

# Compass Group UK and Ireland

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Inspection date

19 June 2009

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Inspection number

321550

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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](http://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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring 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:

- Retail and commercial enterprise
- Business, administration and law

## Description of the provider

1. Compass Group UK and Ireland (Compass) provides extensive food and support services to a wide range of UK markets including business and industry, healthcare, education, defence and government services, hotels, sport, leisure, hospitality and fine dining. Its parent company, Compass Group PLC, is a FTSE 100 company that has global customers. Compass has developed a portfolio of companies that target specific markets. The four divisions are sport, leisure and hospitality; restaurant associates; health; education, defence and government; and business and industry.
2. Compass gained its first funding contract with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in 2006, receiving funding from the National Employer Service. The company receives funding for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and apprenticeships in health and social care, hospitality, literacy, numeracy and business administration.
3. Most of the training and assessment is carried out in the workplace. Learners are based in varying locations across the UK. Currently there are 546 learners on programme. Learners span all four divisions and are managed through a single team comprised of a qualifications manager, four programme leaders, who manage the programmes on an area basis, and one administrator. This team reports into a steering group.
4. All training is currently subcontracted to three companies which are VT Training, Employability and Skills Group and Westminster Kingsway College. Each subcontractor covers a specific geographical region. Each subcontractor can provide all of the qualifications offered on the LSC funded programmes.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
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	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Sector subject areas

Retail and commercial enterprise	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade3  
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The quality of the provision is satisfactory overall. Leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. The provider's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The provision in retail and commercial enterprise and business, administration and law is satisfactory.

### Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Compass has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve. The provider has made significant recent improvements to the monitoring and supervision of its subcontractors. There is a greater degree of oversight of all programmes now taken by middle and senior managers. Compass have invested in a new structure for the management of training. They have appointed a new qualifications manager whose role is supported by five programme leaders, who now have direct responsibility for the programmes. All success rates have improved for this current contract year. Performance management of the subcontracted provision has recently improved.
7. The self-assessment process is inadequate. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Managers do not make explicit and thorough judgements about vocational areas to inform the quality improvement plans. The report did not reflect many of the inspectors' judgements. The links between the quality improvement log and the quality improvement plan are not sufficiently explicit and managers do not monitor action taken. The self-assessment process does not effectively involve all stakeholders.

## Key strengths

- Good development of practical skills on hospitality and catering programmes
- Clear commitment to managing for improvement
- Good relationship with partners

## Key areas for improvement

- Low timely achievement
- Incomplete quality improvement processes
- Insufficient focus on resources to support ambitious development plans
- Lack of implementation planning for Skills for Life

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3  
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates have shown a marked improvement and are now satisfactory. Success rates for 2006/07 were low at 49% and fell to 35% for 2007/08. However, current in-year success rates have risen to 71%.
9. Success rates on hospitality programmes are satisfactory. In 2007/08 the success rates for Train to Gain learners was low at 38%. The success rate has recently improved significantly and in-year success rates have risen to 72%. The in-year success rate for apprentices is currently 64%. Success rates on business administration, customer service and team leading are satisfactory. In 2007/08 the success rates were 68%. Currently in year success rates are at 62% for 2008/09.
10. Timely success rates both for hospitality and business administration, customer service and team leading remain poor at 16% and 32% respectively for 2008/09. This area for improvement was identified in the self-assessment report.
11. Learners on the hospitality programme develop good practical skills and are competent in using a wide range of cooking methods to produce complex dishes from extensive menus. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3  
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. The quality of the provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most training takes place at work. Learners on hospitality programmes are in good quality workplaces, working in a wide variety of hospitality environments, developing their skills in teams working to a high standard.
13. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall. However, on some hospitality programmes the planning of individuals' learning is under-developed and individual learning plans are often poorly completed and do not provide a working summary of the planned training. On business administration, customer service and team leading assessors do not challenge learners sufficiently.



