



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 1998

REINSPECTION JUNE 2000

## West Suffolk Training

## SUMMARY

West Suffolk Training provides good training in retailing and customer service and satisfactory training in engineering and business administration. Good quality work placements provide trainees with valuable learning opportunities. At the time of the first inspection, equal opportunities policies and procedures were inadequate. Clear and comprehensive new policies and procedures have since been introduced and there is now good awareness of equal opportunities within West Suffolk Training. Levels of understanding of equal opportunities in trainees' workplaces remain poor, however. Trainees receive high levels of pastoral care, although their support needs are not identified systematically and they are not set individual goals and targets. Management of training is satisfactory, although there is a lack of strategic planning. At the time of the first inspection, quality assurance arrangements were inadequate. There is now a new quality assurance system but it is not yet finished. There are some well-designed procedures but there is still insufficient monitoring of the quality of training provided in the workplace.

**As a result of the reinspection of West Suffolk Training, the original published report text for equal opportunities and quality assurance has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings introduction have also been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the report, which have not been subject to full reinspection, have been left in their original form.**

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	3
Business administration	3
Retailing & customer service	2

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	3
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	4

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ high-calibre trainees
- ◆ good verbal communications between trainees and assessors
- ◆ highly effective use of original learning materials in insurance



### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ weak initial assessment procedures
- ◆ insufficient strategic planning

## INTRODUCTION

1. West Suffolk Training is a private limited company based at premises on the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. Incorporated as a company in March 1996, the organisation was originally established in 1995 to provide training for local industry and this still accounts for 60 per cent of the company's business. West Suffolk Training has had a contract with Suffolk TEC since 1996. This has grown from a contract for 10 trainees to one for a total of 130. The company also contracts with several other training providers. West Suffolk Training provides training in construction, engineering, business administration, retailing and customer service and hair and beauty. At the time of the original inspection, there were too few trainees in construction and in hair and beauty for these areas to be inspected. The staff has grown by seven since the original inspection, mainly due to the acquisition of another training company. There is now a team of 19 staff, of whom three full-time members, in addition to the chief executive, have a responsibility for government-funded training. Other training staff are self-employed and used as required. The company has five subcontractors, but its use of them is diminishing as it provides more training itself. At the time of the first inspection, there were 124 trainees. At the time of reinspection, there were a total of 96 trainees. These consisted of 54 modern apprentices, 38 national trainees and four trainees on other work-based training programmes for young people.

2. Unemployment in the Bury St Edmunds area is low. At the time of the original inspection in January 1999, the unemployment rate in the Bury St Edmunds area was 2.1 per cent, while in Suffolk as a whole it was 3.9 per cent, compared with a national rate of 4.6 per cent. By the time of the reinspection in June 2000, the unemployment rates in Bury St Edmunds and Suffolk had dropped to 1.4 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively, while the national rate had fallen to 3.5 per cent. In 1998, the percentage of school leavers in Suffolk achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 49.4 per cent, compared with a national average of 46.3 per cent. In 1999, the comparable percentages were 53.8 per cent and 47.9 per cent respectively. The proportion of the population of Suffolk who are from minority ethnic groups is 2.5 per cent, with the highest proportion of people from minority ethnic groups being in the county town of Ipswich.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. With guidance from the TEC, West Suffolk Training produced a self-assessment report prior to the first inspection. An action plan was then produced following inspection, setting out actions to reinforce the strengths which had been identified and to address the weaknesses. A self-assessment report was produced by the training manager three months prior to reinspection, along with a report showing the progress made towards achieving the targets identified in the action plan implemented in April 1999. The report was written in consultation with staff. Trainees and employers were not involved.

4. The first inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors, who spent a total of nine days at West Suffolk Training during January 1999. They met 34 trainees, 16 workplace supervisors and six members of staff. They observed four trainees' progress reviews and one session of training and assessment. They examined company records, policies and procedures, awarding body documents and trainees' portfolios.

5. Reinspection took place in June 2000, and was carried out by a team of two inspectors for a total of four days. They interviewed 12 trainees and visited four work placements, where four workplace supervisors were interviewed. They interviewed nine members of staff. Inspectors examined a range of documentary evidence regarding equal opportunities and quality assurance.

### OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

#### Engineering

#### Grade 3

6. There are 34 trainees in engineering, and they are working towards National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3. Fifteen trainees are on other training, 16 are modern apprentices and four are on national traineeships. Most trainees are initially employed by a range of local engineering companies and then recruited to training programmes. West Suffolk Training also provides a recruiting service for local engineering companies. Its trainers provide most of the training and assessment for the NVQ in the workplace. The company provides some additional training, as required by the modern apprenticeship framework, through several subcontractors. In addition to completing the mandatory elements of the framework, West Suffolk Training also provides additional short courses related to trainees' work. Inspectors agreed with the strengths in the self-assessment report but they considered that the weaknesses were not identified with sufficient clarity.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ wide range of learning opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ high calibre of competent trainees

- ◆ good additional off-the-job training opportunities
- ◆ good rapport between company and employers

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of awareness of NVQ process by employers
- ◆ weak overview of the total training programme

7. Trainees benefit from learning opportunities in a wide range of work placements including those with general production engineering and design engineering employers. Employers give those trainees who demonstrate they are of high calibre, the chance to carry out demanding work with the minimum of supervision. Trainees work through awarding body log books and a range of work books developed by the company. Employers are supportive of work-based training and want to be more involved in supporting trainees. The company also provides commercial training for employers' own employees and where appropriate, this is made available to government-funded trainees free of charge. Such training is beyond the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework and is valued by both employers and trainees. Trainees who do not receive all the training they need in their work placement usually attend training courses provided by local colleges or private training companies to meet their needs. Trainers have established good relationships with these providers.

8. Many employers are not directly involved in training. They are not quite sure what an NVQ involves. Employers miss opportunities to provide witness statements of the trainees' competence in the workplace for the purposes of NVQ assessment. There is no overall plan for training and some trainees struggle to cope with their workloads. They are uncertain what their priorities are and they cannot see the links between their on-the-job and their off-the-job training. Trainees are given the full set of the requisite standards for their NVQ. The company's trainers do not have clear objectives for the off-the-job training, however. The company runs training sessions on portfolio development and key skills but these are not an integral part of the training programme. Several trainees have failed to meet the deadlines in their training plans for completion of work and new deadlines are not set during their progress reviews. Systems for tracking trainees' progress and for signing-off completion of NVQ units are underdeveloped and trainees are unsure of which units they have completed. Trainees' portfolios mainly consist of written work and they contain little evidence derived from direct observation of trainees' skills and performance

### **Business administration**

### **Grade 3**

9. There are 64 trainees, of whom 32 are modern apprentices, eight are on national traineeships and 23 are on other training programmes. The range of subjects covered in the business administration area includes: administration, information technology and accounts. Trainees work in a wide range of sectors, from shipping

insurance and engineering to legal work in a solicitor's office. There are a few accounts trainees, working with chartered accountants. The work placement provider employs most trainees. Inspectors considered that some of the strengths in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice. They found both strengths and weaknesses which the company had not identified and they awarded a lower grade than that given in the report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good verbal communication between trainees and assessors
- ◆ good-quality work placements to meet trainees' needs
- ◆ high degree of self-management by trainees

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of an established system for planning assessment
- ◆ insufficient diversity in assessment procedures
- ◆ late introduction of key skills in some trainees' programmes

10. Trainees are provided with relevant and valuable work experience. They are regularly visited in the workplace by their assessor with whom they have good rapport. Working relationships among providers and employers are good. Trainees have the opportunity to attend workshops held at the centre. Trainees are encouraged to take responsibility for gathering evidence, with support from their assessors. Some trainees have matched evidence to the NVQ standards. In some instances, trainees have exercised a high degree of self-discipline and have managed to gather appropriate evidence successfully despite significant staffing changes in the company and the lack of formal assessment plans. The centre offers a workshop where trainees may gain touch-typing and information technology skills and obtain help with portfolio-building. Trainees who are based near the centre are able to take advantage of the workshop's facilities. Those who are based further away find it more difficult to use the workshop. The company has addressed this problem by establishing workshops close to the main sources of employment and at employers' premises. Workplace supervisors are willing to be involved in the assessment process, but are not yet doing so.

