

INSPECTION REPORT

Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce Training Limited

25 June 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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

Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce Training Limited is based in Coventry. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce. It currently has 464 young people on programmes of work-based training in six areas of learning. There are four New Deal clients. Most of the learners live and work in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Overall judgement

For most young people, the quality of the work-based training is satisfactory. However, for the 13 modern apprentices in hospitality, the nine learners in dental nursing and the 46 learners in retailing and customer service, it is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the company are satisfactory and, overall, the quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

Work-based learning for young people

Work based learning for young people is satisfactory in engineering, business administration, and hairdressing. Learners benefit from good work placements and they are well supported by staff from Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce Training Limited. Staff are quick to respond to employers' concerns. There are good assessment practices in most areas, although the arrangements for initially diagnosing the needs of learners are ineffective. In some areas there is poor planning of training. There are some signs of improving retention rates. Overall, the achievement rates of learners are poor. Few modern apprentices have completed the whole apprenticeship framework, often because of their slow acquisition of key skills.

New Deal

There are only four New Deal clients and this provision was not inspected.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce Training Limited are satisfactory. Good use is made of management information. There are good internal communications and effective links with external organisations. The staff are well qualified and they benefit from effective staff development arrangements. The company has clear and comprehensive policies on equal opportunities. It is failing to meet its targets for the recruitment of learners with disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups. Quality assurance

arrangements are effectively communicated, although they do not cover all areas of the provision. The implementation of a successful strategy for key skills training and assessment has been slow. The self-assessment report gave insufficient weight to the poor achievement rates of learners.

GRADES

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Hairdressing & beauty therapy	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Health, social care & public services	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- particularly good work placements
- frequent and effective workplace visits
- good assessment practices
- effective response to the needs of employers
- good arrangements for staff development
- effective internal and external communications

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- ineffective arrangements for the initial assessment of learners
- ineffective arrangements for key skills training and assessment
- incomplete arrangements for quality assurance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater consistency in the progress review process
- more consistent planning of on-the-job training

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce Training Limited (CWT) provides training for young people and adults in Coventry, Warwickshire and Leicestershire. It was formed in 1983. Before the establishment of the Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in April 2001, CWT was a subsidiary of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise. CWT operates from a main site near the centre of Coventry. This site accommodates the company's administrative functions as well as a suite of training rooms. There are also premises in Nuneaton which contain further training rooms.

2. CWT employs 45 staff, of whom six are part-time. Training is offered in land-based provision, construction, engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology, retailing and customer service, transportation, hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and public services and visual and performing arts and media. All of the young people on work-based training are employed.

3. CWT serves an area with a population of approximately 800,000. Manufacturing is the largest employment sector with a significant number of companies in the automotive, aerospace and telecommunications industries. In May 2001, the unemployment rate was 2 per cent in Warwickshire and 3.6 per cent in Coventry, compared with the national average of 3.1 per cent. The proportion of school leavers moving into full-time further education or progressing into employment with training is significantly above the national average. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Warwickshire and Coventry was 50 per cent and 41 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. The minority ethnic population of Warwickshire accounts for 3.4 per cent of the population. In Coventry, this proportion rises to 11.9 per cent.

THE INSPECTION

4. A team of 11 inspectors spent a total of 42 days at CWT during June 2001. They interviewed 122 learners, conducted 48 interviews with CWT's staff, visited 67 employers and interviewed 62 workplace supervisors. Inspectors observed and graded only 12 training sessions as the teaching year had ended in some of the subcontracted colleges. Of these sessions, two were very good, six were good, three were satisfactory and one was poor. They examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios of evidence and files, business plans and external verifiers' reports. Inspectors studied CWT's self-assessment report, which was produced in January 2001.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	157	3

5. There are 157 young people working towards NVQs at levels 1 to 4. Learners can specialise in motor vehicle, production engineering, technical services, general engineering, metal and plastics operations, assembly and fabrication and laboratory occupations. Other qualifications include engineering foundation training for level 2 NVQs and additional vocational qualifications provided by subcontracted local colleges of further education. There are 73 advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3, 59 foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2 and 25 learners on other work-based training programmes. There are also two New Deal clients working towards NVQ units. Figures for the number of learners starting the training programme and detailed statistics on achievement and retention rates are not available. All learners are employed and are either recruited by CWT or by employers. Recruitment occurs throughout the year. CWT is responsible for the induction programme. Training officers and assessors provide individual support to learners in the workplace. Induction is usually for small groups of learners over one or two days. It includes health and safety, equality of opportunity and the NVQ structure. Employers provide learners with a further induction in their workplace. Learners receive an initial assessment and interview to identify the most appropriate programme of training and key skills development. Training officers and learners hold copies of individual learning plans. Most assessments are carried out in the workplace. Training officers and assessors visit learners in the workplace every 12 weeks to carry out progress reviews and assessments. Additional visits are arranged every 2 to 4 weeks to meet learners' individual needs. Training officers and assessors are vocationally qualified and have appropriate industrial experience. Subcontracted colleges of further education carry out most of the assessment and verification in the workplace. CWT and some employers offer additional training to support the learners' training programmes. Each learner has a mentor in their workplace to give them additional individual support.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time

of inspection.

