

# Linden Management (UK) Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Robert Hamp HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Systems House  
Lodge Lane  
Tuxford  
Newark  
NG22 0NL



## Monitoring visit: main findings

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Linden Management (UK) Limited (Linden) is based in Tuxford near Newark. Its main delivery focus is within logistics and food manufacturing industries. Linden has 351 apprentices on a wide variety of apprenticeship programmes, including business administration, customer service, team leading, management, supply chain, warehouse storage, operative programmes and butchery. The large majority of apprentices are on frameworks. Apprentices on levels 2 and 3 in customer service, business administration and early years workforce are on standards-based apprenticeships.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Directors, managers and trainers have very close working relationships with a broad range of employers. As a result, programmes meet both individual and business needs well. A series of roadshows, provided by Linden for employers and potential apprentices at the start of programmes, provides them with good information advice and guidance.

Communications with, and support for, employers are good. Employers benefit from the advice and guidance they receive when planning training and progression routes for employees. Apprentices receive a thorough induction and most have a good understanding of their qualification and how this might help them to progress. For example, a rail industry customer service apprentice has decided to become a train driver.

Apprenticeships meet the Institute for Apprenticeship requirements. All employers provide sufficient off-the-job time for apprentices to work on their studies. Staff work well with the end-point assessment organisations to prepare apprentices for their final tests. As a result, the large majority of apprentices are well prepared for their tests.

Directors and managers ensure that tutors have the expertise to provide apprentices with high-quality training that delivers the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected in the workplace. Most training resources are of a good quality. The majority of apprentices use these well during on- and off-the-job training.

Arrangements for governance of the provision are well established and effective. This includes a mix of internal directors and managers who have clear oversight of the business. A new independent board member will provide further scrutiny of the provision but it is too early to determine their impact.

The self-assessment process makes good use of feedback from apprentices and employers to support judgements about the quality of provision. The self-assessment report focuses on delivery of the apprenticeship programmes. The quality improvement plan includes challenging timescales and responsibilities, but does not include impact measures to improve the quality of provision.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress**

Tutors take apprentices' prior experiences, knowledge and qualifications into account at the start of the programme through the application and initial assessment process. Most are placed on the correct level of apprenticeship to develop the new skills they need in the workplace.

The vast majority of learners enjoy their programmes. They make at least expected progress in gaining or extending specific skills and knowledge and developing professional behaviours that are suitable for their job roles. Their standard of work is generally good.

Apprentices enjoy good on- and off-the-job training that helps them improve their performance within their job role from the onset of their apprenticeship. For example, a level 2 warehouse operative apprentice demonstrates problem-solving skills when presented with a production problem and a level 2 customer service apprentice was able to calm passengers when having to evacuate a rail station due to an emergency.

Trainers are very experienced and knowledgeable, providing apprentices with real-life examples of how to apply their new knowledge and theory to their practice in the workplace. Apprentices receive effective support from their employers and can see the relevance of their new knowledge and its application to their job role. For example, a child care apprentice was able to identify a child's speech impediment through knowledge gained in theory sessions. She liaised effectively with specialist agencies and the parents of the child to gain an accurate diagnosis which informed a future support plan.

Staff use data to check individual progress well. They use data to monitor the qualification success rates of different groups and have identified no differences in performance as most apprentices are yet to complete their programmes.

The vast majority of trainers provide relevant progression advice and guidance for apprentices to consider their next steps and career options. This raises apprentices' aspirations. Trainers provide encouragement and support to apprentices that build the confidence they need to achieve their ambitions.

Arrangements for effective quality assurance and improvement of teaching, learning and assessment are in place. It is too soon to judge the impact of these measures. For example, action points identify improvements in individual practice but these are not yet monitored for the majority of tutors.

Apprentices nearing completion of standards-based apprenticeships are aware of the requirements of the end-point assessment and are well prepared. Apprentices on frameworks have a good understanding of the progress they make. A few apprentices who have recently started standards-based programmes are not yet aware of the grading criteria and assessment requirements.

Tutors contextualise mathematics sessions well to apprentices' work settings. For example, a level 2 child care apprentice used numeracy skills to calculate the cost and timing of an external trip for young children. Tutors encourage apprentices to develop their information and communication technology skills and most achieve higher standards than required for their qualification.

Staff are aware of a delay in functional skills delivery for a few apprentices. They have acted swiftly to provide suitable support and have now introduced functional skills at the start of all programmes. English and mathematics skills are developed well in training sessions and through good online resources. In a few instances, apprentices' English and mathematics development is not planned well. In these cases, initial assessment is not used to inform the further development of these skills within the apprentice's vocational training. Trainers highlight spelling and grammatical errors made by apprentices but do not provide enough guidance on how to improve.

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

Directors and managers ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The designated safeguarding officer and deputies have level 3 qualifications. Appropriate checks of all staff ensure suitability for their appointments. Staff maintain an up-to-date single central register. They deal with, and record, incidents sensitively and effectively.

A comprehensive safeguarding and risk assessment action plan is in place. Directors and managers ensure that all members of staff complete frequent training to refresh their understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty, British values and equality and diversity. As a result, apprentices feel safe and have a good awareness of the 'Prevent' duty and of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Staff reinforce apprentices' understanding of safeguarding issues effectively throughout the whole apprenticeship programme. As a result, apprentices feel safe, have a good understanding of what to do if they have concerns and are aware of how to stay safe online. Apprentices' understanding of British values is adequate.

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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