



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 2000

Crowns Training Consortium

SUMMARY

Crowns Training Consortium offers training in hairdressing. Learning resources are good and appropriate for trainees' individual needs. Trainees receive good additional support and are given a comprehensive induction. However, achievement rates are low. There is no initial assessment of key skills or accreditation of trainees' prior learning. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the training and assessment process. There are good progression routes into employment for national trainees. Trainees' understanding of equal opportunities is poor. All staff work effectively as a team to train and support trainees through the programmes. There is good use of data to monitor performance. The overall management of training is satisfactory, as are quality assurance arrangements. Staff fully understand their roles within the organisation. Internal verification is weak.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hair & beauty	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	2
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ modern and well-equipped training salons
- ◆ good progression routes for national trainees
- ◆ effective teamwork among staff
- ◆ good representation of male trainees in traditionally female-dominated occupation
- ◆ good additional support given to trainees
- ◆ comprehensive and accurate data used to guide management decisions
- ◆ effective action planning to make continuous improvements

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ low achievement rates
- ◆ some missed assessment opportunities at work
- ◆ some poorly managed theory training
- ◆ poor quality assurance in the workplace
- ◆ internal verification lacks rigour

INTRODUCTION

1. Crowns Training Consortium (CTC), an independent, private training provider, was set up nine years ago as a result of dissatisfaction with training offered at that time in the locality. CTC operates from two training centres at Worthing and Hove, with satellite centres in Healthfield, Uckfield, Eastbourne and Crawley. The company offers training towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing. A customer service qualification is also offered. This was not inspected owing to the low number of trainees on programme.

2. CTC contracts with Sussex Enterprise, the local training and enterprise council (TEC) to offer national traineeships and modern apprenticeships. Training is also available for trainees with learning difficulties. Trainees are drawn from a wide geographical area from Chichester in the west to Eastbourne in the east and Crawley in the north. All trainees are employed. The training division comprises two areas, the training consortium and the training academies/centres. There are two company directors supported by a consortium manager and a training director. The training consortium is responsible for the recruitment, induction, placement, monitoring and welfare of the trainees, and the training centres for providing the training programme itself. The two divisions work closely together. There are nine full-time and one part-time members of staff. CTC has been offering government-funded training programmes for the past eight years.

3. There are currently 167 trainees working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing. There are 155 female trainees and 12 male trainees. None of the trainees have disabilities. CTC has eight salons and contracts with 86 privately owned salons in towns throughout Sussex.

4. CTC operates from Worthing in West Sussex and Brighton and Hove in East Sussex, seaside towns on the south coast. Worthing is a relatively affluent area. The main commercial activities in both locations are predominately in the service industries. There is a large number of employers with between one and 50 employees. Tourism, shops, pubs and restaurants form a large employment sector in the south with public organisations such as hospitals, colleges and local councils making up the rest.

5. Minority ethnic groups make up 1.1 per cent of the local population. The population in Worthing is 99,700 and Brighton/Hove is 255,800. Unemployment in West Sussex is 1.3 per cent, compared with the national average of 4.6 per cent. Worthing has an unemployment rate of 2.5 per cent, and in Brighton and Hove, it stands at 6.5 per cent.

6. In 1999, 2.8 per cent of school leavers entered work-based training in West Sussex. Just over 78 per cent of school leavers went into further education, including sixth-form college. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving



five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 53.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

7. CTC began preparing for self-assessment in June 1998 and produced its report in July 1999. A director and the consortium manager attended three training workshops on self-assessment run by Sussex Enterprise. All of the staff carried out a self-assessment of their own areas. An action plan was drawn up to address the issues raised in the self-assessment report. This plan has been accepted by all staff and is now being implemented. The action plan is being continually updated. Inspectors agreed with all the grades given in the self-assessment report.

8. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at CTC in February 2000. Inspectors interviewed 36 trainees, nine members of staff, five satellite staff and 12 employers. Inspectors examined a range of documentary evidence, including 28 NVQ portfolios and 31 trainees' administration files, together with assessment and review documents, and internal and external verifiers' reports. Policies and procedures, marketing information and a wide range of performance and occupancy data were also examined. There were some opportunities to observe training, assessment and induction. Four training sessions were observed and these are detailed below.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Hairdressing		2	2			4
Total	0	2	2	0	0	4

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hair & beauty (hairdressing)

Grade 3

9. There are 167 trainees on hairdressing training programmes. Of these, 82 are modern apprentices, of whom 45 are working towards NVQs at level 2, and 37 are working towards level 3. Twenty-nine are national trainees working towards level 2 and 56 are on other programmes working towards levels 2 and 3. There are 155 female trainees and 12 male trainees. All of the trainees are employed either in one of CTC's eight salons, or in 86 other salons located throughout Sussex. Some training is carried out at one of the two training academies and some is subcontracted to three satellite centres. Most level 2 trainees attend the training centres for one day each week. Level 3 trainees have the option to attend a four-hour theory or practical session. This is tailored to match individual trainees' needs, which are identified at the interview and through on-the-job monitoring. All trainees are given an induction. Initial reviews are carried out within four weeks of trainees starting the programme. This is continued at eight- or 12-weekly intervals, as appropriate. Although inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment

report, many of the judgements were seen as no more than normal practice. Some of the strengths in the self-assessment report were repeated and two were more applicable to trainee support. Inspectors agreed with the weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given by CTC.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ modern and well-equipped off-the-job training facilities
- ◆ good progression routes for national trainees
- ◆ highly motivated trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ low achievement rates
- ◆ some missed assessment opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ slow development and integration of key skills

10. Trainees have access to modern and fashionable hairdressing training facilities in a professional salon environment. The training salons at the academy are well resourced and allow ample room for specialist demonstrations. Theory rooms are conducive to learning, creating a pleasant atmosphere with relevant hairdressing information on display. The resources at some of the satellite centres do not always reflect the same standards. There is a sufficient number of staff who have the skills, knowledge and qualifications to train in the occupational area.

11. There are good progression routes for national trainees. Many progress to NVQs at level 3. One trainee started as a Saturday worker at CTC, progressed to levels 2 and 3 and was eventually promoted to manager. She is now successfully running her own salon. Another trainee progressed to level 3 in hairdressing and level 3 in customer services, and is now a successful stylist, and other trainees have progressed to become salon managers.

12. Most trainees enjoy their training and are highly motivated. All trainees have the opportunity to obtain an additional qualification at level 2 or 3 in customer services. A small number of trainees have achieved this qualification. Off-the-job training for theory, practical work and assessments is undertaken in small groups of between four to 10. Trainees clearly enjoy these training sessions and are able to work without supervision on practical and theory work.

13. Trainees are well motivated and enthusiastic. The company recently organised a two-day visit to Euro Disney for trainees and staff. This was partly sponsored by a leading manufacturer which gave a presentation and explanation of its latest products. This was followed up with further presentations and sampling for the trainees at the salons. Last year, CTC contracted with another leading manufacturer which arranged demonstrations and shows at its London-based studios. The visit included rail tickets and an evening show all paid for by CTC. This year the company organised a Trainee of the Millennium Award. Trainees

POOR PRACTICE

On two separate occasions, inspectors observed trainees undertaking practical work at the academy applying chemicals to models' hair without wearing protective gloves. Inspectors highlighted this issue to the provider.

were invited to enter the competition and were judged on the creativity of their presentation, standard of their portfolio, time keeping, attendance and attitude. The competition winners were announced during the level 3 presentation show and the awards evening. This event was held at a local hotel before an audience of 140 employers, trainees and parents.

14. Achievement is low. Sixty-five per cent of leavers in 1997-98 gained all their framework qualifications, and in 1998-99 this figure had dropped to 58 per cent. The number of complete framework completions for 1999-2000 so far is 40 per cent. The trainees are given a diary in which to keep a record of the practical work carried out at work. This forms part of their induction pack, and they are encouraged to design their own style model diary which enables feedback to the off-the-job trainer on the trainees' progress.

