

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION
REPORT APRIL 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
SEPTEMBER 2001

HYA Training Limited



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- ◆ work-based training for all people over 16
- ◆ provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- ◆ the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- ◆ adult and community learning
- ◆ training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Grading

In summarising their judgements about the quality of provision in curriculum or occupational areas and about the quality of leadership and management, including quality assurance and equality of opportunity, inspectors use a five-point scale. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- ◆ grade 1 – outstanding
- ◆ grade 2 – good
- ◆ grade 3 – satisfactory
- ◆ grade 4 – unsatisfactory
- ◆ grade 5 – very weak.

SUMMARY

The original inspection of HYA Training Limited was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for business administration, retailing and customer service, health, care and public services and quality assurance. These areas have been reinspected against the requirements of the *Common Inspection Framework* by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, which replaced the Training Standards Council on 1 April 2001. The sections of the original report dealing with business administration, retailing and customer service, health, care and public services and quality assurance have been replaced with the findings of the reinspection. Also, the report summary, report introduction and introduction to the inspection findings have been updated and reflect the findings of the reinspection. Sections of the report, dealing with areas which have not been reinspected, have been left in their original form. The amended inspection report is published on the Adult Learning Inspectorate's website (www.ali.gov.uk).

HYA Training Limited offers some particularly good training opportunities through its work placements. Training centre and workplace staff give good pastoral support to learners. At the original inspection, assessment of NVQs was infrequent and learners made slow progress towards their qualifications. NVQ assessment and internal verification responsibilities were sometimes poorly carried out. The company is beginning to develop its equal opportunities activities. Quality assurance processes were inadequate. The reinspection found NVQ assessments are now carried out regularly and rigorously. Learners are making much better progress towards their qualifications, although achievement of the goals on individual learning plans is still poor in some cases. Internal verification is now well planned and carried out thoroughly. Quality assurance processes are effective and lead to continuous improvements. There is good self-assessment and action-planning being carried out with regular monitoring and updating of HYA's action plan.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Business administration	4
Retailing & customer service	4
Health, care & public services	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	2
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	4

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Business administration	2
Retailing & customer service	3
Health, care & public services	3

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Quality assurance	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ highly effective support for learners
- ◆ particularly good work placements
- ◆ good key skills training
- ◆ thorough assessment process
- ◆ effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ successful use of feedback to bring about continuous improvements
- ◆ rigorous internal verification of NVQs

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some late introduction of key skills training
- ◆ poor achievement rates in retailing and care

INTRODUCTION

1. HYA Training Limited (HYA) was originally founded as Humberside Youth Association in the early 1970s, as a registered charity to provide for learners with learning difficulties or additional needs. In April 1999, it became a limited company (HYA Training Limited) with a board of trustees. It expanded its services to learners mainly in the 16 to 18 years age group. It now offers a wider range of government-funded training through contracts with Humberside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). It also offers its own training programmes on a commercial basis. At the original inspection, HYA had training centres on both sides of the River Humber. There was one in the Kingston-upon-Hull (Hull) docklands area and an administrative centre in Cottingham, both in east Yorkshire. These served Hull and Beverley. There was also a smaller training centre at Barton-upon-Humber in north Lincolnshire. These premises have since closed and been replaced by a training centre in Hessle, close to the Hull end of the Humber Bridge.

2. When the original inspection took place, HYA was led by its chief executive who was supported by two managers. There were 15 full-time staff and four part-time staff. There were 164 learners taking national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Of these, 137 were in Hull and 27 in Barton-upon-Humber. The chief executive retired in January 2001 and handed over to the two managers, who are now directors of HYA. The managing director has overall responsibility for the running of the business and chairs the local training providers association. The operations director is responsible for the day-to-day control of training and is line manager to all staff. Both directors are responsible for quality assurance. There are 14 full-time staff and one part-time member of staff. HYA achieved the Investor in People award, a national quality assurance standard, in August 2001. There are 129 learners currently working towards NVQs. These consist of 28 advanced modern apprentices, 18 foundation modern apprentices and 83 learners on other NVQ courses. Since April 2001 HYA has had a contract with the Humberside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for its NVQ training.

3. Hull and northeast Lincolnshire has a population of around 418,000. Less than 2 per cent of the population is from minority ethnic groups. The area has serious social and economic problems. The main industries are manufacturing, construction, wholesaling and retailing, transport and warehousing. Some of these industries, particularly manufacturing, are in decline. In June 2001, the unemployment rate was 7.1 per cent in Hull and 5.6 per cent in northeast Lincolnshire, both well above the national average of 3 per cent. In 1998, surveys by the Basic Skills Agency and other government-approved organisations showed that the Hull area had the highest proportion of people with poor literacy and numeracy skills in England. Surveys by the Basic Skills Agency and other government-approved organisations in 1997 and 1998 have shown that the Hull area has the highest proportion of people with poor literacy and numeracy skills in England. In 1999, the proportions of school leavers in Northeast Lincolnshire and

Hull achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above were respectively 35.5 per cent and 23.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In 2000 the rates were 24.4 per cent in Hull and 35.8 per cent in Northeast Lincolnshire, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent.

