



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 2001

Jobwise Training

SUMMARY

Jobwise Training provides outstanding training in foundation for work. Trainees' achievement and retention rates are high. Work experience is well planned and organised to meet trainees' individual learning needs. Jobwise effectively monitors and analyses data on equal opportunities but does not use the results to devise a clear strategy to increase recruitment of under-represented groups. Arrangements for support identify and quickly respond to trainees' needs. Trainees' progress reviews are comprehensive and set targets and action plans. Accreditation of prior learning is not systematic and is rarely used as the basis for preparing individual learning plans. On- and off-the-job learning is well managed. Accurate data are routinely used as the basis for management decisions. Communications among staff, trainees and work-placement providers are effective. There is insufficient staff development. Learning sessions are monitored to measure their effectiveness. Feedback and analysis of data are routinely used to make improvements. Self-assessment is not sufficiently self-critical.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Foundation for work	1

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ excellent work placements
- ◆ high achievement and retention rates
- ◆ thorough and comprehensive arrangements for reviewing trainees' progress
- ◆ effective support from employers
- ◆ well-managed on- and off-the-job learning
- ◆ effective use of management information
- ◆ effective monitoring of training
- ◆ effective action-planning

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient management of some equal opportunities arrangements
- ◆ missed opportunities for accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ weak sharing of company's policies with work-placement providers
- ◆ lack of involvement in self-assessment by trainees, staff and work-placement providers

INTRODUCTION

1. Jobwise Training (Jobwise) opened 19 years ago and provides switchboard and reception training for unemployed people. Jobwise is a company limited by guarantee and is owned by two partners. It specialises in training young people and adults and its training centre is located in the Barbican area of London. The company has a contract with FOCUS Central London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) for foundation for work training for young people and adults. Jobwise employs one part-time and 11 full-time members of staff. Eight of the full-time staff are directly involved with job search, training or assessment, and three are support staff. This ratio of training staff to support staff has remained constant, while the total number of staff has increased from nine in 1996-97 to 12 at the time of inspection.

2. Jobwise is a subcontractor for the New Deal full-time education and training option. The company currently has no New Deal clients. Jobwise currently has 27 government-funded trainees on work-based programmes for adults, and recruits, on average, over 300 trainees each year. Jobwise runs two foundation-for-work training programmes: 'mainstream' and 'basic employability'. Mainstream is for trainees who are over 25 years old and have been unemployed for over six months. These trainees attend Jobwise's training centre for three days each week over a four-week period. The remaining time is used for job-search activities and training. The basic employability training programme lasts for eight weeks, and includes three days' training each week for four weeks in Jobwise's training centre. The remaining four weeks are spent on work placement. Trainees on the basic employability programme have usually been unemployed for over two years and have specific barriers to gaining employment. Training focuses on providing the support and training to address trainees' needs for basic employability skills. Jobwise organises work placements for all the basic employability trainees and encourages trainees and work-placement providers to convert work placements into jobs. Jobwise also provides switchboard and reception training for many commercial organisations.

3. Jobwise recruits trainees from across London. The staff at Jobwise include two directors. One is the director of training and the other is the director of finance. The other staff are a training-centre manager, a training manager, a job-search manager, a work-placement co-ordinator, three trainers, an administrator, an information-technology consultant and a recruitment officer. Jobwise also uses two consultants on a part-time basis to give health and safety training and to arrange staff training and development. All 27 trainees at Jobwise are unemployed. Twenty-five are women, 14 are from minority ethnic groups and seven have identified themselves as having a disability.

