

Associated Neighbour Training

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	50547
Name of lead inspector:	Bill Shepley HMI
Last day of inspection:	24 September 2010
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Information about the provider

- 1. Associated Neighbour Training (ANT) is a privately-owned training company formed in 1982. It is run from a home-based office in the Reigate area of Surrey. ANT provides employer responsive work-based learning through apprenticeships and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).
- 2. In 2009/10, 85 learners completed their programmes. Approximately 60% of current learners are taking qualifications in business administration, including estate agency, customer service, management and accounting. Almost 40% of learners are veterinary nurses. The small number of information technology learners was not inspected on this occasion. All learners are employed. The great majority work for businesses and veterinary practices in outer south London and the southern counties.
- 3. ANT's owner and training manager is supported by four office-based staff. Six other staff work from other locations as assessors and verifiers. They visit learners in the workplace to provide support and training, and to carry out assessment and reviews. One acts as a monitor of the sub-contracted veterinary nurse training. All staff are employed on a part-time basis.
- 4. Data from the Office for National Statistics show that, in the last quarter of 2009, unemployment in the south east of England was 6.2%, compared to the national average of 7.8%. Some 52% of pupils in the region achieve 5 A* to C grades at GCSE, compared to 48% nationally. In 2007, approximately 87% of the south east's resident population were defined as White British.
- 5. Training in veterinary nursing is sub-contracted to Mind Your Fingers (MYF) Training, a private training provider in Aldershot who train veterinary nurse learners for a number of providers.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	85 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision Grade 2

Capacity to improve	Grade 3	
	Grade	
Outcomes for learners	2	
Quality of provision	2	
Leadership and management Safeguarding	3 3	
Equality and diversity	3	
Subject Areas		
Business, administration and law	2	
Animal care and veterinary science	2	

Overall effectiveness

- 6. Overall, ANT is a good provider of training. Learners achieve well. The great majority complete their qualifications successfully, gaining confidence and sometimes promotion within their workplaces. Learners produce good work, well matched to the needs of their employers and themselves. They enjoy their training and feel safe doing it. There are too many veterinary nurse learners, however, who do not complete their qualifications within the agreed time period. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners in business value the good support they receive from assessors, and learners with MYF benefit from very experienced trainers and good learning resources. The care, advice and guidance given to learners are satisfactory and the learning matches the needs and interests of learners well. Employers also consider the training is well matched to their needs.
- 7. ANT is satisfactorily managed. The company uses its staff, and those of the company who provide the training for veterinary nurses, well to provide satisfactory value for money. Trainers are well supported by a wide range of opportunities for them to develop their own skills, and they do so. The company collects an appropriate range of information to manage the provision. Learners and employers are regularly asked to give their views on the training through regular questionnaires. However, ANT does not always make full use of the

information it receives. While ANT has good communication between its own staff, the sharing of information and good training ideas with MYF is insufficient.

8. ANT shows that it has reasonable capacity to improve its training. Since its last inspection, learners' achievements have remained good, as has the teaching and training it offers. Leadership and management of the organisation are satisfactory. However, while it has shown improvements since the last inspection, some things that needed to be improved then still need to be tackled.

Main findings

- Success rates for learners are high. Overall apprenticeship success rates have steadily improved since the last inspection and have matched or exceeded the high national averages for these programmes. However, the success rate in accountancy is low.
- The number of learners who complete their learning within their planned period has improved by some 20% since the last inspection, but there are variations across the provision. Too may learners make slow progress in veterinary nursing, but the rate for those completing on time in business has improved to 70% in 2009/10, well ahead of the provisional national average.
- Learners develop good work related skills. They significantly improve their confidence and ability to communicate. They often take pride in their achievements. In veterinary nursing, learners work to demanding industry standards and are well supported to develop their practical skills. In business, learners effectively broaden their knowledge above that of their workplace and many gain pay rises and promotion when their training is completed.
- Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning. They work in good quality workplaces. Employer locations are suitably checked for health and safety. However, the reinforcement of occupational health and safety awareness is insufficient at learner reviews in veterinary nursing.
- The quality of training at ANT is good. In business, highly experienced assessors skilfully guide and encourage learners through their programmes. Knowledgeable veterinary nurse trainers make good use of interactive learning technologies in classes. However, in some sessions, there is insufficient checking of learning by trainers. Employer involvement in training is good in veterinary nursing, but insufficient in some business training environments.
- Assessment and internal verification are good. Assessment is flexible and effectively meets learners' needs. In business, all learners complete useful research into their company which provides evidence for their qualification. MYF provides a well planned approach to assessment and verification.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. ANT understands the evolving training needs of its clients and has an effective strategy to adapt its programmes to meet employer and learner requirements.

- Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory overall. In business, assessors set clear targets for learners. Learners have sufficient information to track their qualification progress. In veterinary nursing, however, the learner review process is inadequate. There is a lack of action planning or target setting to inform improvement. The support for learners making slow progress is insufficient.
- The results of initial literacy and numeracy assessments are not always included as part of learners' training plans. Results of learning styles analysis are not always shared with tutors. Induction is mostly focused on completion of the required paperwork. Support for those identified as requiring additional help, however, is effective but often informal.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. ANT's leaders provide a positive and supportive training environment which is flexible to the developing needs of employers and learners it serves. Resources are used effectively to provide a wide range of expertise. Off-the-job training resources at MYF provide good support for learners. Appropriate data are suitably used to manage the provision.
- Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. ANT meets current government legislation for safeguarding employed young people. Most staff at ANT and all staff at MYF had been subject to appropriate CRB checks. Staff awareness training has been completed by most staff. However, neither senior manager at ANT or MYF, designated as responsible for coordinating safeguarding, has completed additional training to support them in this role. The management of health and safety for learners is satisfactory.
- The management of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The promotion of training and celebration of learners' success are good through attractively designed newsletters and ANT's clear website. Little progress has been made since the last inspection, however, in increasing the number of learners from under-represented groups. Staff training in equality and diversity matters is satisfactory.
- Suitable equality and diversity data are collected and presented, but there is little evidence that this is discussed by teams to monitor the provision. Insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity takes place at learner reviews. Learners have insufficient understanding of equality and diversity in their workplace although the majority, when surveyed, say that their knowledge of equality and diversity has been increased during their training.
- Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Self assessment is, however, informal. In 2009 ANT did not publish a self-assessment report, relying instead upon its quality improvement plan. The monitoring of subcontracted provision is insufficiently thorough with few observations of learning and insufficient sharing of useful feedback from learners and employers.

What does Associated Neighbour Training need to do to improve further?

- Increase the timely success of veterinary nurse learners by better use of initial assessment to inform individual learning plans. Use timely learner progress reviews to set and monitor learner targets, specific to their needs.
- Increase the success rates for accountancy learners and learners aged over 25 years in business and administration through improved advice, guidance and support.
- Increase the role of employers in actively supporting the training process in business and administration.
- Improve the support for learners who defer or fail examinations by better action planning and improved coordination between MYF and ANT.
- Strengthen the quality assurance of the provision by improved communication, monitoring and sharing good practice between ANT and MYF.
- Undertake more systematic self-assessment of all ANT's provision, using the good range of information which is already collected.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the trainers who inspire great confidence
- assessors, who are very supportive in helping learners succeed
- the opportunity for individual learning
- practical activity with animals
- being given responsibility.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the opportunity to complete qualifications in less time
- more interaction between assessors and learners
- greater explanation of the NVQ process.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors What employers like:

- the good level of communication
- the quality of the training
- the extremely supportive training team
- the level of professionalism and support at all times.

What employers would like to see improved:

- greater feedback on learner performance
- greater explanation of NVQ options
- better information on classroom activities to enable practice reinforcement.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

- 9. The outcomes for learners are good in business, administration and law and in veterinary nursing, as they were at the last inspection. Learners attain their learning goals well. Overall success rates are high in both subject areas, as they were at the last inspection, but there has been a decline in timely success rates over the last three years in veterinary nursing. The slow progress of estate agency learners, noted at the last inspection, has been improved. The quality of the provision is good, as it was at the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good and the provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. Sufficient resources are made available to support effective learning. Staff are appropriately qualified and often very experienced.
- 10. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory overall. Self-assessment is inclusive but largely informal. ANT has not produced a self-assessment report for 2009. Other review documents seen by inspectors are often too descriptive with insufficient evaluation. ANT's self-assessment grades are higher than those awarded by inspectors in a number of instances. Some aspects of quality assurance, particularly related to the monitoring of sub-contracted provision, are insufficiently thorough.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

