

# Inspection of The London Hairdressing Apprenticeship Academy Limited

Inspection dates:

16 to 19 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
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Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## Information about this provider

The London Hairdressing Apprenticeship Academy Limited (LHAA) is a national independent learning provider. It has been a subsidiary of Learning Curve Group since 2020. LHAA provide a diverse range of online adult learning programmes and apprenticeships. LHAA has six hairdressing and beauty therapy academy centres in Hertfordshire, London, Essex and Surrey. LHAA provides face-to-face adult learning and apprenticeship training at these academy centres.

At the time of inspection, 957 learners were studying a range of adult learning and apprenticeship programmes. There were 288 adult learners attending flexible online courses from level 1 to level 3 in a diverse range of curriculum areas. These include the level 2 certificate in understanding mental health first aid and mental health advocacy in the workplace, level 3 diploma in counselling skills and level 2 cybersecurity. There were also 256 adult learners attending the academies, studying courses from level 1 to level 3. The largest of these was the level 2 diploma in hairdressing, level 1 certificate in occupational studies for the workplace and level 3 diploma in hairdressing.

At the time of inspection, LHAA did not have any subcontractors and did not have learners in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Adult learners and apprentices value the support and respect they receive from the staff at LHAA. Learners and apprentices say that tutors treat everyone equally. Learners and apprentices work with their peers in a positive atmosphere making it an enjoyable place to work and learn. Learners and apprentices are highly motivated. They quickly develop their practical skills and improve their confidence to work with clients.

Learners and apprentices receive helpful support from their tutors. Learners and apprentices value the teaching they receive. Most learners and apprentices would recommend LHAA as a good place to learn. Tutors model respectful behaviours and have strict codes of conduct. Learners and apprentices develop professional behaviours for working in their chosen industry. They attend exhibitions and competitions which challenge and further develop their expertise. Employers visit the academies and provide masterclasses which broaden the learners' and apprentices' creative skills and understanding.

Tutors motivate learners to be successful in their chosen careers. Participation activity in online learning is high. Many learners on level 2 cybersecurity courses progress to further learning in coding or to level 3 cybersecurity. Learners that are unable to attend face-to-face lessons access alternative practical sessions. However, on a few courses, such as level 2 barbering, attendance is low. Apprentices' attendance is high and has shown an improvement from the previous year.

Learners and apprentices report that they feel safe and know how to report their concerns. They describe how the friendly atmosphere makes them feel confident to talk to any member of staff. Learners who study online know the risks of online study. Learners and apprentices know that staff deal with their concerns quickly.

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

Leaders and managers have designed a flexible, ambitious and responsive curriculum. The learning programmes meet the skills needs of employers in their local and wider communities. For example, leaders have responded to the local and regional employment needs for barbering. This is now taught across the academies at LHAA. Learners and apprentices access programmes to progress into employment or change the sector area they work in. Adult learners can study level 1 occupational studies with their level 2 hairdressing course. This supports them to develop the essential customer service and communication skills employers need.

Learners and apprentices develop good knowledge and technical skills. In hairdressing, apprentices apply colour to clients' hair with increasing confidence and dexterity. They develop their confidence in a range of hair treatments and scalp care. Learners studying level 2 mental health develop strategies to improve their resilience. They share these with their work colleagues. Most learners' and apprentices' academic writing skills develop effectively over time. Learners

effectively reference the sources of research they use. Learners on level 2 mental health first aid develop their higher-order thinking skills. Learners use their reflective skills by applying counselling approaches to real-life scenarios.

Leaders and managers support tutors highly effectively to improve the standards of teaching through appropriate continuous professional development. Leaders hold annual teaching and learning conferences. They focus on the themes resulting from quality monitoring and provide the opportunity for tutors to work together. Leaders and managers are proud of the opportunities they have developed to recognise the good work of their staff. They have developed a strong set of workplace values that staff invest in.

Leaders and managers work effectively with employers and other stakeholders to adapt the curriculum. Leaders involve a national charity to review the level 3 autism spectrum disorder course. They are careful to consider the terminology used and ensure that it is reflective of the sector. Industry health specialists, such as the NHS, are consulted in the development of the level 3 counselling course.

Learners and apprentices gain a good understanding of basic knowledge before progressing to more advanced topics and skills development. Managers and tutors plan learning in a logical sequence. Learners that study the level 3 certificate in autism spectrum disorder learn about the characteristics of autism spectrum disorder. They later develop their knowledge of social interaction and communication. In hairdressing and barbering, learners understand how to do consultations with clients and shampoo their hair. They then progress to cutting hair. Learners on level 3 counselling learn the basics of counselling and how to work with clients. They develop these important skills before moving on to learn theories and ethical approaches.