4. Of the 283 trainees who have started training with Jobwise since April 2000, 52 per cent have been from minority ethnic groups, and 28 per cent of these have gained employment. London has an unemployment rate of 7.8 per cent. The unemployment rates among minority ethnic groups in London are approximately



twice as high as for the population as a whole. Of the 312 trainees who have started training with Jobwise over the past three years, 21 per cent have identified themselves as having a disability, 91 per cent have been women and 47 per cent have been from minority ethnic groups.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. The director of training completed Jobwise's self-assessment report in January 2001. The TEC supported the self-assessment process by providing advice, information and training. Consultants were hired by Jobwise to review the organisation's procedures and to observe training and work experience. Jobwise's staff, as well as some trainees and work-placement providers, were contacted with questionnaires and this information was used as the basis for the report's findings. The report contained sufficient data on trainees' achievements and year-on-year trends. Each section of the report identified strengths, weaknesses and actions required to improve the quality of training. Sources of evidence were given for strengths but not for weaknesses.

6. The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors over a total of 12 days. They examined agreements relating to work placements, trainees' files and portfolios, details of staff qualifications, and the arrangements for quality assurance and management. Inspectors interviewed six of Jobwise's trainers and 15 trainees. Inspectors also visited six employers providing work placements across the London area, and conducted 10 interviews with Jobwise's staff. Four progress reviews and seven learning sessions were observed. The grades awarded for the learning sessions are shown in the following table.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Foundation for work	5	1	1			7
Total	5	1	1	0	0	7

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Foundation for work

Grade 1

7. Jobwise provides work-based training for adults within three foundation for work training programmes: mainstream training, basic employability training and training for New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option. The training is designed to increase the confidence and employability of trainees. Jobwise currently has 26 trainees on basic employability training. Mainstream trainees are required to be over 25 years old and to have been unemployed for at least six months. Mainstream training lasts for four weeks and trainees attend Jobwise's training centre for three days each week, using the remaining time for job search. Basic employability trainees have generally been unemployed for two years or more and have specific barriers to employment. The programme lasts for eight weeks. Trainees attend Jobwise's training centre for three days each week for the first four weeks, and attend a work placement for four weeks. The New Deal training is for clients between the ages of 18 and 24 who have been unemployed

for at least six months. The New Deal training lasts for 14 weeks. Clients attend Jobwise's training centre full time during the first four weeks and then have 10 weeks' work experience, spending one day each week attending Jobwise's training centre. There are currently no clients on the New Deal.

8. Training is designed to encourage development of the skills and confidence needed to gain employment. During off-the-job training at Jobwise's training centre, trainees develop word-processing skills, operate basic telephone-switchboard systems and learn how to use the telephone in a confident manner. No external assessments are required by the programme, and trainees' progress is measured by their participation and the reaching of agreed milestones. For example, the trainees are assessed on their participation in sessions on interview techniques and confidence-building activities, and on their ability to demonstrate basic skills in operating a switchboard. They are assigned a trainer and a mentor at the start of their training. Trainees are visited once during their four weeks work experience period and are contacted by telephone each week during this period. Two hundred and sixty-eight trainees were recruited in 1998-99, 387 in 1999-2000 and 283 up to February 2001. During this period, retention rates have averaged 93 per cent. The self-assessment report accurately identified one strength and one weakness. Inspectors agreed with the strength but not with the weakness. Other important strengths were not identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors awarded a grade higher than that given by Jobwise in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ experienced and well-qualified staff
- ◆ excellent work placements
- ◆ high achievement and retention rates
- ◆ good learning resources

GOOD PRACTICE

Jobwise encourages trainees to use an organisation which provides suits for women attending job interviews. A second suit is provided once employment is secured. There is no charge for this service. The organisation has arranged a networking meeting for all those who have taken part in the initiative.

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of flexibility in off-the-job learning

9. Jobwise provides outstanding and well-structured training for unemployed people and those returning to work. The training is designed to overcome barriers to employment, and is targeted at trainees who wish to become a receptionist or a telephonist or who are seeking general office work. Each programme is designed to ensure that trainees can use a telephone switchboard at a basic commercial level. Other elements of training include confidence building and assertiveness as a preparation for both job interviews and the workplace. Trainees undertake two days of basic computer training at an appropriate level. Training is well planned and structured to maximise opportunities for trainees to interact with their peers and work in small groups. Trainees play an active part in their learning, and training sessions are lively, informative and enjoyable. The trainers employ a range of effective training techniques, such as ice-breaking and role-play sessions,

to develop the skills and confidence of individual trainees within group situations. Jobwise limits class sizes to no more than 12 trainees. Each learning session is thoroughly planned. Each trainer has a set of good, well-prepared learning material, including overhead projector slides, course notes, worksheets and projects. Trainees understand what they need to achieve and can participate in the organisation and planning of on- and off-the-job learning. The progress of trainees is carefully monitored, reviewed and recorded. Trainees are well prepared for their work placements.