- 11. Success rates for learners are high. Overall apprenticeship success rates have steadily improved since the last inspection and have matched, or exceeded, the high national averages for these programmes. The overall veterinary nurse success rate increased to 96% in 2008/9 with 24 of 25 learners achieving their framework. In business, the provisional overall success rates in 2009/10 is 80%. However, the rate in accountancy is low. There are no significant differences in achievement between different learner groups.
- 12. Timely success rates, overall, have improved by some 20% since the last inspection, but there are variations across the provision. Too many learners make slow progress in veterinary nursing, while timely success rates in business have improved to 70% in 2009/10, well ahead of the provisional national average.
- 13. Learners develop good work related skills. They significantly improve their confidence and ability to communicate. They often take pride in their achievements. In veterinary nursing, learners work to demanding industry standards and are well supported to develop their practical skills. In business, learners broaden well their knowledge beyond that of their workplace. Many gain pay rises and promotion when their training is completed. Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning.

Grade 3

The quality of provision

- 14. The quality of training at ANT is good. In business, highly experienced assessors skilfully guide and encourage learners through the programme on their regular visits to the workplace. Learning materials effectively support the development of learners' knowledge. Knowledgeable veterinary nurse trainers make good use of interactive learning technologies in classes, but in some sessions there is insufficient checking of learning by questioning or discussion.
- 15. Assessment and internal verification are good. Assessment is flexible and effectively meets learners' needs. In business, all learners complete a useful report on their company that successfully covers a broad range of evidence. MYF provides a good coherent approach to assessment and verification. Employer involvement in training is good in veterinary nursing, but insufficient in some business training environments.
- 16. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. ANT understands the evolving training needs of its clients and has an effective strategy to adapt its programmes to meet employer and learner requirements. Resources are well distributed through direct and sub-contracted provision. Employers value the quality of training which meets their business needs. Learners comment on their increase in self confidence and on increased opportunities for progression within their companies and practices.
- 17. Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory overall. In business, assessors set clear targets for learners. Learners have sufficient information to track their qualification progress. However, individual learning plans fail to include personal goals. In veterinary nursing the learner review process is inadequate. There is a lack of action planning or target setting to drive improvement. The support for learners making slow progress is insufficient.
- 18. The results of initial literacy and numeracy assessments are not systematically included as part of learners' training plans nor are they sufficiently monitored. Results of learning styles analysis are not shared with tutors. Induction is mostly focused on completion of the required paperwork. Support for those identified as requiring help, however, is effective but often informal.

Leadership and management

19. Available resources are used efficiently and effectively. The use of part-time staff provides learners with a wide range of expertise and experience. Sub-contracting arrangements with MYF provide good access to a wide range of good learning resources. ANT's links with employers provide learners with good on-the-job training. The training manager provides effective leadership, leading a small but committed team in responding to the evolving needs of employers and learners. The company continues to respond well to the need for business and veterinary nurse training in the region. Target setting is satisfactory and linked to suitable staff appraisal arrangements. Staff comment on the good access to training and professional development offered by ANT. Take up of

Grade 2

Grade 3

training is good. The use of data to manage the provision is satisfactory for contract compliance and learner monitoring. A useful, simple spreadsheet keeps assessors up to date in planning learner visits.

- 20. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. ANT meets current government legislation for safeguarding employed young people. At the time of the inspection, most staff at ANT and all staff at MYF had been subject to appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Suitable records of CRB status are held by both organisations. First level safeguarding awareness training, using an on-line commercial training package, has been completed by most staff at ANT and all staff at MYF. However, neither organisation's senior managers, designated as responsible for coordinating safeguarding, have completed additional training to support them in this role. There are very recent plans for them to do so. The management of health and safety for learners is satisfactory. Suitable health and safety checks are conducted on all employers' premises prior to training. Learners undertake appropriate health and safety training as part of their NVQs. In some cases, however, insufficient emphasis is placed on work specific health and safety aspects at reviews.
- 21. ANT's promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place at ANT and MYF. Both organisations promote their policies satisfactorily through learner and employer handbooks. ANT works hard to promote its training services to employers since all learners are already in employment. Promotion of training, and celebration of learners' success, is good through attractively designed newsletters which are also published on ANT's clear website. Little progress has been made since the last inspection, however, in increasing the number of learners from groups under-represented in these skills areas and this is recognised by ANT. Staff training in equality and diversity matters is satisfactory. Awareness raising of equality and diversity and its impact on learning is included in the regular team meeting programme at ANT and many staff have undertaken specific training.
- 22. Suitable equality and diversity data are collected and presented in clear graphical form, but there is little evidence that this is regularly discussed by teams in monitoring the provision, or guiding improvement. Since the last inspection a useful range of well-produced commercial leaflets, providing equality and diversity and safeguarding information to learners, is included in the learner induction packs. However, these leaflets are not used effectively by staff as training aids. Insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity takes place at learner reviews. An equality and diversity quiz, introduced since the last inspection, is of limited value and questions on equality and diversity at learner reviews result in repetitive tick box responses. Learners have insufficient understanding of equality and diversity in the context of their workplace although the majority, when surveyed, say that their knowledge of equality and diversity has been increased during their training.
- 23. Engagement with users is satisfactory. Appropriate links are maintained with employers who, in response to ANT and Ofsted surveys, are very positive about their links with training. Managers at MYF identify good and frequent

