

Lifetime Health and Fitness Limited

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Leisure, travel and tourism
- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. Lifetime Health and Fitness Limited (Lifetime) is a private training company, which provides work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes in the leisure, travel and tourism, business administration and retail sector areas. The organisation was established in 1995 as a consultancy business and has been offering work-based learning to large national employers since 1996. Lifetime operates across the United Kingdom. The company has its headquarters in Bristol and six training centres throughout the country.
2. A management team has specific responsibility for managing the different aspects of the company, including financial management, administration, business development and training and learning operations. The operations team comprises 47 assessors and ten internal verifiers who report to an operations manager. The team is further supported by a quality improvement manager and an administrator. Lifetime currently employs 90 full-time staff. Additionally, 13 freelance tutors are used for specialist training courses.
3. Lifetime's training programmes are funded by the National Employment Service (NES) and the London North LSC. Most learners are on leisure, travel and tourism programmes with 347 advanced apprentices, 443 apprentices and 70 Train to Gain learners. There are 340 apprentices, one advanced apprentice and 44 Train to Gain learners on business, administration and law programmes. The government funded training represents 75% of the total training delivered by the provider. Lifetime achieved the Investors in People award in 2008.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Leisure, travel and tourism	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory and the quality of provision is good. Leadership and management is good and equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The subject sector areas of leisure, travel and tourism and business, administration and law are both good.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. Lifetime demonstrates that it has sufficient capacity to make further improvements. In the last four years, the provision has expanded and although success rates decreased in 2005, they have considerably improved across all programmes since 2006. The inspection grade profile has remained stable when compared with the previous published report. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, with the exception of low success rates for advanced apprentices in leisure, travel and tourism and the underdeveloped aspects within quality improvement, have been addressed.
6. Lifetime's self-assessment process is satisfactory although the section of the self-assessment report covering quality improvement is insufficiently comprehensive.

Key strengths

- Good development of vocational skills
- Good assessment practice
- Particularly good training strategy to meet employers' needs
- Good managerial actions to improve the provision

Key areas for improvement

- Underdeveloped aspects of quality improvement
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity throughout the learners' programmes

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall and good for the business administration area. Success rates for apprentices in leisure and Train to Gain learners in business administration are high.
8. Success rates for apprentices in business administration are satisfactory while success rates for advanced apprentices and Train to Gain learners in leisure are low overall for the last four years.
9. Since 2006/07, there has been a remarkable improvement in success rates across all programmes. Timely completion has also increased for all learners. The percentage of learners completing the full framework has also substantially improved.
10. Learners develop good vocational skills, improved confidence and self-esteem. Their performance in the workplace is much enhanced. Many learners have enhanced job prospects enabling them to move between departments or receive promotion. In 2007/08, 25% of learners have been successfully promoted into management positions in the leisure sector.
11. Learners' work is of a good standard and current learners are making at least satisfactory progress with their qualification. In June last year, 28% of the learners were making slow progress with their qualification while this year that figure has decreased to 15% across both subject sector areas.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

12. The quality of provision is good overall. Assessors provide good off-the-job training to learners through effective individual coaching and mentoring. Employers provide at least satisfactory and much good training. The quality and use of learning resources is good, particularly in leisure. However, in customer service and sales, the use of additional supplementary learning resources is insufficient.
13. Assessment practice is thorough and good overall. However, in customer service and sales, the quality of some written feedback is poor.
14. The review process and monitoring and recording of learners' progress is effective and is particularly good in leisure. However, not all learners or employers access this information outside of assessor visits. In customer service and sales, workplace supervisors are insufficiently involved in the planning and reviewing of learners' programmes.

