

# INSPECTION REPORT

**LAGAT Limited**

**04 August 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

### Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LAGAT Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. LAGAT Limited (LAGAT) was established in 1987 as a consortium of Lincolnshire Co-operative Society, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, and Simons of Lincoln. The provider's head office and training centre are in the centre of Lincoln. LAGAT provides work-based learning in retail and commercial enterprise, leisure, travel and tourism, business administration and law, and information and communications technology (ICT). Most training is carried out in the workplace, although all learners receive some off-the-job training. All of the learners are employed.
2. LAGAT has, until recently, had a learndirect contract and will begin Train to Gain programmes shortly. It also has a contract to provide initial advice and guidance. It offers courses at commercial rates for local companies, in areas such as information technology (IT) and management. LAGAT has two subsidiary recruitment agencies based in Lincoln and Boston. Publicly funded training accounts for about 50 per cent of LAGAT's income.
3. LAGAT employs 35 staff, one of whom is part time. The managing director reports to a board of five other directors drawn from the parent organisations. The training/quality manager has day-to-day responsibility for work-based learning, which is funded by the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** LAGAT's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for quality improvement, whereas equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Provision is good in the contributory areas of hospitality and catering, and administration, and satisfactory in customer service.
5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The well-structured self-assessment process makes appropriate use of data and involves staff well. The report is reasonably evaluative, but it contains too much descriptive material. Most of the judgements in the report matched those of the inspection team.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Learning is well managed and staff development is good. There is a wide range of well-applied initiatives to improve the performance of staff and learners. The provision was judged to be inadequate when inspected in 2003. It had improved significantly when reinspected in 2004. The strengths have been maintained and all of the provision, including the areas of learning, and leadership and management are good.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR LAGAT LIMITED:

- raise success rates
- improve employer involvement in administration and customer service
- ensure better reinforcement of equality of opportunity during progress reviews
- make better use of data in relation to equality of opportunity
- plan the effective use of the new measures for success
- maintain the good quality of the support for literacy and numeracy and assessment practice

## GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		2

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Hospitality and catering</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	11	2	

<b>Business administration and law</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Administration</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	32	2	
<b>Customer service</b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	24	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. A team of four inspectors visited LAGAT for four days at the end of July and the beginning of August 2006. The team inspected the provision of work-based learning in hospitality and catering, and administration, and customer service, as well as LAGAT's leadership and management and quality improvement arrangements, and its measures to ensure equality of opportunity. At the time of inspection there were no ICT learners. Other areas with a small number of learners, such as travel and tourism, retailing, and warehousing and distribution, were not inspected.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	17
Number of learners interviewed	43
Number of staff interviewed	35
Number of employers interviewed	7
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	13

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Strengths**

- very effective management of learning
- particularly good support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs
- very good staff training and development
- well-applied initiatives and procedures to improve performance
- very effective actions to engage groups of under-represented learners

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient planning to introduce new measures for success
- insufficient use of data to monitor and plan for equality of opportunity

## **Retail and commercial enterprise**

### ***Hospitality and catering***

#### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' occupational skills
- good arrangements for learning
- particularly thorough progress reviews
- good assessment methods
- comprehensive literacy, numeracy and language support

#### *Weaknesses*

- slow progress of male learners in food preparation
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity

## **Business administration and law**

#### *Strengths*

- good planning and use of assessment methods
- good progress monitoring and short-term target-setting
- good arrangements for learning in administration

## LAGAT LIMITED

- very effective literacy and numeracy support

### *Weaknesses*

- poor success rates in customer service
- insufficient involvement of employers in the learning process



## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LAGAT LIMITED:**

- 'it's really good to be learning as well as working'
- 'other jobs have not offered me training'
- 'friendly, helpful and supportive staff, especially training officers'
- 'the variety of things that I can learn'
- 'the learning helps me with my own plans'
- 'the good job placement service has helped me'
- 'the qualification in customer service should really be helpful'
- 'getting new skills and enhancing them with LAGAT's support'
- 'it's a welcoming organisation'
- 'they are really committed to helping me'
- 'being treated like an adult'
- 'support is available when you need it'
- 'my life has been changed since starting the programme'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK LAGAT LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- 'not being asked by my assessor to do more work than is necessary'
- 'being able to see my assessor more often'
- 'less paper-based activity, more computer-based activity'
- 'would like to know the timescales for my qualification earlier than at present'
- 'repetitive nature and vagueness of underpinning knowledge questions'

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- very effective management of learning
- particularly good support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs
- very good staff training and development
- well-applied initiatives and procedures to improve performance
- very effective actions to engage groups of under-represented learners

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient planning to introduce new measures for success
- insufficient use of data to monitor and plan for equality of opportunity

8. LAGAT manages all aspects of learning in a very effective way. A thorough and well-applied system ensures that all learners' details and progress are reviewed frequently. Each month the training manager uses this information in effective individual discussions with each learner's training officer. The reviews consider a learner's progress, support matters, and potential barriers to completion. The discussions are well recorded, with clear, agreed action points. The action points are monitored and managed appropriately to improve the learner's performance. Monthly case conferences take place where groups of training officers consider learners who are giving cause for concern. Again, these meetings produce clear, agreed actions that are managed well. Learners may receive additional support, visits, or extra training. The meetings also allow good ideas to be shared among staff.

9. Comprehensive, well-structured monthly team meetings are particularly effective in ensuring that many aspects of learners' programmes and support are reviewed and revised as a matter of routine. LAGAT's data is well used in these meetings to monitor learners' progress and assessors' performances. Formal and informal communications are good between all levels of staff, with an appropriate emphasis on learning and the needs of learners. Managers strike a good balance between encouraging independent action, and providing monitoring and support. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, and are enthusiastic about ensuring that their learners succeed. Recruitment and administrative staff participate fully in supporting learners and helping to manage their training experiences. The management of learning is an active process, but it is supported by routine, detailed procedures, well-organised documents and appropriate audits.

10. Staff training and development is very good. Professional, personal and organisational training needs are identified clearly through annual appraisals, meetings or informal discussions. Nearly all training staff are working towards, or have gained, appropriate teacher training qualifications. Good emphasis is given to the acquisition of teaching skills and qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Staff are required to update their knowledge about relevant aspects of the various training programmes, and a range of government initiatives. Some good cross-training of staff takes place, such as the data manager taking

a numeracy qualification, so that he will be able to advise and support staff and learners in this area. Each month there is a formal staff training session, with members of staff briefing colleagues about matters such as age discrimination, or approaches to self-assessment.

11. All training, internal and external, is evaluated appropriately, with future events properly influenced by analysis of that evaluation. Staff training records, and plans for training are well maintained, with managers reviewing the programme periodically to identify additional needs. All members of staff maintain comprehensive records of their personal development, and have a very positive attitude to improving personal performance through training. LAGAT has a satisfactory annual appraisal system. Although staff are very pleased with routine communications, they welcome this more formal opportunity to review their work, and consider the development possibilities.

12. LAGAT's support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs is particularly good. The provider has good resources, and the programme receives the full support of senior managers. There is a well-managed system for carrying out an initial identification of potential needs, after which, specialist, trained and experienced staff carry out further diagnostic testing where necessary. If learners require support, an appropriate individual learning plan is drawn up. Learners have individual, regular and helpful support sessions in their workplaces, provided by LAGAT's specialist staff. Appropriate records and targets are maintained, with satisfactory involvement of learners in progress reviews. LAGAT's analyses of learners' performances, show that 40 per cent of learners with additional learning needs complete an apprenticeship framework, and 60 per cent acquire at least one qualification. Specialist staff also help learners and staff who may have reading difficulties or suffer from dyslexia. Staff are particularly active in related initiatives, such as the identification of learners' progress in improving personal organisation. External resources and support are used appropriately. Potential learners who are not of an appropriate standard to begin a programme are referred appropriately to other agencies for specialist training.

