

# Lifetime Training Group

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 51856

**Name of lead inspector:** Nick Crombie HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 13 July 2012

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Lifetime Training Group  
Eleventh Floor  
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## Information about the provider

1. Established in 1995, Lifetime Training Group (Lifetime) has a head office based in Bristol and operates in every area of England. It has grown rapidly to become one of the UK's largest providers of apprenticeships. Around 85% of the company's turnover derives from providing government-funded training programmes.
2. Lifetime has grown on its own account and through acquisition. In 2010 it bought Rapido Training Limited (Rapido), a small specialist training company offering adult and childcare programmes. Rapido's operations and management structure are now wholly integrated into Lifetime's, but Rapido retains a separate Skills Funding Agency contract. Lifetime was last inspected in 2008 and Rapido in 2006.
3. Within the Lifetime Group overall there were around 7,000 apprentices in learning at the time of inspection, including Rapido's learners. Around 75% of all learners are following intermediate level programmes. Nearly 90% of learners are adults and 47% are female. Around 11% of learners are from a minority ethnic heritage.
4. Lifetime's largest programme is in sports, leisure and recreation (active leisure), with over 3,300 learners. Lifetime is currently the largest provider of vocational training for the fitness and leisure markets in England. Around 1,500 learners follow hospitality programmes, 35 of whom are taking professional cookery qualifications. The number of care learners is around 1,200 of whom about a third are following childcare programmes. Some 900 learners follow business administration programmes, including customer service, leadership and management, and team leading.
5. Lifetime's apprenticeship programmes are offered predominantly in England and provided at employers' sites by 40 tutors (active leisure only) and around 175 regional trainers (assessors). The Bristol head office houses all senior management, sales, marketing, finance, human resources, quality, compliance and administrative support staff.
6. The provider also provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Leisure Connection
  - Cambridge College
  - Chichester College.
7. The following organisations provide training on behalf of Lifetime:
  - L&F Inspired Hair Academy (hairdressing apprenticeships)
  - ISA Training (hairdressing apprenticeships).

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2011/12</b>
<b>Employer provision:</b> Apprenticeships	5,720 apprentices

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Hospitality and catering	2
Sports, leisure and recreation	2
Business, administration and law	2

## Overall effectiveness

- Lifetime’s overall effectiveness is good. Outcomes for learners, the quality of provision and leadership and management are each good. Most apprentices achieve their qualification. They develop and apply new skills and knowledge well. Training, coaching and learning are good in the active sports provision and satisfactory in hospitality and business administration programmes. The range of provision is outstanding and meets the needs of employers and learners very well, particularly in active leisure programmes. Partnerships with employers are strong. Lifetime has strong performance monitoring and management systems in place and uses extensive data to continually assess and improve the

provision. It uses data less well to evaluate more qualitative aspects of the provision, such as the quality and depth of learning.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates across all programmes are high, although they declined from well above national rates in 2009/10 to around the high national rates in 2010/11. Analysis of differences in the achievement of different groups is routine and actions to reduce achievement gaps are effective.
- Learners make good progress and develop new skills which they apply well to their job roles. For example, active leisure learners develop a high standard of personal and vocational skills and underpinning knowledge. Hospitality learners develop good skills in the workplace and advanced learners apply their learning well. Business administration learners develop good employability skills including improved confidence and self-esteem.
- Learners feel safe. Learners on all programmes enjoy their experience of learning. On intermediate level programmes learners do not always take full responsibility for their own learning.
- The quality of provision is good. Training, coaching and learning are good in active leisure and satisfactory in hospitality and business administration. Active leisure learners benefit from a mix of highly developmental group training sessions, individual reviews and discussions. Business administration and hospitality learners have individual sessions with assessors who do not stretch and challenge all learners sufficiently.
- Assessors make frequent, well-planned and flexibly-timed visits to learners. Progress reviews are effective. The quality of feedback to learners is good. Assessors use the e-portfolio system well to record assessment and evidence, but learners make insufficient use of the system to develop their independent learning and research skills. Target setting and action planning are satisfactory, but medium- and long-term targets are frequently too vague. Lifetime does not develop advanced learners' independent learning skills well.
- Lifetime's arrangements to meet the needs and interests of learners and employers are outstanding, particularly in the active sports provision. The range of training offered provides excellent progression for instructors and personal trainers. Learners have access to a very good range of programmes. Master classes for pastry cooks are particularly effective. Lifetime offers a number of programmes which it tailors very closely to employers' needs.
- Lifetime has developed very good partnerships with small and large companies which directly benefit learners. Employers support learners' programmes well. They work closely with assessors to provide pertinent opportunities to gain experience and develop skills which support learning.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Lifetime provides good personal support and individual coaching to help learners overcome barriers to learning and to progress. Initial assessment is thorough. Advice to learners

