



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JULY 1999

# North Humberside Motor Trade Group Training Association

## SUMMARY

North Humberside Motor Trade Group Training Association provides a good standard of training in three occupational areas: engineering, business administration and retailing and customer service. The trainees' employers are well-established companies providing good on-the-job training. The standard of off-the-job training provided by subcontracted colleges is high. The association effectively ensures equality of opportunity, but trainees' understanding of this is weak. Potential trainees are given sound information and guidance about the programmes. The pastoral support is very good, but the systems for ensuring steady progress are not yet fully effective. Management of the training is good. Communication with subcontractors and employers is effective. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory.

### GRADES

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

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good occupational training and employment in well-established companies
- ◆ well-qualified and experienced staff
- ◆ highly competent trainees
- ◆ effective promotion of opportunities for women in engineering
- ◆ helpful information and guidance for potential trainees
- ◆ good pastoral support
- ◆ effective communication with subcontractors and employers
- ◆ strong emphasis on the quality of training

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor understanding of NVQs by new trainees
- ◆ missed assessment opportunities
- ◆ insufficient emphasis on equal opportunities during induction
- ◆ trainees' progress reviews not fully effective
- ◆ no systematic approach to gathering feedback on training
- ◆ no continuous internal verification throughout training

## INTRODUCTION

1. Employers in the retail motor industry of Kingston-upon-Hull (Hull) and the surrounding area formed North Humberside Motor Trade Group Training Association (NHMTGTA) in 1972. It is now a registered charity with the aim of providing training to people employed in the retail motor industry. The membership of NHMTGTA has grown since 1986, when the membership was 50 employers, to the current membership of 100 employers. Trainees are all employed in garages owned by the members. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to three local colleges. The employers provide on-the-job training. NHMTGTA manages the training and provides support to the trainees. Assessment of the NVQs is carried out in the workplace by NHMTGTA's staff.

2. NHMTGTA contracts with Humberside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to provide training in engineering, business administration, retail and customer service. The training is all related to work in the motor trade. Trainees work in garages in vehicle servicing, repair, sales and administration. Most garages deal in light vehicles and others specialise in heavy vehicles. At the time of the inspection there were 175 trainees in total. One hundred and fourteen are training in engineering, 45 are training in retail and 16 are training in business administration. Eighty-nine per cent of the trainees are modern apprentices. Five per cent are national trainees. The remaining 6 per cent are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) on other work-based programmes at levels 2 and 3.

3. The area served by NHMTGTA is to the north of the Humber. It embraces Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. Trainees work in garages as far afield as York and Scarborough, but only if the garage is a subsidiary of a group based in Hull. Unemployment in the area is 6.8 per cent compared with the national average of 5.2 per cent. The motor trade comprises 5.3 per cent of the total number of businesses in the area, which is higher than the national average. Agriculture and retail are important sectors of employment in the region. Most businesses are small, with 70 per cent having an annual turnover of less than £250,000. The larger industrial plants lie mainly to the south of the Humber. An above-average proportion of companies export their products, and the port is an asset to businesses looking to trade internationally. However, local markets are crucial to growth in employment.

4. In 1998, the percentage of school leavers in Hull achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 22.8 per cent, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. Less than 1 per cent of the local population is from a minority ethnic group.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. All of NHMTGTA's staff were involved in the self-assessment process and in the preparation of the self-assessment report. However, employers, subcontractors and trainees did not contribute to the process. The report is clear and concise. There are some strengths which inspectors regarded as no more than normal practice, but inspectors also identified strengths in the provision that exceed normal practice. Inspectors identified further weaknesses.