13. Strategic planning is satisfactory, and long-term planning is appropriate. Some aims are too general, although strategic goal-setting has improved since the 2003 inspection when this was a weakness. Staff are particularly closely involved with the direction of LAGAT. One day each year is set aside for debating the long-term plan. The board of directors provides appropriate direction, support and critical evaluation of plans, although learners' success rates are not reviewed sufficiently at board level. In response to a deliberate strategy aimed at securing a degree of financial stability, approximately 50 per cent of LAGAT's income now comes from non-government funding. LAGAT is also joining a range of other providers in various networks, in order to meet LSC and Jobcentre Plus contracting requirements. The provider is involved in a good range of programmes to meet local needs, particularly encouraging people who might not normally take up training opportunities to become involved in learning.

14. LAGAT's management of resources is satisfactory. There is a suitable range of rooms for off-the-job training. They are equipped appropriately with computers and basic training aids. The computers, although relatively old, are currently fit for purpose. Plans have been made to improve internet connections and the availability of laptop computers for off-site training. Staff are well trained, experienced and have appropriate occupational competences. Although staff are fully occupied with LAGAT's extensive training and support arrangements, there are generally enough of them to cope with demand. Some

additional support is available from LAGAT's staff in non-government funded commercial and recruiting areas. Health and safety procedures are appropriate within the main premises, and there is a satisfactory system for assessing the health and safety aspects of employers' premises for work-based learners.

15. LAGAT uses its own comprehensive data in a variety of ways to monitor learners' progress and achievements. Data is used particularly effectively in routine team meetings. The system for recording learners' accomplishments is appropriate for day-to-day activities.

16. There is not enough planning to introduce new measures of success data into LAGAT's operations, particularly at senior management level. Staff are broadly aware of the revised approach to identifying learners' successes, and have accessed some of the data that is available through the LSC's Provider Gateway. In some instances they are beginning to use the new methods of calculation. However, there is no strategic direction for how LAGAT will change its approach to the use of data. For instance, it is not clear how or when it may be introduced into routine reports, into the self-assessment process, in targets in strategic and development plans, or in reports to the board. In some instances, LAGAT's interpretation of its learners' performances is now significantly different to the LSC figures. This situation is not being investigated. The ability of the board, and senior management, to make considered decisions about trends, developments, possible consortium work, and potential contract negotiations, is compromised. Recently revised staff guidance does refer to such matters as the new period of reflection, but does not give direction on other important aspects such matters as the identification of a learner's planned time in training.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

17. LAGAT has taken very effective action to work with some groups of potential learners who are under-represented in education and work-based learning. For example, the provider has worked with a local organisation which assists homeless people, to improve their self-esteem and to develop their skills and understanding in areas such as cooking, or aromatherapy. Another project which is focused on young women who are disengaged from learning, helps them to adopt healthier lifestyles, as well as acquiring qualifications such as a basic food hygiene certificate. LAGAT has a well-established partnership with the city council to develop the literacy, numeracy and IT skills of personnel who work outdoors. A well-structured scheme for providing school pupils with work experience, involving an individual learning plan and monthly assessment visits, leads to a certificate and the possibility of taking a national vocational qualification (NVQ). LAGAT also works with local schools to provide training for their support staff.

18. Good arrangements exist for all staff to receive updating in equality of opportunity. A significant amount of in-house training has been delivered, and more is planned, covering an appropriate range of topics. Staff who undertake external training share their knowledge with their colleagues.

19. The provider has satisfactory arrangements for promoting a better understanding of equality of opportunity among learners. Good learning materials are used at induction, but some learners reaching the end of their programmes have only a cursory recollection of them. Learners are questioned about their understanding of various aspects of equality of opportunity during progress reviews. In some cases this is not done thoroughly enough.

20. LAGAT has a clear policy for equality of opportunity and a senior manager has responsibility for its implementation. This is a standing agenda item at team meetings. Access to accommodation for learners at the main training centre is satisfactory. Training rooms are located on the ground floor.

