



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 1998

# TEAM Wearside (Vaux Breweries Ltd)

## SUMMARY

Team Wearside offers good foundation for work training for trainees with severe learning and behavioural difficulties. Equality of opportunity is rigorously enforced for all trainees. Staff respond well to the diverse needs of trainees. Support systems are good. Any special needs of trainees are recognised which helps with their personal development and achievement. Management of training is excellent, providing a solid basis on which to further develop and enhance training. Quality assurance is well-structured and is applied to all aspects of the organisation.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Foundation for work	2

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	2
Management of training	1
Quality assurance	2

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ♦ exceptionally skilled and committed staff
- ♦ extensive range of work placements available for trainees
- ♦ high retention rates
- ♦ exceptionally supportive employers
- ♦ high number of trainees gain jobs
- ♦ good pastoral and professional support for trainees
- ♦ continuous involvement of referral agencies throughout training programme

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ♦ missed opportunities to recognise occupational competence in the workplace
- ♦ no analysis of equal opportunities data
- ♦ no direct input by employers in review process

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Training, Education, Achievement, Motivation (TEAM) Wearside project was first established in 1991. The project was developed with the support of Vaux Breweries Ltd to meet the needs of young people in Sunderland with special learning requirements. Vaux Breweries provides administrative and professional support. Operational management of the TEAM project is the responsibility of the general manager. There are currently five staff employed on the project.

2. All of TEAM Wearside's activities are funded by the City of Sunderland Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The careers service refers all trainees to the provider, all of whom are endorsed as requiring additional learning support. Most trainees come from local special schools dealing with pupils with emotional, behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. Operating alongside TEAM Wearside is TEAM Enterprise. This project was established to offer subsidised employment opportunities, working on community-based projects, to those trainees leaving the main programme without a job.

3. Sunderland has a population of 228,000. Of these, 124,000 are economically active. Unemployment across Sunderland stands at 9 per cent, although, in some wards, the figure is as high as 17 per cent. This compares unfavorably with the national unemployment rate of 5.1 per cent.

4. School leavers' destinations have remained constant over recent years. Fewer than 10 per cent go directly to employment. Many of these gain employment as machine operators or assemblers, with a smaller, but still significant, number entering clerical professions. Eighteen per cent enter work-based training, including modern apprenticeships. A little under 50 per cent stay in full-time education, a figure which has dropped over recent years and is lower than the national average. A little over 4 per cent of year 11 school pupils have special educational needs. Approximately half of these attend special schools, while the others are in mainstream education. Educational achievements of school leavers in Sunderland are below the national average. The number of Sunderland school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 34.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 53 per cent, for 1997. The proportion of those from minority ethnic groups in the Northeast is less than 1 per cent.

5. Over recent years, there has been a significant change in employment patterns in Sunderland. Most employment is now found in the service and public sectors, particularly with the influx of employers establishing call-centre operations in the area. Other significant sectors are engineering, including motor-vehicle manufacturing, retail and distribution.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. All members of staff took part in the self-assessment process. The resulting report was produced just prior to inspection and claimed many strengths and few weaknesses. Most of the strengths represented no more than normal practice. Inspectors found additional strengths and weaknesses. Overall, the quality of training was accurately reflected in the self-assessment report, although the strengths of the organisation were, in many cases, understated.

7. A team of three inspectors spent a total of nine days at TEAM Wearside during November 1998. Inspection concentrated on the initial training programme offered under foundation for work. Inspectors visited 10 employers, interviewed 21 trainees and 11 workplace supervisors. Five staff were interviewed. A broad range of supporting documents was examined, including initial assessment records, trainees' files, training plans and reviews and trainees and employers' feedback documents. Eight sessions of learning were observed.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Foundation for work	1		7			8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Foundation for work

