

TUI UK and Ireland

Employer

**Inspection dates**

1–4 March 2016

Overall effectiveness**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for learners

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- High-quality, on-the-job training develops and broadens apprentices' travel retail skills and experiences effectively, preparing them successfully for additional responsibilities in the workplace.
- Apprentices make good and secure progress towards completing their programme; the proportion who complete their course successfully within the planned time is high.
- Assessment practice is very effective in helping apprentices to understand what they have done well and how they can improve further.
- Apprentices are very confident, articulate and self-assured, their work is of a good standard and their behaviour mirrors the company's values well.
- Apprentices have a broad and effective understanding of equality and diversity within the travel retail sector and they use this knowledge well in their relationships with colleagues and customers.
- Apprentices apply the knowledge they gain during off-the-job training successfully to the workplace, adding value to their employers' businesses.
- Leaders have developed very extensive, wide-ranging partnerships that benefit apprentices and ensure that their training meets business, regional and national needs.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- The board has not set challenging, aspirational key performance targets that reflect its high expectations of the apprenticeship programme. Directors do not receive regular reports on apprenticeship performance and standards.
- The targets set during progress reviews do not stretch and challenge apprentices consistently to reach their full potential. The small minority of adults on intermediate-level courses do not achieve as well as younger apprentices.
- The development of apprentices' English and mathematical skills focuses too much on passing tests and not enough on deepening their understanding of how these essential skills apply to their personal lives and the workplace.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement planning are not yet fully developed.