6. A team of four inspectors spent 16 days at NHMTGTA during late June and early July 1999. They conducted 27 interviews with the staff of the provider and those of the subcontractors. They talked to 34 of the trainees either in the workplace or attending off-the-job training sessions. Three training sessions (graded below), one assessment and four trainees' progress reviews were observed. Visits were made to 25 employers where 19 workplace supervisors were interviewed. Inspectors looked at work that the trainees have produced, as well as their training records and a range of other documents.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering		2				2
Retailing & customer service		1				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering

### Grade 2

7. NHMTGTA provides engineering training in motor-vehicle servicing and repair. The training qualifications relate to light vehicles, heavy vehicles and vehicle body repair. The total number of engineering trainees is 114. They are all modern apprentices employed by companies who are members of NHMTGTA. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to two colleges. Trainees attend the college in the most convenient location for them. The colleges provide the knowledge that the trainees need as a foundation to their practical training. The trainees work towards craft qualifications. The qualifications and their delivery have been revised to reflect changes in the industry. The colleges do not provide practical training, which is provided by employers in the workplace. Trainees are assigned to a supervisor and are shown how to perform tasks. They are then progressively allowed to perform the tasks themselves until they are fully competent. NHMTGTA's staff carry out assessments in the workplace. Trainees are assessed against the appropriate NVQ standards at levels 2 and 3. Staff are all occupationally experienced and qualified. They hold the appropriate training and assessor qualifications. Key skills are

developed and assessed as an integral part of the occupational qualifications.

8. The duration of the modern apprenticeship programme is normally five years. Trainees take up to three years to complete their NVQ level 2. The proportion of modern apprentices leaving the programme having completed the full framework is steadily increasing, and reached 70 per cent in 1998-99. Those who do not complete their full training programme receive certificates for the units they have completed. Inspectors identified strengths and weaknesses additional to those in the self-assessment report, but they agreed with the grade.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ good occupational training and employment in well-established companies
- ◆ high standard of competence achieved by trainees
- ◆ well-qualified and experienced staff
- ◆ opportunities for additional training and qualifications

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for gathering evidence of key skills in the workplace
- ◆ poor understanding of NVQs by new trainees

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*This is an example of good practice resulting from the identification by the provider that trainees' understanding of NVQs is insufficient. Trainees now have individual briefing sessions with their assessor to fully explain the structure, recording methods and evidence requirements of the NVQ. Sessions last between 60 and 90 minutes.*

9. Trainees receive good and thorough training. They achieve a high standard of competence. Trainees' portfolios are well organised and contain good, sound evidence of their achievements. Trainees are employed by well-established companies in the motor trade. As members of NHMTGTA, the employers work very closely with the training staff. The working relationships between employers, staff and trainees are particularly good, to the benefit of the trainees. The companies take a long-term view of training in the expectation that trainees will remain with them. Employment prospects in the area of engineering are good. The workplace supervisors are experienced and highly competent engineers. They gradually extend the trainees' experience, allowing them to work on progressively harder jobs and to work increasingly on their own. The progression evident in the on-the-job training is not formally structured. There are few written on-the-job-training plans. NHMTGTA does not require or assist employers to plan the training in the workplace, either on a long-term or short-term basis. Trainees are not given targets, even from one progress review to the next.

10. The staff of NHMTGTA who manage and assess the engineering training are very experienced and well qualified. They have worked in the industry themselves for many years. Similarly the subcontracted colleges have experienced and well-qualified staff. Resources are adequate and are in the process of improvement. The method of delivery of NVQs in engineering has changed over the past six months to one in which assessment is more evenly spread throughout the trainees' programmes. Prior to that time, trainees had been deliberately encouraged to delay the development of their NVQ portfolios until they achieved a high level of

competence. They were not assessed until a late stage. Trainees in the first year of their programme were not always given adequate information about NVQ level 2. Many trainees are still insufficiently familiar with the NVQ standards. Key skills development and the accumulation of evidence is effectively linked to off-the-job training. Trainees complete assignments which are relevant to their work, but little evidence of trainees' key skills is drawn from the workplace. The introduction of new qualifications in the colleges has increased the relevance to the modern motor trade of the theoretical knowledge that the trainees gain. Excellent learning material has been produced. In addition to the normal qualifications, all trainees attend short intensive courses in specialist subjects. These include courses in electronics, wiring and the use of computer technology. Trainees go on additional courses provided by manufacturers which are specific to their vehicles.

