

REINSPECTION REPORT

County Training (Gloucestershire) Reinspection

11 November 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

COUNTY TRAINING (GLOUCESTERSHIRE) REINSPECTION

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. 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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.

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County Training (Gloucestershire) Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. County Training (Gloucestershire) (County Training) has a training centre in Gloucester. It was established by Gloucestershire County Council (the council) in 1984 to provide work-based learning for 16 to 19 year olds. It provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in business administration. Until November 2004, it also provided training for the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme.
2. County Training is managed by a part-time manager. This manager reports to the manager in the council's human resources department with responsibility for organisational development. County Training also employs one part-time and two full-time tutors and three administrative staff. One of the full-time tutors will move to another role in the council by the end of 2004. Three subcontracted tutors teach business administration and information technology (IT) and three subcontracted assessors assess learners in the workplace for their national vocational qualifications (NVQs).
3. The training is funded through Gloucester Learning and Skills Council and the council. Most learners are from Gloucester. According to the 2001 census, 5.2 per cent of residents in Gloucester are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 1.8 per cent in Gloucestershire and 6.2 per cent in England as a whole.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

4. County Training has 35 learners in business administration. Twenty-six of these are foundation modern apprentices and nine are advanced modern apprentices. All the advanced modern apprentices are employed by the council. Three of the foundation modern apprentices are employed and the other 23 are in work placements. Foundation modern apprentices attend off-the-job training on one day each week for the first three months of their programme. After that, they receive further support as required. The three subcontracted assessors carry out NVQ assessments in the workplace. A member of County Training's staff carries out internal verification.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learner interviews	16
Number of staff interviews	17
Number of employer interviews	6
Number of subcontractor interviews	2

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection in August 2003, leadership and management and quality assurance were unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. Training in business administration, management and professional and foundation programmes was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection, all aspects of provision were good except for equality of opportunity, which remained satisfactory. Foundation programmes were not reinspected because they are no longer offered by County Training.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

Business administration, management & professional	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Foundation programmes	4
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

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

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Retention rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Of those learners starting in 2002-03, 74 per cent are still in learning. Fifty per cent have completed the apprenticeship framework and many of the others are making good progress towards completing it. Of the advanced modern apprentices who started in 2003-04, 60 per cent are still in learning and 75 per cent of these are making satisfactory progress towards completing their apprenticeship.

7. **Learners produce good work.** Their portfolios are well organised and contain clear references to the requirements of their qualifications. Assessment decisions are clear and suitably recorded. **Tutors set clear and demanding targets for learners.**

8. **Learners make good progress at County Training and at work.** They develop their personal and vocational skills and perform well at work. Many start in administrative roles where they are closely supervised and move quickly to roles that require greater initiative.

Quality of education and training

9. **Teaching is good.** Tutors identify the preferred learning styles of individual learners and use the information to prepare detailed session plans and schemes of work. Learning sessions are taught at a suitable pace and involve a variety of activities that interest all learners.

10. **Training is well planned and effective.** Work placements are assessed to ensure that learners will acquire suitable experience and skills. Individual learning plans have improved since the previous inspection and are regularly referred to and updated by staff. Tutors, assessors and workplace supervisors discuss learners' action plans and assessment records. Progress reviews are regular and thorough. There are good links between on- and off-the-job training. Learners and workplace supervisors produce good action plans to use the skills and knowledge learnt during learning sessions.

11. **Assessment is regular, thorough, well planned and clearly recorded.** Assessors visit learners frequently at work. Effective action plans are agreed after the visits.

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12. Workplace supervisors attend an induction at County Training with the learners. Most have a good understanding of the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Workplace supervisors are encouraged to attend training at County Training. Many have recently been given training in mentoring.

13. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are adequately identified and met. All learners are tested during recruitment and induction and the results are used to shape their individual learning plans. Qualified staff provide suitable literacy and numeracy support for learners who require it. However, **language support is inadequate.**

14. Training resources are satisfactory. Learners work in suitable rooms with good IT equipment. Tutors and assessors are well qualified and have good experience in business administration, information and communications technology (ICT), key skills, and literacy, numeracy and language. Learners have good work placements where their skills and knowledge are effectively developed.