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			72		60		73		0	0
Still in training			16	22	23	38	33	45	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan			56	78	37	62	40	55	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			26	36	27	45	21	29	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed			16	22	11	18	6	8	0	0

STRENGTHS

- good training for level 2 NVQs
- thorough assessment practice
- particularly good work placements
- regular and frequent workplace visits

WEAKNESSES

- inconsistent progress reviews
- poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeship framework

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more consistent planning of on-the-job training
- better knowledge of NVQs by workplace supervisors
- better monitoring of learners' progress at NVQ level 3

6. Engineering foundation training at NVQ level 2 gives learners a good introduction to training. The training sessions are taught well and learners are fully involved throughout the sessions. A good range of assessment methods is used. Achievement rates for this stage of the training programme are satisfactory. Learners' progress is monitored well and charts are displayed to record their achievements. Feedback from employers and learners indicates that experience gained at this stage is the most significant early contribution to the learners' apprenticeship. Some learners have the opportunity to attend engineering training programmes in the summer period, outside the normal college year. Some learners complete additional qualifications at level 2, to meet the specific requirements of their employers.

7. On- and off-the job assessment is good. A wide variety of assessment methods are used. Subcontractors carry out most of the assessment and verification. Most of the assessment is by direct observation in the workplace. Workplace supervisors contribute to assessment with witness statements. Learners regularly collect evidence in the workplace. Good use is made of diverse evidence such as written reports, work products, manufacturer's data and photographs. Assessors receive effective guidance to improve the assessment process. Internal verification of assessors' work and portfolio evidence currently occurs at the end of the NVQ training programme.

8. Work placements are particularly good. Learners acquire a range of skills in various engineering and manufacturing techniques. Employers have well-equipped premises and some have their own training facilities. Some learners are given the opportunity to lead departmental teams. Other have gained work experience abroad. Learners are allocated mentors who supervise their tasks and contribute to the assessment process. The range of tasks available for learners in the workplace is generally good and meets the qualification requirements. Employers encourage the learners to progress towards higher qualifications. Some employers and work-based supervisors have a poor understanding of the NVQ. Planning and co-ordinating workplace tasks to meet the NVQ requirements can, therefore, be difficult.

9. Assessors make frequent and regular visits to the workplace. In most cases, qualified assessors from CWT and subcontractors visit employers once or twice a month to carry out assessments. Additional visits are arranged to meet individual learners' needs. Learners have a good working relationship with the assessors. The training of one learner was disrupted by a company takeover. CWT's staff reorganised the training and the learner was kept well informed of the changes and how his new training programme would operate.

10. No apprentices have completed the full modern apprenticeship framework. Most of the current apprentices have not been in training long enough to do so. The achievement rates of NVQs by apprentices are improving and now average 54 per cent for NVQs at level 2 and 26 per cent at level 3. The system to monitor apprentices' progress towards level 3 NVQs is not identifying where additional support may be required. Some apprentices who have completed their NVQs are not completing the whole framework because they have not completed their key skills units. Few apprentices have achieved all the key skills units. Recent improvements in the teaching and assessment of key skills mean that many apprentices are about to complete the whole framework.

11. Progress reviews are not always thorough and procedures are not applied in the same way by all training officers. Paperwork from the progress reviews shows that there is too little emphasis on setting short-term targets for learners. Employers often do not have sufficient involvement in the review process. Some learners are not given enough chance to give their opinion of their training or to discuss equal opportunities issues. Most learners are given a good level of support, but any additional support is not always recorded on the progress review paperwork. Learners and employers do not always

receive a copy of the paperwork.

Good Practice

One learner with additional learning needs was provided with employment by CWT. The employer, who was aware of the learner's previous experience, gave him a job in the production of equipment for people with disabilities. Help was arranged between CWT and a subcontractor to provide extra numeracy and literacy training. The learner has retained his employment for two years and is expected to soon complete his NVQ. His portfolio-building skills have also improved and all evidence is now well presented.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	189	3

12. CWT offers modern apprenticeships in administration, management and accounting, leading to NVQs in administration at levels 2 and 3, and accounting at levels 2, 3 and 4. Apprentices may join at any time of the year. The programme is planned to enable most apprentices to complete the full modern apprenticeship framework in two or three years. Of the current 99 advanced modern apprentices, about half are working towards NVQs and key skills in business administration, with the other half working towards NVQs and key skills in accounting. Eighty-six foundation modern apprentices are working towards NVQs and key skills at level 2, mainly in administration. There are 19 young people following other work-based training. All learners are in full-time employment. Employers include large manufacturing and transport companies, a local authority, a university, schools and a wide range of small and medium-sized companies. Accounting learners are employed at accountancy practises or in accounts departments. Learners gain most of their learning in the workplace. Off-the job training in administration is provided by CWT, or the employers, or by arrangement with external training providers. Most accounting learners follow the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) route. They receive training from a specialist financial training company, on CWT's premises. A few attend local further education colleges. Six members of staff are qualified internal verifiers. Two New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option attend CWT's training centre for training towards units of the level 2 NVQ in business administration. Their training plans include jobsearch training and a period of work experience.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					81		57		59	100
Still in training					14	17	26	46	46	78
FMA framework completed					17	21	9	16	3	5
NVQ level 2 completed					40	49	24	42	0	0

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			71		67		47		64	100
Still in training			14	20	11	16	21	45	53	83
AMA framework completed			21	30	17	25	6	13	5	8
NVQ level 2 completed			47	66	31	46	19	40	6	9
NVQ level 3 completed			36	51	13	19	6	13	6	9

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			152		32		21		13	100
Still in training			1	1	0	0	10	48	8	62
Individual learning plan completed			80	53	17	53	4	19	1	8
Left without completing individual learning plan			71	47	15	47	7	33	4	31
NVQ level 2 completed			60	39	11	34	7	33	2	15
NVQ level 3 completed			22	14	6	19	2	10	0	0

STRENGTHS

- good off-the-job training
- good training resources
- effective assessment practices in administration
- effective matching of trainees to work placements
- good support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- insufficient assessment in accounting
- unco-ordinated workplace learning
- weak initial assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of learners' progress
- more frequent training sessions by main subcontractor for accounting

13. Off-the-job training is good. It covers telephone techniques, working with information technology, time management, team building, presentation skills and many other topics. Additional qualifications available include single subject awards in word processing, text processing, computer literacy and business technology. Some learners also gain a general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in business studies at advanced level. Some of those who complete their business administration NVO at level 2 choose to study for a level 3 qualification in using information technology, or other NVQs appropriate to the industry in which they work. CWT has well-equipped and spacious training facilities, with computer equipment and software which is up to date and meets current industry standards. Materials used to support learning in administration are satisfactory. Most of the accountancy subcontractor's staff are occupationally experienced and professionally qualified. Training sessions are stimulating. Learners are given professionally produced written materials and learning packs. Trainers manage the sessions well, enabling learners to benefit from expert tuition and group work. CWT regularly observes the subcontractor's training staff to assure the quality of training. Some training sessions in accounting are not run at regular intervals, making it difficult for learners to plan time off work to attend.

