

INSPECTION REPORT

Herefordshire Primary Care NHS Trust

25 June 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Herefordshire Primary Care NHS Trust provides a wide range of health care services within Herefordshire. The training centre is the trust's training department which offers training in business administration, information technology, retailing, care, early years care and education, dentistry and the Life Skills element of the Learning Gateway. The training centre also offers training to New Deal clients on the voluntary sector option of New Deal (18-24). There are 122 learners, of whom 62 are advanced modern apprentices, 24 are foundation modern apprentices, 21 are on other training, 12 are on Life Skills training within the Learning Gateway and three are New Deal clients. Learners are either employed or have work placements in the NHS trust and other organisations. Ninety-six learners are employed.

Overall judgement

The work-based training for young people provided by Herefordshire Primary Care NHS Trust is good. Leadership and management are also good. The overall quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

Work-based learning for young people

Work-based training in business administration is good. There is frequent and effective assessment in the workplace with good on-the-job training. Key skills training is an integral part of the learners' occupational training. Achievement rates by foundation modern apprentices are poor. Work-based training in health, social care and public services is good. There are good retention and achievement rates on most training programmes. Good off-the-job training is complemented by flexible and effective assessment which meets learners' individual needs. There are good resources at the training centre. On- and off-the-job training is unco-ordinated in all programmes. In early years care and education, there is an over-reliance on written evidence and key skills training is not an integral part of the occupational training.

Life Skills

The foundation for work programme, comprising the Life Skills element of the Learning Gateway, is outstanding. There are good retention and achievement rates and good training using excellent resources. Training in equal opportunities is particularly good. There is a wide range of good training opportunities combined with excellent support for learners who have diverse needs. Learners' induction is ineffective.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. There are good strategic plans which are carried out effectively. There is good communication between managers and staff. There is effective and frequent review of equality of opportunity for learners and staff and good equal opportunities practices across the organisation. There is good monitoring and analysis of the recruitment and selection processes. Management information systems are poor. There is also poor monitoring of health and safety in the workplace. Internal verification is weak and some aspects of the training centre's operations are not covered by the quality assurance system.

GRADES

Business administration, management & professional	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Foundation programmes	1
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	1

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	1
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- effective actions in response to feedback from learners and employers
- effective self-assessment process
- good internal communications
- good strategic planning
- excellent facilities for learners with disabilities
- good training in equal opportunities
- excellent support for learners with diverse needs
- good on-the-job training
- flexible and effective off-the-job training
- good retention and achievement rates on most programmes
- good integration of key skills training with occupational training in most areas
- frequent and effective assessment in the workplace

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate quality assurance system
- weak internal verification process
- poor monitoring of health and safety in the workplace
- poor management information system
- no co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- extend equal opportunities training for employers
- increase staff awareness of external sources of information
- increase sharing of good practice

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Herefordshire Primary Care NHS Trust Training Centre (the training centre) is part of the local national health service. It provides work-based and other training for employees of the trust and other organisations which operate mainly in the health and social care sectors, such as dental practices, nursing homes, residential homes and day care nurseries for young children. The training centre operates from new premises on the outskirts of Hereford. It moved there in April 2001. The training centre has a number of training rooms and a computer suite, as well as offices for its 23 staff. There is also a well-equipped unit for disaffected young people who have been unable to find appropriate training and guidance in other organisations. The training centre has a contract with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in business administration, retailing, care and early years care and education. It also has contracts with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire LSC to provide national vocational qualification (NVQ) training in dental nursing, dental technician and using information technology, and for the Life Skills element of Learning Gateway. The training centre also has a contract with a local training provider to train New Deal clients on the voluntary sector option of New Deal (18-24) in care. There are 119 learners and three new Deal clients. The training centre also provides training directly for the NHS trust and for a number of other organisations on a commercial basis. Unemployment in May 2001 was 2 per cent compared with 3.8 per cent in the West Midlands and 3.1 per cent in England. In Herefordshire, 0.6 per cent of the resident population are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 6.2 per cent for England. In 2000, 53 per cent of school leavers achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, compared with 49.2 per cent for England.