15. **In some learning sessions, individual learners' understanding is not adequately checked.** In some sessions, tutors test learners' understanding using a variety of methods, including quizzes and group presentations. However, most testing is ineffective and uses a narrow range of methods.

Leadership and management

16. **County Training makes good use of data.** It regularly collects data on learners' retention, achievement and progress and analyses it effectively. The results are presented in formats that are easy to understand. Managers make good use of the charts and reports to monitor the success of programmes and to agree on actions.

17. **County Training manages its subcontracted tutors and assessors well.** It has agreed clear contracts with all subcontracted staff. These staff are involved in monitoring performance and planning improvements. They are observed teaching and assessing and receive clear and detailed feedback on their performance. Subcontracted staff are involved in self-assessment through regular meetings.

18. County Training prioritises staff development, which is effective and well planned. Staff have twice-yearly reviews to identify needs for training. Workplace supervisors also receive good training.

19. The council's senior managers and staff at County Training have a clear strategy for developing the organisation. County Training has clear goals and targets. These are included in the council's strategic plans.

20. **The closure of the E2E programme was carefully and sensitively managed.** Learners experienced no disruption and were given the time and support they needed to achieve all the targets on their personal development plans. In the final year of the E2E programme, performance was good, with 56 per cent of learners achieving goals in their

personal development plans such as securing employment or progressing onto another training programme.

21. At the previous inspection, County Training had an effective strategy for providing support with literacy, numeracy and language. However, this is now out of date. Staff have arranged for current learners to continue to receive suitable support during the move to a new organisational structure. All learners have had their literacy and numeracy tested and suitable support has been given to learners who need it. However, the arrangements to assess and provide support with language are less well managed.

22. The management of resources is satisfactory. County Training's financial position is carefully monitored through the council's procedures. The number of staff is appropriate for the number of learners. The rooms used by learners are satisfactory. Learners benefit from good work placements and employment opportunities.

23. **Equality of opportunity is promoted well.** An action group has been formed to develop an action plan and monitor progress.

24. County Training analyses data and uses the results to set targets for the recruitment and performance of different groups. It succeeds in attracting applicants from minority ethnic groups and from the more deprived wards in its catchment area. Staff and managers take time to establish why some groups perform better than others and to agree on actions to deal with poor performance.

25. Staff receive suitable training in equality of opportunity. The training centre is accessible to wheelchair users and has suitable facilities for people with disabilities. Learners who use wheelchairs are found suitable work placements. Noticeboards in the training centre display the organisation's equal opportunities policies and imaginative materials promoting equality and diversity. They also display a good range of information about agencies that offer support.

26. Learners receive satisfactory guidance at induction about equality and diversity and have adequate knowledge and understanding. They are confident in the organisation's ability to provide an environment where they can feel secure.

27. County Training has policies and procedures on equal opportunities and diversity, disability, complaints and bullying. However, some of these are weak and are insufficiently detailed.

28. Self-assessment is effective and takes into account the views of learners, staff, workplace supervisors and subcontracted tutors and assessors. Learners' views are particularly valued. Self-assessment is continuous. County Training regularly reviews its performance and plans improvements.

29. County Training has developed an effective process for observing training and assessment. All staff and subcontracted tutors and assessors have been observed. Some observations are done by the manager and extensive use is made of outside specialists.

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Observations are thorough and are used to make clear plans for improvement.

30. Since the previous inspection, County Training has introduced a thorough and effective system for quality assurance. The subcontracted tutors and assessors are monitored as part of this system. County Training monitors procedures effectively, carrying out observations and monitoring outcomes.

31. County Training seeks the views of learners, staff and workplace supervisors through regular questionnaires. The results are analysed and used effectively in the self-assessment process and to guide managers' decisions. Learners are asked for comments at the end of each learning session. Tutors and managers use these to adapt the sessions and to plan future ones.