Apprentices and learners benefit from tutors who are well qualified and experienced in their vocational sectors. Many continue to work in industry and have a good understanding of current practices. For example, counselling tutors have expert subject knowledge. The majority have counselling or related social work qualifications. Level 2 cybersecurity tutors frequently share examples from their current experience to make learning meaningful and relevant. They discuss why international organisations are key targets of cybersecurity attacks. A few tutors in hairdressing and beauty therapy own salons. Tutors share up-to-date practice and use relevant examples of client issues. Leaders ensure that tutors receive training and support to gain teaching qualifications if they do not already have them.

Tutors teach their lessons skilfully. They use assessment effectively to plan future learning. Tutors use a variety of approaches to check learners' and apprentices' understanding. Learners on level 2 mental health find the online learning materials well structured. This helps develop their understanding. Tutors use questioning carefully to deepen learning. For example, in Level 3 beauty, tutors discuss the previous learning about chakras. They ask probing questions about the physiology and anatomy of the adrenal glands. Tutors of hairdressing and beauty therapy often use digital quizzes to check understanding thoroughly. Functional skills tutors

effectively support apprentices. They encourage apprentices to participate in discussions. As a result, apprentices develop the skills they need to speak to clients about the hair treatments they recommend.

Apprentices with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language receive effective help with their studies. Tutors provide swift interventions to support learners to be successful. Most learners value the detailed support they receive from tutors. Learners who complete courses online value being able to fit their study around other commitments. They can access live chat support seven days a week.

Most tutors extend learning through good verbal and written feedback. Tutors provide learners with specific actions to guide improvement where knowledge is less secure. Most tutors support learners effectively to improve their English and mathematics skills. Learners on level 1 occupational studies learners improve their grammar in written work. On level 2 barbering, learners can accurately calculate treatment times. However, in beauty therapy, tutors do not encourage learners to develop the standard of their written work. Teachers do not consistently identify where learners use poor written English. Tutors overstate the quality of learners' responses. They do not consistently identify where learners use poor written English. Consequently, learners do not consistently improve their work.

Too few employers take part in apprentices' reviews. As a result, employers do not have the opportunity to review the skills apprentices develop in the workplace and agree on their future development needs. Employers value their apprentices and see them as an important aspect of sustaining their business's future. Employers appreciate the standard of training at LHAA. There is an increasing number of apprentices achieving high grades.

Learners and apprentices become respectful citizens. They have good relationships with staff and are considerate of their peers. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Learners and apprentices can explain why these values are important to them in the sector they work in. Adult learners and apprentices know how to work safely and understand and abide by health and safety legislation.

Leaders do not ensure that learners and apprentices have access to broad and impartial careers advice and guidance outside of their current sector. Tutors provide helpful support with writing CVs and letters of application. However, too few learners and apprentices on programmes, such as level 2 barbering and level 2 hairdressing, progress to a positive destination.

Board members have developed a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. They have a suitable understanding of their statutory responsibilities. They support leaders to invest in the physical resources for apprentices and learners. Leaders frequently provide board members with detailed reports for them to scrutinise. As result, board members challenge leaders appropriately to secure improvement and are actively involved in shaping the strategic direction of LHAA.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners and apprentices feel safe when they attend training and at work. Leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding for online and face-to-face learning. They have put in place appropriate policies and procedures to keep learners safe.

Designated safeguarding leads have the appropriate experience and training to carry out their roles effectively. Leaders access and use local crime and risk data to produce 'hot topic' newsletters specific to the locations where learning takes place. Learners and apprentices have an effective awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. They can explain how to keep themselves safe in their local communities. Police visit the academies and talk about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and knife crime. Learners and apprentices are confident that staff will respond swiftly to any issues or concerns they may have.

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

- Leaders must ensure that learners and apprentices receive sufficiently broad and impartial careers guidance so that they know how they can use their skills to progress to their intended next steps.
- Leaders must improve the attendance of adult learners in face-to-face learning sessions.
- Leaders must ensure that employers are involved in apprentice reviews to capture the skills apprentices develop in the workplace and agree on their future development requirements.

## Provider details

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<b>CEO</b>	Brenda McLeish OBE DL
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 to 27 July 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of excellence, 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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