

Inspection of London Underground Ltd

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

London Underground Ltd (LUL) is an employer provider based in London.

LUL, previously known as LUL Nominee BCV Limited, is a subsidiary of Transport for London. In 2017, LUL Nominee BCV Limited gained a contract to provide levy-funded apprenticeship programmes. At the time of the inspection, there were 137 apprentices on standards-based qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4 in the engineering and transportation sector. Most apprentices were on the rail engineering technician standard at level 3. Apprentices are based across different LUL network sites in London.

LUL works with one subcontractor, The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London. The college teaches some of the knowledge-based elements of the qualifications, such as mechanical principles and rail and signalling technologies, to rail engineering technician apprentices at level 3. This teaching takes place in person at the college campus based in Enfield, north London.

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

Apprentices thrive through studying in a diverse environment that represents the multicultural communities in which they live and work. Leaders have an effective strategy to develop their curriculum offer based on skills shortages in their industry and to widen participation among individuals from diverse and non-traditional backgrounds. They have successfully increased the number of female engineers and the number from a minority ethnic background.

Apprentices demonstrate exceptional professional behaviours, such as determination and resilience. They have highly positive attitudes towards their studies and work and have excellent attendance and punctuality. They are diligent about completing the work set for them outside training sessions. Employers highly value apprentices' commitment. Nearly all apprentices secure a full-time job on completion of their apprenticeship.

Leaders foster a positive culture that acknowledges and rewards apprentices' hard work and exemplary behaviours. They recognise apprentices' achievements through various awards, such as the Monthly Achievers Award. Additionally, staff encourage apprentices to participate in national and international competitions, including the international Railway Challenge Awards and the UK Apprentice of the Year Award, where they have won prizes.

Apprentices understand the risks of radicalisation and extremism and the importance of fundamental British values. They understand the risks associated with the industry in which they work, such as terrorist attacks. They know how to identify, and prevent themselves from being influenced by, those who hold extremist views.

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

Governors and senior leaders have a strong commitment to the apprenticeship programme, which is an essential part of the organisation's growth and skills development strategy. They have implemented a highly ambitious and challenging curriculum for their apprentices.

Apprentices gain vocational qualifications and skills beyond the requirements of their apprenticeship to help them progress in the rail industry. They receive highly effective, one-to-one supervision from experienced mentors during day and night placements. As a result, apprentices quickly grow in confidence, take on more responsibility and become highly competent in their roles.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum content helps apprentices to develop substantial new knowledge and skills over time. Staff help apprentices to learn the key information they need to start their roles in their work placements. For example, rail infrastructure operator apprentices gain a fundamental understanding of their work by undertaking placements in various departments. They complete customer service assistant roles before undertaking customer supervisor placements. They also

undertake service control training and learn about signalling boxes and control rooms. They develop a clear understanding of the importance of train schedules.

Trainers and assessors, including those at the subcontractor, are highly skilled subject specialists and industry experts. They use their expertise exceptionally well when teaching to give apprentices clear explanations. They frequently check apprentices' understanding and correct their mistakes. In practical sessions, trainers use demonstrations skilfully, so that apprentices understand what they need to do. They use well-crafted questioning to find and fill gaps in apprentices' knowledge. Trainers ensure that apprentices have suitable opportunities to revisit topics in lessons and practical sessions. As a result, apprentices rapidly develop sound knowledge and understanding and make excellent progress.

Trainers and assessors give apprentices detailed feedback on their work. They provide apprentices with helpful feedback on how to improve their work using relevant research, and link work-based examples with relevant theory. Apprentices value the feedback and resubmit work with appropriate revisions. Consequently, apprentices produce work of a consistently good standard and, in some cases, an exceptionally high standard. For example, level 3 lift and escalator apprentices produce comprehensive project requests and reports that are detailed and well presented and include good photographic evidence.

Apprentices' placement managers highly value the apprenticeship programme. They understand their roles and responsibilities well. They work closely with the apprenticeship team to ensure that apprentices have suitable opportunities to apply what they have learned in the workplace. They frequently communicate with staff and regularly attend progress reviews. They support apprentices in setting clear targets that relate well to specific gaps in apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. They understand well their apprentices' progress and help them achieve their targets.

Staff provide highly effective support to apprentices who need extra help. They inform relevant staff and apprentices' work placement managers about the support they need. They ensure that apprentices have appropriate arrangements and resources to help them, including extra time during assessments, read-and-write software and additional, one-to-one support in placements. As a result, most apprentices who need extra help make good progress, and most achieve their qualifications on time.

Staff prepare apprentices effectively for their final assessments. Apprentices participate in appropriately structured activities, such as frequent professional discussions, to practise and prepare for their examinations and final assessments. Apprentices achieve exceptionally well. The vast majority of apprentices stay on their programme, and nearly all achieve their apprenticeship. A high proportion of those who achieve their qualification attain a distinction.

Leaders have implemented rigorous quality assurance activities to monitor their performance. They keep a close eye on apprentices' progress across all the

programmes, including subcontracted provision. They frequently monitor teaching and training apprentices receive at the college and provide detailed feedback to subcontractor staff. They use a range of meetings and reports to track apprentices' progress. Leaders take prompt action where there are concerns about the quality of provision. As a result, apprentices receive consistently high-quality teaching and support from the subcontractor.

Since the monitoring visit, leaders have faced significant challenges, including COVID-related disruptions, changes in management in the apprenticeship team and unavailability of key team members in recent months. As a result of these challenges, leaders have been too slow to make suitable arrangements for essential tasks, such as coordinating apprentices' start dates, work placements and college timetables. Consequently, apprentices have had delays in starting their apprenticeships. They are not always clear about when they should attend college and their placement.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices have access to suitable activities to develop their talents and personal interests. Apprentices have limited resources and opportunities to engage with their communities or participate in enrichment activities beyond their qualifications. Although staff promote participation in different social groups and networks, most apprentices do not participate in these activities.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices receive consistently good careers information, advice and guidance. Apprentices nearing the end of their programme, who aspire to progress to management or higher level technical training, are unaware of the specific options or qualification pathways available to them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have implemented suitable policies and procedures to safeguard their apprentices. They provide apprentices with access to a substantial package of support and resources, such as occupational health, through their comprehensive employee assistance programme. Staff deal appropriately with apprentices' concerns and refer them to relevant support services.

Apprentices feel safe. They understand the importance of vigilance in their job roles to keep themselves and others safe. They receive appropriate health and safety training and have daily safety briefings. Staff maintain a clean and tidy work environment to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries.

Leaders ensure that all staff, including designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), receive appropriate training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. However, they do not always update essential training. Staff responsible for different aspects of safeguarding, such as staff recruitment and suitability checks, do not routinely share information. Consequently, leaders do not have suitable access to some of the essential information.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that staff responsible for safeguarding, including DSLs, have suitable access to relevant safeguarding information and records to develop a thorough oversight of safeguarding.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices have access to a range of activities to develop their talents and personal interests.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices receive detailed information, advice and guidance throughout their apprenticeship, so they are fully aware of the different options available to them at the end of their apprenticeship.
- Leaders should ensure that they have suitable resources and arrangements in place to ensure that all apprentices have a consistently positive experience at the start and throughout their apprenticeships.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2526593
Address	123 Gunnersbury Lane Acton London W3 8JR
Contact number	0207 918 6988
Website	www.tfl.gov.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Andrew Morsley
Provider type	Employer provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality standards manager of apprenticeship unit, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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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