14. Assessment practices are good. In administration, assessors use evidence from the workplace effectively to judge learners' competences. Learners agree detailed action plans with their assessor at the end of each assessment visit. The plan lists the evidence they should gather for assessment of the units on which they are working. This short-term plan is very effective in focusing learners' attention on the next stages of their NVQ or key skills units, and is used to guide learners towards the requirements of the qualification. CWT makes special arrangements for those learners whose jobs may not cover all the requirements of their qualification. It offers learners the opportunity to work at CWT on short attachments, for example in reception or on post duties. Assessments are thorough, and assessors set high standards for the evidence they expect learners to gather from their everyday work. Portfolios of evidence include a good variety of evidence, including photographs, assignment reports and detailed examples of learners' work. Written and verbal questioning is used appropriately to test learners' background knowledge. In accounting, there is too little assessment by direct observation in the workplace. Little use is made of alternative evidence such as witness testimonies, professional discussion or verbal questioning. Written feedback is rarely given, leaving learners with little sense of their achievements. Most portfolios of evidence are not assessed until the end of the training programme, so learners do not know if their work is of an acceptable standard. These weaknesses have not been highlighted by internal verification.

15. CWT's recruitment team has links with a wide variety of employers in Coventry and

Warwickshire. CWT promotes its training effectively to these employers. It arranges open days to attract learners and staff visit schools. Learners complete a careers questionnaire to identify their preferences and what learning style might suit them before embarking on the accounting route. Learners who do not have a job before they join CWT are offered a good selection of job opportunities. Once placed in a job, CWT's staff agree on the most appropriate form of learning with the learner and employer, ranging from day- or half-day release to work-based training entirely in the workplace. Learners' prior achievements are recognised and incorporated into their individual learning plan.

16. Accounting learners receive good support from their employers and from training staff. CWT's staff are contracted to carry out learners' progress reviews every three months, but they visit workplaces more frequently than this. The progress reviews are well focused, giving learners realistic short-term goals to work towards. The records of these reviews are detailed. Employers are fully involved in the reviews. Employers support their learners by paying for additional training in such specialist areas as auditing, bookkeeping and Value Added Tax (VAT). Additional revision sessions are offered by CWT before learners take external examinations. In administration, the progress reviews are effective, but the comments made on the review paperwork do not adequately summarise the discussions that take place.

17. The achievement rate of modern apprenticeship frameworks is slow. The failure of CWT to integrate key skills training and assessment with the occupational training and assessment until last year has led to learners needing more time to complete their qualification and has increased the number of those still in training. Although all modern apprentices are assessed in the workplace to help them demonstrate their competences, they make slow progress towards achieving NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Some learners have achieved no units towards their qualification in their first year, and 35 per cent of learners leave early with no units of the NVQ accredited to them. Rates of achievement of NVQs are showing a steady improvement. The self-assessment report did not give sufficient emphasis to the impact that the late introduction of key skills training and assessment has had on achievement rates.

18. Training in the workplace is poorly planned. Learners mainly gain skills by watching other staff and imitating what they do. The training that modern apprentices receive in their workplace helps them carry out their jobs rather than enabling them to progress towards achieving their qualifications. Workplace supervisors have little knowledge of NVQs and key skills. They are only involved in quarterly progress reviews to the extent that they are asked to comment on learners' past progress at work. Some employers provide off-the-job training. Assessors help learners to gather evidence from this for NVQs and key skills.

19. Initial assessment of learners' abilities and level of key skills has been weak. Initial assessment has not given assessors an accurate analysis of each learner's basic skills or their individual needs. The results of initial assessment have not been used to develop individual training plans or to ensure that additional support is arranged in advance.

Learners' needs for additional support have only become apparent during their studies, when assessors have had to make special arrangements to meet these needs. CWT has recently started to assess learners' key skills before they start training and staff are becoming more confident in carrying out these assessments.

20. CWT has introduced new arrangements to ensure that teaching and assessment of key skills and NVQs occurs simultaneously. Most modern apprentices are working towards key skills qualifications at levels 2 and 3, some separately from their other studies, or after completing their NVQ. Some are working on key skills qualifications between their level 2 and level 3 NVQs. Assessment plans now cover both key skills and vocational qualifications and assessors judge whether evidence gathered for NVQ units will provide useful key skills evidence. The new arrangements are not yet sufficiently well established to affect current apprentices.

