



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT AUGUST 1999

REINSPECTION NOVEMBER 2000

EDA Training

SUMMARY

At the first inspection, EDA Training offered satisfactory training in construction, business administration and media and design. Engineering training is imaginative and well delivered. The training provided in foundation for work is excellent. Trainees are supported by a wide range of very well-qualified staff, who are keen to ensure that the programme is always interesting, challenging and of benefit to trainees and the local community. Quality assurance arrangements, trainee support and EDA Training's approach to equal opportunities, are all satisfactory. As part of the Kingston upon Hull City Council, EDA Training has a wide range of policies, procedures and supporting resources which benefit trainees. At the first inspection, the training provided in manufacturing was unsatisfactory with poor achievement rates, weak internal verification and insufficient resources. At reinspection, inspectors found that manufacturing training was satisfactory as a result of the significant efforts to address the weaknesses. Improvements have been made to internal verification, resources and links with employers. At the first inspection, management of training was less than satisfactory. There is now clearer communication with subcontractors and management of health and safety has greatly improved. Management of training is now satisfactory.

As a result of the reinspection of EDA Training, the original published report text for manufacturing and management of training has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings.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 original published report, which have not been subject to full reinspection, have been left in their original form.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	2
Manufacturing	4
Business administration	3
Media & design	3
Foundation for work	1

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Manufacturing	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Management of training	3



KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and delivered off-the-job training in most areas
- ◆ some excellent work placements
- ◆ good initial foundation programme in occupational areas
- ◆ comprehensive staff training and development
- ◆ excellent, productive links with external organisations

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unsystematic initial assessment
- ◆ inadequate promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ inconsistent training practices
- ◆ inadequate use of data to inform management decisions

INTRODUCTION

1. Economic Development Agency Training (EDA Training) was formed as a result of a merger between the Hull Information Technology Centre (ITeC) and the Opportunity Centre in February 1998. Both of the original organisations were part of Kingston-upon-Hull City Council (KHCC) as is EDA Training. The ITeC was established in 1983, one of a network of similar organisations throughout the UK. The ITeC specialised in information-technology-related training but also diversified into various commercially driven activities such as computer repairs, manufacturing and training for private companies. The Opportunity Centre was established in 1981 and focused its activities primarily in the area of community programmes and youth training in traditional occupational areas such as horticulture, engineering, construction and manufacturing. In 1997, the Opportunity Centre was recognised as a supported learning centre by Humberside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) in recognition of its work supporting young people with additional learning and support needs.

2. A period of restructuring and consolidation followed the merger and at the time of the first inspection in August 1999, EDA Training offered training in the occupational areas of construction, engineering, manufacturing, business administration, sport and leisure, media and design, and foundation for work. At reinspection in November 2000, EDA Training offered the same range of occupational training programmes. Most of the training is funded through contracts with Humberside TEC. Most training is provided through work-based training for young people and work-based learning for adult programmes, however, EDA Training also provides training through the New Deal. The New Deal training includes the full-time education and training option and the environment task force option. This New Deal work is funded either through direct contracts with the Employment Service or through subcontracting arrangements with other, private, training organisations. In November 2000, EDA Training employed a total of 72 staff who were directly engaged in government-funded training, an increase of eight staff since the first inspection.

3. The Humberside TEC area has a population of 575,000. Fewer than 1 per cent of these people are from minority ethnic groups. According to recent council research, much of the area is marked by social and economic deprivation. In June 1999, the Humberside TEC area had an unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 4.3 per cent. In September 2000, the unemployment rate was 4.3 per cent and the national average was 3.4 per cent. In 1998, the proportion of school leavers 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. In 2000, there was a slight increase in the proportion to 24.4 per cent. Hull is ranked last out of England's 150 local education authorities in the Department for Education and Employment's published league tables, and five of the city's schools rank among the country's 200 worst. This is poor compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent.

Employment opportunities in the area are particularly poor. The labour market is most buoyant in banking and finance, healthcare and education. The local ports of Immingham, Goole, Hull and Grimsby still provide a significant amount of employment, particularly in the petrochemical and fish processing industries.

4. There are currently 557 people in training, an increase of 41 since the first inspection.

The table below shows the numbers of trainees at the time of the reinspection.

	Youth			NEW DEAL 18 to 24		ADULT
	Advanced modern apprenticeship	Foundation modern apprenticeship	Other training	Full-time education and training	Environment task force	
Construction			12	1		2
Engineering	56	2	41	2	6	30
Manufacturing			34	2		
Business administration	59	24	2			
Information technology	31	50	27	3		
Leisure, sport & travel	5	11	12			
Media (Print & signmaking)	44	15	17			
Foundation for work			68	1		
Total	195	102	213	9	6	32

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. EDA Training produced its first self-assessment report in January 1999. All staff were involved in self-assessment and the report was used as a working document. It was updated two months before inspection. A detailed action plan was developed after the first inspection and used to address both strengths and weaknesses. For reinspection in November 2000, EDA Training carried out self-assessment of its manufacturing and management of training. The organisation is preparing its third self-assessment report, due to be completed in December 2000, as part of its contractual obligation to the TEC.

