

INSPECTION REPORT

Partnership Training

24 September 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

PARTNERSHIP TRAINING

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Inadequate provision

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

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

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

SUMMARY

The provider

Partnership Training is based in Newport, on the Isle of Wight. There are currently seven learners on the Life Skills training programme. There are no learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship or NVQ training programmes.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the Life Skills training programme and the leadership and management of Partnership Training are unsatisfactory.

Life Skills

Training is poor. There is insufficient training to help learners prepare for employment. The identification of individual needs is inadequate and staff are not qualified to provide basic skills training. Progress reviews are inadequate. The training environment is poorly resourced and uncomfortable. Support for individual learners is good.

Leadership and management

Equal opportunities training is effective. Equality of opportunity is emphasised throughout the training programme. There is inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Access to the training centre is poor for those with restricted mobility. Management of the training programme is weak. There is no systematic recording of learner progress. Quality assurance policies and procedures are not fully developed. There is a lack of systematic analysis of data relating to learners and equality of opportunity.

GRADES

Foundation programmes	4
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	4

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- effective individual learner support
- good self-assessment report
- effective equal opportunities training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate identification of individual learning needs
- inadequate progress reviews
- insufficiently qualified staff
- inadequate resources
- weak management of training
- poor monitoring of the training programmes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better training records
- greater use of learners' knowledge and experience in training sessions
- greater emphasis on teaching and learning in review process

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. In February 2001, the Work Opportunities Company, which provided Life Skills training, was purchased by the Isle of Wight Partnership. The training functions of the two companies were amalgamated to form a new business unit, Partnership Training, which operates from two sites in Newport. The former Work Opportunities site is used to provide Life Skills and New Deal training and the other site is the administrative headquarters. There are 17 members of staff. A week before the inspection, the Isle of Wight Partnership announced its decision to sell Partnership Training.
2. Partnership Training has a contract with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide Life Skills training, foundation modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQs). At the time of inspection there were no learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship or NVQ training programmes. Partnership Training also has a contract with the Employment Service to provide training for New Deal clients. The service sector, which includes tourism, catering and public administration, accounts for 65 per cent of employment on the Isle of Wight. Many young people are reliant on the large amount of seasonal work available. The unemployment rate for the Isle of Wight in June 2001 was 3.9 per cent, compared with the national rate of 3 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds on the Isle of Wight is 0.7 per cent, compared with the national rate of 6 per cent. The proportion of young people on the Isle of Wight in 2000 achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, was 44.8 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent.

THE INSPECTION

3. A team of two inspectors spent a total of six days at Partnership Training in September 2001. They interviewed six learners and held nine interviews with provider staff. They observed six training sessions and examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios of evidence, learner records, Partnership Training's business plans, policies and procedures and reports from awarding bodies. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report, which was produced a week before the inspection and was Partnership Training's first report.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	6
Total	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	6

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Foundation programmes

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	7	4

4. Partnership Training provides Life Skills training for 16 to 18 year olds. All learners are referred to the training programme by the careers service and are interviewed by Life Skills staff. Personal advisers are responsible for arranging the interviews, providing guidance and completing individual learning plans for each learner. There have been 50 learners since the training programme began in 1999. There are currently seven learners who attend for a minimum of 16 hours a week and remain on the training programme for up to 24 weeks. Learners' progress is monitored every four weeks. Basic skills training is provided, leading to wordpower and numberpower qualifications. Other courses include first aid, basic food hygiene, fire awareness, health and safety, computer literacy and information and communications technology (ICT). Learners are able to gain key skills qualifications and carry out work placements. A full-time manager has overall responsibility for the training centre. The training centre co-ordinator, one full-time Life Skills co-ordinator and two part-time tutors carry out the teaching, assessment and progress reviews. A work experience co-ordinator works with the training centre co-ordinator and arranges learners' work placements. The Life Skills co-ordinator arranges external visits and speakers.