10. Trainees undertake one test set by Jobwise to assess their theoretical and practical understanding of operating a switchboard system. Further training is arranged if trainees do not meet a basic commercially acceptable standard. Jobwise presents all successful trainees with a diploma on completion of their training and all trainees who gain employment, either during training or within three months of leaving, receive a bonus from Jobwise. Job search is an important element of the training programme. Trainees are given clear guidance on how to research job vacancies, compile the information needed for their curricula vitae, operate a fax machine and use the Internet effectively. They are also encouraged to use a workstation in Jobwise's training centre, which is dedicated to job-search activities, at any time during their training and for up to one year after completion of training.

11. Jobwise's training programmes ensure, through close monitoring and support, that individual trainees achieve their agreed milestones. The milestones are agreed between Jobwise and each trainee during the initial interview and assessment process. The milestones include using initiative, preparing a curriculum vitae and improving communication skills.

12. Jobwise's staff are well qualified and have commercial experience in a wide range of office, secretarial and administrative settings. Five members of staff, currently in managerial and training roles, were originally trainees with Jobwise and act as role models for other trainees. Jobwise uses four associate consultants, who contribute their experience and knowledge to various aspects of the company's work. One consultant is responsible for overseeing health and safety, and for monitoring the standard of on- and off-the-job training. Another consultant carries out the two-day training in information technology.

13. All trainees are treated with respect. Trainees benefit from a high level of staff awareness of their personal circumstances. At the training centre, trainees benefit from up-to-date resources of a commercial standard. The training rooms are equipped with learning equipment, including videos, projectors, flipcharts and whiteboards. Trainees use dedicated training rooms. One room has good computing facilities. The other two rooms have telephone-switchboard training equipment and are also used as general training rooms.

14. Trainees spend 50 per cent of the programme on work placement. Jobwise has agreements with 13 employers which provide work placements and nine of these are currently being used. Jobwise uses only those employers which offer a good range of learning opportunities. These include local authority housing offices,

charities and private companies. Jobwise's staff try to ensure that trainees have work placements which match their preferences. One trainee, for example, was found a work placement with an organisation in which she could use her German language skills. Workplace supervisors work hard to ensure that trainees experience a realistic working environment which reflects current working conditions. All trainees provide Jobwise with written feedback regarding the appropriateness and quality of their work placements. Trainees' reports are positive about this part of the learning programme. Trainees agree that they gain valuable experience in a range of office tasks and that the experience improves their self-confidence and employment prospects.

15. Rates of achievement and retention are high. Over 90 per cent of the 938 trainees who have started training with Jobwise over the past three years have achieved their individual milestones and remained in training until the end of their programme. Approximately 30 per cent of trainees gain employment following their training. The table below shows the achievement and retention rates for the past three years.

Rates of retention and achievement of targets on individual learning plans

	Trainees starting	Rate of achieving individual learning plan targets (percentage)	Retention rates (percentage)
1998-99	268	96	96
1999-2000	387	91	91
2000-01	283	85 (7 per cent still in training)	93

16. A set of milestones is recorded on each trainee's individual learning plan. In setting these milestones, little account is taken of previous office skills or other relevant experience. While Jobwise's staff try to ensure that off-the-job training is relevant to all trainees, there is a lack of flexibility within the learning programme. Jobwise's staff are happy to customise training to meet specific individual needs, and this does occur for some trainees. However, it is not a routine process and trainees are largely unaware that they can request a customised programme.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

