

# Inspection of PGL Travel

Inspection dates:

26–28 October 2021

## Overall effectiveness

## Inadequate

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

PGL Travel is an employer provider founded in 1957 to specialise in outdoor educational activity experiences for children and young people aged seven to 17. The provider operates 14 residential centres in the United Kingdom, nine centres in France and Australia, and a head office in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. The provider has approximately 300 permanent staff – including apprentices – and employs approximately 2,000 seasonal staff. At the time of the inspection there were 42 apprentices, all following apprenticeship standards. Twenty-seven were studying outdoor activity instructor standards at level 3, 10 were studying the team leader/supervisor standard at level 3, one apprentice was studying departmental/operations manager standard at level 5, two apprentices were studying the hospitality team member (food production) standard at level 2, and two apprentices were studying business administration at level 3.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Leaders and managers have not taken appropriate steps to ensure the safety of all apprentices. While apprentices report feeling safe, they are not made sufficiently aware of the risks around them; consequently, they are unable to articulate these risks or take informed actions to keep themselves safe.

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently challenging to provide all apprentices with the opportunity to meet their potential. Tutors do not use information on apprentices' starting points to plan their learning, and consequently apprentices with prior skills or experience are not appropriately challenged to achieve to their capabilities.

Most apprentices understand the career paths available to them at the provider. However, too few apprentices understand how the apprenticeship they are following meets their personal career goals, and what their next steps in further education, training, or employment outside of the provider may be.

Apprentices understand the professional behaviours expected of them and demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy with clients. Their relationships with peers are positive and respectful, and they speak highly of the support they receive.

Apprentices enjoy their learning. They value the opportunity to work in the provider's outdoor activity centres and are committed to their apprenticeship. Many apprentices live at the provider's centres during their apprenticeship and are living away from home for the first time.

Apprentices develop significantly in confidence as a result of their training. They speak with pride about their achievements and how they are better able to communicate with colleagues and guests.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have developed an appropriate and logically ordered curriculum for apprentices, which is designed to tackle the identified skills shortages within the outdoor activity industry. As part of the trailblazer group, they have been one of the first providers to offer the outdoor activity instructor apprenticeship at level 3 to fulfil their long-term labour needs, with an ambitious plan to offer progression routes throughout the company. They have also created a well-conceived and successful 'chef academy' which offers apprenticeships in food production, to meet the challenges the provider faces in recruiting suitably skilled staff.

Managers do not effectively challenge the quality of apprenticeships. They conduct a range of quality assurance activities, however the outcomes from these activities are largely process-driven. They do not sufficiently focus on, or consequently identify,

areas for development that will help them improve the quality of the apprenticeships they offer.

Leaders have not ensured that there are appropriate arrangements in place for scrutiny of the quality of the apprenticeships they offer. The board does not have a suitably experienced member to be able to hold leaders of the apprenticeship programme to account. As a result, leaders of the apprenticeship programme do not receive appropriate challenge to improve the quality of the apprenticeships they provide.

Curriculum leaders do not ensure that tutors use the starting points of apprentices to inform the planning of learning. While some initial assessment does take place, this is not shared with those responsible for apprentices' learning. As a result, tutors are unable to set appropriately challenging targets based on this information or monitor apprentices' progress over time.

Learning and development officers' tracking of apprentices' progress towards acquiring the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful in their apprenticeship is not sufficiently rigorous. They track apprentices' progress against assessment criteria rather than the knowledge, skills and behaviours identified in the apprenticeship standard. As a result, apprentices are not sufficiently challenged to deepen their knowledge and extend their learning beyond these criteria.

Tutors do not routinely develop the English and mathematics skills of all apprentices throughout their apprenticeship. Apprentices complete an assessment of their skills at enrolment. However, only those apprentices who need support to achieve qualifications receive development in these areas. As a result, too few apprentices develop their English and mathematics knowledge and skills throughout their apprenticeship.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices' line managers are sufficiently involved in apprentices' learning. Line managers have not been supported to ensure they understand what apprentices need to know and do to be successful in their apprenticeship and are not involved in reviews of apprentices' progress. As a result, they are unable to support apprentices fully in their learning and ensure that opportunities in the workplace allow apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they will need to be successful.

Apprentices undertake regular training in safeguarding which is aligned to the responsibilities of their job role. Much of apprentices' training and development in safeguarding and its related topics is focused on looking after the children in their care, but it does not place a sufficient focus on developing their understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that apprentices' understanding of life in modern Britain is sufficiently developed. At the beginning of their programme, apprentices complete training modules on a raft of topics, including equality and diversity, radicalisation and extremism, and safeguarding children. However, their

understanding of these topics is not revisited or developed throughout their programme. Although newer apprentices can recall the detail of some of these topics, those who are further into their apprenticeship can only recall receiving this training and are unable to discuss what they learned.

