

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Carver Training

21 May 2001



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## CARVER TRAINING

### Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## **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.

## **Inadequate provision**

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

## SUMMARY

### The provider

Carver Training is a private training organisation based in Wolverhampton. It currently has 55 learners. In addition, there are 11 adults on training programmes but these were not inspected. Most of the learners are employed in the Wolverhampton area.

### Overall judgement

Overall, the quality of the provision meets the needs of learners. The New Deal 18-24 provision was outstanding and the work-based training for young people was satisfactory. The leadership and management of Carver Training were satisfactory.

### Work-based learning for young people

Work-based learning for young people is satisfactory in business administration, retail and customer service and on the foundation for work Life Skills option. Carver Training currently has 53 learners on these programmes. The learners in the two vocational areas have good work placements. They are assessed frequently in the workplace and receive effective assistance in portfolio-building from training staff. Learners' NVQ level 2 achievement rates are good on the training programme in administration. After obtaining one NVQ, many learners are encouraged to achieve another. Overall retention rates on work-based learning programmes are declining and have fallen from 78 per cent in 1998-99, to 65 per cent in 2000-01. Many workplace supervisors have a poor understanding of NVQs and have little involvement in learners' progress reviews. The progress review process is not thorough enough and does not include the setting of clear targets for learners. The number of apprentices is low and none has completed the framework.

### New Deal

There are only two New Deal 18-24 clients and they are both in the Gateway to Work. During 2000-01, there have been 166 clients in this well-planned and effectively managed intensive two-week Gateway which aims to enhance clients' employability. The quality of the training in the Gateway was outstanding. Nearly half the clients gain a job by the time their training is completed and Carver Training staff offer continuing support to those who require it. Clients benefit from the good pastoral support they receive and from the effective links between Carver Training, the careers service and the Employment Service.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of Carver Training are satisfactory. Working relationships with external organisations are productive and the open management style encourages good teamworking. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. There are comprehensive arrangements for staff development. Targets are not set for learners' retention and achievement rates and the proportion of learners who obtain employment. Inspectors found weaknesses in training which were not identified in the self-assessment report. In addition, the self-assessment report did not cover learners' achievements adequately.

## GRADES

<b>Business administration</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Retailing &amp; customer service</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Foundation for work</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
New Deal	1
Learning Gateway	3

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

## CARVER TRAINING

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

- highly effective working relationships with external organisations
- comprehensive staff training and development
- good pastoral support to meet individual needs
- effective assistance to learners in portfolio building
- good work placements
- well-motivated learners

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate targets relating to training
- weak self-assessment process
- poor understanding of NVQs among workplace supervisors
- inadequate arrangements for reviewing learners' progress

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better arrangements for learners to acquire key skills
- more effective arrangements for the observation of training
- more sharing of good practice

## THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Carver Training was founded in 1983 by Carver (Wolverhampton) Ltd as a training centre for warehousing. Carver (Wolverhampton) Ltd is a building supplies company. Since 1996, Carver Training has been independent of Carver (Wolverhampton) Ltd although it operates from the same site at Littles Lane. Carver Training operates as a sole trader and the owner/manager is fully responsible for the operation of the business.
2. Carver Training employs 20 staff, of whom 14 are full-time. There are three sites, all centrally located in Wolverhampton. There are currently 66 learners, including 11 adults. Training is currently offered in business administration, information technology, retail operations, distribution and warehousing operations, lift truck operations, customer service, manufacturing and basic employability and life skills. About two-thirds of the publicly-funded training relates to a contract with the Black Country Local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC), and one-third relates to a contract with Black Country North Employment Service. In addition, Carver Training generates income from full-cost commercial training.
3. The local economy is adjusting to the decline in manufacturing. There is an increase in employment in financial services and distribution, but unemployment rates are relatively high for the region. In March 2001, the rate of unemployment in the Wolverhampton travel to work area was 5.9 per cent. This compares unfavourably with the national rate of 3.9 per cent. In 2000, the proportion of school pupils who gained five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 38.7 per cent which is substantially below the national average of 49.2 per cent. The 1991 census identified that 7.6 per cent of the local population came from minority ethnic groups. Wolverhampton has some areas of social and economic disadvantage.