4. These problems are reflected in the learners joining HYA. Many have poor basic and personal skills and severe personal problems. At the original inspection, the initial assessment of most learners was outside the control of HYA. Now HYA recruit learners via a variety of routes and HYA or an external agency can carry out initial assessment. Many of HYA's learners have taken initial tests showing that they have certain additional needs and will need extra help to achieve their qualifications and find work. These are known as 'endorsed' learners and are entitled to more help than that normally received by NVQ learners. At the original inspection there were 100 endorsed learners, representing 61 per cent of all learners on training programmes. There are now 55 endorsed learners, representing 33 per cent of all learners on training programmes.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. All staff are included in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report for the original inspection was well designed and clearly written. It contains an action plan to build on HYA's strengths and to redress weaknesses. Inspectors considered some of the strengths stated in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice and some of the weaknesses to be of no great significance. They found other weaknesses HYA had not identified. HYA had not yet evaluated its assessment and verification practices in sufficient depth. HYA produced a self-assessment update and action plan for the reinspection.

6. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 20 days at HYA's premises in April 2000. They looked at a wide range of documents, including policies and procedures and learners' files and data from a wide range of statistical sources. Inspectors visited 21 work placements and interviewed 33 learners, one-fifth of the total. They spoke to many more learners while observing training sessions. They observed two off-the-job training sessions and one on-the-job training session. They also observed eight progress reviews, four assessments and one induction session. Inspectors held 27 interviews with HYA's staff and senior managers and interviewed two work-based assessors. They carried out 16 interviews with workplace supervisors or managers.

7. For the reinspection, a team of four inspectors spent a total of twelve days at HYA's premises in September 2001. They visited 21 employers' sites and interviewed 22 employers and 60 learners. They also held 14 interviews with members of HYA's staff. A range of documents was examined, mainly relating to quality assurance, including internal and external verification records, training records, NVQ portfolios and assessment documents. They also observed six assessments, four learners' progress reviews and six training sessions.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the original inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Business administration	0	0	0	3	0	3
Retailing & customer service	0	0	1	1	0	2
Health, care & public services	0	1	1	1	0	3
Total	0	1	2	5	0	8

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the reinspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Business administration	0	1	0	0	0	1
Retailing & customer service	0	0	1	0	0	1
Health, care & public services	1	1	0	0	0	2
Computer skills (key skills)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Induction (general)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	3	1	0	0	6

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Business administration

Grade 2

8. HYA offers training leading to NVQs in administration at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are 55 learners on these programmes. Twenty-nine are employed, 17 are on work placements and nine are working in HYA's training centre awaiting allocation to a work placement. Sixteen are advanced modern apprentices, seven are foundation modern apprentices and 32 are on other NVQ training programmes. Fifteen of these learners need additional learning support. Sixteen learners are working towards NVQs at level 3, 30 are working towards NVQs at level 2 and nine are working towards NVQs at level 1. Training mainly takes place on the job and learners receive monthly visits from HYA's staff for assessment and to help them with portfolio building. There are arrangements for learners to come into HYA's new training centre in Hull for theory sessions and additional help with portfolio-building or to improve their key skills, especially in information technology. Four HYA staff, one of whom works part time, train and assess the administration learners. All are qualified vocational assessors with relevant occupational experience and three are qualified internal verifiers.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ learners' poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ poor rate of progression into employment for learners
- ◆ some unmet training needs of learners
- ◆ insufficient coverage of theory work
- ◆ inefficient assessment techniques

9. Many improvements have been made in accordance with HYA's action plan. Trends in both retention and achievement are improving. Learners' training needs are now being addressed through structured off-the-job training at the new training centre. Theory work is also taking place in the same way. NVQ assessment techniques have improved to the extent that this is now a strength. The update to the self-assessment report concentrated on the strengths and weaknesses from the

original inspection. Inspectors found two additional strengths and one additional weakness. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given by HYA in its latest self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective links with employers
- ◆ good portfolios of evidence
- ◆ thorough assessment process
- ◆ good use of additional qualifications

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some late introduction of key skills training

10. As at the original inspection, the links forged with local employers are strong. Learners receive good on-the-job training from experienced workplace staff. Learners value this greatly and it increases their confidence in their ability to learn. Workplace supervisors assist in the learning process by giving learners tasks that enable them to develop and acquire skills progressively. HYA's staff emphasise the importance of on-the-job training during their visits to learners' workplaces. HYA has a pool of potential work-placement providers who understand the aims of HYA's training and the needs of learners. At the original inspection, there were not enough suitable work placements for all learners. This situation is now much improved. Workplace supervisors and HYA's staff communicate effectively about their learners. HYA's staff and employers set learners a good example through their productive working relationships with one another.

11. Learners produce good NVQ portfolios. They take pride in producing good evidence for their portfolios. The portfolios are well presented. The work is highly individual, reflecting each learner's workplace. HYA's staff provide step-by-step guidance about collecting evidence and building it into a portfolio. Learners learn how to match their evidence to the NVQ requirements. Portfolios are well structured and evidence is appropriately cross-referenced to the NVQ units.

12. There has been a great improvement in assessment and internal verification since the original inspection. Assessments are much more thorough. Learners have a clear understanding of the assessment process and how it relates to their NVQ. They produce a wide range of evidence, most of it produced by observation in the workplace. Learners also use other relevant types of evidence and witness testimonies from colleagues and supervisors in learners' work. Learners are able to cross-reference the evidence and complete their assessment records without difficulty. Assessment planning is good, with learners fully aware of what is expected of them. Feedback to learners is concise and accurate and is given in both oral and written form immediately after assessments. Internal verification is now thorough and takes place throughout learners' time in training. HYA has verification plans to ensure that sufficient checking of portfolios occurs. Internal verifiers observe assessors and give them feedback on their performance. Internal

verifiers and assessors regularly exchange good practice at planned meetings to bring about continuous improvement.

