

# Inspection of System Group Limited

Inspection dates:

1 to 4 November 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Adult learning programmes

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Information about this provider

System Group Limited (SGL) is a national independent learning provider based in Speke, Liverpool. SGL specialises in training adults and apprentices for the transportation, logistics and supply chain industry. SGL provide training programmes for adults to become van drivers and supply chain and warehouse operatives. SGL provide apprenticeship programmes from level 2 to level 5. Most apprentices study on large goods vehicles or leadership and management programmes. SGL work with 18 subcontractors, who deliver the practical driver training and testing aspect of the apprenticeship.

At the time of the inspection, 269 adults were enrolled on the driving goods vehicle programme, comprising of qualifications in health and safety, the principles of warehousing and storage, and driving goods vehicles. A further 16 adults were completing a level 3 diploma in business through a subcontractor. There were 563 apprentices in learning on 13 programmes. Four hundred and sixty-seven apprentices were enrolled on the level 2 large goods vehicle driver C + E, and 34 on the level 3 team leader or supervisor standard. The remaining apprentices were enrolled on leadership, management and logistics apprenticeship standards, from level 2 to level 5.

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

Many learners and apprentices are frustrated because of frequent changes of staff at SGL. This has impacted on their progress. High staff turnover of skills coaches and the resulting negative impact on the organisation and communication relating to their course or apprenticeship, has led to too many learners and apprentices making slow progress.

Most learners and apprentices demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning. They recognise the advantages it offers, not least sustained employment in the logistics industry. Learners and apprentices explain how the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they develop contribute to their effectiveness in the workplace.

Most learners and apprentices develop increasing confidence and competence as they progress through their programme. Many apprentices have high aspirations to potentially progress to supervisory or transport manager roles within their companies. They are aware of the potential progression routes within their industry, such as moving from driving roles to transport management.

Learners, apprentices and staff demonstrate professional, positive relationships in online groups and one-to-one meetings. Skills coaches develop a good rapport with learners, aided by their credibility attained from their own experience of the transport and logistics sector. They create a welcoming learning environment, which encourages learners and apprentices to contribute during online sessions.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and can relate safeguarding to the workplace. They understand the risks of radicalisation and extremism and how they relate to the transport industry. Learners and apprentices explain the potential dangers of intruders in lorries and the trafficking of illegal immigrants. They are quick to identify the need to report concerns, such as unsafe working practices or bullying, to their managers.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale and strategy for the specialist curriculum they offer. They have used their experience and expertise in the transportation and logistics industry to develop adult learning and apprenticeship programmes that provide training to meet the critical national shortage of drivers in the sector. However, leaders do not ensure that they provide a consistently high-quality curriculum that meets the needs of all learners and apprentices.

Leaders and managers plan a logically sequenced curriculum for both adults and apprentices. Adults begin learning about the vital health and safety work that underpins transport and logistics before studying about safe warehousing and storage. They learn about driving goods vehicles and how to prepare the vehicle for use; they learn also about how to follow routes and drive safely. However, leaders

do not plan the programme over a long enough period to ensure that learners achieve their intended outcomes in a timely manner.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that learners and apprentices receive sufficient and robust initial advice and guidance. Many adult learners are taking their first steps back into learning but are automatically enrolled on three qualifications despite the considerable barriers and challenges they face. Similarly, on the team leading apprenticeship, a few apprentices do not have enough opportunities to apply and demonstrate their new knowledge and skills at work. This is because they manage a very small team. Too many learners and apprentices leave their programme early or fail to complete and achieve on time.

The quality of education and experience of adult learners and apprentices is too inconsistent and requires improvement. Leaders have experienced high levels of staff turnover. In addition to this, the number of apprentices enrolled on the largest apprenticeship has grown significantly. This has negatively impacted on the quality of education that apprentices receive. Too many learners and apprentices have experienced changes in their allocated skills coaches throughout their apprenticeship. This has impeded their ability to make consistently strong progress. Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that those who stay on their apprenticeship to catch up and achieve swiftly when they fall behind are supported

Skills coaches do not routinely use progress reviews well enough to gauge apprentices' progress and to plan their next steps. In many cases, there are long gaps between milestone reviews, and employers do not routinely attend. A few employers are not fully aware of the progress their apprentices are making.