14. Internal verification is thorough and sufficient to underpin the accuracy of the assessment process.
15. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory in ensuring that both learner and assessors are aware of each learner's progress through the qualification. However, this information is not used effectively to address the slow progress of many learners through their qualification.
16. The range of the provision is satisfactory. Compass provides a good range of additional learning opportunities which supports learners' development and progression. The provision effectively meets the needs of Compass in developing a skilled workforce, although the planning within the programmes is not sufficiently individualised to meet individual learners' needs.
17. Support for learners is good. Learners are ascribed a mentor who provides good support and guidance throughout the duration of their training. Some managers recognise when learners get into difficulties and arrange additional time away from work with the assessor to promote progress.
18. Induction to the programmes for learners is satisfactory, providing most of them with a clear understanding of their programme content and what is required of them.
19. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall. Most learners are made aware of progression routes and their opportunity to undertake further training. However, for learners on the business administration, customer service and team leading there is insufficient advice and guidance to allow learners to make informed decisions about their career paths.

## Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

20. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Compass recognises this in their self-assessment report. Managers show a clear commitment to managing for improvement. The managing director has established an effective steering group that meets every two months to oversee improvements. This group has established thorough criteria for the selection of subcontractors and introduced strict penalties for non-achievement of performance targets. In addition, Compass has effectively restructured the team that manages the training and development and the monitoring of the quality of provision. These initiatives are having a positive impact on achievement and the quality of the learners' experience.

21. Managers establish good relationships with partners. Compass does not recognise this in their self-assessment report. Compass is actively involved in community-based activities. Managers work effectively with 22 colleges to establish the Junior Chef Academy for 12–16 year olds. This academy develops cooking, social and life skills on a national basis. Compass also works with offenders in prison to effectively develop vocational skills that provide possible progression routes to employment in Compass. Managers were involved in the Hoxton apprenticeship scheme. This scheme provided good opportunities for low-achieving young people from economically disadvantaged areas to learn to run a restaurant.
22. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive. The service level agreement requires subcontractors to source and provide additional support and to celebrate the success of individual learners to build their self-esteem. The management information system provides good monitoring reports across ethnicity, gender and disability. Learning and promotional materials support diversity and equalities. Compass has a guiding principle of developing their people and valuing diversity and has a specific policy to support equal opportunities within the training units. This covers all aspects of diversity and inclusion and not just legal requirements. Learners are encouraged to speak about any problems they have through the 'speak up' programme. However, Compass does not have an equal opportunities implementation plan or action plans to address issues that might arise. Managers do not routinely interrogate management information data to see which learners make slow progress and who may require individual learning reviews or extra support to achieve in a timely manner.
23. Arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are satisfactory, and meet current government requirements.
24. The quality improvement processes are incomplete. The self-assessment report does not recognise this area for improvement. Managers have made recent, effective, changes to the management information system and subcontractors have recently begun using performance indicators. The management information system collects data to monitor learners' progress but three different systems are used. Information is not readily available for interrogation by staff with responsibility for monitoring a particular provider. While the performance indicators are clear and there is a comprehensive action plan for monitoring subcontractors, which sets clear targets, these performance indicators are quantitative and not qualitative. They are not a sufficient tool to assess or help improve quality. Compass does not have a policy and implementation plan for observing training and learning. Compass does not promote exchange of good practice to encourage and develop improved practices.
25. Compass does not focus sufficiently on resources to support ambitious development plans. Managers have not identified this in the self-assessment report. Managers have not prepared an implementation plan to support strategic aims and identify how Compass will achieve these plans, at the same time as ensuring the quality of provision. Currently programme leaders have only one day

per week, under the supervision of a qualifications manager, to monitor quality with the current three subcontractors delivering to about 500 learners nationally.