Poor Practice

Arrangements to cover the long-term absence of an accountancy trainer have been poor. Although classes were covered by other trainers, the training was poorly planned. Some topics were repeated by different tutors. The marking of completed assessments has been delayed. The situation has now been resolved.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	46	4

21. CWT provides modern apprenticeships and other work-based training for young people in retailing, warehousing, customer service and motor vehicle sales. It is an accredited centre for NVQs in retail operations at levels 2 and 3, warehousing and distribution at levels 1,2 and 3, lift truck operations at level 2, and customer service at levels 2 and 3. It also offers training towards a lift truck operators' licence. Currently, there are 46 learners. Learners are recruited by direct referrals from employers or referrals from the careers service. Some approach CWT directly. The motor vehicle sales programme is subcontracted to a national vehicle distributor, which is responsible for all aspects of the programme including recruitment, on- and off-job training, progress reviews and a final assessment. All learners are employed. Those learners recruited directly by CWT have an initial interview. A curriculum vitae is compiled and CWT identifies a suitable employer. This process may take some weeks, during which CWT maintains contact with the applicant. CWT's staff, in consultation with the learner and workplace supervisor, draw up an initial training plan. All learners attend an induction to the modern apprenticeship or NVQ training programme. An assessment of learners' key skills forms part of a one-day general induction at CWT's training centre. Most training is given on the job by employers with guidance, support and assessment by a designated trainer/assessor appointed by CWT. Learners are visited in their place of work at least once a month and formal progress reviews are conducted quarterly.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					2		53		30	100
Still in training					0	0	13	25	17	57
FMA framework completed					0	0	6	11	1	3
NVQ level 2 completed					1	50	44	83	5	17

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					2		2		13	100
Still in training					1	50	0	0	11	85
AMA framework completed					1	50	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					2	100	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed					2	100	0	0	0	0

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					15		5		6	100
Still in training					0	0	0	0	4	67
NVQ level 2 completed					5	33	4	80	1	17

STRENGTHS

- good work placements
- frequent and effective workplace visits

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeship framework
- weak assessment practices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider range of learning opportunities
- greater consistency in the progress review process

22. There is a good range of work placements, which enables learners to pursue their primary qualifications and to gain useful additional qualifications. Placements include a national sportswear retailer which offers experience in retailing, warehousing and customer service, smaller businesses which offer training towards qualifications in such areas as floristry and hairdressing and a laboratory which offers experience in technician work. Employers and workplace supervisors provide good support. They are involved in the learners' initial action-planning and make a written contribution to the progress review. They ensure that learners can gain sufficient knowledge and understanding for their qualification and many provide additional training through seminars on products

and visits to broaden learners' understanding of relevant topics such as security at shopping centres. All employers are aware of the qualifications which their learners are following. They have good awareness of health and safety and good links with CWT. In one instance, a workplace supervisor with two customer service learners is undertaking a management qualification through CWT.

23. Trainer/assessors make regular, frequent visit to learners. Visits may be fortnightly, and weekly visits to learners are common. This helps to improve learners confidence. Employers recognise the professionalism and commitment of the trainer/assessors. The trainer/assessors offer individual training sessions in the workplace, where they can refer to a range of situations relevant to the learners. Information, advice and guidance is routinely available to learners and to employers. Internal verifiers check assessments carried out in the workplace by sampling portfolios of evidence and making visits.

24. Achievement rates for the modern apprenticeship framework are low. Of 53 foundation modern apprentices who started in 1999-2000, only six achieved the full framework. However, 83 per cent achieved NVQs at level 2. The two advanced modern apprentices starting in the same year failed to complete their framework. Four of the five learners who started other work-based training programmes in 1999-2000 gained NVQs at level 2 and one of six starting other work-based training during the last contract year has gained an NVQ at level 2.

25. Assessment practices are poor. Too few assessment opportunities are identified during progress reviews and action-planning. Learners have too little influence on the timing of assessments. They are not given sufficiently challenging timescales for assessments. There is an over-reliance on observation and questioning and not enough use of diverse sources of evidence. Opportunities for developing and assessing key skills are missed. Learners know about key skills but do not understand how they are going to achieve them. The overall effect is that learners' progress is held back. Initial assessment fails to identify fully the existing skills which learners have, or any particular support they may need. This weak initial assessment led to one learner starting a qualification at a lower level than was appropriate. Individual training plans lack detail. Progress reviews are adequate, but although some reviews result in clear targets being set, others do not. Some learners, especially those working in smaller organisations, do not have access to a wide enough range of learning opportunities and resources. There is little variety in the written materials available to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Few learners are offered additional training sessions off the job to deepen their occupational knowledge.

Good Practice

All employers are issued with copies of the relevant qualification framework, their learners' individual learning plans and quarterly review documents.

Poor Practice

A learner had demonstrated competence through written and verbal questioning, yet the assessor asked the learner to write up more detailed responses before carrying out a final assessment. This further delayed completion of the learners' qualification framework.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	13	4

26. CWT provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship training in all sectors of the hospitality industry. It also offers training towards NVQs in hospitality for young people for whom a modern apprenticeship is not appropriate. A team leader and two assessors look after this area of learning. There are currently 13 learners. This figure includes chef apprentices, pub apprentices, a restaurant apprentice and a reception apprentice. Three learners are working towards NVQs at level 2 in food preparation and cooking. Young people may join the programme at any time of the year. The programme is planned to enable apprentices to complete the advanced modern apprenticeship framework in three years, although most do not stay in training for this length of time. All learners are employed and work in establishments such as hotels, restaurants, pubs and social clubs. Most training is given on the job. Three chef apprentices attend local colleges for training and assessment. All learners attend off-the-job training leading to a basic food hygiene certificate. Some learners achieve a first aid certificate during their programme. Assessment and internal verification is carried out in a variety of ways depending on the intended qualifications of learners and their particular requirements. Some learners are assessed by staff from CWT and then verified by a subcontractor, some are assessed and verified by this subcontractor and others are assessed and verified by a local college. The staff carrying out assessments and internal verification have good industrial experience and hold the relevant assessors and internal verifiers' qualifications. Staff visit most learners at least once a month for assessment and every 12 weeks to review and monitor their progress.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							1		8	100
Still in training							1	100	7	88

