

LAGAT Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

2–5 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for learners | Requires improvement |
| Adult learning programmes | Requires improvement |
| Apprenticeships | Requires improvement |
| Traineeships | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Actions to improve the provision identified at the previous inspection have not been fully implemented and the high apprenticeship success rates have not been maintained over time.
- Arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Records of observations in the classroom and workplace are not sufficiently focused on learning and the progress learners make.
- Adult learners' individual needs are not met during classroom sessions and they do not experience employment through workplace taster sessions to prepare them well for their next steps.
- The self-assessment process and quality assurance arrangements have not eliminated gaps in success rates between different groups of apprentices and learners.
- The board of directors has not set appropriate and challenging performance targets for learners' success and the quality of their learning experience.
- Off-the-job training is not well planned and online resources are not used to their full potential to better prepare apprentices and learners for external tests and assessments.

The provider has the following strengths

- Productive collaboration with the local enterprise partnership (LEP), local authorities and Jobcentre Plus has ensured the provision meets the skills gaps and employment potential locally, allowing young people and adults to have relevant learning programmes and apprenticeships.
- Performance management is used well to monitor and motivate staff.
- Prudent financial management by the board of directors has resulted in the company investing in new staff and a strengthened leadership team with the skills and experience to drive forward a culture of change and improvement.
- Progression into apprenticeships, employment or further education for trainees is good.

Full report

Information about the provider

- LAGAT Limited is part of the LAGAT Group, established in April 1987. It provides training and recruitment for people throughout the East Midlands from its offices in central Lincoln. A board of directors oversees its training programmes, supported by a team of 25 managers, training officers, tutors, administration personnel and receptionists.
- Currently 177 learners and apprentices study with LAGAT and its subcontractors. One hundred and sixty-two are intermediate and advanced apprentices of whom 72 are aged 19+ and the majority are in business administration. Approximately 12 are on adult learning employability programmes, referred from Jobcentre Plus.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all the actions, including improvements identified at the last inspection, are fully implemented for the benefit of learners by completing a full review. In particular, ensure individual needs of learners are identified and met appropriately during learning sessions.
- Provide well-planned, good-quality off-the-job training for apprentices to further develop their skills and knowledge and provide adult learners with employment taster sessions to prepare them well for their next steps. Ensure that online resources are up to date and are available to apprentices to develop their skills and knowledge and prepare them well for external tests and assessment.
- Improve self-assessment and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all observers of training activities focus and report on the quality of learning as well as teaching. Ensure the records of observations include accurate and evaluative judgements and the action plans following each observation are detailed and implemented well.
- Ensure that planned improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for learners are implemented quickly and effectively by:
 - improving the level of detail and making better use of data and performance reports to monitor the quality of provision
 - ensuring that targets for improvement are sufficiently challenging, including eliminating gaps in performance between different groups of apprentices and learners.
- Ensure that the board of directors, as part of its strategic business planning arrangements, swiftly establishes precise and challenging business targets that have a clear focus on standards, performance and quality of the learner experience. Review these challenging targets frequently and take swift action where performance is not improving in line with expectations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have not been fully rectified. LAGAT has experienced a period of significant change and has implemented a number of actions including the establishment of a new management structure to improve the quality of provision and to strengthen the range of services it offers to learners and employers alike. The new management team work well together, developing a strong culture of teamwork, and they have introduced much-needed changes to strengthen internal systems and processes. For example, leaders and managers have an ambitious vision that all learners and apprentices will complete their qualifications to a high standard. This is communicated well to staff, but they do not have sufficiently challenging and specific targets set to ensure the high standards achieved at the previous inspection have been maintained.
- Managers and staff have not maintained the standard of quality of teaching, learning and assessment or high level of outcomes for apprentices and their performance has declined over time. Newly appointed managers have begun a more systematic approach to conducting and monitoring observations of teaching, learning and assessment and carrying out checks on the quality of individual learning plans and progress reviews. However, the observation of teaching, learning and assessment is not sufficiently rigorous or evaluative; the system does not focus on learning and learners' progress sufficiently or record clearly what actions need to be taken to improve teaching and learning. The assessment of the quality of teaching and training sessions is not always accurate.
- The self-assessment process requires improvement. Managers have not evaluated the quality of the provision accurately and, consequently, the self-assessment report is not sufficiently accurate. For example, while the self-assessment report has benefited from the involvement of staff and uses the views of learners, it does not evaluate provision in sufficient depth, particularly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Self-assessment does not provide an accurate overview of strengths and areas of improvement. For example, leaders have overestimated the quality of the adult learning and apprenticeship provision as well as other key judgements. In contrast, recent quality improvement planning is more sharply focused and evaluative, it provides a strong basis by which managers and staff can bring about improvements to standards and performance. The recently developed improvement plan accurately identifies the majority of the key quality challenges and sets out clear milestones by which leaders and managers are able to measure progress.
- Managers and staff promote fair treatment of individuals and respect for differences well. Learners have access to a good range of learning materials on equality and diversity themes. Staff use these well to help raise learners' awareness and, as a consequence, they are able to apply their increased understanding of these themes in the workplace and in other settings. Apprentices do not have easy access to these resources and consequently their understanding is not so well developed. Managers do not routinely monitor the performance of different groups of learners effectively. They do not identify the reasons underlying any differences in achievement, and consequently they do not plan effectively to eliminate these gaps.
- Performance management is used well to monitor and motivate staff. Monthly individual meetings between managers and staff are used well to review tutors and training advisers. Underperformance is quickly identified and suitable support promptly provided. Leaders take robust action, including the effective use of capability procedures where staff performance continues to fall below the company's expectations, and as a result a number of staff have recently left the organisation.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the local and regional skills priorities, particularly those aligned to the Greater Lincolnshire LEP. Strong partnership working within employers, local forums, including Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, and Jobcentre Plus, and close engagement with sub-regional employment and skills panels have increased the scope and range of work placements and apprenticeship opportunities with employers. Managers use this knowledge well to ensure the range of provision is planned accurately to address local skill and employment gaps, including the use of carefully selected subcontractors in specialist sectors to provide an extended curriculum offer. Subcontractors are well managed through regular contract monitoring meetings.
- Staff benefit from focused staff development activities that help consolidate their skills and confidence in supporting learners. For example all staff have recently attended training workshops to develop and extend their knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty, safeguarding, equality and diversity, and initial advice and guidance. This has led to tutors and training advisers being more confident in supporting and challenging