21. The recruitment process involves good arrangements for ensuring that individual learning needs are identified and met. However, marketing and promotional leaflets do not do enough to promote diversity or to challenge stereotypes.

22. Data is not used sufficiently to monitor and plan for equality of opportunity. LAGAT is aware of participation rates by gender, disability or ethnic background for each area of learning. The proportion of minority ethnic learners is very low, reflecting that of the community, but there is no analysis of the retention, achievement or success of learners by gender or age. In its self-assessment report, LAGAT identified the need for development in this area. Currently, it is not possible to use the data to identify specific issues, other than low participation rates. Meaningful improvement targets are not being set within areas of learning.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

23. LAGAT has a wide range of well-applied initiatives and procedures to improve learners' and staff's performances. All aspects of learners' performances and progress are monitored well through a thorough management system. Generally effective actions are taken to improve learning. The provider has a good range of observations of training and other staff activities, using internal and external assessors. The observations are acknowledged as being helpful by staff, although formal written feedback and action points are not of a consistent quality. Some staff have improved their teaching qualifications. The performances of these members of staff have improved significantly.

24. In the literacy and numeracy area, LAGAT has carried out internal audits, and arranged for an external review of its approach to assessment and the recording of learners' needs. Improvements to the identification of training needs have been made. Since the 2003 inspection, LAGAT has increased the number of staff in its quality improvement department. Aspects of training such as analysis of, and actions arising from employers' and learners' feedback, and the evaluation and improvement of staff training, have improved. Within the regular and comprehensive range of meetings and provider training sessions, good practice and information is shared routinely. This is particularly so in case conferences where newer members of staff welcome advice on how to deal with learners who have difficulties. LAGAT has recently begun an initial advice and guidance provision, and the expertise and training in this area is also being used effectively to ensure the appropriate recruitment of work-based learners.

25. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures is linked to all aspects of learning and administration. These procedures are applied well, and a thorough audit ensures that standards are maintained. The documents used to record learning-related activities are clear, useful and up to date.

26. Internal verification is satisfactory. The system is comprehensive and managed well. Internal verification activities take place before learners reach the 14th week of their programmes, then when they are 40 per cent and 80 per cent of the way through their

courses, and at the end of their programmes. The verification activities include more than the formal requirements of the awarding bodies. For instance, there are detailed file checks, and additional observations of staff's activities. There are appropriate monthly internal verifier meetings. These meetings are scheduled to take place at the same time as assessors' meetings, allowing for the immediate communication and effective resolution of problems. Twice-yearly standardisation meetings ensure that assessors and trainers are kept informed of developments in their areas of learning.

27. The self-assessment process is well structured, and staff are fully involved in contributing to the report. Data is used appropriately and includes learners' and employers' feedback. The main report is too descriptive, but there is a satisfactory amount of evaluation and, to a large extent, its judgements match the findings of the inspection. The associated development plan is simple, but well focused on improvements, with clear actions outlined. Most elements of the plan lead to appropriate actions, with satisfactory levels of updating and reviews.

28. Annual feedback about LAGAT's operations has been gathered from employers and learners for the past four years. Appropriate analyses and action-planning have taken place. Over the past three years, the proportion of employers who believe that the service provided by LAGAT is good, or excellent, has risen from 75 per cent to 95 per cent, albeit with a slight drop in the excellence rating in the past year. The learner survey is more concerned with checking that specific events have taken place, and does not give the learner sufficient opportunity to express views on the quality of provision.

29. After the inspection in 2003, there were significant improvements in learners' overall success rates. The overall figure for learners achieving a full apprenticeship framework increased from a poor 29 per cent in 2003-04, to 56 per cent in 2004-05. This was well above the then national average of 37 per cent. This achievement has not been fully maintained, with the rate dropping to 47 per cent towards the end of the current year, which is near to the revised national average. LAGAT's analysis of the causes of this suggests that turnover of staff, and a change of premises, had a short-term detrimental effect on the progress of some learners during the current year.

