



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JULY 1999

Royal Borough of
Kingston Upon Thames,
Training for Work

SUMMARY

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Training for Work, provides excellent training in foundation for work, with training tailored to meet trainees' individual needs. There is good training in business administration, including information technology. Trainee support and management of training are outstanding, with highly experienced and qualified staff and comprehensive management-information systems. Arrangements for equal opportunities and quality assurance are good.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Business administration	2
Foundation for work	1

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	1
Management of training	1
Quality assurance	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good quality off-the-job training
- ◆ flexible training tailored to individual needs
- ◆ careful matching of trainees and placements
- ◆ high levels of achievement by those from disadvantaged groups
- ◆ frequent formal and informal feedback on progress
- ◆ intensive and effective pastoral care
- ◆ comprehensive management-information systems
- ◆ highly experienced and qualified staff
- ◆ clear and comprehensive quality assurance procedures
- ◆ effective evaluation of training programmes

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ lack of structured initial assessment for modern apprentices
- ◆ poor awareness of equal opportunities by some trainees

INTRODUCTION

1. Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Training for Work (Training for Work) has been providing government-funded work-based training since 1979. Its aim is to 'enable unemployed adults to achieve national vocational qualifications and gain employment through the provision of high quality training and appropriate work placement.' It is part of the education department of the local authority and is housed in an adult education centre in the Surbiton area of Kingston, with an annexe at the North Kingston Centre. It is a registered assessment centre for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in administration, accounting and information technology to level 3. It has a contract with AZTEC, the training and enterprise council (TEC) for southwest London, to provide modern apprenticeships, prevocational training and work-based training for adults. It also runs a rehabilitation programme for the Employment Service, specifically for trainees with disabilities, and for the training component of the employment option of New Deal. Sixty trainees are on programmes at any one time, with most following work-based training for adults programmes. The client group includes those who have been long-term unemployed, returners to the labour market, single parents, ex-service personnel, ex-offenders and people for whom English is a second language. Twenty-eight per cent of the TEC provision is dedicated to trainees with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Training for Work employs 15 full- and part-time staff.

2. Kingston is a highly populated and developed suburb situated 10 miles from the centre of London. In 1991, the borough had a population of 132,996, of whom 11,448 (8.6 per cent) were from minority ethnic groups (*1991 Census*). There are 74,000 people of working age (*Labour Force Survey 1998*). Local employment is mainly focussed around Kingston town centre, with its high concentration of employers in the service sectors, such as retailing and office work. Close proximity to popular tourist destinations such as Hampton Court Palace provides opportunities for work in the tourism and leisure industry. Unemployment figures have been steadily reducing over the last five years, and in 1998 stood at 2.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 5.2 per cent. This area of southwest London has a highly qualified workforce with 58 per cent being qualified to NVQ level 3 and above (*Labour Force Survey 1998*). In 1998, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Kingston was 58.6 per cent, well above the national average of 46.3 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. Training for Work produced its first self-assessment report in September 1998. The process included all staff, led by managers. The head of training attended training on self-assessment organised by the local TEC, and worked within the agreed guidelines. The report was comprehensive, giving good background information on the training programmes. Since producing the report, Training for Work has made progress in addressing identified weaknesses through its action plan

4. A team of three inspectors spent a total of nine days at Training for Work, based at the King Charles Centre site. They interviewed 27 trainees, either individually or in small groups, and 14 workplace supervisors. They visited 14 sites and conducted 14 interviews with Training for Work's administrative, training and management staff. They examined the organisation's policies and procedures, and looked at trainees' records, including individual training plans, reviews and assessment records. They inspected trainees' portfolios and Training for Work's plans and evaluations of training, as well as management information and statistical data. They observed and graded four training sessions.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Business administration		1				1
Foundation for work	3					3
Total	3	1	0	0	0	4