THE INSPECTION

2. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at the training centre. They inspected business administration, health, social care and public services and foundation for work. The areas of information and communications technology and retailing, customer service and transportation were not inspected owing to the low numbers of learners in these areas. Inspectors conducted interviews with 59 learners, 23 members of the training centre's staff, visited 29 employers and interviewed 24 workplace supervisors and managers. Inspectors observed five training sessions. They examined a range of documents including 43 portfolios of evidence, learners' records, the company's plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature and reports from awarding bodies and other external quality assurance agencies. Inspectors studied the training centre's latest self-assessment report, which was produced in December 2000.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	5

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	2

3. The training centre offers foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in administration. There are 12 advanced modern apprentices and five foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3 and key skills. Apprentices work in a variety of organisations including hospitals, credit card payment and insolvency companies and a horticultural nursery. Ten advanced modern apprentices and one foundation modern apprentice are employed. Most modern apprentices are employed before they start their training and are referred to the training centre by their employer. There is one administration assessor and one internal verifier. Both are qualified as assessors and internal verifiers. The assessor also holds the key skills assessors' qualification. A second qualified assessor has recently been appointed. There is one work-based assessor. Learners have an initial assessment for key skills. The results of the initial assessments are noted on individual training plans and are used to identify additional learning needs. Sufficient resources are available to meet any identified needs. Prior achievements are also noted on learning plans and taken into account. Each learner receives an individual induction in the workplace by a member of the training centre's staff as well as an induction by the employer or work-placement provider. The assessor carries out some off-the-job training in the workplace. Learners can also attend the training centre for one day every other week, and four foundation modern apprentices regularly attend. Learners progress is reviewed every 12 weeks.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates of learners available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					8		5		8	100
Still in training					0	0	0	0	5	62
FMA framework completed					2	25	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					5	62	2	40	0	0

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							5		17	100
Still in training							2	40	12	71
AMA framework completed							1	20	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed							1	20	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed							3	60	1	6

STRENGTHS

- frequent and effective work-based assessment
- good on-the-job training
- good progress reviews
- effective integration of key skills training into occupational training

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates on foundation modern apprenticeship programme

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of short-term targets
- more detailed portfolio evidence

4. Learners benefit from the frequent visits by their assessor. The visits take place approximately every two weeks and learners are given a number to contact the assessor between visits. An assessment plan is prepared at the start of the learners' training and assessors work to the plan, making adjustments when necessary to suit the learner. Assessment methods include observation and questioning and feedback is given. Actions for the next visit are planned with the learner and their workplace supervisor.

5. Employers give good on-the-job training and support for learners. In addition to administration training, many employers offer training in the use of databases, first-aid and health and safety. Learners have had training in assertiveness, handling complaints, and organisational techniques. The progress of each learner is monitored through good progress reviews. Employers are keen to attend progress reviews and they make constructive comments on assessment opportunities. Progress reviews also check that learners have sufficient time to work on their evidence and that they are able to apply their knowledge and skills. Health and safety, equal opportunities, assessments, punctuality and attendance are also discussed.

6. Key skills are an integral part of the administration training programmes. Learners are aware from the start of their training that they are also gathering evidence for key skills as they build their administration portfolios. They are encouraged to collect relevant work-based evidence and witness testimonies for key skills. Employers are aware of, and support learners achievement of, key skills and allow them ample time to prepare for and attend the external key skills assessment tests.

7. Retention and achievement rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme have been poor over the past three years. Eighty-five per cent of those who started a foundation modern apprenticeship between April 1998 and March 2000 left before they had completed their apprenticeship. Of those starting between April 2000 and March 2001, 37 per cent have left early. Only 13 per cent of those leaving a foundation modern apprenticeship have completed the framework.

8. The assessor gives good advice and guidance to learners during assessment visits and at progress reviews. Short-term targets are agreed between the assessor and the learner, but the advice, guidance and targets are not fully recorded. Some learners make informal notes but these are not always retained.