learners regarding their understanding of life in modern Britain and the importance of values such as tolerance, valuing differences in society and treating others with respect.

- Since the last inspection, managers have improved the quality of provision for English and mathematics, for example by recruiting a specialist English tutor. A high proportion of apprentices now successfully achieve their functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) at their first attempt and have become more confident in applying these skills in the workplace and in their personal lives.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Although directors have a clear strategic business plan that identifies appropriate company goals, too few of these goals focus on the importance of outcomes and quality and standards as fundamentals to achieving business objectives.
 - The board have ensured that the curriculum continues to evolve to meet the differing needs of learners and employers. Regional and local priorities are met well.
 - Prudent financial management has enabled the board to invest wisely in the recent appointment of a newly created leadership team. Taking forward responsibility for improvements to quality and standards across the organisation, they support the development of wider strategic relationships with key stakeholders, including the LEP and local business chamber, and with employers.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Appropriately trained members of staff undertake risk assessments on all potential work experience and work placement sites. Managers and staff closely monitor employers' approach to health and safety. Suitable safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and have been updated to include reference to radicalisation and extremism. The designated safeguarding officer is appropriately trained and experienced.
 - Staff are aware of the need to protect learners against radicalisation and have received 'Prevent' training and professional development relating to safeguarding.
 - Managers and staff take effective actions to counter incidents of bullying and harassment. Learners are vigilant as to how they can protect themselves while online from the dangers of cyber bullying, online grooming and access to inappropriate materials.
 - Inspectors identified an incident where the organisation did not follow its own procedures with regard to staff recruitment to carry out a disclosure and barring service check for a new member of staff. However, managers ensured that the individual did not have unsupervised access to young people and made sure the missing check was completed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Observations of teaching and learning are not improving practice and managers do not rigorously follow up action plans. Too little time is spent developing apprentices' knowledge and skills through well-planned off-the-job training activities. Most assessors focus on assessment rather than the development of learners' underpinning knowledge.
- Sessions for adults fail to address their individual learning needs, causing less-able learners to get confused over the tutor's expectations, and more-able learners are required to wait until everyone has finished a task before progressing. Attendance for accounting apprentices at off-the job sessions is poor with too few passing their online assessments first time. However, attendance and punctuality are good on adult learning programmes and in the subcontracted provision.
- Staff hold a range of relevant qualifications and industry experience enabling them to successfully relate theory for trainees and adults to workplace expectations. However, too few are sufficiently skilled in teaching and learning with insufficient updating of their skills and knowledge and, as a result, too many sessions require improvement.
- Tutors ensure that trainees and adults have a good understanding of the expectations of the workplace but insufficient attention is paid to the broader employability skills, such as taking off coats and storing bags before learning sessions and explaining protocols for eating and drinking during lessons. Adult learners do not undertake work tasters and, as a result, they are not always prepared well for their next steps.
- Additional learning support is ineffective and, where identified, is only in place for apprentices. No specialist additional support is in place. Some apprentices receive additional one-to-one support with functional skills tutors but impact from this is not communicated to the training officers for them to share

with their learners and line managers. There is no additional support to develop further English and mathematics for trainees and adults.