6. During August 1999, a team of nine inspectors spent a total of 41 days at EDA Training. Inspectors examined EDA Training and its awarding body's documents. They interviewed 49 of EDA Training's staff and 96 trainees and held discussions with 32 local employers. They examined assessment records, trainees' work and the portfolios they were completing for their NVQs. Inspectors observed a total of 20 training sessions, and graded them as shown in the following table.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the first inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction		1	2			3
Engineering			2	1		3
Manufacturing			3			3
Business administration		2	2			4
Media & design		4				4
Foundation for work	3					3
Total	3	7	9	1	0	20

7. At reinspection in November 2000, two inspectors spent a total of six days at EDA Training. They interviewed 18 trainees from the manufacturing course and 24 trainees from other occupational areas. They examined 20 NVQ portfolios and 25 trainees' administration files. Fifteen of EDA Training's staff were interviewed and two subcontractors' staff. In manufacturing, inspectors observed one progress review and one assessment, both of which were judged as satisfactory. One training session was observed in manufacturing and this was awarded a grade 2.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

8. EDA Training offers construction-related training programmes at NVQ levels 1 to 3, for one modern apprentice and 32 trainees on other work-based training for young people. Vocational areas include bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, scaffolding and general construction. Following recruitment, trainees start full-time training until they gain a placement or a job with a local employer. Off-the-job training takes place at the training centre on one day each week. New Deal clients attend on a day-release basis from the start of their programme. In most cases, clients are working towards units of NVQ level 2 in general construction. Employers offering placements or employment are diverse and range from small firms managed by the owner to large multi-site organisations. The self-assessment report did not identify any strengths. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a higher grade than that given by EDA Training.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and -structured off-the-job training
- ◆ excellent working relationships between training staff, trainees and clients
- ◆ high priority afforded to health and safety

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some employers not aware of NVQ programmes
- ◆ lack of work-based evidence
- ◆ low achievement rates

9. Trainees receive a detailed plan of the off-the-job training. This plan has objectives and dates. It is referred to at each training session and helps trainees understand the structure of their programme. Successful completion of a section of the off-the-job training programme is indicated on wall charts, allowing trainees to see their progress at a glance. There are good working relationships among all training staff, their trainees and New Deal clients. Trainees and clients are confident to ask for help and guidance which is provided on a supportive one-to-one basis. A New Deal workshop facility has recently been established. Trainees are assessed in the workplace, mainly by EDA Training's staff, but increasing numbers of workplace supervisors are being trained as assessors. Health and safety is given a high priority when reviews are carried out, particularly when they are conducted on site. Trainees are questioned about their understanding of health and safety in their current environment.

10. Some employers are not aware of the programmes and qualifications their trainees are working towards. Employers do not provide effective support to help

trainees achieve their NVQs. There are missed opportunities to produce work-based evidence and trainees make slow progress toward accreditation. There are weak links between on- and off-the-job training. There is insufficient use made of work-based evidence when assessing a trainee's competence. Some trainees take longer than is necessary to achieve their qualification. Achievement is poor in bricklaying and carpentry and joinery. Only two NVQs have been achieved in the last 12 months, and over the last three years, only 12 NVQs have been achieved. There are a further six portfolios awaiting approval from the awarding body.

Engineering

Grade 2

11. EDA Training has 110 trainees in engineering. This includes modern apprentices, national trainees, other work-based training programmes for young people and adults, and New Deal clients. There are currently 42 trainees following the in house induction training programme while they wait to find a placement. The remaining trainees are either employed or already placed with a local employer. Achievement data for 1998-99 varied across the engineering programmes. There were 33 modern apprentices in training at the end of this period. Of that number, 22 were new starters of whom one person had left without having achieved any qualifications and the rest are still on the programme. For the other work-based training for young people programmes, 51 trainees started and 13 left. Of those leavers, nine achieved all aspects of their individual training plan. In the work-based learning for adult programme in the same period, 38 per cent of all leavers achieved at least one NVQ. The engineering qualifications offered to adult and youth trainees are NVQ levels 1 and 2 in fabrication and welding, engineering production and foundation engineering. All programmes up to NVQ level 2 are assessed both on and off the job by EDA Training's staff. NVQ level 3 programmes are assessed entirely in the workplace. Key skills for modern apprentices are taught and assessed off the job. Modern apprentices also undertake additional industry-specific examination-based qualifications to support their NVQs. EDA Training accurately identified several strengths and weaknesses through the self-assessment process. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured and -delivered off-the-job training
- ◆ well-motivated adult trainees
- ◆ high standard of portfolios

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some workplaces are of poor quality
- ◆ employers not sufficiently involved in the NVQ process

GOOD PRACTICE

Off-the-job training is realistic and makes use of typical work examples. Recent projects include the fabrication of local park fencing for the local council, the building of a narrow barge boat and the refurbishment of a fishing trawler, as well as the traditional engineering projects usually developed for NVQ programmes.

12. Good practice is demonstrated in the quality of the activities undertaken in the off-the-job workshop. Nearly all are real work-based projects. This offers a wide variety of different experiences for the trainees during their induction programme and ongoing off-the-job training. The off-the-job training is further enhanced by examination-based qualifications in addition to the NVQ. The programmes on offer are well organised and effectively administered. Trainees receive a high level of individual support. Adult trainees are well disciplined, motivated and considerate. They have a high level of respect for their trainers and fellow trainees, work hard and are proud of their individual projects. Most trainees benefit from a six-to-eight week initial induction and training period before being employed or placed with local employers. The induction programme is well organised and provides a considerable degree of evidence towards the NVQs. Some workplaces offer exceptional experiences for the trainees in addition to the NVQ requirement. At one employer, the trainee has taken on the additional responsibility for programming the CNC punch machine as well as training as a fabricator. In another, the trainee is involved in the whole aspect of bespoke manufacturing, spending time in each individual area and then taking a product from inception through to completion. Some workplaces, however, do not offer a rounded or broad experience for trainees. Trainees frequently spend most of their time on one operation and the environment in which they work is not conducive to good training. All trainees' portfolios and logbooks are of a high standard, with obvious care and attention to detail being taken at all times. EDA Training has a fabrication and welding workshop training facility, which is adequately resourced and well organised.