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					5		5		3	100
Still in training					0	0	1	20	1	33
NVQ level 2 completed					2	40	1	20	0	0

STRENGTHS

- highly supportive employers
- effective response to learners and employers' needs
- good ratio of staff to learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- insufficiently challenging targets set for most learners
- inadequate initial assessment
- lack of planning of on-the-job training
- poor assessment practices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater consistency in pre-placement checks

27. Learners benefit from good work placements. All learners are interviewed by CWT's staff, who identify appropriate jobs with training and then organise interviews. Staff have developed good links with local employers so that learners have a wide range of jobs to choose from. Most learners are already employed before joining their training and they have been encouraged by employers that recognise the value of their staff receiving training and gaining qualifications. Employers take an active interest in their learners' development. Workplace supervisors provide good individual support. One workplace supervisor altered his day off to ensure that learners could attend their day-release training at college. Another employer has bought a number of recipe books for learners and, in another work placement, a learner has been helped to find accommodation closer to work.

28. CWT's staff give good support to learners and employers. They respond quickly to feedback from them. An example of this is changing the way training is given, from day release at college to a totally work-based programme, to meet the needs of the parties

concerned. Staff carry out formal progress review visits every 13 weeks, in line with contractual requirements, but there is much more frequent contact between staff, learners and employers. Those learners being assessed in the workplace have assessor visits at least once a month. The timing of these visits is well planned to ensure that good evidence can be gathered towards learners' qualifications. Staff spend the necessary time with the learners to ensure that they are given the support they need at different stages of their training.

29. CWT's staff are expected to manage no more than twenty learners each. They are currently looking after much smaller numbers and can therefore provide good individual support. A new member of staff has been given the job of increasing the number of hospitality learners and this is beginning to happen. CWT is making sure that this happens in a planned way, so that staff caseloads do not become excessive.

30. Achievement rates are poor. Since 1998, none of the advanced modern apprentices has achieved the full framework. Three apprentices have achieved level 2 NVQs and none has achieved a level 3 NVQ or the required key skills units. Achievement by foundation modern apprentices has been slow. Of the eight who started training in 2000-01, seven are still on the programme, but their progress towards completion of units for their level 2 NVQ has been slow. Some apprentices who have been in training for over six months have yet to complete a full unit. The NVQ learners are also making slow progress towards their level 2 qualification. Two learners who have been on this programme for over 18 months have achieved some units but are not expected to complete their full qualification for another year. Some learners are not being challenged to achieve any NVQ units until well into their programme. In some cases this can be up to a year after starting training. Some individual learning plans fail to give target dates for some parts of the training programme. The requirement to achieve a basic food hygiene certificate is not listed on some plans and on others it appears but there is no target date set for its achievement. Chef apprentices are not given targets for the achievement of the customer care requirements of their framework. Progress reviews do not result in clear, short-term targets for learners to aim for before the next review. Comments on the progress review paperwork are often no more than bland statements encouraging general progression. In the subcontracted part of this provision, progress reviews are carried out by staff from CWT who are not hospitality specialists. These staff lack detailed knowledge of the NVQs and do not set adequate targets.

31. The arrangements for initial assessment are inadequate. Those learners who are already employed when they join the programme have not, until very recently, routinely been given any initial assessment. The basic skills of learners have not been adequately assessed and they have had no assessment of their occupational skills. Additional support is usually confined to staff visiting learners more frequently or for longer periods of time. This does not adequately deal with specific learning needs. All learners have their key skills assessed, usually some months after they have started their training. Many of them do not know why they are completing the test and not everyone is given feedback on the results.

32. The assessment of those learners attending college one day a week is undertaken at the college. Assessment occurs in line with a plan based on the college's year. No use is made of any evidence from the learners' workplaces. Most other learners are assessed in the workplace. Assessors visit at least once a month and sometimes more frequently. There are no work-based assessors. Workplace supervisors are not routinely involved in the assessment process. Little use is made of witness testimony. Learners do not feel sufficiently involved in the assessment process. Evidence from their everyday work is not being gathered.

33. Training in the workplace is not sufficiently planned. Learners do not have written plans identifying what training they will receive in the workplace. They are unclear how the training programme will develop. The use of learning materials is poor. Not all workplaces have an adequate supply of good materials. Some learners have access to specific text books for their NVQs, but many do not. The quality of handouts in learners' files is not always good. The pub apprentices are given few learning materials to help develop their knowledge and understanding.

34. The pre-placement check of an employer's premises is not currently being undertaken in the same way by all staff. There is a comprehensive questionnaire covering health and safety issues, but in some cases this is not being used effectively by CWT's staff.

Good Practice

CWT's staff respond well to the individual needs of young people. A school pupil who had experienced many problems at school joined the pre-16 programme offered by CWT. Staff found a work placement and started him working towards level 1 NVQ units. His progress has been so good that he is now working towards some level 2 units and is in the process of joining the foundation modern apprenticeship programme.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	50	3

35. CWT recruits learners to foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ training at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing. Learners can take additional qualifications, for example, in customer service. They may join the programme at any time of the year. Most learners are expected to complete the foundation modern apprenticeship in two years and the modern apprenticeship in three years. Ten of the current learners are advanced modern apprentices, working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3. Thirty-four are foundation modern apprentices and six are on other work-based training, working towards level 2 and 3 NVQs. Learners are working across Coventry and Warwickshire, in establishments ranging from small businesses to large multi-site organisations. Both CWT and employers carry out recruitment. An induction day is held in August before learners begin in September. The induction covers the requirements of the courses, the appeals procedure, health and safety and equality of opportunity. Initial assessment forms part of the induction. The results of initial assessment are used to help draw up an individual learning plan. CWT operates a salon in a local college of further education. Most learners working towards NVQs at level 2 attend training rooms at CWT or the salon at the college for six hours each week. During this time they undertake training in theory, portfolio-building and practical training and assessment. CWT has recently started to provide key skills workshops. Learners all receive assessments and one-to-one support in the workplace from CWT's staff or work-based assessors. All training staff within CWT have the appropriate training and assessment qualifications. Two members of staff are qualified internal verifiers and have teaching qualifications, three have the key skill practitioners award and two are qualified to accredit prior learning.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					26		26		26	100
Still in training					0	0	13	50	21	81
FMA framework completed					3	12	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					9	35	2	8	5	19

