



Managing learners at-risk policy



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| Document status | Final |
| Date | June 2021 |
| Review date: | June 2022 |
| Version | ATL 1.0 |
| Owner | ATEL Quality Manager |
| Approval Board | ATL Operational Board of Directors |

1. Introduction

Aspiration Training Ltd (ATL) is committed to ensuring a fair and supported opportunity for learners to achieve their apprenticeship to the highest standard possible, with positive interventions made to support individuals who may be vulnerable or 'at risk' of not achieving their learning aims. This includes identifying and overcoming any barriers and challenges faced by learners that threaten their ability to progress, remain on programme and achieve.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an effective process for identifying and supporting learners that are not making sufficient progress and identify effective and appropriate strategies to support learners to achieve.

This policy has been developed to support learners to achieve by ensuring:

- Clarification of the difference between the need for support and the need for a sanction/intervention, and when each should be applied;
- Clear guidance around how to support learners when concerns are identified; and
- A learning environment is provided where learners feel safe, supported, and able to raise any concerns they might have

2. Policy intent:

This policy is intended to provide clear guidance and support when concerns are raised about a learner's progress, and it is felt that their ability to complete their programme is 'at-risk.' This policy provides a robust framework and guidance to ensure a balanced approach is taken between support and formal intervention to ensure learners have the best opportunities to succeed. However, approaches will be personalised to the individual learner and their circumstances.

3. Scope of policy:

This policy applies to all learners completing programmes of training and learning with Aspiration Training. This policy and procedure cannot be viewed in isolation and must be read in conjunction with the following documents and policies:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2019) • Estyn Common Inspection Framework (2017) • ATL Complaints, Compliments and Comments policy • ATL Code of conduct for apprentices • ATL Code of conduct for traineeships • ATL Equality and diversity policy • ATL Malpractice and maladministration policy • ATL Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy • ATL Whistleblowing policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Risk Process Flow (ATEL Apprenticeships) • At Risk Process Flow (ATWL Apprenticeships) • At Risk Process Flow (ATEL Traineeships) • At Risk Process Flow (ATEL Distance Learning) |
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4. Impact on the learner:

The implementation of this policy will provide learners with clear guidance as to the expectations and commitment required of them, as well as a detailed overview of the support available and intervention processes that may be adopted to help them to achieve.

5. Procedure:

5.1 Risk Indicators:

Learners may be considered to be 'at-risk' at any point in their programme. However, if an 'at-risk' learner returns to being consistently at or above their expected progress markers, they will be removed from the 'at-risk' register.

5.1.1 Start of programme

Robust entry criteria are in place to ensure that, from an academic ability perspective, learners should be able to manage the stretch.

However, learners' individual circumstances may indicate that personal, health and wellbeing issues may present a temporary or constant risk to a learner's ability to achieve. 'At-risk' factors which might affect a learner at the start of their programme may include, but not be limited to:

- Parental/Guardian/Carer responsibility changes that may require suspension of/a break in learning
- Learners enrolling whilst on an employment probation period
- Learners that belong to a particular group that has not achieved well in the previous contract year
- Qualification required to maintain employment but there is a lack of commitment from the learner
- Socio-economic issues e.g. financial/health/welfare/childcare issues, access to IT
- Learners showing signs of vulnerability such as instability at home or poor mental health and wellbeing

5.1.2 During programme

An 'at-risk' learner can be identified as a learner who struggles in an area or several areas of their studies or training and has a multitude of causes. As such, during a learner's programme, a learner's behaviours and/or progress, as well as any existing or new personal, health or wellbeing issues, will identify them as being 'at-risk'. These may include, but not be limited to:

- Bereavement
- Discipline issues at work and/or during their classes/training sessions
- Home circumstances
- Illness
- Neurodiversity
- Poor/low assignment grades (underachievement)
- Plagiarism
- Poor attendance at work/on programme (disengagement)
- Increased workload
- Reduced access to the workplace (furlough)
- Poor relationship with the employer/lack of support
- Referral to safeguarding team
- Relationship issues
- Socio-economic issues e.g. financial/health/welfare/childcare issues, access to IT
- Travel issues

5.1.3 Learner Support Requirements

To ensure learners are fully supported to achieve, operational teams should consider offering the following options to learners, but must ensure that employers are involved in any significant changes to planned delivery (apprenticeships):