15. In all programmes, learners follow generic prescribed, short-term, clear and specific actions for their qualifications that are identified electronically. However, assessors set insufficient personalised targets for learners.
16. Lifetime designs programmes very well to meet the needs of learners and employers. The range of provision is appropriate, offering relevant progression opportunities from Level 2 to Level 3, although this is only very recent in customer service and sales.
17. Support from assessors and employers, to promote learning, is very effective in leisure and is satisfactory in customer services and sales. Learners receive an effective induction which helps them settle into their programmes well. The identification of, and provision for, meeting additional support needs in literacy, language and numeracy are satisfactory overall. Lifetime has an appropriate system for diagnostic testing although not all learners complete this when they have relevant prior qualifications.
18. Information, advice and guidance and pastoral support are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

19. Leadership and management are good. Lifetime has developed a very good training strategy to meet the needs of employers. It carries out a very thorough training needs analysis with each employer identifying the necessary training to further develop their workforce. The employers' existing training is effectively mapped into the requirements of the qualification avoiding duplication and creating economies in their training budget. Lifetime has built very effective relationships with most of the large national employers in the leisure and hospitality industry to understand their business aims and values and build them onto the training programmes. It also tailors each individual programme to meet their local needs. Most employers have experienced an increased customer satisfaction level and improved staff retention rates.
20. Staff appraisal and development is very good. The appraisal links effectively to job descriptions, the competencies necessary to deliver the role and the business objectives. Staff critically self-assess and grade their performance annually. Their strengths and development needs are highlighted to support them in achieving their next objectives. There is a thorough induction and probationary period in which new staff are very well supported and effectively introduced to Lifetime's business aims. All staff are adequately qualified and there is a company wide training plan to support the delivery of new initiatives and the further development of matters such as health and safety, equality and diversity and safeguarding children.
21. Lifetime has implemented good managerial actions to improve the provision. In 2005/06, it effectively addressed the decline in success rates by strengthening its management structure and improving the use of management information systems. Lifetime has made a considerable investment in resources to increase the managerial capability of the organisation. The management information system is now used very effectively to highlight those learners who are making slow progress. Success rates have substantially improved since 2006 and most learners are now making satisfactory to good progress.
22. The company business objectives are shared with staff however, there is insufficient use of numerical targets for each of the specific programmes and subject sector areas. This is also evident in the quality improvement plan. Internal and external communications are good.
23. The quality improvement system has some aspects that are underdeveloped. The company is currently gathering all quality assurance policies and procedures to establish consistency across the provision. A recently appointed quality manager is planning an annual cycle of activities within the quality improvement framework. Overall, the internal verification process is satisfactory, although in a few instances within the leisure area, it did not address identified areas for improvement. The employer and learner feedback systems have been recently reviewed to improve the quality of the information collected. The teaching and learning observation system is underdeveloped and there are insufficient trained staff to carry out the observations. Observation activities across all learning activities are not clearly planned and the current observations do not measure the learning outcomes. A system to monitor quality trends over time and to identify the correct priorities for improvement has yet to be developed. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report.
24. The promotion of equality and diversity within Lifetime is satisfactory. There is good access to training by many unfunded learners. Lifetime maximises learning opportunities within the existing employer training programmes by offering these to additional staff that

are not eligible for funding. All Train to Gain learners in the leisure sector access additional qualifications.

25. Marketing and promotional materials include positive imagery and they have been used effectively to recruit both staff and learners. Last year Lifetime introduced a dedicated team to promote equality and diversity throughout the company. Staff receive appropriate and regular equality and diversity awareness training.
26. Lifetime uses data well to monitor learners' performance by gender, ethnicity, and disability and there are improving trends in achievement rates closing gaps in success rates. Contract managers promptly ensure that their corporate employers have the appropriate equality policies and strategies.
27. Assessors adequately monitor equality of opportunity issues with the learners and the promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactorily delivered within learner induction. However, there is insufficient reinforcement of the learners' understanding of equality and diversity during their learning programme.
28. Procedures for safeguarding learners appropriately meet the current government requirements.
29. The self-assessment process is well established in the organisation and is fully inclusive of staff. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate although it is insufficiently comprehensive in describing the company's quality improvement arrangements.