32. Internal verification has greatly improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Assessors are observed regularly and suitable samples of work are monitored for accuracy and consistency.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good use of management information
- effective management of subcontracted tutors and assessors
- well-planned and effective staff development
- effective self-assessment involving learners, staff, workplace supervisors and others
- effective observations of training and assessment

Weaknesses

- some weak procedures for equality of opportunity

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good teaching
- well-planned and effective training
- good range of effective quality assurance arrangements

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring of individual learning in some learning sessions

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good use of management information
- effective management of subcontracted tutors and assessors
- well-planned and effective staff development
- effective self-assessment involving learners, staff, workplace supervisors and others
- effective observations of training and assessment

Weaknesses

- some weak procedures for equality of opportunity

33. County Training has developed useful ways of reporting data to help make decisions. Data on learners' retention, achievement and progress is regularly collected and effectively analysed. The results are presented in formats that are easy to understand, including coloured charts and graphs. For example, charts show clearly the percentage of learners taking each qualification and their success rates. There are also graphs showing each year group's progress against targets at various stages. Staff receive regular reports on performance, which are discussed at meetings. Managers use charts and reports effectively to monitor the various programmes and to identify strengths and weaknesses. Actions are agreed at meetings to put right any weaknesses.

34. County Training manages its subcontracted tutors and assessors well. It has agreed clear contracts with all subcontracted staff. All subcontracted staff attend monthly meetings to discuss the programmes and learners' progress. These meetings are effective in monitoring their work and enable them to help develop the programme. Communications are effective between County Training and its subcontracted staff. All subcontracted staff are closely monitored. They are observed teaching or assessing. This results in clear and detailed feedback and effective action to deal with any poor performance. The subcontracted staff are involved in self-assessment through the regular meetings that they attend.

35. County Training prioritises staff development, which is effective and well planned. Staff performance is reviewed twice a year to identify training needs. Short courses and workshops are organised about issues relating to the organisation's development plan. Staff have received extensive training on equality of opportunity, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, health and safety, assessment, training and support, key skills, initial assessment and involving employers. Workplace supervisors are given training that

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enables them to contribute to the goals in the organisation's development plan. They are invited to regular briefings about the training programmes and most now attend.

36. The council's senior managers and County Training have a clear strategy to develop the programmes. County Training's goals are included in the council's strategic plans with clear targets. Since the previous inspection, County Training has adopted a new structure. Roles and responsibilities have been clarified. County Training no longer offers the E2E programme. It now focuses on apprenticeships with the aim of encouraging more young people to work for the council. Further changes are planned for the next few months, when County Training will become part of the council's training and development department.

37. The closure of the E2E programme was carefully and sensitively managed. Learners experienced no disruption and were given the time and support they needed to achieve all the targets on their personal development plans. In the final year of the E2E programme, performance was good, with 56 per cent of learners achieving goals in their personal development plans such as a job or training. Most of these went on to further education or training and a good number went into full- or part-time jobs. Learners make good progress towards their personal goals and most achieve useful qualifications.

38. At the previous inspection, County Training had an effective strategy for providing support with literacy, numeracy and language. However, this is now out of date. All the specialist tutors and staff identified within the strategy have already left or will be leaving soon. Other staff have received training in assessing and teaching literacy and numeracy, but these are not specialists. County Training has made temporary arrangements for current learners to continue to receive suitable support during the move to the new organisational structure. All learners have had their literacy and numeracy tested and suitable support has been given to those who need it. However, the assessment and teaching of language is less well managed.

39. County Training's management of resources is satisfactory. The organisation's financial position is monitored carefully through the council's procedures. The number of staff is appropriate for the number of learners. The rooms used by learners are satisfactory. They include areas where learners can relax and private rooms for individual coaching. Each programme has enough resources, including course materials and computer software. County Training has a good range of ICT equipment.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

40. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. An action group has been formed to develop an action plan and monitor progress. This group includes an equal opportunities specialist from the council. The action plan is suitable and is monitored carefully. The group meets regularly and uses data as a basis for its decisions.