9. Some evidence in learners' portfolios cannot be attributed to the individual learner. For example, some evidence is the result of work carried out by a number of employees and the exact nature of the learner's role is not clear. Not all evidence is signed and dated and personal statements are not countersigned by the learner's supervisor. Evidence such as company policies is included in portfolios, but there is no evidence that the learners understand the application of the policies.

Good Practice

A learner with disabilities was given specially adapted furniture and equipment, and a specially adapted car to allow her to work towards an advanced modern apprenticeship. The learner is making good progress and is highly regarded by her employer and colleagues.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	90	2

10. Learners are recruited through local press advertisements, referrals from employers or the careers service. The training centre offers advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in care and early years care and education and NVQ training in dental nursing and dental technology. There are 32 advanced modern apprentices in care and 18 in early years care and education. There are 14 foundation modern apprentices in care and five in early years care and education. There are six learners on other training working towards an NVQ level 2 in early years care. Two learners are working towards a national diploma in dental technology and 13 towards a national certificate in dental nursing. The training centre has recently been given approval to offer NVQs in oral healthcare support at level 2 and oral healthcare dental nursing at level 3. There are three New Deal clients on the voluntary sector option working towards units of the NVQ in care at level 2. No distinction is made between New Deal clients and other learners.

11. All learners attend off-the-job training on day-release or during the evening. Learners in early years care and education work in day nurseries and schools, dental nurses in general dental and special orthodontic practices, the dental technicians in dental laboratories. Care learners work in hospitals, nursing homes and residential homes. Assessors from the training centre carry out observations in the workplace for all but three of the learners working towards NVQs. Work-based assessors carry out the assessment for the remaining three learners in early years care and education. Internal verification is carried out by training centre staff. Trainers and assessors are occupationally experienced and have the appropriate qualifications. The training centre has recently established a nursing cadet scheme as a progression route into higher education and there are four modern apprentices on this scheme. Learners have an initial assessment and the results are recorded on their individual training plan. Prior achievements are also taken into account when the plan is prepared. Learners' progress is regularly reviewed every 12 weeks and employers are actively involved in the process. A copy of the progress review document is given to learners and their employer. The data for advanced modern apprenticeships in 1998-99 are unreliable. They were not fully available in the required format at the time of inspection.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

New Deal										
New Deal (18-24)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started									2	100
Still in training									3	150
Gained job and/or planned learning completed									1	50
Gained job									1	50
Planned learning completed									1	50

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					5		15		18	100
Still in training					0	0	2	13	17	94
FMA framework completed					4	80	4	27	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					5	100	7	47	0	0

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							38		62	100
Still in training							4	11	46	74
AMA framework completed							23	61	5	8
NVQ level 2 completed							11	29	3	5
NVQ level 3 completed							23	61	5	8

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					24		22		19	100
Still in training					0	0	7	32	14	74
Individual learning plan completed					24	100	13	59	1	5
Left without completing individual learning plan					0	0	2	9	4	21
NVQ level 2 completed					23	96	13	59	1	5
NVQ level 3 completed					1	4	0	0	0	0

STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- good off-the-job training
- excellent resources in the training centre
- flexible and effective support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- no co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- over reliance on written evidence in early years care
- insufficient integration of key skills training in early years care

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- share good practice across all programmes

12. Retention and achievement rates are good. For those learners starting all training programmes between April 1998 and March 2001, 81 per cent have achieved all targets on their training plans or are still in training and 79 per cent have achieved at least one NVQ. In particular, on NVQ training over this period, 92 per cent of those starting training completed their planned training programme or are still in training.

13. There is good off-the-job training. It is well planned and effectively taught by occupationally competent and qualified staff, who create an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Learners are given clear aims and objectives for each session, and are introduced to a range of procedures which they practise under expert guidance and supervision. In dental care, learners evaluate their own learning and the quality of the teaching at the end of each session. Handouts and training materials are produced to a good standard. A variety of teaching methods are used, which includes lectures by staff

and visiting speakers, group work and practical sessions. This adds variety to the sessions and maintains learners' interest and motivation.