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Business administration

Grade 2

5. There are currently 17 trainees on programmes within this occupational area, with 12 on courses in business administration (including four modern apprentices), four on courses in accounting (including two modern apprentices), and one working towards an information technology NVQ. They have been joined by an additional 12 trainees who are on the prevocational training programme: eight in administration, three in accounting, and one in information technology. Those on a modern apprenticeship programme are employed full-time, while the others are adults working an average of two days a week in a work placement to support their three days a week spent at the training centre. The numbers of trainees are at their lowest for some years. The trainees are employed or in a placement with local employers which have been vetted as suitable. Relationships with some of these employers have continued for a number of years. There are six key staff involved on these programmes. These members of staff may have dual roles as tutor and

assessor/verifier, or they may be solely involved as an assessor, depending on their experience and qualifications. All are appropriately qualified. The self-assessment report contained a large number of strengths, some of which were confirmed by inspectors. Weaknesses highlighted in the report had largely disappeared by the time of inspection, owing to appropriate action having been taken. Inspection highlighted another weakness, however, which resulted in a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high quality off-the-job training
- ◆ good range of resources
- ◆ well-qualified and experienced staff
- ◆ excellent attendance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little work-based assessment

GOOD PRACTICE

Staff enable trainees to feel confident about working in different office environments with alternative computer systems and software. A range of computer software is made available, from the most modern to some several years old. This allows trainees to work with the programme which is most familiar to them, and steadily progress to more sophisticated programmes. Trainees then confidently work in settings where either older or more modern software is used.

6. High-quality training is offered to all trainees through administration, accounting and IT courses. These include classes on IT to industry standards using word-processing, database, spreadsheet and accounting packages. The trainees gain the necessary skills and abilities to be commercially valuable and to help with their search for employment. These courses are well taught by experienced, knowledgeable and qualified staff, who are able to meet the individual needs of trainees looking to gain new work skills. All classes are tutor led and include exercises and work tasks. Class sizes are carefully regulated, ensuring individual attention from tutors and teaching assistants. Modern apprentices need the agreement of their employers to attend these courses. All modern apprentices except one have this agreement and attend off-the-job training.

7. Training for Work has a wide selection of computers, and a range of old and new software. A particular advantage of having this range of software is the confidence it brings to trainees, as they are able to work on familiar programmes before progressing to the more modern applications. In addition, textbooks are made available as a source of reference to help with the knowledge and understanding requirements of the qualification.

8. There is excellent attendance at the training sessions, with records showing that unauthorised absence is as low as 0.5 per cent. Any absences are followed up by telephone calls, and discussed at staff meetings.

9. Work placements are carefully chosen by Training for Work's staff. Trainees are placed in organisations with supportive staff, who understand the nature of the courses that the trainees are taking. Trainees receive good on-the-job training. They are given varied job tasks, with content appropriate to the subject and qualification

that they are pursuing.

10. Training for Work cannot currently use any work-based assessors due to the absence of qualified assessors at any of the workplaces used. Some assessment does take place at work, particularly for the modern apprentices, who are visited and observed in the workplace every two or three weeks. Most assessment takes place at the training centre and includes real work brought back from placement employers and real work assignments undertaken at the centre. This method of assessment is particularly common for those on work placements, who generally receive just one visit by an assessor to the workplace throughout the programme. Much of the evidence in this case, is in the form of assignments or tasks. There has been action by Training for Work to encourage the trainees to provide more work-based evidence. There has been some improvement in the situation, but as a work-based assessment programme, more is still required.

11. Training for Work gives verbal and written guidance on evidence-gathering to both employers and trainees. Evidence of trainees' competence is often provided in the form of 'tick sheets' confirming performance criteria, or a signature on a witness testimony written by the trainee. However, this is never used as the sole source of evidence. These are acceptable ways of providing evidence, but fall short of best practice. Supervisors have been asked to provide their own witness testimonies of trainees' competence.

12. The internal verification system at Training for Work is sound, with appropriate sampling of assessors' and assessment decisions. This system is frequently reviewed.

13. Performance figures for 1998-99 show that 54 per cent of trainees who start a course of training go on to achieve an NVQ. The percentage for 1997-98 was 61 per cent, but these two figures are not directly comparable as prevocational trainees are no longer transferred to mainstream courses to work towards NVQs. In 1998-99, only 4.2 per cent of those entering training left before they had completed their course. The proportion of trainees gaining employment at the end of their training was 54 per cent for 1997-98 and 58 per cent for 1998-99. Job and NVQ figures are higher than in the general TEC area.

14. The modern apprenticeship programme is new, as is the introduction of key skills. Where possible, evidence of key skills is drawn from workplace evidence already collated for NVQ assessment. Some aspects of application of number and information technology are not easily addressed in this way and off-the-job training and assessment is, therefore, provided.