11. After each visit from an assessor, performances review sheets are completed and signed by trainees, assessors and workplace supervisors. However, these sheets frequently contain general comments on trainees' progress and attitude and do not always set and review targets which relate to NVQ standards. Although trainees receive help with the process of evidence collection, there are no formal assessment plans. There are a few records of observation or questioning; but these are not always signed or referenced with the qualification unit's title, element or date. Although many trainees have almost completed their evidence collection, specific achievements have not been recorded in trainees' files. Over 50 per cent

of the trainees have not completed their qualification within the timescales set out in the management-information system's documents. There is some internal verification activity, but no overall plan and no consistent application of the internal verification policy. The introduction of key skills, in many cases, has been delayed until the end of the programme. Trainees and assessors are now beginning to make key skills an internal part of the NVQ programmes.

## Retailing & customer service

## Grade 2

12. There are 13 trainees, 11 of whom work at two separate insurance brokers, one in Ipswich and one in Bury St Edmunds. They are all working towards modern apprenticeships in insurance. Of the two remaining trainees, one works towards a customer service NVQ at level 2 and the other a distribution & warehouse NVQ at the same level. Insurance trainees have detailed theory sessions delivered by an occupationally competent assessor during a full day's visit each month. The assessor has also formulated a study guide, in line with the underpinning knowledge and examination requirements of the NVQ in insurance. To fulfil the customer service NVQ criteria, trainees, under the guidance of the assessor, have produced a questionnaire which the company intends to use as an essential part of a major market-research project. Inspectors agreed with the strengths in this occupational area but they found other strengths which were not identified by the company and they awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

### **GOOD PRACTICE**

*Theory sessions, which occupy a full morning, include a series of stimulating learning activities such as quizzes, case-studies and mock exams, all of which are original learning material, written and produced by the assessor. These activities are followed by individual assessments, of at least one hour's duration. The activities are properly planned and well structured and the trainees derive considerable benefit from them.*

### **STRENGTHS**

- ◆ highly effective use of original learning materials
- ◆ good documents on trainees' progress
- ◆ effective formal assessment planning agreed by trainee and supervisor
- ◆ good training plans
- ◆ highly experienced and competent assessor/trainer

### **WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ insufficient resources in the workplace
- ◆ employers' lack of involvement in training

13. Documents for the tracking of trainees' progress towards achieving their NVQ are clear and understandable. Records of the implementation of agreed assessment plans are included in each trainee's portfolio. Training plans are of exceptional quality and contain additional information to help the trainee towards achievement of the NVQ. The assessor/trainer who has provided some excellent learning materials is of a very high calibre, and has good understanding of the occupational area.



14. Accommodation available for the trainee/assessor to use in the workplace is sometimes poor. In theory, a room is available for the theory sessions of the insurance modules. In practice, however, this room is sometimes appropriated for other purposes, at very short notice. When the room is in use for other purposes, theory sessions take place in the lobby which also serves as the reception area. The employer has no involvement in training trainees. The content and delivery of the training are in the hands of the assessor, who makes occasional feedback to the company in the form of review sheets which the employer reads and then signs.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

### Grade 3

15. West Suffolk Training has a written equal opportunities policy which is reviewed on an annual basis. The effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy is monitored by the training manager, who is responsible for equal opportunities within the company. Of the 19 staff, 13 are women. The proportion of the population of Suffolk who are members of minority ethnic groups is 2.5 per cent. There are no staff or trainees from a minority ethnic group. Data are collected on the ethnicity, gender and disabilities of trainees. There are written complaints and harassment procedures. Details of these procedures are included in the handbook which is given to all trainees at induction.