14. Trainers can use a wide variety of up-to-date resources, including mobility aids such as wheelchairs, frames and hoists which are used to demonstrate safe techniques for transferring clients. There is a range of videos and a small lending library. In early years care and education, learners can use a wide range of equipment which allows them to practise and develop the skills of handling and caring for babies. Most off-the-job training in dental care takes place at a dental surgery where trainers use a wide range of up-to-date equipment and materials. The dental technicians attend off-the-job training at a college of further education.

15. Training and assessment are designed to take account of learners' individual needs. Assessors visit the workplaces at night or at weekends to carry out assessments for learners on shift work. Assessors from the training centre visit all learners, including those with work-based assessors, to maintain progress when work-based assessors are unavailable. For those learners living or working in rural areas, learning packs have been developed to enable them to study at work or at home. Learners who need additional support are provided with a wide range of services, including additional tutorials, individual coaching, counselling and specific equipment for those with physical disabilities.

16. The training centre works closely with employers and external agencies to offer training which meets the needs of learners and the local community. One example of this is the establishment of a nurse cadet scheme. Schemes such as this are being created in many NHS trusts in England in an attempt to provide young people with a route into nurse training. Four learners were recruited in September 2000 as modern apprentices and a further 12 are being recruited. Cadets receive a four-week induction and then spend time working in local hospitals and attending off-the-job training. After achievement of the modern apprenticeship, it is anticipated that learners will progress to a two-year undergraduate university course, leading to qualified nurse status. To meet the needs of dental practices in the area, the training centre is working closely with all dentists to provide training and qualifications for dental nurses.

17. There is no co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. On-the-job training is not recorded. Some employers in care provide learners with comprehensive training plans, but they are not referred to when assessments are planned, and they are not linked to the off-the-job training.

18. There is an over reliance on written evidence and little use of observation in early years care. Learners are given a list of evidence which they have to produce. For those with literacy difficulties and for those who are not given time in the workplace to work on their portfolio, the amount of written evidence is excessive. Learners are required to give written answers to a set of questions for each unit of the NVQ. In addition, learners have to complete case studies and activity sheets. Many of these records are incomplete.

19. Key skills training is not an integral part of early years care training. Key skills are not always referred to during off-the-job training. Learners complete separate assignments for the assessment of application of number, information technology and communication skills. Work-related evidence is not used to assess key skills. There is no system for recording the training or coaching which learners receive at work.

20. There are three distinct occupational specialities in this area, care, early years care and education and dental occupations. While staff from all specialities meet regularly, they do not always share good practice.

Foundation programmes

Grade 1

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	12	1

21. The training centre has 12 learners who are training on the Life Skills element of the Learning Gateway. They all started their training in the current contract year. All learners are referred by the careers service and the average length of stay is 19 weeks. The training is designed to help young people develop the skills for employment or to allow them to progress onto further education or training. Most of the young people have difficulties, which affect their ability to get and retain jobs. Many of the learners have been excluded from other organisations, because of their behaviour. Each learner has an initial assessment which is carried out by the careers service and a summary is passed to the training centre. The learner has a structured interview with a member of the training centre's staff on their first day. Staff also carry out an assessment of the risk posed by the learner within two days of the learner starting training. All this information is used as a basis for their individual training plan. Learners receive an induction and training in basic skills, information technology and other activities designed to develop their social and independent living skills and workplace skills. A trained counsellor attends the training centre once a week to work with those who need individual help. Some learners spend at least one day each week in a work placement, although most of them spend most of their time at the training centre. Learners meet with their personal adviser and a member of staff every four weeks for a progress review. A high proportion of the staff are fully qualified to teach adults and many have additional qualifications to teach basic skills. The training centre has been running programmes similar to Life Skills since 1996, some of which has been government funded. Life Skills training has been offered since 2000.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Foundation Programmes										
Foundation Programmes										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			58		79		92		85	100
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gained job with training/progressed to further training and/or planned learning completed			10	17	20	25	20	22	13	15
Left without either			48	83	59	75	74	80	72	85
Gained job with training			10	17	18	23	18	20	12	14
Progressed to further training			0	0	2	3	2	2	1	1
Planned learning completed			47	81	63	80	60	65	52	61

STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- effective training sessions
- excellent resources
- wide range of good training opportunities
- good learners' training in equal opportunities
- excellent support for learners with diverse needs
- productive relationships with external agencies

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective induction process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- increase knowledge of external sources of information

22. Retention and achievement rates are good. Since the programme was first offered, the proportion of learners completing their planned learning, averages 73 per cent. In the year from April 2000, it is 81 per cent.