26. Compass managers have not prepared an implementation plan for Skills for Life. The self-assessment report does not recognise this. Compass has a good Skills for Life policy, which is comprehensive in its scope. However, managers have not identified the mechanism, resources and training needs required to ensure the realisation of the aims expressed in the policy. Compass is not sufficiently meeting the needs of all learners. Some assessors support additional needs with no training or qualifications in basic skills.
27. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Managers do not make explicit and thorough judgements about vocational areas to inform the quality improvement plans. The report did not reflect many of the inspectors' judgements. The links between the quality improvement log and the quality improvement plan are not sufficiently explicit. Managers do not monitor action taken.

## What learners like:

- 'It was a good opportunity to engage in learning again'
- 'It is something different and refreshes the mind'
- 'The really good support from the assessor and my team leader'
- 'Getting a qualification'
- 'I enjoyed the programme eventually, after a nervous start'
- 'The key skills and technical certificate tests – they were quite challenging and got my brain working'
- 'I have developed skills since starting as a catering assistant which I didn't think I could do'
- 'The programme links into the work well'
- 'Has improved my mathematics'
- 'Like the fact that I can achieve a qualification while I am working'
- 'See this as a great opportunity'

## What learners think could improve:

- 'There was a delay between sign up and the first assessment visit'
- 'It would be good to have a 'get to know you day' with the assessor'
- 'The volume of paper'
- 'Improved explanations of the NVQ, especially the need to complete all elements of the background knowledge'
- 'More time at work for portfolio completion'
- 'It would have been good to have been asked if I wanted to do an NVQ'
- 'Improved induction with more timely information'
- 'More time – it was sprung on us and all a bit rushed'
- 'I'd like to have been shown how to cross reference evidence, so that it wasn't so repetitive'
- 'I'd liked to have discussed things a little more'
- 'I could manage more work between assessor visits'
- 'Key skills are boring and irrelevant'
- 'More visits from my coach would be helpful'
- 'Topsy turvy learning, things seem out of sequence'
- 'Had to complete a project before given the knowledge'
- 'Project work does not appear to have been marked'

## Retail and commercial enterprise

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

28. Compass provides level 2 and 3 training programmes in hospitality. There are 149 apprentices and 24 learners on Train to Gain programmes. The apprentices are working towards a variety of NVQs, including 45 on NVQ at level 2 in professional cookery, 43 on NVQ at level 2 food and drink service, 30 on level 2 multi skilled hospitality services and 19 on NVQ at level 3 hospitality supervision. Nineteen of the Train to Gain learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2 food and drink service.

29. All learners are employed by Compass in one of its four main operating sectors. All learners are interviewed and assessed for literacy, numeracy and their occupational skills. Induction to their programme takes place at the workplace. Assessors from the subcontractors visit the apprentices in the workplace at least every four weeks to provide training and assessment and to review their progress.

### Strengths

- Good development of practical skills
- Good quality workplaces
- Good range of additional learning opportunities
- Very effective mentoring of learners
- Strong management commitment to the development of learners

### Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for Train to Gain learners
- Underdeveloped individual planning of learning
- Insufficient monitoring of subcontractors
- Insufficient use of data
- Underdeveloped self-assessment process

### Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2007/08 the overall success rate for Train to Gain learners was low at 38%. However, it is improving significantly and currently stands at 72%. The success rate for apprentices is satisfactory at 64%.

31. Learners develop good practical skills. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. They are competent in using a wide range of cooking methods to produce complex dishes from extensive menus. Learners adopt and

understand the importance of safe working practices, including good knife skills and the use of clean personal protective equipment. Learners are confident and can describe fluently the task they are performing using the correct industry terminology. They develop additional skills such as good customer care and a better understanding of the financial management of their areas of work. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners' portfolios are well structured and organised.

32. Most apprentices currently on programme are making at least satisfactory progress. Progress for Train to Gain learners is slow. As identified in the self-assessment report, timely success rates for these learners are inadequate. In 2007/08 only six per cent achieved their qualification within the planned time. This increased to 33% in 2008/09 but remains inadequate.

