

External review of Modern Apprenticeship delivery by

Gibson Training & Care Limited

A report by HM Inspectors

CEO/Principal	Dorothea Morrison
External review date	16th April 2024
Provider type	Employer
Lead HMI	Jacqueline McLellan
Apprentice numbers	55

1. Background

External reviews of Modern Apprenticeship providers are planned collaboratively between the provider and HM Inspectors. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provide information regarding provider performance including key data to support this process.

During the review, a team of HM Inspectors evaluated the quality of training provision and the experiences of apprentices and key stakeholders such as employers. During the visit, the team met with staff, learners and other stakeholders and explored the quality of training delivery, how well the needs of apprentices are met, and approaches to improving quality of provision.

This report summarises the findings from the visit, awards grades for the three elements and highlights areas of positive practice, areas for development, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider, Scottish Government, and SDS. For colleges, the report will be shared with the College Principals and Board or Regional Strategic Body, and Scottish Funding Council (SFC). An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland's website.

2. The provider and its context

Gibson Care Limited was founded in 1998 and is located in Fife. The company's training department, established in 2007, delivers Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) for the care sector, at levels 2, 3, and 4 as well as Professional Development Awards and short programmes.

In 1999, the company obtained centre accreditation from Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The company delivers Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes in social services and health care at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 6 and 7. The apprenticeship programme supports apprentices to enter employment in the adult social services sector. There are currently 55 apprentices participating in the MA training programme.

3. Outcome of external review

The grades for each of the three elements are:

Leadership and Quality Culture	Satisfactory
Service Delivery	Good
Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices	Good

4. Summary of review findings

A summary of the findings of HM Inspectors are set out below.

4.1 Leadership and Quality Culture - Grade: Satisfactory

4.1.1 Securing improvement of quality and impact of training.

Areas of positive progress

- Managers reflect well on programmes using the SDS self-assessment tool to develop their operational plans.
- Managers engage actively with employers to evaluate their training and recruitment requirements. This approach helps Gibson Training tailor its services to meet employers' needs.
- Employers receive regular reports from assessors on their apprentices' performance and areas for improvement. This ensures transparency and collaboration between all parties involved in the apprenticeship programme.
- Gibson Training managers' report to their board of management every six weeks. This regular exchange of information ensures the board is appropriately informed and has the information required to support decision making.

Areas for development

- Managers, assessors, and key stakeholders have limited opportunity to participate in formal evaluation activities to ensure continuous improvement.
- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of actions for improvement by managers.

4.2 Service Delivery - Grade: Good

4.2.1 Delivery of training

Areas of positive progress

- Induction arrangements are comprehensive. Apprentices receive a wide range of useful information, ensuring they are well prepared for their apprenticeship journey.

- Assessors maintain good communication with apprentices and employers. This ensures all parties are informed of progress being made and that apprentices receive the support they need to help them succeed.
- Apprentices make good use of a digital portfolio that gives access to information on their assessment cycle, units, evidence, and progress being made. Assessors use the digital portfolio to provide apprentices with tailored feedback. This encourages apprentices to engage in self-directed learning which helps improve their self-confidence, and skills development.
- Almost all apprentices confirm that the MA programme enables them to grow in confidence. Apprentices acknowledge that their training has equipped them with the knowledge and skills required for their job roles.
- Almost all employers report that the MA programme supports their needs and provides added value to their business through apprentice skills development.
- Assessors ensure assessment activities integrate well with employer work schedules. Training plans are tailored to meet individual needs, ensuring work-based learning is scheduled to accommodate different working patterns.
- Assessors participate in peer observation activities. These experiences help increase their knowledge, develop their assessment techniques, and encourages assessors to adopt best practice approaches.
- The Training Agreement and Individual Training Plan are written collaboratively with the apprentice, the employer, and the assessor. This approach helps set appropriate goals and includes identification of those apprentices with additional support needs. Assessors provide individual support to apprentices with additional needs throughout their programme.

Areas for development

- None.

4.2.2 Staff reflection on provision to improve training

Areas of positive progress

- Assessors hold the requisite assessment qualifications and participate in mandatory training activities. Annual reviews held with managers help identify appropriate opportunities for further professional development.
- All centre staff participate effectively in quarterly standardisation meetings to review verification activities, share effective practice, and identify actions for improvement. These arrangements help to ensure compliance with awarding body standards.
- Apprentices are supported to select optional units that align closely with their job roles, allowing them to personalise their learning experiences.
- Assessors adapt learning resources to help meet the needs of individual learners. These adaptations improve apprentices' engagement and understanding of theoretical topics.

Areas for development

- Managers do not consistently gather or use feedback from employers and apprentices. Consequently, opportunities to enhance programme delivery and improve apprentice outcomes are missed.