13. All learners benefit from the opportunity to achieve additional recognised external qualifications in health and safety and computer work. Training for these takes place early in the learners' time at HYA and motivates the learners. Learners take pride in these qualifications and display them in their portfolios, also using them as evidence for elements of their NVQs.

14. At the time of the original inspection, retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners who were not modern apprentices had been consistently poor over the previous four years. Retention and achievement rates are now improving. Of the 1998-99 starters, 48 per cent left without achieving goals on their individual learning plans. This has fallen to 42 per cent in 1999-2000 and 27 per cent in 2000-01. The figure for learners who completed training plus those still in training from 1998-99 starts is 38 per cent, the figure for 1999-2000 is 49 per cent and for 2000-01 73 per cent.

15. HYA provides well structured off-the-job training at its new training centre to meet learners' needs. At the time of the original inspection, employers would identify learners' specific skills gaps such as telephone skills, customer care or particular computer skills. They were not always able to provide training themselves and HYA did not offer any off-the-job training either. Now individual learning plans identify each learner's skills gaps and HYA arranges appropriate training.

16. Good theory training is available to all learners at the new training centre. At the original inspection HYA failed to ensure that learners covered the required theory work properly. Learning resources for theory work were poor. There was only one textbook and learning pack in each of the Hull and Barton training centres. Not all learners visited the training centres, however. Learners had little access to relevant reference materials in the workplace. They relied on handouts from their trainer/assessor, but these were unsatisfactory. There were no off-the-job training sessions to cover theory work for the NVQ. Resources are now adequate to meet the theory training needs of learners. Effective learning packs and handouts are also available to learners.

17. Key skills training is only just starting to be integrated into some of the learners' NVQ training. Some learners have now missed the opportunity to collect evidence of their key skills earlier in their training. Some learners also have a poor understanding of key skills. At the original inspection, learners were leaving their programmes early without completing either key skills or their apprenticeship framework. New learners are now commencing key skills training earlier in their training.

Retailing & customer service

Grade 3

18. At the original inspection, HYA offered training leading to NVQs in retail and warehousing at levels 1 and 2. There were 50 learners in this occupational area. Five were modern apprentices and 45 were learners on other training programmes for young people, who required additional support to complete their NVQs. There are now 32 learners in this occupational area. Five are advanced modern apprentices taking customer service NVQs and 27 are on other NVQ training programmes. Seventeen of those on NVQ training are working towards a level 1 NVQ in retailing, nine are taking a level 2 NVQ in retailing and one is taking a warehousing NVQ at level 2. Of these 27 learners, 24 will require additional support to complete their NVQs. Eleven learners are employed, with the remainder in work placements. There are 20 female and 12 male learners. There are two members of staff responsible for training in retailing and warehousing. Four members of staff are involved in customer service training. All are appropriately qualified and experienced. They internally verify each other's assessments. In addition, the centre internal verifier selects and checks a proportion of the portfolios. Customer service advanced modern apprentices receive key skills training as an integral part of their NVQ training. Their trainer has the relevant qualifications. Learners are mainly referred to HYA through their local careers service. A one-day initial induction takes place at HYA for all learners. Initial assessment is carried out and the outcomes recorded on each learner's individual learning plan. Any prior achievement or learning is also identified. A schedule of off-the-job training sessions was introduced in August 2001 with different topics being covered over a 10-month period. All learners are invited to attend. Jobsearch sessions take place weekly. HYA's staff visit the workplaces either fortnightly or monthly to assess the learners and review their progress. Workplace supervisors are included in the discussions. Action plans are agreed at each visit and targets set. Staff check at each visit whether learners have carried out the tasks agreed at the previous visit.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ learners' poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ poor rate of progression into employment for learners
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ poor learning resources
- ◆ some poor assessment practice
- ◆ inconsistent use of documents and record keeping
- ◆ lack of rigour in the internal verification process

19. Since the original inspection, considerable improvements have been made and five of the weaknesses are no longer applicable. Retention and achievement rates have improved among both advanced modern apprentices and NVQ learners. In the latter case, retention has improved from 9 per cent in 1999-2000 to 49 per cent last year. On- and off-the-job training are now well co-ordinated. Discussions now take place between employers, learners and HYA's staff to identify the training

POOR PRACTICE

NVQ logbooks are being re-used. A learner had been given an NVQ logbook but some of the pages giving details of the NVQ standards had been previously written on and deleted. The learner did not know why and was confused by this. The trainer had only recently been recruited so was also not aware of why this had been done. Arrangements were made for the learner to have a new logbook and to have the units explained. The writing and deleting was only on the printed standards sheets. There is no suggestion that evidence from another learner was being used as the evidence summary sheets were not marked.

available at work and, wherever possible, to link this to the off-the-job training. Since HYA moved to its new training premises, facilities and learning resources have improved. New equipment has been purchased and staff have access to training materials to use with learners. Assessment practice is now satisfactory. Documents and their use are now standardised and record-keeping is consistent. A new, thorough, internal verification system has now been introduced. The self-assessment report for the reinspection used the progress made on the action plan from the original inspection. The original inspection identified four strengths. At the reinspection, inspectors judged that three of these were incorporated into the strength relating to good work placements. Inspectors awarded the same grade as HYA.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ highly effective support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor achievement of NVQs

20. The work placements are still good. HYA give a high priority to selecting good work placements that will provide learners with a supportive environment. The employers involved are committed to training and many also have their own training programmes. HYA's staff link the on- and off-the-job training wherever possible. Employers are briefed about their role in the NVQ process at the start of the training programme and are actively involved in planning training and assessment. Employers try to ensure learners make progress through their qualifications. For example, occasionally employers change arrangements for stock deliveries to allow their learners to be assessed on those tasks. Employers are involved in the progress review process. Eleven of the learners are employed and many of the others, who are in work placements, have been told they will be employed after they have been with their company for a period of time.