13. There is some ineffective communication between workplace employers and EDA Training's staff. Many employers are unaware of the NVQ programmes that trainees are following and they are unable to provide effective support. Most employers expressed a wish to be more involved in the NVQ process. EDA Training's staff carried out workplace assessment for the engineering production level 2 qualification. The level 3 engineering NVQ has yet to start, but there are plans to assess the whole qualification on the job. Foundation engineering is assessed entirely off the job. Some employers do offer additional on-the-job training opportunities to their trainees but this evidence is not used for the NVQ or towards a future qualification. The off-the-job facilities at EDA Training are of variable quality. The décor and facilities within classrooms are poorly maintained and in need of refurbishment.

Manufacturing**Grade 3**

14. There are 34 trainees following work-based training for young people and two New Deal clients. All except two of the trainees have been identified as needing additional learning support. Twenty-four trainees are working towards level 1 NVQs and five towards level 2 NVQs in performing manufacturing operations. Five trainees are working towards level 1 NVQs in distribution and warehouse operations. Over 90 per cent of the trainees have progressed into their current

position from a foundation for work programme, which is also provided by EDA Training. This includes a two-week taster period in the training provider's manufacturing centre. Initial training for all trainees takes place at EDA Training's computing and recycling centre. Trainees are not put into work placements until the training provider is satisfied that they have been adequately prepared. The work placements are with a range of manufacturing companies. All assessments are carried out in the workplace. In 1999-2000, 46 per cent of trainees achieved all the targets in their individual training plans and 17 per cent secured employment. There are two New Deal clients who are following the full-time education and training option, undertaking units towards level 1 NVQs in distribution and warehouse operations. Three staff currently work on the manufacturing programme, all of whom are appropriately qualified and experienced.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ ineffective initial assessment of trainees' basic skills
- ◆ missed opportunities to collect work-based evidence
- ◆ poor administration of trainee-related documents
- ◆ some slow progress by trainees
- ◆ low achievement and retention rates

15. Since inspection, an action plan and subsequent self-assessment report suggested that EDA Training had taken significant steps to improve the training offered. For reinspection, EDA Training regraded its manufacturing training as grade 2. Inspectors agreed that the first three weaknesses no longer existed, and had now become strengths. There is still slow progress for some trainees and achievement and retention rates are unsatisfactory but improving. However, these remain as weaknesses. Inspectors identified another weakness and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ excellent on-the-job resources
- ◆ comprehensive initial assessment of basic skills
- ◆ excellent teamwork between trainers and employers
- ◆ excellent use of work-based evidence

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient influence on training by trainees
- ◆ slow progress for some trainees
- ◆ unsatisfactory achievement and retention rates

16. EDA Training has excellent on-the-job training resources in manufacturing and warehousing. It made a successful bid for landfill tax credits to refurbish and recycle redundant computer equipment. This enabled it to equip a modern building and operate it as a commercial venture. EDA Training has subsequently moved to

larger premises in summer 2000, to accommodate its successful growth. This provides a real working environment for trainees as they work towards a level 1 NVQ in manufacturing or warehousing before going out on placement. Since inspection, staff have carefully vetted potential work placements to ensure that they have the appropriate facilities and infrastructure to ensure clear relevance at the work placement to the NVQ.

17. Since the initial inspection, recruitment and selection of potential trainees has been reviewed. Most trainees are still referred from the foundation for work course, where they are given the opportunity to undertake a two-week work trial before committing themselves to the training programmes. All trainees undertake a thorough basic skills assessment and a computerised diagnostic test to identify if the trainee has any special training requirements. This is recorded on the individual training plan which clearly specifies the type of support required and planned dates for this to happen. Appropriate literacy and numeracy support is given. Additionally, trainers take the opportunity to nurture the trainee, focusing on the individual's basic skills inadequacies to develop the trainee through one-to-one coaching and participation in group training sessions.

18. Since inspection, the training provider's staff have forged closer relationships with key employers who offer work placements to EDA Training's trainees. The employers are systematically updated about the NVQ requirements and their role in helping trainees meet them. This encourages employers to take a more active approach to the training programme. Since all training is undertaken on the job, employers are now fully aware that the trainee's work experience can be co-ordinated with the requirements of the NVQ. Progress reviews are undertaken at more frequent intervals than is required by the contract and are attended by the trainer, the employer and the trainee. Trainers and employers discuss the requirements of the job and the type of trainee required before offering trainees a placement. EDA Training now has a carefully considered strategy when placing trainees into the workplace. Some unsupportive employers are no longer used.

19. A new document, known as the NVQ audit and evidence document, enables staff to identify opportunities to collect work-based evidence. This takes the form of a scan of the skills used at work so that gaps in evidence can be identified. This has had a significant impact on the effectiveness of assessment. Trainers now record all key aspects of on-the-job training. Assessors have reviewed their assessment arrangements to include all evidence from the workplace. Trainees are clear about their progress and can discuss the range of methods used by their assessors during assessment. Trainees are clear where they need to gather additional evidence and this information is clearly recorded on short-term action plans.

20. EDA Training's staff give every assistance to their trainees, many of whom need significant support, to give them the best possible training. Trainees are not always involved in the preparation of their individual training plans. The selection of optional units for the level 1 NVQ in performing manufacturing operations is dependent mainly on the work placement and there is often little input from the

trainee. Trainers tend to manage the portfolios rather than the trainees. This has been recognised by the training provider, which is just starting to equip trainees with better portfolio-management skills.

21. The progress of some trainees is unacceptably slow. Assessments do not always take place when they are expected. This has been recognised by the internal verifier and raised at team meetings. Specific target-setting is now in place to rectify this problem.

22. The levels of achievement are still unsatisfactory as 46 per cent of trainees achieved all the targets in their individual training plans and only 17 per cent gained employment during 1999-2000. However retention rates are beginning to improve. Since June 2000, the retention rate for newly recruited trainees has been maintained at a much improved 93 per cent. Strategies to address poor retention have been successful to date, for example using work trials and improved matching of trainees to work placements. The vastly improved initial assessment arrangements have also ensured that the right trainees are recruited.