Foundation for work

Grade 1

15. There are 19 trainees on prevocational training programmes. This is fewer than Training for Work's target numbers. Seven trainees are on basic employability programmes and are working towards agreed milestones, while 12 are working towards NVQs at levels 2 or 3 in business administration, information technology or accounting, in addition to their milestones. Of the 41 trainees starting the programme in the 1998-99 contract year, 24 had an NVQ as a targeted outcome. All trainees initially attend full-time in-house training in basic employability. The in-house training and off-the-job training programmes comprise an individually agreed set of modules. The selection of these modules is based on needs identified at initial assessment and interview, or during progress reviews. Trainees are assigned a personal tutor, who reviews their progress towards the agreed milestones every four weeks. At an agreed point in their training, trainees move onto a work placement for two to three days a week and continue to attend the centre for the rest of the week. If appropriate, they will also negotiate their progression onto the NVQ programme at this point. For trainees in a work placement, reviews are carried out during attendance at the training centre. Inspectors confirmed some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report and found others to be no more than normal practice. The grade awarded is the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible training tailored to individual needs
- ◆ well-planned and -delivered off-the-job training
- ◆ specialised English for Speakers of Other Languages initial assessment and training
- ◆ careful matching of trainees and placements
- ◆ excellent and supportive work placements
- ◆ excellent working relationships between all parties
- ◆ high achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no significant weaknesses identified

16. Training programmes are individually agreed on the basis of needs identified during the initial assessment and interview process and are tailored to meet specific needs. The programme is recorded on an individual training plan, which is a working document and is regularly updated to reflect any renegotiation of targets during the programme.

GOOD PRACTICE

The personal tutor is the main point of contact for the prevocational trainees. Tutors regularly review trainees' progress and are familiar with their particular needs and

17. The in-house training is flexible, and is well planned and delivered. This includes English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), health and safety, personal development, and aspects of information technology and office skills

training, provided as part of the basic employability programme. Training is delivered in a workshop and the content is matched to meet trainees' individual needs. The method of training allows each trainee to work at the level and pace that they require. Trainees are highly motivated. Staff-to-trainee ratios are good, with staff often working with trainees on a one-to-one basis. Staff respond to trainees' needs quickly and appropriately. As well as the regular planned reviews of progress, trainees receive regular informal feedback on their progress during the training sessions.

18. The ESOL training and assessment is an excellent feature of the programme, as it allows trainees to access up to six hours a week of English language coaching as a planned element of the programme. In addition, the in-house provision means that trainees can access this training on an informal basis while attending other modules. This ensures that trainees' progress in other areas of their programmes is not unnecessarily held back.

19. Both trainees and work placement supervisors are interviewed before any trainee is placed with an employer. This attention to detail leads to effective matching of work placements with trainees, and encourages work-placement providers to have a continuing involvement in the programme. Most trainees get at least four weeks in a work placement. Work placements are excellent, and provide trainees with real work activities in a highly supportive environment. The work provided is mostly in office administration roles and includes a wide range of activities and job tasks, all of which are clearly explained to the trainees. Workplace supervisors give good guidance and support.

20. The time spent in-house at the beginning of the programme allows the work-placement officer to develop a clear picture of each trainee's aims and abilities. The effective working relationships between staff and trainees improve trainees' confidence and enable them to take an active role in the negotiation of their programmes. The achievement of milestones is assessed as appropriate. For many trainees, attendance is an important milestone, so the attendance record provides suitable evidence that the milestone has been successfully reached. Trainees taking an NVQ receive one observation visit in the workplace. The rest of their assessment takes place in the training centre, where all the trainers are also qualified as assessors.

21. Achievement rates are high. At the time of inspection, there had been 28 leavers from the trainees starting the programme in the 1998-99 contract year. Of these, 24 had completed their action plan and achieved the agreed milestones. Seventeen had gained employment, one was in voluntary work, one had progressed to further education and one had transferred to mainstream training. Ten achieved NVQs in addition to their other milestones, of which nine were at level 2, and one was at level 1. Attendance rates are good, with only 28 days of unauthorised absence out of a total of 2,323 working days.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

22. Training for Work is part of the local authority, which has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and procedures. These are distributed to all members of staff and include harassment, complaints and grievance policies and procedures. The local authority has a strong commitment to equal opportunities for all. Training for Work has produced a handbook for employers and trainees which includes information about a range of aspects relating to the programmes offered and Training for Works' expectations, including the organisation's equal opportunities policy and the complaints procedure. Data relating to the ethnicity, gender, age and disability of those entering training are collected. The self-assessment report identified many strengths, some of which were found to be no more than normal practice, and one weakness, which has since been addressed. The grade awarded by inspectors is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high levels of achievement by trainees from disadvantaged groups
- ◆ good resources for trainees with additional learning needs
- ◆ equal opportunities training provided for all staff
- ◆ effective promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ comprehensive statistical information