The main weaknesses identified at the first inspection were:-

- ◆ the failure of the equal opportunities policy to cover trainees
- ◆ underdeveloped procedures
- ◆ lack of evaluation of data
- ◆ weak promotion of equal opportunities

16. Since the first inspection, there have been a number of improvements to equal opportunities arrangements within the company. A training manager with direct responsibility for equal opportunities was appointed in August 1999. West Suffolk Training has continued to use an external consultant on equal opportunities, and has produced a new equal opportunities policy and procedures. Progress has also been made towards implementing the actions identified in the action plan. The self-assessment report produced for reinspection repeated the strengths identified in the first inspection. Inspectors agreed that these were still relevant and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive equal opportunities policy and procedures
- ◆ effective promotion of equal opportunities awareness within the company

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor understanding of equal opportunities in trainees' workplaces
- ◆ insufficient promotion of training to under-represented groups

17. With the help of an external consultant, West Suffolk Training has produced a comprehensive and clearly written equal opportunities policy. There are also clear procedures for the implementation of the different areas of the policy. The policy takes full account of current legislation and applies both to those employed by West Suffolk Training and to trainees. The procedures for dealing with harassment, complaints and grievances are written in simple language which is easy to understand. The procedures are summarised in the trainees' handbook. They are also included in the agreement that employers sign. West Suffolk Training has taken positive and effective steps to raise their employees and trainees' awareness of equal opportunities. Staff development has included good training courses on key equal opportunities issues. These have taken place in February 1999 and again in April and May 1999 and all staff have attended. Equal opportunities is now a standard agenda item at all staff meetings. As a result of feedback from trainees, the part of their induction which focuses on equal opportunities has now been changed. Since April 2000, trainees' induction has included an interactive video which is successfully raising their understanding of equal opportunities. All marketing materials clearly state the company's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity. Data are now collected on trainees' ethnicity, gender and disabilities. The company is in the very early stages of analysing this data.

18. Adequate special arrangements are made to meet the specific needs of any trainees with disabilities and staff work with work placement providers to provide suitable access for those with mobility difficulties. However, the premises which are used for off-the-job training are not suitable for trainees in wheelchairs.

19. Although knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities have risen within West Suffolk Training itself, in many trainees' workplaces, levels of understanding of equal opportunities remain poor and arrangements intended to ensure equality of opportunity are not well implemented. Employers agree to abide by the terms of West Suffolk Training's equal opportunities policy when they sign a training agreement, but insufficient steps have been taken to ensure that employers are fully familiar with the contents of the policy. Many are not. For example, a large engineering company with eight trainees has its own equal opportunities policy but is unaware of West Suffolk Training's policy. To rectify these weaknesses, West Suffolk Training's staff are now using their visits to trainees' workplaces to promote employers and supervisors' awareness and understanding of equal opportunities issues. These visits take place at least once a month and are primarily made for the purposes of training and assessing trainees and for carrying out progress reviews. West Suffolk Training's staff are also using these opportunities to pass on to employers and supervisors what they have learned in their equal opportunities training and to advise them on how to develop

appropriate equal opportunities policies within their own organisations. Improvements continue to be made but there are not yet sufficient and adequate arrangements to monitor and ensure equality of opportunity for trainees in the workplace across all occupational areas. Although there is a complaints procedure on assessments, trainees are not always aware of how to complain if there are problems in the workplace. Equal opportunities is not reinforced at trainees' progress reviews.

20. West Suffolk Training has taken positive steps to address the gender imbalance on its programmes. The company has interviewed and recommended two prospective female engineering trainees to local employers. One of these trainees has now been successfully recruited onto an engineering programme and is making good progress. Staff have taken part in a local initiative to promote training opportunities to members of minority ethnic groups. The marketing manager attended a careers convention for minority ethnic groups in November 1999. These actions have yet to prove effective, however, in breaking down the stereotypical gender profiles within the occupational areas. There is still just the one female trainee in engineering. All the modern apprentices recruited over the last three years are men, while the number of men training in business administration has steadily declined and male trainees now make up only 22 per cent of the total in this occupational area. Marketing materials have improved since the original inspection and now show a better gender balance in the illustrations for the different occupational areas. Some of the illustrations are inappropriate, however. A photograph of a female engineering trainee, for example, shows a model wearing a large quantity of jewellery. Such jewellery would pose a safety hazard in a workshop environment.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 3**