23. The training for New Deal clients is good. Clients are integrated into the mainstream training programmes, while still receiving any necessary additional support. Opportunities are sought for clients to obtain additional qualifications and work experience which will improve their employability. They are on target to achieve the targets in their individual training plans.

24. At the first inspection, internal verification was identified as a weakness within quality assurance. The manufacturing team has improved its internal verification procedures so that they are now satisfactory. This has included improvements to the sampling process, assessors' observations and better communication between internal verifiers and assessors.

Business administration

Grade 3

25. EDA Training has 174 trainees working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in either business administration, using information technology, use and support of information technology and install information technology products. There are 76 modern apprentices, 25 national trainees, 63 trainees following other work-based training for young people, two adult trainees and eight on the New Deal full-time education and training option. Trainees are referred to programmes either by the careers service, by the Employment Service or by direct contact. Prior to starting the programme, trainees attend an interview, take an initial assessment test and have a tour of the centre. Trainees receive an induction and follow a period of foundation training for between eight and 10 weeks at the training centre. This covers basis office skills and information technology communication skills. After foundation training, trainees are placed with an employer and EDA Training arranges on- and off-the-job training. In 1998-1999, 18 per cent of business administration trainees completed all elements of their training plan and a further 52 per cent achieved an NVQ. Sixty-three per cent of trainees following

information technology programmes for the same period completed their training plans, and a further 95 per cent achieved an NVQ. In most programmes, trainees follow a level 2 NVQ before starting a level 3 framework. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified additional strengths and weaknesses. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ effective training at foundation level
- ◆ high level of computer literacy achieved by trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no accreditation of trainees' prior learning
- ◆ missed opportunities to assess trainees in the workplace
- ◆ insufficient range of on-the-job opportunities for some modern apprentices in administration

GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice is demonstrated by trainees joining the team in the City Council's service department. The trainees are working towards the 'install information technology products' NVQ and have the opportunity to add to their skills gained in the foundation training. They work as they would in any commercial workshop, building computers to customer's specifications.

26. Trainees are placed with, or employed in, a wide range of local companies, including many departments within the City Council. All employers provide good-quality work placements and learning opportunities. Supportive work-based supervisors contribute to the good on-the-job training. Work-based training plans are informal (not written) but this does not affect the learning experience of the trainee. Some employers provide additional courses such as assertiveness training and telephone techniques. The eight-to-10 week foundation programme provides an opportunity for trainees to pick up basic administrative and computer skills, giving them valuable preparation for their placement and providing them with skills appropriate to their NVQ. Lesson plans are available for daily activities which are appropriately resourced. The focus of the foundation period is to equip new trainees and clients with the required information technology skills necessary to build confidence and enable trainees to be quickly effective and contribute positively in the workplace. The contribution of foundation training and good-quality work-based learning results in trainees demonstrating a high level of competence in information technology. A high number of trainees gain jobs.

27. Trainees' prior achievements are recorded on their individual training plans, but this information is not used in practice to accredit their prior learning and experience. Some trainees repeat pieces of work and quickly become demotivated and bored. Workplace observation is recorded on specific observation sheets relating to elements of the NVQ. Opportunities for key skills assessment are missed for some trainees in information technology where naturally occurring evidence is available. In some areas there is insufficient assessment in the workplace. Work-based supervisors are supportive of trainees' progress, but opportunities are missed because supervisors are not informed of NVQ

requirements and targets. Some supervisors have expressed an interest in becoming qualified assessors, but there has been no action taken to date.

28. Some modern apprentices in administration do not work in positions of responsibility or authority. In these cases, placements offer work in routine or basic tasks and there is little opportunity to gain all the evidence they need to complete either their NVQ or the modern apprenticeship programme. There is an assumption by EDA Training that they will go on and gain promotion in a job where they can gain relevant experience, but there is no guarantee that this will happen. Some trainees are in a job where it is impossible to progress through their qualification. Some modern apprentices in administration have been unable to progress as quickly as others because of staff shortages earlier in the year. For a number of trainees, this meant that they had little support during a two-to-three-month period and their progress slowed down. These trainees are now progressing as normal, although there has been no additional learning provided to help them to catch up. Although computer equipment in the administration-training suite is capable of running up-to-date computer software packages, nearly all administration trainees complain that the equipment is slow or keeps crashing.

Media & design

Grade 3

29. Humberside has the second largest concentration of print-related industry in the country. All trainees are employed in local print companies. Two-thirds of trainees work in small print companies and the rest work in one of eight large employers. EDA Training has three trainees working towards a qualification in origination, 44 in machine printing and 35 in signmaking. Trainees are either following a modern apprenticeship or other work-based training for young people programme. Trainees work towards either level 2 or level 3 NVQs. Print trainees also work towards industry-related examination-based qualifications. Modern apprentices also work towards key skills awards at level 3. Eight trainees were recruited to the pilot programme for the examination-based qualification only in 1996 and all passed their levels 2 and 3 examination. Twenty trainees were recruited to the full programme in 1997. There are five full-time staff, four to support printing and one for signmaking. Three trainees have left the print programme since 1997. Of those leavers, one gained the examination-based qualification and an NVQ at level 2 and the others achieved the examination-based qualification only. Seventeen trainees remain on the print programme. All trainees have passed their examination-based qualification. Of the 35 trainees recruited to signmaking since 1997, 33 remain on the programme. Trainees spend one day each week throughout their programme at the training centre for off-the-job training. The centre provides portfolio-building workshops, key skills training, and lectures on the knowledge required to support the NVQ and the examination-based qualifications. Qualified staff from EDA Training carries out all assessment in the workplace. Employers carried out all training in the workplace by. Inspectors agreed with several of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ demanding targets set and met for completion of additional qualification
- ◆ high examination pass rate
- ◆ good checks made on placements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ infrequent workplace assessment
- ◆ missed opportunities to collect key skills evidence in workplace
- ◆ some employers unaware of the programme requirements

