

# Green Labyrinth

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Matt Hann, His Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Green Labyrinth (GL) was inspected in June 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

GL is a Swindon based independent training provider wholly owned by The NPTC Group of Colleges (NPTC). Adult learners account for around half of the total funded education and training provided by GL. These learners are taught in fitness centres in the north east and north west of England or at a beauty therapies centre in Swindon.

Forty-two learners aged 16 to 18 study a personal development and employability programme at entry level to level 2. Most of these learners study English and/or mathematics qualifications as part of their programme. Fourteen of these learners have high needs. The vast majority of learners join GL with few qualifications and face many social and personal barriers to learning.

Six apprentices study the lean manufacturing operative apprenticeship programme at level 2 and are based in Southampton.

### Themes

**What progress have senior leaders at NPTC made in holding leaders at Green Labyrinth to account for the quality of education and training received, particularly by learners aged 16 to 18, apprentices and learners with high needs? Significant progress**

Governors and senior leaders at NPTC are determined to rectify the shortfalls in the curriculum for all learners and apprentices at GL. They have begun to utilise the resource at NPTC to help them succeed in making the necessary improvements at GL. For example, they have deployed senior leaders, managers and specialist staff from NPTC to visit GL's Swindon site to share their expertise with staff at GL. Governors and senior leaders at NPTC have the expertise to hold leaders at GL to account. They have responded to the shortfalls identified in the quality of education at GL by introducing a greater level of scrutiny and accountability. For example, they have introduced a fortnightly board meeting to monitor the progress of the improvement plan at GL. Senior leaders at NPTC use these meetings to provide an appropriate level of challenge to GL leaders.

Senior leaders at NPTC have used their experience of quality assurance at NPTC to introduce useful scrutiny exercises at GL. For example, leaders and managers at NPTC have begun attending GL's Swindon site to undertake joint quality assurance activities, such as lesson visits. Leaders and managers at GL value these opportunities to learn from NPTC staff. Senior leaders at NPTC have directed this resource to the curriculums that are in most need of rapid improvement. This means that senior leaders at NPTC have mainly focused the ongoing scrutiny exercises on programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 and on programmes for learners with high needs.

Senior leaders at NPTC swiftly transferred the large majority of apprentices to a different training provider that can meet their training needs shortly after the full inspection visit. This means that the very small number of apprentices who do remain at GL are taught by GL assessors with expertise in the content of the apprenticeship programme.

**What progress have senior leaders at NPTC and Green Labyrinth made in providing tutors and support assistants with training in pedagogies so that they teach the content of the curriculum and support learners highly effectively?** **Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have provided helpful support to GL tutors to plan the content of a new curriculum. For example, NPTC managers provide training on the sequencing of programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 and for learners with high needs. Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have introduced useful staff working groups to promote the sharing of curriculum resources.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have begun providing useful training opportunities for staff at GL. For example, GL tutors who do not have a teaching qualification now receive the support they need to complete this training and become more effective teachers. Support assistants at GL now receive training from outside agencies with expertise in supporting learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders now assure themselves that assessors of apprenticeship programmes have the expertise to assess the curriculum content. For example, assessors of the lean manufacturing operative apprenticeship programme have up-to-date vocational knowledge in improving business capability and efficiencies. Leaders at GL have plans in place to ensure that assessors receive the training and support they need to become more effective in their job role. This includes training to conduct progress reviews for apprentices more effectively.

**What progress have senior leaders at NPTC and leaders at Green Labyrinth made in providing learners aged 16 to 18, apprentices and learners with high needs with a curriculum that meets** **Reasonable progress**

**their needs, is based on clearly identified starting points, and prepares them well for their next step?**

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have, since the previous inspection, introduced a new curriculum for learners aged 16 to 18 and learners with high needs. This curriculum now uses identified starting points to deliver to learners the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for employment and for their own personal development. Leaders now provide valuable opportunities for learners to develop their wider interests through the curriculum. For example, around one fifth of learners aged 16 to 18 now study for the bronze award on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and learn new skills such as effective teamworking.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have introduced appropriate work-related activities and work experience for their learners. Staff at GL have recently formed a partnership with the Nationwide Building Society to provide their learners with supportive and realistic experiences to help them gain future employment. For example, learners take part in practise interviews to improve their interpersonal skills.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have begun to prepare learners for their next steps more thoroughly through the curriculum they study. This means that GL tutors now encourage their learners to consider their future training options throughout the duration of their programme. For example, learners are now supported by GL staff to attend local careers events. Learners now receive useful careers information and guidance from appropriately trained and knowledgeable GL staff.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have taken the strategic decision to significantly reduce the number of apprenticeship programmes offered at GL. Leaders at GL now only provide apprenticeship programmes where they have the expertise and resources to meet the apprentices' training needs. They now offer training in just one level 2 apprenticeship programme, in lean manufacturing operative, to a very small number of apprentices. The large majority of their mid-year apprentices have since been transferred to other education providers to better meet their training needs. The remaining apprentices know how the skills they learn help them to improve their career prospects in their current job role or one similar. However, these apprentices have not yet received enough guidance about the wider opportunities in the sector that are available to them when they complete their training programme.

**What progress have senior leaders at NPTC and Green Labyrinth leaders made in ensuring that learners aged 16 to 18, apprentices and learners with high needs develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of studying the curriculum?**

**Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have made improvements in the tracking of the progress made by learners aged 16 to 18 and learners with high needs. They have introduced supportive transition activities that take place prior to learners beginning their training programme. This means that GL tutors and support assistants are better informed about what learners already know and can do at the start of their programme. Staff at GL now agree meaningful targets with their learners and review the progress for most learners appropriately.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have taken appropriate steps to identify earlier the support needed by learners aged 16 to 18 and learners with high needs. For example, GL staff meet on a weekly basis to identify individual reasons for low attendance and to monitor the progress these learners are making on their programme. These meetings follow a person-centred approach and are well informed by a team of GL staff, such as tutors, learning mentors, support assistants and counsellors, which provides support to these learners. Staff at GL identify and monitor appropriate actions that are specific to the needs of individual learners. These actions are mainly focused on helping learners to overcome the social and personal barriers they face in routinely attending their lessons. They have also begun to implement alternative methods in the teaching of the curriculum, such as a blended timetable between face-to-face and online learning. However, it is too early to identify the impact of this new approach by GL staff. For a small minority of learners with high needs, not enough progress has been made in meeting a few of their personal targets. For example, the travel training provided to these learners does not yet allow for early enough opportunities to gain meaningful practical experience in the local area.

Senior leaders at NPTC and GL leaders have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that apprentices make the expected progress in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours in the lean manufacturing operative programme. For example, apprentices use new knowledge to improve business capability, such as applying the six-sigma method. They undertake projects at their place of work to implement more efficient work-flow processes. However, GL leaders and managers do not yet track the progress of apprentices sufficiently well enough. For example, progress reviews do not always record the apprentice's achievement accurately or their off-the-job training clearly enough. Leaders and managers at GL have been slow in providing the support that their remaining apprentices need to improve their English and/or mathematics knowledge and to achieve these qualifications.

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