

# INSPECTION REPORT

**TUI UK Limited**

**09 February 2007**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



**Estyn**

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg  
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
For Education and Training in Wales

## 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

## TUI UK Limited

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for TUI UK Limited	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	2
What learners like about TUI UK Limited	5
What learners think TUI UK Limited could improve	5

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	6
Equality of opportunity	7
Quality improvement	8
Leisure, travel and tourism	10

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. TUI UK Limited (TUI UK), which is owned by TUI AG, is the United Kingdom division of the world's largest tourism group. TUI UK was formed in 2002 and has 11,500 employees, with approximately 5,200 staff working in Thomson's travel agencies. TUI UK offers government-funded training in travel and tourism to 765 apprentices and advanced apprentices through the Thomson travel agency chain. Each learner has a mentor, within their shop, who looks after their learning on a day-to-day basis, holds monthly performance reviews and is involved in quarterly progress reviews. The Thomson shop manager has the ultimate responsibility for the development of the learner. A team of shop managers provides regional group off-the-job training sessions, usually in training rooms above some of the larger shops. TUI UK has offices in Coventry and Luton. The government-funded learning programmes are managed within the funded schemes department, based in Coventry. A funded schemes manager is responsible for the overall management of the programme and is supported by a team of five managers, analysts, consultants and advisers. Two funded schemes advisers and four administrators complete the funded schemes team.

2. TUI UK subcontracts the assessment, internal verification, progress reviews, accreditation of prior learning, updating of individual learning plans and certification of programmes to TTC Training in England and Vocations Limited in Wales. TTC Training was inspected by the ALI in December 2006. Vocations Limited has not previously been inspected as it does not hold its own contract with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). TUI UK subcontracts the arrangements for technical certificate testing to Training For Travel, which was inspected by the ALI in July 2005.

3. The government-funded training is funded through the LSC's National Employer Service. Thomson's shops are in areas of both high and low unemployment. The travel industry has traditionally attracted more women than men into employment, and the industry profile for travel and tourism, published in March 2006 by People 1st, the sector skills council for travel and tourism, shows that 71 per cent of the workforce are women. The industry suffers from low retention, and TUI UK's own statistics for 2005 show that its staff turnover is 45 per cent across all roles in retail, although the government-funded programme has a lower staff turnover.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** TUI UK's leadership and management are good, and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are satisfactory. The travel and tourism provision is satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The judgements and grades in the self-assessment report are very accurate and realistic. The funded schemes manager co-ordinated the current report, using data, the findings of evaluations, reviews of the programmes and the views and reports from the funded schemes team. The process is being further developed to involve all stakeholders

more fully.

**6. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.**

TUI UK has strong leadership and management, and the government-funded programme is seen as a key part of the future of the business. The funded schemes team has good procedures for recognising and implementing the improvements needed to the programme. Over the past two years, TUI UK has made significant investment and introduced initiatives to improve both the training programme and overall success rates. However, this has not yet had sufficient time to affect overall success rates in travel and tourism, and the inspection grade is lower than at the previous inspection. Some weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been rectified, but a weakness in the promotion of training to learners from under-represented groups still remains.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR TUI UK LIMITED:

- maintain and develop the resource and capacity within funded schemes to further improve the provision
- manage the expectations of learners into their career with TUI UK
- improve the overall and timely success rates, particularly with the subcontracted aspects of the provision in England
- complete and implement the quality improvement arrangements
- increase the diversity of representation among staff

## 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		3

<b>Leisure, travel and tourism</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b><i>Travel and tourism</i></b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	765	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Inspectors visited TUI UK for three days in December 2006 to observe learners' and mentors' training and meet learners in the northwest of England. Inspectors collected and used information from observing assessment, progress reviews and internal verification for the subcontractor, TTC Training, during its inspection in December 2006. The final week of inspection was for five days at the beginning of February 2007, and included inspectors

from the ALI and Estyn.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	28
Number of learners interviewed	53
Number of staff interviewed	18
Number of employers interviewed	61
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	37
Number of visits	3

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- clear strategic direction linked to business improvement
- wide range of actions taken to improve success rates
- good training and development of staff to support learners
- good management and monitoring of learners' welfare and treatment at work
- good improvements to the training programmes

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently routine analysis and use of data
- insufficient analysis and comparison of evaluations and feedback
- low participation and success rates by under-represented groups
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