- The training centre is welcoming and provides well-equipped training rooms. However, some of the rooms are very small for the number of learners present and lack natural light. Learning resources are of a good standard with a virtual learning library available for those that do not attend the centre and to encourage independent learning. Too few apprentices access the resources and some resources are in need of updating.
- All learners are progressing well through very specific target setting and clear action planning and, as a result, the vast majority achieve their qualifications. Apprentices know exactly where they are on their programme of learning either through their good use of the electronic portfolio or through action planning with their training officer and line manager. Trainees and adults receive regular written feedback on their work and one-to-one support sessions with their tutor or business adviser. Tutors provide constructive written commentary when marking work.
- Learning activities for trainees are varied and interesting and relate to the career aspirations of the trainees present. The quality of the subcontracted provision for hairdressing trainees and motor vehicle apprentices is good.
- Training officers and employers use their knowledge and industry experience well to set high standards and to motivate apprentices. They demand high-quality work and respectful behaviour and expect apprentices to work hard to develop their knowledge and skills. Apprentices respond well and work diligently to succeed in their learning. Many have taken on extra responsibilities.
- All learners receive in-depth initial advice and guidance which ensures they are promptly put onto the correct programme to meet their career aspirations. LAGAT's business advisers provide a strong bond between the learner and their new employer or work placement provider. Career choices and further training opportunities are regularly discussed with apprentices and their line managers to allow them to make decisions about their future career paths.
- Development of English and mathematics skills for trainees and adults is built into theory sessions well. For example, trainees are confident to calculate the cost of advertising airtime and number of hits on an online music download site. Learners are developing good information technology skills and developing their understanding of technical language. Too little attention is paid to developing adult learners' oral skills which would aid their readiness for employment.
- Apprentices are progressing well with their mathematics and English functional skills and many are undertaking information and communication technology in addition. Apprentices supporting teaching and learning in schools use their mathematics and English particularly well in classes of young children, helping them to confidently measure and use the correct terms.
- Equality and diversity, safeguarding, radicalisation and e-safety are very well reinforced with adults and trainees that attend the centre. They are able to explain confidently about the security issues of social media, they know who the designated safeguarding officer is and are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Adults particularly understand behaviour expected of them in the centre and act well towards their peers. British values are understood and regularly discussed in sessions. This is less well embedded for apprentices with too many still not able to confidently talk about these topics and how they relate to them in the workplace.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

- Apprentices' attendance on some off-the-job training is variable. In some classroom sessions for adult learners and trainees, high sugar content drinks are consumed during learning sessions. This behaviour is not challenged by tutors to promote a healthy lifestyle or to discuss and reinforce good workplace behaviour. In adult learning sessions, coats are worn and bags are not stored away safely. Most learners and trainees have good attendance and punctuality when attending their employability sessions. They are generally attentive and respectful of their tutors and other learners.
- All learners and apprentices benefit from good and timely information, advice and guidance (IAG). However, adult learners on employability programmes do not have work taster sessions to help consolidate their next steps. Learners on traineeships receive highly effective IAG prior to and during their traineeship, ensuring they are on the right programme and their individual needs are met well. Consequently, they make good progress.

- The vast majority of learners improve their English and mathematics skills, although adult learners' oral skill development requires improvement. English and mathematics are developed well in adult learning and traineeship teaching sessions. For example, trainees prepare advertising campaigns, calculate stock, produce covering letters and calculate area and volume in warehouses. Learners' and apprentices' written work is of a high standard with good attention paid to accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation in the majority of cases.
- Learners and apprentices develop a range of relevant new skills including a greater understanding of employment rights and responsibilities and the need to treat customers and colleagues with respect and tolerance. Trainees have improved their skills in communicating with others, presenting information, personal conduct and handling conflict effectively as a result of their training. Learners are gaining in personal confidence quickly as a result of their programmes. They take on additional responsibilities and know their roles within their workplace teams.
- Most learners and apprentices enjoy learning and developing work-related skills. They feel safe and understand e-safety and know how to report an incident and who to. The health and safety of learners and apprentices is given the highest priority. Adult learners have a good understanding of e-safety.
- British values, 'Prevent' and equality and diversity are promoted well in classroom sessions. However, these topics are not routinely reinforced with apprentices to ensure they are confident and knowledgeable.