15. Some assessment opportunities are missed in the workplace. Three trainees have taken four years to complete their programme, one of whom was at level 2. Of the 86 work placements currently used, 20 have qualified work-based assessors. However, these assessors are not always used to assess trainees at work. Recently, the company has started to use one of the trainee assessors from the academy to undertake some peripatetic assessment.

16. Work to introduce the key skills training and assessment that are a requirement of the national trainee and modern apprentice frameworks has been too slow. Trainees lack an understanding of key skills. One trainee is using a computer at the workplace, but is not aware of its relevance to the key skills element of the training programme. Documents have recently been developed for key skills training, but it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness. The company has run a two-day training session on key skills training for staff based at the training academy.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

17. Responsibility for equal opportunities at CTC is shared among all staff. All employees within the organisation are familiar with the equal opportunities policy and related procedures. Each member of staff receives information on equal opportunities at induction to the company, as do trainees. The trainees' handbook includes a copy of the statement. In its employers' agreement, there is a section devoted to equal opportunities practice. All employers are now assessed, when trainees are first placed, as to their equal opportunities practices in the salon. The proportion of male trainees is 7 per cent and the minority ethnic groups account for less than 1 per cent. The self-assessment report identified two strengths relating to the company having an equal opportunities statement and staff being aware and committed to following it. These strengths were viewed as no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with the strength relating to the promotion of equal opportunities at the point of recruitment for trainees. The report cited the

monitoring of equal opportunities awareness and the need to monitor equal opportunities practices as weaknesses and inspectors agreed with this judgement. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given by CTC.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ action taken to address stereotypical roles
- ◆ effective complaints procedure

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities with staff, employers and trainees
- ◆ lack of awareness of equal opportunities

18. CTC's staff attend an 'Equals at Work' convention each year. The aim of this event is to challenge the ideas that some young people may have about jobs and the people who do them. It aims to bring together men and women who do jobs not always associated with their gender or who have overcome barriers of race or disability. The company displays information about the hairdressing profession which pupils are encouraged to scrutinise for equality issues. Staff also attend an annual 'what's my line' day at one of the local schools. Those attending are asked to dress in a style not normally associated with their job so that the pupils in the school do not associate clothes and image with any particular profession or occupation. Men now make up 7 per cent of trainees.

19. CTC accepts all trainees who apply for the training programme. All newspaper advertisements connected with recruitment highlight the fact that it is an equal opportunities employer. No trainees have been refused a place on the programme and each trainee receives individual attention to address any additional training needs they may have. Crowns has a clearly written complaints procedure which is in a user-friendly language. All complaints are recorded and are brought to the attention of the training manager. Issues are dealt with promptly and, for those trainees who are unhappy with the outcome, there is a right to appeal to the company's directors. Where complaints have been received, all parties have been involved in resolving the issues raised.

20. Visits are made by CTC's staff to employers before a trainee is placed with them. A health and safety check of the premises is carried out, during which time a questionnaire is completed by the company's staff. One aspect of this questionnaire relates to equal opportunities and the member of staff is required to acknowledge coverage of this aspect by recording the date the audit took place. There are no guidelines provided for staff on how to evaluate the effectiveness of equal opportunities in the salons. Equal opportunities issues are not systematically included in management team meetings, and related issues only become agenda items when there is a need to address them. Employers which do not have an equal opportunities policy are not provided with one from the company and no formal advice is given to help them to formulate one of their own.

21. There is a comprehensive harassment statement and equal opportunities policy. However, the policy lacks detail. Although all trainees receive an induction at the start of the programme which covers the companies' equal opportunities statement and harassment statement, their understanding of equal opportunities issues is poor. Equal opportunities data and practices are not systematically monitored.

22. None of CTC's staff have received training on equal opportunities. Trainees' understanding and the employers' awareness and practices of equal opportunities in the salon environment are not checked. Most employers are unaware of their responsibilities with regard to CTC's requirements and expectations.