23. The training sessions are well planned and fulfil a range of objectives. Learners, who have often found school difficult, enjoy them and participate fully. Two members of staff teach on each session to enable them to give individual support to learners when needed. The lesson plans are detailed and a variety of methods and materials are used. The trainers are well qualified and have the skills to be able to change a learning session so that it meets the immediate needs of the group. Some sessions are designed to give training in particular topics, others offer the opportunity to share experiences and problems and learn from each other.

24. The training centre has excellent resources and is well designed. There is a kitchen, where all appliances are used by learners as part of their training. They learn how to plan and cook simple meals using basic equipment. They work together to prepare and cook meals and this helps them to work as part of a team. Learners use a digital camera to take pictures of social activities and learning sessions and some are used to make displays. There is also camping equipment with walking boots available for learners. A range of equipment is used to develop parenting skills. The training centre has a budget which allows them to buy food for cookery lessons and for visits to an outdoor activity centre.

25. There is a wide range of training available. Learners can develop their numeracy and language skills and are able to attend information technology sessions and work towards an in-house certificate of achievement. There is a weekly session for employment preparation, which includes completing application forms and producing a curriculum vitae. There are visits to an outdoor activity centre each week where learners work with others to improve their own learning and performance. At the end of the session a discussion takes place about the activity for the following week. There are good sessions on disability awareness and equal opportunities. Role play is used to heighten learners' awareness of equality of opportunity. For example, in the session on disability awareness, learners use wheelchairs to understand the effects of restricted mobility.

26. A part-time member of staff looks for work placements and carries out reviews of progress in the workplace. Learners review their own achievements at the end of each week. At the weekly staff meeting every learner's progress is reviewed and the process includes a review of the learner's risk to themselves and to others at the training centre. Every four weeks a formal progress review takes place. Prior to the progress review, the learner completes a self-assessment checklist and other information is collected from all members of staff who are involved with the learner. The learner's personal adviser and one member of the staff team meet with the learner to review progress and plan goals and targets for the next four weekly period.

27. Learners have complex difficulties. Many come to the training centre from other organisations which have been unable to offer the specialist learning and support needed. Staff offer excellent support to learners. Some have attended counselling courses and some have a degree in psychology. A well-trained and experienced counsellor attends the training centre every week and most learners attend. Facilities and help are available at all times. Members of staff will attend appointments at other agencies, to offer support and will visit learners' homes and meet with parents if requested to do so. A careers adviser attends the training centre each week to give additional help and support. Every effort is maintained to monitor learners once they leave and they are invited to use the training centre as a source of information if they need it.

28. The young people on Life Skills training are often clients of other agencies. Staff from each of the agencies work with Herefordshire Primary Care NHS Trust to ensure continuity and consistency of approach. For example, one member of staff attends and contributes to the content of a supervision plan submitted to a court in the case of a young offender. Other members of staff are involved in committees of other agencies. The organisation is responsive to the needs of partners. The careers service wanted a leaflet to give to prospective learners and this was produced immediately.

29. The induction process is ineffective. It is usually carried out on a one-to-one basis and includes a great deal of information over a period of approximately two hours. Learners remember little of the content, except for filling out forms and they sign all paperwork indiscriminately. Many have signed to say they have received terms and

conditions of employment, yet they are not in employment. The induction process is not evaluated and therefore few improvements are made.

30. Staff are unaware of the wide range of information available to them. They attend meetings with eight other Life Skills training providers at the Herefordshire and Worcestershire LSC and some sharing of good practice has taken place. However, the staff need to ensure that they are up to date with other sources of information, particularly that which is available on the Internet.