- Support learners at risk of becoming an early leaver on a one-to-one basis by fast-tracking their programme so that they can achieve as soon as possible, where time requirements allow and minimum duration periods and requirements (e.g. Off-the-Job hours for Apprenticeships in England) have been met
- Offering support so that the learner can complete their qualification through distance learning, with online support and resources as required
- Implementation of support plans, including input of support from the employer
- If a learner has moved to a new employer, liaise with the Business Development team to determine if the training plan can be transferred
- Secure equipment loans from Chameleon Helpdesk for work to be completed at home in the learners' own time
- Identify if a bursary or other source of funding could be applied for if financial hardship is the main reason for potentially becoming an early leaver
- Discuss with your Sector Manager to see if an additional member of the team could be used to provide mentoring / coaching support
- Explore appropriate reasonable adjustments/access arrangements necessary.

The two most important aspects of providing support to an 'at-risk' learner are to ensure that support is appropriate and should, therefore, always be discussed with the learner; and that it is provided promptly to reduce the period a learner has to become disengaged and demotivated.

All support agreed with the learner and put in place should be logged and entered onto Smart Assessor, in the contact log and the relevant session plan and actions tab, so that all stakeholders can monitor the effectiveness of the support mechanisms in place and adjust these as required.

5.2 'At-Risk' rating

Throughout the learner journey, Coaches need to ensure the relevant risk rating of a learner accurately reflects the risk of successful completion of their programme at any given time. The risk rating should be changed whenever the learner moves from one rating to another:

| Rating | Meaning |
|--------|---|
| Low | Learner ahead/at target - no obvious risk |
| Medium | Learner slightly behind target, and showing early signs of challenge/risk - medium risk |
| High | Learner significantly at risk of becoming a leaver – extremely high risk |

All learners will be rated 'Low' at enrolment unless any of the start risk triggers are identified.

Where learners are rated 'medium' or 'high' risk, the rating will be entered by the Coach into the contact log as contact type, providing for the opportunity for robust reporting and management of any learners that may show early signs of risk. Where learners are rated 'low' risk there is no requirement to add anything to the contact log. Where a coach needs to change the risk rating, an end date is to be applied to that contact type and a new contact log entry added with the new risk rating.

All learner information is stored confidentially and securely, and any sensitive information that arises from safeguarding conversations must be shared only with the safeguarding team. Equally, any sensitive information that arises from an 'at-risk' conversation must be dealt with professionally and in confidence.

5.3 Escalation Process

When learners are identified as being at-risk, support interventions outlined in 5.1.3 should be followed in addition to regular contact attempts by phone and email. Circumstances to instigate the escalation process are set out below.

5.3.1 First risk identified

As learners are rated medium or high risk a support plan and engagement contract must be considered and developed, if required. These should encourage the learner to reflect on their goals and motivations for completing the course.

These plans and contracts will be shared with learners and employers (where appropriate), and there will be a clear focus on agreeing to meet deadlines and other requirements by all parties.

Where motivation contracts are not required, but other support needs are identified, actions must be agreed upon and recorded clearly in the appropriate session within Smart Assessor.

5.3.2 Stage 1

Following multiple attempts to engage both the learner and employer (as appropriate) through three-way support meetings, a Stage 1 email will be sent to both parties (as appropriate) by the Coach and Sector Manager (England) or Operational Support Co-ordinator (Wales) cc in response to:

- Non-attendance to a scheduled session without advance notice
- No recorded progress within 42 days (England) or 49 days (Wales) (Apprenticeships)
- 2 cancelled visits in 4 weeks (apprenticeships)

A copy of the learner response must be stored in the contact log on Smart Assessor. Whilst a learner is considered to be 'at-risk,' copies of all correspondence must be stored in the contact log.

Learners issued with a Stage 1 notice will be recorded in the 'at-risk' log. This is stored centrally in a secure folder, with limited permissions and is updated by the Sector Manager/ Internal Quality Assurer as appropriate in the sector (England) or the Operational Support Co-ordinator (Wales). The maintenance of this document is supported by the central Quality team.

A further 2 attempts will be made, emphasising a welfare check, by telephone and email and recorded on the contact log within a 5-working day period.

If this intervention is successful, a support contract is to be put in place. Should all the above efforts be unsuccessful within 5 working days, stage 2 of the escalation process should be implemented.