41. County Training makes good use of data to analyse the recruitment and performance of different groups. It succeeds in attracting applicants from minority ethnic groups and from the more deprived wards in its catchment area. A large proportion of

foundation modern apprentices are from minority ethnic groups but the proportion of advanced modern apprentices from minority ethnic groups is small. The proportion of learners with a disability is large at 14 per cent. County Training analyses the retention, progression and achievement rates of different groups and uses the results to set targets. Staff and managers take time to establish why some groups perform better than others and to agree on actions to deal with poor performance.

42. Staff receive suitable training in equality of opportunity. The training centre is accessible to wheelchair users and has suitable facilities for learners with disabilities. Learners who use wheelchairs are found suitable work placements. Noticeboards in the training centre display the organisation's equal opportunities policies and imaginative materials promoting equality and diversity. They also display a good range of information about agencies that offer support.

43. County Training gives learners satisfactory guidance about equality and diversity at their inductions and monitors learners' understanding. The organisation has introduced further training for learners who started in 2004 to give them a better understanding. Learners have an adequate knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity. They are confident in the organisation's ability to provide an environment where they can feel secure.

44. County Training has policies and procedures on equal opportunities and diversity, disability, complaints and bullying. However, some of these are weak and incomplete. For example, a statement describes bullying and says that it is unacceptable and should be reported. However, it is not clear how learners should report bullying or how staff and managers should respond to reports. The statement says that disciplinary action will be taken but gives no guidance on support for the learner who has been bullied. The complaints procedure is unclear and does not adequately explain the stages involved in investigating a complaint. It does not provide enough information about how complaints will be dealt with or the timescales involved. County Training has started to improve policies and procedures that are weak. Some policies and procedures are thorough and tie in with the council's policies.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

45. Self-assessment is effective and takes into account the views of learners, staff, workplace supervisors, and subcontracted tutors and assessors. Learners' views are particularly valued. The self-assessment report reflects the views of all those involved in training. Self-assessment has enabled County Training to plan improvements. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in June 2004. Since then, the provision has improved greatly and many weaknesses have been remedied. Self-assessment is continuous. County Training regularly reviews its performance and plans improvements.

46. County Training has developed an effective process for observing training and assessment. It has planned a schedule of observations and observed all staff and subcontracted tutors and assessors. Some observations are done by the manager and extensive use is made of external agencies. The observations are thorough and well

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recorded. Detailed feedback is given. A few staff and subcontracted tutors and assessors have been judged unsatisfactory. Clear plans for their improvement were made and further observations have found that the performance of these individuals is now satisfactory or better.

47. Since the previous inspection, County Training has introduced a thorough and effective system for quality assurance. Procedures are clear. County Training monitors these effectively, carrying out observations and checking outcomes. For example, it regularly observes teaching, assessment and progress reviews. Records and documents are monitored and detailed reports are produced on the extent to which procedures are being followed. These are used by managers to reinforce procedures and to make any changes required. The subcontracted tutors and assessors are monitored as part of the quality assurance system.

48. County Training seeks the views of learners, staff and workplace supervisors. It sends thorough questionnaires to workplace supervisors twice a year. Learners receive questionnaires three times during their programme. The results are analysed and used effectively in self-assessment and to guide managers' decisions. Learners are asked for comments at the end of each learning session. These are analysed and any difficulties are noted. Tutors and managers use the information to adapt the learning sessions and to plan future ones.

49. Internal verification has greatly improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Assessors are regularly observed and suitable samples of work are monitored for accuracy and consistency.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	35	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good teaching
- well-planned and effective training
- good range of effective quality assurance arrangements

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring of individual learning in some learning sessions

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Foundation modern apprentices are now making good progress towards completing their apprenticeship framework. Of those learners who started training in 2002-03, 74 per cent are still in learning. Fifty per cent have completed the apprenticeship framework and many of the others are making good progress towards completing it. Of the advanced modern apprentices who started in 2003-04, 60 per cent are still in learning and 75 per cent of these are making satisfactory progress towards completing their apprenticeship framework.