Good Practice

Learners work well together to plan, prepare and cook meals. They eat with tutors and visitors, then wash up and clear the equipment and tables.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 2**

31. The training centre's manager is responsible for all activities and reports to the trust's director of corporate development. The training centre is organised around two departments, one providing foundation for work and one providing all other training programmes. Each has a departmental manager, one of whom is also the operations manager. There are 23 managers and staff, including three administrators. Eleven staff hold teaching or training qualifications, 14 are qualified assessors, seven are qualified internal verifiers and three are qualified in the accreditation of prior learning. All staff have occupational experience and qualifications. The training centre has a quality assurance policy and procedures which are regularly reviewed and updated. All staff have a copy of the quality assurance standards. There are regular internal audits of the quality assurance system which are carried out according to a plan, which is reviewed annually. The training department manager also acts as the quality assurance manager. The assessment centre manager is responsible for the internal verification procedures. Internal verification takes place throughout the learner's training as well as at the end. Observations of training and tutorial sessions in the training centre are carried out to a plan and the results are recorded. The self-assessment report was prepared in December 2000.

STRENGTHS

- good strategic plans
- good internal communications
- good support for staff
- good promotion of equal opportunities
- good monitoring and analysis of recruitment and selection data
- excellent facilities for learners with disabilities
- effective and frequent reviews of equal opportunities
- effective self-assessment process
- good action-planning for continuous improvement
- effective actions in response to feedback from learners and employers

WEAKNESSES

- poor management information system
- poor monitoring of health and safety at employers in the workplace
- insufficient monitoring of quality assurance procedures
- weak internal verification process
- inadequate quality assurance system

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- extend equal opportunities training for employers
- more sharing of good practices
- clarify roles and responsibilities of work-based assessors and supervisors

32. The training centre has good strategic plans for the development of its training programmes. They are based on a thorough and detailed analysis of the growth and needs of the local community. The training centre manager attends a number of the trust's committee meetings and also represents the trust at meetings with external organisations. The strategic plans are effectively carried out through action plans which are regularly monitored and evaluated.

33. Internal communications are good. There are weekly departmental meetings chaired by the head of each department which focus on short-term operational issues and reviews of each learners' progress. Equality of opportunity and self-assessment are standard agenda items at these meetings. All staff meet with managers every other month. Managers also meet each month to monitor the organisation's financial and operational performance, to prepare forecasts, and to monitor the implementation of action plans. Minutes of all meetings are kept and include action points, responsibilities and timescales for completion. Actions are reviewed at subsequent meetings. There is contact between managers and staff on a daily basis. Managers actively participate in training, assessment and verification and can therefore identify with the problems affecting staff.

34. Staff receive good support from the training centre. All staff have appraisals, at least annually, which form the basis for an individual development plan. They are more frequent for new staff and for staff experiencing difficulties. Individual development plans meet the needs of the training centre and wherever possible, the aims of the individual for personal development. Appropriately qualified personal counsellors are available to staff experiencing job difficulties.

35. Management information systems are poor. Managers and staff have difficulty in accessing some information, for example, achievement and retention rates. Data are not held centrally and some information is only available in learners' individual files. Collation of this information for evaluation purposes has to be done manually which is time consuming and not consistently accurate. There is poor monitoring of health and safety at employers' premises. A health and safety check is carried out when a learner starts training and then repeated annually, even though some of the learners' occupations are categorised as high risk. When action points have been identified following a health and safety audit, there is no record of any follow up to ensure that problems have been dealt with. The training centre keeps copies of employer liability insurance certificates but they are not up to date. In some cases, the latest copy in the files is of a certificate which expired almost a year ago.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 1**

