

TUI UK and Ireland

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 55115

Name of lead inspector: Joy Montgomery HMI

Last day of inspection: 18 March 2011

Type of provider: Employer

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Information about the provider

1. TUI UK limited was established in 2001 when Thomson Travel Group restructured. In 2007, TUI Travel plc was formed following the merger of First Choice Holidays plc and the tourism division of TUI AG. At this time, TUI UK became TUI UK and Ireland (TUI). TUI Travel plc is included in the index for the Financial Times and Stock Exchange 100 leading companies. TUI has over 200 brands, operating in 180 countries and approximately 49,000 employees. TUI has over 850 retail outlets in the UK that represent the Thomson or First Choice brands.
2. TUI contracts with the National Employer Service of the Skills Funding Agency for all its apprenticeship programmes in England. The TUI's accredited programmes team, based in Coventry, manages the apprenticeship provision. TUI has other major offices in Luton, Port Solent and Crawley. At inspection, TUI had 123 apprentices and 205 advanced apprentices in England, employed in either Thomson or First Choice travel agency shops, working towards travel services qualifications. TUI also offers apprenticeships in Wales and Scotland and in early years and outdoor activity leadership. These programmes were not included in this inspection. Apprentices on the outdoor activity leadership programme are employees of JCA.
3. Travel services apprentices complete a 12 week induction called 'passport to travel' with support from a work-place mentor. TUI provides knowledge and skills training through training events, online learning, shop team development activities, coaching and on-the-job learning. Accredited programmes' learning advisers provide additional practical advice and guidance as well as pastoral support.
4. The following organisations provide assessment and verification on behalf of TUI:
 - Training for Travel
 - Vocations Limited

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	736 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	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	Grade
Travel and tourism	2

Overall effectiveness

5. TUI offers good provision. Most apprentices successfully complete their apprenticeship programme within the timescales expected. Apprentices are confident and develop good customer service skills as well as a detailed knowledge of different holidays and destinations. Most apprentices go on to have successful careers within the company.
6. Training is well structured with a thorough recruitment process and a very effective initial training programme. Apprentices receive good training and guidance from shop managers and mentors, although a minority do not allocate enough time to learners to complete the online training modules. The apprenticeship programme is very flexible and fits in well with the demands of a busy travel agency. Apprentices receive good support from colleagues, managers, assessors and learning advisers. However, apprentices may experience changes to the staff that support them, which can slow their rate of progress.
7. TUI is committed to the apprenticeship programmes and sees them as a valuable method for recruiting and developing staff to meet the needs of the business. The programmes are continually refined and improved. The shops provide apprentices with a safe environment in which to work and learn. Apprentices treat customers with respect ensuring the holidays they book meet

their individual needs. However, TUI does not routinely brief apprentices on all aspects of equality and diversity.

Main findings

- Success rates are high for travel and tourism apprentices working in Thomson and First Choice shops and the majority achieve within the timeframes expected. Success rates vary across the regions and are lower for the small number of intermediate level male apprentices.
- Apprentices demonstrate good professional and personal skills when dealing with customers' holiday bookings. They develop good knowledge about worldwide holiday destinations and work effectively as part of the sales team. The majority of apprentices successfully progress and become assistant managers.
- Apprentices feel safe at work and have a good awareness of what to do to protect themselves, colleagues and visitors to the shops. Processes and procedures to ensure apprentices are safe, particularly those under 18 years of age, are satisfactory.
- Apprentices have good individual coaching at work to be successful travel advisors. Mentors and managers carefully organise apprentices to watch experienced colleagues dealing with different types of bookings then closely supervise them trying out their newly acquired skills.
- Apprentices complete a wide range of interactive online learning packages to develop their knowledge of products and countries and prepare them for external tests. Apprentices enjoy the flexibility of these packages but the majority find the mock customer enquiries are too repetitive and time consuming. Managers do not plan study time and, for a minority of apprentices, do not provide sufficient time for learning.
- The training programmes are very flexible and meet apprentices' needs well. Apprentices progress easily from the intermediate to advanced level. They have good progression and promotion opportunities within TUI. Apprenticeships programmes link well to the future needs of the business and the development of its employees.
- TUI has satisfactory partnerships with the companies that assess apprentices' work and deliver key skills. Managers, mentors and assessors develop productive relationships with apprentices but the quality of the support and assessment they receive varies between branches. Changes in assessors, mentors and managers result in a minority of apprentices making slower progress.
- TUI provides very clear initial advice and guidance to help potential apprentices through recruitment. Apprentices attend a good two to three week initial training course that is fun and informative. They gain a good awareness of the company ethos, systems and products that prepares them well for starting their job.