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					3		18		3	100
Still in training					0	0	8	44	2	67
AMA framework completed					1	33	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					1	33	3	17	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed					2	67	1	6	0	0

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					8		3		13	100
Still in training					0	0	1	33	5	38
Individual learning plan completed					6	75	1	33	2	15
Left without completing individual learning plan					2	25	1	33	6	46
NVQ level 2 completed					0	0	1	33	2	15
NVQ level 3 completed					6	75	0	0	0	0

STRENGTHS

- effective individual support for trainees from training staff
- good range of clients for off-the-job training at level 2
- good work placements
- well-established links between on- and off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework
- slow progress of some learners towards their NVQs
- delayed recording of assessment decisions

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater consistency in assessment planning and feedback

36. Learners are given good individual support during training and assessment sessions. There is a good ratio of trainers to learners. Assessments are recorded on client

consultation sheets, which show how learners are making progress in their practical sessions and help with the planning of future assessments. CWT is open three days each week for training and assessment. This provides a good choice for learners and means that employers with more than one learner can minimise the disruption to their salon. CWT runs a summer school, mainly for second year learners, to help them complete outstanding assessments. Learners are visited in the workplace by their assessors every four weeks. This allows assessors to undertake direct observation of learners carrying out their everyday work. Level 3 modern apprentices are visited once a fortnight for guidance and theory, and once every four weeks for assessments.

37. Learners following NVQs at level 2 work on a broad range of clients in the salon based at the local college. The variety of clients allows learners to cover all of the technical activities within the NVQ, such as perming, cutting, and colouring. This means that practical sessions leading up to assessments can take place on a regular basis. Most learners are able to work on clients rather than tuition heads, giving them valuable experience of live models.

38. Most learners work in salons that have a good level of resources and modern equipment. The staff maintain high standards of technical skill and professionalism. Some of the salons have weekly or fortnightly training sessions for learners to work on live models, supervised by experienced and qualified staff. Most learners attend workshops and courses run by leading manufacturers, to enhance and develop their skills. This motivates learners and builds their confidence. CWT has also paid for some learners to take additional external courses in barbering.

39. There are well-established links between on- and off-the-job training. Employers ensure that learners receive training in their salons which has been carefully structured as a result of action-planning and discussions with trainers and assessors. Theory training involves easy-to-use work packs, task sheets and written materials to help learners understand difficult areas. These packs effectively link theory to practical application. Employers are given a scheme of work to inform them of the skills that their learners will be taught off the job.

40. Some learners make slow progress on the NVQ level 2 and 3 training programmes. They are having too few assessments of units which reflects their current or previous workplace experience. Even though learners on both level 2 and 3 programmes have quarterly progress reviews, and visits from assessors every four weeks, the assessment process has insufficient momentum. The proportion of young people who successfully complete the modern apprenticeship framework is low. This poor rate of completion has been affected by the slow integration of key skills training with the vocational training. CWT's staff have worked hard to overcome the weaknesses in the arrangements for learners to acquire key skills. The learners are now benefiting from the improvements that include workshops on information technology. More use is being made of evidence from learners' everyday work. Assessments are now taking place within the workplace on a regular, monthly basis. Retention rates for the modern apprenticeship are improving.

41. The recording of information in learners' assessment logbooks is sometimes unnecessarily delayed. The time between the completion of oral or written questions and assignments, and the recording of the results of their assessment, can be too long. From the learners' point of view, this makes the assessment process appear disjointed. In some cases, assignments are completed before practical assessments are started.

Good Practice

Learners enter a large regional competition annually. In March of this year, the competition was cancelled at very short notice. In order to avoid the disappointment that this would cause, CWT contacted the salons taking part to inform them that they would hold the competition at their own salon. This enabled the learners to gain the benefits of being involved in such an event.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	9	4

42. CWT recruits young people through the careers service, by local advertising and by direct recruitment from employers. Currently, learners are selected for a two-year training programme leading to a national certificate in dental nursing. Most learners are recruited to fit in with the enrolment dates of CWT's subcontractors. Employed learners are interviewed in their workplace. Unemployed learners are interviewed by CWT's staff, and take a literacy and numeracy test before being interviewed by prospective employers. Once it is apparent that learners are suited to the work, CWT enrolls them with one of three subcontractors. Learners attend off-the-job training one evening a week for two hours. Learners have to complete two years' work experience in a dental practice to achieve their national certificate. The national certificate in dental nursing was replaced six months ago by national vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3. CWT is planning to introduce the NVOs. Learners have a basic induction in their workplace with CWT and the subcontractors. CWT's staff work with the learners to produce an individual learning plan, and this is reviewed every 12 weeks by CWT's staff.

STRENGTHS

- good on-the-job training
- effective response by staff to employers' needs

WEAKNESSES

- poor off-the-job training
- low rates of retention and progression for first-year trainees
- poor practices in progress reviews and health and safety monitoring

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- initial assessments and induction more specifically relevant to dental nursing

43. Learners benefit from supportive learning environments, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Most learners are given good training on the job, including the opportunity to observe good practice and take part in practical training sessions. Staff in the workplaces have good experience and assist in the learners' development. Learners

show good practical skills and recognise how much they are learning in their workplaces. All the workplaces have appropriate resources.

