

Inspection of GTG Training Limited

Inspection dates:

14 to 17 June 2022

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

The Glasgow Training Group was established in 1971 and was subsequently purchased by the Arnold Clark Group and renamed as GTG Training. GTG is led by an operations director who reports directly to the Arnold Clark Group board. In May 2017, the company received direct funding for its own apprenticeships. The first levy-funded apprentices enrolled three months later. Since then, it has been a subcontractor to other training providers, delivering apprenticeships in mostly the automotive sector. This subcontracted provision was out of scope.

GTG provides a range of automotive-related apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 in auto-care, light vehicle, heavy vehicle, and bus and coach technician. In addition, it provides apprenticeships for drivers of large goods vehicles. The company has established five training academies, four of which are based in Scotland and one in the West Midlands. Automotive apprentices attend the company's training academies in Scotland and England, while the driving goods vehicle apprentices attend only the training academy located in Wolverhampton.

At the time of the inspection there were 306 apprentices in learning. Most apprentices follow standards-based apprenticeships, but a few are on legacy frameworks in parts operations, vehicle body and paint operations. Apprentices are located across England with the majority based across local authorities in the Midlands and the North.

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

Training staff ensure that learning is sequenced so that off-the-job training provides apprentices with the essential skills and insight to undertake a range of automotive-maintenance tasks, or to drive large goods vehicles safely. Apprentices' work reflects well the vocational standards expected in the industry.

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, training staff skilfully adapted the curriculum to ensure apprentices continued to benefit from access to education by moving learning online, including resequencing the order in which the learning content was to be taught. Following the lifting of social-distancing requirements, training staff ensured a swift return to face-to-face learning with an emphasis on more on-the-job practical skills activities to recover lost time associated with the pandemic.

Apprentices benefit from regular access to training and coaching provided by highly skilled trainers and development coaches, who use their considerable experience of working in the automotive service and logistics industry. Trainers ensure learning is memorable and interesting by relating it to apprentices' workplace experiences.

Trainers ensure that learning environments such as classroom and practical training areas are respectful spaces where industry standards of behaviour are promoted well. Leaders and trainers ensure that group sizes are carefully planned to ensure all apprentices have appropriate opportunities to engage with their learning. Apprentices' attendance and punctuality both in training and at the workplace are routinely high.

Apprentices value and benefit from regular access to modern training facilities that are equipped with up-to-date practical equipment and resources that reflect fully the wide range of vehicles they are expected to maintain or drive at work. Apprentices also have access to a variety of training resources in their workplace that they use to practise and hone their vocational skills. As a result, apprentices quickly become valued members of their employers' workforce.

In most cases, apprentices receive helpful feedback on what they do well and which sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours in both practical and workplace settings that they need to improve.

A small minority of apprentices experienced disruption to their learning due to delays in leaders recruiting suitably qualified and experienced development coaches. A few development coaches do not set appropriately personalised learning targets for most-able apprentices to challenge them to achieve their potential. In addition, some workplace managers do not routinely participate fully in reviews of their apprentices' progress.

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

Apprentices benefit from routine access to a carefully planned and sequenced curriculum that extends their skills, knowledge, and behaviours beyond the requirements of their respective apprenticeship. For example, all automotive apprentices undertake an additional training unit in electric hybrid vehicles that deepens their learning beyond the core requirements of their apprenticeship. Apprentices working towards qualifications in driving goods vehicles receive additional guidance and instruction on hazard awareness and fatigue management. Consequently, all apprentices have access to a curriculum that appropriately meets their individual needs and is reflective of the demands of industry.

Training staff organise and plan learning in a logical order, so that apprentices develop the technical knowledge and skills required to service a car, lorry or bus, or to drive a goods vehicle safely. For example, apprentices on level 3 light vehicle service and maintenance, and bus and coach technician programmes receive clear instruction and guidance from trainers on how to use a variety of hand and power tools correctly when undertaking service, maintenance, and repair work on a range of vehicles.

Most tutors make skilful use of apprentices' prior knowledge of a topic and revisit this both to check their understanding and to address any misconceptions. For example, as a result of trainers' guidance and instruction, most apprentices develop a precise understanding of the impact on vehicle stability and performance when tyres are not inflated to the correct air pressure, or of how to diagnose a fault on a hydraulic or air-assisted braking system. Apprentices build their knowledge, skills, and behaviours progressively over time and can recall such information with fluency.

Most apprentices develop and extend their English and mathematical skills as part of their course, regardless of their prior learning. For example, in level 3 light vehicle maintenance, trainers emphasise the importance of the correct spelling and use of technical terminology related to the topic, such as 'hydroscopic' in relation to fluid technology. In relation to level 3 bus and coach provision, apprentices are supported to develop their confidence in numeracy through the completion of practical tasks, such as using multimeters to measure resistance values in electrical wiring looms, and vernier calipers/dial test indicators to measure for wear and imbalance on brake discs and drums.

The large majority of development coaches know their apprentices well. They use their extensive industry experience to ensure apprentices acquire and develop the required behaviours alongside the skills and knowledge for employment in industry. However, in a very small minority of cases, the targets set for most-able apprentices at reviews are overly focused on the completion of job cards and recording off-the-job hours. Consequently, these apprentices do not benefit from sharply focused and precise guidance on what they need to do to improve, or to achieve higher grades in their final assessments.