## **Business administration**

## **Grade 2**

11. Business administration trainees work in the garages of NHMTGTA's member companies. The majority of the employers of business administration trainees are major car dealerships. The trainees' jobs encompass a range of roles including office administration, customer support services and reception duties. Fifteen trainees are working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 within the occupational area. Eight are modern apprentices and seven are national trainees. One national trainee is following an NVQ within the accounting framework, which is delivered by a local subcontractor. Trainees begin their training as national trainees, then move into modern apprenticeships following completion of NVQ level 2. Trainees are employed at the start of their training. As their experience grows following achievement of NVQ level 2, they are able to change direction to pursue a qualification in customer service as long as their job roles enables them to do so. A local college provides off-the-job training under subcontracting arrangements. The business administration training programme is the responsibility of one full-time member of staff who trains, carries out progress reviews and assesses trainees in the workplace. Off-the-job training provided by NHMTGTA itself consists mainly of support in compiling portfolios. Training in business administration was introduced in 1996. The first trainees are not due to complete until the years 1999 and 2000. Inspectors regarded the strengths in the self-assessment report as no more than normal practice. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

### ***STRENGTHS***

- ◆ good opportunity for trainees to take additional qualifications
- ◆ good-quality and supportive employers
- ◆ highly detailed and effective assessment planning

### ***WEAKNESSES***

- ◆ missed assessment opportunities

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*This is an example of good co-operation between NHMTGTA and a subcontracted college. A trainee wanted to leave a full-time college course to train in the workplace. The college and NHMTGTA co-operated to enable the trainee to complete her GNVQ while starting to train in the workplace.*

12. The training provided by the subcontracted college is good. Programmes are clearly structured. They are supported by lesson plans and good-quality learning material. The computer resources are good. Trainees' progress is tracked systematically. Trainees attend many additional training courses and gain qualifications beyond the requirements of the frameworks. Business administration trainees are encouraged to take additional single subject training in more specialist skills such as information technology, word processing, use of the telephone and customer service. They lead to qualifications or the achievement of certificates issued by NHMTGTA. The additional training is very valuable to the trainees. Staff at both the college and NHMTGTA are well qualified and experienced and place a strong emphasis on developing the highest standards of competence and exceeding the NVQ standards. Sessions devoted to the development of portfolios of evidence are structured to provide maximum individual support. Employers encourage trainees to attend off-the-job training. They provide very good on-the-job training.

#### POOR PRACTICE

*This is an example of poor practice in assessment, although it only forms a small part of the evidence used for assessment. Employers complete pre-printed identical witness testimony sheets which only require them to tick that performance criteria have been achieved. They do not provide sufficient evidence of*

13. Assessment is predominantly carried out by observation and questioning. Assessment by observation begins within the first four months. Trainees and employers agree detailed assessment plans in advance of assessment visits to the workplace. The plans are effective in enabling both trainees and employers to prepare for the assessment. Trainees are fully aware of what is expected of them. However, when assessors visit trainees in the workplace to conduct progress reviews, they do not take the opportunity to observe the trainees working, and so miss the chance of assessing their competence. This slows progress towards achieving the qualification, but does mean that by the time they are assessed, trainees have a substantially higher standard of competence than the required level. NHMTGTA has already recognised the weakness and is implementing changed assessment arrangements. Key skills assessment takes place when all the NVQ evidence has been assessed. Trainees are not encouraged to gain an understanding of the key skills standards. The assessment of key skills and occupational competence are not integrated. Assessors are observed twice each year by the internal verifier, but internal verification is mainly at the end of the training period. It is based predominantly on the documentary evidence rather than on observation.

