas for Improvement

- Low participation rates from individuals who are care experienced
- Low participation rates from individuals from a BME background
- Lack of progress with addressing gender imbalance on heavily segregated frameworks
- Low participation rates from individuals with a self-declared impairment, health condition or learning disability

Awarding & Industry Body requirements

3.1.3: How well are we meeting the requirements of Awarding Bodies and Industry Bodies?



Areas for Improvement

- External Verification reports by relevant awarding bodies are not shared with relevant sub-contractor staff
- No review of the quality of subcontractors' awarding body reports

Systematic gathering, analysis, and use of employer and stakeholder perception data

3.2.1: How satisfied are employers and stakeholders with our service and relationship?

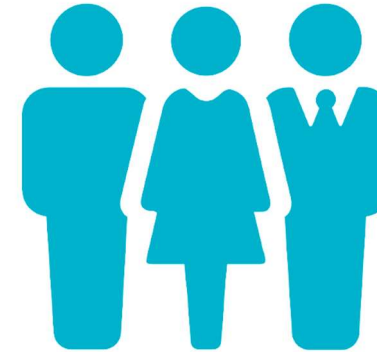


Areas for Improvement

- Approach to gathering feedback has resulted in low response rate
- Design of surveys limits meaningful feedback (e.g., there is a lack of anonymity, only issued upon learner completion)
- Ineffective use of survey feedback to inform improvements to delivery (including no analysis of trends or disaggregation)
- No systematic approach to gathering and analysing employer feedback

Systematic gathering, analysis, and use of learner perception data

3.2.2: How satisfied are learners with our provision?



Areas for Improvement

- No systematic approach to gathering and analysing learner feedback
- Poor communication with apprentices on how their feedback is utilised
- Ineffective use of survey feedback to inform improvements to delivery (including no analysis of trends or disaggregation)
- Approach to gathering feedback has resulted in low response rate
- Design of surveys limits meaningful feedback (e.g. there is a lack of anonymity, only issued upon learner completion)

Appendix 1 – Grade Descriptors

	Service Delivery	Leadership and Quality Culture	Outcomes and Impact
Excellent	<p>An evaluation of excellent applies to the operational planning and delivery of apprenticeships which are of a very high quality. There is an outstanding standard of training which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating across the provider network. Apprenticeship planning and delivery is clearly adapted and tailored to meet the needs of every individual apprentice, including those from under-represented groups. All apprentices and employers are involved in the planning and delivery and all apprentices have ownership of their learner journey, optimising their chances of success and providing them with future-proofed vocational and transferable skills. The provider demonstrates they have effective/innovative approaches for meeting individuals' goals and monitoring and reviewing their progress that go beyond SDS 'compliance' requirements. It implies that the service offer is deemed to be sustainable and that the provider will</p>	<p>An evaluation of excellent applies to the leadership and quality culture of the provider resulting in planning and delivery of apprenticeships which are of a very high quality. There is a sustainable culture of continuous improvement, embracing equality and diversity and the management and development of WBL related staff to ensure that training provided is optimal for all apprentices and their employers. The provider is innovative, works with appropriate partners to optimise their service, and thinks strategically about the future of their WBL provision. There are examples of very best practice, worthy of disseminating across the provider network.</p>	<p>An evaluation of excellent applies to the recent past relevant results of the provider which reflect extremely high satisfaction with all aspects of their apprenticeship provision by apprentices, employers, and other relevant stakeholders. This includes how well the provider considers their impact on under-represented groups. The provider has a systematic and proactive approach to gathering relevant quantitative and qualitative data and analysing it. There is a strong track record of high rates of apprentice achievement in all of the framework areas they operate in and across different pertinent equality groups which are reflective (i.e., there is a causal relationship) of the service offer and leadership provided. The provider promotes and explicitly celebrates the success of individual apprentices and sets themselves appropriate incremental targets for improvement on areas that they see will enhance their service.</p>