about appropriate programmes, levels and career pathways is sound. The quality of information, advice and guidance is good.

- Leadership and management are good. The links between strategic planning, vision and working practice are strong and learner focused. Very thorough performance management and monitoring arrangements are in place and managers use a wide range of data-based quantitative indicators to inform decision making. A culture of continuous improvement permeates the company. Communications within the company and with employers and partners are good
- Lifetime has satisfactory arrangements in place to meet its statutory obligations for safeguarding. Some documentation on referral procedures lacks clarity. Discussions about safeguarding during learners' reviews lack depth.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff and learners' induction to equality and diversity is good, well structured and provided effectively. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is generally satisfactory. Good training materials prompt discussion between learners and assessors during reviews, but not always in sufficient depth.
- Quality improvement arrangements, including self-assessment, are good. Self-assessment is largely accurate. Improvement action planning is detailed and comprehensive. Regular performance reviews, monitoring and programme evaluations are thorough and informed by extensive and accurate data. The observations of teaching and learning, particularly for assessors, have insufficient focus on the quality of learning.

### **What does Lifetime need to do to improve further?**

- Raise success rates by supporting assessors to apply teaching and assessment techniques which stretch and challenge all learners and by encouraging and enabling all learners to develop their independent thinking and learning skills.
- Ensure that reviews effectively develop and reinforce learners' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and staying safe and that all documentation on referral procedures is clear.
- Monitor the effectiveness of assessors' training and review sessions across all programmes to assess and improve the quality and depth of discussion about equality and diversity for learners.

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

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

- the opportunity to learn at work
- attending speciality training courses in hospitality and fitness instruction
- the excellent support from tutors and personal trainers in the gymnasium
- the knowledge and skills developed during their apprenticeship
- the ease with which tutors can be contacted for support
- the chance to learn while working.

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

- a reduction in the high assessor workloads which seem to delay some communication and contact
- the amount time they have with assessors during visits, to allow more opportunity to reflect and ask questions
- the number of laptops available to support learning
- the access to e-learning resources.

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

**What employers like:**

- the flexible way Lifetime provides training and support
- the effectiveness of partnership working that has positive impact on employment
- the way learners are stretched in their training to develop new skills which they can apply in the gymnasium
- the informative monthly discussions about learners' performance with senior Lifetime staff.

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

- the forward planning of assessors' visits to chef academy learners
- the time lost by taking staff off-the-job for assessments and reviews
- the limited information given to supervisors about Lifetime when learners are signed on to programmes
- communication with Lifetime when the assessor cannot be reached.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

### Grade 2

9. Lifetime has a good capacity to improve. A culture of continuous improvement permeates the company at all levels. The company is adept at identifying what it needs to do better, effectively planning for improvement. Learners' success rates have been consistently high and above national rates. Lifetime has tackled a recent decline in learners' success rates well with strong signs of improvement in the year to date. Staff have a clear understanding of their demanding targets and their progress towards achieving them. Good arrangements are in place to engage with users and act on their views, particularly those of learners. Self-assessment is largely accurate.

