

INSPECTION REPORT

DMT Business Services Ltd

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

DMT Business Services Ltd is a private training company which provides training in a wide range of areas of learning throughout Cornwall. It is based in Truro and currently provides work-based training for 122 young people and 46 New Deal clients.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of work-based training is good in land-based provision, satisfactory in construction and health care and unsatisfactory in business administration and foundation for work. DMT Business Services Ltd's leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Work-based learning for young people

The quality of the training on the job, is good in most areas. Staff are particularly responsive to the needs of individual learners and offer them good support. In many areas of learning, progress reviews are ineffective and learners are not set clear targets for achievement. Many records of training, such as individual training plans, are poor. Assessment and verification practices are unsatisfactory in some areas. Employers often lack knowledge of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and are not sufficiently involved in learners' progress reviews. Achievement rates are low.

New Deal

New Deal training in agriculture and in business administration is good and in construction it is satisfactory. Clients benefit from a wide range of programmes which are suited to their individual needs. The Gateway to Work training is effective and a good proportion of clients move into employment from it. Good use is made of real work projects for clients to gain a wide range of practical skills and to develop self-confidence and social skills. On- and off-the-job training is co-ordinated effectively with good resources at the training centres. Clients are well motivated and enthusiastic with a good understanding of their programme. Achievement rates have improved over the past year, but in many areas remain low. Some individual training plans lack detail and clients are not set sufficiently specific targets at their progress reviews. Records of training and achievement do not contain enough detail.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of DMT Business Services Ltd are unsatisfactory. Training in some areas of learning is well managed, but there is poor management in many. The company's strategic plan does not focus sufficiently on training or contain measurable targets by which success will be judged. There is a good staff appraisal system and staff receive appropriate training. Meetings of managers and staff are held regularly but the outcomes of these meetings are not always recorded well and some staff are unaware of the company's policies and procedures. The company makes effective use of partnerships to promote participation in training, but does not set itself targets for increasing the representation of people from under-represented groups in training. Quality assurance systems and procedures have been amended recently but it is too early to assess their effectiveness. Staff do not yet understand the systems and follow all the procedures. Feedback from learners is evaluated, but the views of employers and subcontractors are not routinely sought. The self-assessment process is new to the company and does not yet contribute to strategic planning.

GRADES

Land-based provision	2
Contributory grades:	
New Deal	2

Construction	3
Contributory grades:	
New Deal	3

Business administration, management & professional	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal	2

Health, social care & public services	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Foundation programmes	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- much effective on- and off-the-job training
- imaginative use of projects for environment task force clients
- good support for learners from staff
- effective Gateway to Work training
- effective staff appraisals and training
- effective use of partnerships to promote participation in learning
- well co-ordinated transport arrangements

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently detailed records of training
- ineffective reviews of learners' progress
- low retention and achievement rates
- poor assessment practices in business administration and Life Skills
- unclear strategy for business development
- lack of an established quality assurance system

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- increase employers' involvement in training
- more comprehensive internal verification
- better promotion of equal opportunities
- greater involvement of training staff in quality assurance
- better analysis and use of management information
- more comprehensive self-assessment
- better arrangements for sharing good practice
- better co-ordination of initial assessment in Life Skills

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. DMT Business Services Ltd (DMT) is a private training company based in Truro with training centres in Bodmin, Camborne, Redruth and Truro. It was established in 1994 and offers a range of training, recruitment and business development services for employers, local authorities, voluntary and environmental organisations, employees, unemployed adults and young people and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. It operates throughout Cornwall and Devon. DMT has developed a wide network of contacts in the area and is involved in many partnerships to promote participation in learning. DMT offers a wide range of government-funded training. As well as offering modern apprenticeships, the company also offers New Deal training and the Life Skills element of the Learning Gateway, offered for clients who have not been successfully involved in learning. A significant proportion of New Deal clients are sent to DMT's training without choosing it. Apprentices are employed in a range of industries. Some also receive training in local colleges. There are 53 staff and 295 learners. Many of DMT's staff started as learners themselves.

2. Modern apprenticeship training is funded by Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Other funding comes from the Employment Service and from European Union (EU) initiatives. The Cornish economy still relies on a relatively narrow base of agriculture, fishing, tourism and manufacturing. Much employment is seasonal. In May 2001, the unemployment rate in Cornwall was 3.6 per cent, compared with the national rate of 3.1 per cent. Unemployment in the Truro travel-to-work area is low at 2.6 per cent. At the time of the inspection, the number of job vacancies in the Truro area exceeded the number of people seeking employment. Less than 1 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers in Cornwall achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 53 per cent, higher than the national average of 49.2 per cent.