## THE INSPECTION

4. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at Carver Training during May 2001. They interviewed 27 learners, conducted 24 interviews with Carver Training's staff, visited 14 employers, and interviewed 17 workplace supervisors. Three training sessions were observed, one of which was given a grade 3 and two were given a grade 4. Inspectors examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios of evidence, learners' files, business plans and external verifiers' reports. They studied the company's self-assessment report which was produced in February 2001.



## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Business administration

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	28	3

5. Carver Training offers work-based training in administration leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2 and 3. Learners may join the programme at any time of the year. They progress at different rates, according to their job role and ability. There were three foundation modern apprentices and three advanced modern apprentices with employed status. Only two adults were involved in work-based learning and the remaining 22 learners were employed as trainees working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Learners attend for their off-the-job training at Carver Training on one day each month. Although some learners were working towards a second NVQ, usually in information technology, few were working towards additional qualifications, such as those in word or text processing. Staff from Carver Training visit the workplace regularly to assess learners in the workplace and carry out monthly reviews of learners' progress. Inspectors agreed with the strengths stated in the self-assessment report but they found weaknesses the company had not identified.

The table below shows achievement and retention rates of learners since April 1998.

NVQ Training								
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
	Number that started			23		22		31
Still in training			0	0	1	5	11	35
Individual learning plan completed			15	65	11	50	5	16
Left without completing individual learning plan			5	22	4	18	8	26
NVQ level 1 completed			2	9	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			17	74	15	68	10	32

### STRENGTHS

- good work placements
- good communication between training provider and employers
- effective assistance for learners in portfolio-building
- learners' good achievement rates of NVQs at level 2

## CARVER TRAINING

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate arrangements for progress reviews
- some poor assessment practice
- lack of qualified and experienced trainers and assessors

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better planning of key skills training
- better understanding of NVQs on the part of employers
- more opportunities for learners to gain related qualifications

6. Carver Training has developed effective links with employers and has a good range of quality work placements. Communications between Carver Training and employers are good. Induction to the training programme is comprehensive and learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and the importance of health and safety requirements. Employers provide learners with varied experience and they make good progress in the workplace. Some of the learners' workplace supervisors have little understanding of the off-the-job training programme and of the structure of NVQs. They plan relevant workplace activities for the learners, however, and these meet the learners' needs. Some supervisors make arrangements for learners to work in other areas of the company to ensure that they are able to develop the skills they need in order to gain their NVQ. Most learners receive a basic initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, and recently, initial assessment of other key skills has been introduced.

7. Off-the-job training is matched to the learners' work activity. Trainers provide a variety of exercises which gives learners the opportunity to develop and practise their skills. Most learners are well motivated and enthusiastic about their off-the-job training sessions, particularly those in which they receive help from their tutors in portfolio-building. Some of the trainers and assessors are not appropriately qualified or experienced in business administration.

8. The learners' portfolios are well organised and contain a wide range of evidence of learners' acquisition of work-based competence. Some assessment practice is poor. In some instances, there is insufficient checking of the learners' understanding and the quality of the written feedback to learners on their performance is poor. In the workplace, learners receive reviews of their progress regularly. The review process is not sufficiently thorough and learners are not set specific targets. The workplace supervisor is seldom present during the progress reviews. Some workplace supervisors have little awareness of the extent of learners' progress.

9. Of the learners who started NVQs in business administration in the three years to 2000-01, about one-fifth left early with no qualifications. Many of those who remain on

the programme have achieved an NVQ at level 2. No business administration apprentices have completed their framework because none has achieved certification in key skills. Key skills training is not an integral part of vocational training. Many learners are unsure how and when they will complete their training in key skills.