## **Leisure, travel and tourism**

### ***Travel and tourism***

#### *Strengths*

- good attainment of technical certificates
- good development of workplace skills
- good off-the-job training
- good support for learners

*Weaknesses*

- low overall success rates
- insufficient meeting of some learners' needs by the subcontractor in England
- some badly managed aspects of the selection process for permanent employment

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TUI UK LIMITED:**

- the training days - 'they are fun and you learn a lot'
- the good support from everyone, especially the mentors
- the mix of work and study, while getting paid
- the regular knowledge tests
- the passport to travel, which is good for getting started at work

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK TUI UK LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- the frequency of assessors' visits
- the travelling distance to the training days
- the uncertainty about the selection event and getting a job
- the amount of study time

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- clear strategic direction linked to business improvement
- wide range of actions taken to improve success rates
- good training and development of staff to support learners
- good management and monitoring of learners' welfare and treatment at work
- good improvements to the training programmes

#### Weaknesses

- insufficiently routine analysis and use of data
- insufficient analysis and comparison of evaluations and feedback
- low participation and success rates by under-represented groups
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

8. The link between the strategic direction for the business and the apprenticeship programme is clear. There is a good awareness among directors and senior managers of the benefits to the business of the apprenticeship programme. A far-reaching productivity review by management consultants recognises the value of the apprenticeship programme to TUI UK's future. TUI UK is implementing a wide-ranging productivity improvement programme and the apprenticeship programme is part of this development. Significant investments have been made on management information systems, staffing and travel and tourism resources to support the learners. The company's directors and managers view the apprenticeship programme as a key part of the strategy for recruiting and developing future managers and ensuring new staff are capable of facing the current operational challenges. Learners participate in a new selection and assessment day, before being offered permanent employment, to ensure they complete their frameworks and have the industry knowledge and skills needed by the business. The funded schemes manager has been very active in identifying clear career progression routes from work experience to apprenticeships and the foundation degree, which has been developed in collaboration with external organisations.

9. TUI UK is taking a wide range of actions to improve overall success rates. In 2005, it carried out a detailed review of the programme, identifying the reasons why high numbers of learners left the programme early and didn't complete their framework. TUI UK made a considerable investment in 2006, significantly increasing the salary for learners to attract a higher calibre of learner and to improve retention. The company has further strengthened the recruitment and selection processes, which are very thorough and consistent. The regional sales managers are fully involved in the process to ensure the number and location of learners recruited meets business objectives. The funded schemes manager has made appropriate changes to the structure of the programme, from a two-year advanced apprenticeship contract to two one-year contracts. All learners now complete the apprenticeship, which was previously not offered by TUI UK, before

progressing onto the advanced apprenticeship. TUI UK has revised the role profile for learners to increase the focus on time allowed for learning and the need to complete the framework before gaining permanent employment.

10. TUI UK's staff have good and wide-ranging training and development. All staff working in Thomson's shops are members of the Thomson Academy, which is a well-structured and clear programme of learning enabling staff to work through bronze, gold and platinum status as they complete their learning programmes and progress through the company. In 2006, the funded schemes team introduced a very effective mentor champion role in each region, with a structured training programme enabling the mentor champions to train and support a team of mentors. The funded schemes team effectively shares good practice and tips through a mentors' magazine. Articles in the magazine also act as a good reminder to ensure learners have sufficient study time and that each mentor is following consistent guidance. TUI UK's shop managers who are the appointed trainers attend a good annual 'train the trainer' event. Most trainers have also received very comprehensive external training to support their delivery and understanding of key skills training and support. Two apprenticeship champions have been appointed to help develop the programme further and share information on changes and developments.

11. TUI UK has invested in new management information systems allowing data to be transferred from a variety of spreadsheets to one central database. Much work has been carried out to ensure the data is complete and accurate. This has been used effectively to prepare various useful reports to review the provision, for example on technical certificate pass rates and levels. Managers are generally aware of the low overall success rates but are unclear on the current performance, how this compares with previous years and the rate of improvement. Senior managers and regional staff are unaware of overall success rate targets and the progress being made against these targets. The historical use of different systems makes it difficult to compare data and establish trends.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

12. TUI UK's funded schemes adviser regularly monitors learners' welfare and treatment at work through telephoning them and discussing issues, the quality of support, their progress and study time. The funded schemes adviser has a thorough and effective system for categorising each learner and shop into red, amber or green status, which determines the frequency of the telephone calls. TUI UK makes good use of information from previous telephone calls, issues with support and the volume of early leavers from a particular shop to determine the category. Learners receive good support from all staff, including from funded schemes. Where learners are in situations that could potentially develop into harassment or bullying issues, these are successfully identified at an early stage and effectively dealt with. Funded schemes link closely with other departments within TUI UK and are well informed about security and human resources issues. TUI UK has good arrangements for providing counselling and referral to external organisations, where needed. Staff identify and implement practical solutions where learners have individual support needs, for example with dyslexia, pregnancy, medical conditions or in travelling to off-the-job training. The role of the funded schemes adviser is well publicised through the apprentices' and mentors' newsletters. Support arrangements are documented well.