What learners like:

- The development of their skills and confidence through learning
- Support they receive from their trainers and assessors
- The improvement of their job prospects
- Increased professionalism in the way they deliver their job roles

What learners think could improve:

- The planning of training time enabling relief from duties and avoiding disruption
- Provide an increase in the amount of materials available on the electronic portal and make it accessible at work

Sector subject areas

Leisure, travel and tourism

Good: Grade 2

Context

30. Lifetime delivers work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes across England. It provides training for 860 work based learners. Of these, 347 are advanced apprentices, 443 are apprentices and 70 are on a Train to Gain programme. Within these programmes, learners can choose to complete exercise and fitness or operational services and leisure management programmes. All learners are in full time employment and are recruited directly from the leisure and hospitality industry. Throughout the last year Lifetime worked with ten national organisations.

Strengths

- High success rates for apprentices
- Good development of vocational skills
- Good assessment practice
- Good monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- Good use of learning resources
- Very well designed programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers
- Very effective support to promote learning
- Well managed provision

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates for advanced apprentices and Train to Gain learners
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity throughout the learners' programmes

Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards are satisfactory and improving. Success rates for apprenticeship programmes are good. They have increased from an average of 39% from 2004 to 2006 to 70% in 2006/07, which is substantially above the national average rate. Success rates in the current year are also high at 70%.
32. Success rates for advanced apprentices and Train to Gain learners have been low over the last four years. However, success rates have significantly improved across all programmes. Overall success rates for advanced apprenticeships have increased from nine per cent in 2004/05 to 42% in 2006/07 and they are 60% in the current year. Success rates for Train to Gain learners have increased from 28% in 2004/05 to 85% in the current year.
33. Timely success rates have also shown a similar improvement trend increasing from an average of 27% from 2004 to 2006 for apprentices to 63% in the current year. Timely success rates have also increased for the Train to Gain programmes from 41% in 2006/07 to 65% in the current year. The increase in timely success, although improved, is less noticeable in the advanced apprenticeship programmes where rates increased from 2% in

2004 to 06 to 23% in the current year. This was partly identified in the self-assessment report.

34. Learners develop good vocational skills, improved confidence and self-esteem. Their performance at work is much enhanced. Exercise and fitness learners demonstrate a wide variety of alternative exercises in exercise and fitness assessments. Learners become confident in dealing with customers. Employer and customer satisfaction feedback has greatly improved. As identified in the self-assessment report, many learners have enhanced job prospects and 25% of learners have been successfully promoted into management positions in 2007/08.
35. Learners' work is of a good standard and current learners are making at least satisfactory progress toward their qualification.

Quality of provision

36. The quality of provision is good. Assessment practice is good. Workplace evidence is used effectively to enhance learners' experience within their programme. Learners receive highly effective verbal feedback to confirm their competence. Employers make good use of procedures, including supporting documentation and language in assessment. In a small number of cases, a significant proportion of assessment time is spent recording evidence. This was identified in the self-assessment report.
37. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress is good. Assessors effectively use the electronic portfolio to record and monitor learners' progress. Information is promptly available to update learners, employers and provider staff of their overall progress. Learners have frequent reviews to support learning and assessment. This was identified in the self-assessment report. However, not all learners are able to access the electronic portal either from work or at home.
38. Learning resources are of a good quality and used effectively to support learning. Learners benefit from a good range of resources to support different learning styles including a comprehensive workbook, CD-ROM tutorial resources and background knowledge books. In one session, a three-dimensional presentation was used to bring to life the functions of the heart. The electronic-portfolio facilitates holistic assessment and the recording of evidence. This was identified in the provider's self-assessment report.
39. Programmes are very well designed to meet the needs of employers and learners. Employer training programmes are very effectively mapped to the learners' programme, linking the learning to the workplace and avoiding duplication for the learner in most centres. Train to Gain learners in the exercise and fitness area access additional industry related qualifications to enhance their programmes. This was identified in the self-assessment report.
40. Learners receive very effective support to promote learning from both employers and trainers' while at work. Regional trainers visit learners frequently to review progress, assess evidence and plan further work. Trainers focus on delivering good quality service to customers in the workplace and demonstrate best practice in the training methods within the fitness industry. Employers have a good knowledge of the programmes' requirements and support learners well by providing time off shift, information and work shadowing in the gym. Learners receive adequate support with any identified learning

needs. Pastoral support is also very good and effectively monitors the learner's safeguarding.