- Apprentices have good support from their workplace team. The majority of mentors and managers are previous apprentices and this helps them to support apprentices effectively. Learning advisors at the Coventry office provide apprentices with good, practical help on a range of issues. A few managers give apprentices inappropriate or inaccurate guidance about permanent employment when they finish.
- Leadership and management are good. All levels of the organisation are highly committed to the apprenticeship programmes. TUI has very high expectations of apprentices and a strong culture of support ensures they attain high industry standards.
- Apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Apprentices demonstrate a clear understanding of customers' individual needs. Training at induction helps them to develop their understanding of equality and diversity. However, apprentices' recall of this is very limited. TUI's understanding of why so few minority ethnic apprentices are on the programme is limited.
- TUI is effective at improving many aspects of the quality of training offered, making good use of feedback from apprentices and managers. However, the self-assessment report is too descriptive. The integration of self-assessment into quality improvement planning is insufficient.

What does TUI UK and Ireland need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the variations in success rates to ensure all apprentices, in every region, have the same likelihood of success through better access to continuous assessment.
- Review and modify the balance between online learning and face-to-face training to ensure that it meets apprentices' preferred learning styles.
- Ensure shop managers take their full responsibility for planning training, and become more effective at providing correct guidance and ensuring apprentices have sufficient study time.
- Increase managers', mentors' and apprentices' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity by incorporating topics more clearly in learning, assessment and reviews.
- Develop the self-assessment processes to include the views of users and related reports clearly. Produce a succinct and evaluative self-assessment report that clearly articulates key findings that lead to a detailed and challenging quality improvement plan.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the help and coaching they receive from their managers and mentors, who are good role models
- the way that the learning programme fits in so well with their jobs

- the help they are given in being set regular goals and being pushed to achieve these
- support from the accredited programmes team who are helpful in sorting out problems and are easy to get hold of
- the way their assessor shows them how they can improve and move forward with their work
- the initial training, which was interesting, fun and where they learned a lot
- the way the programme enables them to learn independently and not be reliant on a teacher
- being given more responsibility as they progress.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the continuity in support from their assessors, managers and mentors particularly where they have changed
- the opportunities they have to attend group training sessions, as they would like more
- the approach that managers take to the study time, as not all are receiving the recommended hour each day
- the online learning activities they complete, particularly the customer profiles which are too lengthy, repetitive and in a few instances are unrealistic to the products that they sell within their stores
- the help for key skills which is not always face-to-face and which a minority struggle to complete.

Summary of the views of managers as confirmed by inspectors**What managers like:**

- the help learning advisors provide when they had concerns about the assessors
- the depth of the learning that their apprentices get through researching procedures, destinations and products
- the improvements that have been made to the programme through introducing online learning
- the structure the programme provides to support progression within the company and industry
- being able to give apprentices more responsibility as they acquire more skills.

What managers would like to see improved:

- re-introducing some off-the-job training, as they would prefer their apprentices to attend more group sessions to develop their knowledge and team building skills

- support and number of visits from the assessors, as a minority of apprentices have long periods of time without an assessor visit
- the information TUI provides to help them understand the apprenticeship framework content and their role in the learning process.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

8. Success rates have steadily increased and are now high. TUI has very high expectations of apprentices and recruits accordingly. Store managers motivate and support apprentices well and their business performance is similar to that of other staff. TUI's recent re-structuring provides more efficient arrangements for the accredited programmes team to work with internal business partners and have even greater impact on business performance.
9. Since the previous inspection TUI has made significant changes and improvements to the provision. The company has introduced and developed high quality online training resources and it has implemented a robust management information system. Quality improvement is good and the use of feedback from learners and managers is effective. TUI recognises that the self-assessment process is not sufficiently developed and although the report is broadly accurate it is too descriptive. TUI's key improvement plans closely match those of the inspection findings.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Success rates for travel and tourism apprenticeships have improved over the last three years and are high for 2009/10 at 84%. The majority of apprentices achieve within the timescales expected. Significant variations exist across the regions. The lowest performance is by apprentices in the north west and the highest by advanced apprentices in the west midlands. Variation between age groups is minimal. Overall, females perform better than males except on advanced apprenticeship where almost all the small number of males completed. The vast majority of apprenticeships are White British.
11. Apprentices are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their training and work. They demonstrate good skills with customers and deal confidently with complex holiday bookings. Apprentices make good progress through their qualifications and quickly take on specific roles and responsibilities. The majority of managers and mentors are ex-apprentices and provide good role models, give effective support and help learners see the value of the apprenticeship to their future career.
12. Apprentices feel safe and have a good knowledge of the clear range of company policies and procedures that support them. All employees receive health, safety and security training. Thompson and First Choice shops have taken positive actions to reduce the number of robberies and provide a safe environment for its employees.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