13. Arrangements for recruitment and selection onto the apprenticeship have been

improved and are thorough and fair. TUI UK's human resources department collates and analyses data comparing recruitment of diverse groups at apprenticeship, shop and organisation level. The recently introduced selection event for advanced apprentices to progress into permanent employment uses set criteria to ensure consistency in decisions. However, learners receive varying information about what to expect at this assessment, with some being briefed at their training days and others receiving no advance information.

14. Most learners have a satisfactory, and some have a good, understanding of equality of opportunity and their rights and responsibilities. All learners complete interesting and informative activities on equality and diversity during their induction training. Staff have been trained in anti-bullying and harassment and, more recently, briefed on the protection of vulnerable people. Learners have a young person's risk assessment for the workplace. TUI UK's equal opportunities policies are relevant and current. The subcontracted assessors monitor equality of opportunity in the workplace during the review process.

15. TUI UK recognises in its self-assessment report the low representation of minority groups. Over the past two years, less than 1 per cent of learners starting programmes came from minority ethnic groups. Participation by men is relatively static at 7 per cent and, although the industry traditionally attracts fewer men than women, these rates are low. TUI UK has insufficient images of men and minority ethnic staff in its recruitment materials. Men have significantly lower overall success rates than women. In 2005-06, only 22 per cent of male leavers completed their framework, compared with 44 per cent of female leavers. TUI UK has set targets to improve these participation rates and the level of support for men. In 2005, TUI UK carried out research with its male apprentices to gain an insight into recruitment and retention issues. Some of the findings from this research have been implemented. For example, salary rates have been increased for apprentices and more structured career routes identified and promoted to make employment more attractive to all groups. Although it is too early to analyse the effect of these initiatives, TUI UK does not regularly analyse or use diversity data to monitor performance by different groups.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

16. TUI UK makes good improvements to the content and delivery of the apprenticeship training programmes. The funded schemes manager has a well-defined annual plan to review all parts of the apprenticeship programmes including the induction packs, national vocational qualification (NVQ) portfolios and off-the-job training. Good use is made of informal and formal feedback received from trainers and learners. Detailed questionnaires are used to evaluate each training session. Improvements made include changes to the format of tests and the updating of content to stretch learners more. The training materials in the induction packs and for this year's off-the-job training sessions have been carefully designed to meet the requirements of the updated technical certificate. Learning sessions have been revised to include a good range of interesting and relevant activities. Additional resources are carefully researched and purchased to support the learners. The schedule of training days has been revised to better meet the needs of the business. The funded schemes team works well with other departments within TUI UK, especially when designing new materials and e-learning packages, to ensure the corporate message and needs of the apprenticeship programme are balanced effectively.

17. TUI UK has developed a detailed service level agreement that it uses to manage and

monitor closely the work of subcontractors. Communications between TUI UK and the subcontractors are regular and effective. Each week, TUI UK and the subcontractors share detailed communication logs recording any issues raised. The funded schemes manager and subcontractors meet monthly to agree actions and the subcontractor's performance is reviewed each quarter against a series of key performance indicators and targets. The subcontractor in Wales is meeting these targets, and the provision is meeting the requirements of TUI UK and the learners. One subcontractor is not meeting some of the targets set, despite the close monitoring by TUI UK.

18. The funded scheme adviser reviews and audits all learners' paperwork. Appropriate actions are taken to correct any errors and return these to the learners and mentors with guidance on what amendments are required. The funded schemes team uses the results of this auditing well to give additional guidance and reminders to mentors.

19. The funded schemes manager co-ordinates the self-assessment process, which is satisfactory. Self-assessment procedures are being further developed to increase the involvement of different stakeholders in the process. The current self-assessment process makes sufficient use of the various reviews of the programme, verbal feedback from managers, mentors and trainers, learners' questionnaires and reports from the funded schemes team. TUI UK has developed a detailed and summary quality improvement plan to maintain the strengths and rectify the identified weaknesses. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found during inspection.