30. Examination-based qualification was developed at the request of local print employers. It covers all of the knowledge required for the NVQ and is taught in modular form, one day each week for 40 weeks. At the end of each module, trainees take a one-hour examination. Those who fail to pass an individual module are able to take a maximum of two re-sits following additional tuition at the end of the course. To date, all trainees have passed the exam, which is externally moderated. Close links with an external college have enabled EDA Training to offer a comprehensive range of course materials. A one-week course at the college enables trainees to gain experience on a range of equipment additional to that which they use in the workplace. EDA Training actively promotes and is involved with the 'Print Pack Alliance'. This is a forum to enable local employers in print-related industries to work together and share best training and assessment practice. All workplaces are thoroughly checked to ensure that they can offer the full range of opportunities required by trainees to complete all aspects of their training programme.

31. There is a lack of staff resources and a backlog of workplace assessments to be carried out. One trainee who requested an assessment in January was not assessed until August of this year. An additional member of staff has been appointed but is not currently qualified as an assessor. Assessments that do take place are well planned, structured and recorded. An additional member of staff has recently been appointed to ensure that the key skills qualifications are provided effectively. Projects have been developed to facilitate this; but they do not make use of naturally occurring evidence in the workplace. Individual employers are supportive of EDA Training but in some cases lack sufficient information about the programme or are not involved in the training process. Trainees are reviewed in the workplace every eight weeks. The reviews are comprehensive but trainees and supervisors do not receive a copy. Some trainees, particularly those who work in companies who employ few staff, find difficulty in regularly attending off-the-job training sessions, owing to commercial pressures in the workplace. EDA Training has a policy of contacting employers when this occurs.

Foundation for work

Grade 1

32. The foundation for work programme is provided at EDA Training's 'Career Choices' centre which is located about four miles from its main administration base at the Hull ITeC building. There are 80 trainees on work-based training for young people and two New Deal clients. Approximately 10 to 15 of the trainees are placed with local employers at any one time and a further six-to-10 are working with a local subcontracted training provider. The remainder, between 55 and 66, are based full time at the training centre. Between 30 and 50 trainees are recruited every two weeks. The first two weeks for any individual are spent on a detailed assessment programme. After that, trainees progress to a training programme that has been tailored to meet their individual needs. This can be at the centre, on placement, with a subcontractor or a mixture of these. There are 10 staff based at this centre. No formal accredited vocational training is currently delivered at the Career Choices centre. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths and some weaknesses. Many of the weaknesses had already been addressed and inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given by EDA Training.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good network of external agencies
- ◆ extremely well-qualified staff
- ◆ trainees involved in a range of innovative projects
- ◆ good recognition of trainees achievements
- ◆ good peer mentoring scheme for trainees

GOOD PRACTICE

As an example of the effectiveness of EDA Training's trainee mentoring scheme, an engineering trainee was identified as a potential mentor to help other trainees overcome any difficulties they may experience during the training programme. The trainee identified had personal experience of family problems and drug addiction. The trainee is now attending a series of training courses to become a mentor.

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate record-keeping

33. At its Career Choices centre EDA Training aims to identify and address barriers to training and employment and provides occupational 'taster' courses for trainees. Staff quickly establish an effective rapport with trainees which allows for the exchange of personal and confidential information. Barriers to learning are identified at the earliest opportunity and remedial action taken. In order to meet all eventualities, the centre has established partnerships with other specialist agencies which are called upon to provide additional support as required. Among these are the Young Person's Support Service and the Independent Access Programme. Some personal development training and additional placement or taster opportunities are available through subcontracted arrangements. The range of backgrounds and qualifications among the staff and the additional available support enables EDA Training to expand the range of activities and support services on offer to trainees. Trainees have opportunities to participate in outdoor pursuit days, run either by in-house staff or by the Army Youth Team which provides a certificate of attendance. Trainees can also achieve other certificates for short courses such as health and safety, manual handling and first aid. Further personal development programmes are subcontracted to a national charitable

organisation, a local college or a private training company. In addition to this, further training is provided in the centre by a range of other external agencies.

34. In-house resources are comprehensive and comprise accommodation for two information technology suites, one of which also provides some business administration learning opportunities, and which between them have 16 information technology work stations. Each workstation provides Internet access, e-mail facilities, a digital camera and a wide range of up-to-date software. There are also training areas for bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, metalwork and engineering, plastics and signmaking. A booth is currently being prepared to give trainees an introduction to painting and decorating. In these areas, trainees are encouraged to produce individually designed products such as garden furniture, planters, brick-built barbecues, metal candleholders, plant stands, seating etc, which are then available for sale to the general public. In addition to these formal training areas, there are some large general-purpose training rooms, a canteen and an administration office.