### Quality of provision

33. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of workplaces is good. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are employed in a wide variety of hospitality situations where they are part of a team working to high professional standards. Learners develop their skills in working environments often dealing with high volumes of customers. Many catering outlets include opportunities for learners to work on a variety of customer requirements and a range of menus. The line managers make special provision for learners to experience unusual situations and prepare items not normally used in the establishment. Most workplaces are well equipped and maintained.
34. Assessment and verification are satisfactory. However, for some learners the assessment of their practical cookery skills takes place away from the main production environment.
35. The planning of individuals' learning is under-developed. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Although initial assessment effectively ensures that learners are on appropriate courses at the correct level, it does not always lead to an appropriate individual programme covering all the needs of the learner. Some learners with additional learning needs do not receive appropriate specialist support. Individual learning plans are often poorly completed. Some assessors use an alternative monitoring summary but others do not provide learners with a clear, timely understanding of their programme or of the progress they are making.
36. There is a good range of additional learning opportunities. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Learners attend effective in-house courses and seminars on a range of topics related to their professional and personal development. Learners take part in internal and national competitions. The apprentices attending the Compass Academy link into a wider programme of management development.

37. The mentoring of learners is very effective. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. At the start of training a learner is ascribed a mentor who provides good support and guidance throughout the duration of their training. In some workplaces two mentors ensure that all shift patterns are covered and the learner has continuous support. In one unit, a learning workshop where learners have access to staff for additional support and guidance relating to learning is held weekly. Learners are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They have frequent and effective contact with assessors in the workplace.
38. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Induction to learning is satisfactory. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

### Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is strong management commitment to the development of learners. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. The programmes are seen as an integral part of the wide range of staff development activity within Compass.
40. Staff are set targets at their annual appraisal but these do not specifically relate to Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes.
41. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. This is covered in sufficient detail during learners' induction and is reinforced at review meetings.
42. The monitoring of subcontractors is insufficient. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Insufficient quality monitoring of key aspects of the learners' programme is undertaken. Programme leaders regularly visit workplaces to observe subcontractor staff. This process is relatively new. The observation process fails to adequately record sufficient judgements to support grades awarded. Identification of good practice within the programmes does not routinely occur nor is this effectively shared.
43. The use of data is insufficient. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. There has been an over-reliance on subcontractors to provide the majority of information, particularly concerning learners' progress and success. Recent management action has addressed this. Access to data is improving, although managers' understanding of available data, and its significance, is insufficient. Much information about the learners' programme is not effectively recorded.
44. The self-assessment process is under-developed. The role of self-assessment as a key quality improvement tool within the provision is not sufficiently understood. Many of the key strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors were not identified.

## Business, administration and law

Satisfactory: Grade3

### Context

45. Compass provides level 2 training programmes in business administration, customer service and team leading. There are 37 learners on customer service, 50 on team leading and 47 on business administration programmes. 78 are apprentices, five advanced apprentices and 51 Train to Gain learners. All learners are in employment in the company. Assessment and training is subcontracted to a number of other providers.

### Strengths

- Good progress of current learners
- Good range of additional qualifications
- Particularly effective employer support for learners

### Areas for improvement

- Slow progress by many learners
- Inconsistent progression guidance
- Insufficient support for language, literacy and numeracy needs
- Inconsistent management of the training programme

### Achievement and standards

46. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Current learners are making good progress. All learners are set clear targets for completion. Many learners are close to achievement of all aspects of their qualification within the expected time frame. Key skills are introduced at the beginning of the programme and are integrated well with the NVQ. The provider recognises this strength in the self-assessment report. In 2008/09 the overall in year success rate is satisfactory at 62%.

47. Many Learners working towards qualifications in customer service, administration and team leading have made slow progress. The timely success rate is inadequate at 16% for 2007/08 and 38% in year for 2008/09. This was recognised in the self-assessment report.

48. Learners develop satisfactory workplace skills. They carry out tasks with increased confidence. Learners develop an increased awareness of customer expectations and are less anxious when dealing with difficult customers. Some learners show improved numerical skills.



49. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory and reflects the level and experience of the learners, many of whom are returning to learning after many years.

### Quality of provision

50. Quality of provision is satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory and meets the needs of individual learners. Assessors visit workplaces on a regular and flexible basis. Good use is made of case studies in business administration. However, assessors do not challenge learners sufficiently and there is insufficient development of independent learning skills. Insufficient use is made of technology in assessment, such as digital recorders or electronic portfolios. Although worksheets and written questions in the portfolio are marked regularly assessors do not annotate the work sufficiently to explain decisions or help learners to improve. Too little use is made of cross-referencing when assessing background knowledge. Internal verification is satisfactory.

51. All learners are employed by the provider and training is satisfactorily carried out on-the-job. Individual coaching by subcontractor staff is effective. Much of the learning is by self-study using resource packs and in some cases online resources for developing key skills.

52. Learners benefit from a good range of additional in-house qualifications. Learners are well prepared for promotion and to take on extra responsibility. They have a good understanding of legislation and procedures that impact on their working practices. Some of these additional qualifications are externally accredited and all are company certificated. Many of the programmes provide evidence for the NVQ which is not always recorded.

53. All learners are Compass employees undertaking training programmes which meet the needs of the company. However, the programmes do not always meet learner aspirations, particularly when they have no choice of programme or units. Some learners feel rushed and would prefer a longer timescale than three months.

54. Employer support for learners is particularly effective. All learners are allocated a highly supportive workplace mentor who is their immediate supervisor or team leader. The highly motivated and enthusiastic employers are very keen to assist the learners to complete. Time away from work is readily given for both assessment and portfolio building. Employers have a very good understanding of what the learners are capable of. They recognise when learners get into difficulties and arrange additional time away from work with the assessor to promote progress. The impact on the learner is very positive in terms of increased confidence and an improved work ethic.

55. Induction is satisfactory for most learners, covering all the basic information needed. Good quality information and induction handbooks are available, but

some learners feel that the explanation of NVQ processes is too superficial and does not allow them to tackle their qualification with confidence.

56. Progression guidance is inconsistent. Learners' reviews vary in their usefulness with some having insufficient detail on what the learner has achieved and what needs to be done next to progress. There are instances of insufficient involvement of line managers in the process. Individual learning plans are not updated regularly enough to provide learners with a clear picture of progress. There is insufficient advice and guidance given to learners during the course of their programme to allow them to make informed decisions about their career paths. This area for improvement was recognised in the self-assessment report.

57. Support for language, literacy and numeracy is inconsistent. All learners have an initial assessment at the start of their programme and the results are communicated effectively. Where a need is identified, literacy and numeracy support is given by the subcontractor assessors. However, assessment staff are not qualified in basic skills. One of the subcontractors has an in-house training programme to improve the key skills of assessors and another has a qualified trainer to advise assessors. However, plans are not in place to provide qualified basic skills assessors.

#### Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The management of the training programmes is inconsistent. Processes in place to ensure that all learners have the same good quality learning experience are insufficient. This is reflected in the provision for language, literacy and numeracy and in the variable progression guidance.

59. Training staff are well equipped to meet learners' needs. However, continuous professional development and the maintenance of occupational competence are not standard across the subcontractors.

60. There are no processes in place to share good practice with other subcontractors. For example, one subcontractor has a very good staff induction process which is not shared. Another has excellent communication with assessors using emails, internet voice over, internet protocol and a range of meetings. There is insufficient formal evaluation of learners' and workplace supervisors' feedback to influence and improve programmes. Not all staff are involved in the self-assessment process and the preparation of the self-assessment report.

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by Compass 2006 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	502	49%
		timely	62	13%
	2007/08	overall	1625	35%
		timely	309	21%
	2008/09	overall	366	71%
		timely	70	30%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

- \* 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
- \*\* NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider before inspection