

Inspection of The Best Connection Group Limited

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Information about this provider

The Best Connection Group Limited is an employer provider based in Halesowen in the West Midlands.

Its focus is on training recruitment consultants to support its core business of supplying personnel to a range of sectors. These sectors include industrial, driving, warehouse, distribution and logistics sectors. The provider has over 80 branches nationally. At the time of the inspection, 46 apprentices were studying on three apprenticeship programmes. Most apprentices study the recruitment consultant standard at level 3. The remaining few study either the business administrator standard at level 3 or the customer service practitioner standard at level 2. All apprentices are 19 years old or older. The provider does not subcontract any of its provision.

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

Motivated apprentices study in calm learning environments. They enjoy learning, have high attendance and are ambitious for their future. They take pride in the good standard of work they produce. They know that their apprenticeship will develop the knowledge and skills that can help them to be successful in their careers. Many apprentices achieve promotion following the achievement of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices develop their character and confidence through their studies. They work closely with their trainers and branch managers, who support them to build their knowledge and confidence to talk to clients and colleagues fluently and professionally.

Apprentices successfully develop their understanding of fundamental British values. They gain an insight into and appreciation of diversity. Apprentices frequently recognise diversity in the workplace. For example, they identify and support clients with protected characteristics positively, ensuring that they are placed in appropriate job roles successfully.

Most apprentices take part in charitable and community projects successfully. They participate in the provider's 'better-connected' activities and raise money for several charities, such as The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals and a local food bank. As a result of this, apprentices feel proud of their accomplishments.

Apprentices have a sound understanding of what healthy relationships are in their daily lives and their workplace. They have access to relationship and family support mechanisms when needed. Apprentices are clear about their working responsibilities and develop a good understanding of professional boundaries while working with clients.

Apprentices are taught effectively how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremist views. They can recall fluently the dangers they may face in their locality, such as local dangers involving the use of fake taxis and the dangers of exploitation or trafficking. As a result, apprentices feel safe and understand whom to speak to should they have any concerns.

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

Leaders highly value the apprentices in their business. They have a strong rationale for the apprenticeship curriculums they have selected. They have chosen to offer apprenticeships that complement their strategic business objectives. The apprenticeships provide valuable development opportunities for both new and existing staff. Because of this, most apprentices stay with their employer once they have achieved their apprenticeship.

Leaders have created effective curriculums. The curriculums are well sequenced and designed to help apprentices build substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

For example, apprentices following the level 3 recruitment consultant standard learn key elements of the workplace. These include employment law and legislation. They then move on to more complex topics, such as sales and customer relationship management. As a result of this, apprentices develop a core set of knowledge and skills before building on these further.

Trainers develop highly effective, professional relationships with apprentices' branch managers. This connection ensures that there is a clear synergy between the learning that takes place off the job and the significant opportunities that apprentices receive to practise and shadow new learning. For example, apprentices on the level 2 customer service practitioner apprenticeship are given time to shadow activities and colleagues in the workplace shortly before and then after receiving teaching on related topics. As a result of this, apprentices retain knowledge in their long-term memory, and most apprentices are awarded distinction grades at their final assessments.

Trainers use the results of initial assessments successfully to plan learning. When starting the apprenticeship, apprentices take a range of tests that evaluate their initial knowledge and skills. Trainers use these results effectively to adjust learning. For example, trainers quickly adapt the training plan when apprentices have already completed some of the in-company training. This is to avoid any repetition of learning. Trainers then design targets to fill gaps in apprentices' knowledge. As a result, apprentices make swift progress from their starting points.

Trainers use highly effective teaching strategies to help apprentices learn. They use their considerable knowledge and experience to contextualise teaching for individual apprentices. In sales training, they use role-play effectively to simulate and practise sales processes. Because of this, apprentices quickly improve their understanding and apply their learning at work.

Apprentices are supported effectively to develop their English and mathematical skills throughout their apprenticeship. Trainers who teach the level 3 recruitment consultant standard use everyday tasks naturally in the workplace, for example in calculating hourly rates and charges for customers, to develop apprentices' mathematical skills. As a result, apprentices develop vocational fluency in their mathematical and English skills throughout their apprenticeship, which helps to prepare them for their next steps.

Trainers ensure that the feedback that apprentices receive is highly effective. For example, apprentices on level 3 recruitment consultant apprenticeships receive clear guidance on how to improve their client onboarding skills. This results in many apprentices making rapid progress.

Apprentices have a good understanding of the opportunities that are available to them in the workplace. For example, they have access to the Recruitment Employment Confederation. The confederation provides useful information that keeps apprentices updated on the latest opportunities and trends across the

recruitment field. Apprentices are aware of internal routes of progression. Because of this, most apprentices have a good understanding of their next steps.

Leaders ensure that trainers have access to appropriate continuing professional development (CPD). All trainers are routinely provided with monthly CPD. These opportunities include the development of professional competency by working in the branches. Trainers can choose to attend conference events, webinars and podcasts. They improve their teaching skills through shadowing and sharing good practice. Leaders use one-to-one meetings with trainers and information from the quality assurance process to identify more formal CPD. As a result, trainers are vocationally competent and highly skilled teachers.

Leaders value their staff. They have a thorough understanding of their workloads and adjust caseloads accordingly. Trainers meet with leaders weekly to discuss what has gone well and what has not and share their work burdens. They have access to an effective employee assistance programme that provides a range of support. When needed, mental health workers are available to offer help. Consequently, trainers feel supported and valued.

Governance of the provision is effective. The board includes experts from across the business and the further education sector. Governors use their considerable experience and knowledge to influence the curriculums. For example, governors identified issues with sales in branches. This resulted in the implementation of additional in-person sales training. They receive detailed reports before meetings. This allows them time to evaluate the information provided and present appropriate challenges to leaders. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of the provision and they support leaders to make any necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2674164
Address	The Best Connection Group Ltd 9 Birmingham Street Halesowen Birmingham B63 3HN
Contact number	0121 504 3060
Website	https://thebestconnection.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Neil Yorke
Provider type	Employer provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeship manager, 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

Bev Ramsell, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sharon Dowling	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Parton	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Collett	His Majesty's Inspector

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