## Retailing & customer service

## Grade 2

14. There are 45 trainees in this occupational area. Of these, nine are training in customer service, 26 are training in the retail of vehicle parts and 10 are in vehicle sales. All trainees are employed and work in NHMTGTA's members' garages throughout the area. Customer service trainees are on the national traineeship programme with the option of progressing to NVQ level 3. Retail trainees are modern apprentices. The vehicle-sales trainees follow training initially to NVQ level 2, then to level 3. Trainees are released from work one day each week for off-the-job training. Retail trainees receive training towards a craft qualification at a subcontracted college. Customer service trainees attend college to learn keyboard skills and to receive integrated technology training. In addition, they are encouraged



to obtain further qualifications

15. Vehicle-sales trainees receive off-the-job training at the premises of NHMTGTA, although the delivery is subcontracted. Assessment for retail and vehicle sales to NVQ level 2 and 3 is undertaken by NHMTGTA's staff in the workplace after trainees have completed their training and are considered competent by their trainer and workplace supervisors. There is continuous assessment of customer service trainees by the staff of a subcontractor. Training in business administration was introduced in 1996. The number of trainees reaching completion is rising steadily. Inspectors identified additional strengths to those in the self-assessment report. The main weakness in the self-assessment report has been addressed. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given in the report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ trainees achieve a high level of competence
- ◆ good on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ highly experienced training staff
- ◆ very good co-operation with employers

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ individual targets not rigorously set for trainees
- ◆ little understanding of NVQs by employers

16. Work-based supervisors have a high level of occupational experience and are well qualified. They have completed appropriate manufacturers' technical training courses on a wide variety of vehicles. The employers have documented systems to the ISO 9000 quality standard, which form the basis of the on-the-job training. Employers have annual appraisal systems in operation to which trainees are subjected. This supplements the regular reviews of trainees' progress by NHMTGTA. Work-based supervisors contribute to trainees' reviews, and there is a strong sense of teamwork between them, the trainees and NHMTGTA's staff. The supervisors' contribution is restricted to giving their views on the trainees' performance in the job and is not directly related to progress towards the trainees' NVQ. Work-based supervisors have little understanding of NVQs or how they are assessed. There are very good working relationships between trainers and trainees. There is a high level of trust and openness when assessing their progress, discussing issues and addressing problems. Employers approach NHMTGTA if they have a problem they cannot resolve. They can also be open and frank about the performance of NHMTGTA. All work-based supervisors have a very high regard for NHMTGTA.

17. Trainees are not sufficiently clear about what is expected of them in order to achieve their NVQ. There are no effective individual training plans with targets, milestones and deadlines. Awarding body assessment records and personal work records are used for assessing parts and vehicle sales trainees. There is little



### GOOD PRACTICE

*A female trainee started as an engineer. She did not show sufficient aptitude for the employer to continue with her training. Following a discussion with the employer and the trainee, NHMTGTA suggested she make use of her interest and experience in the motor industry to train in the retail of motor vehicle parts. She is making good progress and has been given responsibility for the management of the parts department*

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continuous on-the-job assessment. Until recently, assessments have been conducted at the end of a trainee's training as a single block and not used to inform or update individual training plans. This weakness has been recognised. NHMTGTA is in the process of changing its assessment arrangements. Off-the-job assessment of theoretical knowledge is conducted on a continuous basis. The standard of briefing and support materials provided to the trainees for their assessment is good. Customer service trainees produce portfolios which contain a range of good-quality work-based evidence. A variety of assessment methods are used. Trainees' progress is regularly monitored and recorded in conjunction with the trainees and their supervisors. The standard of trainees' achievements is well above the average for the occupational area and shows steady improvement. Trainees are able to achieve their full potential and to progress at their own pace. Off-the-job training is lively, relevant, uses good resources and is well delivered. Training staff are well qualified and experienced. They have occupational qualifications to degree level, teaching qualifications and have spent many years in the motor industry.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