Outcomes for learners

require improvement

- The overall success rate and the success rate for apprentices completing their programmes in agreed timescales have improved in 2014/15 but remain below the rates of the previous inspection. Although the qualification success rate for adult learners on employability programmes is high, the progression rates into employment are low. Learners on traineeships have gained apprenticeships or employment consistently over the last two years and their outcomes are good.
- Tutors on the adult learning programme do not make use of initial assessment. Consequently, progress for the more-able learners is slow. Current trainees and apprentices make at least the progress expected of them and some are making good progress from their starting points. The proportion who progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships is low. The majority of apprentices remain in sustained employment at the completion of their apprenticeship.
- Information, advice and guidance is good for apprentices and trainees and, as a result, most have a good understanding of their chosen career paths. The lack of employment taster opportunities for adult learners does not prepare them well for their next steps.
- The overall rate for learners passing their functional skills test in English, mathematics and information and communication technology at the first attempt is high. Learners are on target and are gaining their functional skills early in their programme and understand the benefit of these skills in furthering their careers.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

require improvement

- In 2014/15, approximately 200 learners completed short qualifications to prepare for employment. While the large majority achieved their qualification, a very small minority went into sustained employment. Approximately 12 adult learners are working towards their qualifications in either employability or ICT skills. LAGAT works effectively with Jobcentre Plus staff to develop relevant training programmes and have recently introduced a short entry level course for information and communication technology users.
- Tutors do not take sufficient account of learners' prior attainment when planning learning programmes and consequently they fail to develop an individualised learning plan for adult learners; this was a recommendation of the previous inspection. The majority of learners are set the same learning targets irrespective of their own identified areas for development. The programme fails to provide learners with opportunities to experience employment through work tasters and, as a consequence, they are not always sure of their next steps.

- Tutors do not plan lessons effectively to meet individual learner needs. Too few learners are challenged to participate in lessons and often the more confident learners dominate discussions. Tutors do not establish sufficiently learners' understanding or challenge them to develop their problem-solving skills. Too often, tutors simply give information and lessons lack challenge and variety to interest learners sufficiently.
- Target setting in lessons and at reviews requires improvement. The majority of targets set by tutors are too general. Tutors focus on achieving the qualification and set too few personal development targets to help learners improve their chances of gaining employment. Tutors do not challenge learners to improve aspects of their behaviour or appearance vital to being effective employees, for example learners wearing outdoor coats in lessons and drinking sugary drinks in learning sessions. Learners do not have an area to socialise during breaktimes and miss the opportunity to develop their social interaction skills. The training rooms are too hot and lack sufficient space for all learners to sit comfortably as one group.
- The majority of learners develop their ICT and listening skills well, for example through the effective use of mock interviews in lessons. Learners develop the skills of writing an effective curriculum vitae and speculative letters to potential employers. Learners develop their mathematics skills through useful sessions on personal budgeting. Tutors identify the majority of spelling errors; however, tutors give insufficient focus to providing learners with clear guidance to improve aspects of their oral and written work and little use is made of the good resources on the provider's virtual learning library.
- Tutors ensure that learners have a thorough understanding of topics related to equality and diversity and they integrate this effectively into lessons. Learners know how to apply this learning to everyday situations. They develop a good understanding of British values and teachers respond effectively to opportunities to reinforce these in lessons with a strong emphasis placed on developing self-respect and tolerance. Reinforcement of safeguarding and health and safety is very effective, with a good focus on e-safety.
- Tutors are enthusiastic and very supportive of learners. They provide a welcoming environment for learners, many of whom have not been involved in learning for a considerable time. Attendance and punctuality at lessons are good. Assessment is rigorous and well planned. Learners receive detailed written feedback which helps them understand areas for further improvement. This helps them make good progress in achieving their employability qualifications.