44. CWT's staff are responsive to the needs of employers. They take into account employers' needs and wishes when recruiting young people. They respond promptly and effectively to employers' questions and concerns. If requested, they send progress review paperwork to employers in advance of the review so that employers can prepare for their contribution to the review. Employers have been fully briefed on the introduction of the dental nursing NVQs, on a one-to-one basis if required.

45. Off-the-job training is poor, a weakness recognised by CWT in its self-assessment report. There are currently three subcontractors for the training. Not all of the subcontractors give adequate support and help to learners. Some learners experience delays in starting their training and some have still not been given textbooks after a year of their training. The teaching lacks creativity. Learners spend too much time taking notes from poorly prepared slides and there is little time for discussion. Some of the presentations are too fast to allow all the learners time to grasp fully the topics being taught. This demotivates learners. The feedback to learners on their assignments is often too brief. There are too few links between off-the-job training and training in the workplace.

46. The rates of retention and progression for first-year learners are low. CWT identified this weakness in its self-assessment report. Of those who started in 1999-2000, 60 per cent left early. These learners either left by choice or failed to achieve the standards required to progress to the second year. Of the nine learners currently in training, six are in their first year. Most of these young people are dissatisfied with their off-the-job training and are considering leaving the training programme. Those learners who do progress to the second year, achieve their qualifications.

47. Learners' progress reviews are poorly structured. Learners have progress reviews every 12 weeks. Learners and workplace supervisors are interviewed separately. The review does not include a review of the learner's file of work or of the standard of their homework. Training in the workplace is not recorded. Some subcontractors give feedback to CWT on their learners, but this does not correspond with learners' review dates and so there is no in-depth discussion of any issues. The monitoring of health and safety in the workplace is weak. Issues particular to dental nursing, such as exposure to patients' blood or the use of syringes, are not included. The monitoring document is sometimes left with the employer to complete and return. This means there is no opportunity for CWT's staff to discuss any issues with the employer and learner.

48. Learners will all benefit from the new arrangements for initial assessment which CWT is introducing, but there is no assessment planned specifically to test whether young people are suited to dental nursing. Learners receive inductions from CWT, their employer and, to a lesser extent, the subcontractors, but there is no evidence that these are planned to cover topics specific to dental nursing.

Good Practice

An integral part of one learner's planned on-the-job training is a full day each week dedicated to study while at work. This is in addition to the everyday learning in the workplace and the off-the-job training which takes place.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 3**

49. CWT is a limited company managed by a board of directors. The executive director has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the company. CWT achieved the Investors in People award in 1996 and was re-accredited in 1999. The senior management team consists of four team leaders and the executive director. Three team leaders have joint responsibility for training programmes for young people and specific additional responsibilities including quality assurance and recruitment. One team leader has responsibility for adult training programmes. CWT employs 45 staff. Staff responsibilities include training, NVQ assessment, workplace support visits and recruitment. A team of administrative staff assists in these activities. The company has an equal opportunities policy and a quality assurance system. CWT has ISO9000, a nationally recognised quality assurance accreditation. It produced its first self-assessment report in 1997 and there have been three further reports, the most recent being completed in January 2001.

STRENGTHS

- highly qualified and occupationally experienced staff
- good collection and analysis of management information
- highly effective links with external organisations
- good internal communication
- clear and comprehensive equal opportunities policy and code of practice
- good training for all staff in equal opportunities
- clear and effectively communicated quality assurance arrangements
- effective internal verification system

WEAKNESSES

- poor management of key skills training and assessment
- self-assessment identified actions not always followed through
- incomplete quality assurance system
- failure of some groups to meet targets relating to under-representation

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- specific detail in subcontractor service-level agreements
- greater emphasis on training in quality procedures
- promotional materials aimed at under-represented groups

50. CWT's staff have a wide range of qualifications such as degrees, certificates in education, and qualifications in further education teaching and the teaching of basic skills. Training staff are occupationally qualified and have relevant training and development qualifications. Many are qualified to internally verify and accredit prior

learning and achievement. Most training staff have completed or are working towards key skills practitioners' awards. All staff training is evaluated. These evaluations are used to develop future training. Most staff have recent experience of their own industrial sector. CWT has begun to place its staff in industry to maintain their occupational knowledge. Two trainer/assessors in retailing and customer service have been back into industry recently. Staff receive a thorough induction when joining CWT. The first week covers organisational policies and use of procedures. This is followed by a series of work-shadowing exercises until the new members of staff are confident enough to start their job role. All staff have up-to-date job descriptions which are reviewed as part of the staff appraisal system.

51. A wide range of management information is collected for monitoring and analysis. Key areas include equal opportunities, data on applications and recruitment, and feedback from learners. There are good examples of how this monitoring and analysis has led to improvements. The initial induction programme was revised after feedback from learners. It is now well planned and more interesting for learners. Analysis of initial recruitment information showed that many applicants referred by the careers service did not attend their initial interview. Following discussions with the careers service, a new referral system was developed which made applicants think more carefully about their choices. Each month, managers analyse performance data against the targets in the contract with the LSC. The findings are reviewed at team and management meetings. The recruitment team has a series of wall charts in their work area which are updated regularly and allow staff to see how well they are meeting their targets.

52. CWT has good links with many external agencies and organisations, which help it to identify and share good practice in training. It is a member of 15 external working groups and forums. These groups include the local training providers' association, education and business partnerships, lifelong learning partnerships and a range of Chamber of Commerce working groups including those on health and safety and good practice. CWT also has good links with several national training organisations and staff attend events organised by the awarding bodies. Regular meetings take place with the local careers service to ensure that arrangements for referring young people are maintained and improved. CWT is a member of the national advice and guidance network. Staff who attend the various forums and meetings share information with colleagues at regular staff meetings.