CARVER TRAINING

Retailing & customer service

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	16	3

10. Carver Training provides youth training programmes in retail operations, distribution and warehousing operations, lift truck operations and customer service. Learners are interviewed and they take a basic skills test to identify their additional needs for learning support. Most learners start training at NVQ level 2, but in distributive operations, they start at level 1 and can progress to level 2. Most learners are given the opportunity to achieve a second NVQ at level 2. Learners have placements with national and local companies and efforts are made to ensure that work placements are matched to learners' aims. Learners attend off-the-job training sessions at Carver Training's premises. The self-assessment report stated eleven strengths and three weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths, but others were no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified weaknesses which were not shown in the self-assessment report. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

The table below shows the achievements and retention rates of learning since April 1998.

NVQ Training								
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
	Number that started			30		47		38
Still in training			0	0	0	0	11	29
Individual learning plan completed			15	50	18	38	10	26

**STRENGTHS**

- good work placements
- well-motivated learners
- frequent and effective assessment in the workplace
- success of learners in gaining additional qualifications

## WEAKNESSES

- failure to credit learners with NVQ units progressively
- poor progress review process
- poor understanding of NVQs on the part of workplace supervisors

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more sharing of good practice in assessment

11. Carver Training secures work placements which give learners a good range of work experience. The companies providing placements ensure that on-the-job training covers a wide variety of skills and some larger companies have structured training schemes. Trainers visit learners in work placements on a regular basis to carry out progress reviews. Workplace supervisors are involved in the review process, but not to any depth. There are good relationships between trainers, learners and workplace supervisors. Most workplace supervisors allow learners to develop their portfolios during working hours. Some, however, do not know enough about the NVQ process to be able to help learners gather evidence of their competences in the workplace.

12. Off-the-job training takes place at the Littles Lane site. Usually, learners attend off-the-job training on one half day every four weeks, but more often when necessary. Learners with identified additional needs attend additional sessions. The training centre has suitable accommodation for group and individual learning, and a well-stocked resource area. Training staff are appropriately qualified and suitably experienced. The company has an arrangement with a large builders' merchant whereby trainers are seconded to the firm to keep their occupational skills and knowledge up to date. Learners' time at training sessions is divided between training and portfolio-building. Lesson plans are clearly detailed and include resource requirements. Some of the lessons involved the use of video films. In some lessons, learners carried out some stimulating exercises individually or in groups. In others, however, most of the time was spent on presentations involving the use of overhead transparencies and handouts and learners found these boring. Information technology equipment is available to learners. Some assessors sign and date evidence which they considered met the required NVQ standards but other assessors fail to do this. Learners are encouraged to cross-reference their evidence to the NVQ standards, and they take a pride in their portfolios. They have a good understanding of their NVQs, value the opportunity to develop good skills, and are well motivated. Learners speak highly of the guidance and support they receive. Many learners obtain full-time employment with the company which has provided them with their work placement.

13. Learners' assessments and progress reviews are carried out by the same trainer. Trainers assess learners frequently through direct observation of their performance in the workplace. Progress reviews are held frequently but they are not carried out effectively.

## CARVER TRAINING

Some records of discussions are brief and superficial. Action planning is sometimes vague and not always understood by the learner. The targets learners are set during their progress reviews are undemanding and trainers do not monitor learners' progress in meeting these at the next review. Learners are not encouraged to accelerate their completion of training. For example, although assessors visit the workplace regularly, they do not sign off NVQ units as the learners complete them.

14. Many learners are given the opportunity to progress to work towards a second NVQ. This NVQ is usually in a related occupational area, which is sufficiently different to add real value to their record of achievement. For example, some learners who had achieved an NVQ in distribution and warehousing at level 2 were working towards an NVQ in retail operations, lift truck operations, or customer service at level 2. Forty per cent of learners achieve a second NVQ at level 2.