17. Jobwise has a comprehensive written equal opportunities policy. It is reviewed annually. Trainees, staff and clients are given a copy of the policy during induction. Jobwise monitors and analyses data on equal opportunities. Jobwise also has disciplinary, grievance and complaints procedures. Employers who

provide work placements for Jobwise's trainees complete an agreement covering their responsibilities for health and safety and equal opportunities. Employers without an equal opportunities policy are encouraged to adopt Jobwise's policy. Overall responsibility for equal opportunities lies with Jobwise's director of training, but another member of staff has recently been approached to take over responsibility for equal opportunities. Responsibilities for ensuring equality of opportunity are included in all job descriptions. The organisation has a commitment to maintaining equality of opportunity and equal access to training. Ninety-one per cent of trainees are women. Currently, 52 per cent of trainees are from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-one per cent of current trainees have a disability or a long-term health problem. Of the 12 staff, 10 are women, and three are from minority ethnic groups.

18. The self-assessment report gives evidence for the strengths of the training but not for any of the identified weaknesses. It does not identify the weak management of some equal opportunity arrangements as a weakness. Inspectors broadly agreed with the three strengths given in the report. The grade awarded is the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ broad representation of community groups on programmes
- ◆ robust and effective complaints procedures
- ◆ effective monitoring and analysis of data on equal opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak strategy to recruit trainees from under-represented groups
- ◆ insufficient management of some equal opportunities arrangements

19. Jobwise has consistently attracted trainees from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Of the 937 trainees recruited to TEC-funded training programmes over the past three years, 47 per cent have come from minority ethnic groups and 21 per cent have recorded that they have a disability. Jobwise struggles to recruit male trainees. However, 9 per cent of trainees over the same period have been men. The table below shows the trends in recruitment over this period.

Recruitment trends in foundation for work training

Foundation for work programmes	Total number of new trainees	Women (percentage)	Men (percentage)	Trainees with disabilities (percentage)	Trainees from minority ethnic groups (percentage)
1998-99	268	91	9	23	49
1999-2000	387	94	6	20	41
2000-01	283	91	9	21	52
Average over 3 years	NA	92	8	21	47

20. The company has a clearly written complaints and grievance procedure, and trainees and staff know how to use it. All new trainees and members of staff receive copies of the procedure. Complaints are handled quickly and to the satisfaction of all parties. Both the training manager and the training-centre manager are readily accessible to trainees and staff, who are encouraged to raise issues with them. Equal opportunities are discussed as part of trainees and staff members' induction. Jobwise's staff demonstrate a strong commitment to equality of access to training. Discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. Jobwise's staff and trainees have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. These are discussed in detail during induction, and the understanding of members of staff is reinforced during their three-month probationary period and annual appraisals.

21. Data relating to equal opportunities are gathered when staff and trainees are recruited and analysed by the organisation to identify trends and target recruitment. Application forms for trainees contain a section in which applicants can declare any learning support needs or special requirements. Jobwise produces reports which monitor the recruitment, progression and achievements of trainees by gender, ethnicity and disability. These are used to prepare action plans and to highlight gaps in recruitment and trends in progression. All trainees and members of staff interviewed by inspectors had a satisfactory awareness of equal opportunities.

22. Jobwise has identified that it is weak in its recruitment of trainees with physical disabilities and mobility problems, as well as in its recruitment of men and of Pakistani and Bangladeshi trainees. Jobwise has no clear marketing strategy to improve recruitment from these groups. Its promotional literature is available only in English, and the images used are predominantly of white, female trainees and do not convey a clear message that Jobwise is keen to widen participation. Fewer than 10 per cent of all applicants are men. Jobwise has marketed its basic employability training programmes as providing training for telephonists and switchboard operators, and has advertised in the office and administration jobs sections of newspapers. This has not encouraged men to apply.

23. Jobwise has not managed some important equal opportunities arrangements effectively. Although the organisation is strongly committed to equality of opportunity, it does not translate this commitment into clear strategies and practices. For example, staff and trainees are not fully aware of their broader responsibilities for the promotion of equal opportunities. Trainees are not made aware of the equal opportunities policies of their work-placement providers. Jobwise's staff training on equal opportunities is insufficient, and its equal opportunities policy has not been reviewed to take into account the views of employers, trainees and staff, or recent legislation.