THE INSPECTION

3. Seven inspectors spent a total of 28 days at DMT during June 2001. They met 76 learners, conducted interviews with 44 of DMT's staff and 14 subcontractors. They visited 31 work placements where they interviewed 29 employers and workplace supervisors. Inspectors observed 13 training sessions and also observed assessments and learners' progress reviews. They examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios and files, learners' personal records, DMT's plans, policies and procedures, management information and reports from awarding bodies. Inspectors studied DMT's self-assessment report and the accompanying action plan, which was updated in June 2001.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Land-based provision	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Construction	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	5
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total	0	3	5	4	0	1	0	13

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Land-based provision

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal	15	2

4. There are 18 learners in the agriculture occupational area. One is a foundation modern apprentice in horticulture, two are on other work-based training for young people in veterinary nursing and the remainder are on the environment task force option of the New Deal. All environment task force clients are referred by the Employment Service. Sixty per cent of these clients are sent on this option without choosing it. Work experience and training for environment task force is carried out by four subcontractors. Three-quarters of environment task force clients are with the Tap Routes Consortium of conservation organisations, which includes British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the Silvanus Trust, the National Trust and Greenscapes. Other subcontractors include Duchy College and Greenlanes. Work experience and training takes place on projects throughout Cornwall. Environment task force clients receive on-the-job training and foundation modern apprentices attend day-release training at college. Advanced modern apprentices attend block-release training at college in Devon. The modern apprentices receive key skills training. Ten of the New Deal clients are working towards units of the environmental conservation national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2, two are attending short course training, two are working towards the commercial horticulture level 1 NVQ and one is working towards a level 2 NVQ in animal care.

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

New Deal										
New Deal (18-24)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							67		60	100
Gained job and/or planned learning completed							2	3	3	5
Gained job							11	16	15	25
Planned learning completed							17	25	28	47

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	100
Still in training									1	100

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							1		1	100
Still in training							1	100	1	100

STRENGTHS

- effective on- and off-the-job training
- effective use of projects to enhance learning
- good understanding of training by clients

WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently detailed records

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better communication with employers
- more detailed feedback of training observation reviews to subcontractors

5. As identified in the self-assessment report, all subcontractors have good training resources. Trainers have extensive experience in agriculture and many are qualified assessors. They are enthusiastic, develop good working relationships with learners and ensure that learners achieve the maximum benefit from every learning opportunity. Most learners receive training at work or are sent for training by their employer. Some subcontractors offer a wide range of training opportunities. Clients with the main subcontractor have access to over 50 short courses, such as moth identification and hedge laying. Inspectors observed two very good training sessions. DMT sends veterinary nurses to training in Devon because it judges the training there to be of a higher standard than that available locally.

6. The work placements in this area of learning are good and are both creative and interesting for learners. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Many

of the projects provide considerable benefits for local communities. One organisation builds gardens for charitable groups who cannot afford to have the work done privately. Clients improve their communication, support and planning skills and benefit from working and learning as a group. Many of the projects bring clients into regular contact with local communities, which enhances their confidence and social skills.

7. Clients are highly motivated, enthusiastic about their training and dedicated to achieving their qualifications. They have a good knowledge of their training and qualifications. They understand the structure of the qualifications and are clear about the requirements of their selected NVQ. Their initial assessment and induction are satisfactory. Achievement rates are good in this occupational area and the proportion of clients completing their training and gaining employment has improved between 1999 and 2001. The self-assessment report recognised this improvement in achievement. Most portfolios of evidence seen by inspectors were of a good standard. They were well presented and contained a wide range of appropriate evidence. Assessment and verification arrangements are good.

8. Many training and achievement records do not contain enough detail. There is not always a clear link between personal development plans for New Deal clients and their work experience and training programmes. Individual training plans do not always record accurately in advance what the clients will do and how this will help them to achieve their qualifications. Some clients make considerable progress, particularly in terms of personal development. Although this is often recognised by those involved, written records are not kept of such successes. In one case, a client, an employer and DMT's liaison officer agreed that the main achievement of this client was increased self-confidence. This achievement was not recorded in the client's personal file. The self-assessment report identified the need for more detailed recording of training and individual achievements.

9. DMT's communications with some employers and subcontractors are poor. One subcontractor was unsure about training arrangements for clients at a local college and a client was uncertain about the availability of additional education and further training opportunities. DMT monitors the quality of the training provided by subcontractors. Learners complete questionnaires for most training events and DMT's staff have observed 14 training sessions given by subcontractors in the last 15 months. However, the quality of these training sessions is not evaluated sufficiently. DMT does not tell subcontractors and trainers of any necessary improvements it has identified from its analysis of feedback and observation.

Good Practice

One learner was disappointed to be turned down by the armed services on health grounds. DMT encouraged him to follow an alternative career in environmental conservation. An innovative training programme was set up with a local college and he developed a keen interest in woodland management. As a result he has been accepted onto a full-time forestry course at a college which specialises in this area of education and training.