21. HYA offers a supportive environment to many learners who lack confidence or have additional needs. Currently, 24 out of the 27 NVQ learners have additional needs and HYA offers them a high level of support. Trainers visit learners in the workplace very regularly, particularly those learners who lack confidence. HYA's staff are also available by telephone and are always willing to make extra visits to learners for pastoral reasons. Learners value this extra support and most are now making good progress towards their NVQ. Staff make an effort to inform employers about the learners at the end of each visit. They give employers the opportunity to comment on how the training has increased the learners' motivation and confidence. Learners often spend several weeks in the HYA training centre receiving help with numeracy and literacy work, confidence building and many other diverse needs to help them to secure a work placement. HYA employs a training centre support worker and a youth support worker with appropriate experience to help these learners. Sometimes learners lose their work placement and can return to the training centre for appropriate support until a new workplace

can be found. HYA staff visit learners at work regularly and are always available by telephone to offer advice and support or to make additional visits whenever required. Learners appreciate the support offered. Learners who are not employed can attend weekly jobsearch sessions at HYA and are given good assistance to find employment.

22. Learners' achievement rates are still poor and are falling. In 1998-99, 24 per cent of NVQ learners achieved the goals on their individual learning plan. Not including those still in training, the rates for 1999-2000 and 2000-01 are 21 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. HYA recognises this and has investigated why this is happening. The results have shown that over the last two years, the number of learners recruited who have additional learning needs and are working towards level 1 NVQs has increased. Many of these learners spend some time in the training centre receiving Life Skills training or appropriate additional training as identified in their individual learning plans before they can start work placements. This also delays their starting their NVQ, giving the impression that there is slow progress. However, evidence seen during the inspection shows that satisfactory progress is being made with all the learners. Almost all have had some NVQ assessment. HYA has identified a need for a foundation course which would allow learners to receive the appropriate additional support before starting on an NVQ programme and work placement. Currently HYA does not have this option in its contract, but it is discussing the possibility with the local LSC. The achievement rate for the advanced modern apprentices is better than the NVQ learners. It has been improving, although is still not good, with the exception of learners who have started in the last year.

GOOD PRACTICE

In one residential home for the elderly, the assessor set up a training session in which she and two learners carried out some simple and suitable mobility exercises with the residents. The assessor ensured that they participated willingly and made sure they were comfortable and relaxed. Clear instructions and explanations about exercises were given to residents. The assessor was an excellent role model to learners. Evidence gathered was directly relevant to their NVQ requirements

Health, care & public services

Grade 3

23. At the original inspection there were 43 learners on the programmes. Of those, 41 were women. Five learners were modern apprentices, nine were national trainees and 29 were on other training programmes for young people. There are now eight advanced modern apprentices, 11 foundation modern apprentices and 24 on other training programmes. Two of the 43 learners are men. Twenty-four of the learners are employed and the other 19 are in work placements in residential homes. Sixteen of the learners are receiving additional support. Eleven learners are working towards NVQs at level 3 and 24 working towards level 2 NVQs. Eight learners are working towards a qualification which is equivalent to an NVQ at level 1. Work for this qualification is being used as preparation prior to commencing NVQ training at level 2. Off-the-job training takes place in several different ways. Training leading to additional qualifications is also available to the learners. All learners are offered training and assessment in five key skills. There are work-based NVQ assessors in all the care establishments where learners work. Two of HYA's staff carry out off-the-job training. They also carry out NVQ assessments when necessary and act as internal verifiers. Both are suitably qualified and experienced.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ poor rate of progression into employment for learners
- ◆ some weak assessment practice
- ◆ lack of rigour in internal verification process
- ◆ learners' slow progress towards gaining qualifications

24. HYA has made improvements which have overcome most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Retention is no longer a weakness, although some achievement rates are still poor. HYA's updated action plan recognises this. Assessment practices are now sound and well documented. Work-based assessors receive regular training and their performance is monitored. There is now continuous and thorough internal verification. Good records are now kept of this and the process is now more streamlined. HYA has introduced thorough monitoring of learners' NVQ unit completion. Learners are now making good progress towards their NVQs.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ good training techniques
- ◆ good opportunities for additional qualifications
- ◆ good key skills training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poor achievement rates

GOOD PRACTICE

Some employers liaise with HYA's trainer/assessors to organise presentation ceremonies in the residential homes when learners achieve qualifications or complete their training. These are surprise events for the learners and take place in a party atmosphere with cakes, flowers and photographs. These help to celebrate the learners' achievement and help their motivation.

