

# Inspection of Davies Learning Solutions

Inspection dates:

19 to 22 February 2024

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

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|--|-----------------------------|
| The quality of education                     | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Behaviour and attitudes                      | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Personal development                         | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Leadership and management                    | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Adult learning programmes                    | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Apprenticeships                              | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement        |

**Information about this provider**

Davies Learning Solutions is an independent learning provider that offers training to the financial services and insurance sector through apprenticeships and Skills Bootcamps. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,748 apprentices studying standards relating to insurance, financial services and business. There were 480 apprentices studying the senior insurance professional standard at level 6, 368 studying the insurance professional standard at level 4 and 448 apprentices studying the insurance practitioner standard level 3. The remaining apprentices were studying a range of standards at levels 2 to 6 in subjects such as finance and business. Leaders have recently stopped recruiting to seven other apprenticeship standards for which they still have 88 apprentices completing their studies. A further 71 apprentices were on a break in learning. Twenty-nine apprentices were under 18 years of age.

At the time of inspection, Davies Learning Solutions was teaching its fifth cohort of insurance Skills Bootcamps funded through the Greater London Authority. There were eight learners in this cohort of the Skills Bootcamp course.

The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Learners value the support that they get from caring coaches to guide them through their qualifications. Coaches are highly knowledgeable, with experience of working in the insurance and finance sectors. Apprentices value the scenarios and real-life examples that coaches share. Apprentices develop their character and resilience. They become more confident in managing their emotions when dealing with challenging customers.

Apprentices appreciate the calm and supportive online training environment. They benefit from discussing each other's experiences in group sessions. Apprentices attend their sessions and rightly value the useful new knowledge they learn. For example, compliance and risk apprentices speak with pride about their knowledge of financial regulatory systems.

Apprentices feel reassured that they can revisit recordings of training sessions to help them revise for examinations. They receive helpful feedback from their line managers during reviews of their progress. As a result, apprentices know how to succeed in their work and studies.

Staff encourage apprentices and learners to take ownership of their studies by learning through high-quality digital learning resources alongside their online sessions. Most apprentices value this approach to help them manage their studies alongside their work responsibilities. However, a small proportion of apprentices struggle to focus and so gain an in-depth understanding of key topics when studying alone. In a few instances, level 6 apprentices struggle to catch up due to the demands of their work. Most learners on Skills Bootcamps lack the motivation to use the self-study materials and complete their qualifications.

Apprentices and learners feel safe. They benefit from thoughtful discussions with their coaches about healthy lifestyles, mental health and working with people from diverse backgrounds. Coaches teach apprentices about key industry risks, such as financial fraud and money laundering.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear strategy to teach apprentices and learners the skills needed in the insurance sector to work in roles such as assistant underwriters and brokers. Leaders have rightly recognised the need to reduce the number of apprenticeship standards they offer to focus on the areas where they have specialist expertise.

Leaders have strong relationships with employers in the sector. They regularly update the curriculum to meet the needs of learners, apprentices and employers. For example, they teach apprentices and Skills Bootcamp learners about London insurance market regulations. Apprentices gain valuable new knowledge about risk

management and claims. As a result, learners and apprentices are well prepared to market and sell insurance products in the workplace.

Staff teach vital knowledge at the start of courses. For example, Skills Bootcamp learners first learn about policy wording and benefit insurance. Insurance apprentices learn about risk transfer and regulation early in their courses. Coaches then teach apprentices how outside factors affect risk and how regulations apply in different contexts. As a result, learners and apprentices build their knowledge about how to manage claims effectively.

On most courses, managers and coaches assign online learning modules skilfully to align training with the tasks that apprentices take on at work. For example, level 4 financial adviser apprentices learn topics such as data reporting and empathy with clients, which they then apply at work. However, staff do not ensure that self-study materials set are relevant to the day-to-day roles of insurance apprentices studying at level 6.