30. The inspection in February 2003 gave unsatisfactory grades for all aspects of leadership and management and all areas of learning, except for foundation programmes, which were judged to be satisfactory. The reinspection in June 2004 saw improvements in all areas, with all aspects then judged to be good, except for equality of opportunity and the hospitality programmes which were satisfactory. Improvements have continued. LAGAT has maintained its strengths and successfully resolved most of the weaknesses. All of the areas inspected are now good, although equality of opportunity remains satisfactory.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Retail and commercial enterprise

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Hospitality and catering</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	11	2

31. LAGAT provides training in a range of hospitality occupations. Eleven learners are on hospitality programmes. Of these, four are advanced apprentices and seven are apprentices. Apprentices work towards NVQs in food and drink service, food preparation and cooking, professional cookery, and bar service. Advanced apprentices work towards NVQs in food preparation and cooking and hospitality supervision. All learners are employed. They have an induction to the programme of learning which includes employment rights and responsibilities, and a briefing about the NVQ and the apprenticeship framework. Learners receive an initial assessment to identify any additional needs in literacy, numeracy and language. Training officers visit learners every two to three weeks in the workplace for on- and off-the-job training, assessment and progress reviews.

#### **Hospitality and catering**

##### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' occupational skills
- good arrangements for learning
- particularly thorough progress reviews
- good assessment methods
- comprehensive literacy, numeracy and language support

##### *Weaknesses*

- slow progress of male learners in food preparation
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity

#### **Achievement and standards**

32. Learners have good standards of hospitality occupational skills. Food preparation and cookery learners at level 3 NVQ are well organised in preparing, cooking and presenting dishes for service to customers. Learners have a good knowledge of how particular culinary techniques improve the flavour of a dish. Professional cookery learners at level 2 NVQ have a good understanding of recipes, ingredients and the problems associated with preparing and producing a particular food product. The dishes that learners prepare and cook for customers are of a good standard. Level 3 NVQ hospitality supervision learners are good at organising and supervising hospitality activities, such as reception work and the food and drink service. Front-of-house learners take particular care over their appearance, but some food preparation and cooking learners do not. Learners' portfolios

of evidence are well organised and presented. Learners' answers to background knowledge show that they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of hospitality topics.

33. The overall NVQ-only success rate for apprentices in 2004-05 was good. It improved very significantly from the previous year and was substantially above the national average. Overall framework success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices are satisfactory. Well over 50 per cent of apprentices, and just over 33 per cent of advanced apprentices completed the apprenticeship framework successfully in 2004-05. For apprentices and advanced apprentices, overall framework success rates in 2004-05 were significantly above the national average and they increased substantially compared with the previous year. Part-year figures for 2005-06 show that success rates have declined for apprentices but are continuing to increase for advanced apprentices.

34. Male learners in food preparation and cooking make slow progress in completing the framework. Training officers and managers are particularly aware of this issue and work hard to resolve it. A high proportion of these learners do not complete their programmes of learning until after the scheduled programme end dates. Inspectors found several reasons for late completion. These included delays in completing background knowledge questions, NVQ units and key skills work, heavy work schedules at learners' places of employment, and issues outside the workplace. The progress of most female learners, including those on food preparation and cooking programmes, ranges from satisfactory to very good.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	15	27	26	13	17
		timely	16	13	16	6	10
	2004-05	overall	14	36	26	36	19
		timely	13	23	19	23	13
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	17	24	43	24	29
		timely	18	17	25	17	16
	2004-05	overall	7	71	45	57	34
		timely	10	10	32	10	24

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### The quality of provision

35. LAGAT has good arrangements for providing hospitality programmes. Before the programme begins, training officers check thoroughly with employers to ensure that they can provide the range of learning opportunities necessary for learners to become competent in their chosen area of hospitality. Training officers have a good understanding of learners' prior knowledge and skills. The training officers adapt the training to make sure that this is taken into account, which enables learners to concentrate on developing



new skills and knowledge. Training officers work closely with learners and most employers to ensure that training covers the framework requirements. Training officers have a good understanding of how each learner prefers to learn. They work well with the learners to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of a particular hospitality topic, and that they are developing good hospitality work skills. Training officers' explanations of learning topics are clear and well understood by learners.

