

# Calex UK Ltd

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58586

**Name of lead inspector:** Penelope Horner HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 10 December 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 4–6 The Quadrant  
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## Information about the provider

1. Calex UK Ltd (Calex) was established as a limited company in 2007. Since 2008, it has been funded to provide apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in motor vehicle maintenance and repair, body repair and refinishing, and parts operations and customer service for Volvo Car UK (VCUK). Its Train to Gain contract has now ceased but a small number of learners remain on customer service programmes. Most Train to Gain learners are employees of Volvo Car UK and the Volvo dealer network. In 2010, Calex also gained a contract to provide young apprenticeships in Lancashire and Luton.
2. Calex is led by a managing director. He is supported by an operations manager and an apprentice programme manager. They work with training managers at VCUK to manage the programme. A team of assessors and trainers works directly with apprentices in the workplace or at VCUK's training centre in Daventry.
3. Apprentices over the age of 16 are employed at Volvo dealerships across the United Kingdom. They attend off-the-job training at VCUK's training centre in Daventry on four-day block release periods held six times each year. Young apprentices attend training centres in Luton or Lancashire on one day each week for technical training and assessment.
4. Calex recruits learners to the Volvo apprenticeship programme in partnership with the Volvo dealer network. Over 90% of apprentices are men, and all are from White British or other White ethnic heritage groups. On the young apprenticeship programme, 42% of learners are from Black ethnic heritage groups. Most apprentices have five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, on entry to the programme.
5. Calex provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Citroen UK Ltd
  - Jaguar Land Rover
6. The following organisation provides young apprenticeship training on behalf of Calex:
  - Raytheon Professional Services

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships	100 learners 98 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Grade 2
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		2
Quality of provision		2
Leadership and management		2
Safeguarding		2
Equality and diversity		2
Subject Areas		Grade
Automotive engineering		2

## Overall effectiveness

7. Provision at Calex is good. Learners develop excellent skills and knowledge and a high proportion of those who begin their training with Calex complete their awards successfully. Although almost half the learners completed their awards well after the planned end date in 2009/10, Calex has taken suitable action to improve and learners with planned end dates in 2010/11 are on track to complete their awards in good time.
8. Calex provides very good training for learners at its training centres. Training is well planned and makes good use of excellent resources and facilities. Mentors and supervisors provide good skills coaching and practical development at learners' workplaces. Assessors provide good support for learners in employment. They carry out thorough observations of learners when they visit them at work, but do not always prepare sufficiently detailed plans for learners' training and assessment between their visits. Some employers do not prepare sufficiently for these visits.
9. Provision is well led and managed by managers at Calex and VCUK. They are successful in promoting a strong sense of respect and value for individuals among staff and learners and are ambitious for learners' training and success. They monitor provision carefully and take prompt action to improve when the need arises, but have not implemented all the quality improvement

arrangements identified in their procedures to ensure that every aspect of provision is of a similarly high quality.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The overall success rate on apprenticeship programmes has been high since the programme's start, but the timely success rate fell in 2009/10. Although timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes in engineering were high, they were below national rates in customer service. Calex has taken suitable action to improve learners' progress.
- Learners develop excellent workplace skills. Their practical skills and theoretical knowledge in engineering are excellent. They work under the supervision of skilled technicians, in good workplaces, and often maintain prestigious vehicles. Employers value their learners' skills and knowledge. Many learners have progressed into more responsible positions such as master technicians or supervisors.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Resources in the training centre are outstanding with a wide range of high-quality vehicle and diagnostic equipment. Trainers prepare detailed schemes of work, lesson plans and good quality handouts. Support for customer service learners is good. Learners enjoy their theory and practical training at the Daventry centre and at work.
- Assessors' observations of learners, for their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), are very thorough and are carried out at regular intervals. However, some employers are not sufficiently well prepared for these observations. This results in delays to learners' progress. When learners present written evidence for their NVQs, assessors do not always question them in sufficient detail to check learners' understanding.
- Learner reviews are satisfactory. However, assessors do not always set sufficiently specific and detailed targets for learners or their employers. Employers are not always sufficiently involved in reviews. Assessors do not ask sufficiently probing or relevant questions to test or reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity and applications of health and safety at work.
- Calex is highly responsive to employers' needs. Staff at Calex have very close and productive links with staff at VCUK. Managers at VCUK monitor the programme effectively and pay particularly close attention to learners' progress during their training.
- Internal verification is thorough. Calex's internal verifier prepares detailed reports on observations of assessment and sampled NVQ units which give clear feedback to assessors. Where standards are not met, the process is effective in ensuring that remedial action is taken and clearly recorded.
- Managers at Calex are successful in promoting a culture of respect for individuals which is well understood. Learners and staff have a strong sense of belonging to the Volvo 'family'. Managers have high expectations for the quality of training and outcomes for learners. However, they have taken insufficient action to improve the support provided by some learners' employers.