Trainee support

Grade 2

23. To recruit trainees on to CTC's programmes, training staff attend careers events at schools and other career events. Trainees, accompanied by staff, demonstrate their hairdressing skills at these events. All potential trainees are invited to a 'taster' day. The day includes sessions on what the industry has to offer, what the day-to-day work involves, what the training course will consist of and how it will operate. A certificate of attendance is given as acknowledgement of the days' work. Skills and knowledge are assessed prior to, and on entry to, the programme and monitored each week during the training. All trainees attend a skills awareness session prior to the start of the programme. This is carried out in order to help prospective trainees to confirm their decision to embark on the training programme. At the start of the training programme, all trainees receive an induction. Two further inductions are carried out at four-weekly intervals. All trainees are visited at work every eight or 12 weeks by a training co-ordinator for a review of their progress to date. For trainees who have additional training needs, the review visits are increased in frequency, depending on the level of the training support needed. The self-assessment report included all of the strengths identified by inspectors. A further strength was identified, highlighting the innovative recruitment methods used by the company. However the report failed to identify as a weakness the lack of any accreditation of prior learning. One of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report relates to the need to develop stronger links with workplace assessors. This was considered by inspectors to be an occupational issue. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by CTC.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ innovative recruitment methods
- ◆ comprehensive induction procedures
- ◆ good individual support for trainees
- ◆ specific learning materials developed to support trainees
- ◆ clearly focused and targeted action plans

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no initial assessment of trainees' key skills
- ◆ no accreditation of prior learning

24. CTC uses some innovative recruitment methods to encourage trainees to enter the hairdressing profession. It has good links with local schools and invites young people to particularly well-designed and comprehensive hairdressing 'taster' days. The company makes all the necessary arrangements with the school to allow the young people to attend. Advice is also offered to trainees on the importance of personal presentation. At the start of the taster day each young person is given a pack of material relevant to the proceedings. This pack contains information on health and safety facilities in the centres, followed by the plan for the day. The taster day consists of case studies from previous trainees who have successfully achieved the relevant qualifications and are operating as successful business people in the hairdressing profession. Sessions are also carried out on basic hygiene, and good conduct. Discussions take place during the day with regard to the role of the hairdresser when all of the duties, including the cleaning of both the salon and equipment, are covered. Pupils are given information on interview techniques including the planning of the interview day, research into the employers' activities, use of the voice during the interview and their attitude and skills. Questions they may be asked are outlined, as are suggested questions the pupils may ask the interviewer. Information is given about the NVQs available in hairdressing and also the options available within the training frameworks. This is consolidated by an overview of the careers available in the profession, outlining the qualifications needed to carry out the relevant job roles. The second half of the day is a practical session which includes current trainees and school pupils setting and blow-drying. Trainees complete a simple questionnaire as an evaluation of the day. Included in this document is a question related to the young person being able to make a career choice. The response to this question informs the company as to the individual's interest in becoming a trainee.

25. More recent work to recruit trainees into the hairdressing profession has been undertaken with a local school. Discussions are taking place with the school with a view to offering the NVQ in hairdressing at level 1 to pupils involved in work-related programmes during key stage four. The company has developed proposals for this training, and these are now awaiting approval.

26. All trainees have a comprehensive induction. The process is separated into three parts. The first part takes place on entry to the programme and is supplemented by a pack of material. This consists of a diagrammatic description of CTC's 'family tree' to help trainees to recognise and focus on the relevant member of staff. The trainees also note points of contact at this stage. Information is given about the NVQ. The role of the assessor and trainer, and the appeals procedure is explained. The pack also contains an equal opportunities statement and harassment procedures and both training centre rules and trainees' responsibilities during the

training programme. Emphasis is placed during the induction on the need for models to be acquired in order to practice and gain the necessary skills acquisition. To assist in this a 'how to attract models' handout is provided for each trainee. To monitor the training experience a model diary is also provided for the trainees. This is completed each time any work is carried out on a client. The purpose is to analyse the completed forms to ascertain what type of work and how frequently the trainees are practicing their skills. Photographic evidence is also required on this form of both before and after a service has been carried out. This information is used for evidence of competency in the trainees' portfolios.