35. Trainees are encouraged to produce good-quality items during their time in the workshop areas. There are many opportunities for trainees to become involved in a wide range of local projects, including making candle holders for a local church, an anti-drugs initiative with a regional commercial radio station and decorative grills for shop units in a nearby area of Hull. Trainees collect a portfolio of evidence showing examples of their work undertaken while at the Career Choices centre, and have a thorough and well-documented assessment at the end of the first two-week period. After that period, progress is monitored and recorded through a review which takes place every two weeks. Information on the skills achieved and abilities demonstrated by trainees while on 'tasters' at Career Choices are not always effectively communicated to the staff who manage and deliver the NVQ programmes once trainees move on to mainstream training programmes. This applies to vocational skills, key skills and basic skills.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

36. EDA Training uses the City Council's equal opportunities policies and procedures. As a result of the preparation of the self-assessment report, it designated a member of staff to take responsibility for equal opportunities. Data are collected by the City Council on the ethnicity, disability and gender of all of its staff and trainees. Equal opportunities are discussed in the respective trainee and staff induction. Trainees and employers are given written information on equal opportunities. EDA Training's staff are strongly committed to equal opportunities, but many systems are new and there is no formal medium- or long-term plan to ensure that equal opportunities is systematically implemented across all sites. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Action had already been taken to address some of the weaknesses identified. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive and well-documented policies and procedures
- ◆ positive action to recruit women into male-dominated job roles
- ◆ thorough understanding by trainees of equal opportunities issues

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ data not systematically used to influence recruitment or policy decisions
- ◆ publicity and marketing materials do not effectively promote equal opportunities
- ◆ no monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements

GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice was demonstrated through the 'launch pad' scheme which allows young people to try a variety of skills. One young woman was recruited to an engineering training programme and having gained her qualification she gained full time employment in a local engineering company.

37. The equal opportunities policies and procedures are comprehensive, clearly and concisely laid out, regularly reviewed and cover all legal requirements. The member of staff designated to Implement equal opportunities throughout EDA Training started work in June of this year. A detailed interim action plan was produced within four weeks outlining priorities for action. Links and contacts are being established with equal opportunity-related network groups, and the City Council's focus groups on disability and equality. Discussions are also taking place with individuals within EDA Training to develop a strategic plan. Updates are regularly made and sent to EDA Training for inclusion in the organisation's procedure and policy manual. EDA Training has taken positive action to recruit women into male dominated sectors. A recent 'construction fair' gave women the opportunity to try painting, wallpapering, bricklaying and other construction-related activities. All trainees have a good awareness of equal opportunities and have written information relating to equal opportunities. All members of staff who are involved in the recruitment of other staff attend a two-day training course. This course is being modified for staff who recruit trainees. The person specification for all jobs states that the potential employee must be active in promoting equal opportunities. Their understanding of equal opportunities is checked at interview. There is good access to the training centres for those with mobility difficulties.

38. Data on disability, ethnicity and gender received from the City Council are passed to EDA Training's. Some section managers use the information to target specific groups, but this is not systematic or co-ordinated throughout the organisation. Complaints are dealt with by individual managers and tutors. EDA Training's senior managers deal with serious complaints. No analysis is made of complaints either by site or at an occupational area level. Employers are given minimal information on equal opportunities by EDA Training's staff at their first visit. Employers who do not have a policy but confirm that they practice equal opportunities are not given a copy of EDA Training's policy. Marketing and publicity materials are not used to promote equal opportunities. A recent glossy brochure produced for trainees depicts mostly male trainees working in traditionally male-dominated jobs. The brochure does not mention access for trainees with disabilities or other under-represented groups.

Trainee support

Grade 3

39. Trainees are referred to EDA Training by the careers service, job centres or by recommendation from friends and family. Trainees are interviewed by a member of EDA Training's staff and take an initial skills test. There is an induction programme, during which trainees are issued with a trainee charter. Staff and trainees agree an individual training plan detailing their prior achievements, target qualifications, review dates and any additional learning support that is needed. Trainees have a named member of staff who acts as a personal mentor during their time on the programme. Trainees are reviewed at least every eight weeks. Details of the review are recorded in the files. Trainees have access to information relating to placements and employment opportunities through members of staff at the centre, weekly bulletins and an employer referral file. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report and identified additional strengths and weaknesses. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that given by EDA Training in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive induction programme
- ◆ comprehensive trainee charter
- ◆ effective pastoral support provided through mentor programme

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ ineffective reviews
- ◆ inconsistent approach to initial assessment of key skills
- ◆ ineffective management of some areas of trainee support

40. All trainees apply to join EDA Training's training programmes by completing an application form. Potential trainees are given the opportunity to meet and are interviewed by a relevant member of staff. Selection is based on the interview, a personal presentation, interest in the subject area and by test results. In foundation for work programmes, selection is based on trainees' needs for additional support. There are a variety of initial tests used depending on the programme trainees wish to join. Trainees joining foundation for work are given basic skills tests. Trainees wishing to join other programmes are given company-devised tests, with the exception of media and design where specific key skills testing is conducted. The results of the interview are notified to potential trainees by letter. At the start of the programme trainees receive an induction covering all aspects of their training programme, including health and safety, terms and conditions, NVQ programmes, equal opportunities and progress review arrangements. Induction is delivered in an interesting way to trainees and they are able to recall its content at a later date. At induction, trainees receive a comprehensive handbook. Trainees complete an individual training plan which records their prior achievements and experience but these are not formally accredited. A trainee charter is agreed between the trainee and EDA Training detailing the rights and responsibilities of the trainee. It is

comprehensive and fully understood and seen as beneficial by trainees. During the first few weeks of training, trainees are notified of their personal mentor who is responsible for their training, assessment and personal development throughout their training programme. The relationships between trainee and mentor are positive and productive with swift action taken to minimise problems and resolve difficulties on behalf of trainees.

41. Reviews are not consistently effective across different programmes and training sites within EDA Training. They vary in their frequency and the way in which they are carried out and recorded. Employers are not systematically involved in the review process. They are often not fully informed of the progress trainees are making towards the NVQ or advised on how the on-the-job training can be structured to support the training programme. Copies of the review are not always given to trainees. This does not enable them to recognise and appreciate their own achievements. In some areas, action plans are copied to trainees. Training plans are not used as working documents to recording progress made as part of the review process.