This timeframe is reduced for traineeships and a response must be received within 3 working days.

5.3.3 Stage 2

If a learner does not respond to the Stage 1 notification, or if their 'at-risk' behaviour(s) does not demonstrate an improvement, the Sector Manager/ Head of Operations (England) or the Operational Support Co-ordinator (Wales) will contact both parties (as appropriate) by telephone. If commitment to continuing and changes to 'at-risk' behaviours are not agreed, the call should be followed up with a Stage 2 email to the learner and employer (as appropriate).

If the learner/employer responds expressing motivation to continue and improve, this must be recorded in the contact log in Smart Assessor.

Whilst a learner is considered to be 'at-risk,' copies of all correspondence must be stored in the contact log on Smart Assessor.

A further 2 attempts will be made, emphasising a welfare check, by telephone and email and recorded on the contact log within a 5-working day period.

If this intervention is successful, a support contract is to be put in place. Should all above efforts be unsuccessful within 5 working days, stage 3 of the escalation process, 'Notification of Withdrawal' should be implemented.

This timeframe is reduced for traineeships and a response must be received within 2 working days.

5.3.4 Stage 3

If a learner/employer does not respond to the stage 2 notification, or if their 'at-risk' behaviour(s) does not demonstrate an improvement, the Head of Operations (England) or Operational Support Co-ordinator (Wales) will contact both parties (as appropriate) by telephone. If commitment to continuing and changes to 'at-risk' behaviours are not agreed, the call should be followed up with a stage 3 'Notification of Withdrawal' email (with Sector Manager cc) to the learner and employer (as appropriate).

In the case of an apprenticeship learner, agreement must be sought from the employer to remove the learner from the programme.

All communication to and from the learner and employer, whilst the learner is considered to be 'at-risk,' must be stored in the contact log on Smart Assessor.

5.4 Risk Reporting

All learners considered to be 'at-risk' must be managed and monitored in a sensitive but robust way. Operational and Sector Managers must discuss 'at-risk' learners in one-to-one meetings and ensure all support plans/engagement contracts are in place and appropriate.

Learners should only be entered onto the 'at risk' log if for some reason, their learning has been impaired and that he/she is at risk of failing or leaving their chosen course. Under no circumstances should anyone enter learner names on the register who are CLEARLY not at risk of not achieving/leaving their course.

Further scrutiny and analysis are completed of all learners formally 'at risk' by the relevant management teams. This allows the identification and monitoring of robust actions and interventions that can be put in place where needed.

The importance of learning from learners that do not achieve is recognised and learners that ATL fail to retain are reviewed every 8 weeks in a leaver panel. This identifies themes and trends to inform improvements, and this is further scrutinised in Sector Reviews (ATEL) / Performance meetings (ATWL) where training needs and interventions/actions are agreed upon.

6.0 Responsibilities:

6.1 The Board of Directors:

- Ensuring Aspiration Training is fully compliant with legal requirements
- Ensuring effective implementation of this policy
- Ensuring this policy is reviewed regularly

6.2 Senior Managers:

- Evaluating performance of individual teams, taking proactive steps to address potential issues
- Ensuring this policy is fully supported by their team
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy and receive adequate training to ensure its implementation

6.3 Quality Team:

- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of support to learners identified as 'at-risk' through key improvement mechanisms, such as learner survey responses, interviews, and observations.
- Provide support with auditing of support plans for quality and consistency.
- Support in the delivery of training needs arising from quality activity

6.4 Line Managers:

- Ensuring effective implementation of the policy and process within the team, supporting with training needs, where required
- Monitoring effectiveness and consistency of action plans

6.5 Vocational Coaches / Skills Coaches / Knowledge Coaches

- Ensuring active participation in the process and acting upon recommendations and feedback from audits and other improvement mechanisms.
- Ensuring improvements are made as documented by improvement plans and recommendations.

7.0 Communication

This policy is available on the Aspiration Training website and may be provided in hard copy upon request. This policy is available in Welsh on the Aspiration Training (Wales) website.

8.0 Monitoring and review processes:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or when statutory guidance changes, to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. The review will be conducted by the Board of Directors.

9.0 Contact details:

If you would like to discuss this policy further, please contact:

| Wales | England |
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