Apprenticeships

require improvement

- LAGAT provides apprenticeships in health and social care, ICT, retail and commercial enterprise, education and training, and business administration and law across all age groups. Of the 162 apprentices, the large majority are in business administration. LAGAT delivers training and assesses apprentices across most of the East Midlands and a subcontractor, Cordeaux Academy, provides a small number of motor vehicle apprenticeships in Lincolnshire.
- The vast majority of apprentices receive very little off-the-job teaching, learning and assessment. Too little time is spent developing apprentices' knowledge and technical abilities through off-the-job training activities. A useful online resource to support learning is available but it is not used well by some apprentices who find it difficult to access and some resources need updating.
- Assessment practice requires improvement. On- and off-the-job training is not planned to maximise learning and assessment opportunities effectively. Feedback on assessed work does not always clearly identify how apprentices can improve. Target setting and action planning do not always drive progress well and motivate apprentices to achieve.
- Initial assessment for additional learning support is not effective. A few apprentices receive additional functional skills support where a need has been identified. When they do receive support, the progress they make is not communicated to their line manager or training officer.
- LAGAT offers some flexible training models for accounting apprentices to meet the needs of employers and apprentices. However, attendance at the training sessions is low with consistently poor attendance for many.
- The vast majority of employers engage well with the apprenticeship programme through active participation at progress reviews. They motivate apprentices to produce good-quality work, develop good work skills and take on additional responsibilities. For example, an apprentice supporting teaching and learning in the classroom is looking after the school website and the allocation of fruit to children. A business administration apprentice is gaining in confidence through answering the phone and dealing

directly with client queries in an estate agent's office. As a result, the majority of apprentices remain in sustained employment on completion of their apprenticeship. However, the proportion who progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships is low.

- Staff are well qualified and experienced in their subject areas. English and mathematics are integrated well into the programme and training officers reinforce their importance regularly. The majority of apprentices do not have a clear understanding of British values and equality and diversity as these themes are not promoted regularly during reviews.
- Apprentices feel safe, are generally aware of their rights and responsibilities and know what to do if they experience any problems. They know how to report incidents of radicalisation or extremism.
- Subcontractor staff are knowledgeable, experienced and well qualified in their specialist subject area. They all have teaching qualifications and most are working towards assessor qualifications. The facilities and training equipment are of a high standard and well maintained. Staff have high expectations of apprentices and promote a good culture of learning and achievement.

Traineeships are good

- Since August 2015, ten learners have completed their traineeships with a very large majority progressing into paid employment, further study and apprenticeships. Currently, three trainees are on programme, all aged under 18. Trainees learn employability skills, develop their English and mathematics and participate in a work placement. A subcontractor, KM Training, provides a small number of traineeships in hairdressing in Derby.
- Trainees enjoy well-paced, current and relevant activities that develop their understanding of local business and industry. For example, they discuss the appropriate use of social media in an advertising campaign and how this links to various target audiences. They develop their mathematics and problem-solving skills well when calculating the floor space and amount of shelving in a warehouse. Learners enjoy this and benefit from the rapid progress made as a result.
- Work placements are good and are planned well to meet individual needs. As a result, trainees rapidly develop their confidence and self-esteem and are prepared well for their next steps. Behaviour is excellent and progression into apprenticeships, employment or further education is good. The quality of training, development and resources in the subcontracted provision is good and consequently three trainees have recently become hairdressing apprentices.
- The recruitment and selection of trainees is effective and mutually beneficial to meet the needs and aspirations of both the employer and learner. Employers contribute effectively to the development of the trainees and are very satisfied with the standards they display at work.
- English, mathematics and employability skills are well developed in classroom sessions. Trainees understand the importance of these skills and many are able to apply them in their work placement. Examples include interactions with clients in a hairdressing salon and producing letters in an office environment.
- The majority of work produced by trainees is of a high standard. They learn how to produce a good-quality curriculum vitae and how to respond appropriately at interview. This contributes well to their further progression into an apprenticeship or employment.
- Trainees benefit from good information, advice and guidance prior to and during their traineeship. This ensures they are on the right programme and that their individual needs and career aspirations are met well.
- Trainees are respectful, very well behaved and understand fully the need for tolerance both in and out of the workplace. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity, 'Prevent' and British values is reinforced well during learning. They feel safe and know what to do if an incident should occur.

Provider details

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|--|--|
| Type of provider | Independent learning provider |
| Age range of learners | 16+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 338 |
| Principal/CEO | Hannah Spencer |
| Website address | www.LAGAT.co.uk |

Provider information at the time of the inspection

| Main course or learning programme level | Level 1 or below | | Level 2 | | Level 3 | | Level 4 and above | |
|--|---|-----|-----------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
| | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ |
| Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships) | | 12 | | | | | | |
| | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | | |
| | 77 | 50 | 13 | 22 | | | | |
| Number of traineeships | 16-19 | | 19+ | | Total | | | |
| | 3 | | | | 3 | | | |
| Funding received from | Skills Funding Agency (SFA) | | | | | | | |
| At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cordeaux Academy, Louth ■ KM Training, Derby | | | | | | | |

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Robert Hamp, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Victor Reid, assistant lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Anne Ashworth | Ofsted Inspector |
| Stephen Masterson | Ofsted Inspector |
| John Grimmer | Ofsted Inspector |
| Julie Gibson | Ofsted Inspector |

The above team was assisted by the quality and audit manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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