36. Regular and frequent progress reviews are particularly thorough. Training officers provide learners with clear and comprehensive and verbal feedback about their performances and progress. Training officers augment the verbal feedback with detailed and particularly useful written feedback. At each progress review, training officers, in partnership with the learners and most employers, set out clearly and effectively what learners need to achieve by the time of the next visit. This is based on pertinent discussions between training officers, learners and most employers about what needs to be done. Training officers support discussions about the planning of learning by providing learners with clearly written learning targets.

37. Good assessment practice was a strength identified in the 2004 reinspection, and in the subsequent self-assessment report. LAGAT has maintained this strength. It uses a good range of assessment methods and adapts them very effectively to the particular circumstances of each learner, as well as the actual competence being assessed. Methods include witness and competency statements, professional discussions, and observations and verbal questioning. Assessment planning is thorough. Assessors take learners carefully, and in detail, through what they need to do achieve the NVQ units and elements. The timing of workplace assessment is good. Assessors are very good at arranging assessments so that they fit with learners' work patterns which includes evening and weekend duties. Learners have a clear understanding of what is expected of them at assessment and what evidence they need to produce. Verbal feedback after assessment is comprehensive. The planning of assessments and feedback to learners are supported by a clear written commentary from the assessor. Cross-referencing the evidence to NVQ units and elements is done well. Assessment is accurate and fair.

38. Arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are systematic and comprehensive. All learners receive an assessment for literacy, numeracy, and language support. In addition, where appropriate, learners receive a further diagnostic assessment. The assessment indicates the level of support that the learner requires. All learners identified with literacy, numeracy and/or language needs receive a learning programme which is clearly designed for their particular requirements. LAGAT provides particularly effective support in several ways. These include general support for literacy and numeracy in completing portfolios and key skills, additional assistance from the training officer in the workplace for those with basic support needs, and specialist individual support from dedicated literacy and numeracy tutors for those with more complex support needs. In addition, LAGAT offers a weekly appointment and drop-in service at its offices in Lincoln for those who prefer to receive literacy, numeracy and language support away from the workplace.

39. LAGAT offers an appropriate range of hospitality apprentice and advanced apprenticeship programmes which meet the needs of learners and employers. LAGAT also offers a useful range of commercial courses to the local hospitality industry. These are available to learners and include courses about the licensed trade, food hygiene, and

health and safety. In addition, LAGAT offers a range of short, personal interest courses to learners.

40. LAGAT has effective arrangements for initial advice, guidance and support. All learners attend an initial interview to determine the most appropriate programme of learning for them. Induction procedures cover equal opportunities and the apprenticeship framework. At progress reviews, training officers check learners' well being. The provider has links with external agencies if learners require specialist personal support, such as problems with finance and housing, or drink and drugs misuse. LAGAT has arrangements to provide adaptive technology if learners have a learning difficulty and/or disability. At the end of the learning programme, all learners attend an interview to provide careers guidance.

41. Resources are satisfactory. Most learners work in employers' premises, which have a range of accommodation, facilities and equipment which varies from satisfactory to very good. LAGAT's own premises have appropriate levels of accommodation and equipment for training. There is a range of useful learning materials to support training. Training officers are appropriately qualified and have good knowledge and experience of the hospitality industry.

### **Leadership and management**

42. Management arrangements ensure that learners receive good training and develop good standards of hospitality skills and knowledge. Overall success rates have improved significantly since the reinspection, although the part-year success rates for apprentices in 2005-06 show a decline. Management has not been effective in resolving the problem of the slow progress of male learners in food preparation and cooking, and in improving the promotion of equality of opportunity. Communications between managers and staff are good. Regular staff meetings have clearly focused on those learners at risk of not completing their programmes successfully. These meetings are supported by individual meetings between training officers and managers to discuss the performance and progress of individual learners. Where issues are identified, managers and training officers take actions to resolve them. Self-assessment is thorough. The self-assessment report gives judgements which reflect most on the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspection team.