51. Learners produce good work. Their portfolios are well organised and contain a good range of invoices, e-mail messages, requisition forms, minutes of meetings and witness statements. Evidence is clearly linked to the requirements of learners' qualifications. Where units have been completed, assessment decisions are clearly recorded. Tutors set clear and demanding targets for learners. Learners comment on the helpful advice they receive from tutors and assessors in gathering and presenting evidence for their portfolios.

52. Learners make good progress both at County Training and at work. They respond well to the encouragement given by tutors, assessors and workplace supervisors. They develop their personal and vocational skills and perform well at work. Many start in administrative roles where they are closely supervised and move on quickly to roles that require greater initiative. For example, one advanced modern apprentice developed an effective service for managing messages in a busy team with several members who worked away from the office. A foundation modern apprentice devised a good system

for controlling one department's stock of stationery. Learners talk readily about how they have benefited from the programme, describing their increased self-confidence.

Quality of education and training

53. Teaching is good. Tutors adapt their learning sessions to meet learners' needs. Tutors identify the preferred learning styles of individual learners and use the information to prepare detailed session plans and schemes of work. Sessions are taught at a suitable pace and involve a wide variety of activities that interest all learners. Tutors encourage learners to apply background knowledge to practical examples from their own experience at work. In one session, for example, learners were asked to give examples of how they dealt with difficult telephone calls in the office. In another, they produced charts showing how their colleagues travelled to work and discussed possible reasons for differences between departments.

54. Training is well planned and effective. A member of staff visits the workplace at the start of a work placement to agree how the learner will gain suitable evidence for the NVQ and key skills qualification. Individual learning plans have improved since the previous inspection. Learners, tutors and workplace supervisors have copies of the plans, which are regularly referred to and updated. Tutors, assessors and workplace supervisors discuss learners' action plans and assessment records. Progress reviews are regular and thorough. Learners are given helpful advice during progress reviews. They are also given good support by tutors, assessors and workplace supervisors. There are good links between on- and off-the-job training. Workplace supervisors attend an induction with the learners at County Training and most understand the requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Workplace supervisors are encouraged to attend training at County Training and many have recently been trained in mentoring.

55. Assessment is thorough and effective. Learners are assessed regularly and frequently at work. Assessments are well planned and use a good range of methods. Learners are given clear and constructive feedback and are set clear plans for gathering any further evidence required. Assessments are clearly recorded.

56. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are adequately identified and met. All learners are tested during recruitment and induction and the results are used to shape their individual learning plans. Qualified staff provide suitable literacy and numeracy support for learners who require it. Two tutors have had specialist training in identifying and assisting learners with dyslexia. However, language support is inadequate.

57. Training resources are satisfactory. Learners work in suitable rooms with good IT equipment. Tutors and assessors are well qualified and have good experience in business administration, ICT, key skills, and literacy, numeracy and language. Work placements are good and learners benefit from working in busy offices with experienced and qualified colleagues.

58. In some learning sessions, individual learners' understanding is not adequately

monitored. In some sessions, tutors test learners' understanding using a variety of methods, including quizzes and group presentations. However, most testing is ineffective and uses a narrow range of methods.

Leadership and management

59. The management of business administration has greatly improved since the previous inspection. County Training has adopted a new structure. There is now more co-ordinated management of the team.

60. County Training uses a good range of effective arrangements to assure quality. Tutors receive immediate written feedback from learners on learning sessions and use this to plan future activities. Tutors are in frequent contact with workplace supervisors and act on their comments. Internal verification is thorough and carefully planned according to a yearly schedule. Tutors, assessors and internal verifiers meet each month. Unsatisfactory assessment has been identified and steps taken to deal with it. Tutors are observed in learning sessions and the results are discussed and used to plan future sessions. Self-assessment uses contributions from all those involved in training, including tutors, managers, administrators, assessors, workplace supervisors and learners.

61. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. They are given information during induction, and equality of opportunity at work is discussed during assessments and progress reviews. Learners know how to use the NVQ appeals procedure and how to make a complaint.