



Investigation Outcome report

Provider: DRL Services Ltd

Background

In June 2024, the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) commenced an investigation relating to apprenticeship funding claimed by and paid to DRL Services Limited (DRL). The concerns involved:

- Changes in the employment status of apprentices and their eligibility for funding; and
- The accuracy of data submitted in support of apprenticeship funding claims.

As part of the investigation, DRL were asked to undertake a review of all withdrawn apprentices for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency became part of the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2025.

Outcomes of the investigation

The outcomes of the investigation were:

- The investigation identified that the evidence to support funding claimed did not meet the required standard set out in the funding rules.
- There were five instances of non-compliance with the apprenticeship funding rules. Two of these instances were self-identified by DRL following their review of withdrawn learners.
- In all five instances, learners had left employment during the apprenticeship programme and funding had continued to be claimed by DRL beyond the last date of evidence of learning held by them.

The following breaches of the funding rules were identified:

Framework	Breach	Issue
Apprenticeship funding rules 2020-21 , 2022-23 and 2023-24	P60 & P299 (2020-21) P99 & P272 (2022-23) P97 & P227 (2023-24)	Apprenticeship delivery was inaccurately reported to DfE. Evidence reviewed confirmed periods of apprentice inactivity due to their employment ending. The provider submitted data returns to DfE reporting continuous delivery of training to 5 apprentices causing DfE funds to be overclaimed. Funding claims made by DRL for the 5 apprentices were overstated as they were not reflective of actual programme delivery.

Action

The DfE identified funding errors totalling £8,735.66 which will be recovered from DRL.

Prevention

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the DfE undertook a prevention analysis exercise to establish what could have been done to prevent the breaches that were identified in the investigation.

Issue	Prevention
Provider not accurately recording programme delivery.	Providers should have robust quality assurance processes in place to ensure that programme delivery is compliant with the funding rules and is accurately evidenced.
Data submission inaccuracy.	Data reported to the DfE should be factually accurate. Providers should have systems and processes in place to ensure compliance with their apprenticeship agreement and Individual Learner Record reporting requirements.