21. West Suffolk Training's trainees have access to a supportive team of staff who offer extensive pastoral care. There are regular reviews of trainees' progress, including feedback to employers. References to trainee support in the self-assessment report are too generalised and are insufficiently specific. Inspectors considered that most of the strengths are no more than normal practice. They agreed, however, with the weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ high level of pastoral care
- ◆ successful action in raising minimum training allowance for non-employed trainees

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ weak initial assessment procedures
- ◆ lack of the use of individual training plan to set goals and targets

22. The high level of pastoral care and support is clearly demonstrated in the good working relationships among trainees and assessors. Trainees are given relevant office and mobile telephone numbers in order that they may have easy access to the assessor or other members of West Suffolk Training's staff. Trainees are also given the option to participate in off-the-job training sessions in the form of one-day workshops, covering a variety of skill areas such as telephone techniques, touch-typing and information technology. There are also good verbal communications between trainees and assessors. Assessors are informal and friendly. The successful negotiations between West Suffolk Training and its work-placement providers have resulted in a substantial pay rise of between 50 and 100 per cent for most trainees.

23. Initial assessment procedures are weak and their outcomes are insufficiently informative to be useful in the formulation of training plans. Trainees are not given goals or targets, other than a deadline by which they must have completed work for their NVQ. At least 50 per cent of trainees fail to meet this deadline. One trainer is using certain documents effectively to track trainees' progress towards achievement of the qualification but this good practice is not being implemented across all occupational areas.

### **Management of training**

**Grade 3**

24. Currently, the chief executive has sole responsibility for the management of the company. The management systems reflect the company's need to comply with the requirements of the TEC and the awarding bodies. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths in the self-assessment report but they found some weaknesses which the company had not identified. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good access by trainees to commercial activities
- ◆ good staff deployment

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ the failure to keep employers well informed about training procedures
- ◆ the failure to disseminate good practice across all occupational areas
- ◆ lack of strategic planning
- ◆ weak staff induction and appraisal

25. The company provides a wide range of commercial training for local companies in the occupational areas covered by the TEC-funded programmes.

Most these take place at the well-equipped training centre which is also used by trainees. Trainees are encouraged to take part in the company's own training activities and do so as an additional element in their learning programme. A few of these additional activities lead to national qualifications, such as that in first aid. With the rapid expansion of the company, there has been an increase in the number of staff, and most of those involved in government-funded training have been appointed in the last six months. Trainees benefit from the expertise of highly skilled staff. Three key members of the team are now developing their own initiatives. For example, one has designated mentors for all the trainees under his supervision.

26. Good practice is not regularly shared and discussed by trainers and the dissemination of good practice is not part of the company's overall policy. The company has no overall strategic plan or business plan. Many of its activities mainly comply with awarding body and TEC requirements. Many employers ask for information on training procedures. The company visits employers and makes presentations to them. It fails, however, to keep employers informed about current developments in its training provision. There are few workplace assessors in engineering. Many employers are unaware that they can be trained to become assessors themselves. The company's staff appraisal process is not well established. There is no structured induction process for staff.

### Quality assurance

### Grade 3

27. West Suffolk Training has a member of staff who is specifically responsible for quality assurance, and another who has responsibility for internal verification. There are written procedures for internal verification and many aspects of quality assurance. Other quality assurance procedures are being written, and the current procedures are also being reviewed and revised. Quality assurance issues are addressed at monthly staff meetings at which minutes are taken and necessary actions identified. There are additional staff meetings for assessors and internal verifiers. Feedback on the training is sought from staff and trainees by means of questionnaires. The company has committed itself to achieving the Investors in People Standard, with a target completion date of January 2001. It recently took over another local training provider which had been re-accredited for the Investors in People Standard in January 2000.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poorly documented quality procedures
- ◆ poor target setting
- ◆ lack of effective internal verification processes across all programmes
- ◆ some unsatisfactory tracking of trainees' progress