4.3 Safeguarding and Meeting the needs of apprentices - Grade: Good

4.3.1 Achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery.

Areas of positive progress

- The recruitment of apprentices with a declared disability or who are care experience exceeds the national SDS benchmark. This is helping to offer opportunities for individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Assessors conduct progress reviews with apprentices every 12 weeks to ensure agreed milestones are achieved. These reviews provide valuable feedback on apprentices' progress and helps to identify areas for improvement.
- Assessors and verifiers engage actively in professional learning opportunities and update their knowledge of industry standards and regulations to remain occupationally current. This ensures assessors and verifiers are equipped to sustain the quality and integrity of assessment arrangements.
- Assessors host drop-in sessions to provide additional support for apprentices. These sessions offer apprentices the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification on tasks, and receive guidance on their training.

Areas for development

- Overall successful completion rates have declined over the last three years with an average achievement rate of 54.6%, which is significantly below the national framework benchmark.
- The recruitment of male apprentices and apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds is lower than the national SDS benchmark.
- Centre managers do not promote career pathways and opportunities sufficiently to external parties or care employers.

4.3.2 Adherence to statutory principles and guidance

Areas of positive progress

- Assessors and verifiers have a strong understanding of equality and diversity procedures and policies. They effectively signpost these during induction and are proactive in ensuring they are promoted as part of the MA programme.
- All assessors and verifiers are members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. All staff complete safeguarding training and are confident in their roles. The management team adheres closely to the guidelines set by the Care Inspectorate Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment guidance.

- All staff comply with health and safety policies and procedures. Apprentices understand the importance of their role in complying with health and safety requirements. These arrangements are explained during induction and are reinforced by assessors during one-to-one sessions and progress reviews.
- Employers complete the SQA site selection checklist to ensure the assessment environment is safe and suitable. This approach complies with health and safety, legal, and insurance requirements.
- All apprentices undertake health and safety learning as part of their apprenticeship. This enhances their understanding of the regulations and legislative requirements for a safe and secure workplace.
- Apprentices are supported well on their programme by staff, and they know who to contact should they have any wellbeing issues or matters of concern.

Areas for development

- None.

4.3.3 Apprentice progress and achievement of individual outcomes

Areas of positive progress

- Assessors are supportive and responsive to queries or concerns, demonstrating flexibility in providing additional help or extending deadlines when needed. Apprentices value this level of support.
- Assessors are flexible with working hours and locations when engaging with apprentices and employers. This approach enables apprentices to manage their work patterns effectively and work towards achieving their goals.
- Apprentices receive guidance on progression pathways and know that their qualifications are nationally recognised. This supports apprentices effectively in planning for progression to employment or further study.
- Almost all apprentices who complete their MA programme remain in employment and progress their careers within the care industry. Gibson Training promotes further training opportunities, including professional development awards and short programmes, after apprentices complete their apprenticeship.
- Managers and assessors work closely with businesses to tailor the programme to meet the needs of employers and the sector.

Areas for development

- The development and monitoring of meta skills are not promoted or embedded within the programme.

5. Main points for action

The following main points for action are required:

- Managers should take steps to systematically gather, analyse, and reflect upon data and intelligence to support the development of action plans for improvement.
- Managers should work with staff to improve apprentice achievement rates.

6. Examples of highly effective practice

None identified.

7. What happens next?

HM Inspectors found a number of strengths in the work of the provider. However, there a number of areas where improvement is required. We will ask for a report on progress on these areas for improvement to be provided to the lead HM Inspector within six months. Taking account of the progress report, we will then decide what further engagement with the provider may be required.

Jacqueline McLellan
HM Inspector

Appendix 1 Grades used in reporting

A common grading scale is used in making judgements for provider reviews:

- Grade 1 EXCELLENT – Outstanding and sector leading
- Grade 2 VERY GOOD – Major strengths
- Grade 3 GOOD – Important strengths with some areas for improvement
- Grade 4 SATISFACTORY - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- Grade 5 WEAK – Important weaknesses
- Grade 6 UNSATISFACTORY – Major weaknesses

Summary

- An evaluation of **excellent** applies to training which is of a very high quality. An evaluation of *excellent* represents an outstanding standard of training which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the current provision. It implies that very high-levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
- An evaluation of **very good** applies to training characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of *very good* represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide training without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the provider will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.
- An evaluation of **good** applies to training characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of *good* represents a standard of training in which the strengths have a significant positive impact. However, the quality of apprentices' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the provider should seek to improve further the areas of important strength but take action to address the areas for improvement.
- An evaluation of **satisfactory** applies to training characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of *satisfactory* indicates that apprentices' have access to a basic level of training. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of apprentices' experiences. It implies that the provider should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** applies to training which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of *weak* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish apprentices' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the provider.
- An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** applies when there are major weaknesses in training, requiring immediate remedial action. The training experience for apprentices is at risk in

significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for training evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the immediate support given by the provider.

Appendix 2 Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.