43. Equality of opportunity is not promoted sufficiently to learners. LAGAT covers equality of opportunity at induction, but training officers do not regularly discuss and promote equality of opportunity during visits to learners. LAGAT has appropriate procedures to check that learners are not discriminated against, and also procedures to deal with complaints, harassment and bullying.

**Business administration and law****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Administration</b> Apprenticeships for young people	32	2
<b>Customer service</b> Apprenticeships for young people	24	3

44. LAGAT has 57 learners in business administration and law. Apart from one apprentice in business management, all are working towards qualifications in either administration or customer service. Learners are employed in large or medium-sized organisations in Lincoln and the surrounding area.

45. LAGAT provides training in administration at level 2 and 3 NVQ. Learning programmes usually last for 12 months, although they could take longer if a learner has additional needs. At the time of the inspection there were 32 administration learners, of whom six were advanced apprentices and 26 were apprentices. LAGAT also provides programmes in customer service at level 2 and 3 NVQ. Apprentices are expected to complete their training within 12 months, and advanced apprentices have a planned programme which lasts for 15 months. Again, these periods may be extended for learners with additional needs. At the time of the inspection there were 24 customer service learners, of whom five were advanced apprentices and 19 were apprentices.

46. Learners can join at any time during the year. Assessors visit learners at their place of work every two or three weeks. They provide guidance and support, observe learners carrying out their work activities, and plan and carry out training and assessments. Learners studying for a technical certificate attend one-day training sessions each month at LAGAT's offices.

*Strengths*

- good planning and use of assessment methods
- good progress monitoring and short-term target-setting
- good arrangements for learning in administration
- very effective literacy and numeracy support

*Weaknesses*

- poor success rates in customer service
- insufficient involvement of employers in the learning process

**Achievement and standards**

47. Success rates in this area of learning are satisfactory. Overall success rates for apprentices improved significantly in 2004-05, and success rates for advanced apprentices have stayed well above the national average.

48. Overall framework success rates for advanced apprentices in administration were

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above the national average in 2003-04, and well above in 2004-05, although the number of learners involved is quite low, and learners did not make timely completions.

49. There was a significant improvement in overall framework success rates for administration apprentices in 2004-05, which well exceeded the national average. Timely success rates for administration apprentices also improved significantly in 2004-05, and were well above the national average.

50. The overall success rates for customer service are poor. The number of advanced apprentices in customer service has always been very small, and two of three learners who completed the programme in 2003-04 achieved their frameworks, but neither in a timely fashion. Both advanced apprentices in 2004-05 completed their apprenticeship frameworks. The one customer service apprentice who left in 2003-04 did not complete the framework. Seven apprentices left in 2004-05, but the success rates were below the national average. LAGAT has recognised this weakness and has taken steps to resolve it. More attention is now being given to the quality of the work placements and the suitability of employment for apprentices in this part of the area of learning. The effect of these changes are not clear yet.

51. The quality of work being produced by current apprentices or advanced apprentices is good. Many learners are employed in high-quality organisations and are able to provide a good standard of written and computer-based evidence for their portfolios. A number of learners have been promoted, or have been given additional responsibilities since beginning their programmes.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	6	67	46	50	28
		timely	7	0	30	0	18
	2004-05	overall	2	100	47	50	31
		timely	1	100	35	0	23
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	14	43	51	36	37
		timely	11	27	25	18	18
	2004-05	overall	34	68	56	68	45
		timely	35	60	35	60	28

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### The quality of provision

52. The planning and use of assessment methods are good. Assessors explain clearly to learners what will be expected of them. A wide variety of assessment methods are used well. In particular, assessors use verbal questions and discussions well to encourage learners to examine the quality and relevance of the evidence they have put forward. Well-presented written questions are used frequently to check learners' knowledge and

understanding. Assessors provide effective guidance to help learners to claim their competences, using the qualification standards. New learners are particularly well supported in this activity and those able to claim their own competences are soon encouraged to carry out this work independently. Assessors provide good advice about portfolio-building, and about cross-referencing evidence. They adopt a flexible approach to following the options in the learning plan, enabling a change of units to reflect changes in job responsibilities. Portable dictation machines and digital cameras are often used to enable learners to provide authentic evidence for their portfolios.