### Outcomes for learners

### Grade 2

10. Outcomes for learners are good. Despite a decline in overall success rates in 2010/11 they remain high across all programmes. The overall success rate for active leisure learners in 2010/11 is eight percentage points above the national rate. Success rates on Lifetime's other programmes in the same period are at, or slightly above, high national rates. Data indicate a generally improving picture for overall success rates in the year to date.
11. Most current learners are now making good progress towards completing their programmes within agreed timescales. The percentage of learners making good progress was very high in 2009/10 but it fell by around nine percentage points by 2010/11. Data for the current year indicate significant improvements in all but business administration programmes.
12. Learners enjoy their learning. They develop skills and knowledge well in the course of their programmes and apply them to good effect in their workplaces. Employers are able to identify improvements in learners' effectiveness and impact. Many learners extend their job roles and enhance their career prospects. Active leisure learners develop a high standard of personal and vocational skill and underpinning knowledge. Hospitality learners develop good skills in the workplace and advanced learners apply their learning well. Most business administration learners develop good employability skills including improved confidence and self-esteem. Learners feel safe.
13. Many intermediate-level learners do not take full ownership and responsibility for their learning. They rely too heavily on assessors' input and use standard learning resources as evidence of learning. Learners on advanced level programmes do not develop independent learning skills sufficiently well.

### The quality of provision

### Grade 2

14. The quality of provision is good. Training, coaching and learning are good in the active leisure provision and satisfactory in hospitality and business administration programmes. Active leisure tutors lead well-planned on- and off-

the-job group training sessions. The content and approach to these are interesting, interactive, and participative, and the pace is frequently dynamic. Tutors use practical gymnasium sessions very well to develop learners' technique and their performance analysis and coaching skills. Assessors in individualised sessions provide constructive and timely feedback on progress to learners and employers. Working relationships are productive.

15. Assessors make frequent and flexibly-timed visits to hospitality and business administration learners and provide good additional out-of-hours contact. Assessors are occupationally competent and use their knowledge very well to relate theory to workplace practice and develop learners' skills. The development of learners' key skills is integrated well within their programmes. Assessors' feedback to learners is detailed and enables them to understand what they need to do to progress. Inspectors observed good use of questioning to stretch and challenge learners during some coaching sessions, but such practice is the exception. The quality of short-term target setting and tracking is satisfactory, but medium- and long-term target setting is frequently too vague. Assessors use an e-portfolio system very well to record assessments and evidence, but very few learners make use of this system remotely or gain access to Lifetime's online learning materials to develop their independent learning and research skills.
16. Lifetime's arrangements to meet the needs and interests of learners and employers are outstanding. In the active leisure provision Lifetime very effectively supports employers' recruitment and staffing needs through its academy programme. The range of training offered provides excellent progression for instructors and personal trainers. Hospitality learners have a very good range of programmes and additional options which allow them to gain appropriate qualifications relevant to their job roles and career goals. Master classes at Lifetime's Hilton Chef Academy are particularly effective in developing learners' practical work. Business administration learners benefit from well-developed programmes closely tailored to employers' business needs.
17. Lifetime has developed many close and effective working partnerships with large and small companies. Planning for learning is good. Assessors work very closely with most employers and jointly plan very good opportunities to learn and practise their skills. Most assessors give employers useful and detailed feedback at the end of each session and keep them well informed about learners' progress.
18. Care, guidance and support are good. Learners value the support they receive and the professional way it is provided. Lifetime provides good initial information and advice to ensure learners are on the most suitable qualification and level. Tutors routinely provide good personal and academic individual support for learners to help overcome barriers to learning. Learners receive appropriate guidance on opportunities for further study and employment.



## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

19. Lifetime is well managed. It has grown rapidly in scale and scope in the past five years in particular and has managed its operational expansion very effectively. Its clear vision, values and ambitious strategic planning are each strongly learner focused and are reflected in the way the organisation works with its learners. A culture of continuous improvement permeates the company at all levels of its operation.
20. Lifetime's extensive performance management and monitoring arrangements are highly effective. Managers and staff use them systematically and very thoroughly to measure and monitor the performance of the business and apprenticeship programmes. These arrangements are less effective in Rapido's care provision which is in the process of being integrated fully into Lifetime's systems and procedures. Lifetime's support for, and management of, its two subcontractors is very sound.
21. Lifetime maintains regular, good-quality communication with staff including area managers, assessors and tutors, using informative, data-based local reports which identify team and individual performance against demanding business targets. Lifetime uses data exhaustively, primarily to measure the performance of process-based elements of the provision such as a learner's incremental progress on their programme. Lifetime gives insufficient emphasis to evaluating qualitative aspects, such as the quality of assessors' interaction with learners during reviews.
22. Staff have very good access to information and communication technology. Resources are generally good and Lifetime supports its staff well. Tutors and assessors are highly experienced in their respective disciplines and professionally well qualified. They use their expertise well to develop learners' understanding and knowledge. The tutors leading group sports and fitness learning sessions hold appropriate teaching and training qualifications. However, around two thirds of assessors are currently working towards initial teaching qualifications.
23. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Lifetime meets its legal requirements in designating a lead staff member, carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks, maintaining central records and implementing appropriate policies and basic guidelines. Staff are appropriately trained and updated. Actions in response to the very small number of reported safeguarding issues involving learners across Lifetime have been appropriate. However, some written procedures for staff outlining the formal referral process are confusing. Safeguarding is a standard component of learners' induction. Learners' understanding of safeguarding and staying safe is adequate, but assessors do not cover the subject in sufficient depth during learners' regular reviews.
24. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff and learners' induction in equality and diversity is good, well structured and provided

effectively. Lifetime's data team produces detailed reports identifying the performance of different groups. Managers monitor these reports regularly and have been successful in closing any achievement gaps. An equality champion leads a specialist equality and diversity expert group. The group meets regularly, and sets a 'topic of the month', reviewing good training materials which assessors use with learners. Lifetime checks that the topic is discussed during reviews, but does not monitor the depth or quality of the discussion. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is generally satisfactory.

25. Lifetime has good arrangements to engage with learners and employers to promote and support improvement. It uses monthly surveys of current learners and recent completers well to harness their views on what is working well and what can be done better. Lifetime takes appropriate improvement actions in response to learners' views. Employer surveys are thorough and Lifetime is similarly responsive.
26. Quality improvement arrangements, including self-assessment, are good. Lifetime's management has a very good understanding of the company's strengths and areas for improvement and plans and acts well for improvement. Detailed performance reviews, monitoring and programme evaluations take place very regularly at different levels of the organisation. The reviews are thorough and informed well by extensive and accurate data. Self-assessment is largely accurate and the main body of the self-assessment report is evaluative and makes clear judgements. Inspectors agreed with the grades awarded in the self-assessment report in most cases, except for safeguarding and the promotion of equality and diversity. Improvement action planning following self-assessment is comprehensive and ambitious, clearly separated into activity and subject area, specific in terms of activity, and with measurable achievement criteria. The arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment are extensive but lack consistency and depth. Effective formal and informal arrangements are in place to observe and evaluate tutors who teach group sessions in sports and fitness programmes. However, the criteria used to determine a tutor's performance do not include sufficient focus on the quality of learning. Some of the grades awarded to tutors are overgenerous. The arrangements for observing assessors are less well developed and based too much on conforming to procedures and process with too little focus on the quality of teaching and learning. Judgements in the observation record generally do not support the grade awarded to an assessor.
27. Lifetime provides good value for money. Learners' outcomes, including the high number who achieve their qualification and improve their skills, are good. Lifetime seeks and makes good use of learners' and employers' views to effect improvement. Resources are extensive, their quality is high and staff use them well.