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor awareness of equal opportunities among some trainees

GOOD PRACTICE

Data revealed that male trainees were not getting into jobs within the expected timescales. This was thought to be because of insufficient time being given to job search prior to completion of the programme. The period was extended for male trainees to give them longer on CV preparation, interview skills, and seeking appropriate work. The job achievement rate for male trainees has subsequently improved.

23. Data for 1998-99 show achievement of NVQs by people with disabilities at 46 per cent and for those from minority ethnic groups at 61 per cent. This compares favourably with the TEC area figures of 22 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. The proportion of trainees finding employment at the end of their training is similarly high for these groups.

24. Training for Work offers a wide range of resources for trainees with disabilities. These include large-screens for computers, special chairs, large screen software, 'speak and talk' programmes, left- and right-hand keyboards, transmitter and receiver equipment for those with impaired hearing, and wheelchair access to the training centre.

25. There is an active approach to the promotion of equal opportunities, demonstrated by the use of positive role models when celebrating success stories and the recent successful achievement of the 'Positive about Disabled' benchmark. The equal opportunities statement is on all marketing material. Training for Work monitors compliments and complaints, and there is evidence of complaints being

addressed and of the action taken being recorded. Those records viewed showed complaints were satisfactorily resolved.

26. There is a comprehensive management information system, which is used to monitor data relating to specific groups. This information is regularly evaluated and reviewed in order to target specific groups.

27. Equal opportunities training has been provided for all staff within the last year to ensure that they are familiar with recent legislative developments and current issues. Training for Work has a policy of interviewing as potential trainees all of those who are referred to it, but will only offer training to those it believes can be successfully placed and who can achieve their individual training plan.

28. Staff are given a copy of the equal opportunities policy, and an abridged version is provided for all employers to ensure their compliance. Some modern apprentices have a poor understanding of equal opportunities. In the trainees' handbook there is a very brief statement about equal opportunities, which for example, makes no mention of harassment. Although there is discussion of equal opportunities at induction, and the personal development module covers issues such as bullying, there is no procedure to check trainees' understanding of these issues. During the course of the programme, opportunities are not taken to review knowledge and understanding or to identify issues.

Trainee support

Grade 1

29. Adult trainees have a three-stage 'intake' programme which covers information, induction and initial assessment. There is a half-day group session where basic information on the programme and the different opportunities available are explained and trainees share their expectations. This is followed by an interview where further initial assessment takes place. The third stage, on a separate day, covers all the administrative areas. A tutor carries out the induction for modern apprentices at their place of work. There is an initial visit to discuss the programme and the opportunities available. A second visit covers induction and the administrative areas. Trainees on prevocational training courses have a personal tutor who offers them regular support. Formal progress reviews take place every four weeks. Other adult trainees have four-weekly reviews and the modern apprentices have quarterly reviews at work. Trainees also receive informal feedback on their progress and have support for personal development issues when they attend the centre for training. Adult trainees have job-search sessions during their programme and more specific guidance on job search and progression opportunities towards the end of the programme. Extra support for trainees with disabilities is available through external networks. The inspectors confirmed most of the strengths in the self-assessment report. The grade awarded is higher than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive information and induction process for adult trainees
- ◆ detailed initial assessment for adult trainees
- ◆ frequent formal and informal feedback on progress
- ◆ intensive and effective pastoral care
- ◆ excellent support for trainees with disabilities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of structured initial assessment for modern apprentices

GOOD PRACTICE

Support is provided for trainees with disabilities to enter the workplace. Those who need the special equipment which is made available while they are training, can borrow the equipment once they have secured a job. Their employer can then get the equipment themselves, through the disability employment advisor.

30. The intake programme for adults ensures that trainees understand the programmes available and have the opportunity to discuss their particular needs and expectations with staff on a one-to-one basis. Trainees speak highly of this process and can clearly remember the different activities that take place. They receive a well-written and -produced handbook and health and safety information.