28. Following the first inspection, West Suffolk Training developed a range of actions to address the weaknesses which had been identified. A consultant was

commissioned to devise a quality assurance system for the whole company, to incorporate procedures with specific application to the work-based training programmes. Subsequently, some aspects of this system were found to be unsuitable. With the assistance of the TEC, alternative systems for assuring work-based training programmes were introduced shortly before reinspection. A regular programme of staff meetings has been established. Minutes are taken along with details of actions to be taken. There are additional staff meetings for assessors and internal verifiers. A new assessment and internal verification procedure has been developed and used. Inspectors found a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the developing procedures being put in place. They agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report submitted for reinspection.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good internal verification procedures
- ◆ some good quality assurance procedures

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ incomplete quality assurance system
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of training in the workplace

29. There are good new procedures for internal verification. Following the first inspection, West Suffolk Training made a number of changes to its management structure. These changes were prompted by the acquisition of another training provider in the local area. One manager was given the job of developing a company-wide assessment and internal verification policy. This has now been adopted across the business. The detail is comprehensive, and processes are clearly explained and illustrated. The policy is supported by an appropriate range of newly developed procedures. Internal verification workshops are held monthly. Assessors are prompted to assess trainees' units as they are completed. The procedures aim to ensure that trainees' work is internally verified at three points during their programmes: after six months, after 12 months, and at the end of their training. The new system is fully in use and recent external verifiers' reports comment positively on the new arrangements.

30. The quality assurance procedures which have been completed and are in full use are well designed and effective. They are available to all staff electronically and incorporate good practice identified in the procedures used by the training organisation taken over by West Suffolk Training. Procedures carried over in this way include those for internal verification and the use of feedback questionnaires for staff and trainees. The procedures for checking the quality of policies and procedures are also highly effective and enabled the company to identify that the original quality assurance system which a consultant was developing for it was not entirely suitable for its needs. Those parts of the original system which were good were retained, including the arrangements for document control and updating, and,

with the help of the TEC, staff designed and introduced other systems to supplement them. These new systems are specifically designed to assure the quality of work-based training programmes. All changes to quality assurance arrangements are co-ordinated through a single person, and staff keep detailed written records of what they do, how it is evaluated, and any changes which they introduce. The regular staff meetings and the distribution of minutes to all staff ensure that good practice is shared between staff at the two sites and across the different occupational areas. These arrangements have helped to ensure the prompt adoption and consistent application of new quality assurance arrangements across the company. The company has developed effective new procedures to monitor individual trainees' progress towards completing their NVQs. Staff now maintain clear records in each trainee's file showing exactly how far the trainee has progressed in each unit of their NVQ. Staff use these records to identify any difficulties which the trainees may be having in completing their qualifications. These problems are discussed at trainers and internal verifiers' meetings and prompt and appropriate action is taken to overcome them.

31. West Suffolk Training does not yet have a complete quality assurance system. The overall quality assurance policy has now been completed but staff are still in the process of writing some of the procedures needed to put it fully into effect. The target date for getting the whole system finished and implemented is August 2000. It is as yet too early to judge how effective the new arrangements will be, although those procedures which have been drafted are based on sound practice.

32. Most of the training is provided in the workplace. The quality of the small amount which is provided at the training centre is carefully monitored. Trainers are observed on a regular basis and given detailed feedback on the quality of their work. The company has not developed an adequate procedure for assuring the quality of training provided in the workplace, however, and there is no system to ensure that training is consistently of a high quality across all areas and employers. Training officers visit trainees every eight weeks, or every four weeks if needed, but this is to provide assessment, offer guidance, and plan future work and assessments. There is no systematic monitoring, by observation, of the quality of training provided by employers' staff, or checking of their formal qualifications. The opportunity has been missed to develop work-based assessors. There are no plans available to inform trainees of the duration and content of their training programmes. Details of each trainee's progress are given in their individual files, but there is no easy way of getting an overview of how all the trainees are progressing.

33. Since the first inspection, West Suffolk Training has successfully integrated regular self-assessment into the quality assurance process. The self-assessment report produced prior to reinspection was accurate and self-critical. The weaknesses identified were broadly the same as those identified by inspectors, who awarded the same grades as those given by the company.