42. There is no common approach to key skills testing across the occupational areas. Trainees starting NVQ programmes are from diverse backgrounds and have different abilities and needs, but the initial assessment does not adequately identify these differences. Company-devised tests are used in isolation to determine trainees basic skills but do not address the full requirements of key skills. Test results are not used to influence individual training plans. Trainees on foundation for work programmes receive good additional support, which is detailed in the individual training plans. However, this additional support ceases when trainees progress into mainstream NVQ programmes.

Management of training

Grade 3

43. In addition to the head office and training centre, EDA Training operates from five other training centres in Hull. EDA Training is managed by the training initiatives manager, who is responsible for the site managers at each of the other training locations. The site managers are, in turn, responsible for teams of trainers and administrative staff at their own site. Since inspection in August 1999, there have been significant operational changes and restructuring. The training initiatives manager was relocated to EDA Training's head office in May 2000 in order to better co-ordinate the activities of EDA Training with other sections of the economic development agency of the council. The manufacturing team moved to newly refurbished premises in July 2000. The construction training staff have now integrated into the foundation for work training team. Site managers have been given increased responsibilities for all aspects of their own sites, including budgets.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ ineffective management of health and safety

- ◆ inconsistent practice between sites
- ◆ poor co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ no formal agreements with subcontractors

GOOD PRACTICE

Staff recruitment procedures in foundation for work are particularly good. In order to recruit the right candidates, trainees are invited to contribute to the recruitment process by evaluating a presentation by potential candidates. Trainees are motivated by the value placed on their opinions. Candidates are able to understand the ethos of the foundation for work training courses.

44. EDA Training has made significant progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the first inspection. Management of health and safety has improved to reach contract compliance. All subcontractors now have a comprehensive agreement and are routinely monitored against targets set by EDA Training. Strenuous efforts have been made to integrate NVQs and key skills to trainees' experiences in the workplace, resulting in closer co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training. The self-assessment report accurately identified three significant strengths and inspectors found another relating to strategic planning and target-setting. Inspectors found that the weakness relating to inconsistent training practices was still evident from the first inspection. Two other weaknesses were identified. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by EDA Training.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective strategic planning and target-setting
- ◆ rigorous staff recruitment, induction and appraisal procedures
- ◆ thorough staff training programme
- ◆ excellent, productive links with external organisations

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inconsistent training practices across occupational areas
- ◆ inadequate use of data to guide management decisions
- ◆ unplanned and unstructured training in some areas

GOOD PRACTICE

One site manager has begun to systematically observe staff undertaking training, assessment and progress reviews. While the observation sampling plan is not fully developed, the site manager is able to monitor consistency of practice and quality of training.

45. EDA Training is part of a comprehensive strategic planning process, which provides clear targets for the organisation and individually to each member of staff. The aims and objectives of a regional economic strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber are taken into account in the council's corporate aims and objectives. Long term issues are then included in EDA Training's local economic development plan. Each section of the council prepares a service action plan which further breaks down targets and budget requirements. A service delivery plan specifies the operational activities for each year which are required to meet the section's targets. For EDA Training, targets include offering basic educational attainment levels for unemployed people, providing training in key skills, training to address skills shortages in the local economy and developing sustainable employment opportunities. These targets are then devolved to site managers and to individual staff during the staff achievement and development interviews which are held every six months. Staff are fully aware of their targets and key performance indicators and understand how the targets fit into larger targets for EDA Training as a whole.

GOOD PRACTICE

Trainees in foundation for work are encouraged to become involved in a local charity linked to Romanian orphanages. Trainees work hard producing goods for commercial sale in order to fund visits to Romania. There are numerous examples of trainees who have benefited enormously from these activities. Many trainees return with a different perspective of their own lives.

46. EDA Training has a rigorous recruitment, induction and appraisal programme for all staff. Recruitment processes are excellent. Potential candidates' application forms are examined on the basis of abilities and experience, as all personal details relating to gender, ethnicity, age and circumstances are removed before the selection process. This ensures an open and fair process in keeping with equal opportunities legislation. At the interview stage, all interviewers must have previously attended a two-day training course in interviewing techniques and equal opportunities awareness. Subsequently, all interviewers must attend a one-day refresher course every year in equal opportunities and interviewing skills. All potential candidates are interviewed by at least two interviewers in order to ensure objectivity. At the first inspection, staff induction processes were not sound, with variable practices across EDA Training. At reinspection, the induction procedure has been developed to ensure that all new staff receive a comprehensive induction, embark on a work shadowing process with an experienced member of staff and are allocated a mentor for their probationary period. There is an excellent staff appraisal system in the form of achievement and development interviews which are held every six months. These are viewed very positively by staff.

47. Trainees benefit considerably from the well-trained and highly qualified staff at EDA Training. Significant financial resources support the training and development of EDA Training's staff. There is an overall corporate training plan and a separate training plan for EDA Training. Staff are able to attend corporate training events which cover a range of topics including the use of information technology, customer care and interviewing skills. For some courses, site managers are required to share training information with their staff teams and where appropriate this is recorded. One example of this is that some managers have attended training on stress management and are required to pass the information on to their team members. The wide range of training opportunities available to staff are publicised in EDA Training's newsletter. Additionally, job-specific training needs are identified and individual training action plans agreed at the six-monthly achievement and development interviews. Staff attend appropriate courses to enhance their job skills, and target dates for training are met in most cases. Where target dates are not met, staff have received the identified training within three months of the target date.

48. Seven staff have been supported by EDA Training to obtain training qualifications and a degree in education. Projects which staff undertake as part of their training have been used to improve the quality of training within the organisation. These have included research, analysis and evaluation of quality assurance systems, trainees leaving unexpectedly and initial assessment of trainees with specific training needs. Additionally, there are monthly staff development days to support training. For example, the training days cover such areas as trainee-centred approaches to teaching, counselling skills, health and safety checks on work placements, drugs awareness, and developing and integrating key skills, all of which have a beneficial impact on the trainees' experiences.