53. Progress monitoring and short-term target-setting are good. Learners meet regularly with their assessors, usually every two to three weeks, to monitor competences and to agree action plans and short-term targets. Progress reviews take place every two months, at which detailed evidence about learners' achievements is presented, and short- and long-term targets are agreed with the learner. Employers are not always included in these discussions, but a report of the review is often made to them verbally, and always in writing. Action plans are clear and include easily understood and relevant short-term targets. The targets resulting from the progress reviews are referenced appropriately to the short-term targets in the action plans. Learners have a good understanding of their progress and spend time early in their programmes agreeing with their assessor a simple chart of their anticipated rate of progress. Some learners have enough confidence in understanding their progress to take the initiative to get ahead of the planned schedules. Assessors use standardisation meetings well to agree the kinds of evidence that are most effective in supporting learners' progress.

54. There are good arrangements for training in administration. Assessor/trainers are vocationally competent and hold appropriate assessment and verification qualifications. A number of assessor/trainers have, or are currently working towards, teaching qualifications. All staff have access to a programme of continuous personal development. Assessor/trainers offer good coaching and training at employers' premises, or in the training rooms on LAGAT's premises. There are particularly thorough arrangements for the teaching of the technical certificate in administration. Learners attend well-organised training days at the LAGAT training centre each month. In planning these events, LAGAT's trainers give appropriate attention to the requirements of the technical certificate. They have carefully planned and timetabled the full allocation of guided learning hours recommended by the awarding bodies. LAGAT's staff plan different approaches to learning, in order to meet learners' needs more effectively. These approaches include paper-based and computer-based learning. The evidence produced during technical certificate training days is used well to support knowledge and understanding for the NVQ.

55. LAGAT provides very effective literacy and numeracy support for learners. The early identification of any additional learning needs involves the use of comprehensive assessment methods, including online testing. There is good diagnostic assessment of additional needs if learners require more than literacy, numeracy and language support. LAGAT provides support which is related to individual requirements, through a dedicated tutor. The provider also establishes separate individual learning plans for literacy and numeracy support, and allocates hourly support sessions to each learner at convenient times of the day, either by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Learners receive support in a format which suits them best. Support arrangements are evaluated regularly and learners have a high level of success in tests. Most learners achieve one or more key skills

as an integral part of the literacy and numeracy support arrangements.

56. Employers are not fully involved in the learning process, and do not always appreciate the learning needs of their employees. LAGAT's assessor/training officers have developed good working relationships with employers. Many employers provide witness testimonies for learners, and some of them will arrange additional training to develop learners' competence at work. As employers do not routinely attend progress reviews, they are not sufficiently involved in discussions about the training programme. Many employers are not aware of the details of their apprentices' training programmes, or of the qualification standards. LAGAT's staff are not assertive enough in ensuring that employers are central to the learning process.

### **Leadership and management**

57. Management has made good arrangements for training in this area. Staff are well qualified to provide administration and customer service programmes. There is a well-organised staff development programme, and a clear emphasis on continuing professional development. Careful attention is given to maintaining good-quality procedures and working practices, and to linking with specialist support staff to provide very effective literacy and numeracy support. The assessor/trainers check on equal opportunities awareness during progress reviews, but the questions that they ask are not always followed up sufficiently well to ensure that learners have a clear understanding of the issues. Staff in the area of learning work well with their business development colleagues to ensure that the quality of administration work placements and jobs is maintained at its currently high level, and that the quality of customer service work placements improves.

58. Staff were involved in the self-assessment process and had opportunities to contribute to the judgements. The self-assessment report reflected many of the inspection's findings, but did not identify the weakness relating to employer involvement.