communication with ANT as being a key strength of their working relationship. However, useful learners' survey results of MYF based learners, collected by ANT, have not been shared with the sub-contractor. Learners frequently identify the good communication they enjoy with assessors and trainers, but the results of learner surveys are insufficiently considered in planning improvement.

Subject areas

Business, administration and law

Grade 2

Context

24. At the time of the inspection there were 44 learners on business programmes. ANT offers estate agency, administration, customer service, accounting and management apprenticeship frameworks. The number of learners working towards advanced apprenticeships and apprenticeships are 28 and 16 respectively. Just over half of learners are male. All learners are employed. All the delivery of business and administration programmes is delivered by ANT.

Key findings

- Overall, success rates are good and have improved since 2008/09. In 2009/10, success rates in business administration are particularly high at 93%, and high in customer service and management at 80% and 77% respectively. However, success rates are low in accountancy at 50% and for learners over 25 years of age at 68%, compared to a national average of 77%. Learners make satisfactory progress with approximately seven out of ten learners completing in the agreed timescale.
- Most learners demonstrate good employability and vocational skills. They significantly improve their confidence and ability to communicate more effectively and improve their work productivity. Learners broaden their knowledge well above that of their work place and many gain pay rises and promotion following the training they have completed. Learners enjoy their training with ANT.
- The quality of training is good. Highly experienced assessors skilfully guide and encourage learners through the programme on their regular visits to the workplace. Learning materials effectively support the development of learners' knowledge.
- Assessment is flexible and fully meets learners' needs. In the early stages of the programme, all learners complete a report on their company that successfully covers a broad range of evidence required for their qualification and identifies any additional learning needs. Employer involvement in training is, however, insufficient in some cases.
- Assessors are accessible and supportive. They set clear targets for learners. Learners have sufficient information to track their qualification progress. However, individual learning plans fail to include personal goals. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory.
- Initial assessment and support for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Support for those identified as requiring help is effective but often informal. The results of initial literacy and numeracy assessments are not systematically included as part of the training plan, nor are they sufficiently monitored.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management of assessors is effective and communication supports learner development well. Assessors share resources appropriately and good training opportunities to improve their performance are regularly taken up.
- Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Learners feel safe. However, advice on learners' rights and responsibilities in the workplace is often too generic. Specific advice related to individual learners' work placements is not sufficiently explored.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactory. ANT provides a suitable range of relevant information and course work in the early stages to support the development of learners' understanding. Additional activities are included, for example quizzes. However, reinforcement of equality and diversity is insufficient at reviews and, when asked, learners were unable to explain key aspects of the subject.
- Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The small team address issues quickly and effectively. Improvements have been made since the last inspection. However, the self-assessment of business provision is too informal and over generously graded. The current quality improvement plan insufficiently recognises key areas for improvement, for example low success rates for a significant cohort of learners aged 25+.

What does Associated Neighbour Training need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates for accountancy and learners aged over 25 years through improved advice, guidance and support.
- Increase the role of employers in actively supporting the training process.
- Make the self-assessment process more thorough to clearly evaluate the quality of provision and plan for improvement.