Trainee support

Grade 2

24. Over 80 per cent of trainees are recruited through newspaper advertisements. Other trainees are referred to Jobwise by the Employment Service or approach Jobwise on the recommendation of current or former trainees. Applicants for training attend Jobwise's training centre for an interview and complete an initial assessment of their basic skills before starting their training. Trainers advise applicants of the most appropriate option for training, based on the results of the initial assessment. If their needs or requirements cannot be met by Jobwise, applicants with literacy and numeracy problems are referred to other training organisations or to the Employment Service. Jobwise does not offer coaching in English language or training in basic skills. Trainees complete weekly diaries describing activities undertaken in the training centre and during their work experience. In addition, they have weekly telephone contact with their trainers.

25. Trainees' induction takes place during the first day of training. It includes detailed discussion about the training programme, as well as instruction on health and safety, rights and responsibilities and equal opportunities. Induction also takes place for trainees when they start their work placements. This is carried out by employers' staff. Trainees are assigned a member of staff to contact if they encounter any problems. Employers provide support for trainees on work placements. The self-assessment report accurately identified the strong progress-review arrangements, and the support provided by employers and Jobwise's staff, as strengths of the training. The report did not identify as a weakness the lack of systematic initial assessment of trainees' prior learning. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ thorough and comprehensive arrangements for reviewing trainees' progress
- ◆ effective identification of and response to trainees' learning support needs
- ◆ effective support from employers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for accreditation of prior learning

26. Trainees' progress reviews occur every week during off-the-job training at Jobwise's training centre. Trainees have their progress reviewed once and are contacted every week by telephone during their four-week work placements. Trainers conduct progress reviews in a professional, friendly and supportive way, and show sensitivity to each trainee's personal situation. All discussions between the trainer and the trainee are recorded, and trainees receive copies. Before each progress review, trainees complete a self-assessment of their progress. The trainer uses the completed form as the basis for the progress-review meeting. This encourages trainees to be constructive and self-critical about their progress. The progress-review form covers all aspects of the training programme. Targets are set at each progress review and an individual action plan is agreed between the trainer and the trainee. Previously set targets and action plans are reviewed at the start of each review. Trainers encourage trainees to raise other issues or personal problems during the progress review.

27. Jobwise does not provide training in basic skills. However, Jobwise's staff routinely work closely with trainees who are having difficulties with numeracy and communication. Trainees' needs are identified during their initial interview and on a regular basis during training, during progress reviews, through weekly telephone discussions, and when trainees begin a work placement. Jobwise records and addresses the needs and problems of trainees which may become barriers to achievement. Trainees with additional support needs are identified to ensure that trainers giving training in groups are aware and are able to monitor their behaviour and progress.

GOOD PRACTICE

Jobwise refers trainees to specialist external agencies. One example is an organisation which provides suits for women seeking employment. Each trainee receives two suits: one when an interview is arranged and a second when employment has been gained. There is no charge for this service and many of Jobwise's trainees have made use of it. The organisation has arranged a networking event for all those who have taken part in the initiative.

28. Jobwise ensures trainees are aware of an up-to-date directory of external support agencies. Information is available, for example, about organisations which support lone parents and those with housing or domestic difficulties. Trainees attend job-search sessions during their training. If trainees identify a job vacancy during training, they are able to use the job-search facilities to contact employers and to research up-to-date employment publications. Jobwise's staff fax curricula vitae to prospective employers on trainees' behalf. Trainees are able to use Jobwise's job-search facilities for up to one year after they complete their training. Individual references are also prepared for trainees, using information gathered from Jobwise's trainers and work-placement providers.