Construction**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal	19	3

10. There are 15 clients on the environment task force option of New Deal. Over 70 per cent of them have been sent to this option by the Employment Service without choosing it. Three clients are on the employment option. New Deal clients work towards completing a number of basic qualifications in woodwork, brickwork, painting and decorating or plastering. The employer and client agree between themselves which qualifications meet individual clients' needs. On average, clients attend a DMT training centre for off-the-job training for one day each week. One client is on the full-time education and training option and is just about to complete a painting and decorating level 2 NVQ. There are two advanced modern apprentices. One is working towards a level 3 NVQ in installing and commissioning electrotechnical installations and the other is working towards the wood occupations level 3 NVQ. Off-the-job training and assessment for the NVQs and key skills is subcontracted to two local colleges. The present advanced modern apprentices have not been in training long enough to have completed their apprenticeships. There are three foundation modern apprentices. One is working towards bricklaying NVQ at level 2 and attends a local college for off-the-job training. The other two apprentices are working towards level 2 NVQ in glazing. All of their training and assessment takes place on the job. All apprentices are employed. Their companies employ the work-based assessors and DMT provides internal verification. Key skills training and assessment for the two glazing apprentices takes place at one of DMT's training centres. There are two trainees on other training programmes. One is working towards the wood occupations level 1 NVQ and the other is taking the trowel occupations level 2 NVQ.

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

New Deal										
New Deal (18-24)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							108		102	100
Still in training							0	0	5	5
Gained job							24	22	17	17
Planned learning completed							11	10	20	20

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		3		4	100
Still in training					0	0	0	0	3	75
FMA framework completed					0	0	1	33	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					1	50	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			27		14		9		11	100
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	18
Individual learning plan completed			5	19	3	21	1	11	3	27
Left without completing individual learning plan			22	81	11	79	8	89	6	55
NVQ level 1 completed			4	15	2	14	1	11	3	27
NVQ level 2 completed			1	4	1	7	0	0	0	0

STRENGTHS

- good initial assessment for construction craft skills
- wide range of effective environment task force projects
- good off-the-job practical training
- good involvement of employers in training

WEAKNESSES

- weak reviews of learners' progress
- low retention and achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training for modern apprentices
- better general housekeeping and tidiness in the carpentry and joinery workshop
- enhanced private study arrangements and resources at the training centre

11. The initial assessment of construction craft skills is good. Learners take an initial

assessment which is based on their ability to produce a small piece of practical work. Trainers demonstrate the methods and techniques needed to produce the test piece. Learners have two attempts to produce the piece working from a simple drawing. Trainers assess the better piece against clearly identified criteria that have been explained to the learners. The quality of the assessed piece of work is used to determine an appropriate target qualification and level for the learner. Similar tests have recently been developed for carpentry and joinery and painting and decorating. Learners then complete a common initial training programme to develop their skill at using tools and their manual dexterity. This provides a further opportunity to assess the potential capability of the learner. The self-assessment report identified the need to standardise initial assessment procedures and record-keeping and this has now been achieved.

12. New Deal clients benefit from the wide range of environment task force projects. One project is the conversion of an office building and old garages into a new training centre for DMT. The work projects require the clients to use an extensive range of construction skills. Other projects include conversion of old industrial buildings, repair and renovation of shops and redecoration of schools. Many letters have been received from the owners of buildings expressing their pleasure at the quality of the work and the professional attitude of the clients. DMT provides transport to take clients to and from the projects. Clients work under the direction of a project supervisor. Several supervisors were previously New Deal clients themselves. They can understand the clients' perspective and provide appropriate guidance and individual support. A number of project supervisors are training to become assessors. Tutors frequently visit the projects to provide additional support and help clients to identify evidence and assessment opportunities for their qualifications. Clients also benefit by developing their self-confidence, teamworking and leadership skills. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report. There is adequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training for those in work-based training.

13. Practical training at the training centre is good. Appropriate resources are available but the carpentry and joinery workshop is not kept sufficiently clean and tidy during training sessions. Facilities and resources for private study are just adequate for the number of learners using them. Learners carry out their tasks diligently without too much supervision. Trainers are available to demonstrate and help and only intervene when necessary. Every morning, the painting and decorating trainer holds a briefing session with the learners. He explains the programme for the day and ensures everyone understands what they will be doing. The praise and encouragement given by the trainer motivates learners. Learners work well together, often providing mutual help and support. Trainers are appropriately experienced and qualified. Assessment and verification arrangements are satisfactory.

14. Employers are enthusiastic about the training and are keen to help learners to progress. DMT identified that a glazing company was unable to offer the full range of experience necessary for an apprentice to achieve the NVQ. The company plans to arrange a secondment to another company to provide that experience. Another employer is investigating the possibility of transferring his New Deal client, who started

with the company less than three months ago, onto a modern apprenticeship programme.