20. The funded schemes team uses a wide range of questionnaires and surveys to collect feedback from learners, trainers and mentors. Some of the questionnaires do not provide information which is useful or can easily be analysed. Although the questionnaires used at the end of each training day in 2006-07 have been summarised, this did not happen in the previous year, making it difficult to compare and evaluate trends or the success of improvements made to the training. The analysis of feedback is not sufficient to be able to compare the views of different groups of learners.

21. TUI UK's quality improvement arrangements are incomplete. The funded schemes manager has recently developed a detailed quality improvement statement. A wide range of quality assurance methods is listed but some have not yet been implemented, including the arrangements for observing different activities for learners such as selection events, initial assessment and monitoring visits. Regional sales managers have recently started to observe training days. Trainers find their feedback useful and supportive. However, in most cases, all aspects of the training are graded too highly, at excellent, even though there are several areas for development.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Leisure, travel and tourism

### Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Travel and tourism</b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	765	3

22. TUI UK has 388 apprentices and 377 advanced apprentices in travel and tourism. Of these, 25 apprentices and 33 advanced apprentices are in Wales. Learners work in Thomson travel agencies. Most of the learners are between 16 and 18 years of age and are recruited by TUI UK. Learners find out about the programmes through advertising in the Thomson shop windows, Jobcentre Plus, Thomson website and through friends or relatives working for Thomson, also school and college career events and Connexions service. Learners complete an initial assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills, with any additional learning needs being detailed on an individual learning plan. TUI UK subcontracts the assessment, internal verification, progress reviews, accreditation of prior learning, updating of individual learning plans and certification of programmes to TTC Training in England and Vocations Limited in Wales. Learners in England are assessed in the workplace every eight to 12 weeks and in Wales every six to eight weeks. Learners have a mentor who carries out a monthly performance review, which links into the progress review with their assessor. All learners attend a planned programme of off-the-job training, in groups, at a range of venues throughout England and Wales.

#### **Travel and tourism**

##### *Strengths*

- good attainment of technical certificates
- good development of workplace skills
- good off-the-job training
- good support for learners

##### *Weaknesses*

- low overall success rates
- insufficient meeting of some learners' needs by the subcontractor in England
- some badly managed aspects of the selection process for permanent employment

#### **Achievement and standards**

23. A high proportion of learners in the current year who have taken the technical certificate in worldwide geography have passed first time. Ninety-eight per cent of level 2 and 89 per cent of level 3 learners passed first time. Attainment by level 2 learners is particularly good, with 54 per cent achieving distinction grades. In 2005, 97 per cent of learners achieved their technical certificates, although data is not available to show if these were first-time passes. All learners complete their insurance technical certificate early by

completing TUI UK's online learning and assessment package, enabling them to sell insurance products quickly and confidently.

24. Learners develop their knowledge of travel and tourism products well, and are able to work independently and competently to sell a wide range of products. Learners confidently package a range of different products to meet their customers' needs. Learners demonstrate a higher level of customer service and problem solving skills than required by the framework, while maintaining the company ethos. Level 2 learners are selling complex bookings like cruises, safaris and weddings at a very early stage in their programme. Many learners exceed their sales targets and some are best-sellers for their shops and region. Some advanced apprentices progress into management and overseas roles, some becoming assistant sales managers before completing their programme.

25. Learners are making satisfactory progress towards their NVQ. In particular, some advanced apprentices are making swift progress towards achieving their level 3 NVQ where they have been offered a permanent role. Learners in Wales are producing good-quality work in their portfolios. These learners receive particularly clear and consistent guidance from their assessors. All learners are enthusiastic about producing portfolio work, but often produce too much paper-based evidence.

26. Overall success rates in England for advanced apprentices are low and static, having been 36 per cent for the past two years. In 2005-06, this was below the poor national rate of 41 per cent. Using the provider's own data, in the five months since August 2006, 161 advanced apprentices have completed their full framework, which is similar to the total number of achievers in the whole of 2005-06. TUI UK has introduced very appropriate initiatives to improve the overall success rates, but it is too early for this to have been fully effective. Success rates for learners in Wales, using the provider's own data, are good at 68 per cent for learners starting programmes in 2004-05.