### Grade 3

18. NHMTGTA has a written policy which requires it to offer all applicants equal access to its training. Fifteen per cent of trainees are women. There are five female engineering trainees. The company seeks to increase the number of women by aiming recruitment activities at female school students. Trainees who live in rural areas have difficulty in entering the motor trade. They incur greater travel costs. NHMTGTA assists trainees with the cost of travel either directly from their own funds or by persuading the employer to contribute. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic communities is less than 1 per cent. Currently, there are no trainees from minority ethnic groups. NHMTGTA collects statistical data on the background of applicants and the schools they attended. The data are analysed, together with the results of the selection tests completed as part of recruitment. Trainees sign to say that they have read an agreement which briefly describes the company's equal opportunities policy. The agreement is explained to trainees during their induction. Staff receive formal training in equal opportunities. Employers are informed of NHMTGTA's equal opportunity policy prior to the employment of a trainee. Inspectors did not agree with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report, but they identified further strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given by the company.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ good analysis of data from applications and recruitment
- ◆ effective promotion of opportunities for women in engineering
- ◆ financial assistance for trainees living in rural areas

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient understanding by trainees of their rights and responsibilities
- ◆ insufficient emphasis on equal opportunities during induction

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*This is an example of good practice in the support given to a trainee with severe physical disability to help him to train in the retail of motor-vehicle parts. As the trainee's disability has become progressively worse, NHMTGTA's staff have persuaded his employer to continue to employ him and to find ways of enabling him to do his job. The staff have also arranged for the college, which the trainee attends one day each week, to change the classroom used by the group to allow easier access to the room for the trainee with the disability.*

19. NHMTGTA does not deliberately set out to recruit trainees from minority ethnic groups, because the number of potential applicants is small. It seeks to recruit female school leavers into training, including motor-vehicle training. For example, the company visits girls' schools in the area as well as mixed schools. NHMTGTA maintains statistics on the schools attended by applicants and on their background. They analyse the data on applicants and compare it with data on those applicants selected for training. The company seeks ways of encouraging more women into engineering. Women who become trainees are involved in promotional activities, including features in two publications and a television programme. The company's promotional video presents the motor trade in a way which is encouraging to female school students. When a garage has been reluctant to employ a woman as an engineer, NHMTGTA's staff have persuaded them to give them a chance on a trial basis. Staff at the garages have then changed their views.

20. Trainees who live in rural areas are reimbursed for their travel costs to enable them to attend college one day each week. NHMTGTA seeks to persuade a trainee's employer to pay, but if necessary the company uses its own funds. Promotional activities are not restricted to schools in urban areas. NHMTGTA's staff also visit schools in rural areas to promote its training opportunities to students. Trainees with disabilities are encouraged to take part in training. Equality of opportunity is covered briefly during trainees' induction and without sufficient explanation. It is not treated in a way that is memorable or which is directly relevant to them. Trainees are aware of equal opportunities, but they are unable to articulate what it means in terms of their rights and responsibilities towards other people.

### Trainee support

### Grade 2

21. Potential trainees are given advice on training at open days and when NHMTGTA's staff visit schools. A professionally produced promotional video is often used. Trainees complete initial assessments of both their occupational and key skills aptitude. The results are used to guide trainees about their training and career options and to match trainees to potential employers. Assessment of prior achievements is used instead of the tests for those trainees who apply late. Employers have the final decision on whether to employ the trainee.

22. Trainees are given a two-day combined induction by NHMTGTA and their off-the-job subcontracted training provider, if this is a college. There is a systematic schedule of progress reviews in the workplace. Trainees are given the opportunity to discuss their progress with both the subcontractors' staff and their work-based supervisor at regular intervals. A record of the review is kept in the trainee's file. Trainees with additional learning needs are given assistance with their initial

assessment. For example, trainees with dyslexia have someone to read the questions to them. Test scores are adjusted to take account of the dyslexia in line with the advice of the appropriate association. Trainees who require a change of employer are also provided with help and support to find and transfer to another job. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses cited by NHMTGTA and identified additional ones. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ helpful information and guidance for potential trainees
- ◆ very good pastoral support
- ◆ occupational aptitudes and key skills systematically assessed on entry
- ◆ well-organised and -managed support system

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ individual training plans not based on initial assessment
- ◆ trainees' progress reviews not fully effective