41. The process of induction is satisfactory. However, as identified in the self-assessment report, some learners who have been on programme for longer periods have poor recall of the induction process. Learners effectively agree their short-term targets for further learning and receive statistical information on their progress. However, there are insufficient individual targets set for learners. This was partly identified in the self-assessment report. Learners receive adequate information, advice and guidance. Learners access useful employers' information that provides them with career advice.

Leadership and management

42. Provision in sport, leisure and recreation is well managed. Lifetime has implemented good actions to improve the provision. Staff have a clear understanding of their targets and the organisation's strategic direction. Communication is particularly good. The use of management information systems is appropriate to identify learners' progress. Employer and learner feedback has recently been improved. Trainers are well supported and developed. Staff are adequately qualified and very experienced.
43. The internal verification process is, in some cases, ineffective in directing improvement. As identified in the self-assessment report, some actions are not routinely recorded and reviewed.
44. The monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. However, it's reinforcement throughout the learning programme is insufficient. There are insufficient opportunities within the assessment practice and progress reviews to further develop the learners' knowledge of equality of opportunity. Learners have a basic understanding of equality and diversity. This was not identified in the self-assessment report.
45. The self-assessment process involved staff and the report was broadly reflective of inspectors' findings.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

46. Lifetime provides qualifications at Level 2 and 3 in customer service and sales in apprenticeship programmes and Train to Gain. There are 340 apprentices, one advanced apprentice and 44 learners following the Train to Gain programme at Level 2. Learners are employed in the leisure or hospitality industry across different regions in England and they can undertake a qualification in customer services or sales. All learners receive an induction to their programmes in their workplace. Off-the-job training is delivered by assessors and takes place on a one-to-one basis in the workplace.

Strengths

- High success rates on Train to Gain programmes
- Good development of personal and vocational skills
- Particularly thorough assessment practice
- Very well designed programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers
- Well managed provision

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors in planning and reviewing learning
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity throughout learners' programmes

Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are good and improving, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Success rates on Train to Gain are high, having improved significantly from 27% in 2004/05 to 92% in 2006/07. To date, they continue to be high at 91%.

48. Success rates for apprentices are much improved. Although rates fell from 100% in 2004/05 to 32% in 2005/06, they significantly improved in 2006/07 to 65%, matching national averages. Rates remain stable in 2007/08 at 67%. Timely success rates show a similar trend, decreasing from 86% in 2004/05 to 26% in 2005/06 but rising in 2006/07 to 53%, also matching national averages. Timely rates have further improved to 64% in the current year to date. Success rates for apprentices are now satisfactory.

49. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills as recognised in the self-assessment report. They acquire effective workplace skills such as time management, personal presentation, organisation, problem-solving and communications. Learners take on increasing responsibility and more complex tasks as learning progresses. Many learners have obtained job promotions. The standard of all learners' work is good. Most of the current learners are making good progress.

Quality of provision

50. The quality of provision is good. Assessment practice is particularly thorough as partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Assessors are proactive in using an effective

range of assessment methods to meet individual learner's needs, including extensive questioning techniques which probe and challenge learners' knowledge and understanding well. Clear and specific objectives for assessment sessions are set. Detailed observation reports are appropriately cross-referenced to criteria. Learners understand well how they have demonstrated their competence and how it relates to their qualification. Assessors and learners use laptops, printers and digital cameras to support the training and assessment process well. Verbal feedback is generally good although some written feedback is poor.

