

My Life Learning

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Paul Cocker, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first safeguarding monitoring visit following My Life Learning (MLL) receiving an insufficient progress grade for safeguarding at their first new provider monitoring visit in July 2021.

My Life Learning is part of the wider My Life charity. It provides education and support for learners aged 16 to 25 with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include moderate to severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum condition, speech, language and communication needs, and emotional difficulties. Learners attend lessons in a variety of subjects, such as English, mathematics, animal care, life skills, art, catering, information and communication technology and horticulture. Learners have access to an extensive, 84-acre site and farm that supports their learning. At the time of the visit, 26 learners were enrolled at the college.

Due to the COVID-19 national restrictions, leaders organised learners into four tutor groups according to their needs, abilities and interests. Learners remain in these 'bubble' groups throughout the day for all of their lessons and social activities. Until very recently, learners have been unable to attend any work experience placements. This has hindered learners' development of work-related skills.

Themes

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

Leaders, managers and governors have taken decisive action to improve the weaknesses in safeguarding identified at the previous monitoring visit. They have put in place a range of measures to protect learners from potential safeguarding risks when they attend college. For example, they have demarcated the learning zone from other areas on site and put in place single entry and exit gates to control those who enter and leave the learning zone. They have installed anti-climb fencing and planted conifer trees to act as a physical barrier to the public walkway that runs adjacent to the learning zone. At break times, learners are supervised by members of staff to assure their safety.

Leaders have put in place appropriate policies and procedures that staff diligently follow. Staff receive appropriate training to inform them of recent changes to the policy and procedures, which include the promotion of healthy sexual relationships and the reporting of peer-on-peer abuse.

The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy and the safeguarding officer have all received an appropriate level of training to allow them to execute their role effectively. They respond swiftly when staff identify welfare or safeguarding concerns

and follow up these concerns quickly. This ensures that learners receive the support that they need in a timely manner, ensuring the safety of all learners and staff.

Leaders work closely with external agencies and organisations to support learners in a range of areas, including healthy sexual relationships, mental health and well-being and supported living arrangements. Parents/guardians greatly appreciate the support that they and learners receive from the college.

Leaders ensure that appropriate safer recruitment of staff is adhered to before offering employment at the college, such as disclosure and barring scheme checks, and gaining employment and character references. This and other measures assure leaders that prospective employees are suitable to work with these vulnerable learners.

Learners say they feel safe and are comfortable in sharing their concerns with members of staff. Tutors skilfully manage behaviour of their learners with the use of a 'train engine' to identify their feelings in the classroom. They use recent training on self-regulation of learners' behaviour to de-escalate negative behaviours when they occur.

Learners are taught how to keep themselves safe in the community. They speak confidently about the importance of not talking to strangers and the risks of sharing personal data when using the internet and social media platforms. Tutors teach learners strategies to become more independent in their day-to-day lives, such as travelling to and from college and going to the shops to buy clothes and groceries in a safe manner.

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