27. The company has a comprehensive and clear attendance policy. Trainees are also advised of the learning support available and the ways that this support may be accessed. Health and safety issues are also dealt with at induction stage. Trainees complete a 'hazard spotting' exercise and a risk assessment of the areas previously identified as unacceptable. Personal health and safety issues are addressed and all trainees complete a final written assessment to evaluate their understanding of the aspects covered. A further assignment is given for each trainee to complete in their place of work.

28. The second part of the induction takes place after trainees have been on the programme for eight weeks. This induction pack focuses on the acquisition of key skills. Further instruction is given on collecting NVQ portfolio evidence and the good practice involved in building a portfolio. The final part of the induction process is carried out four weeks later. This part is used to assess trainees' understanding of the NVQ programme.

29. Training staff and managers offer trainees good individual support. Prospective trainees attend a skills awareness session to check their ability and suitability to work and train within the hairdressing industry. The session lasts for four hours, during which time the young people are looked after by an experienced trainee. The results of individual performance are noted by the trainer. The trainees' suitability for employment is assessed. All trainees are found employment before the start of the training programme. Support is also offered during the training programme to address any problems within the salon environment. Variations in the quality of training are highlighted and dissatisfaction dealt with as they arise. Any unsafe health and safety practices result in trainees being moved from one employer to another. Extensive contact with previous training providers is maintained when a trainee is transferred. One potentially homeless trainee was helped with an accommodation problem by CTC's staff contacting a housing agency in order to find a home for the trainee. A recently developed newsletter is circulated to all salons employing trainees. The letter contains information on forthcoming events and celebrates trainees' achievements. It also provides a brief summary of CTC's success in the previous year in recruiting new trainees and emphasises again the role that the salon owners and their staff have to play in the training process. The newsletter is also used to inform salon owners of any additional courses the trainees may take advantage of and to promote the inclusion of key skills in the training programmes.

30. Some training co-ordinators develop specific learning materials for trainees with learning difficulties. Various methods are used for dyslexic trainees, for example, to help them with the theory part of the programme. The methods used include oral questioning and scribe facilities to take down notes and written answers to formal question papers. Changes are made to handouts so that the language used is easier to understand. Technical words used in the industry which are unable to be simplified are presented on paper in a simple format. Assignment packs used by trainees for the theory part of the qualification have been re-written by the co-ordinator to help trainees who find reading and comprehension difficult. The text used in these packs is supplemented with pictures. When reviewing trainees' portfolios, trainers use large clearly identifiable notes rather than normal written feedback to indicate any further work needed. Future appointments made for support sessions are noted on large appointment sheets. These highlight the appointment date, time and whom the trainee is to see. They also show what the session will consist of. A record of all support given is completed at the end of each session noting the date, trainees' name, content of the session and its outcome. An action plan for the next session is also written at this time.

31. A weekly monitoring report diary is completed at the end of each practical session by the trainer. The diary contains the date of the activity and the practical skills carried out. An indication is also given as to whether this skill was assessed or not. Areas requiring further training are recorded, as are any assessments that have taken place. This diary is attached to trainees' personal performance review sheet. All trainees develop a clearly targeted and personally focused action plan with the trainer every six weeks. They use the document as a performance review sheet which is then translated into actions for future success by both trainer and trainee. Trainees first identify which practical area of work they are currently working on and again for the theory part of the programme. Areas identified for improvements are then listed and along with how individual trainees feel they can achieve these. Trainees then identify their goals for the next six weeks. The final part of this personal review requires trainees to identify the areas of work they feel confident with and which they are ready to begin an assessment on. This document is then shared with the trainer and jointly a decision is made on trainees' progress since the last action plan. Further agreed action is decided and clearly identifiable attainable targets are reset. The training co-ordinators use this information at the reviews, together with a further written statement from the off-the-job trainer to also evaluate progress and set new targets.