### Grade 2

8. There are 58 young people undertaking basic skills training. There are also six trainees on the New Deal full-time training and education option. All trainees are placed with an employer, including 29 in retail and distributive operations, seven in catering, four in care and four in motor-vehicle-related occupations. Twelve trainees are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1. The delivery and assessment of the NVQs are subcontracted to external specialist training providers. Training is delivered mainly on the job, trainees attending off-the-job training at TEAM Wearside's centre one day each week. Trainees gain occupational skills and work towards wordpower and numberpower certificates. They can also gain additional qualifications, such as health and safety, food hygiene, first aid and manual handling. The self-assessment report claimed several strengths and some weaknesses. Additional strengths and weaknesses were found, and the grade awarded is the same as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good range of work placements available
- ◆ good use of work-based learning to enhance basic skills
- ◆ low drop-out rate
- ◆ high number of trainees gain jobs
- ◆ exceptionally skilled and committed staff
- ◆ wide variety of training methods and learning opportunities used

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ missed opportunities for recognition of occupational competence
- ◆ limited understanding by employers of content of training programmes
- ◆ outdated information technology resources

9. TEAM Wearside uses a variety of learning and assessment methods, such as one-to-one sessions, project work, lectures and seminars, to help to address individual trainees' special needs. Its close links with employers and external agencies serve to ensure that trainees are carefully matched to placements. There is a low-drop out rate, and 80 per cent of trainees who complete the programme gain permanent employment. Other agencies, including the Employment Service and TEAM Enterprise contribute to this success rate by accessing wage supplements for trainees on behalf of employers. Staff are well qualified and visit trainees in the workplace on a monthly basis to monitor progress. There is regular communication between employers and TEAM Wearside. In order to reinforce the personal development of trainees and increase their confidence and self-esteem, residential outward-bound courses and visits to Europe are arranged.

10. All trainees gain valuable occupational skills, but only the few trainees following an NVQ programme have these skills accredited. Some employers have a limited understanding of the content of the training programmes being followed off the job. Employers understand that what trainees achieve on the job will provide evidence towards accreditation, but they have little knowledge and understanding beyond this. Resources for information technology training are outdated.

## **GENERIC AREAS**

### **Equal opportunities**

### **Grade 2**

11. TEAM Wearside has an equal opportunities policy which meets the requirements of the TEC. Its commitment to equality of opportunity is inherent in all its activities. It recruits only trainees with recognised learning or behavioural needs, many of whom are referred from local special schools. The self-assessment report claimed several strengths and weaknesses, most of which represent no more than

normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that proposed by the company.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good understanding by staff of the diverse needs of trainees
- ◆ positive action taken to prevent bullying and harassment
- ◆ effective procedures for dealing with complaints
- ◆ open access to training for trainees with diverse and severe special needs

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ little promotion of equal opportunities among employers
- ◆ no analysis of equal opportunities data

12. All staff and trainees have a good understanding of the equal opportunities policy; trainees retain information from it. Employers are given a copy of the policy. The staff's commitment to trainees' needs is strong, and all are well-equipped to deal with the wide range of behavioural, learning and physical difficulties of the trainees on the programme. Recruitment practice ensures equality of opportunity for all applicants. The process begins in schools, and anyone who approaches TEAM Wearside is offered a place on the programme. Trainees are protected from harassment, both at the training centre and in the workplace. There is a code of practice covering this issue and employers are briefed on it. There is close observation and monitoring of the way in which trainees are treated.

13. The equal opportunities policy has recently been revised, but fails to make reference to the Disability Discrimination Act. Action has been taken to correct this and it is to be included. TEAM Wearside collects data on trainees' gender, disability and ethnicity, but these are not evaluated to help improve provision. There is little activity to promote understanding of equal opportunities policies and good practice among employers.

## **Trainee support**

## **Grade 2**

14. Trainees referred to TEAM Wearside are usually ex-pupils of two local schools, which specialise in teaching young people with either emotional or moderate learning difficulties. The schools and careers service work closely with TEAM Wearside's staff, and visits and open-days are arranged for potential trainees and their parents to attend. All trainees undergo a comprehensive two-week induction programme, delivered through group sessions and discussions, where information is gathered about trainees' abilities, interests and learning needs. This information is used to create individual action-plans. Reviews are carried out at the centre every ten weeks. All trainees are interviewed on leaving, with the full involvement of the careers service. The self-assessment report claimed several strengths, some of which

represent no more than normal practice, and one weakness. Additional strengths and weaknesses were found by inspectors and the grade awarded is the same grade as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ input of referral agencies at all stages of the training programme
- ◆ effective counselling and other professional services available to trainees
- ◆ strong pastoral support
- ◆ good, wide-ranging opportunities for personal development