- Calex takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and has a clear policy and good guidance on safeguarding the learners in its care. It has particularly good arrangements for safeguarding learners while they are on their block release training. Calex carries out suitable checks on staff and provides good safeguarding and health and safety training for staff and learners.
- Learners are treated well and feel valued by their employers and Calex. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is good. They are well informed about bullying, harassment and equality of opportunity in employment. However, staff have not had recent training in equality and diversity and Calex does not do enough to promote or check equality of opportunity arrangements of employers.
- Calex engages with users very effectively to support and promote improvement. It collects regular feedback from employers and learners and responds well to their suggestions for improvement. However, it does not routinely analyse this feedback to identify trends.
- Calex's self-assessment process is broadly accurate and it is highly responsive to the need for improvement when it is identified. It has detailed and thorough written procedures for quality improvement, but has not implemented all of these procedures. It does not carry out observations of some key aspects of learners' programmes, such as reviews, or check that policies and guidance are always followed.

### **What does Calex UK Ltd need to do to improve further?**

- Improve target setting and the involvement of employers at reviews to help learners make better progress in training and assessment between assessors' visits.
- Take action to improve the support offered by some employers to enable learners to complete their on-the-job training and assessment within planned timescales.
- Ensure that all staff have recent training in equality and diversity to enable them to check and reinforce learners' understanding during reviews and check employers' understanding and arrangements.
- Maintain the monitoring and support provided for learners at risk of falling behind to ensure that all learners complete their awards within the time planned.
- Complete the implementation of quality improvement procedures to monitor all aspects of learners' programmes and ensure that all are of a similarly high quality.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the excellent resources in the training centre
- the experience and ability of assessors and trainers, which bring the subject to life

- well-planned training in the training centre, which links clearly to their work
- being treated as an adult and given significant responsibility
- being able to network with fellow apprentices at the training centre
- the friendly and approachable staff.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- the frequency of visits by assessors (they would like more frequent visits)
- the support they are given by their employers, in preparation for assessors' visits.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

**What employers like:**

- the high quality of training in the training centre
- the very responsible and mature attitude of learners
- the extensive experience and knowledge of Calex trainers and assessors.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

- no improvements identified.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

10. Provision at Calex is good and its high overall success rates have been maintained for both years of the VCUK contract. Managers and staff are ambitious for the quality of Calex's training and are highly responsive to the need for improvement when it is identified. Managers set suitably challenging targets in their quality improvement plan and carefully monitor the company's progress in achieving these. Managers and staff work well with VCUK, the Volvo dealer network and their subcontractor to provide good training for learners.
11. Calex's self-assessment process is thorough and draws on feedback from learners, employers, managers and staff at Calex, and managers at VCUK. The self-assessment report, although too descriptive in parts, accurately identifies strengths and most areas for improvement in provision. Calex monitors learners' progress carefully and has taken successful action to halt a decline in apprentices' timely success rates. Learners currently on programme are making good progress. Calex has very thorough and detailed quality improvement policies and procedures, but these have not all been implemented.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

12. Outcomes for learners on engineering programmes are good. The overall success rate for these learners was 93% in 2008/09 and rose to 95% in 2009/10, well above the national rate. However, timely success rates fell from 81% in 2008/09 to an unsatisfactory level of 54% in 2009/10. Overall and timely success rates in Train to Gain programmes in engineering were high in 2009/10, but were low in customer service. There are no significant differences in the performance between different groups of learners.
13. Learners develop excellent workplace skills and knowledge and enjoy their training. They make rapid progress in the development of good practical skills, and carry out routine servicing and repairs at an early stage of their training. Their confidence increases as their programme progresses and employers value learners' growing technical expertise. Young apprentices gain valuable skills and useful insights into their aptitudes and interests for future study and careers. Customer service learners improve their skills in dealing with customers and are more confident about making decisions at work.
14. Engineering apprentices gain a good range of additional qualifications in topics such as tyre fitting and air conditioning, and automotive technician accreditation. These give learners extra specialist knowledge which increases both their flexibility at work, and their employability.
15. Learners' programmes focus closely on health and safety in the training centre and in the workplace. Learners feel safe and understand how to keep

themselves and their colleagues safe. Healthy options are available in the training centre and learners are encouraged to eat healthily at all times.