49. The training initiatives manager attends meetings of three employer group training organisations in the Hull area, one of which was established as a result of

EDA Training's marketing activity. The manager is actively involved in establishing further group training organisations for other occupational areas. Involvement with these employers' networks gives EDA Training an opportunity to promote the value of NVQs to employers, and encourage them to offer placements or offer NVQs to their own employees. These organisations identify skill shortages, for instance in the marine engineering and print industries, and EDA Training has established training to remedy these shortages. A further organisation is being developed for information technology, where large skill shortages have been identified, as qualified people tend to move out of the Hull area once trained. The aim of the new organisation will be to train and retain qualified software engineers. The employers' groups and EDA Training also work together to secure additional funding to support training activities. EDA Training has close working relationships with other training providers, particularly those which offer progression routes for foundation for work trainees. Staff from other training providers are invited to the monthly staff development days run by EDA Training to ensure that the transition from career choices to mainstream training is as smooth as possible. This encourages improved communications, a co-operative approach and external staff becoming aware of the specific challenges presented by some trainees' learning and behavioural difficulties.

50. Training practice differs between sites and occupational areas. This was identified as a weakness at the first inspection. Some measures have been taken to address the inconsistencies in approach to trainees' induction, progress reviews and the co-ordinating of on- and off-the-job training. However, there are no key training procedures in place to specify how trainees will be managed from recruitment and selection through to exit. Staff in different training centres and in different occupations carry out initial assessment, training, assessment and internal verification in differing ways. Some attempt has been made to exchange good practice, but this is not systematic. There are no internal audit schedules in EDA Training to ensure consistency of documents or training practices.

51. There is poor use of data to guide management decisions. Each site monitors its own trainees on separate and different documents. This, in turn, makes it difficult to co-ordinate or summarise trainees' numbers, progress and achievements. There is insufficient monitoring of trainees' achievement of the targets in their individual training plans or retention rates. One site manager has developed a retention strategy to act as an intervention for trainees who are identified as at risk of leaving their programmes early. Managers do not use data sufficiently to examine trainees' progress or the performance in individual occupational areas or of individual trainers.

52. There is some unplanned and unstructured training. Training in key skills is not systematically planned across sites or in some occupations where these are a necessary part of the trainees' learning plan. Although key skills are introduced to most trainees during the first four weeks of training, they are not reinforced or evidence gathered by some trainers until trainees are reaching completion of their NVQ. For trainees at a subcontractor, there is little planning to ensure key skills will be integrated into their vocational qualification. For some trainees on day

release from work, their time is generally spent on portfolio-building or report-writing. For these trainees, there are few opportunities to receive theoretical training, key skills training or a varied set of activities during the day. For trainees who have been on long-term work placements, formal job-search activities are not planned effectively before they reach the end of their training. Managers are not planning training activities across sites or occupations to make best use of both physical and human resources.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

53. EDA Training has a quality assurance system which is based on the framework outlined in *Raising the Standard*. The system was introduced following the establishment of EDA Training's quality and development team in June 1998. The team is responsible for implementing the system across all the training centres. It undertakes internal audits of all training activity, and monitors compliance with TEC and New Deal contracts. The quality and development team also provides training for EDA Training's staff on quality assurance matters. In the area of quality assurance, the self-assessment report was mostly accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive quality assurance procedures
- ◆ quality and development team established
- ◆ self-assessment results in realistic action plans

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient co-ordination of quality assurance activities across occupational areas
- ◆ inconsistent approach to internal verification
- ◆ data analysis not used to aid continuous improvement

54. EDA Training has developed comprehensive quality-assurance procedures manuals which are available to all staff on paper and on the computer network. They cover the administrative requirements at each stage of the training programme, and ensure compliance with the requirements of the TEC contract. A specific team has been established to deal with quality assurance in the organisation. Team members collect data from the different sites and monitor whether staff are completing documents appropriately. The team has begun conducting internal audits which also examine the quality of completed documents. Where audits identify problems with consistency, procedures are amended to ensure improvement. This is followed by workshops for staff to explain the amendments, and associated guidance is given. EDA Training's staff are committed to continuous improvement.

55. Workshops were arranged to explain the self-assessment process to staff, which were attended by 50 of the 60 EDA Training employees. Following the workshops, managers and staff from each site were involved in preparing the draft self-assessment report for their occupational area. Managers were involved in writing the generic sections of the report, and copies of all sections of the report were circulated to staff and managers for their comments before the final report was completed. Action plans for each occupational and generic area were drawn up on completion of the self-assessment report. The action plans have realistic targets for both improvement and achievement timescales. Work has already begun to implement the plans, and some deadlines have already been achieved.

56. The organisation does not have a quality assurance policy to explain the aims of the procedures which have been put in place. At present, quality assurance procedures are focused on compliance with TEC and New Deal contracts. Activities are not co-ordinated across occupational areas. Some centres have developed new forms. Completion of EDA Training's forms differs between the centres. Staff in occupational areas place different emphasis on feedback from trainees. Although all staff attend the City Council's induction programme, induction to the EDA Training centres varies, as do review and assessment practice. Good practice is not shared effectively. Monthly meetings of site managers take place, but discussion centres around financial and compliance targets. The meetings do not provide a regular opportunity to share good practice.

57. The approach to internal verification differs significantly between occupational areas. In media and design, internal verification takes place at the end of training; in other areas, this is throughout the process. The quality assurance system does not specify a standard for good internal verification practice. Targets for achievement and retention rates are set, and discussed in staff and management meetings. Variations from targets are analysed, but the data are not used to identify trends. There is no strategy to use data for continuous improvement.