## Subject areas

### Hospitality and catering

### Grade 2

#### Context

28. Lifetime training offers a wide range of hospitality and catering programmes. At the time of inspection, 1,504 learners were on apprenticeship programmes throughout England; all learners are employed. The large majority of learners are following intermediate apprenticeships, primarily on food and beverage and housekeeping programmes. Employers include small businesses, large hotel chains, restaurants and coffee shops.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Over the past two years, overall success rates have been consistently around the high national figure and success rates within learners' planned timescales five to ten percentage points above the national rate. Learners' success rates are higher at intermediate than advanced level, and 16- to 18-year-olds outperform adults. Data for the year to date indicate that all success rates have improved for adults but declined for 16- to 18-year-olds.
- Learners develop and apply good practical and employability skills. They develop confidence in their working practices and understand their roles and those of colleagues better as a result of their programmes. Master classes for learners at the Hilton's Chef Academy are particularly effective in developing learners' practical work, especially in pastry skills.
- Learners make good progress in their programmes and enjoy their learning. Assessors support learners well to achieve their qualification. Employers are supportive of learners' programmes. They work closely with assessors to provide good opportunities for learners to gain a good range of practical experience and knowledge during their apprenticeship.
- Learners feel safe. They are appropriately aware of, and demonstrate, safe working practice in their workplaces. Learners receive a thorough induction which covers health and safety matters well. Assessors adequately reinforce their understanding during their reviews with learners. Advanced-level learners use assignments well to help them implement safer working practices in their workplace.
- Training and learning are satisfactory. Assessment practice is good, involving frequent and flexibly-timed visits together with additional out-of-hours contact. Assessors' feedback to learners adequately enables them to understand what they need to do to make progress. Assessors use an e-portfolio system well to record evidence, but very few learners are able to use this system or make use of Lifetime's online learning materials to develop independent learning and research skills.

- Target setting and tracking are satisfactory. Assessors track and record learners' progress well using the e-portfolio system, but the information is not available online to learners. Assessors set verbal targets in most cases, but in some cases learners are unclear what their targets are. Formal action planning is not sufficiently individualised or specific.
- Highly experienced assessors use their professional knowledge appropriately to develop learners' practical and theoretical skills. Assessors' working relationships with learners are very good. However, many of the reviews inspectors observed did not stretch or challenge learners beyond the programmes' minimum requirements. At times the pace of reviews was too fast and the level of detail too great to allow learners enough time to reflect.
- Lifetime plans programmes extremely well to meet learners' and employers' specific needs. A very good range of programmes and additional options allows learners to gain appropriate qualifications relevant to their job roles and career goals. Assessors work closely with employers so that learners have good opportunities to learn. Lifetime has developed a number of carefully tailored apprenticeship programmes for large companies.
- Care and support for learners are good. Assessors progressively build learners' confidence to help learners achieve. Learners value assessors' support and professionalism. Lifetime has expanded the range of initial advice and guidance for learners, in particular at advanced level, and it is now good. However, learners with language, literacy and numeracy needs do not all receive sufficient support.
- Hospitality and catering programmes are well managed. Staff use a wide range of data well. Management of the field-based teams of assessors is highly effective. Managers meet very regularly with teams and individuals to set and review progress towards achieving high standards and provide support to improve where appropriate.
- Lifetime regularly seeks and acts upon the views of learners and employers to promote improvement. It routinely uses questionnaires to gain learners' feedback about the quality of learning and audits this information centrally, but does not collect qualitative feedback from employers systematically at a local level.
- Self-assessment is largely accurate. Area managers produce clear action plans and meet regularly with their teams to discuss and take appropriate action on key improvements, with particularly focus on improving success rates. However, managers do not pay sufficient attention to evaluating the quality of teaching and learning compared to monitoring adherence to the assessment process.

### **What does Lifetime need to do to improve further?**

- Train assessors in the use of action plans for learners which include specific and time-bound targets, in order to raise learners' aspirations and focus them on their future career progression.

- Encourage learners to use the e-portfolio system and the range of high quality online learning materials to promote their independent learning and research skills.
- Further develop the observation of teaching and learning system through greater focus on the quality of teaching, training and learning. Clearly articulate the key strengths and areas for improvement observed, and identify and disseminate good practice widely to promote improvement.

## Sports, leisure and recreation

## Grade 2

### Context

29. Lifetime has 3,315 learners enrolled on apprenticeship programmes. Of these, 1,990 are working towards intermediate qualifications in fitness instruction and 1,250 are advanced apprentices following personal training programmes. Learners attend on- and off-the-job training for key skills and technical certificates. All learners are employed in the fitness industry in locations around England. Some intermediate-level apprentices are on short-term contracts or placements. Tutors provide training sessions for groups and assessors for individuals.

