

NETA Training Trust

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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.

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), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment 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:

- Engineering and manufacturing technologies
- Construction, planning and the built environment
- Information and communication technology (ICT)

Inspectors also examined evidence from programmes in retail and commercial enterprise and business, administration and law, which were not reported on separately, to support judgements in leadership and management. Inspectors also collected evidence on provision for 14-16 year olds and awarded contributory grades for this provision where appropriate.

Description of the provider

1. NETA Training Trust (NETA) was established in 1975 as a group training organisation. It is a charity, and a company limited by guarantee. Its head office is located in Stockton-on-Tees and there are additional sites in Billingham and Thornaby. NETA has a board of trustees with an elected chairman. Trustees are drawn from local companies, particularly from within the engineering construction sector. The chief executive reports company performance to the board on a quarterly basis. The chief executive is assisted by a senior management team comprising a project manager, a sales manager, a facilities manager, an accountant/information technology manager, and an operations manager. The chief executive and senior management team meet every week. The operations manager has direct responsibility for a number of departmental co-ordinators. There are approximately 100 staff in the organisation.
2. NETA is Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for Engineering and Construction. Approximately 70% of its turnover comes from full-cost commercial training. The remaining 30% from various government funded programmes include work-based learning for young people, Train to Gain, and learndirect. These are all funded through contracts with Tees Valley LSC. NETA currently has approximately 340 learners following programmes in engineering, construction, retail and ICT. The organisation uses three sub-contractors to deliver technical certificates to apprentices and advanced apprentices. The sub-contractors are: North East Chamber of Commerce; Hartlepool College of Further Education; and Middlesbrough College of Further Education. Skills for Life provision is being developed by NETA, with staff currently being trained. Skills for Life is also sub-contracted to Learning Links, who deliver learning on NETA's behalf both internally and externally. NETA also has a franchising agreement with Hartlepool College for approximately 100 learners following programmes in ICT, customer services and Institute of Leadership and Management qualifications.
3. NETA's mission states that "NETA will provide the highest quality learning experience which places the learner at the centre of all of our activities. We will provide efficient training assessment and associated support to meet the needs of all stakeholders and assist in developing an inclusive and productive community."
4. The Tees Valley LSC area is in the north east of England and covers the lower reaches of the river Tees. There are five unitary local authorities in the region, including Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees. Unemployment in the Tees Valley area in June 2006 was 3.8%. This was above the averages of 3.2% for the north east region, and the national average of 2.6%. The 2001 census figures show that 2% of the Tees valley population are from minority ethnic groups, as compared with 5.9% nationally.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision		Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade2
learndirect	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade2
Capacity to improve		Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards		Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management		Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
Information and communication technologies	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning
Train to Gain
learndirect
14-16 programmes

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Success rates on advanced apprenticeship programmes for all sectors have been above national averages for some time, but they are not improving. Success rates on apprenticeships have improved significantly since the previous inspection, and they are now around the national average. NETA has withdrawn from areas of provision where work-based learning success rates were lowest. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes in construction are outstanding. Success and withdrawal rates on learndirect programmes are significantly better than regional and national averages. Achievement rates for learners on vocational programmes for 14 to 16 year olds are high.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Facilities for off-the-job training in engineering programmes are good. In construction, the off-the-job facilities are also good. The training centre is well equipped and has good sized internal and external training areas. As well as providing effective support for their learners, construction employers are very much involved in the assessment process. Teaching and learning on learndirect programmes is good, although some learners experience problems accessing the learndirect network.
7. NETA's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The company works with its partners to provide learning opportunities for those who have not been in education or training for many years. Its links with 14 schools enable 250 14 to 16 year old learners to gain vocational qualifications. NETA has been active in identifying and attracting under-represented groups and has successfully improved the enrolment of female learners and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds.
8. Guidance and support are good. All learners receive good initial advice and guidance and a satisfactory induction to their programme. In engineering and construction, learners' progress reviews are satisfactory but target-setting is weak. In ICT, learners receive particularly good initial advice and guidance. They meet frequently with tutors, but there is insufficient short term target-setting. All learners receive good support from their employers.
9. Leadership and management are good. Good strategic management has led to the new areas of provision and enhanced links with employers, schools and other partners. NETA has been successful in attracting more learners from under-represented groups but there is insufficient awareness and reinforcement of equality of opportunity. Strategies have been introduced to improve retention and

achievement, along with a new management information system which provides good analysis of learner performance. Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory and the monitoring of sub-contractors is good. Self-assessment is satisfactory but target-setting is weak.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