31. A structured initial assessment takes place during the intake programme which covers literacy, numeracy and ESOL, where required. Further initial assessment takes place during the interview and staff use skilful questioning to identify further needs and any specialist support required. Many trainees are on prevocational training courses, so have relatively little prior learning, but all prior learning is carefully assessed. Modern apprentices who have already gained key skills by, for example, taking a relevant GNVQ, have this accredited as prior learning. The results of initial assessment influence the individual training plans and the milestones which are drawn up for the trainees on prevocational training. Any prior learning is noted on individual training plans. Personal tutors provide individual support and encouragement for trainees on prevocational training courses. All support provided is recorded on trainees' individual training plans and is reviewed as part of the regular progress reviews.

32. Modern apprentices have regular assessment visits where work is reviewed and targets are set against completion of the NVQ. They also have quarterly reviews. Adult trainees are formally reviewed every four weeks, but have access to staff on a daily basis when they are in the centre. Training sessions at the centre include feedback to trainees on their progress. Trainees have close contact with staff for advice, guidance and information. Every effort is made to enable trainees to access support externally or in-house, as appropriate. Only 4.2 per cent of trainees leave before completing their course of training.

33. Many of the trainees on the Employment Service rehabilitation programme move on to prevocational training and continue to access specialist equipment and support, from both internal and external sources. Subsidised childcare is available to help trainees with dependent children.

34. There is a loose structure to the initial assessment undertaken by the small numbers of modern apprentices. As they are already in employment and have met their employer's job specification, they are not tested for basic skills. There is discussion with employers to identify the appropriate level of NVQ and any specific training needs. School records of achievement, GCSEs and other qualifications are used as a guide to an individual's suitability for undertaking training. There is little evidence in the individual training plans that initial assessment has taken place.

Management of training

Grade 1

35. As part of the local authority, Training for Work has detailed and comprehensive policies and procedures which relate to staff recruitment, appraisal, development and training, as well as to equal opportunities and harassment. These are detailed in the local authority manager's handbook and employees' handbook. It has additional policies and procedures, outlined in the employers and trainees' handbooks, that relate to the provision of training, and these are shared with trainees, employers and workplace supervisors. As part of the local authority, Training for Work is a non-profit-making training provider. Staff are on annual contracts with renewal dependent on a successful tender for work-based training to the TEC. Adult Education & Training, of which Training for Work is a part, achieved the Investors in People award in 1997. The self-assessment report identified many strengths. The grade awarded by inspectors is higher than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive management information systems
- ◆ good external networks
- ◆ highly experienced and qualified staff
- ◆ active involvement of staff in development of training programme
- ◆ effective use of staff appraisal system

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ policies, strategies and targets not fully communicated to employers and workplace supervisors

36. Training for Work collects useful management information from a number of sources. It makes use of labour market information collected through the TEC and the Employment Service, and through their own research into jobs available and advertised in the local press. In addition, they collect information gathered from trainees applying for training and referred from the Employment Service, including details on ethnicity, gender and disability. Other information recorded is about barriers to employment, NVQs achieved and job outcomes. These figures are presented at staff meetings and measured against targets set for specific programmes

GOOD PRACTICE

Trainees are involved in gathering statistical

and the TEC contract requirements. The information is comprehensive, enabling training and administrative staff to make use of it in discussions about the expected profile of trainees and labour market trends.

37. Training for Work has contact with a number of external agencies and is part of relevant networking groups involved in similar activities or providing services for their client group. Trainees are referred to the Citizens Advice Bureau for information on benefits, or to other agencies that are able to offer support and guidance on specific issues. The head of training has strong links with the disability employment advisors based at the Employment Service Job Centres and has invited them to give talks to the staff as well as spending time in the Job Centre explaining Training for Work's role and the training programmes it offers. The placement officer has excellent working relationships with employers regularly providing placements for prevocational training or work-based training for adults. The trainees' notice board displays information about services available in the local community, including the potential support and advice available to them after they have finished their training. The head of training is a member of the local consortium responsible for the delivery of New Deal and liaises with further education colleges, the TEC and other training providers on a regular basis.

38. Many staff have been in post for over five years. They are highly qualified and experienced in their vocational fields. Some staff are qualified to provide training for trainees with a range of specific learning disabilities. Additional training has been provided for staff to help them to effectively train and support those with disabilities. Staff have excellent, long-standing relationships with employers and work placement providers. On- and off-the-job training are well co-ordinated and there is good written and verbal communication between staff and workplace supervisors. All potential work-placement providers are carefully vetted to make sure that they meet equal opportunities and health and safety requirements before any actual placement of trainees takes place.