## The quality of provision

## Grade 2

16. Teaching and learning are very good on the apprenticeship and young apprenticeship programmes. Calex provides an excellent series of training modules at VCUK's training centre and for young apprentices. At VCUK's training centre, learners work to a high standard and are prepared very effectively for their on-the-job training. At work, highly skilled workplace mentors work closely with learners to provide good coaching and helpful feedback to enable learners to develop and practise their skills.
17. Most assessment practice is satisfactory; some is good. Assessors meet their learners every eight to ten weeks to assess evidence in the workplace and carry out learners' progress reviews. Their observations of performance are detailed and effective in assessing learners' competence. However, assessors are not always able to carry out planned assessment observations because learners' employers do not always allocate suitable tasks for them to carry out. This delays some learners' progress towards achievement of their awards. Assessors sometimes make insufficient use of questioning to test learners' understanding when using documents as evidence of their competence.
18. Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. However, assessors do not make sufficient use of them to plan for learners' development and assessment at work. Reviews do not always follow the guidelines specified on the review form. Although assessors prepare action plans with learners at the end of each visit, the targets they agree lack sufficient detail and specificity. They do not give examples of the work that learners should do to meet NVQ requirements. Assessors do not always leave a copy of the plan with learners, or their employers, for reference between visits. Assessors refer to learners' individual learning plans during reviews but these plans are not always updated. They do not make sufficient use of objective milestones to measure learners' progress and not all make use of Calex's progress-tracking software.
19. Assessors' reviews of learners' understanding of health and safety practices and aspects of equality and diversity are satisfactory. However, some of their questions are not probing and do not make sufficient use of relevant work experiences to test learners' understanding. Assessors' records of these discussions do not help to ensure that these topics are covered in detail, over a period of time.
20. The range and content of provision are closely matched to the needs and aspirations of learners and employers. Learners are very enthusiastic about their training and the companies they work for.
21. Partnerships with schools participating in the young apprenticeship programme are excellent. Pupils at school are keen to participate. A large number of dealerships and service centres offer work experience, holiday and Saturday



work to help prepare pupils and, in many cases, this work experience leads to a place on the young apprenticeship programme. Partnerships with VCUK and the Volvo dealer network are strong and ensure that the programme meets employers' and learners' needs.

22. Calex provides good care, guidance and support for learners. Learners have a very high regard for its well-qualified staff, who provide them with good support both in the workplace and during their frequent visits to the training centre. Initial advice and guidance help place learners on appropriate apprenticeships to meet their needs and aspirations. However, some employers provide insufficient support for learners to enable them to make best use of visits from their assessors.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

23. Leaders and managers are successful in promoting a strong culture of respect and value for individuals which is well understood by staff and learners. Teamwork is good and learners and staff have a strong sense of belonging to the Volvo 'family'. Managers set challenging targets for learners' outcomes and have high expectations for the quality of training that learners receive. Calex has suitable systems for managing and developing staff, and for communicating with its dispersed workforce. Staff are well qualified and supported and many have progressed from earlier apprenticeship programmes. Calex keeps managers at VCUK well informed. VCUK managers provide effective support and challenge to help Calex to improve. However, Calex and managers at VCUK have taken insufficiently timely action to help improve the support provided by some learners' employers.
24. Calex takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and has a clear policy and good guidance on safeguarding the learners in its care. It has particularly good arrangements for safeguarding learners when they stay at a local hotel during their block release training. It invites parents to visit the hotel during learners' induction and most take up this opportunity. Its rules on behaviour at the hotel are clear and well understood by learners and hotel staff. Calex has good arrangements for ensuring that learners are suitably accommodated, have access to appropriate facilities and are monitored properly when they are staying at the hotel. It holds quarterly reviews with hotel staff to ensure that its safeguarding policy is implemented. Hotel staff are well informed about learners' individual needs and circumstances and know what action to take if they have any concerns. Calex carries out suitable checks on its staff and provides them with good training in safeguarding. All staff have completed this training but Calex does not systematically record this information on its central record. It promotes e-safety and provides good driver awareness training for learners. Learners' understanding of health and safety is good. Calex has plans to improve employers' awareness of safeguarding as part of a course to introduce apprenticeships to employers, but this course has not yet taken place.
25. Learners at Calex are treated as individuals and feel valued and respected. During their off-the-job training, staff make good use of thought-provoking

images and discussion to challenge stereotypical attitudes, develop learners' understanding and knowledge of relevant and recent legislation. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is good and learners are well informed about bullying, harassment and equality of opportunity in employment. However, assessors make insufficient use of reviews to probe this understanding or prompt discussion about their treatment at work. Calex has not provided recent training to update staff understanding of equality and diversity. Although an e-learning programme is planned, Calex does not do enough to promote equality and diversity to employers, or to check their equality of opportunity arrangements.