53. Internal communication is good. Meetings are conducted in an open manner, with the opportunity for all staff to contribute to the direction of the organisation. Staff know for which aspects of the business plan they have responsibility. The senior managers meet every fortnight to discuss business performance and developments. Team meetings also take place fortnightly, with a focus on business performance. The executive director meets weekly with the directors of the Chamber and monthly with CWT's board of directors. The chairman of the board takes a very active interest in the running of CWT. Trainer/assessors meet every other month in their sector groups to ensure consistency in assessment practice and they meet with other trainer/assessor groups to share best practice. Investment in improving training resources and facilities

has been fully supported by the board of directors. Internal verifiers' meetings are held every three months. Full staff meetings take place every two months and CWT organises days out of the office for staff development and team building. All meetings are recorded and action points are identified. Recent changes in the company's structure and organisation were effectively communicated to staff.

54. Key skills training is poorly managed. In some areas of learning, key skills training has not been integrated with the occupational training. Many learners have a poor appreciation of the relevance of key skills and do not recognise that they have developed such skills. Within some areas of learning, learners have not received sufficiently regular support for their key skills. Key skills training has been introduced late into some training programmes and opportunities have been missed to gather key skills evidence.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

55. CWT has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy, which is regularly updated. It covers staff, learners, and employers and identifies key issues at each stage of the training process. There is a detailed section on sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities is improving following the introduction of a video during the induction process, which requires the learners to consider their response to various forms of discrimination and harassment. CWT provides each employer with a written guide that includes a clear set of statements about CWT's role and the employer's role in ensuring that there is equality of opportunity in the training process. Also included in the guide is a section on entitlements relating to the European directive on working hours and the national minimum wage.

56. All staff have been given equal opportunities training by an external provider. Recently appointed staff will also receive this training. Following the training, staff produce an action plan for incorporating equality of opportunity into their work.

57. There is good provision of car parking spaces for wheelchair users at the main training centre and good access to the ground floor training rooms. There is no lift to the first floor at either the Coventry or Nuneaton sites but, where necessary, training is provided on the ground floor for learners with mobility difficulties. CWT has not been successful in meeting its targets for participation by minority ethnic learners and those with disabilities. This has been recognised in the last three self-assessment reports. Systematic action-planning to deal with equality of opportunity issues has recently been introduced. One of the team leaders has now been given a specific responsibility for equality of opportunity, particularly in relation to recruitment. The equal opportunities policy and promotional and marketing materials are available only in English. However, some information technology course materials are available in Braille.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

58. CWT's quality assurance arrangements are well established within the organisation and cover most of its business activities. The quality assurance procedures are clearly written and easy to follow. All staff have access to the quality assurance manual. Procedures are explained to new members of staff as part of their induction. Further explanation and advice on how to apply the procedures are given as staff develop in their job role. CWT's staff understand the procedures and their importance. There is good control of the paperwork used by the company. A senior member of staff has specific responsibility for the co-ordination of quality assurance activities. A team of quality assurance auditors help with this. Staff clearly appreciate the importance of quality assurance and recognise the importance of critical self-evaluation and auditing within the overall quality assurance framework. Feedback from learners and employers is regularly sought and there are examples where views have been used effectively to improve the training.

59. The internal verification of assessments which CWT carries out is good. There are sufficient staff qualified as internal verifiers. There is a detailed plan which ensures that sampling of learners' portfolios is systematic and that identified actions are carried out. There is a schedule for regular action of observing assessments. Learners fully understand the role of the internal verifier within the assessment process, both in terms of quality assuring assessment decisions and as part of CWT's appeals procedures.

60. The quality assurance procedures do not cover some key training activities. There is no procedure for systematic and detailed initial assessment. At interview learners undertake an assessment of their interests, motivation and preferred learning styles and, at induction, an assessment of their key skills. Testing of basic skills and occupational aptitude are not included in the quality assurance system. There are no procedures to ensure that learners receive appropriate support when additional learning needs are identified and there is no clear responsibility for arranging additional support within the quality assurance system. CWT carries out many evaluation and feedback activities but these are not scheduled or backed up by quality procedures. Procedures for monitoring the performance of subcontractors are not sufficiently explicit or detailed.

61. Self-assessment is not an integral part of the quality assurance system and the process is not always used effectively to improve the company's performance and the quality of training. CWT has produced four self-assessment reports since 1997. These reports are well structured, but fail to identify all the main strengths and weaknesses in each occupational area. Many identified strengths are no more than normal practice. The reports fail to identify some of the key weaknesses and the impact these have on learners' achievements. Most of the grades given in the self-assessment report were higher than those awarded by inspectors. Action plans do not cover all of the identified weaknesses. Actions to deal with weaknesses are not always followed through and often appear in subsequent reports. Issues concerning the quality of some subcontractors' training, the failure of subcontractors to provide attendance records, ineffective initial assessment, the continued under-representation of some minority groups and slow introduction of key skills training and assessment remain as issues although they were first identified as long

ago as 1997. The self-assessment process involved contributions from learners, employers and CWT's staff but was not extended to subcontractors.

62. Although the quality assurance system is clear and detailed, it focuses on the quality assurance of the business rather than the training process. Standard agreements are issued to all subcontractors and are used as a sound basis for monitoring their performance. These agreements are not, however, fully explicit in defining who has responsibility for identifying and arranging additional learning support or, in certain cases, the specific requirement for internal verification.

Good Practice

Thirteen staff have been working towards becoming key skills practitioners. CWT has allowed these staff 14 days off work with pay to prepare for examinations and work on portfolios. This encouragement and support is valued by staff.

In order to strengthen links between CWT and employers, workplace supervisors are invited to join their learners and CWT's staff for lunch during the learners' induction days.