32. There is no initial assessment of trainees' key skills at the start of the training, and all trainees follow the same levels of key skills assignments. An initial assessment of basic skills is carried out for trainees who CTC feels may need the support. These are usually the trainees with no previously acquired formal qualifications. There is no systematic use of this initial assessment to identify any basic skills needs other trainees may have.

33. There is no accreditation of trainees' prior learning. Some trainees have previous experiences as Saturday staff in salons where skills in shampooing,

gowning clients, reception work, and health and safety have been covered. This previous experience is not formally recognised and used to assess trainees more quickly.

Management of training

Grade 3

34. CTC's management structure consists of two directors who are responsible for finance, salon co-ordination, NVQs, new product developments, personnel and health and safety. The consortium manager and the training director carry out the day-to-day running of the business. There is a group administrator and a junior administrator. There are two training scheme co-ordinators and four instructors. There are five qualified assessors and two internal verifiers. There is a structure for meetings and staff meet regularly both formally and informally. There is a staff appraisal system. A computerised system is used to provide data to manage the TEC contracts. CTC gained the Investors in People Standard in 1993, and was successfully re-assessed in 1996 and again in 1999. Most of the strengths described in the self-assessment report were confirmed by inspectors, but, one strength was considered to be no more than normal practice. The weaknesses were agreed and one additional weaknesses identified. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective teamwork among staff
- ◆ well-developed links with outside organisations
- ◆ rigorous and comprehensive management information system

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor sharing of good practice with some subcontractors and employers
- ◆ poorly managed theory training

35. CTC has a well-defined management structure. Staff have a clear understanding of their own responsibilities and roles. Teamwork among staff is good. Communication between staff is both formal and informal. There are frequent informal discussions between staff on a day-to-day basis to discuss and solve issues as they arise. There is a formal meetings and structure which is planned in advance and includes management meetings, and consortium and training meetings. Joint meetings of the two divisions, along with standardisation of assessment meetings, are also held. Most meetings are minuted but action points are not always followed up.

36. The company had good links with external agencies. For example, it is part of the Sussex training provider network and a member of staff has until recently been chairperson of this group and is now vice chairman. CTC has strong links with

Sussex Enterprise. Two members of staff are members of a national training group and regularly attend meetings. A member of staff is on the committee of training providers for the Southeast. CTC has links with other training providers outside the area and liaises closely with the careers service. It networks with schools and attends careers evenings. A member of CTC's staff goes into local schools to conduct mock interviews. Staff members are asked to judge competitions put on by other organisations. There is informal communication between CTC and other training providers and good practice is shared.

37. CTC has a staff appraisal system and appraisals take place twice a year. Staff complete a questionnaire and meet with their line manager. After discussion, an action plan is formulated which links to staff development. One issue arising from appraisals is the need for training staff to teach the information technology key skill. CTC also offers assessor awards and 20 work-placement providers have gained these qualification and 10 workplace supervisors are working towards them. However, this training is not followed-up to ensure the quality of assessments and very few of the assessments take place in the workplace.

38. CTC has a staff induction manual, which covers its policies and procedures. For the first week, new staff shadow an experienced member of staff. Support is given throughout the induction process. Staff development is regular and planned. Some staff are working towards the key skills practitioners award. A two-day internal staff training event was organised by the training director to cover key skills issues. However, satellite staff were not invited and the information has not been shared with these staff at the other centres. At some centres key skills have only been introduced within the last two weeks. Trainers have been given a short briefing pack by CTC but they have not received any in-depth training. Staff attend health and safety courses. There is no member of staff with a qualification to carry out accreditation of prior learning and no one is working towards this award. All staff are aware of their job roles and responsibilities and have copies of their job descriptions.

39. CTC has a comprehensive computerised management information system, which meets the requirements of the TEC contract. The director responsible for the budget produces monthly statistics to predict the forthcoming NVQ results. Monthly financial statistics to indicate performance against the TEC contract are discussed and necessary remedial action is taken. It is also used to monitor the reviews of trainees. Data are produced in a clear format. Health and safety monitoring of placements and insurance updates are also monitored on the system and fed back to staff so that action can be taken. Data are produced regularly to monitor trainees' progress. Trainees leaving the programme are interviewed and the information gathered is collected and categorised.