36. The promotion of equality of opportunity is an integral part of all aspects of work undertaken within the training centre. The roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly detailed. The training centre has adopted the trust's equal opportunities policy which is thorough and is given to all staff. The policy refers to a wide range of associated policies and procedures, which include disciplinary, grievance, cultural and religious needs, the needs of parents, people with disabilities and age discrimination. The training centre has a written statement which confirms that the policy includes learners, employers and subcontractors. The training centre has an equal opportunities statement which is clearly displayed throughout the building. In addition, the training centre has a range of procedures which refer to the rights and responsibilities of learners and includes a procedure for them to make an appeal against assessment decisions. These procedures are discussed with learners at induction. Equality of opportunity is discussed with learners during progress reviews. Recruitment and selection data are thoroughly monitored and analysed every six months. Information is collated in relation to gender, ethnicity, disability, associated health problems, marital status and age. This information is used as a basis for discussions at staff meetings and the production of an annual update report which identifies improvements needed and the actions required for their implementation.

37. Every effort is made to support those with disabilities into employment and training. There is good access to the training centre and appropriate facilities for wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility. The training centre has recently purchased a minibus with a ramp and has also provided taxis to allow learners with disabilities to get to work each day. Specialist office furniture, fixtures, fittings and equipment are made available for learners to enable them to perform tasks which would otherwise be impossible. A specially adapted car has also been arranged to provide independence for a learner with severely restricted mobility. Most learners receive training in disability awareness. All staff have attended a one-day disability awareness training event.

38. The training centre frequently reviews equal opportunities practices to good effect. An equal opportunities good practice book records examples and incidents of how staff have assisted trainees to find work, enabled them to continue in training, or provided support and pastoral care. Examples include a certificate in Braille being arranged for a learner with impaired vision and learners without independent living skills being accompanied to job interviews and other appointments. All incidents involving learners such as unacceptable behaviour or drug misuse, are recorded and prompt and appropriate action is taken. A complaints register details and analyses all complaints received. These are dealt with promptly and thoroughly and outcomes are discussed at staff meetings. All information on incidents and complaints is collated and analysed to form the basis for an annual report. Actions have been taken to change the policy and procedures in an attempt to remedy any problems identified by this process.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

39. Self-assessment is an integral part of the training centre's quality assurance strategy and is the main process for continuous improvement within the organisation. The improvement of retention and achievement rates is the main benchmark for success. The latest self-assessment report was prepared in December 2000. It provides an accurate description and evaluation of the organisation and many of the weaknesses which it identifies have been satisfactorily resolved. Inspectors agreed with most of the remaining weaknesses and identified many strengths not shown in the self-assessment report. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process, which is thorough and leads to detailed action plans. There are self-assessment review and evaluation meetings every three months. The self-assessment action plan is monitored each week at the departmental staff meetings and is effective in leading to continuous improvements. For example, using work-based assessors in care programmes was not effective, so the training centre reverted to using its own assessors. They also increased support for employers, including detailed information packs for workplace supervisors. Employers and learners have responded favourably to the revised assessment arrangements.

40. The views of learners and employers are gathered annually. The results are analysed and action is taken to deal with any problems. Employer evaluations have sections to ensure that employers are aware of the key skills qualification, the requirement for its external assessment and the importance of key skills in modern apprenticeship frameworks. Recent problems which have been effectively dealt with include, learners concerns over the complaints procedure, employers concerns about the language used in the occupational standards and a care home's reluctance to allow assessors to visit learners.

41. There is not enough routine monitoring of the quality assurance procedures. The internal audit process has identified a number of procedures which are not complied with, as well as inconsistencies in the completion of assessment and internal verification records. Improvements to working practices have been introduced by individual departments, but the relevant quality assurance procedures have not been updated. This weakness has been identified in the self-assessment report. Internal verification is weak. Some planned internal verification is not carried out and some assessors are not observed carrying out assessments by their internal verifier. Some internal verification records are incomplete and some internal verifiers are inexperienced in the occupational area which they are verifying.

42. Some elements of the training process are not covered by the quality assurance system. There is no procedure for induction, resulting in learners receiving inconsistent information. There is no procedure to evaluate the effectiveness of induction. There is no procedure related to counselling. Some staff share good practice on an informal basis. There is no procedure or group to ensure that good practice is shared throughout the organisation.