### Good Practice

*Learners are encouraged to wear the type of clothing or uniform worn by permanent staff. This practice enables them to feel more closely identified with the company.*

## Foundation for work

## Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal	2	1
Learning Gateway	9	3

15. Clients spend an average of 10 weeks on the Learning Gateway Life Skills option. Clients do not work towards any qualifications but they are encouraged to develop skills required in further training or work. The New Deal Gateway to Work is of two weeks' duration. Clients in the Gateway receive an assessment of their basic skills and their strengths and weaknesses, training in jobsearch and in skills needed for employment. They undertake a variety of activities to prepare them for work, including a mock interview with an employer. They receive oral and written feedback on their performance in the interview. Clients study job vacancies and identify whether they have the requisite skills for the advertised posts. They draw up an action plan with short-term targets. They evaluate their training daily on feedback sheets and identify the extent of their success in meeting their targets.

New Deal								
New Deal (18-24)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
	Number that started							166
Still in training							2	1
Gained job and/or planned learning completed							78	47

Foundation Programmes								
Foundation Programmes	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
	Number that started					28		80
Still in training					12	43	9	11

**STRENGTHS**

- well-planned and well-managed New Deal Gateway
- good links with careers and employment services
- good pastoral support to meet individual needs

## CARVER TRAINING

### WEAKNESSES

- ineffective use of milestones in the Life Skills option
- poor identification of individual learners' needs in training sessions

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more effective work experience arrangements for learners
- closer monitoring of clients' progress

16. The New Deal Gateway to Work is well managed. Clients receive careful initial assessment of their existing skills in order to identify the skills they need to obtain a job. Staff are highly motivated and make every effort to find jobs for which the clients have the required skills. Staff maintain a good database of prospective employers and use it to book interviews for clients. Through links with employers, clients have work 'tasters' which help them to identify which area of work they would like to go into. Mock interviews with employers enable clients to practise interview skills in a real work environment. Clients' progress is monitored carefully. Clients are given good learning packs on interview techniques, personal presentation and other relevant skills. Session plans have clear aims and objectives. They take account of individual clients' abilities and prior knowledge. Trainers check the progress of individual clients each day to enable them to identify the next step clients should take. Records are kept of clients' success in obtaining jobs. Since July 2000, of the 166 clients who entered the Gateway, 47 per cent obtained a job during the two-week period. Those clients who have not obtained a job during the first two weeks receive further help with finding employment.

17. Good pastoral support is given to all learners on the Life Skills option. Learners value this support, which is also available outside the normal timetable. Learners who experience difficulties with the training programme or in their personal lives, have the confidence to seek guidance. Staff show understanding of the learners' needs and difficulties, and act promptly to resolve problems. Learners are referred to external agencies when appropriate. Those with specific problems, such as those associated with drugs misuse or debt are appropriately referred and fully supported. Disciplinary or behavioural issues are dealt with promptly. Staff communicate with each other effectively. At their regular team meetings, they discuss ways of helping learners with their problems and try to ensure they adopt a common approach towards dealing with these.

18. Good links are maintained with the careers service throughout the Life Skills option. The careers service refers clients to Carver Training and prepares a detailed individual development plan for each of them. The information received by Carver Training is consistently good and helps trainers to establish an initial relationship with the client. The clients' learning needs in basic skills are identified through initial assessment and



these complement the needs stated in the individual development plan. During the learners' training programme, the trainer and the personal adviser from the careers service, hold monthly progress reviews with the learner. The trainer and the personal adviser liaise closely to ensure the learners receive all the help and support they need.

19. Milestones are not used effectively on the Life Skills option. Milestones are not set relating to the learners' personal and social development, vocational preparation, or basic and key skills development. Learners are not set specific targets following initial assessment in their individual learning plan and during progress reviews. Although individual learning objectives are identified in the learning plan, these are general rather than specific and are not accompanied by deadlines. Learners do not understand what a suitable milestone is. Trainers carry out weekly reviews of learners' progress during which learners are encouraged to comment on their recent training experience.