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*This is an example of good practice in encouraging trainees to succeed. NHMTGTA holds an annual awards ceremony. Parents attend, as well as the trainees, their workplace supervisors, and representatives of the colleges. It is held at a prestigious venue and is modelled on a university graduation ceremony.*

23. Relevant, accurate and objective advice is provided to potential trainees. NHMTGTA receives an average of one request a week from the careers service and individual schools to give presentations to teachers, parents and young people about NVQs and careers in the motor trade. Staff provide tuition to school students on writing job applications, interview techniques and health and safety in the workplace. Staff are actively involved in groups responsible for co-ordinating careers education, producing information on all occupations for school leavers and in the Young Enterprise competition (which is a business management competition for young people). These activities enable staff to better advise prospective trainees themselves, as well as allowing them to influence other agencies in the way work-based training is promoted in the area.

24. There are clear lines of responsibility for managing and delivering support for trainees. The training manager is responsible for recruitment and initial assessment. Staff provide written feedback reports, daily if necessary, in the case of problems regarding trainees' progress, to the training manager on the progress of trainees. The monitoring staff are also responsible for liaising with the colleges to manage attendance, to check that assignments are completed and to issue certificates. Serious issues concerning trainees, such as personal or disciplinary problems, are referred to the training manager. Trainees can contact members of staff at any time. This policy is actively promoted and is well understood by trainees. Staff go to considerable trouble to work with parents and employers to resolve a wide range of trainees' problems. Staff identify alternative employment and training programmes for trainees where their current arrangements are not suitable.

25. The occupational skills, knowledge and prior achievements of trainees are

systematically assessed on entry. The purpose of the initial assessment is to match trainees to a suitable training programme and to an employer. The results of initial assessment are not adequately used as the basis for drawing up individual training and development plans which are brief. They specify the qualifications aimed for rather than the training required. Trainees receive regular progress reviews in the workplace every six or eight weeks. The main function of the review is to check a trainee's performance in the job and the progress he or she is making with the on-the-job training. With many trainees, there is insufficient discussion with assessors from NHMTGTA about the trainees' progress towards completing their NVQ or of future training required. In contrast, trainees do frequently discuss progress about their off-the-job training and qualifications.

## **Management of training**

## **Grade 2**

26. NHMTGTA is a group training association with a membership of 100 employers in the motor trade. Members elect an 11-strong executive committee to manage the association. The committee decides on policy and leaves the day-to-day management to the full-time director of training and six other staff. Sub-groups of the committee are formed to deal with specific issues, such as the recruitment of a new member of staff. Formal management meetings are held every six months. NHMTGTA has been awarded the Investors in People Standard. NHMTGTA is located within the grounds of one of the three colleges to whom off-the-job training is subcontracted. The subcontracts are managed by means of written contracts. A business plan is produced each year. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report and with the grade given by NHMTGTA.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective communication with subcontractors and employers
- ◆ good management of health and safety monitoring and training
- ◆ open management and good internal communications
- ◆ effective and established staff development arrangements

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ insufficient tracking of trainees' progress

27. The staff form a close team. They communicate with each other very effectively without many formal mechanisms. Staff are well aware of the aims of the association and are fully involved in its management. They all take part in the management meetings and attend weekly informal team meetings. Staff understand their job roles which are defined in job descriptions. There is regular contact with subcontractors. NHMTGTA's staff meet every day with the staff of the neighbouring college, and at least every two weeks with the other subcontractors, to check attendance and to resolve problems as they arise. Employers are contacted

frequently to discuss attendance and progress, in addition to the regular review meetings.

28. There are documented procedures for staff induction and training. Staff receive an annual performance appraisal. It is conducted in an informal manner but the agreed results are recorded. The discussion focuses on the general ability of individuals to carry out their job. The process informs staff development and is linked to personal, organisational, awarding body and TEC objectives. Some staff are qualified to assess within the engineering sector, but their skills are not fully utilised. Monitoring of employers' premises is particularly well managed, and conducted by a specialist member of staff. In addition to monitoring, his role combines delivery of health and safety training for all trainees at induction, relevant training for NVQs, and acting as a health and safety advisor to association members. Monitoring and renewal dates are recorded on a database. The database contains full details of all health and safety reports and associated action plans. Contingency plans are in place to protect trainees if action plans are not implemented.