### Key findings

- Overall success rates for 2010/11 are high on active leisure qualifications, although they are slightly lower than the previous year. Lifetime took swift action to reverse this decline, and data for the year to date indicate a significant improvement. Success rates within the planned timescale declined in 2010/11 but remain above the national rate. Data indicate that current learners are making good progress.
- Learners develop a high standard of personal and vocational skills. Their motivation and confidence improve at work. They guide new clients through personal training programmes with panache and authority. Learners progress well in their job roles and careers, progressively taking on more complex tasks and responsibilities. Around half of the 16- to 18-year-old intermediate learners gain permanent jobs or promotion after completing their apprenticeship.
- Intermediate learners produce a good standard of work based on workbooks and assignment templates, augmented well by the skills they gain in the workplace. Some advanced learners independently devise projects which demonstrate the good range and depth of their knowledge. However, too many advanced learners do not receive sufficient challenge from tutors to develop independent learning skills or a wider understanding of the subject matter.
- Learners feel very safe and demonstrate safe working practices. Employers give a high priority to the health and safety of learners and clients in the workplace. Tutors and employers regularly reinforce health and safety throughout the apprenticeship. Learners appreciate the importance of healthy eating and maintaining a good physique and communicate this well to clients.
- Training, coaching and learning are good. Tutors lead well-planned on- and off-the-job group training sessions. Session content is interesting and the style participative, and frequently dynamic in pace. Practical sessions in the gymnasium are particularly effective in developing learners' posture, technique and promoting constructive performance analysis and coaching skills. Employers provide good training and skills development opportunities linked to learners' programmes.

- Assessors provide constructive and timely feedback on progress to learners and employers. Assessors use the e-portfolio well to record assessments and collate evidence, but learners do not use it as a learning and development or reference tool outside of visits. Learners retain paper copies of their work and assessment records but these are often poorly organised.
- Progress reviews are effective. Assessors monitor learners' progress well and routinely involve employers in the review process. Tutors update individual learning plans on the e-portfolio system but do not always record targets they have given learners verbally.
- The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers is outstanding. Lifetime very effectively supports employers' recruitment and staffing needs through its academy programme, providing a regular stream of potential instructors. Lifetime's range of programmes provides excellent progression for instructors and personal trainers. Lifetime has forged strong and productive links with employers which benefit learners.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Lifetime provides good initial information and advice to ensure learners are on the most suitable qualification. Academy learners receive very clear advice and guidance at the start of their learning. Lifetime staff identify personal goals and provide effective direction toward appropriate learning and job opportunities. A skills scan for advanced learners lacks sufficient detail to pinpoint potential higher-level ability.
- Programme management is very effective. Managers monitor learners' progress and performance very closely using a wide range of accurate data. Lifetime plans training for key skills and technical certificates well, and monitors attendance at training sessions effectively. Staff are occupationally very competent, capable and are managed well. A high caseload and large geographical area for some assessors and tutors limit their support for learners.
- The promotion and understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Lifetime's induction raises learners' awareness initially. Some taught sessions include discussions on how to manage clients who disclose they suffer from bullying because of their weight. Assessors' questioning of learners on either equality and diversity and safeguarding during reviews often lacks depth and breadth. Many learners have a superficial understanding of safeguarding issues.
- Quality improvement arrangements, including self-assessment are satisfactory. The process is inclusive and judgements are broadly accurate. Internal quality assurance is sound and the monitoring of tutors' adherence to required practice is effective. Observations of teaching and learning do not focus sufficiently on how well teaching promotes learning and attainment.

### **What does Lifetime need to do to improve further?**

- Provide learners with full remote access to the e-portfolio system in order that they can all use the good range of online learning materials, track their learning and develop independent learning and research skills.

- Provide assessors with sufficient professional development to increase the academic rigour they apply when setting tasks and activities, and marking and assessing the work of advanced-level apprentices to ensure learners' work demonstrates the higher order cognitive skills and knowledge expected at this level.
- Monitor the depth and detail of discussions about safeguarding and staying safe during reviews to ensure learners' knowledge and understanding of these topics are thorough.