10. NETA has demonstrated good capacity to improve. It has identified key weaknesses in the performance of programmes and has taken action to address them. Retention and success rates have begun to improve. Systems are in place to ensure compliance with procedures. The separate strands of quality monitoring and improvement are not yet integrated with a framework, which focuses all outcomes on the quality improvement plan. Procedures for monitoring and improving reviews are still being introduced. The organisation has an extensive programme of staff development and subject learning coaches are active in each of the main teaching areas.

11. The self-assessment process is broadly satisfactory. Most staff participate and the report identified most of the weaknesses found by inspection. However, the structure of report is unclear. The action plan covers strengths and area for improvement, but the targets and timescales are not sufficiently specific and measurable.

Key strengths

- Good strategic management
- Very effective partnerships with a wide range of employers
- Strong and well managed provision for 14 to 16 year olds
- Strong focus on improving retention and pass rates
- Good development of learners' skills
- Wide range of provision which meets learners' and employers' needs
- Excellent success rates in Train to Gain
- Good resources for off-the-job training
- Good initial advice and guidance in learndirect

Key areas for improvement

- Poor target-setting
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity
- Insufficiently memorable induction for many learners
- Insufficiently rigorous self-assessment process in learndirect

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

12. Achievements and standards in work-based learning are satisfactory. Success rates for advanced apprentices have been above national averages for some time, but they are not improving. Success rates for apprentices have significantly improved over the three years up to 2005/06 and they are now around the national average. Provider data for 2006/07 shows that success rates are likely to improve in the current year. Timely success rates have been below national averages for a number of years, and NETA recognises that this is an area for improvement. NETA has withdrawn from work-based learning in retailing and hospitality. Low achievement in these areas was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection.

13. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes in construction are outstanding. Over two years, 100% of learners have successfully completed, and retention on this year's programme is very good. Success rates on learndirect programmes in ICT are satisfactory. However, success and withdrawal rates for these programmes are significantly better than regional and national averages. Achievement rates for learners on vocational programmes for 14 to 16 year olds are high. Many learners who have previously under-achieved at school achieve well on vocational programmes.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. The quality of provision is satisfactory. In work-based learning engineering programmes, facilities for off-the-job training are good. Equipment matches current industrial practice and learners develop good work-related skills. On Train to Gain programmes in construction, employers are very supportive of their learners' training and assessment. NETA facilities for off-the-job training in construction are good. The training centre is well equipped and has good sized internal and external training areas. Teaching and learning on learndirect programmes in ICT are good. Tutors provide effective individualised support for all learners. However, some learners experience problems accessing the learndirect network, and some materials need updating.

15. Arrangements for identifying and providing courses that meet the needs of learners and employers are good. Employers and learners have a broad choice of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and additional units in engineering. Programmes for 14 to 16 year olds in engineering are designed in close liaison with partner schools. Increasingly learners progress to engineering apprenticeships. Most learners in construction have not participated in training or education for many years, and the Train to Gain programmes clearly meet their needs. In ICT there is very effective engagement with employers. All employers actively support their employees, and one employer has provided a good quality learning centre on their premises.
16. Guidance and support is good. Learners receive good initial advice and guidance, and a satisfactory induction to their programme. However, many have difficulty recalling the content of their induction after starting training. In engineering and construction learners receive good initial assessment, which is effective in identifying and meeting additional learning needs. Progress reviews are satisfactory, but target-setting is weak. In ICT programmes, learners receive particularly good initial advice and guidance. They meet frequently with tutors, but do not set adequate short term targets. Learners receive good support from their employers.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learn direct	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
14-16 programmes	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. NETA's strategic management is good. The organisation has expanded its range of provision, and has acquired other providers to further enhance its provision and facilities. The achievement of CoVE status for engineering construction has enabled further improvements to resources.
18. There is strong engineering provision for 14 to 16 year olds, delivered through links with 14 schools. In the current year 240 pupils have received accredited training in engineering, using very good facilities at the Billingham site. Learners enjoy their studies at NETA, and retention and success rates are good. Progression from the schools provision to engineering apprenticeships is increasing.
19. NETA maintains productive links with large numbers of companies. The board of trustees has representatives from a number of prominent local companies, and managers are well represented in local and regional employer associations. Many learners gain employment with these companies, and have access to specialist equipment loaned by local firms.