29. All the employers who provide work placements are vetted by Jobwise to ensure that they can provide sufficient learning opportunities for trainees, and to ensure that they comply with current legislation concerning health and safety. Workplace supervisors are supportive of the trainees and ensure that they enjoy a rounded, useful experience. All trainees undertake a workplace induction. A copy of the health and safety element of the induction is faxed to Jobwise by the trainee as part of the trainee's training in communications and to assist Jobwise's health and safety monitoring. Some workplace supervisors have produced a training plan showing the range of tasks which the trainee will undertake. One employer, for example, lists all the tasks which the trainee will undertake over the four-week period under four headings: reception duties, secretarial, general office

administration and post. Jobwise maintains regular contact with employers and trainees during work placements and carries out one review of the trainee's progress during their third week on work placement. Jobwise's staff visit the workplace more often if it is necessary. Workplace supervisors provide Jobwise with a written report on the trainee's performance and progress at work and this information forms the basis of the job reference which trainees receive at the end of their training.

30. Early recognition of trainees' prior learning and experience is important for the planning of the intensive four-week off-the-job training element of the basic employability programme. Jobwise records trainees' previous achievements and experience during the initial interviews. However, this information is not used to shape the trainees' individual learning plans. The information is not shared with trainers at the outset of training to ensure that off-the-job learning is individualised. As a result, some trainees are undertaking tasks at which they are already competent.

Management of training

Grade 2

31. Jobwise is a company owned by two directors: the director of finance and the director of training. The director of training is responsible for the overall management and quality assurance of training. Operational management tasks have been delegated to Jobwise's training-centre manager, and more recently to the training manager. Over the past six months, Jobwise has changed both its staffing levels and its staffing structure. Jobwise's training centre and job-search managers, together with the three consultants, report directly to the director of training. The training centre manager appraises the performance of Jobwise's three trainers, the recruitment officer, the administrator, the training manager and the work-placement co-ordinator. Staff report to the training manager on a day-to-day basis, with the recruitment officer, the work-placement co-ordinator, the administrator and the job-search manager reporting to both the training manager and the training-centre manager. All members of staff are appraised annually and Jobwise was accredited with the Investors in People Standard two weeks before the inspection.

32. Jobwise has provided training for adults for over six years. Off-the-job training is delegated to the training team, which is led by the training manager. An administrator is responsible for initial interviews and for testing the basic skills of potential trainees. Jobwise's recruitment officer is responsible for marketing the programmes. The work-placement co-ordinator is responsible for all the on-the-job training. Workplace supervisors sign a training contract and are given a handbook which outlines the role and duties of the employer. Jobwise's work-placement co-ordinator maintains regular weekly contact with workplace supervisors and trainees during work placements.

33. Jobwise's self-assessment report identified six strengths and one weakness. Most of the strengths related to quality assurance. Jobwise accurately identified

staff training as a strength but failed to identify the lack of staff development as a weakness. The good use of efficient management-information systems was accurately identified as a strength. The self-assessment report did not identify the strengths found by inspectors relating to good communications, good staffing procedures and well-managed training. The report accurately identified the weak arrangements for sharing Jobwise's values and policies with work-placement providers. Inspectors identified additional strengths and two weaknesses and awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-managed on- and off-the-job learning
- ◆ effective internal and external communications
- ◆ good staffing procedures
- ◆ effective use of management information

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak sharing of company's policies with work-placement providers
- ◆ insufficient staff development

34. On- and off-the-job training is well managed. Off-the-job training is structured in a similar way for all trainees and clients. Jobwise's staff use a detailed scheme of work, which clearly outlines the aims and objectives of training, and the resources and teaching methods for each learning session. Trainers have the opportunity to customise these plans to meet the needs of each group of trainees. Each scheme of work is reviewed after each session. The training manager evaluates these reviews and discusses with trainers any changes required to make the sessions more effective. Trainers are provided with a file which sets out their working practices and also includes lesson plans to cover the length of the training programme. Similarly, on-the-job training is well planned. The workplace supervisor negotiates with Jobwise's work-placement co-ordinator the skills and experience which the employer is to offer specific trainees. Trainees benefit from an individualised on-the-job learning plan. Jobwise monitors work placements closely by keeping in regular weekly contact with the workplace supervisor and trainee. Trainees complete their work diaries, indicating the development of skills and knowledge. Trainees fax the diaries to Jobwise on a weekly basis. Workplace supervisors also sign the diaries and include their comments on how the trainee has performed. The workplace supervisors fax to Jobwise their own evaluation of the work-placement plans, indicating any further developmental and training needs which trainees have. In this way, the learning plan is constantly reviewed and updated to meet the needs of the trainee.