51. Training is satisfactory overall. Assessors provide very effective personalised coaching and mentoring for learners' as a need arises, however, this not always formally recorded. Lifetime has developed comprehensive subject specific learning resources consisting of well designed learner handbooks and workbooks. These support individual coaching and independent study well. However, some learners do not have sufficient access to additional supplementary resources such as professional journals, CD-ROMs, DVDs and textbooks.
52. The use of targets for learners is satisfactory. Individual learning plans identify satisfactory long-term targets for the completion of programmes. Lifetime has developed a structure of generic tasks and targets for every visit for each programme. Short-term targets are clear and specific, but are not always sufficiently individualised to learners' needs. Learners have access to their e-portfolio via assessors' laptops. However, some learners have limited access to their portfolio between assessor visits. They are not able to review it and reflect on their recorded progress.
53. Workplace supervisors are insufficiently involved in the planning and reviewing of learners' programmes. This is partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Employers provide at least satisfactory and much good training. Supervisors are not sufficiently involved in discussing and planning learners' training needs to ensure that learners receive a cohesive and coherent programme. Many supervisors have insufficient knowledge of the detail of learners' qualification requirements and are unable to fully support assessment opportunities and evidence collection for learners.
54. Programmes to meet the needs and interests of learners and employers are very well designed as recognised in the self-assessment report. An extremely effective organisational needs analysis is completed with employers to help inform the development of learners' programmes. Assessors have a very good knowledge of employers' businesses and very effectively map the employers' training programmes to match the requirements of learners' qualifications and employers' business needs.
55. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Arrangements for the identification and provision of additional support are satisfactory. Support for learners is effective. Learners receive an appropriate induction which helps them settle into their programmes. It includes a satisfactory range of information about their course, grievance and appeals procedures and their rights and responsibilities in relation to health and safety and equality and diversity. The recent introduction of Level 3 programmes now provides satisfactory opportunities for progression to meet the needs of learners and employers.

Leadership and management

56. Business administration is well managed. The self-assessment report partially identifies this. Effective actions have been implemented that have improved overall and timely success rates and the quality of provision. Effective use of management information and targets supports the monitoring of learner progress and achievement well. However, individual targets for staff are too generic.
57. Communications are good. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Newly appointed staff receive a thorough induction and are very well supported. Internal verification is satisfactory in assuring the quality of assessment. The collection and use of learner and employer feedback to improve provision is satisfactory although much is recent.
58. The reinforcement of equality and diversity throughout learners' programmes is insufficient. Learners receive good information during induction. The monitoring of learners welfare takes place effectively during the review process, however, assessors do not adequately check or raise awareness of learners understanding of equality and diversity. Some learners demonstrate insufficient awareness of these issues.
59. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report for this sector subject area is broadly accurate.

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning leisure, travel and tourism 'apprenticeship' programmes** managed by the provider **2004 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	88	23%	42%	9%	30%
		timely	94	11%	29%	2%	22%
	05-06	overall	128	26%	46%	11%	35%
		timely	130	7%	28%	2%	20%
	06-07	overall	201	44%	56%	42%	49%
		timely	198	20%	41%	19%	35%
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	198	61%	49%	39%	32%
		timely	221	47%	34%	28%	23%
	05-06	overall	273	49%	57%	38%	48%
		timely	253	28%	37%	25%	31%
	06-07	overall	241	71%	65%	70%	60%
		timely	232	56%	44%	54%	40%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

Success rates on **leisure, travel and tourism 'Train to Gain' programmes** managed by the provider **2006 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2005/06	overall	77	28%
		timely	n/a	n/a
	2006/07	overall	100	54%
		timely	76	41%
	2007/08	overall	20	85%
		timely	16	65%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

*** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'skills for life'

Success rates on work-based learning business, administration and law ‘apprenticeship’ programmes managed by the provider 2004 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	12	100%	56%	100%	46%
		timely	14	93%	35%	86%	295
	05-06	overall	82	43%	62%	32%	57%
		timely	80	35%	44%	26%	41%
	06-07	overall	130	66%	69%	65%	66%
		timely	130	55%	54%	53%	52%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the ‘Individual Learning Record’

Success rates on business, administration and law ‘Train to Gain’ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2005/06	overall	19	83%
		timely	n/a	n/a
	2006/07	overall	47	93%
		timely	49	96%
	2007/08	overall	20	91%
		timely	19	87%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the ‘Individual Learning Record’

*** Includes ‘Train to Gain’ long course NVQ provision, but not ‘skills for life’