40. CTC does not adequately involve satellite centres in its training programmes. One centre has good learning materials and resources but this is not the case in all centres. Documents are not standardised across the centres. There is no systematic checking of the consistency of the training taking place across the centres. Lesson plans are not managed. Work-placement staff are invited into standardisation

meetings, but attendance is poor. Supervisors in the workplace are not always aware of the progress trainees are making towards the NVQ.

41. Theory training is poorly planned. Trainees can join the programme at any time, but some new trainees find themselves in training sessions with trainees who have been on the programme for as long as two years. This can mean that they have to cover complex issues without having the basic occupation knowledge.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

42. CTC meets the quality assurance requirements of the TEC and awarding body. The technical and training director has overall responsibility for quality assurance of training within the organisation. The training academies' director and the training scheme manager have operational responsibility for ensuring the quality of training on a day-to-day basis. Activities necessary to maintain the standards are detailed in a consortium systems file. Copies of this file are held in each of the main training centres. Further details on maintaining standards are contained in the employees' handbook issued to all staff. The company produced its first self-assessment report in July 1999, and action plans from this were recently revised prior to inspection. The self-assessment report identified eight strengths which were considered to be no more than normal practice, and inspectors highlighted additional strengths. The report identified weaknesses relating to the gathering of feedback from trainees, and the lack of quality assurance arrangements in the workplace. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ self-assessment process has led to improvements
- ◆ effective and frequent monitoring of health and safety at work
- ◆ effective use of data and target setting

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no observations of training at work
- ◆ poor processes to gather feedback
- ◆ internal verification processes lack rigour

43. All staff at CTC are involved in improving the quality of off-the-job training for trainees. Additional support materials have been developed for occupational and key skills. Staff complete much of this work in their own time. Regular checks are made on trainees' attendance at both on- and off-the-job training, and follow-up procedures are thorough and well-recorded. Staff undertake frequent and rigorous health and safety checks of the salons used for training. These checks are carried out every 12 weeks, and clearly written reports are filed. Where problems are highlighted, further visits are arranged to ensure that action has been carried

out. A trainee was transferred to another salon to continue training after being assessed as being at risk.

44. All staff contributed to the self-assessment report. The process was led by the technical and training director and the training scheme manager, who attended a three-day training session organised by the TEC. The self-assessment process has been used to make improvements, including the continuous development of the consortium systems file. Other documents, including trainees' review forms, and programme monitoring sheets, have also been updated and modified. The action plans produced following self-assessment have provided the company with a useful tool for improvement, and all staff had a good understanding of the need for improved quality assurance.

45. The company holds monthly meetings to review targets and identify emerging issues. All data are checked at these meetings, and clear targets are set for staff. CTC is able to replicate data in a number of ways. Data regarding attendance, achievement, retention, ethnicity and gender are analysed in a format which is clear and identifiable for all staff. Trainees are given the opportunity to provide feedback to CTC about the quality of training through a questionnaire. The questionnaire and the resulting analysis, however, are perfunctory, and no use is made of these data in the way that the programme is carried out, or in planning the programme. CTC has not gathered any recent formal feedback from employers. The last questionnaire sent to employers was in 1998, and no analysis was made or action taken.

46. CTC has no formal procedures to check the quality of training at work. Regular review visits are made to the workplace, but no observation of training takes place. None of the trainers in any of the salons have trainer qualifications, apart from CTC's staff. Checks are made on trainees' model diaries, which contain information regarding the content of the training that they have completed in the workplace. This does not, however, constitute a review of the quality of the training that has taken place.

47. The company has an internal verification system, although there is no policy or operational guidelines for all staff to follow. Internal verification sampling is not planned in advance. Records of internal verification are completed. No indication is made on these records of the assessor whose work was verified. Standardisation meetings take place on a regular basis, and external verification reports are summarised and shared with all staff. There have been a few observations of assessors, but there is no written evidence of any oral questioning taking place.