20. Individual learning is not routinely planned to meet individual needs on the Life Skills option. Prior learning which is identified at initial assessment is not always taken into account when drawing up individual learners' learning programmes. For example, a learner who has already achieved qualifications in English or mathematics is not challenged to develop skills at a higher level. Learners have portfolios for their work but these do not have plans for assessment in specific skills. Learners are unsure of the extent of their achievements. Learners who are working through resource packs do not have individual learning plans, which include targets they have to achieve within a set timescale. Learners who have additional learning needs in basic skills which were identified at initial assessment, do not receive the support they require in all timetabled training sessions.

21. Two training sessions were observed on the Life Skills option. Group aims and objectives are recorded in the lesson plan but individual aims and objectives are not clearly recorded or discussed with the learner. There was little checking of learners' background knowledge. Learners were encouraged to work with a partner to develop communication skills but received perfunctory feedback on their performance. In one session where two new learners were present, the trainer failed to find out the extent of their knowledge. One learner had identified learning needs in basic skills but the trainer took no action to meet these. The other learner had already covered the topic being dealt with in the session.

#### Good Practice

*In the Gateway to Work, Carver Training has entered into an arrangement with a local company which is seeking to develop the interview skills of managers. Learners take part in mock interviews and this provides them with useful preparation for real job interviews, and also furthers the company's management development programme.*

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

22. Carver Training is owned and managed by a sole proprietor. A deputy manager, four full-time team leaders and one part-time team leader support the manager. Carver Training is organised into five areas which are NVQ youth training, foundation youth training, New Deal Gateway to Work, marketing and administration. There are 14 full-time staff, six part-time staff and two volunteers. They operate from three sites in the centre of Wolverhampton. The company was accredited as an Investor in People in 1996 and was re-accredited in June 1999. It has an equal opportunities policy. The company produced its fourth self-assessment report in February 2001.

### STRENGTHS

- good and effective teamworking
- effective working relationships with external organisations
- comprehensive staff training and development programme
- good promotion of equal opportunities
- effective action by staff to achieve the continuous improvement of training programmes

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient quality assurance procedures for the learning process
- inadequate targets for learners' performance
- weak self-assessment process

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more effective observations of training
- more effective use of resources

23. Staff meet every three weeks to share information and work together to deal with problems which arise. In addition, each team holds its own meetings. There is a close working relationship among team members and they discuss and resolve issues as they arise. One team holds an awayday each quarter for staff training and development and team building. This team has recently reviewed and improved all paperwork which is used during the assessment and verification processes. Its members have also increased the frequency of their visits to learners to once every four weeks. There is an open management style which encourages all staff to play a full part in the organisation's activities. Carver Training plans to reduce its sites from three to two in order that its resources, including information technology equipment, may be used more efficiently.

24. Carver Training has a business plan with targets which relate to the Black Country LLSC contract and the Employment Service contract. There are no targets relating to

learners' achievements, progression, retention rates and success in finding jobs, for each training programme. In addition to the business plan, the company has a detailed policy on staff development and states the staff training priorities for the year. The training needs of staff are identified through a training needs analysis initiated during the induction of new staff. Team leaders review findings quarterly. Individual members of staff have an annual review with their manager, during which their training needs are identified and they are set objectives. Training needs reflect the individual's personal and professional development, team goals, and the company's business objectives. A few staff did not have objectives set during their last review. The objectives relate to contract compliance. The company has not established performance indicators against which the effectiveness of training may be measured. Most training staff are working towards, or have achieved, teaching and assessing qualifications as well as NVOs in guidance. Two assessors have been working towards their key skills practitioner award for the past two years. One team leader is developing and piloting a more detailed personal development plan, which includes target dates for training and development, clear objectives and measures for evaluating progress towards reaching these. One assessor is qualified as a basic skills trainer but does not help staff who are working with foundation learners and who are not qualified to teach basic skills themselves.

