

# Inspection of Innersummit Limited

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 September 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Apprenticeships **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Innersummit Limited started to provide training in leadership and management in 2004. It secured its first directly funded contract to provide apprenticeship training in 2019. The provider works closely with a small number of large and very large employers that require apprenticeship training to develop the management and supervisory skills in their organisations. Approximately two thirds of apprentices are located in the north-east of the country, with the remaining third based in London. At the time of the inspection, there were 69 apprentices on the level 3 business administrator standard, 42 on the level 3 team leader standard, 24 on the level 5 coaching professional standard and 20 studying the level 5 operations management standard. All apprentices are aged 19 and over.

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

Apprentices develop their confidence well. They are able to solve problems and tackle situations at work by speaking out to offer alternative views during team meetings. Apprentices in level 3 business administration successfully develop their skills in public speaking and communicating accurately, including the writing of formal emails using appropriate, professional language.

Apprentices take pride in their work, and produce work of a high standard. They provide detailed descriptions of their learning through well-researched, referenced and accurately written reflective accounts that relate clearly to what they do in the workplace. Apprentices record their own coaching sessions so they can review their effectiveness as a new coach and adjust their practice, drawing on different leadership styles. They produce improvement charts related to staff performance to demonstrate the impact that they have in their roles.

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours throughout their programme. Many take on new responsibilities as project managers or lead on organisational change. Workplace managers encourage apprentices, such as those on level 3 team leading, to chair meetings to provide them with experience of delivering key messages and managing stakeholder relationships.

Apprentices demonstrate mature and professional attitudes. Staff role model professional workplace behaviours effectively. They have high expectations for learners about how they conduct themselves in learning and at work. However, in a few instances, staff are too lenient in their expectation of apprentices' attendance at sessions, and they allow workplace pressures to take priority over face-to-face training.

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

Leaders collaborate closely with employers to deliver leadership and coaching training that meets their needs. For example, they have designed a bespoke apprenticeship for a government department that is tailored to their exacting requirements. They have also collaborated with a local university to design an apprenticeship that aims to contribute to changing the leadership culture of the organisation by enabling staff to take a self-directed and proactive approach to improving performance within their departments.

Leaders have recruited well-qualified staff who are credible in their field. Most are qualified to at least degree level in leadership, retail or business administration, with many staff holding level 7 qualifications. Staff have a range of industry experience, including holding senior leadership positions within the banking sector, the National Health Service and automotive industries.

Leaders have successfully taken on a number of apprentices from another training provider which has ceased offering apprenticeships. When they joined, this cohort of

apprentices were significantly behind on their programme. Staff have worked hard to re-engage the apprentices in learning, working closely with employers and supervisors to get them back on track. Most apprentices are now making expected progress, with many already in the final stage of their apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers use a variety of activities to improve the quality of teaching. They use the information from their observations of teaching to plan additional staff training, such as how to facilitate effective online training, to ensure that the quality of teaching is of a high standard across the organisation.

Learning coaches use their extensive expertise to provide lively workshop sessions that inspire apprentices to learn. They coach small groups of apprentices to encourage them to discuss, analyse and find solutions to tasks. Learning coaches facilitate practical team-building exercises in which apprentices use limited resources to build the tallest model tower. Apprentices then analyse their contributions to these activities to identify their own leadership style and skills.

Learning coaches use assessment well to test apprentices' knowledge and understanding. They encourage apprentices to evaluate theories to enable them to put their knowledge into practice in the workplace, such as by comparing the associated strengths and weaknesses of a range of leadership styles. Apprentices conduct thorough evaluations of their work and go on to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

Learning coaches provide apprentices with helpful feedback on their written work and in their reflective accounts, where apprentices describe what they have learned during off-the-job training sessions. They use feedback effectively to identify what is going well and what apprentices need to do to improve. Learning coaches make additional suggestions for apprentices to consider, such as alternative coaching models that will further enhance their practice, and they offer guidance on how to improve apprentices' ability to link theory effectively to their practice at work.

Learning coaches use progress reviews successfully to check the knowledge and skills that apprentices learn. Employers and apprentices value these reviews as they clearly identify what is going well and the actions that they need to take. Employers work closely with learning coaches to provide apprentices with the specific training that they need at work. For example, they provide level 3 team leading apprentices with opportunities to lead teams and chair formal management meetings.

Employers value the benefits that apprenticeship training brings to their organisation. They report increased productivity as a result of the training and that apprentices often become the expert in their field at their place of work. For example, level 5 coaching apprentices who learn about change management are identified within their organisation to support other managers to lead their teams through change.

Staff provide good support to help apprentices to develop their English and mathematics skills. They then assess the effectiveness of apprentices' skills in the

workplace. For example, learning coaches support apprentices to develop the mathematics skills that they use to plan their budgets and calculate their staffing resource. However, for the small number of apprentices who need functional skills qualifications, support for the development of their skills has been too slow, which has delayed their progress towards completing their apprenticeship.

Governors hold leaders to account effectively for most aspects of the provider's work. They have a range of experience in commercial, financial, education and safeguarding sectors that they use well in their governance roles. Governors receive a range of detailed reports about the provider's performance. However, as they recognise, the reports do not provide sufficiently succinct information about apprentices' progress.

Leaders ensure that apprentices enrol on the correct apprenticeship programme to develop their individual career ambitions and improve their skills at work. However, too many apprentices do not receive the impartial careers advice and guidance that they would benefit from to make informed decisions about their potential next steps, including the additional study opportunities available on completion of their training.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding that helps protect apprentices from harm, such as the risk of radicalisation for those working in government offices. They use and disseminate pertinent information to apprentices through topical newsletters and reference materials, as well as through taught sessions.

Staff are fully aware of what they need to do should there be a concern with an apprentice and address concerns swiftly when they do occur. When safeguarding concerns are raised, which mainly relates to mental health and well-being, apprentices are supported swiftly to access counselling or other sessions to improve their well-being.

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

- Ensure that all apprentices receive high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance so they understand what they need to do to fulfil their career ambitions.
- Ensure that a higher proportion of apprentices attend the face-to-face, off-the-job training sessions so that they can fully benefit from the high-quality training that is planned for them.
- Ensure that leaders identify early enough the few apprentices making slower than expected progress, such as those studying functional skills qualifications, so that staff can take action to support them to catch up.

- Ensure that reports to governors provide them with the information that they need to hold leaders to account for all aspects of the provider's work, including apprentices' progress.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2625243
<b>Address</b>	7 and 8 Delta Drive Road Gateshead NE11 9DJ
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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Chris Andreou
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<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 managing director, 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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