

Inspection of Linden Management (UK) Limited

Inspection dates:

30 July to 2 August 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Linden Management (UK) Limited is a Nottinghamshire based national independent learning provider. At the time of the inspection, there were 387 apprentices, most are over 19. Apprentices study at levels 2 to 7, on one of 20 standards-based apprenticeships. Leaders offer training in the sectors of leadership and management, food and drink, warehousing and supply chain, logistics and transport, early years, manufacturing, and learning and development. The largest apprenticeships are for level 2 early years practitioner, level 2 passenger transport operative, level 3 team leader supervisor, and level 5 operations and departmental managers.

Apprentices either study online or a hybrid of online and face-to-face training at work. Leaders work with large national employers in the logistics and motorcycle production sectors.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Not enough apprentices benefit from a well-planned programme of training. In too many cases, they must undertake self-directed learning to try and fully understand key topics. Apprentices value the short time they spend with their trainers online and feel well supported by them.

Most apprentices develop their confidence and character as they progress through their apprenticeship. For example, level 2 early years practitioners converse confidently with parents about their child's development. Level 2 passenger transport operatives de-escalate difficult customer disputes about travel plans. Apprentices have positive attitudes to learning and most attend their sessions well.

Most apprentices benefit from useful guidance that helps them stay mentally and physically healthy. For example, level 2 passenger transport operatives learn the importance of getting enough sleep between shifts and eating a healthy diet. Leaders ensure that younger apprentices benefit from activities that develop their understanding of citizenship and healthy relationships.

Trainers encourage apprentices to think about how to keep themselves safe at work, online and when socialising. Apprentices know who to contact about any concerns for their safety, or a colleague.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are yet to sufficiently resolve all the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Apprentices still do not consistently benefit from well-sequenced curriculums and enough training. Conversely, leaders have improved additional learning support arrangements, careers guidance and English and mathematics training to benefit apprentices.

Managers and trainers do not always sequence topics sufficiently well. For example, the level 3 team leader curriculum follows the order of the apprenticeship standard, but this is often not ideal. Subjects, like managing yourself, are taught halfway through the course, when they would be more useful to apprentices at the start. However, when the generic curriculum sequence is adjusted, for individual apprentices or employers, the revised plans are often more beneficial.

Trainers do not plan all aspects of the apprenticeship thoroughly enough. Apprentices attend short monthly training sessions and individual coaching sessions. Following the sessions, too many trainers set limited activities for apprentices to continue their learning. For example, level 5 operations and departmental managers mainly read textbooks or PowerPoint presentations. Level 2 early years apprentices must rely heavily on completing e-learning materials to develop their theoretical knowledge. These activities are not sufficient to help apprentices to master all aspects of the curriculum.

For management apprentices, trainers focus too much on apprentices logging off-the-job hours, rather than setting relevant plans for how they will use this time. Line managers do not routinely contribute to discussions on how apprentices will use their time at work. Level 3 team leader and level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices mainly associate normal day-to-day tasks with off-the-job training. As a result, apprentices do not get timely opportunities to practise what they learn in their training at work.

Level 2 early years practitioner and passenger transport operatives have better opportunities to practise what they learn in their job roles. Managers have a high level of involvement in apprentices' studies. For example, after training in skincare, level 2 early years practitioners undertake children's care routines with guidance until their knowledge and skills are secure.

Trainers have suitable expertise in the subjects that they teach. Most demonstrate sound vocational knowledge and use it to lead effective professional discussions. In sessions, trainers link learning well to the workplace. For example, level 5 operations and departmental manager trainers use actor-led role plays effectively. These activities support apprentices to link technical knowledge to practical situations at work, such as how to manage conflict between staff.

In sessions, the large majority of trainers use a range of appropriate activities, provide clear explanations of topics and check understanding well. This helps apprentices to grasp new learning in class. However, most trainers do not revisit topics with apprentices throughout their course. As a result, they often struggle to recall key learning points from earlier in their studies.

Managers have suitable processes to identify apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff work with apprentices to establish their needs and provide appropriate support. A well-qualified additional learning support trainer provides specialist support where this is required.

The standard of apprentices' work varies too much. For example, level 5 operations and departmental managers often produce work that lacks analysis or evaluation, theories are simply listed, and their work is not referenced. Level 2 passenger transport operatives produce detailed work of a high standard.

Towards the end of their studies, trainers prepare apprentices well for their final assessments. Around two-thirds of apprentices complete their courses and approximately half achieve a distinction grade. Trainers and line managers provide most apprentices with useful guidance on their next steps and career options.

Leaders work well with employers to plan training that meets industry needs. For example, they work closely with a large rail company to design and teach a curriculum specifically for new employees in the rail transport sector. This helps employers to meet the demand for a skilled workforce of passenger transport operatives.

More recently, leaders have started to introduce a new course review process with an appropriate focus on the quality of education. Leaders have designed the new process to ensure that they have a better understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement at course level, however, it is too soon for inspectors to judge the impact this may have.

Leaders, and external members, form a small governance group that meets quarterly. External members are suitably qualified. They offer a proportionate level of challenge and support to leaders, given the size and scale of the group.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices receive enough suitable training and learning activities to help them master all aspects of the curriculum.
- Make sure curriculums are well sequenced and allow apprentices to logically develop their knowledge and skills.
- Ensure that trainers and line managers provide apprentices with well-planned on- and off-the-job training activities so they can practise what they learn at work.
- Make sure that trainers routinely revisit prior learning to help apprentices remember important topics and theories.
- Enable apprentices to produce a consistently high standard of work, appropriate to the level at which they study.
- Ensure that quality improvement activities have a positive impact on enhancing apprentices' training.

Provider details

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Address	1 Darwin Court, Sherwood Energy Village, New Ollerton Newark NG22 9FE
Contact number	01777 870887
Website	www.lindenmanagement.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Ryan Bell
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	19 to 22 October 2021
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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