20. Equal opportunities arrangements are satisfactory. In late 2006 NETA identified a senior member of staff with overall responsibility for this area, and produced an equality improvement plan. Procedures for bullying, harassment and grievance are satisfactory. Copies are provided to all learners and discussed at induction. Staff development for equality and diversity is adequate.
21. NETA is successful in attracting learners from under-represented groups. In 2006, nine of 138 pupils recruited were women, and six were from minority ethnic groups. This was an increase from previous years.
22. Equality of opportunity is insufficiently reinforced with learners. Learners are asked closed questions in progress reviews that elicit a true or false answer. Learners do not have the opportunity to discuss the wider issues of equality and diversity within the workplace.
23. NETA has introduced effective strategies to improve retention and success rates including restructuring the engineering department to focus more on learner achievement. NETA promotes new learning materials and innovative approaches to teaching. All instructors have, or are currently taking, level 3 learning and development qualifications. Learners' progress is closely monitored by a senior manager using a new database. Support for learners with additional needs is effective, and their success rates are higher than those of other learners.
24. Data management is satisfactory. NETA has recently introduced a new management information system which leads to good analysis of learner performance. However, not all staff are using the system. The system does not include learndirect provision. Published success rates for work-based learning programmes and learndirect have been affected by errors in data entry. Inspectors used provider data during the inspection. Problems relating to the accuracy of published data did not impact on the inspection.
25. Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. The results of teaching and learning observations are carefully analysed, and actions to improve are implemented. In learndirect provision, NETA uses innovative monitoring methods to capture the learner's experience of its provision. Company procedures are regularly audited and reviewed. Internal verification is well planned and robust. The self-assessment report accurately identified that the quality improvement strands are not sufficiently integrated.
26. Monitoring of sub-contractors is good. NETA meets monthly with each of the three sub-contractors and receives feedback relating to quality monitoring, as well as comprehensive reports on learners' progress. However, the content of these reports does not always reach tutors who implement learners' progress reviews.
27. The self-assessment process is satisfactory, but target-setting is weak. Judgements are moderated carefully, and the strengths and areas for improvement lead to the quality improvement plan. However, the format of the report is difficult to follow, and targets in the plan are unclear and insufficiently detailed.

What learners like:

- 'Good support from NETA staff'
- 'It's a nice place to be'
- 'On learndirect we learn at our own pace'
- 'On learndirect courses you don't get pressured like in a classroom'
- 'On learndirect, it's flexible and the content is very good'
- 'The hands on experience is very good'
- 'Being treated like adults'
- 'We enjoy the practical work'
- 'The training's good and there are regular checks on progress'
- 'Getting a qualification years after leaving school [through Train to Gain]'
- 'The good canteen facilities'
- 'I always know what I'm doing'
- 'NETA shows you how it's done properly'
- 'You never get bored'
- 'Everything runs smoothly and there's always someone to help you'

What learners think could improve:

- 'The engineering training programme could be better planned at the start'
- 'The volume of paperwork could be reduced on engineering programmes'
- 'We need better scaffolding fittings'
- 'Some of the learndirect videos are a bit amateurish and childlike'
- 'It can be very slow logging on to the learndirect site'
- 'learndirect does not support the most recent operating system on the computers'
- 'Some of the training materials, supplied by learndirect, need updating'

Sector subject areas

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

28. Currently 29 apprentices and 160 advanced apprentices follow a broad range of engineering and engineering construction disciplines. Of these, six are women and five are from minority ethnic groups. All apprentices complete a programme of off-the-job training in their first year. Most learners are employed, and these are placed on an advanced apprenticeship programme. Those that are not initially employed are placed on an apprenticeship programme and they have a work placement during their initial training. They all are employed by the end of the first year.