Animal care and veterinary science

Context

25. At the time of the inspection 29 learners were working towards veterinary nursing qualifications. Sixteen are working towards advanced apprenticeships and thirteen towards apprenticeships. Most learners are over 19 years of age and all are employed in veterinary practices. Entry qualifications for learners are largely prescribed by the awarding body. Few learners are required to complete additional key skills qualifications. Veterinary nurse training is delivered by MYF Training in Aldershot.

Key findings

- Success rates for learners are high. Overall apprenticeship success rates have been over 80% for the last three years, matching the high national average for these qualifications. The success rate increased to 96% in 2008/9, with 24 of the 25 learners achieving their framework.
- Too may learners make slow progress. Timely success rates are satisfactory but have declined in the last three years from 81% in 2007/8 to 71% in 2009/10. Some 25% of current learners have not achieved in the time expected. A few learners have failed examinations on several occasions. Of learners currently on programme, 50% have deferred taking, or need to resit, examinations.
- Learners develop good work-related skills. They increase their understanding of their job roles and take a pride in their achievements. Learners work to demanding industry standards. They are well supported to develop their practical competence. MYF Training provides good support for learners and assessors have a clear understanding of veterinary nursing frameworks.
- Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning. They work in good quality workplaces. Employer locations are suitably checked for health and safety. Health and safety topics are covered thoroughly in training sessions at MYF. However, the reinforcement of occupational health and safety awareness is insufficient at learner reviews.
- The involvement of employers in training is good. Employers are committed to training and they are well informed by MYF on the awarding body requirements. Employers' training staff are experienced. Arrangements for training and assessment are flexible to meet learners' and employers' needs. Most learners have significant experience working in practice prior to commencing training. They work well with their work place assessors. Employers are well informed and assessors are well supported by the awarding body.
- Training is good and prepares learners well for external examinations. Teachers at MYF make good use of interactive learning technologies in classes, with good use of photographs and videos to illustrate theory taught. In some lessons, however, there is insufficient checking of learning by questioning or discussion. Notes provided for learners are detailed but some lack interest and variety to assist learning. Learners value the support provided by tutors.

Grade 2

- Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Learners receive regular tutorials and are supported effectively by their assessors in the development of portfolio evidence. MYF is the Veterinary Nursing Approved Centre for most of the veterinary practices. There is a coherent approach to assessment and verification. However, for learners in practices linked with other centres, there is less consistency in their training. Too many learners are slow to complete their portfolios.
- Initial assessment is not used effectively to inform learning programmes. Results of learning styles analysis are not shared with tutors. Literacy and numeracy assessment is not used to inform learning plans. Key skills requirements are not clear, leading to confusion for staff and learners. Learning plans are incomplete and are not used to inform and track learning. Induction is mostly focused on completion of the required paperwork.
- The learner review process is inadequate. Learner progress is reviewed every three months. While learners and supervisors normally contribute to reviews, there is a lack of action planning or target setting to drive improvement. Additional reports from the training provider do not inform the review process. When learners are not able to attend the review the process is conducted in their absence leading to gaps of six months or more between learner and reviewer contact. The support for learners making slow progress is insufficient.
- Resources to meet the needs of learners are good. MYF's teaching suite has good specialist veterinary resources. A virtual learning facility is under development for use by learners on the new diploma programme.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum management is good and there is good communication with learners and employers regarding training delivery. Tutors are suitably qualified and experienced. Arrangements to quality assure training by MYF, however, lack rigour. Lesson observation reports by ANT focus insufficiently on aspects for improvement.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Appropriate arrangements to eliminate harassment and bullying are in place. Equality and diversity are suitably introduced at the initial induction and materials have been developed to enhance learners understanding. However, reinforcement of understanding at reviews is insufficiently promoted. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace is limited.

What does Associated Neighbour Training need to do to improve further?

- Increase the timely success of learners by better use of initial assessment to inform individual learning plans. Use timely learner progress reviews to set and monitor learner targets, specific to their needs.
- Improve the support for learners who defer or fail examinations by better action planning and improved coordination between MYF and ANT.
- Strengthen the quality assurance of the provision by improved communication, monitoring and sharing of information with MYF.

Information about the inspection

- 26. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's training manager as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment information and development plans, the previous inspection report and data on the outcomes for learners over the period since the previous inspection.
- 27. Inspectors used individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider and Ofsted. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Associated Neighbour Training

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners		
Part-time learners	44	44
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	3	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	-	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	-	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
Leadership and management	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	-	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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