Full report

Information about the provider

- 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 has over 649 retail outlets in the UK that represent the Thomson or First Choice brands.
- The TUI group has a workforce of approximately 76,000 employees. The company operates 140 aircraft through six brands including TUIfly, Thomson, TUIfly Nordic, Jetairfly, Corsair and ArkeFly, serving more than 180 destinations around the world. The group has 13 cruise ships and over 300 hotels in 24 countries.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the board of directors swiftly sets appropriately challenging key performance targets regarding the performance of the apprenticeship programme; directors should receive regular reports detailing performance against these targets and hold relevant managers to robust account where performance is not in line with the board's high expectations.
- Ensure that all apprentices make good progress in all aspects of their programmes by ensuring that assessors and store managers set precise actions and targets for their on-the-job performance, as well as for the progress that apprentices achieve in their learning and skills assessments.
- Ensure that all apprentices complete a diagnostic test of their English and mathematical skills so that vocational learning staff can plan individualised learning and support to meet their needs; assessors should challenge apprentices routinely to develop high standards of spelling and grammar in their written work to prepare them well for their next steps in learning and career development.
- Ensure that the self-assessment process is self-critical, with detailed and evaluative evidence; ensure that actions in the quality improvement plan are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely, and are implemented effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Directors, leaders and managers have high expectations for their apprentices; they demonstrate a strong and unequivocal commitment to the apprenticeship programme in meeting the company's future workforce needs and in equipping their apprentices with the skills to be successful in the workplace. Leaders communicate well an aspirational and clear vision for the achievement of their apprentices through the TUI corporate values of 'Engage', 'Shape' and 'Deliver'.
- Operational management is effective through robust performance management arrangements and an organisation-wide culture of accountability and improvement. Managers challenge assessors and other vocational delivery staff routinely during individual monthly meetings when reviewing apprentices' progress. Poorly performing members of staff promptly receive help with their professional development needs in order to bring about improvement, or leave the organisation.
- Managers and staff use management information well both to monitor the effectiveness of the provision and to inform their decisions at team and individual meetings. Leaders and managers analysed the reasons for the decline in apprenticeship performance in 2013/14 accurately and implemented swift and appropriate actions to bring about rapid improvement.
- Self-assessment is accurate. The self-assessment process is consultative and makes good use of feedback from apprentices and their line managers as to the impact of training and to evaluate the quality of provision. Leaders and managers have addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection successfully. However, although the self-assessment grades match those awarded by the inspection team, the analyses and judgements in the self-assessment report are not sufficiently self-critical and the quality improvement plan lacks detail.
- Since the last inspection, managers have maintained well-managed internal quality assurance processes that ensure apprentices' work meets awarding body criteria. However, while reports of observations of teaching and learning are extensive in judging the quality of assessment, arrangements for observations focus almost exclusively on the assessors rather than on the apprentices. Managers recognise this as an area for further improvement.
- Staff within the vocational learning team have very good retail travel experience and expertise that apprentices value highly. Managers provide good support to assessors and other training staff through a well-planned professional development programme. Staff develop their technical knowledge and skills further through an annual 'back-to-the-floor' familiarisation workshop at one of the company's retail stores, which ensures that their knowledge of the travel industry is current and up to date.
- Partnership working is good. The apprenticeship programmes meet the needs and priorities of TUI and the retail travel sector very effectively. Leaders and managers plan and manage learning programmes that meet the needs and interests of apprentices and the specific requirements of the travel industry well, through their active contribution in leading on the development of new trailblazing occupational standards for the travel and tourism sector. Leaders make good use of their close and effective partnership working with other travel organisations, industry bodies and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership to promote the benefits of apprenticeships in meeting the needs of learners and the industry successfully. The majority of apprentices benefit from the opportunities that managers create for them to progress to higher levels of study.
- Staff promote equality and diversity well. Leaders and managers place a high priority on promoting respect through the equality and diversity policy, which is implemented effectively at all levels in the organisation. Managers ensure that apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity and recognise the difference between treating people equally and treating them fairly. Managers are vigilant in identifying any form of bullying and discrimination, and deal with issues very effectively.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - The board of directors provides clear strategic direction that supports the strong ambition to deliver high-quality apprenticeship provision to meet the business needs of TUI. The board's strategic plan outlines its objectives, mission, culture and ethos clearly and is understood well by staff and apprentices alike.
 - Directors have not set challenging targets relating to the performance and quality of the apprenticeship programme; they do not receive regular reports from managers detailing how the apprenticeship programme is meeting the company's high expectations of its workforce.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Leaders have ensured that appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance notes for safeguarding of apprentices are in place. They carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all vocational learning staff who have regular access to young and vulnerable apprentices. The designated safeguarding officer is suitably trained and experienced; apprentices are well protected and any concerns they may have are investigated quickly and appropriate action is taken.
- Recently, managers have developed a formal policy setting out how they intend to counteract the challenges posed by radicalisation and extremism; however, the board of directors has yet to approve the policy formally. Staff have all had awareness training on the risks of radicalisation and extremism recently, but this training has yet to be extended to apprentices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Apprentices benefit from a well-planned learning programme. An initial 50-day induction period, in which apprentices complete an extensive range of online training modules, enables them to acquire and practise quickly the specialist skills and knowledge required for the retail travel industry, and to become valued employees.
- Very effective on-the-job coaching and supervision by assessors, mentors and store managers enable apprentices to develop good retail skills rapidly and, as a result, they become much more confident in dealing with a varied range of customers. Apprentices demonstrate highly effective workplace skills such as how to engage with customers to understand their holiday needs, including clarifying any mobility or travel assistance needs they may have, and how to book the varied components they require for a successful holiday.
- Apprentices extend their knowledge of the retail leisure and travel industry successfully beyond that required for their qualification by attending new product launches provided by specialist tour operators regularly. They share their newly gained knowledge of holiday resorts and cruise destinations effectively with other store colleagues at weekly staff training meetings. Apprentices rapidly gain confidence in working in different settings and with different teams by covering for absent colleagues at other store locations.
- Store managers monitor apprentices' on-the-job performance closely and provide good, constructive feedback on their performance against challenging retail performance targets and how they are performing against the TUI corporate values and expectations. The large majority of apprentices benefit from the detailed and valued feedback provided by store managers, on a monthly basis, as to what they are doing well and what they could have done better, such as raising customers' awareness of travel insurance, and resort tours and excursions. However, in a small minority of instances, managers do not record this developmental feedback in sufficient detail to help apprentices make the progress of which they are capable between reviews.
- Assessors provide good support to apprentices via frequent contact whether by visiting the store, by telephone or through email communication. Apprentices receive a thorough and detailed action plan that outlines precisely the range and types of evidence that they need to collect to support their progress towards their qualifications. Assessors provide sharply focused and accurate feedback on the standards of apprentices' work; as a result, apprentices have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve further. Assessors use a good variety of assessment methods, including thorough observations and good use of oral questioning; this ensures that most apprentices are on target to complete their qualification in the planned timescales.
- Apprentices develop the English and mathematical skills necessary for them to meet the standards of the apprenticeship framework. However, assessors and staff do not reinforce or monitor the development of these skills beyond apprentices' initial starting points. In some cases, assessors do not correct spelling and punctuation errors sufficiently in written work produced by apprentices, who are often unaware that improvements need to be made.
- Initial information, advice and guidance are effective in ensuring that apprentices are placed on suitable courses. Apprentices have a good understanding of the career paths available to them at TUI. Store managers and mentors ensure that each apprentice receives individualised training and support to enable them to be successful in their chosen careers. Annual celebratory events help reinforce career pathways, and apprentices are enthusiastic about their training.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity and the importance of respecting different cultures and lifestyles as part of a democratic society. They are confident to apply this knowledge in a wide range of situations that are relevant to their job roles. However, assessors do not routinely discuss and reinforce these aspects with apprentices to broaden their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