25. The learners receive training which is well co-ordinated. Good liaison and effective relationships with employers ensure that the on- and off-the job training are linked. Learners receive a good introduction to the NVQ programme. Off-the-job training arrangements are flexible. Learners can attend individual training and help with recording evidence and building portfolios. There is a structured programme of group off-the-job training sessions covering topics relevant to care work in care and the NVQ. For example, all learners attend courses in dealing with abuse and aggression early in their training. They recognise that this helps them in the workplace. HYA's staff use good training techniques. They use a variety of activities to sustain learners' interest and give unobtrusive support to learners who need additional help. HYA tells employers and work-based assessors about the content of the training sessions and some of them contribute specialist resources. The lessons are well prepared. Learners provide feedback after each session. Modifications are made to training sessions as a result. At the original inspection, too much information was often given without checking that the learners understood it. Now trainers make unobtrusive but regular checks on learners' understanding. If learners are unable to attend sessions at HYA's premises, the training staff will see them individually in their workplace. In some work placements where there are several learners, the off-the-job training takes place on

the employer's premises. There is also good on-the-job training. Clearly written training plans are used to introduce the learner to the workplace, its policies, procedures and working practices. HYA staff meet regularly with work-based assessors to plan the training and identify which of them is responsible for particular aspects of it. Assessors also give some training to the learners.

26. Learners have the opportunity to obtain additional training qualifications, for example in basic first aid, manual handling and lifting. They are also able to take a nationally recognised qualification in information technology if they wish. At work, learners attend training sessions given by other professionals, such as pharmacists. Learners are also able to attend HYA's training centre for additional support sessions which may lead to basic skills qualifications for some learners who need help with their basic skills. Training packs have been designed for each unit. These give learners guidance on the types of evidence to gather and how to record it. The packs also contain written notes and materials which may assist the learners. Learners also have access to other useful training materials in the workplace.

27. Key skills training is an integral part of the NVQ training. HYA has devised some particularly good assignments and projects which enable learners to gather evidence for specific NVQ units and also for their application of number and information technology key skills units. At the time of the original inspection, trainers did not make this dual purpose clear to learners. Learners are now aware of how they would obtain their key skills qualifications. Assessment plans also identify how evidence can be gathered for the key skills units of communication and working with others. Fifteen of the 43 current learners have obtained certification for all five key skills and five have completed their key skills work and are awaiting assessment. At the original inspection, retention and achievement rates among learners who were not modern apprentices were poor.

28. Retention is no longer a weakness. It has risen to over 80 per cent for modern apprenticeships and over 60 per cent for other youth training. However, fewer than 45 per cent of learners achieve all the goals on their individual learning plans. There was a 66 per cent achievement of NVQs for foundation modern apprentices in 1999-2000. NVQ achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices was 50 per cent in the same period. For other learners, many of whom are endorsed, the NVQ achievement rate was 47.4 per cent between 1998 and 2000.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

29. HYA has an equal opportunities policy that meets contractual requirements. It is issued to staff, trainees and employers. On some marketing material, HYA identifies itself as an 'equal opportunities employer'. The mission statement includes a reference to 'equal opportunities for all'. In line with TEC and the awarding bodies' requirements, data are collected on trainees' gender, ethnic

origin and disabilities. The proportion of men on programmes is 18 per cent, compared with 34 per cent across all youth programmes in the Humberside TEC area. No trainee or member of staff is from a minority ethnic group. In the Humberside area, people from minority ethnic groups make up 1 per cent of the population. There are currently three trainees with disabilities on programmes and they represent 1.8 per cent of total trainees. This proportion is slightly higher than the percentage of trainees with disabilities on all Humberside youth programmes, which stands at 1.5 per cent. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses stated in the self-assessment report. They considered one of the strengths to be more relevant to trainee support. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good initiatives to promote equal opportunities
- ◆ good planning to ensure the new premises are accessible to the physically disabled

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no systematic monitoring of promotion of work-placement providers
- ◆ no monitoring of the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy

30. HYA has well-established practices to ensure its promotion of equal opportunities meets contractual requirements. Staff and trainees' recruitment procedures are fair and equitable. Staff and trainees have mutual respect. The company is initiating a more active approach to the promotion of equal opportunities. It has established an agenda for action and several good initiatives are underway. Managers have attended training sessions on equal opportunities and have passed information learnt on these on to other staff by running an in-house workshop. A further staff workshop is planned. The equal opportunities policy has been recently reviewed and up-dated, following staff discussions. Marketing materials, staff recruitment material, training materials and evaluation questionnaires have been amended to bring them into line with the organisation's policy. This review of documents is not complete, but a good start has been made. The review form now includes a space to record any comments that trainees may wish to make in relation to equal opportunities issues. The organisation is making efforts to recruit more male staff. HYA is due to move to new premises in North Humberside. The impact of the move on equal opportunities has been carefully considered. The location and physical layout of the new premises have been chosen with the interests of the physically disabled in mind. The new premises are not only more accessible for people with impaired mobility, but also more conveniently situated for all trainees.

31. The monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace is unsystematic and lacks rigour. HYA's staff visit all prospective work-placement providers to check on their health and safety practices and their promotion of equal opportunities. They record their findings on a special form. Staff have to state whether the work-placement provider is in agreement with HYA's equal

opportunities policy and has provision for physically disabled trainees. The form does not, however, allow staff to provide detailed or extensive information on the work-placement providers' attitude towards equal opportunities. Employers are given a copy of HYA's policy at this visit. HYA's contract with work-placement providers mentions only the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* and the *Race Relations Act 1976*. Employers of national trainees or modern apprentices sign a TEC agreement which makes no specific reference to equal opportunities.