13. Mentors, colleagues and managers provide apprentices with good individual coaching that develops their skills. They shadow experienced team members and are closely supervised through new tasks. Apprentices quickly develop good customer service skills and develop their product knowledge. The training is exceptionally responsive to apprentices' individual needs and highly relevant to the requirement of customers. Managers give weekly "team talks" where apprentices get updates on a wide range of topics. A minority of apprentices have had changes to their managers or mentors, causing some disruption to their on-the-job learning.
14. TUI provides satisfactory off-the-job training. Apprentices complete a 12 week well-planned "passport to travel" programme which prepares them well for their career. Apprentices take a wide range of online learning packages, which develops their product and geography knowledge effectively. While some apprentices are enthusiastic and finish the learning packages quickly, others do not enjoy this mode of learning. Managers rarely plan study time for online learning and do not provide a minority of learners with sufficient time resulting in slower progress. Pressures from working in a busy travel agency and achieving sales targets often interrupts study time. Apprentices taking key skills receive less effective support, mainly by email or post. Too often, they have to rely on their colleagues for help.
15. Assessors set very clear and detailed action plans to help apprentices prioritise their work between visits. They carry out thorough assessments of apprentices at work, including, taking holiday enquiries, organising window displays and selling foreign exchange. Apprentices receive useful feedback that helps them improve their skills. A few apprentices have had too many changes in assessors, which is affecting their ability to achieve the NVQ units that require them to be observed making bookings and taking payments.
16. TUI's apprenticeship programmes match the business priorities and employees' development well. Exceptionally flexible programmes enable apprentices to progress at their own speed. They progress smoothly from the intermediate to advanced level to achieve before their planned target date for completion. Apprentices have good progression and promotion opportunities within TUI.
17. TUI has effective partnerships with the sub-contractors who assess apprentices and deliver key skills. Assessors build a good rapport with apprentices, mentors and managers. Managers and mentors work hard to give apprentices good quality training but a few have a low awareness of the requirements of the apprenticeship programme, their role or the levels of support apprentices' need.
18. Apprentices receive good initial advice and guidance. TUI provides them with very clear information about the apprenticeship. Where apprentices fail the initial recruitment and selection tests, their prospective managers provides appropriate feedback to prepare them to re-apply. Apprentices have a good initial training for their programme. The training introduces them to the

company's ethos and systems through a fun and informative two to three week training programme. JCA apprentices complete many aspects of their programme, such as key skills and assessments for leading activities, during their initial training.

19. Colleagues, assessors, mentors and managers generally support apprentices well. Learning advisors, based in Coventry, provide very effective help and advice about all aspects of the programme. A minority of apprentices do not receive sufficiently accurate or appropriate advice from their managers about continued employment at the end of their apprenticeship.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

20. Leaders and managers at all levels are fully committed to the apprenticeship programme. The apprenticeship programmes are a key part in developing young and talented people in the organisation. TUI has high expectations of apprentices and the recruiting process ensures they are particularly well suited to the demands of the retail business. Particularly effective communication from shop staff is a major factor in apprentices achieving high levels of competence. Most store managers monitor learners' performance well. However, not all managers have sufficient understanding of the apprenticeship programme or fully comply with meeting their responsibility to the learners' development.
21. TUI ensures well managed safety, security and well-being of apprentices. Arrangements for safeguarding young people are satisfactory and appropriate restrictions are in place for those under 18 years of age. Senior managers have designated responsibilities for safeguarding. Store managers receive clear guidance on ways to support young people in cases of disclosure and reporting procedures are clear. Apprentices know how to report any incidents of harassment or discrimination. Although TUI does keep staff informed, confirmation of safeguarding arrangements with store managers is not always clearly registered and risk assessment arrangements with sub-contractors are unclear.
22. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Apprentices receive satisfactory instruction in equality and diversity at induction. They have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and easy access to a range of company policies for this area. Apprentices have a good understanding in how to support travel customers with special requirements. However, most have limited recollection of equality and diversity and receive no additional training or review of knowledge following induction.
23. Apprentices from ethnic minorities achieve well. Males achieve less well compared to female learners. Since the previous inspection, TUI has introduced marketing materials that better reflect the population balance within society and the number of young men on the the programme has increased. However, the programme has few apprentices from minority ethnic groups and TUI is

unable to analyse data for those young people that applied but failed to get a place.

24. TUI has effective systems to measure the broad aspects of staff satisfaction at work and to gather suggestions for improving work practices. Most apprentices confirm they receive the training they need to do a good job. TUI closely monitors feedback from apprentices' regarding recent changes to training practice. This information compares rising satisfaction levels and has highlighted areas for further development.
25. Quality improvement arrangements are mostly good. The development of online learning resources ensures apprentices access high quality training materials that are more flexible and accessible to their needs. The monitoring of apprentices progress and training experience from TUI's Coventry office is particularly effective. TUI has successfully introduced an outdoor activity leadership programme. The sharing of best practice between programmes is now supporting the improved provision of key skills. TUI has well advanced plans to improve further the apprentices' experience of training and assessment. The management of sub-contractors is satisfactory. However, TUI is insufficiently clear why a minority of regional area success rates are much lower than others. The self-assessment process is not sufficiently integrated into quality improvement plans.
26. TUI offers good value for money. Success rates are high and the income generated by apprentices is equitable to those of trained staff. Training has reduced staff turnover and opportunities for apprentice to progress into management are very good. Apprentices are well equipped to work in the travel industry.

Information about the inspection

27. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's accredited programmes development manager as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and managers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

TUI UK and Ireland

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 using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	328	328
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
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>	n/a	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a	
Quality of provision	2	2
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?	3	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
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>	n/a	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
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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