- Apprentices improve their self-confidence swiftly and become more assured and competent in the retail travel sector as a result of their apprenticeship. They respond well to the high expectations set for them by managers and aspire to achieve well. Learners enjoy working for TUI, as retail travel apprentices, and all are keen to progress their careers within the industry.
- Apprentices are articulate, they are very professionally presented and their punctuality and timekeeping are exemplary. They rapidly develop a sound understanding of the operational processes needed to arrange and book holidays. Apprentices develop their personal, social and employability skills very well; for example, they respond efficiently and effectively to a wide range of customers' queries both on the telephone and face to face in the retail stores.
- Apprentices develop good independent learning skills as they work towards completing their qualifications; they complete allocated tasks required for their learning programme between assessor visits enthusiastically, requiring only minimum supervision.
- Apprentices receive highly effective support in their stores from managers, their mentor and other staff; as a result, they develop good skills and behaviours that enable them to achieve their qualification and succeed in their work role. The majority of apprentices progress from an intermediate-level to an advanced-level apprenticeship and virtually all gain permanent employment with the company.
- Managers are good role models for apprentices and, as a result, most apprentices aspire to assume additional responsibilities; this prepares them for higher level positions in the company. For example, one advanced-level apprentice deputises for the store manager in their absence. Another apprentice following an intermediate-level programme takes responsibility for managing the inventory and ordering the store's stationery and brochures.
- Apprentices enjoy the high-quality, specialist on-the-job training they receive from their managers and store staff, such as learning how to use bespoke software to browse and book different holiday types for customers and how to carry out currency exchange accurately in the travel bureau. Online learning resources used by apprentices are of a high quality and provide a wide range of travel and customer service information that tests their knowledge and understanding on a wide range of topics such as worldwide destinations.
- Apprentices are very positive about the additional travel-related experiences they gain through a wide range of educational programmes that contribute to their on-the-job training. These include attending trips to overseas destinations and themed events, such as cruise and theme-park days, through which apprentices enhance their knowledge of different destinations and expand their information of the aspects that contribute to a positive holiday experience for customers. For example, after a training visit to Portugal, an intermediate-level apprentice very ably shared with customers and other store staff the highlights and benefits of taking a holiday in that country.
- Apprentices feel safe in work and know how to report any concerns; they have a good understanding of safe working practices and are particularly aware of in-store security practices. However, while apprentices feel safe and work safely, their understanding of issues such as the safe use of the internet and the risks of radicalisation are not routinely extended by assessors during their apprenticeship programme.
- Apprentices act as good ambassadors for the company and for other staff; they treat all customers with respect, tolerance and understanding. Apprentices identify accurately, and support well, those customers who have differing needs, including those with disability or limited mobility, and who may need additional assistance and consideration as part of their future travel arrangements.

Outcomes for learners

are good

- The large majority of apprentices make at least the progress expected, given their carefully identified starting points, existing skills and qualifications. A small minority of apprentices are making better than expected progress. Apprentices work steadily through their vocational qualifications under the close guidance and encouragement of their assessor and store managers. The standard of apprentices' work is good; they develop skills, knowledge and behaviours that meet the requirements of their qualifications and the needs of TUI.

- The proportion of apprentices who achieved their frameworks successfully within the expected timeframe improved significantly in 2014/15 to well above the performance of other, similar providers, following a decline in the previous year.
- Differences in the achievement between groups of apprentices, including by geographical location, gender and learning disability, have narrowed and their performance is above the respective national group rates. However, achievement gaps still exist between different apprenticeship programmes, particularly for the small minority of adult apprentices aged 19 to 24 on intermediate-level apprenticeships who do not achieve as well as younger apprentices. Outcomes for the few apprentices aged 24 or over are poor.
- Apprentices develop particularly good employability skills through very effective planning of on-the-job training and access to good-quality learning resources, such as the 'addicted to learning' and 'travel geography' online learning courses that prepare them successfully for their intended job roles within the travel industry. Apprentices quickly gain confidence in their knowledge of European and worldwide travel destinations and use this information well to assist customers in making informed decisions as to their individual travel needs; as a result, TUI gains well-skilled and knowledgeable staff who become valued employees and who contribute well to business performance.
- Progression for apprentices into sustained employment is very high; virtually all apprentices who graduate secure permanent employment subsequently within the company. The majority of apprentices who complete their intermediate-level apprenticeship successfully are supported to progress to an advanced-level apprenticeship. A small minority of apprentices gain early promotion as cabin crew, cruise experts, after-travel customer support advisers and activity leaders.
- Celebration of apprentices' success is good. High standards of apprenticeship performance are celebrated well though the company's extensive involvement in nominating high-performing apprentices for consideration in national skills awards, for which a number of TUI apprentices have been shortlisted as finalists.
- The small minority of apprentices who are required to complete functional skills qualifications achieve broadly in line with expectations; however, first-time pass rates at level 1 in functional skills in mathematics require improvement.

Provider details

Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	111
Principal/CEO	Caroline Kitcher, HR Director TUI UK and Ireland
Website address	www.tuigroup.com/en-en

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)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	43	22	1	15	–	–		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main sub-contractors:	■ No subcontracted provision.							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Victor Reid, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Adkins	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the development manager vocational learning, 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 apprentices 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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