

Inspection of GI Group

Inspection dates: 24 to 27 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

GI Group is a large company within the staffing industry. As part of its activities, it runs apprenticeship courses for organisations in the sales and events sectors. Apprentices work for both large and small organisations in the private and public sectors. At the time of the inspection, there were 125 apprentices. All were aged 18 or over. Previously, GI Group offered apprenticeships in performing manufacturing operations, and warehousing and storage.

The majority of current apprentices follow sales executive apprenticeships at level 4. Smaller but significant numbers of apprentices study level 3 business administrator, or level 3 team leader courses. A very small number of apprentices study food and drink process operator apprenticeships at level 2.

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

The large majority of apprentices enjoy their studies and feel happy with their courses. They value the professional relationships they have with GI Group's staff, who they find to be friendly, approachable and supportive. Apprentices study in an inclusive, respectful environment.

Apprentices benefit highly from leaders' and managers' productive links with their employers. These lead to well-planned courses that are tailored to apprentices' needs. Apprentices develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to both their current roles and their future progression routes. Many apprentices gain promotion or take on additional responsibilities either during their courses, or shortly after they finish.

Trainers focus on apprentices' mental and physical well-being as well as their academic progress. They make frequent checks to ensure that apprentices have caring support networks, and know where to get help for their well-being if they need this. As part of their courses, apprentices cover topics, such as healthy relationships at work. They have a thorough knowledge of appropriate professional behaviour, and how to respond if colleagues' behaviour is ever inappropriate.

Apprentices rightly feel safe when they study. They frequently discuss safeguarding-related topics with their trainers, and they understand who to contact if they have a safeguarding concern.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully revised the curriculum. It now matches well to the needs of employers who they work with as part of their wider recruitment activities. For example, the level 4 sales executive course meets a demand from employers for staff with higher-level sales skills. Leaders and trainers ensure that curriculums are very relevant to individual workplaces.

Trainers plan logically the courses that they teach. Apprentices on the business administrator level 3 standard start with a thorough induction. This includes a focus on safeguarding, so that apprentices understand their safeguarding responsibilities towards members of the public and themselves. Level 4 sales executive apprentices learn about product knowledge and sales planning before they study negotiation.

During both in-person and online classes, trainers present and explain information clearly. They use high-quality resources that link directly to apprentices' job roles. Trainers check apprentices' knowledge carefully, including their understanding of previous topics. They use probing questions to test how apprentices apply this knowledge to their jobs. When apprentices reach the latter stages of their courses, trainers use practice tests to identify areas of the curriculum that need extra focus.

Trainers adjust one-to-one sessions well to meet apprentices' individual needs, for example to enable them to refine their written answers in assignments. Trainers also use these sessions to provide targeted help to those with additional support needs such as dyslexia.

The written feedback that trainers give to apprentices is helpful. For example, trainers on the business administrator course use feedback to identify areas for improvement, and to explain how apprentices can attain the highest grades. Trainers also use feedback to support apprentices to develop their written English.

Apprentices at both level 3 and level 4 produce written work of at least the expected standards, and in many cases of a high standard. The large majority of apprentices pass their final assessments, although too many do not achieve the highest overall grades on their project work. As a result of their studies, apprentices have a very positive impact at work. Business administrator apprentices produce complex schedule plans for major events, and sales executive apprentices use knowledge of sales theories to approach clients in a more considered way, and to close sales. Employers consider apprentices to be mature and capable team members.

Trainers have not ensured that support for the minority of apprentices who study functional mathematics is well planned. As a result, these apprentices only get meaningful training for this subject towards the end of their courses. This causes frustration for them and their employers, as it increases their workload at a critical time in their studies.

In a minority of cases, apprentices do not complete their courses in a timely manner. Leaders have worked hard to help these apprentices catch up, and as a result most are close to completing their final assessments. However, the action plans that trainers produce to support those that fall behind vary in their quality. In the worst cases, they are not precise enough to enable apprentices to understand what they need to do to catch up.

Leaders provide apprentices with an array of careers advice and guidance. This includes one-to-one coaching and a careers portal. The materials on the portal are of good quality. Trainers take opportunities to guide apprentices towards the most useful materials for their general career development. However, neither they nor leaders focus closely enough on the specific jobs that apprentices aspire to. In a minority of cases, apprentices do not know about the various sources of help they can access for their career development.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeships they offer. Their oversight of the courses is thorough. Leaders provide trainers with useful development opportunities. This includes shadowing more experienced colleagues, and training on relevant topics such as neurodiversity or formative assessment.

Governors are supportive of leaders. They have considerable experience of the further education sector, which they use well in their roles. They are determined to improve the quality of courses for the good of apprentices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented appropriate safeguarding processes. This includes suitable safer recruitment checks, and considerable staff and governor training. When apprentices disclose safeguarding concerns, staff act appropriately to support them.

Staff with responsibility for safeguarding have developed useful links to regional coordinators for the 'Prevent' duty. This ensures that they can provide apprentices with pertinent, region-focused safeguarding information.

Trainers integrate safeguarding-related topics into their training and review sessions. Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices' line managers understand safeguarding themes and their responsibilities, for example by holding webinars for them on topics such as sexual harassment at work.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that apprentices do not routinely fall behind with their studies. If this happens, leaders should ensure that trainers' plans and support help apprentices to catch up quickly.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices who need to complete functional mathematics qualifications receive timely and appropriate training.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices benefit from appropriate careers information, advice and guidance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59190
Address	Draefern House Unit B Dunston Court Dunston Road Chesterfield S41 8NL
Contact number	07957 227133
Website	https://uk.gigroup.com/
Principal/CEO	Jim O'Brien
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	5 to 8 July 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of apprenticeships, 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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