39. Staff identify with the organisation's aims and targets. In the past year they have embraced the opportunities offered to communicate their ideas about the programmes and their proposals for development. The head of training encourages staff to take responsibility for their training programmes.

40. The annual staff appraisal system is comprehensive and detailed. Staff are able to identify their own development needs as well as linking to organisational requirements. The previous year's aims are reviewed and progress toward achievement of identified targets is monitored. The recently introduced observation of training by peers has been completed and the results have been fed into the staff appraisal process. Staff are invited to contribute to the appraisal system and undertake a self-assessment against specific criteria.

41. The organisation's policies and procedures are summarised for employers and contained in the employers' handbook, as well as in the trainees' handbook. Although useful information is included in these publications, they do not detail the organisation's targets and the full extent of its policies and procedures. The lack of detail results in employers not fully understanding the particular values of the

organisation or the standards required in the NVQs. Many employers are unclear about how they can best contribute to the trainees' progress and match the work experience to the trainees' specific needs. Some workplace supervisors who have a long-standing relationship with Training for Work are more able to make this match.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

42. Training for Work has appropriate arrangements for quality assurance, which cover all aspects of the organisation's work. These arrangements comply with TEC requirements and are audited on a regular basis. There are systems to ensure the consistent assessment of trainees, which are supported by the internal and external verification process. Trainers are set individual targets, identified through the staff appraisal system, and are collectively responsible for ensuring that performance indicators are met. Self-assessment has been used as a quality assurance tool since 1995, and has resulted in quarterly reviews of the business plan identifying action points. The grade awarded by inspectors is higher than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear and comprehensive quality assurance procedures
- ◆ effective evaluation of training programmes
- ◆ strong commitment to continuous improvement
- ◆ effective use of management information to improve performance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of evaluation of individual training modules

43. There is a comprehensive and detailed quality assurance system in place. This has been developed as a direct outcome of self-assessment and covers all aspects of Training for Work's activities, from the referral of trainees to the organisation to their eventual exit from training. The system enables monitoring of systems, policies and procedures that relate to planning, training and evaluation of the work undertaken.

44. Training programmes are evaluated by staff and trainees. For trainees, the evaluation questionnaires are presented just before they complete their programmes. Questions cover all components of the training experience from initial assessment and induction to the assessment of the NVQs or milestones and review of progress. Staff follow a similar process at regular, frequent intervals. The information is collated on a quarterly basis. Responses made to each question are highlighted to indicate trends. Qualitative information is noted separately and analysis of this information is presented as a summary by the head of training. Appropriate changes to specific elements are proposed and the information is passed to the member of

staff responsible to implement. The results are presented at staff meetings for general discussion along with other management information.

45. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement. There is formal and informal discussion about improving the training programmes and individual staff performance. Training Standards Council self-assessment indicators enabled staff to identify areas for development. They have taken responsibility for making the required changes, even though this has involved a major alteration in their approach to their work.

46. Training for Work uses a range of management information, gathered from trainees, work placements, employers and staff, as well as from external sources. This information is well presented in a simple way and included as an agenda item at regular intervals at staff meetings. The information gathered is not just discussed in relation to targets set by the TEC but is also used as a basis for improving the quality of training.

47. Evaluation of the work undertaken by Training for Work has resulted in improvements in the trainees' experience on the programmes and the ways in which staff work. However, individual training modules and specific sessions are not evaluated by trainees. This results in a lack of awareness of issues relating to the relevance of a particular training approach, or the content of specific training sessions. The quarterly analysis of programme evaluations does not refer to specific modules and can relate to elements of the programme delivered some time ago. However, trainees do have an opportunity to discuss any concerns about their course through regular meetings with their personal tutor.

48. The quality assurance arrangements have been developed in the last year. Extensive changes to training have already been implemented, but it is too soon to see the impact of these changes on trainees' experience. Training for Work's self-assessment report was produced in 1998. One of the grades awarded was confirmed at inspection, while in three instances, inspectors gave higher grades than those given in the self-assessment report. In two areas, inspectors awarded lower grades than those given in the report. All staff have been actively involved in addressing the weaknesses identified by self-assessment. The peer observation process and an improved system for auditing the quality of all aspects of the organisation's work have both been introduced as a direct result of self-assessment.