15. As identified in the self-assessment report, progress review practices are weak. Tutors are not directly involved in the reviews. Most learners are aware of the length of time they will spend training and the overall targets they have to achieve. Some progress reviews set no specific training targets. Some woodworking clients are unaware of how much progress they have made and do not know what work they will be set after completing their current tasks. An apprentice starting the third year of an advanced modern apprenticeship has yet to begin working towards key skill qualifications. This was not noticed or recorded at progress reviews. Liaison officers who carry out learners' reviews have no specialist knowledge of construction. Reviews with modern apprentices are carried out in the workplace, often with the apprentice's supervisor present.

16. The achievement rates for clients on the environment task force option of New Deal are low. Clients pass a number of skills tests but there is insufficient time for them to achieve a certificate from the awarding body. Over the past two years, over 90 per cent of clients have left the option without achieving the targets on their individual training plans. During this time, only 41 of the 210 clients who started training have gained employment. In an effort to improve this, DMT has recently introduced basic skills tests as a qualification target for clients. Over the past three years, more than 70 per cent of learners left the NVQ training programmes without achieving the targets on their individual training plans. Although still low, at 27 per cent, achievement rates have more than doubled over the last year. The self-assessment report identified the weakness of low achievement rates. Modern apprenticeship training has not been running long enough for achievement and retention trends to be apparent.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	19	4
New Deal	12	2

17. DMT offers advanced modern apprenticeships in administration and accounting at NVQ level 3 and foundation modern apprenticeships in administration, using information technology and installing and supporting information technology. There are three advanced modern apprentices in administration and four in accounting, all of whom also receive key skills training. Accounting training is subcontracted to a local college. There are three foundation modern apprentices in administration, one in using computers and one in installing and supporting information technology. All modern apprentices are employed in local small businesses. They are visited in the workplace by business liaison officers for progress reviews and by an assessor for assessment and action-planning. Off-the-job training takes place in two of DMT's training centres. Training sessions include both modern apprentices and New Deal clients. Ten of the 12 clients are on the environment task force option. One client is on the employment option and one has already been on a New Deal option and has been referred back for more help in finding work. Six clients are working towards qualifications in computer literacy and information technology, three are completing a different computer qualification and one client is studying administration skills. Clients are placed with a range of organisations and two are based in DMT's own training centres. Business liaison officers carry out progress reviews for all clients. Clients receive training at two of DMT's training centres or from the organisation where they are placed. There are seven other trainees working towards NVQs.

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

New Deal										
New Deal (18-24)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							62		66	100
Still in training							0	0	2	3
Gained job and/or planned learning completed							21	34	46	70
Gained job							8	13	22	33
Planned learning completed							13	21	24	36

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		11		6	100
Still in training					0	0	0	0	5	83
FMA framework completed					0	0	6	55	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					1	50	7	64	1	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			18		11		4		7	100
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	6	86
AMA framework completed			4	22	3	27	1	25	1	14
NVQ level 2 completed			1	6	2	18	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed			5	28	8	73	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			14		12		13		14	100
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	8	57
Individual learning plan completed			7	50	7	58	4	31	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan			7	50	5	42	8	62	6	43
NVQ level 1 completed			3	21	6	50	6	46	1	7
NVQ level 2 completed			4	29	0	0	0	0	1	7

STRENGTHS

- good support for learners from staff
- good training resources for computer training
- good achievement rates among New Deal clients

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient training opportunities for modern apprentices
- inadequate recording and monitoring of training
- poor assessment practices
- low achievement rates for modern apprentices and NVQ trainees

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- increased involvement in training programmes by employers
- more effective progress reviews
- more comprehensive internal verification

18. DMT's staff are committed to creating the best learning environments and to helping learners succeed. They respond promptly and effectively to learners' requests, take an active interest in their wellbeing and development and solve problems creatively. The targets they set for learners are relevant and achievable. The good staff to learner ratio is beneficial to learning and dealing with individual needs. Learners are given frequent individual training and receive effective individual induction. These strengths were identified in the self-assessment report.

19. The computer training centre provides an appropriate environment for training and has good resources, a strength identified in DMT's self-assessment report. Learners have enough access to good computers, which meet the needs of industry. Computers are well maintained and staff, who are well qualified and experienced, are available to resolve any problems as they arise. Learning materials are of good quality. There is a working Internet café where learners gain work experience. The training and qualifications available meet the needs of individual learners and employers. Much of the training is based on a system of tests, exercises and individual projects linked to the specific interests of learners. One learner designed a presentation that is to be used as a learning aid by DMT's training department.

20. Employers provide little training in the workplace and some cannot help the learners to make progress due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of NVQs. Records are not kept of training and learners' training does not go beyond equipping them for basic tasks. Learners demonstrate competences by completing tasks but have little understanding of alternative ways of gathering evidence. The theory training is weak. Five of the eight modern apprentices are not allowed by their employers to receive any off-the-job training. DMT provides some training at their workplace but this is insufficient. Few learners attend short courses. Weaknesses in the quality of training were not identified in the self-assessment report and have not been dealt with. Some employers have little knowledge about DMT, receive minimal information about learners' progress and do not take an active part in the review process.