Strengths

- High success rates for apprenticeships
- Good development of a broad range of employment related skills
- High standard of learner portfolios
- Good practical training facilities
- Broad range of NVQs which meet learners' and employers' needs

Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently inclusive self-assessment process
- Poor target-setting

Achievement and standards

29. Success rates on apprenticeships are high. Based on agreed provider data, success rates for apprentices increased from 10% in 2003/04 to 68% in 2005/06, which is well above the national average. Success rates for advanced apprentices decreased from 62% in 2003/04 to 55% in 2005/06. However, this is above the national average. NETA accurately identified that timely success rates on both programmes are poor, but the average time taken by learners to complete their frameworks is reducing. A significant number of learners progress onto higher level programmes. Currently, 33 learners are undertaking a higher education qualification.

30. Learners develop a broad range of employment related skills, and achieve additional qualifications. Additional training programmes are selected in discussion with employers. Courses include; abrasive wheels, slinging, scaffolding, welding, working in confined spaces and asbestos training, plus accredited health and safety training. There is a strong emphasis on health and safety at induction and throughout the training.

31. Learner portfolios are of a high standard. Portfolios are well planned, organised, and clearly structured. Evidence is collected by carefully cross referencing the NVQ competences to the tasks that individual learners complete in the workplace. Evidence occurs naturally and relates clearly to the NVQ standards. Portfolios are neat and tidy and evidence is signed and dated by assessors. Most learners receive clear feedback on assessments, but in a few cases written feedback is insufficiently specific and time bound.

Quality of provision

32. Facilities for initial off-the-job and specialist training are good. The mechanical engineering and welding facilities used for off-the-job training are good, and learners have access to specialist hydraulics, pneumatics, electrical, instrumentation and pipe work facilities. Equipment and facilities meet industrial standards and learners develop realistic industrial skills.
33. NETA offers a very wide range of NVQs, which meet the needs of learners and employers. Employers are able to select the most appropriate NVQ for their learners, and in many cases additional NVQ units are added to the programme to meet specific needs. Learners undertake frequent, regular and planned reviews of their progress, but target-setting is poor. Employers contribute fully to the review process, and assist their learners in making progress. Reviews monitor progress towards the NVQ and key skills awards but not the technical certificate. Targets are agreed during discussions with the learners, but often lack detail. Information from the central monitoring database is not used to inform reviews. The monitoring progress on NVQ units is insufficiently detailed.
34. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners receive initial assessment. The results are recorded on individual learning plans, and are used to identify any additional learning support. Learners have an induction which covers the essential elements of the programme. Some learners do not collect any evidence for their level 3 NVQ portfolio until some time after they join their employer. During this time opportunities for assessment are missed. However, assessment and internal verification is otherwise well planned and executed.

Leadership and management

35. Operational management is satisfactory. There are regular team meetings. Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Surveys are used to collect learners' views, but learners do not get feedback on the results. Learner performance is monitored through a recently developed monitoring and performance database. This provides a wide range of information which is not used to inform progress reviews. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The observation scheme is effective.
36. Target-setting for individual members of staff is poor. Targets for retention and achievement are set at organisational level, but targets are not set with assessors and reviewers for retention, achievement and progress of their learners.

37. The self-assessment process is insufficiently inclusive. Some staff and employers do not contribute to the self-assessment report. The improvement plan is shared with staff but not all are aware of the actions required by them to make improvements. Equality and diversity are adequately covered during induction and during learners' reviews.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: Grade 2

Context

38. NETA provides training and assessment in scaffolding for 52 employed learners through the Train to Gain programme. Off-the-job training is provided at NETA's training centre, located in Stockton-on-Tees. A team of three instructors is led by a departmental co-ordinator. All of the instructors are qualified assessors, with internal verification undertaken by the co-ordinator. The training is at NVQ level 2 and is designed to qualify experienced construction workers, building on their existing practical skills. Learners receive an induction that includes a diagnostic assessment of the learners' literacy and numeracy standard. On completion of their training, learners also receive the industry-recognised construction skills certification scheme card.

Strengths

- Outstanding success rates
- Good employer involvement in training and assessment
- Good resources for off-the-job training

Areas for improvement

- Poor target-setting during learners' progress reviews
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity

Achievement and standards

39. Success rates are outstanding. In 2005/06 and 2006/07 learners achieved 100% success. For the current year, all learners who started training remain. Timely success rates have improved from 13% for 2005/06 to 56% for 2006/07. NETA has identified timely success rates as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report.