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	372	52	42	47	34
		timely	398	13	27	12	22
	2004-05	overall	357	52	47	36	33
		timely	326	21	33	14	26
	2005-06	overall	448	42	52	36	41
		timely	477	21	27	16	19

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

27. Off-the-job learning is planned well to include a wide range of learning strategies and there are good links between the training and technical certificate requirements. Learners are prepared well for their learning sessions, having completed pre-course work and preparation. Learners enjoy the sessions, which include a variety of fun learning activities and games. They develop good inter-personal skills through role-play, listening,

note-taking and presentation activities. Learning is delivered at a good pace, with learners' enthusiasm being maintained throughout the long day. Trainers make good use of testing. They use very effective and relevant examples from outside the travel industry to stress the importance of customer service and additional services. Some learners travel some distance to attend training sessions, but in other regions, learners attend alternative venues that are closer to where they live or work.

28. Learners have a trained mentor, who has a good awareness of the requirements of the qualification. Mentors are active in ensuring the whole shop team supports the learner in gaining evidence. Learners and mentors regularly review learners' overall progress and support needs, which links well into assessors' visits and action plans. The funded schemes adviser routinely checks the welfare of learners and offers practical solutions where issues arise. Learners have good peer support, within the training groups and their own shop. In the best shops, mentors and managers plan and ensure that learners have dedicated time away from the shop floor for study time. In other shops, learners struggle to be allocated study time.

29. TUI UK provides excellent learning resources, some of which have been researched well to meet the needs of the UK technical certificate. However, some learners have not yet received these resources. Thomson's shops provide a good learning environment with extensive opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge. TUI UK has developed a range of e-learning packages, which are well used and user-friendly. Learners in Wales have sufficient opportunity to study the qualification in the Welsh language. Materials are available in both languages and one assessor is a Welsh speaker.

30. Assessment and internal verification are sound in Wales and satisfactory in England. Most learners are exempt from key skills qualifications. Learners taking key skills qualifications receive a range of support, including individual study activities, group learning sessions and support from assessors. TUI UK has made a significant investment in an online initial assessment and diagnostic system. Most learners starting in 2006 have completed this and have an individual learning plan for communication or application of number support, where appropriate. The initial assessment arrangements for learners starting in 2006 are more effective than in 2005. TUI UK has a strong emphasis on health and safety and risk-assesses young people. However, many learners and trainers carry a large amount of paperwork and resources to training venues, which are often located upstairs.

31. Learners in England receive an inconsistent service from the subcontracted assessors depending on the quality of the assessor or their availability. Learners at similar stages in their programmes have achieved varying numbers of units towards their NVQ, despite evidence for two units being generated in the first three months of their employment. Some learners receive infrequent visits, delaying their rate of progress and achievement of the NVQ. Learners with relevant prior achievement are not offered the opportunity to fast-track their qualification. These learners are often required to duplicate their existing knowledge of subjects like geography and customer service.

32. Advanced apprentices who wish to be taken on permanently by TUI UK attend a selection event. Learners receive inadequate briefing about the nature and format of the selection event. Some learners receive more information about the event than others, depending on the training event they attend or the timing of the selection event. Some

selection events have higher success rates than others, but this has not been analysed by the funded schemes team. Learners receive verbal feedback after the event. The process has a requirement for learners to have a development plan, but this is not being adhered to. Learners who are unsuccessful have insufficient written feedback to support their development for the next event. Learners are unsettled by the selection event, and some are demotivated.

### **Leadership and management**

33. The funded schemes department is managed well, with a team that has regular communication with retail shops. TUI UK has an effective structure of manager and co-ordinator roles that support the management of the government-funded programme. The mentor training programme was vastly improved in 2006, and incorporates changes to the learners' programme. Mentor champions have been introduced, but in some regions it is unclear who the current mentor champion is. Mentor champions routinely monitor and follow up issues arising from the monthly performance reviews. Communication is effective, but there has been some late passing on of some training dates to shop managers. Learners receive a regular and informative magazine from funded schemes. Funded schemes staff meet regularly with the subcontractors, and in Wales this relationship is good. Despite close monitoring of the English subcontractor, some local issues are arising with individual assessors, delaying learners' progress. Learners and trainers evaluate each training session and continuously make improvements to the training sessions. Self-assessment is very critical and accurate. However, few people outside of TUI UK's head office are aware of the process and report. Most learners have a satisfactory or better understanding of equality of opportunity, their rights and responsibilities.