25. Carver Training works very closely and effectively with the careers service and Employment Service. The company also works with schools and staff and makes presentations on a variety of topics as well as arranging work experience for year-11 pupils. The manager is a member of the strategic advisory group on raising standards for the Black Country LLSC, and the Black Country provider training group. The manager also chairs the Wolverhampton Association of Training Organisations, and the Wolverhampton Education Business Partnership.

26. Inspectors did not agree with many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. They considered many of the strengths to be no more than normal practice. Many judgements in the self-assessment report were insufficiently clear and there was little evidence relating to learners' achievements. Most grades awarded by the inspectors were lower than those given in the self-assessment report. The action plan does not relate to current strengths and weaknesses and does not specify how progress towards implementing improvements will be measured. There is no written procedure for self-assessment. Monthly meetings on self-assessment are not minuted. At these meetings, staff decide on action for improvement but they do not specify how they will monitor its effectiveness. Carver Training invited a group of representatives including learners, an employer, an external consultant, and the LLSC to review the self-assessment report and to give feedback on it. There is no evidence to show how the feedback was used.

**Equality of opportunity**

**Contributory grade 2**

27. Carver Training has a clearly written equal opportunities policy that applies to all staff and learners. The policy covers staff recruitment, staff development, complaint procedures and the monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities across the company. Carver Training takes prompt action to counter discrimination and offensive behaviour. It promotes equal opportunities through its marketing activities and publicity material. Some of the staff have received training related to equal opportunities and there is now increased coverage of equal opportunities in the learners' induction programme. Carver Training has an equal opportunities adviser who seeks feedback from learners, consults with specialist organisations, identifies ways of promoting equal opportunities, and investigates complaints. The equal opportunities adviser has started to monitor the effectiveness of equal opportunities policies and procedures of work-placement providers and employers. Questionnaires have been distributed, but as yet, responses to these have not been fully collated or analysed.

28. Carver Training collects data on learners on each training programme, in terms of their ethnicity, gender and disabilities. Comparable data are not maintained on learners who leave early and those who achieve their qualifications. Currently, all learners on distribution and warehousing programmes are male. There have, however, been some initiatives involving local schools to recruit young women to these programmes. There are no learners on these programmes from minority ethnic groups. At careers events, the company displays publicity material containing images that promote equality of opportunity. The proportion of learners with disabilities is high, compared with the proportion of persons with disabilities in the local workforce. Only one of the company's three sites is accessible to wheelchair users. Many learners have additional learning needs. Some have social or behavioural problems.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 3**

29. Staff work hard to achieve the continuous improvement of training. They carry out annual reviews of training materials and the paperwork used to record assessments, progress reviews and internal verification. There is a monthly meeting of staff to discuss quality assurance issues and to agree actions to improve the experience for learners. For example, additional handouts have been produced to help learners prepare for interviews. Each team has developed its own handbooks and general guidance notes. In some areas, however, procedures for judging the quality of learning activities have not been clearly established. Resource packs contain guidelines on how some training sessions should be carried out. Insufficient criteria have been established, however, against which the quality of learning sessions may be judged.

30. Team leaders occasionally carry out observations of teaching and training but there is no system to record the feedback given to trainers, or the actions required to improve the quality of the learning experience for the learners. Learners' views are gathered about the quality of the training programmes. The questions learners answer do not adequately cover the quality of their learning. Trainers and team leaders do not fully analyse the feedback from learners to identify ways of improving training.

Good Practice
<p><i>Carver Training, in association with a partner organisation, ran a European Social Fund (ESF) funded project with the objective of reducing gender stereotyping at work. Fifty-two young people undertook a 10-week, full-time training programme in an occupational area in which either men or women have always been in the majority. Learners also work towards units of an appropriate NVQ. Twenty-five learners completed the programme.</i></p>