32. In order to meet contractual requirements, HYA collects data on sex, ethnic origin and disability. This is passed to Humberside TEC, but is not systematically collated and analysed by the training company.

Trainee support

Grade 2

33. Potential trainees are recruited through the careers service or by direct application or by referral from employers. There is a key member of staff who deals with all referrals and interviews. There is an open access policy. The initial assessment of most trainees is outside the control of HYA. The company only carries out initial assessment of the basic skills of direct entrants. If these trainees are subsequently found to require additional learning support then most are referred back to the external body which carried out their evaluation. Those in this category who have commenced work placements undergo a special procedure to ascertain their additional learning requirements. All trainees receive an initial assessment of their key skills. The company carries out accreditation of trainees' prior learning and achievement. Trainees attend a one-day induction. Employed trainees are taken through the same programme on an individual basis in the workplace. Additional assistance is available for trainees with specific learning needs and disabilities. Reviews of trainees' progress are carried out more frequently than the TEC contract requires. The self-assessment report identified six strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors considered some strengths to be no more than normal practice. Two additional strengths and one weakness were identified during the inspection. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective response to trainees' additional learning needs
- ◆ particularly good pastoral support for trainees
- ◆ celebration of trainees' successes
- ◆ regular and frequent reviews of trainees' progress

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to record some provision of support accurately
- ◆ failure to set trainees clear aims during progress reviews

34. Some trainees are recruited directly by the company and have not undergone the initial assessment that is carried out by an external organisation. If HYA's staff then consider that these trainees need additional learning support, they are referred to the external organisation. Trainees are also given the opportunity to sample occupational areas. The trainees' application form is sent to the training company of their choice. An interview takes place when the trainee transfers to the chosen training company. All recorded initial assessment documents and test results are forwarded to the training company. Written records are kept of all interviews. Following initial assessment, a small number of trainees have been placed on a level 1 NVQ programme but showed themselves to be more suited to a level 2 NVQ. Trainees who are not identified as requiring additional help take basic skills tests during induction at HYA. Arrangements for carrying out initial assessment of trainees' occupational skills are in the early stages of development.

35. The company is using the endorsement system, for establishing the level of additional learning support required, incorrectly in the case of some trainees. These trainees have not been through the process of evaluation for endorsement and have not been properly identified as requiring the additional help that attracts additional funding. The company, however, gives them an endorsement category for administrative convenience.

36. When trainees are recruited directly by HYA they may have some additional needs. These trainees are evaluated externally. There is a special exemption process only for those who have started work placements. In order to provide continuity of work experience, these trainees are evaluated by HYA. Humberside TEC then oversigns the proposed category of endorsement. There is inconsistency in the number of tests used in this process. The initial testing system issued by the external body uses a wide-ranging battery of tests. HYA's system for the endorsement of trainees uses only the basic skills agency test. There is inconsistency in the qualification requirements for staff involved in endorsements. The staff of the TEC and the central endorsement processing centre must be specially qualified to analyse and confirm endorsements. Staff at HYA do not have to be qualified to evaluate the results of an endorsement test. Staff at HYA have a poor understanding of the difference between the normal support given during an NVQ and the additional support requested by the TEC's endorsement.

37. The induction programme is comprehensive and it has been standardised. Trainees are given an information pack and a well-written handbook which summarises the information imparted during the induction process. It includes clear information on health and safety and equal opportunities. It explains what trainees should do if they are subjected to bullying or harassment at any time during training. Three months after induction, the trainees are questioned on what they have been told during induction. Records show that 96 per cent of trainees understand the information given to them during induction. Eighty-one per cent found it interesting and well presented. Ninety-six per cent understood information on health and safety and a similar percentage were happy with the way induction was carried out.

38. HYA offers a wide range of assistance to trainees. Trainees with identified literacy and numeracy needs are offered the opportunity to improve these skills through structured learning programmes. The training company refers trainees with particular learning problems such as dyslexia to external agencies. Assistance given to trainees is well recorded. Specific learning aids are purchased to assist trainees with hearing impairments. Trainees are encouraged to use audio tapes to record evidence for their portfolios. Trainees have ready access to the training staff for individual assistance. Staff are very helpful to trainees seeking employment. Trainees who are experiencing difficulties in finding a work placement are placed with the centre support worker who provides help and help with job-search skills. Trainees are helped to prepare their curricula vitae, application forms and letters. They are also helped to develop interview skills. Work-placements are carefully chosen for trainees who may require specific help in the workplace. Trainees have the opportunity to work towards additional qualifications to strengthen their employability.

39. Trainees receive particularly good pastoral support. Staff build up excellent relationships with the trainees who feel confident about discussing confidential and personal issues and seeking help. HYA has links with many external agencies to which trainees are referred for counselling and other specific types of assistance. Staff respond to trainees' requests for help outside normal working hours. Reviews of trainees' progress are carried out regularly and more frequently than required by the TEC contract. Trainees' success is celebrated at an annual award ceremony. Staff are also presented with certificates for any training they have completed at the same ceremony.

40. The training staff do not fully understand some of the support systems. Individual training plans are not updated to take account of trainees' progress and achievements. Some staff are unclear how to use the learning plan. The type of additional help required by the trainees is identified in some instances, but there is no clear indication of how it will be provided. Many parts of the learning plan are completed to a standard format and the plan does not include individual goals for the completion of specific units of training. Not all aspects of pastoral support are adequately recorded. The rewards of some progress reviews contain little information on action planning and target setting. Details of assistance needed by trainees and the action taken to provide this are inadequately recorded in some reviews.