	continually seek ways in which to enhance their delivery.		
Very Good	<p>An evaluation of very good applies to the operational planning and delivery of apprenticeships which are of a high quality. The standard of training is very good, and it is characterised by major strengths. There may be areas for improvement which do not significantly diminish apprentices' and employers' experiences. Whilst this represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all WBL providers. There are obvious examples of apprenticeship planning and delivery being adapted to meet the needs of individual apprentices, including those from under-represented groups. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide their training without significant adjustment but there is an expectation that the provider will take opportunities to continue to improve and enhance their service delivery.</p>	<p>An evaluation of very good applies to the leadership and quality culture of the provider resulting in planning and delivery of apprenticeships which are of a high quality. There are major strengths in relation to continuous improvement that consider the diversity of their WBL contract and there is a well-executed commitment to management and training of WBL related staff. There may be areas for improvement which do not significantly diminish the commitment to delivering high quality training. The provider manages their WBL well now and is looking to their own position in the future of WBL. There may be examples of best practice worthy of dissemination across the provider network.</p>	<p>An evaluation of very good applies to the recent past results of the provider which reflect high satisfaction with their apprenticeship provision by apprentices, employers and other relevant stakeholders. This includes how well the provider considers their impact on individuals from under-represented groups. The provider has a systematic approach to gathering relevant quantitative and qualitative data and analysing it. There are very good rates of apprenticeship achievement in almost all of the framework areas delivered and across different pertinent equality groups which are reflective (i.e., there is a causal relationship) of the service offer and leadership provided. There may be examples of individual success of the provider's apprentices.</p>
Good	<p>An evaluation of good applies to the operational planning and delivery of apprenticeships characterised by important strengths which, taken</p>	<p>An evaluation of good applies to the leadership and quality culture of the provider resulting in planning and delivery of apprenticeships which are</p>	<p>An evaluation of good applies to the recent past results of the provider which reflect satisfaction on the whole with their apprenticeship provision by</p>

	<p>together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. There may be a few examples of tailoring the planning and delivery of the apprenticeship to meet individual needs, including those from under-represented groups. However, the quality of some of the apprentices' and/or employers' experiences of delivery may be diminished by aspects in which improvement is required. The provider should seek to enhance the areas that are delivered well whilst taking clear action to address aspects which are identified for improvement.</p>	<p>generally of a high quality. Continuous improvement involves pertinent people and WBL is managed and delivered in line with SDS contract requirements. Any mandatory requirements for staff training are met and the organisation reacts to staffing challenges that occur. However, there may be a few aspects in which the leadership and quality culture of the provider is diminishing their apprenticeship offer now and/or they may not be considering their place well enough in the future of WBL.</p>	<p>apprentices, employers and other stakeholders. This includes how well the provider considers their impact on individuals from under-represented groups. The provider has some evidence of gathering data and using it to inform what they do. There are good rates of apprenticeship achievement for most of the frameworks delivered and across different pertinent equality groups in most framework areas that the provider operates.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>An evaluation of satisfactory applies to the operational planning and delivery of apprenticeships characterised by strengths which just outweigh areas for improvement indicating that apprentices and their employers have access to a basic standard of service. Overall, the areas for improvement are not having a substantially adverse effect on apprentices' and employers' experiences but they are clearly not optimising the apprentices' chances of success. The provider is expected</p>	<p>An evaluation of satisfactory applies to the leadership and quality culture of the provider resulting in planning and delivery of apprenticeships which are of a basic standard. Continuous improvement processes need to be improved in some way and the management of WBL may require to be improved to bring the apprenticeship offer generally to a higher quality standard to meet apprentices' and employers' needs now and in the future. There is limited evidence of relevant, or mandatory,</p>	<p>An evaluation of satisfactory applies to recent past results of the provider which reflect mixed satisfaction with their apprenticeship provision by apprentices, employers, and other stakeholders with little evidence of how their impact on under-represented groups is considered. The provider is passive in gathering data and in using it to inform what they do. Achievement rates are at, or below national averages for frameworks delivered and pertinent equality groups in almost all</p>

	to take immediate action to address the areas for improvement.	staff training taking place which meets individual development needs.	framework areas that the provider operates.
Unsatisfactory	An evaluation of unsatisfactory applies to the operational planning and delivery of apprenticeships characterised by significant and damaging areas for improvement which clearly outweigh strengths indicating that apprentices and employers do not have access to a basic standard of service as demanded by SDS. This will be considered as a breach in contract as set out in the MA specification and conditions and SDS will treat the matter as such through the appropriate governance process.	An evaluation of unsatisfactory applies to the leadership and quality culture of the provider resulting in sub-standard planning and delivery of apprenticeships. There is no evidence that continuous improvement processes are working and the management of WBL is not meeting the needs of apprentices and employers now. There is no evidence of relevant, or mandatory, staff training taking place which meets individual development needs. This will be considered as a breach in contract as set out in the MA specification and conditions and SDS will treat the matter as such through the appropriate governance process.	An evaluation of unsatisfactory applies to recent past results of the provider which reflect low levels of satisfaction with their apprenticeship provision by apprentices, employers and other stakeholders with negligible evidence of how their impact on under-represented groups is considered. The provider is passive in gathering data and does not consider intelligence shared with them in relation to their performance. Achievement rates are generally well below national averages for frameworks delivered and pertinent equality groups in almost all framework areas that the provider operates. This will be considered as a breach in contract as set out in the MA specification and conditions and SDS will treat the matter as such through the appropriate governance process.