21. There is insufficient recording of learners' progress or achievements. Personal development plans and progress reviews are unclear and of little practical use. Records of learners' previous reviews are not referred to and comments on successive reviews are repetitive. Target-setting is weak and of little value to the learner. The lack of a training plan at the training centres makes recording and monitoring learners' progress difficult. Individual trainers have their own record-keeping systems, which are not standardised. Records are ineffective and are not always shared with appropriate individuals. Recent changes in the review process are improving its value for learners.

22. Learners are visited regularly at work by DMT's staff but these meetings are not productive. The objectives for these meetings are not clearly set and often administrative tasks take precedence over providing effective support for learners. Learners are unaware of the different forms of assessment. There is no assessment plan and employers are not involved in the assessment process. They are often asked to validate evidence when they have little understanding or knowledge of NVQs. Learners do not know in advance when assessment is to take place and they collect little evidence of their competences through their everyday work. Some assessment occurs at training centres but assessors do not keep appropriate records when units are achieved.

23. The achievement rates of New Deal clients improved significantly last year. In 2000-01, 74 per cent of clients either gained employment or completed their planned learning, compared with 37 per cent in 1999-2000. In contrast, achievement rates for modern apprentices over the past three years are poor. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Since 1998, only five advanced modern apprentices and six foundation modern apprentices have completed the full apprenticeship framework. Two apprentices are working towards key skills units. The key skills training has not yet been fully integrated with the NVQ training.

24. Internal verification meetings are infrequent. Minutes of these meetings contain few specific references to the business administration training and have few action points. There is insufficient monitoring of assessors. Internal verification of learners' portfolios is unstructured. Learners are not included in the verification process and have no contact with the verifier. They are not aware of the significance of internal verification or of their rights if they disagree with a judgement.

Poor Practice

Internal verification is sometimes carried out using photocopied evidence supplied by the trainer. In one instance, the learner's portfolio was not made available to the internal verifier. The learner did not know that internal verification had taken place. Internal verification reports are not included in portfolios, nor is a copy given to the learner.

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	31	3

25. DMT provides training towards NVQs at level 2 in care and level 3 in care and promoting independence. Currently, there are 30 modern apprentices in training; 14 at advanced level and 16 at foundation level. There is also one trainee doing other work-based training for young people. An NVQ co-ordinator has overall responsibility for managing the training. Trainees are employed in residential care or nursing homes across Cornwall. They are recruited to training through liaison between DMT's customer services staff and local employers. Business liaison officers visit potential trainees in the workplace to enrol them and draw up an individual training plan. Trainees are assessed in their workplace by work-based or subcontracted assessors. Training for the theory elements of the qualifications is given by both employers and DMT at venues which suit the needs of the trainees and employers. The modern apprentices receive key skills training. Subcontractors provide internal verification. Business liaison officers provide support and guidance to trainees and review 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					9		16		17	100
Still in training					0	0	0	0	16	94
FMA framework completed					2	22	4	25	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					3	33	5	31	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			17		25		17		15	100
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	14	93
AMA framework completed			2	12	1	4	3	18	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			3	18	5	20	3	18	1	7
NVQ level 3 completed			3	18	5	20	3	18	0	0

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			18		2		1		1	100
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
Individual learning plan completed			5	28	1	50	0	0	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan			13	72	1	50	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			5	28	1	50	0	0	0	0

STRENGTHS

- well-planned individual training programmes
- particularly supportive training team
- effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- low achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater involvement by employers and assessors in progress reviews
- development of a sampling plan for internal verification
- continued development of a strategy to improve retention rates

26. Training is planned to meet the individual needs and requirements of trainees. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. When trainees are recruited, they receive induction and an initial assessment to identify any additional support needs. Additional support is then adapted to individuals' needs. Basic skills training is available at DMT's training centres and transport is provided to enable trainees to attend. If trainees are unable to attend formal training sessions, arrangements are made to provide help in the workplace. Training is planned by the trainee, assessor and the business liaison officer. Well-planned assessment takes place in the workplace and is fully recorded. After assessment, trainees receive verbal and written feedback. Written progress reports are kept in trainees' portfolios. There is easy access to assessors and trainees are making good progress towards achievement of their qualification.

27. The teaching of key skills starts at the beginning of the programme. Trainees attend additional off-the-job training to cover the application of number and information technology key skills. If this is not possible, the training is given to them at work. Key

skills work is directly linked to care activities and trainees appreciate the relevance of key skills to their own jobs. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report.