35. Jobwise has good staffing procedures. Staff are recruited from a variety of backgrounds. They include former trainees of Jobwise and professionals in other fields, such as recruitment, information technology and health and safety. All new

full-time staff undertake a three-month probationary period, during which they receive an induction into the company and the job. New staff shadow other staff members to learn how the job role is to be performed. The new recruits observe other trainers and staff at work, and slowly take over the roles. During the first month of employment, new staff complete a weekly diary. Completed diary sheets are passed each week to the relevant manager or the director of training. During the probationary period, experienced staff or managers observe the new staff, and provide them with written feedback. Staff are also encouraged to provide each other with verbal feedback on each other's performance. When staff change roles, they are given the opportunity to shadow existing staff until they are familiar with their new role. After the probationary period, all staff undertake an annual appraisal in which their training needs are considered.

36. Jobwise has effective internal and external lines of communication. All staff attend weekly staff meetings. The management team meets monthly. Staff and management teams meet more frequently when important issues require discussion. Not all meetings are recorded. Each meeting produces action points which are dealt with by the relevant member of staff and which are reviewed at the next meeting. All members of staff are kept aware of developments in the organisation. External lines of communication are equally strong. Jobwise's work-placement co-ordinator is in regular weekly contact with employers providing work placements to discuss potential work-placement opportunities and any concerns which employers have. Jobwise's job-search manager is in regular contact with employment agencies and prospective employers, in order to market Jobwise's trainees and training programmes. This has resulted in an 8 per cent increase in the employment of trainees over the past nine months, compared with the same period in the previous year. The job-search manager regularly receives information from organisations which are recruiting receptionists and telephonists.

37. Jobwise makes good use of its management information, using effective computerised and manual information systems. The main management-information system is managed and regularly updated by Jobwise's training-centre manager. Information is prepared to indicate the performance of groups and individual trainees as well as different trainers. Data include information on trainees' ethnicity, disabilities, gender and postcodes. The training-centre manager also uses a manual data system for back-up purposes. Information from both systems is discussed weekly at staff meetings and forms an integral part of Jobwise's decision-making.

38. Jobwise's policies are not fully shared with all work-placement providers. Employers are provided with a handbook outlining some of Jobwise's policies. However, Jobwise does not ensure that employers read or refer to this handbook. Employers are not fully aware of arrangements such as progress-review procedures, equal opportunities procedures and policies, Jobwise's targets and values, and trainees' induction and monitoring arrangements.

39. Jobwise has insufficient staff development. All members of staff receive training in how to be effective trainers and are qualified assessors. Staff also take part in other training activities. However, these are focused entirely on training and

assessment, and do little to develop understanding of, for example, guidance and counselling, coaching skills, facilitation skills and equal opportunities.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

40. Jobwise meets all the TEC's quality assurance requirements. On the one occasion when an audit found non-compliance, Jobwise responded quickly, producing an action plan to resolve the issue. Jobwise has written procedures for all its management, staffing and quality assurance arrangements. Most of the systems are fully established and staff have their own copy of the relevant procedures and guidance notes. Arrangements for quality assurance are reviewed at monthly team meetings, and documents and procedures are reviewed once each year. Jobwise's staff are provided with written procedures for their duties in the training centre and for liaison with external agencies or work-placement providers. Trainers and trainees evaluate every learning session. These evaluations are recorded and analysed by the trainers' line manager, together with feedback provided by Jobwise's staff, trainees and work-placement providers. Plans for improvement are prepared using feedback and statistical data.