26. Calex collects and analyses data on the performance of different groups of learners. In most cases, numbers are too small to provide meaningful comparisons. However, the small numbers of learners with disabilities do well on the programme, as do those with additional learning needs. A high proportion of young apprentices have been recruited from minority ethnic groups. These learners are making good progress, but it is too soon to compare the achievements of different groups of these learners.
27. Calex engages with users very effectively to support and promote improvement. It has particularly close and effective working relationships with VCUK and staff at the training centre in Daventry. They hold quarterly meetings to review the programme and monitor learners' progress. Calex collects regular feedback from employers and is highly responsive to their needs. It collects regular and frequent feedback from learners and makes changes, where appropriate, in response to their suggestions for improvement. Employers and learners are highly satisfied with the training they receive. However, Calex does not routinely analyse the data provided by this feedback to identify trends.
28. Calex has well-designed systems for monitoring learners' progress. Following a fall in timely success rates in 2009/10, it has used these well to identify those at risk of falling behind and has taken effective action to improve the progress that learners make. These actions have been successful in ensuring that, thus far in 2010/11, learners complete their programmes on time. Calex uses data well to monitor performance. It has a very detailed and thorough quality improvement policy and framework, but their implementation is incomplete. Although it carries out many of the checks and associated plans for improvement, such as observation of teaching and learning, or assessment. It does not carry out observations of some key aspects of learners' programmes, such as reviews, or check that its policies and guidance are always followed.
29. Calex's self-assessment process is inclusive and involves managers and staff at Calex and Volvo. It makes good use of feedback from learners and employers. Its most recent report was written in March 2010. Although much of it is too descriptive, it identifies the strengths and most areas for improvement identified by inspectors. The associated quality improvement plan is clear, with specific targets and actions to improve. Implementation of the plan is carefully monitored and some actions have already been effective in rectifying areas for

improvement identified in the self-assessment report. However, some of the grades Calex awarded for its provision were over generous.

## Subject areas

### Automotive engineering

### Grade 2

#### Context

23. Calex provides apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in light vehicle maintenance and repair, vehicle body repair and refinishing and parts operations for VCUK. Apprentices train on the job in employment, and off the job on block release at VCUK's training centre in Daventry. Calex also provides training for young apprentices one day a week, at training centres in Luton or Lancashire. This training is subcontracted to Raytheon Professional Services. At the time of inspection, there were 45 apprentices and 50 young apprentices in training. The Train to Gain contract has ceased with no engineering learners remaining on programme.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners' attainment of their awards is outstanding. Overall success rates have been very high for the last two years. Both overall and timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes in engineering were also high. However, timely success rates on apprenticeship programmes fell in 2009/10 to below national rates. Calex has taken suitable steps to rectify this decline.
- Learners develop excellent practical skills and theoretical knowledge. They work in good workplaces under the supervision of skilled technicians, often maintaining prestigious vehicles. Employers value the high levels of practical skill and theoretical knowledge gained by learners. Many former learners have progressed to more responsible positions, such as master technicians and supervisors.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Resources in the training centres are outstanding, with a wide range of high quality vehicles and diagnostic equipment. Trainers prepare detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. The handouts and written materials that they prepare for learners are good. Learners and employers value highly the training provided by Calex.
- Assessors' practice varies in quality from good to satisfactory. Observed assessment is very thorough and carried out at regular intervals. However, some employers do not prepare sufficiently for learners' observations and this delays learners' progress. In some cases, assessors do not carry out sufficiently thorough checks on the learners' understanding when learners provide written evidence of their competence.
- Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. However, assessors do not always set sufficiently specific and detailed targets for learners and employers. They do not always involve employers sufficiently in learners' reviews.
- During reviews, learners are routinely asked questions about equality and diversity or health and safety. However, some of these questions are superficial

and not sufficiently linked to relevant examples. They do not test or reinforce learners' knowledge and understanding sufficiently.

- Calex has well-established and very close links with VCUK and the Volvo dealer network. It is highly responsive to their needs and has made effective changes to the programme to meet both employers' and learners' needs. It now uses these links well to monitor individual learners' progress and take action to help support learners at risk of falling behind.
- Internal verification is thorough. The internal verifier monitors observations and sampled assessment carefully and provides clear feedback for assessors to improve their practice. If standards are not met the process is effective in ensuring that remedial action is taken and clearly recorded.

### **What does Calex UK Ltd need to do to improve further?**

- Improve target setting and involvement of employers during learners' progress reviews to help learners make better progress in training and assessment between assessors' visits.
- Make better use of questions to test and develop learners' knowledge and understanding.
- Improve the support offered by some employers to ensure that all observed assessments are effective and enable learners to make good progress.
- Maintain the actions taken to ensure that learners complete their awards within the timescale planned.

## **Information about the inspection**

24. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by Calex's operations manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of Calex's most recent self-assessment report and development plans and data on learners and their achievement.
25. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas Calex offers.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

## Calex UK Ltd

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	19+ Learner responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>			
Full-time learners	45		45
Part-time learners	54	54	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2		
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>			
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>			
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3		
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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