28. The training team works well together and gives very effective support to trainees. This strength was also identified in the self-assessment report. Employers allow trainees to spend time with their work-based assessors and to attend off-the-job training. There are good communications between business liaison officers and employers and between the assessors and the internal verifiers. Trainees have direct access to their assessor and business liaison manager.

29. Business liaison officers, the NVQ co-ordinator, DMT's assessors and the internal verifiers meet every month. They review the progress of all trainees, identify any problems with assessors or employers and agree an appropriate action plan to ensure the matters raised are resolved quickly and effectively. Business liaison officers visit trainees in the workplace each month to carry out progress reviews. They consider the trainee's job role and training and assessment so far and use this to monitor the trainee's progress and plan future achievement. Reviews are fully documented and set clear targets for progression. Employers and work-based assessors are consulted but the process does not always ensure that everyone is involved with the trainee at the same time.

30. Training is well planned to help trainees carry out their jobs. Assessors help trainees to link their on- or off-the-job training to the requirements of both their jobs and their NVQs. This ensures effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Resources used in training are satisfactory.

31. Apprentices' low achievement rates were correctly identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Few apprentices achieve NVQs and even fewer complete their modern apprenticeships.

32. Retention rates have improved considerably in the last few years since DMT developed an action plan and restructured its staffing to improve support for work-based trainees. DMT now emphasises the importance of retaining trainees and giving them time to complete their awards. In 1998-99, the retention rate for foundation apprentices was 52 per cent and 32 per cent for advanced apprentices. By 2000-01, these rates had improved to 82 per cent and 93 per cent respectively.

33. Internal verifiers support assessors in the workplace and hold regular standardisation meetings. Verification is carried out at the end of a trainee's first unit, halfway through the training and at the end of the training. Internal verifiers give verbal and written feedback to assessors. There is no system for selecting and checking a proportion of trainees' portfolios. The external verifier identified this problem in December 2000 but nothing has yet been done to develop a system.

Good Practice

DMT's assessor and an employer helped a trainee who had severe dyslexia. The trainee received additional support to ensure the training met their needs. This resulted in the trainee achieving eight units of the NVQ in eight months.

A work-based assessor manages the training of a trainee with additional support needs. She works with the trainee to plan the training and assessment one week at a time because working any further ahead distresses the trainee.

Foundation programmes

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	62	4

34. DMT holds two contracts in this area of training. The Life Skills element of the Learning Gateway is the largest, with 62 current learners. There are currently no clients on the New Deal Gateway to Work, but in the past year, 72 clients have attended the course. Gateway to Work is offered in Truro as a structured three-week course of jobsearch and personal development activities. DMT provides Life Skills training for 16 to 19 year-olds who are disengaged from training. Since the start of the contract in 1999, 192 young people have joined this training. The average length of time spent in this training is 14 weeks. All learners are referred by Connexions (formerly the Careers Service), where a personal adviser makes an initial assessment of an individual's needs and develops an action plan. DMT then draws up a plan to meet the learner's needs. About one third of learners are with subcontractors, while two thirds take part in activities run by DMT. A wide range of training is available. Basic skills tuition is available, leading to wordpower and numberpower qualifications. Other courses vary from first aid, basic food hygiene and computer literacy and information technology to tortoise farming and gundog training. Learners at one subcontractor are able to gain key skills qualifications at levels 2 and 3. Some learners spend almost all their time in a single occupational area, such as information technology or construction. Others cover a range of areas, often spending at least one day a week improving their basic skills and two days on other training or a work placement.

This table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Foundation Programmes										
Foundation Programmes	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started					32		26		166	100
Still in training					0	0	0	0	62	37
Gained job with training/progressed to further training and/or planned learning completed					0	0	5	19	15	9
Left without either					0	0	13	50	63	38
Gained job with training					0	0	5	100	14	8
Progressed to further training					0	0	0	0	1	1
Planned learning completed					0	0	13	100	41	25

STRENGTHS

- particularly responsive and supportive staff
- good use of short courses to engage learners
- effective Gateway to Work training

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate individual training plans
- little assessment of training
- ineffective progress reviews
- low retention rates in Life Skills

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider range of supportive work placements
- better co-ordination between initial assessment and Life Skills individual training plans

35. DMT's Life Skills training staff offer a flexible and individualised approach, responding positively when learners request changes to their training. They are aware of the need to overcome the problems which have prevented these young people from learning and tackle difficult pastoral issues with tact and in a professional manner. Staff also deal firmly, but supportively, with problems such as disruptive behaviour or poor attendance.

36. A range of short courses is used to enhance learners' self-esteem and motivation. These offer structured training and practical strategies, as well as encouraging learners to think about their own personal development. The content of these courses and the way they are used is kept under review. Staff and learners often suggest improvements. Learners enjoy the courses and can explain what progress they are making and what they have learned.