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ unstructured initial assessment
- ◆ no formal employer involvement in review process

15. Close collaboration with referral agencies underpins the high level of trainee support before, during and after the programme. TEAM Wearside liaises effectively with all relevant specialist agencies, such as educational psychologists, disability employment advisers and supported employment agencies so experts are available to help trainees at all times. The networking activities carried out by TEAM Wearside contribute to the significant progress and success achieved by trainees, many of whom exceed expectations. This is particularly the case with personal development. European visits and residential training are key factors in increasing trainees' self-esteem and personal development.

16. Overall, initial assessment lacks structure. All trainees undertake a formal test to identify literacy and numeracy needs. Other basic skills needs are identified informally, but practices for documenting these additional needs are not applied evenly. However, valuable use is made of the informal exchange of information among staff, careers advisers and other organisations. Trainees find reviews useful, although employers are not involved in the process.

## **Management of training**

## **Grade 1**

17. TEAM Wearside is a small, well-established training provider. The general manager has overall responsibility for the programme, receiving some support from the breweries' director of personnel and an advisory board with a membership representing the special schools, local authority, business community and the TEC. The company holds the Investors in People Standard. The self-assessment report identified several areas as strengths which represent no more than normal practice. Few weaknesses were claimed. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff development
- ◆ well-planned staff training
- ◆ positive and co-operative working with organisations involved in training
- ◆ good understanding of TEAM Wearside's values and goals by employers and referral bodies
- ◆ good links between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ well-planned and effectively managed training

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ underdeveloped control of subcontracted provision

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*In order to broaden their understanding of the needs of trainees, staff attend training events held for teaching staff of the local special schools, from which many of the trainees are referred to TEAM Wearside.*

18. All staff are well trained to meet the diverse needs of the young people on the programme. Training is well planned and managed effectively. Internal and external lines of communication and accountability are clear, and working relationships with partner organisations and other stakeholders are excellent. There are policies covering all activities of the organisation, including induction, appraisal and professional development, which all staff understand. Performance targets are set on an organisational, rather than individual, basis. These are monitored closely to meet the requirements of the TEC contract. All staff clearly understand their rôles and are deployed effectively. Staff development and appraisal is linked to the overall business objectives of TEAM Wearside. There are frequent opportunities to review and monitor the quality of training, and all staff are encouraged to participate in debate about the delivery of the training programme. Information systems are effective, and the data collected are used to inform management decisions and trigger appropriate action by staff.

19. Owing to recent changes in subcontractors used, the management of subcontracted provision is in a state of transition. There are no systems to ensure that the quality of delivery, assessment and support matches trainees' experiences on the job and on day release at TEAM Wearside's premises.

### Quality assurance

### Grade 2

20. TEAM Wearside satisfies the quality assurance requirements of the City of Sunderland TEC and of the awarding bodies. It has a well-developed quality systems manual, with comprehensive procedures covering all significant aspects of the organisation's activities. TEAM Wearside holds the ISO 9001 quality standard. It also holds the Basic Skills Agency quality mark. The self-assessment report claimed some strengths, most of which represented no more than normal practice, and one weakness. Further strengths and some weaknesses were identified by inspectors and the grade awarded is the same as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.



### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective analysis and use of feedback from trainees and employers
- ◆ good quality assurance systems
- ◆ information from leavers used to improve training

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ cumbersome administrative systems

21. TEAM Wearside seeks feedback from trainees and employers and evaluates it to improve the quality of provision. For example, the number of trainees leaving the programme without employment was identified as a problem, and remedial action was taken to find supported employment opportunities appropriate to their needs and abilities. Quality systems and procedures are well documented and comprehensive, and are understood by all staff. Quality assurance arrangements contribute effectively to the quality and continuous improvement of the training provision. Judgements made in TEAM Wearside's self-assessment report were backed up by evidence. The report included action points to address the weaknesses which were accurately identified by the organisation.

22. In order to track trainees' progress effectively from recruitment to completion of the programme, it is necessary to access several files holding different information and stored in several locations.