29. Data on trainees are collated centrally by an administrator. They are used to monitor performance. Performance data are presented in graphical form. There is insufficient cumulative tracking of trainees' progress towards the achievement of NVQs. Staff are not given measurable achievement targets. The business plan relates entirely to the TEC contract. It does not take into consideration other issues of relevance to training, such as the planning of resources.

## Quality assurance

## Grade 3

30. NHMTGTA has a set of documented quality procedures which are certified as meeting the ISO 9002 national quality standard. The procedures are regularly internally audited. They are also audited by the awarding body and by the TEC. The company has been recognised as meeting other external standards including the Humberside Local Authority Quality in Management Award. Improvements in the quality of training are discussed informally among staff and in a more structured way at programme review meetings. A programme review team meeting is held three times each year. It includes representatives of the subcontractors, trainees and employers as well as staff of NHMTGTA. Data on trainees' achievement rates for theoretical knowledge qualifications are analysed to identify trends and any problems in their delivery. Internal verification of engineering and some retail assessments take place at the end of the training and assessment period. NHMTGTA's staff have been active in promoting the quality of training within the area and within the motor-vehicle sector. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths but identified additional weaknesses to those in the self-assessment report. They awarded a lower grade than that given by NHMTGTA.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective programme improvement
- ◆ effective analysis of data trends to identify and correct problems
- ◆ strong emphasis on the quality of training

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no systematic approach to gathering feedback on training
- ◆ written action plans not effectively used to manage continuous improvement
- ◆ no continuous internal verification throughout training

31. Programme review meetings are an effective means of improving the quality of the training. Attendance at the meetings is good and the participants are keen to contribute. The group discusses a wide range of issues related to training. Changes are frequently made to the training as a result of the discussions. For example, a fire-fighting training session was introduced into the induction programme and a new vehicle was acquired by a subcontractor for training purposes. Although trainees are represented in the programme review meetings, their contribution is not sufficient to gain adequate feedback on trainees' perceptions of their training. There is no mechanism to allow all trainees to comment on their training in a systematic way. Although employers are able to provide feedback by a number of routes, there is no systematic method of gathering feedback from all employers.

32. Data on trainees' achievements during their off-the-job training have been collected and analysed over a period of many years. The analysis is effectively used to identify long-term trends in performance as well as to highlight problems. For example, a decline in the achievement rate in an engineering craft qualification resulted in changes in the teaching arrangements on a course delivered by a subcontractor. Continuous improvement in the quality of training is evident, but it is not managed systematically. Action plans are not generated by the company to define and monitor the progress of long-term improvements. Actions are recorded in the minutes of meetings or are noted informally, but they are not drawn together into a single plan for the organisation as a whole. The quality procedures are effective in maintaining the administrative systems of NHMTGTA and in controlling the recording methods. However, they have little impact on the quality of training.

33. There is a strong emphasis by the executive committee, the training director and the staff on the quality of training. Representatives of NHMTGTA have been outspoken, both locally and nationally, in warning against the danger to the quality of training of funding mechanisms that place an excessive premium on achieving awards. There is a clear ethos of service to the community, to young people and to the industry, with commercial considerations taking a secondary priority.

34. Until six months ago, assessment in some of the occupational areas has been carried out at the end of the training in a concentrated period. Assessment arrangements have now changed so that it is distributed more evenly throughout the

training period. Internal verification still takes place mainly at the end. There is no continuous verification throughout the training period. Assessors do not receive the benefit of continuous feedback on their assessments. The verification activities are based mainly on recorded evidence. They do not focus sufficiently on observation of assessment as it occurs.

35. Although NHMTGTA produced a clearly presented report, it has not yet embraced self-assessment as an effective method of continuous improvement. Strengths and weaknesses were not accurately identified, and self-assessment has not been used as the basis for effective action-planning.