

# Inspection of Data Law Limited

Inspection dates:

16–18 February 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Data Law Limited is an independent training provider based in Liverpool, Merseyside. It specialises in training for the legal profession and works with employers nationally. At the time of the inspection, there were 49 apprentices studying standards-based apprenticeships. Around half of apprentices were studying the level 3 paralegal apprenticeship. The remainder were studying level 5 operations and departmental manager, level 3 team leader or supervisor and level 3 technical salesperson apprenticeships. The provider delivers all provision and carries out apprentices' progress reviews online.

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

Almost all apprentices enjoy their programmes. They value the support they receive from their trainers in their online learning and individual sessions. A minority of apprentices routinely cancel their sessions and consequently have low attendance. Leaders have recently put new procedures in place so that trainers effectively follow up any absences. Missed sessions are rescheduled to help apprentices catch up. As a result, the large majority of apprentices are making their expected progress.

Apprentices benefit from their trainers' experience of working in the legal profession. Trainers have up-to-date knowledge in civil law and management practices. As a result, apprentices develop detailed knowledge of the most current legal and managerial topics.

Trainers do not prepare apprentices early enough to complete their final assessments. Most apprentices have only recently become aware of higher-grade opportunities. Leaders have recently put additional sessions in place for apprentices to improve their work to a higher standard. As a result, all level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices that complete their final assessments achieve high grades.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, level 5 operational and departmental manager apprentices develop deeper knowledge of the solicitor's regulation authorities' standards and regulations, such as legal aid and compensation. Level 3 paralegal apprentices learn about wills, criminal litigation and conveyancing. This allows them to file cases and support associates in their legal practices.

Apprentices feel safe. They demonstrate a mature, positive attitude to their learning. They manage their own work schedules and watch webinars on legal writing, probate and family law. This results in them developing new knowledge and making progress towards their final assessments.

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

Leaders have been too slow to improve the quality of education since the new provider monitoring visit. There is too much inconsistency in the quality of education that different apprentices receive. Level 3 paralegal apprentices receive a better quality of training than apprentices on the level 5 operations and departmental manager apprenticeship programme. A few of the weaknesses identified at the previous monitoring visit still remain. For instance, leaders have only recently put plans in place for apprentices to develop the required skills to complete English and mathematics functional skills examinations. This means that the majority of apprentices have yet to complete their examinations and have not completed their apprenticeship on time.

Leaders do not provide effective initial advice and guidance for their current apprentices. Apprentices were not aware of the content, study requirements or final

assessments that they need to complete. As a result, nearly half of apprentices have left their apprenticeship early. However, those that remain make good progress.

Leaders do not gather information on apprentices' prior knowledge and experience at the start of their programme. This leads to apprentices with experience completing the same programme as those with no experience. Leaders have recently devised new procedures to collect pre-enrolment information for new recruits. However, as no new apprentices have been recruited since the new provider monitoring visit, the impact of this has yet to be tested.

Leaders do not ensure that trainers effectively plan the curriculum for all apprenticeships. Level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices complete additional qualifications that are not part of the apprenticeship standard at the beginning of their programme. As a result, they do not start the key components of their apprenticeship for several months. These apprentices do not make their expected progress. Leaders, in conjunction with trainers, have developed a new curriculum delivery plan that sequentially builds apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. This has yet to be implemented.

Leaders do ensure that apprentices receive ongoing careers advice and guidance. Trainers discuss internal promotion and different legal pathway opportunities with apprentices during their reviews and one-to-one sessions. However, apprentices are unaware of the wider opportunities, such as further study or the range of careers in the legal sector.

Leaders have improved communication with employers. For instance, the vast majority of employers now participate in apprentices' progress reviews. Leaders monitor apprentices' progress and agree relevant workplace projects with apprentices' employers. This helps apprentices to put their new knowledge and skills into practice in the workplace.

Trainers have recently improved the planning of on- and off-the-job learning. Apprentices now have the opportunity to apply their learning at work. Level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices practise interviewing, conflict management and financial analysis as part of their job role. Level 3 paralegal apprentices study legal ethics and codes of conduct. They apply their new knowledge when shadowing solicitors and completing first drafts of witness statements. However, trainers do not have effective plans in place for the small minority of apprentices who are not making expected progress to help them catch up.

Leaders have introduced an effective personal development curriculum. This raises apprentices' awareness of topics such as mental health, rule of law, equality and diversity. Apprentices use this knowledge appropriately when dealing with clients. However, apprentices have a limited understanding of topics on healthy lifestyles.

Governance arrangements have recently been put in place. The chair of governors has experience of further education which they use to provide support to leaders on how

to make the necessary improvements. However, as this arrangement is in its infancy, the impact on improving the quality of training is not yet evident.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders place a high priority on keeping apprentices safe, and on their mental health and well-being. Apprentices feel safe. They are aware of how to contact the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and know how to raise concerns. Apprentices complete regular training that enables them to recognise the signs of workplace stress and instances of bullying.

The DSL provides useful information to staff and apprentices about external agencies and partners who deal with issues such as stress and anxiety. However, the DSL recognises that further links with the police and awareness of local risks across all regions need developing so that apprentices can keep themselves and others safe.

Leaders recruit staff safely. They complete appropriate checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with apprentices.

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

- Leaders should monitor the impact of their quality assurance strategies so that they make swift progress towards all areas of improvement.
- Leaders should ensure that trainers use the information collected on apprentices' prior knowledge, skills and behaviours to plan an individualised programme of learning from the beginning of their apprenticeship.
- Leaders should ensure that staff provide effective ongoing careers advice and guidance so that apprentices are aware of opportunities for further study and other careers in the legal sector.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices receive robust initial advice and guidance so that they and their employers fully understand their commitments to an apprenticeship.
- Leaders should develop individualised catch-up plans for the small minority of level 3 paralegal apprentices who are not making their expected progress.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Charles Peter
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the internal quality adviser, 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

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