41. HYA's staff deal with problems in a good-humoured and positive way. There is a high level of sickness and unauthorised absence among trainees. Monitoring control checks are kept on the length of time trainees are working in the training centre while waiting for a work placement. There are checks on those who fail to attend. Staff follow set procedures in such cases. The names of trainees who do not attend are presented to a staff meeting to determine whether or not to remove them from the register. The number of days of sickness is also recorded. The direct recruitment process takes up a great deal of staff time and is not necessarily productive. Results of a survey show that between September 1999 and March 2000, letters were sent inviting 249 potential trainees to interview at HYA. These

potential trainees had first approached their local careers service offices asking for training and had been referred to HYA. Of the 249 trainees who received letters for interviews, only 30 per cent turned up for interview. When the interviews took place, 87 per cent of trainees were given start dates for NVQ programmes. Only 50 per cent of these turned up at HYA begin training. Of the total of 249 who asked to start and received an invitation to interview, only 34 trainees, or 13 per cent started.

Management of training

Grade 3

42. HYA is owned by Humberside Youth Association. It has a board of trustees. All policy, strategy and finance matters are dealt with by the managing director. The managing director has decided to retire and hand over progressively to a director who manages training operations and a business development manager. These managers are gradually taking up their responsibilities. They hold regular meetings with staff. They keep in close contact with Humberside TEC. They work from the Hull training site but visit the Barton site regularly. Both these managers are planning the move of the Hull training centre to new premises. The business development manager organises a marketing campaign and keeps in close contact with employers. The training company is a member of the separate local employers network groups for north and south Humber and the National Training Federation. The training company has made a commitment to gain the Investors in People Standard. Inspectors mainly agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report but considered that some strengths were no more than normal practice. They agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ particularly good communication between managers and staff
- ◆ managers' clear strategic vision
- ◆ good additional training programmes for staff
- ◆ strong links between training company and local employers and organisations

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no written business plan
- ◆ insufficiently flexible management information system
- ◆ insufficient and infrequent assessment of trainees
- ◆ some low staffing levels

43. There is particularly good communication between managers and staff. Staff said they enjoyed and looked forward to meetings. The management style is open, fair and managers are supportive of staff. Important programme control meetings are held by each occupational area at which trainees' progress and problems are discussed. Regular minuted meetings are also held to discuss quality assurance matters. These cover a wide range of issues in depth. Examples of recent

discussions at these meetings include key skills initial assessment, recruitment progress, interviews for trainees leaving programmes, self-assessment, progress on the gaining of work placements, health and safety, staff courses and work experience matters.

44. Managers are evolving a clear and exciting strategic vision. Plans are in hand to move and merge the Hull and Cottingham centres at the new site in Hessle beginning in June 2000. The two managers now taking up full responsibilities have spent a year analysing the best sites in the Hull area to use for relocation of the training centre. They have identified and obtained a self-contained business unit with two floors, fitted with double glazing and computer points near the Hull end of the Humber Bridge. This site has ample parking and is next to a large industrial estate where trainees are already on work placements. The new premises has been obtained with an initial rent-free period. The new premises have spacious training rooms and offices. The purchase of new computers and Internet access has been evaluated and costed. A new management information system has been identified for purchase. The building has much easier access for those with disabilities than the existing building and there are suitable lavatory facilities for them. The management vision includes ideas on the further improvement of contact between HYA and local employers and organisations on either side of the Humber Bridge and further afield. Managers are enthusiastic about the benefits which they believe will be gained from the move from old dockland premises to the new building.

45. There is a formal appraisal system for staff at which their training needs are identified. Managers make it possible for staff to attend additional training courses. These courses cover topics such as additional learning support for trainees, health and safety, substance misuse, dealing with aggressive behaviour, equal opportunities, first aid, and key skills.

46. Local employers are very helpful to HYA's trainees. Work-placement managers and employers are regularly sent questionnaires asking them about working relationships and most responses to these are positive. The HYA marketing process is well designed. Marketing materials are carefully designed and produced. They include clear leaflets on the NVQ programmes for youth trainees. There are also appropriate leaflets specifically for modern apprentices and national trainees. HYA belongs to the strategic marketing organisation managed by a group of training companies. These adhere to a set of objectives which include producing a charter for excellence, the monitoring of marketing material and the matching of training to local labour market information. HYA's managers attend these meetings of this marketing organisation. Good practice is shared. A magazine has been produced for all trainees of companies belonging to the organisation. Trainees' achievements are celebrated in this magazine. A survey has been carried out by a research company on all training providers in the area. The survey reveals how well each provider is doing, and findings are confidential. Managers have acted upon findings in respect of HYA.

47. The managing director was on holiday during the inspection and could not be interviewed. The managing director keeps the records concerning TEC contract

compliance. The managing director has not produced a written business plan. The two managers taking over from the managing director are still learning how to manage the complex provision. Although the company is small, its responsibilities are complex and it covers a large geographical area. About two thirds of all trainees are endorsed as needing additional help and managers have to ensure they receive good pastoral and additional training support. At present, although the new strategic vision is communicated clearly, it is not set down in writing. There are no written plans which are part of any formal business plan. Many key operational decisions made by managers are not set out in writing, with clear aims and a date by which these must be achieved. Managers say they have to spend a great deal of time on routine day-to-day matters rather than management itself. They are awaiting the appointment of a new company secretary who, they hope, will share some of the routine work they have to carry out at the moment.