Most teaching staff use a range of helpful techniques to help learners and apprentices remember key concepts. Coaches use case studies effectively. Apprentices apply their knowledge of insurable and uninsurable categories of risk in household contents insurance and travel insurance. Most teaching staff question apprentices suitably and correct any misunderstandings. However, in a few instances, staff do not check whether all apprentices have understood a topic before moving on to the next.

At the start of apprentices' programmes, coaches check thoroughly what apprentices already know and can do. In most instances, coaches and managers use this information to tailor the content and duration of apprentices' programmes. However, a few apprentices are frustrated as they revisit topics they already know.

Throughout the apprenticeships and Skill Bootcamps, staff set suitable and frequent assessments to check learners' and apprentices' knowledge. For example, they set written questions where apprentices recall and reflect on topics they have covered. As a result, coaches are aware of the progress that learners and apprentices make. They take suitable actions, such as arranging additional meetings, if learners or apprentices fall behind.

In most instances, coaches provide clear and guiding feedback on apprentices' written work. For example, coaches of level 4 financial adviser apprentices guide learners effectively to gain a deeper understanding of onshore and offshore bonds. As a result, most apprentices produce work of the expected standard. However, in too many instances, coaches of level 6 apprentices do not provide feedback that guides apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills further. A few learners at level 6 do not submit work that is of the professional standard expected.

Experienced tutors provide helpful training to apprentices who need to achieve English and mathematics qualifications. Tutors adapt what they teach to help fill the

gaps they identify in apprentices' knowledge. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices achieve these qualifications on their first attempt.

Leaders and managers check, through a helpful meeting at the start of the course, how they can best support apprentices with additional needs. Staff teach shorter, more frequent lessons to help learners retain information. They make appropriate adjustments to assessments. As a result, these apprentices make similar progress to that of their peers.

Too many Skills Bootcamp learners do not complete their courses or gain employment at the end of their course. Too many apprentices leave the apprenticeship to gain new roles or promotions once they have achieved their industry-related qualifications. Leaders recognise this issue and have taken suitable action to resolve it. They have increased the number of apprentices who have achieved their apprenticeship in recent years. Where apprentices do complete their apprenticeship, a high proportion achieve merit and distinction grades.

Staff and employers help apprentices understand the range of careers available to them. Leaders and managers provide helpful online resources about job roles in the sector. Learners and insurance apprentices benefit from becoming members of the professional body for insurance and financial planning. Coaches guide learners to explore career options in line with their aspirations. Employers place apprentices in different departments throughout their apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices gain a broad range of rich experiences, which helps them decide which areas they would like to specialise in further.

Leaders and managers provide a range of resources for apprentices and learners to widen their knowledge and interests outside the subject of their apprenticeship. For example, they offer networking events and online activities, such as yoga. However, too few learners and apprentices take part in these activities. Leaders and managers have not structured training for younger apprentices in wider topics, such as healthy relationships, to take place at an appropriate time in their studies.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened their governance arrangements. Governors are ambitious for the organisation and recognise its main challenges. They provide a suitably high level of challenge, which is helping to increase the number of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Improve the quality of Skills Bootcamps to ensure that learners complete their training and qualifications and move into employment on completion of their courses.

- Further increase the number of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship.
- Make sure that it plans and teaches a well-structured personal development curriculum for apprentices and learners, particularly those under the age of 18.

## Provider details

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>      | 1276474   |
| <b>Address</b>                      | 5th floor<br>20 Gracechurch Street<br>London<br>EC3V 0BG                      |
| <b>Contact number</b>               | 0208 304 3666   |
| <b>Website</b>                      | <a href="https://talent.davies-group.com">https://talent.davies-group.com</a> |
| <b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b> | Craig Potter  |
| <b>Provider type</b>                | Independent learning provider   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>  | 16 to 19 November 2021  |
| <b>Main subcontractors</b>          | None  |

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and delivery director, 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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|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rebecca Jennings, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
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| Asfa Sohail                      | Ofsted Inspector        |
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