37. Gateway to Work courses are effective at helping clients progress into jobs. Seven three-week courses have taken place so far, leading to 50 per cent of clients moving into jobs or self-employment. The course uses a combination of individual and group work. Currently, most work placements to help clients are in a narrow range of occupational areas. There is an emphasis on developing team spirit and creating a positive, supportive environment. To enhance clients' motivation, former clients return to tell their success stories.

38. Self-assessment failed to identify the shortcomings in planning and reviewing Life

Skills as a key weakness. Life Skills learners have inadequate individual training plans. DMT has only recently started running Life Skills training itself, but there is no detailed breakdown of training objectives. Individual training plans are little more than a list of sessions the learner must attend with a brief, repetitive description of the main benefits of each aspect.

39. This lack of an effective training plan undermines the assessment of learning. As training objectives are not clearly stated at the beginning, learners and tutors are unable to identify whether the desired learning has taken place. Assessment of training only takes place when the learner is taking a formal qualification. Less formal learning outcomes are not systematically identified and recorded. Much of the learning which takes place during Life Skills is unassessed. This is a problem because Life Skills covers the development of personal, social and behavioural skills, not just work towards qualifications or more easily measured skills. Staff are aware of the need to record learners' achievements in a more systematic way and have recently started using modules of a nationally recognised award scheme. This has given staff a more flexible way to set and assess learning goals. Self-assessment recognised the use of these modules as a strength, but did not recognise the wider problems.

40. Progress reviews are ineffective. The lack of adequate individual training plans makes it difficult for learners and tutors to discuss and record what has been learned. Reviews lack detail and are poorly recorded. They focus on pastoral matters rather than on learning. DMT staff receive no guidance from clients' personal advisers about the quality or frequency of reviews. Progress reviews are supposed to take place monthly, but do not. DMT does not monitor how frequently the reviews are held. There are not enough progress reviews at very important times during a learner's training, such as the early stages of a work placement.

41. There are low retention rates in Life Skills. Since the programme started in 1999, there have been 130 leavers. Sixteen per cent of them moved into employment or to other training or further education. Thirty-nine per cent left because of poor attendance and the remaining 45 per cent left for personal reasons. Forty-two per cent of leavers achieved the goals on their individual training plans.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 4**

42. DMT is a registered company with five directors. Three directors are involved with operations: the managing director, the administration director and the executive director. The accounts director and the finance director are not involved with DMT's day-to-day operations. The operations manager leads a team of eight section managers with responsibilities for the four training centres, youth, adult and Employment Service training programmes, customer services, transport, NVQ co-ordination and Employment Service administration. There are 20 instructor-assessors, 14 business liaison officers, three supervisors, nine administration staff and seven co-ordinators of Life Skills training and community support. The policy for promoting equality of opportunity and its associated procedures forms part of the overall quality assurance system. There is a range of quality assurance procedures and other documents covering most aspects of training. The first self-assessment report was produced in 1999 and has been updated annually since then.

STRENGTHS

- effective staff appraisal and training
- open and consultative management style
- effective use of partnerships to promote participation in learning
- good transport arrangements to widen access to learning
- good evaluation of feedback from learners

WEAKNESSES

- unclear strategy for business development
- some poor management of training
- ineffective internal communications
- lack of an established quality assurance system

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better record-keeping of meetings
- better promotion of equal opportunities
- greater involvement of training staff in quality assurance
- better analysis and use of management information
- more comprehensive self-assessment
- better arrangements for sharing good practice
- better monitoring of subcontractors

43. There is effective staff appraisal and training. Staff appraisals take place at least annually. Staff training needs are identified and staff are working towards or have

achieved a wide range of appropriate training. This includes assessors' qualifications, courses in counselling, supervisory management and diversity and vocational qualifications appropriate to their jobs. Records of staff development are good. All training is focused on helping the individual staff members to meet the needs of their learners. Many staff started as learners and have gone on to be employed by DMT, where they have received further training and development. These staff have a good understanding of those they are teaching.

44. DMT has an open and consultative management style. The managing director founded the company and works closely with all staff. He makes regular visits to all training centres, meets with staff at all levels and makes himself known to learners. The operations manager and other managers have a similar style. All this allows decisions to be reached quickly and ensures that directors and managers have a thorough knowledge of DMT's daily activities. Most staff view the open style of management as useful and feel able to make decisions which benefit learners without needing to seek approval.

45. DMT has prepared no written strategic plan that focuses on learning. Directors have prepared a business plan, which is monitored during quarterly directors' meetings. DMT's recent strategy has been based on winning a range of LSC and Employment Service contracts for work-based training for young people and adults. While this has been successful, there is no plan showing how this training will be developed and no targets against which success will be measured.

46. There is inconsistent management of training across the different programmes and subjects. In some cases, the management of on- and off-the-job training is well co-ordinated, while in others there are few links. Other areas where there is marked variation in standards include internal verification, the frequency and content of learners' progress reviews, the monitoring of subcontractors and the sharing of good practice. In some training centres and areas of learning, staff develop their own systems and procedures, which are not consistent with DMT's procedures. This results in wasted effort by staff and some poor training for learners.