Leaders have recently introduced actions to bring about improvement to identified weaknesses. They have put more support in place to prepare apprentices for their final assessment. While these actions are beginning to have a positive impact on the few apprentices who have more recently completed their final assessment, it is still too early to fully see the impact on apprentices' final assessments. On programmes for adult learners, leaders and managers have built in more time for preparation for employment, such as preparing CVs and improving interview techniques. However, the destinations of adult learners into employment remain low.

Leaders and managers use a range of quality assurance processes to monitor and identify areas for improvement in the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive. The quality team frequently sample learners' work and use observations of teaching and learning to identify areas for further development for skills coaches. However, leaders' feedback from observations do not always challenge skills coaches sufficiently, to improve their teaching practice further.

Leaders have invested in the development of staff new to teaching with the introduction of an 'academy' to improve their teaching skills. They ensure that they recruit skills coaches with vocational expertise in the sector and provide them with training to gain teaching qualifications. Skills coaches value the support and development that they receive.

Leaders consider the well-being of their staff. They have introduced a range of support mechanisms, including trained mental health first aiders, listening groups, rewards, and recognition, to promote a productive work-life balance.

Skills coaches have extensive industry experience in warehousing, storage and driving. They use this experience effectively to illustrate points and check learners' understanding. They bring theory to life, discussing the storage of electrical goods in bonded warehouses to ensure goods meet safety regulations and import duty compliance is adhered to. Learners feel that this makes learning content more memorable.

Skills coaches integrate English and mathematics into the curriculum effectively. Learners and apprentices calculate driving hours and braking distances using tachographs. They use acronyms and technical language with increasing confidence, referring to coding on labels as alphanumeric, numeric and alphabetical and storage of stock as 'fifo' (first in first out). Learners and apprentices produce work of a good standard that meets the level required.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures so that staff understand their responsibilities to keep learners and apprentices safe. The safeguarding team, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL are appropriately trained and qualified to carry out their roles. Leaders follow safe recruitment practices and ensure that training staff are suitable to work with learners and apprentices.

All staff benefit from safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. The DSL provides skills coaches with current topics to update learners and apprentices on safeguarding issues, such as sexual harassment and cyber-bullying. Leaders have recently introduced an interactive location map that identifies local support agencies, including bereavement support and foodbanks, to refer learners should they need it.

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

- Leaders should continue to stabilise their staffing, to ensure continuity and consistency of teaching for their learners and apprentices.
- Leaders should ensure that they plan programmes that give learners and apprentices sufficient time to complete, achieve and progress to their intended destinations and careers.
- Leaders should ensure that they provide comprehensive information, advice and guidance to learners and apprentices so that they are on the right programme. They should redirect adult learners who are not yet ready for the full driving goods vehicle programme to alternative provision.

- Skills coaches should use information about all learners' and apprentices' prior knowledge, skills and experience to plan learning that meets their individual needs and develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be successful.
- Skills coaches should use progress reviews more effectively to monitor apprentices' progress and plan their next steps. They should work with employers to ensure that they are fully aware of the progress apprentices make.
- Leaders and skills coaches should take swift action to ensure apprentices catch up and achieve quickly when they fall behind.
- Leaders should continue to strengthen their professional development programme to further improve the teaching practice of skills coaches.

## Provider details

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<b>Contact number</b>	07783 155515
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.system-training.com">www.system-training.com</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Paul Hudson
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 to 23 February 2017

## Main subcontractors

Automotive Transport Training Limited  
 Apex Training Centres (UK) Limited  
 Wiltshire Transport Training &  
 Development Limited  
 Dave Hughes Driver Training Limited  
 Teesside LGV Training Limited  
 2 Start Limited  
 Dulson Training Limited  
 GTG Training Limited  
 Wallace School of Transport Limited  
 Viamaster Training Limited

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, 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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