48. Managers have identified significant deficiencies in their computer system. While it can generate data to meet the requirements of the TEC contract, it cannot produce clear data on trainees' performance and achievements. The company plans to purchase a new and more flexible computer system.

49. Many trainees have social problems. Some have increased in confidence and have improved their occupational skills. They have benefited from the opportunity to do real work. Many trainees are endorsed as needing additional help and support. The company has, however, breached trainees' confidentiality by putting up lists of trainees, indicating trainees' endorsement categories which describe the level of additional learning support they require, in training rooms. Managers have stated that they will cease this practice immediately. Trainees are not assessed frequently enough. Planning of assessment is inadequate. There is a shortage of assessors. A recruitment drive for new staff is currently in progress.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

50. At the original inspection, HYA's guide to good practice specified the areas of training that were subject to quality assurance. HYA gathered the views of learners about the quality of training through the use of questionnaires. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report. Managers had attended quality assurance and self-assessment training sessions organised by Humberside TEC. Managers used different types of questionnaires to evaluate the quality of induction and training. HYA has quality assurance systems covering all of its training and assessment. There are written procedures for NVQ assessment and verification. There is regular internal auditing of key training and assessment procedures to check that staff are observing procedures consistently.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no well-established quality assurance system
- ◆ little scope given to internal audit of quality

- ◆ no monitoring of the quality of the training process
- ◆ insufficient analysis of data on learners' achievements and destinations
- ◆ no written clear action plan to improve the company's performance
- ◆ no action on learners' responses to questionnaires

51. All of the weaknesses have been corrected and in some cases are now strengths. All these weaknesses have been successfully remedied and quality assurance procedures for the main training and assessment processes are now well established. There are internal audits every three months to check that the procedures are being followed consistently. Managers are evaluating training sessions every six months and checking the quality of the training materials. They give feedback to help staff improve their training and the training materials. HYA has a new database, which staff use to monitor retention and achievement data. The action plan developed from the previous inspection and the ongoing self-assessment process is regularly discussed and updated to show the progress of improvements being made. HYA now responds promptly to feedback from learners. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given by HYA in its latest update to the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ successful involvement of all staff in quality assurance
- ◆ good self-assessment process
- ◆ good-quality training premises and resources
- ◆ effective evaluation of training delivery and materials
- ◆ successful use of feedback to bring about continuous improvement
- ◆ regular and effective monitoring of self-assessment action plan
- ◆ rigorous internal verification of NVQs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ limited follow-up of quality improvements

52. At the original inspection, managers had made some good progress implementing improvements following self-assessment. The HYA's guide to good practice set out the main quality assurance procedures. This booklet was produced in January 2000. It explained how often staff should carry out the various quality assurance processes. Managers had set themselves and their staff, clear and sensible goals for improvement through their self-assessment action plan. The reinspection found much better quality assurance procedures have been devised and implemented and are operating successfully. Staff are regularly involved in improving systems and procedures to do with training and NVQ assessment. There is a positive approach to quality assurance within HYA and a culture of continuous improvement is evident throughout the organisation.

53. The self-assessment process is good and involves all staff. Staff are keen to help managers improve HYA's training. They take part in meetings to discuss

improvements in detail. The self-assessment report is well written. HYA regularly updates the action plan resulting from self-assessment with details of targets being achieved. The action plan is reviewed, with new targets and actions being added. A short update report was produced for the reinspection. This identified the progress made since the original inspection against the post-inspection action plan. Staff contributed to the judgements in the report. Learners and employers have also contributed to some of the judgements through questionnaires to gain their views about the quality of training, assessments and support.

54. There is now effective evaluation of training. HYA's managers observe and evaluate off-the-job training sessions every six months. They give feedback to the training staff to help them improve. HYA also checks and improves the quality of its training materials.

55. The quality assurance system at the original inspection had failed to identify learners' poor retention and achievement rates on most programmes. Data about learners' performance was not systematically analysed. Now, however, HYA uses a comprehensive commercial database designed specifically for training organisations. Managers and staff are provided with regular reports from the database about learners' progress, retention and achievements. These are then discussed with a manager and the individual trainer/assessors to check if agreed targets are going to be met. The targets have been set to remedy the poor achievement and retention rates and these are now showing signs of improvement. HYA uses feedback from learners and employers to bring about continuous improvement. HYA acts on feedback as soon as the information is received. HYA collects feedback from questionnaires completed at the end of short training courses, a learners' comments box in the learners' rest area at HYA and from general questionnaires sent to all learners and employers. Feedback from the questionnaires and the inspectors' interviews, shows that learners and employers are very pleased with the training and general service provided by HYA.

56. The system for internally verifying NVQs in all occupational areas is operating very efficiently. It is well planned, covers all the areas needed to ensure the quality of assessment and is applied thoroughly. Verifiers provide written feedback to assessors and learners and suggestions for improvements.

57. One of the ways in which HYA has improved is by moving to much better premises since the original inspection. The new premises are modern, and are well decorated and maintained. There are good training resources available and managers regularly check the quality and suitability of these. These, together with the positive images and signs displayed help to create a good learning environment for young people. Quality assurance is still not fully established at HYA. Many of the quality assurance systems and procedures have only been introduced relatively recently. HYA has yet to follow up its arrangements to analyse their effectiveness and see how they could be improved.