## Business administration and law

## Grade 2

### Context

30. Lifetime currently has 904 learners on apprenticeship programmes at intermediate and advanced levels in business administration, customer service, team leading, management and sales. The large majority are intermediate-level learners on customer service programmes. Learners are all employed and work in large and small companies throughout England. All training takes place in the workplace.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. In 2010/11, learners' overall success rates and those completing within the planned timescale were around the high national rates. Data indicate that success rates have dipped slightly in the year to date. Intermediate-level female learners achieve at around five percentage points higher than male learners, but at advanced level the difference in performance is negligible.
- Learners enjoy their learning and make good progress through their qualification. The quality of learners' work is generally of a high standard. Learners' develop and apply good skills and knowledge. Most learners develop their employability skills well, become more effective in their job roles and improve their career prospects, self-confidence and self-esteem. Learners gain a better understanding of their own and others' job roles.
- Learners say they feel safe in their learning and employment and use safe working practices. The promotion of health and safety is satisfactory. Learners know who to contact if issues arise. However, discussions between assessors and learners during reviews about health and safety lack depth.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Occupationally competent assessors use their knowledge very well to develop learners' understanding and relate theory to workplace practice. Inspectors observed good use of questioning during some coaching sessions prompting learners' deeper exploration of topics, but such practice was not universal. The development of learners' key skills is integrated into learners' programmes well.
- Assessment practice and working relationships between assessors and learners are good. Assessors visit learners regularly in the workplace and schedule their visits flexibly to accommodate work patterns. They maintain good contact by telephone and email in the interim, and give constructive feedback. Assessors use an e-portfolio system well to record evidence and learners' progress, but learners do not use the system to develop their own independent learning and research skills.
- Lifetime has established very good working relationships with employers. Assessors give feedback at the end of each session which ensures employers are well informed about learners' progress. Employers are fully supportive of

the training programmes and work closely with assessors to provide opportunities for learners to develop relevant knowledge and skills.

- The provision meets the needs of learners and employers very well. The programmes are relevant to learners. Learners and employers are very satisfied with the programmes and the quality of the training. Well-developed arrangements are in place with large employers to provide programmes closely tailored to the employers' business needs. A few learners are unable to choose additional optional units specific to their job roles.
- Tutors provide good personal and academic individual support for learners to help them progress and overcome any barriers to learning. Learners value this support. Lifetime gives learners appropriate guidance on opportunities for further study.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers centrally and locally monitor progress towards achieving performance targets using comprehensive data. Managers and staff have a very good knowledge of each learner's progress. Assessors understand their performance targets and receive support at a local level to achieve them. Communications are good. Staff have good opportunities for professional development and feel well supported.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Coverage during learners' induction and in their workbooks is appropriate. One review contained a very good discussion about transgender issues that flowed naturally and was directly relevant to the learner's job role. However, such discussions in reviews do not routinely promote and contextualise equality and diversity in such a seamless way.
- Quality improvement arrangements are good. A well-structured and thorough performance monitoring and related action-planning process promotes continuous improvement of learners' experience of their programmes. Appropriate arrangements are in place to collect feedback from learners and employers which is then used to improve the provision. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate.

### **What does Lifetime need to do to improve further?**

- Provide professional development for assessors to develop their coaching skills in order to stretch and challenge all learners.
- Develop learners' independent learning and research skills by providing them with open and remote access to the e-portfolio system and online learning portal.
- Provide training for assessors which enables them to incorporate equality and diversity seamlessly and in sufficient depth with learners during regular reviews.

## Information about the inspection

31. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's executive chairman, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report, a current position statement, a wide range of monitoring and management reports and quality improvement and development plans. Inspectors analysed data on learners and their achievements over the past three years.
32. Inspectors used individual interviews, telephone calls and email responses to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed group learning sessions, individual assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas that Lifetime offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Lifetime Training Group**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Leamer 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	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	5720	5720
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2	
<b>Outcomes for learners</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?	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>	-	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	-	
<b>Quality of provision</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?	1	
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?	2	
<b>Leadership and management</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?	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?	2	
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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