47. The most important place for internal communication is the monthly management team meeting. There are also meetings of centre staff and internal verifiers. The outcomes of meetings are not always well recorded. Communications between DMT and those who give training are not always productive. Some of DMT's own staff members are unaware of the company's strategy and procedures. There are plans for an annual report which will review past performance and state key business objectives for the next year. Managers' time is in great demand and many spend significant time dealing with routine problems that could easily be handled by other staff if communications were clearer and individual staff roles and responsibilities were adhered to. Many informal meetings take place at which, major decisions are reached. These decisions are poorly recorded and how they are carried out cannot be monitored.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

48. DMT makes effective use of partnerships with other organisations to promote participation in learning. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Examples include extensive liaison with the Employment Service, the careers service, the regional development agency, schools, colleges, local authorities and community groups. All of this activity leads to a wide range of training programmes and initiatives that increase participation and progression in learning. Its efforts ensure that DMT is well respected in the local community.

49. Promotion of equal opportunities is mostly satisfactory. There are adequate equal opportunities policies and procedures covering most aspects of current legislation. Learners understand how to make a complaint and are protected from harassment and bullying. For example, special transport arrangements were made for one learner who was experiencing harassment from other people when using public transport. DMT shows learners a video on equal opportunities at induction and is considering how to involve learners more in the induction process. Equal opportunities is discussed during initial meetings with employers to ensure that employers will safeguard equal opportunities for learners. Ongoing monitoring and promotion of equal opportunities is linked to the monitoring of learners' welfare. There is not enough promotion of training to people from minority ethnic groups or challenging of gender stereotypes. Managers analyse the gender, ethnicity and disability of learners recruited. They discuss the reasons why few learners are from minority ethnic groups or have disabilities but do not set targets for improvement. Training facilities do not display enough images which promote equal opportunities. In some cases, access for people with mobility difficulties is inadequate. Many improvements are currently being made to facilities, such as easier access to toilets and the installation of ramps. Approximately one-third of staff have received training in promoting equal opportunities.

50. Operating in an area with a mixture of remote rural and urban communities, DMT has well co-ordinated transport arrangements to help people to take part in training. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Financial assistance is given to help learners use public transport. Where there is no public transport, DMT uses its own 27 minibuses. Bus routes are varied according to demand. Business liaison officers arrange work placements close to learners' homes where possible.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

51. Quality assurance systems and procedures adequately cover most aspects of training. These have been reviewed and streamlined recently but it is too early to say whether they will be effective. Staff have low awareness of quality assurance systems and procedures and their practices do not always comply with the systems. DMT acknowledged this weakness in its self-assessment report. Staff involved in training are not sufficiently involved in designing quality assurance procedures. However, they were involved in the recent revision of the quality assurance manual. While all staff are committed to improving the quality of training, few have knowledge of the ways in which such improvement can be measured. In most occupational areas, there are satisfactory arrangements to monitor the quality of the work undertaken by subcontractors.

52. There is good evaluation of feedback from learners. Questionnaires are issued at the start, middle and end of training. Response rates are good. The questions are too complicated. The results are logged and analysed. Quarterly reports are produced showing feedback in statistical terms as well as comments from individual learners. These reports are discussed at managers' meetings and there are arrangements for following up problems identified by learners. Most learners are satisfied with the service they receive from DMT. DMT sends questionnaires to learners who leave training early, but the response rate is low. The views of employers and subcontractors are not routinely sought. There are satisfactory systems for collecting management information and a range of reports which analyse these data are produced. A new computer system is being installed that will allow DMT to develop the analysis of data to continually improve its training.

53. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and involves most key staff. The process is new to DMT and as yet does not contribute to the strategic planning process. Many strengths and weaknesses have been accurately identified but the self-assessment process has failed to identify other significant matters. The action plan adequately identifies which improvements are to be made, when and by whom but many of the actions listed are too complicated to be realistic.

54. Assessment is effective where it is properly planned and employers are fully involved and understand the process. However, some learners' achievements, such as improved confidence, are not formally assessed and recorded. Internal verification is not well organised. Meetings of verifiers are infrequent, plans for selecting and checking a proportion of assessments and portfolios are not always clear and there is insufficient monitoring of the standards set by assessors. Some learners do not understand the process and how they can appeal against assessment decisions.

Good Practice

DMT is located in a remote area where many learners rely on public transport to reach off-the-job training. The locations of three training centres have been carefully chosen to be within easy walking distances of railway and bus stations.

DMT invests in premises in need of refurbishment. Learners involved with community projects are involved with the renovation of these. This leads to high levels of local pride and a sense of involvement among learners. It also helps to preserve buildings and associated construction skills.