40. Learners gain experience on a wide range of construction projects. These include housing projects, bridge repair work and shoring on major refurbishment projects. While on site, all learners are supervised by experienced site supervisors or advanced scaffolders. Learners develop skills that meet the standards set by main contractors and clients. Learners develop a good understanding of health and safety, relative to work operations. They work safely and wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Quality of provision

41. Employers' involvement in training and assessment is good. For example, one employer has developed a well-structured training programme that complements off-the-job training and provides learners with ample opportunity to gather evidence for assessment. Learners with this employer develop basic vocational

skills at the company depot, before moving to site, where they work alongside experienced scaffold supervisors. The supervisors use mobile telephones to take photographs of learners' work, which are downloaded along with relevant site documentation at the company office. This helps to simplify the gathering of assessment evidence and maximises the opportunity for assessment. Employers speak highly of the relationship they have with NETA, and they make frequent visits to the NETA training centre. Employers encourage and support learners to participate in training. The programme has been designed to meet the needs of the construction industry, its employers and learners. Employers value highly the opportunities which are created for their workforce to improve their skill levels and achieve qualifications.

42. Resources for off-the-job training are good. The centre is well equipped with a diverse range of accessible equipment, enabling learners to develop skills and experience in realistic work conditions. NETA has good sized internal and external training areas. Classroom facilities are good and well maintained, with a good range of training aids. Learner and employer feedback indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the resources for training.
43. Assessment is satisfactory. The assessment documents are well designed. Assessment planning is clear and causes minimum disruption to workplace activities. Employers and supervisors act as work-based recorders and provide witness testimonies, details of learner's prior achievement and photographic evidence. Assessors frequently telephone employers and learners to monitor progress and to provide any necessary guidance. Learner's portfolios are well structured and contain a good range of evidence.
44. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. The NVQ is clearly promoted as a means to provide a skilled workforce and improve health and safety awareness and standards. Learners complete a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs. The results of the assessment are given to learners during an individual interview. Additional learning support is available for learners needing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
45. Target-setting for learners during progress reviews is poor. Targets are discussed and agreed, but many are not sufficiently challenging and most lack sufficient detail about the tasks to be completed. Targets are often focused on gathering a number of pieces of evidence for whole NVQ units, rather than detailing specific work-based activities required for each unit.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategic planning is communicated through the company intranet and team meetings. Communications are satisfactory. Staff meet frequently and the meetings are effective in improving the assessment process and sharing good practice. Construction staff have monthly targets for achievement, which are monitored at management co-ordinators meetings. Staff appraisal is completed annually and includes review of performance and the opportunity to discuss staff development. NETA has a facilities manager, who is responsible for monitoring the company health and

safety policy. This includes monitoring health and safety within the centre to ensure a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment.

47. Internal verification processes are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the awarding body. The strategy for internal verification has been revised to improve standardisation and increase sharing of good practice. Reports from external verification visits are shared at team meetings and reviewed by senior managers. Observations of training and progress reviews have been introduced recently.
48. Staff were involved in producing the organisation's self-assessment report. However, the report takes insufficient account of learners' and employers' views. Although the organisation's quality improvement plan has a clear focus on improving the learners' experience, some actions lack sufficient detail.
49. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is poor. Although information on equality of opportunity is provided for learners at induction, it is insufficiently reinforced at progress reviews. The questions used by the reviewers do not encourage learners to demonstrate a depth of understanding of equality or diversity.

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

50. Currently 28 learners follow eight learndirect courses in ICT of which two are accredited. Of the learners 20 are women, 19 are employed in large organisations and six in small and medium-sized organisations. There are five tutors, an internal verifier and a learndirect co-ordinator. Regular progress reviews are carried out through individual visits and by phone and email communication. Some learners visit the centre each week.

Strengths

- Good development of learner skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Good initial advice and guidance
- Highly effective engagement with employers
- Good team work

Areas for improvement

- Inadequate short term planning
- Insufficiently memorable induction
- Insufficiently rigorous self-assessment process

Achievement and standards

51. Learners develop good ICT skills and effectively use word processing, spreadsheets, computerised presentations, databases and electronic communications. The standard of work is good. Learners develop a high level of self-confidence, and their newly acquired knowledge and skills are rapidly applied in the workplace.