Leaders and managers have not conducted a suitably thorough assessment of the risks of radicalisation and extremism to their staff and apprentices. The assessment which leaders have completed does not weigh the risks of where and how apprentices or staff may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism or county lines. For example, a number of the provider's sites are in areas which have been identified as having instances of activity related to county lines; however, the risk assessment fails to identify – and consequently assess – the risks this poses to staff and apprentices, particularly those apprentices who are living and working away from home for the first time and could be vulnerable to such activity.

Leaders and managers have ensured that the curriculum which apprentices follow is appropriately sequenced so that they develop skills, knowledge and behaviours throughout their course of study. For example, apprentices in food production complete a 12-week intensive training programme at the start of their apprenticeship. They gain the knowledge and skills they need before they start practical cooking sessions. As a result, apprentices quickly make a valuable contribution in the workplace.

Apprentices develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours during their apprenticeship. For example, outdoor activity instructor apprentices learn to plan and deliver outdoor activities confidently to industry standards. They introduce activities to groups of young children, explain clearly the challenges involved and respond to questions confidently. However, this is driven by the apprentices' job role within the provider, and tutors do not ensure that this learning is aligned with meeting the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements of the apprenticeship standard. As a result, tutors miss opportunities to evaluate the contribution this learning makes towards the apprenticeship, and apprentices do not understand the progress they are making.

Leaders ensure that apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Risk assessments are completed by an external organisation, and tutors use these to provide the support the apprentice needs. For example, apprentices with autism spectrum disorder and dyslexia have had strategies put in place to support them, including wearing ear buds, or contacting their team leader to be removed from a situation if they feel the need to do so.

Leaders have ensured that apprentices receive their entitlement to time away from the workplace to complete their studies. Apprentices' training is organised into intensive blocks around peak activity times for the provider's residential centres, for example prior to the start of each season and over the quieter winter period, with further sessions arranged throughout the year. As a result, apprentices are given the time they need to focus on their learning.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders and managers have not developed a culture of safeguarding to ensure that apprentices are kept safe or know how to keep themselves safe. They have identified a senior member of staff as a designated safeguarding lead, who heads a safeguarding board responsible for safeguarding across the provider's business. The board receives regular updates on incidents from centres; however, the actions the board takes focus predominantly on process and policy, and do not focus sharply enough on the root cause of safeguarding-related incidents, or actions to prevent or minimise them.

Leaders and managers have not acted rapidly enough to assess, and consequently take actions to mitigate, the risks to staff and apprentices of sexual harassment and/or assault. Leaders identified a concerning number of allegations of staff-on-staff sexual harassment and assault at the provider's residential centres and arranged a dedicated meeting to take action to prevent these issues occurring in future. However, leaders did not have a sufficient focus on the circumstances surrounding the allegations, or fully assess the risks to staff and apprentices. Consequently, leaders were unable to put in place effective actions to deal with or reduce instances of these allegations between staff, which have continued to be reported in the months since the meeting was held.

Apprentices undergo awareness training on topics such as consent, appropriate behaviour, and an individual's right to change their mind. They complete this training at the beginning of the apprenticeship during induction. However, learning and development officers do not revisit this training with apprentices throughout their learning, and consequently apprentices' deeper understanding of these topics is not routinely developed.

Apprentices report feeling safe. They are able to identify who they would go to if they felt they needed help.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders must take immediate action to assess, evaluate, and consequently mitigate the risks to all apprentices and staff of sexual harassment and assault, ensuring they take into account those who are more vulnerable, such as young apprentices living away from home for the first time.
- Leaders must ensure that they take immediate action to assess the risks of radicalisation and extremism and county lines to apprentices in the locations where they live and work and take steps to ensure that apprentices' knowledge of these risks is appropriately developed.
- Leaders should ensure that there are appropriate procedures in place to assure the quality of the apprenticeships, leading to the improvement of the quality of the apprentices' experience.

- Leaders should ensure that they are held to account for the quality of apprenticeships they offer by arranging appropriately independent scrutiny and challenge through a structure of governance.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices receive development of their English and mathematics skills throughout their programmes, irrespective of their prior qualifications.
- Curriculum leaders should ensure that the starting points of apprentices are taken into account when planning learning, and that targets are sufficiently challenging for all apprentices based on their prior knowledge or experience.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that the review process includes the apprentices' line manager and focuses more closely on the knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices are developing, and the progress they are making.

## Provider details

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<b>Address</b>	Alton Court Penyard Lane Ross-On-Wye Herefordshire HR9 5GL
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<b>CEO</b>	Anthony Jones
<b>Provider type</b>	Employer
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of learning and development, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Stuart Collett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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