41. Jobwise's self-assessment report identified two strengths. Inspectors agreed with one strength, relating to action-planning, and judged the other to be no more than an indication that Jobwise routinely meets the TEC's contractual requirements. Jobwise identified three weaknesses in its self-assessment report, which were broadly linked to internal communications and the amount of paperwork. Inspectors did not judge these to be weaknesses. The report did not identify the effective monitoring of training and the use of data as strengths. Nor did it identify the lack of involvement of trainees, Jobwise's staff and employers in the self-assessment process as a weakness. Inspectors identified several significant strengths and awarded a grade higher than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective monitoring of training
- ◆ rigorous monitoring of data on achievement and progression
- ◆ effective action-planning

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak arrangements for assuring the quality of some workplace activities
- ◆ lack of involvement in self-assessment by trainees, staff and work-placement providers

42. Jobwise monitors its training effectively. Off-the-job training is evaluated through written feedback from trainers and trainees. The feedback is analysed by the training manager and action is taken to remedy any weaknesses. Additional

monitoring takes place as a result of direct observation of training by other trainers and Jobwise's managers. An external consultant also samples learning sessions. All observations are recorded, verbal feedback is provided for the trainer and a written report is prepared for the director of training. These arrangements are fully established features of Jobwise's quality assurance procedures. The standard of work placements is monitored by Jobwise's work-placement co-ordinator. The work-placement co-ordinator monitors the written feedback from the trainees' workplace supervisors and analyses the written and verbal feedback from each trainee. This analysis enables Jobwise to ensure that the employer provides an appropriate learning experience which meets the expectations of the trainees and the requirement of the learning programme. Through these arrangements, Jobwise identified weak commitment on the part of one employer and discontinued using that employer for work placements.

43. All trainees have their attendance and timekeeping monitored on a daily basis, at both the training centre and the work placement. Trainees are monitored weekly to measure their progress towards achieving their milestones. This monitoring helps to maintain strong links with the network of employers used by Jobwise for work placements. It also provides a strong focus for trainees' action-planning and target-setting during the weekly off-the-job progress reviews. When trainees progress more slowly than expected, their trainers raise this with the other trainers and closely monitor the trainee on a daily basis until the next progress review. Monitoring continues after trainees leave the programme. Jobwise's job-search manager contacts all trainees for written feedback in the second and fourth week, and again in the third month, after leaving Jobwise. The response rate is good, at over 90 per cent. By monitoring each trainee in this way, Jobwise obtains information about jobs gained. This allows Jobwise to claim funding from the TEC and to extend support to trainees long after training has ceased.

44. Each member of staff is required to provide written feedback on a weekly, monthly and annual basis on his or her performance as a trainer, and experience as a staff member. Similar written and verbal feedback is sought from trainees on a regular basis. The information is analysed and action plans are prepared to remedy concerns. Work-placement providers provide Jobwise with similar written and verbal feedback. For example, one employer indicated to Jobwise's work-placement co-ordinator that some trainees were turning up to work in inappropriate clothing, indicating to Jobwise that trainees needed to be made more aware of the required dress code. Jobwise has a strong culture of action-planning and developmental planning. Some actions are not recorded, but the process is sufficiently established to address issues and improve the standard of training.

45. Jobwise has comprehensive policies and procedures to assure the quality of all the activities which take place in the training centre. However, it has not extended some of its quality assurance systems to the activities of employers providing work placements. For example, Jobwise has no record of whether a trainee has completed Jobwise's or the employer's own induction to equal opportunities, or of whether the employer's own complaints and disciplinary procedures have been explained.

46. Jobwise did not include all those involved in training in the self-assessment process. Trainees, staff and work-placement providers completed surveys and questionnaires before the inspection. They were not aware of how these data had been analysed and how the analysis reflected on their performance. The self-assessment was over-reliant on statistical data, and did not lead to clear and critical judgements about the quality of training. All the strengths identified in the report were supported by statistical analysis. However, this was not the case for any of the weaknesses in the report.