52. Success rates are satisfactory at 57%, and are above regional and national averages. The withdrawal rate is a satisfactory 9% and less than regional and national rates. Learners make slow progress and fail to complete a single unit within six months of starting the programme.

Quality of provision

53. Teaching and learning are good. Learners enjoy the learndirect methodology. Tutors have good relationships with learners and provide effective individualised learning support to accommodate learners' specific learning needs. Tutors are readily available to support remote learners through telephone calls or emails. Tutors provide learners in the learndirect centre with teaching or coaching to support the learndirect materials. Specific sessions are arranged for remote learners who are unsure how to proceed with their learning. Feedback to learners is good. Most of the ICT provision is accredited. There is poor connectivity and

compatibility for some learners. The internet service provider and the University for Industry (Ufi) are trying to resolve the connectivity problem. Learning materials provided by learndirect are not compatible with the latest version of the operating system used by some learners.

54. Initial advice and guidance is good. Learners' strengths, weaknesses and learning styles are identified effectively. Tutors suggest programmes and learning approaches which meet the learners' needs. Identification of additional learning support requirements and provision of language, literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory.
55. Employers are engaged successfully and support their learners. Many employers have several learners. One employer, Hartlepool Council, has provided a good quality learning resource centre on their premises. A NETA tutor works in this centre on a full-time basis to support learners.
56. Short term targets are not set effectively. Learners meet with tutors regularly but do not negotiate targets to guide learning and measure progress. Written targets are insufficiently precise. Learners are not encouraged to set out their learning aims at the start of each session. Insufficient tutor guidance is given for learners to relate their intended learning to the: length of the learning session; course content; or their medium and long term learning goals. The assessment and the internal verification of learners' work are satisfactory.
57. Learners do not remember the key points of induction. The quality and content of information given to learners is satisfactory and includes health and safety guidance on working with ICT equipment. Learners also receive adequate information about equality of opportunity and diversity, bullying and harassment and the complaints procedure. However, these topics are not reinforced following induction.

Leadership and management

58. Operational management is satisfactory and team work is good. The co-ordinator and the team of six staff support learners well. Management arrangements, roles and responsibilities are clear and internal communications are good. The co-ordinator meets with the internal verifier each week to discuss and debate issues and identify actions to improve which are followed up at monthly team meetings. Minutes of meetings identify who is responsible for these actions but do not include target dates. Communications with employers, Ufi and other external agencies are good. Connectivity issues are monitored effectively. Ufi management information is used adequately. However, eight learners were coded to the wrong course when they started. They were withdrawn and transferred to the correct course, but the Ufi data system still counts them as withdrawals on the original course. NETA accurately identified that it needs to consolidate Ufi data with its own management information.
59. NETA is currently promoting its Ufi provision in an attempt to recruit more learners from under-represented groups and widen participation. NETA is attempting to increase participation by people with a disability, from minority

ethnic groups, and from different employment sectors. It is developing its relationship with the Department of Work & Pensions to attract people who have been long-term unemployed or are at risk of unemployment. It is too early to judge the impact of these measures.

60. The self-assessment process is insufficiently rigorous. There is insufficient evaluative review and no weaknesses were identified. Learners and employers did not contribute to the report. The report does not link adequately to the quality improvement plan.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Published data for success rates were unreliable.

Table 2

Success rates on work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2007.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	05/06	overall	23	100%
		timely	3	13%
	06/07	overall	26	100%
		timely	15	56%

* 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

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

*** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'Skills for Life'

Table 3

Outcomes on learndirect programmes

Q3 2007	Enrolments	Counted for data	Success rate (%)	Withdrawal rate (%)
All sectors	199	245	74	10
ICT	*	*	*	*
Skills for Life	108	102	86	4
Business and management	3	0	0	0

* unreliable published data

Equality and diversity

Q3 2006	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese/Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	199	0	4	0	2	0	193
Completion rate (%)	90	0	75	0	100	0	90
Achievement rate (%)	81	0	100	0	0	0	81
Success rate (%)	74	0	75	0	0	0	75
Withdrawal rate (%)	10	0	25	0	0	0	10