Most employers support apprentices well in the workplace. However, in a few isolated instances, a small minority of line managers do not fully participate in apprentices' progress reviews. As a result, they do not have in-depth understanding of how they can assist and support their employees in developing their technical skills.

Apprentices routinely demonstrate professional attitudes and positive behaviours which extend beyond the classroom to their work, both with colleagues and customers. They value the opportunity, since the pandemic, to return to face-to-face learning alongside their peers, and readily identify the benefits of sharing experiences from different workplaces to enhance education. For example, apprentices in light vehicle quickly grow in confidence through recording and narrating short videos of the work they have undertaken on customers' vehicles. The videos are then provided to clients when they collect their car.

Most apprentices are supported well in developing an appropriate understanding of life in modern Britain. Trainers ensure such matters are contextualised through the curriculum, for example, the social responsibilities of the automotive industry associated with reducing vehicle emissions. However, in a few cases, apprentices' understanding of wider issues in contemporary society, such as the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and how such matters may affect them in their working or personal lives, is not developed well enough.

Trainers ensure that most apprentices are supported to understand the potential next steps available to them upon completion of their apprenticeship. However, the advice they have received is limited to further qualifications or roles with their existing employer. Consequently, too few apprentices demonstrate an understanding of the wider career opportunities available to them.

Directors and leaders have developed a clear vision for the organisation and high ambitions for apprentices which are sharply focused on developing the skills, knowledge, and behaviours that they need to succeed. This enables most apprentices to develop good levels of technical and practical skills development and to demonstrate routinely the professional standards expected by their employers and of the wider automotive and logistics sector.

Leaders and managers continue to foster strong and effective links with a range of partner organisations. They use these links well to adapt the curriculum and take account of new qualifications and developments that meet the workforce development needs of employers. For example, since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced a new apprenticeship at level 2 in auto care and established a dedicated training academy with a specific focus on the service and repair of electric and hybrid vehicles.

Senior leaders have carefully reviewed the effectiveness of internal systems and processes to provide a more critical and insightful overview of the apprenticeship programme and apprentices' progress from starting points. Since the last inspection leaders have revised the staff observation system with a sharper focus on the

impact of planned learning activities for apprentices and their skills development over time. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training and development support to consolidate and hone their practice.

Senior leaders and managers are ambitious for apprentices. They have put in place an appropriate strategy to develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills, and consequently the proportion who make assured progress in these essential skills has increased over time.

Directors and senior leaders make effective use of a range of tools to improve the quality of the apprenticeship curriculum. They have established effective arrangements between curriculum delivery and quality teams, undertaken more frequent quality reviews of apprentices' online portfolios and instigated more sharply focused internal quality and review meetings. Governors and senior leaders now routinely analyse detailed data reports presented to them. They provide appropriate scrutiny and challenge to managers and the wider apprenticeship delivery team, particularly where performance is not in line with agreed targets.

Leaders, managers, and governors have a clear, accurate understanding of the quality of provision. The self-assessment report provides a detailed and insightful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, a few of the recommendations identified at the previous visit have yet to be fully addressed. In addition, leaders' arrangements to consult and obtain the views of apprentices as part of the organisation's quality improvement processes are weak and so require improvement.

Leaders rightfully acknowledge that staff recruitment and retention challenges associated with the pandemic have resulted in some internal training vacancies not being filled quickly, leading to some apprentices not being allocated to a development consultant for a period of time. Leaders and managers are taking action to address this matter, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

Governors have a good range of educational, business, and human resource management skills, experience and expertise. They work effectively with managers in shaping and defining the strategic direction for the organisation appropriately in response to changes in government policy, and to meet the skills needs of employers and their workforce. Governors have a well-informed understanding of the provision and its overall performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff set a high priority for the health, well-being, and safety of apprentices at the training academies, at the workplace and when in overnight accommodation. Safeguarding policies and procedures are clear and appropriately detailed in setting out how risks will be managed to assure the safety of apprentices. Leaders ensure that staff and external partners receive precise

instruction and guidance on the procedures to follow if they need to raise any safeguarding concerns regarding apprentices who may need help and protection.

The designated safeguarding lead and the deputy are trained to an appropriate level, and they both receive regular continuous professional development to ensure that they fulfil their role effectively. Leaders ensure all staff receive annual training on how to keep apprentices safe. Apprentices know what steps to take if they want to report any safeguarding or welfare concerns. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy and inclusive behaviours. Apprentices receive appropriate information that extends their understanding of being safe online.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices' line managers routinely attend planned learning reviews and contribute fully to the planning of learning for their employees.
- Leaders and managers should improve the access that apprentices have to impartial information, advice, and guidance, so that they have a good level of understanding of their wider transferable skills as they near the end of their apprenticeship.
- Senior leaders and governors should ensure that recently developed initiatives to recruit and retain training and development consultants are routinely reviewed against challenging targets, so that the proportion of apprentices who experience disruption to learning due to staffing challenges quickly reduces over time.
- Managers should ensure that all development consultants make full use of all the available information regarding what apprentices know and can do to set individualised, clear, precise, and demanding targets, so that all apprentices achieve to their full potential.
- Senior leaders and managers should ensure that effective arrangements are swiftly implemented to consult and gather the views of apprentices on their training experience routinely, and that the few outstanding recommendations identified at the previous inspection are fully addressed.

Provider details

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Website	http://www.gtg.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Billy Hammond
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	7 to 10 May 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the group quality manager, 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.

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