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

Foundation Programmes										
Foundation Programmes	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					8		5		37
Still in training					0	0	0	0	7	0
Gained job with training/progressed to further training and/or planned learning completed					4	50	3	8	16	0
Left without either					3	38	2	5	14	0
Gained job with training					2	25	0	0	4	0
Progressed to further training					0	0	2	5	1	0
Planned learning completed					0	0	2	5	8	0

STRENGTHS

- effective individual learner support
- good range of additional courses

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient training to help learners prepare for employment
- inadequate identification of individual learning needs
- insufficiently qualified staff
- lack of variety in training programme
- inadequate progress reviews
- inadequate training resources

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better training records
- more effective use of learners' knowledge and experience in training sessions
- better designed learners handbook

5. Individual learner support is effective. Induction is conducted with individual learners, if appropriate, or in groups. Staff are generally available daily to help learners with both training and pastoral needs. Learners receive regular feedback on their behaviour and achievements. This helps them to acknowledge problems and agree practical steps to rectify them. The Life Skills training team has good links with a network of specialist support agencies to provide learners with additional help in overcoming drug and substance abuse and health problems, and in dealing with benefit claims and housing benefit. The learner handbook for the Life Skills training programme is comprehensive but poorly presented. There are no illustrations or diagrams to support the text.

6. A good range of additional courses is provided. These include health and safety, fire awareness, manual handling, life-saver and first aid. Despite these courses, there is insufficient training to help learners prepare for employment. There are no regular visits to or from local employers. Although the company has a bank of employers who offer work experience, few learners carry out work placements. There is no formal referral system to the work experience co-ordinator. There are few structured jobsearch activities and no regular training sessions to help learners develop the skills they need to gain jobs. Few of the targets on learners' individual learning plans relate to preparing for work, although many learners have identified this as a goal. The minimum requirement of 16 hours attendance, is not extended during the course of the training programme to

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develop learners' ability to cope with full-time work.

7. Identification of individual learning needs is poor. Individual learning plans do not show how identified needs are to be met. Many learners work towards basic or key skills qualifications that are not suitable. Many learners do not find the work they carry out to be sufficiently demanding. No member of staff is qualified to provide basic skills training. Learning materials are not designed to meet the range of needs and abilities of the learners. There is an over-reliance of the completion of worksheets. Development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills is inadequate.

8. There is a lack of variety in the activities provided for learners throughout the training programme. Priorities such as a five-day residential course and sailing, which were originally provided for the learners, are no longer a part of the training programme. Learners have no regular access to leisure and sport facilities.

9. The procedures for reviewing learners' progress are inadequate. The information which is recorded during progress reviews lacks detail. Targets are not clearly recorded. Information from progress reviews is not routinely used to update individual learning plans. Individual learning plans do not clearly state training objectives. Learners and tutors are therefore unable to identify what learning has taken place. Assessment only takes place when the learner is taking a formal qualification. Development of personal, social and behavioural skills is not systematically identified or recorded.

10. The building in which the training centre is located is not suitable, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. The training rooms are cramped, with an insufficient number of tables at which learners can work comfortably. There is insufficient space for displays and inadequate storage space and the rooms are unclean. The computing room is too small for the number of machines provided. In addition, the software is out-dated and not to industry standards.

11. Since the training programme started in 1999, there have been 43 leavers. Retention rates, however, are improving. In 1999-2000, 62 per cent of learners completed the training programme. In the current contract year, this figure has risen to 64 per cent. The proportion of learners gaining jobs or moving into further training or education programmes, has risen from 50 to 60 per cent over the same period. Completion of individual learning plans is inadequate. In 1999-2000, no learners completed their individual learning plans. In 2000-01, 40 per cent of learners completed their individual learning plans and for the current contract year this figure stands at 22 per cent.

Good Practice

A learner who could not walk long distances was provided with transport on a visit to a local forest. Without this support the learner would have been unable to participate in the orienteering activity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 4**

12. The director of Partnership Training has overall responsibility for the Life Skills training programmes. The training centre manager and the centre co-ordinator are responsible for the operational management of the training programmes. There are 17 members of staff in the training team, who provide administrative support and are responsible for quality assurance and internal review. There is also an officer responsible for organising work placements. The teaching team teach on the Life Skills programmes as well as the programmes funded through the Employment Service. There is a health and safety policy and an equal opportunities policy, which was updated in September 2001. Quality assurance and internal verification policies and procedures are being developed. Partnership Training's first self-assessment report was completed the week before inspection, and included a detailed development plan.

STRENGTHS

- effective equal opportunities training
- good self-assessment report

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate resources
- weak management of training
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- poor monitoring of the training programmes
- lack of systematic analysis of data

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater emphasis on teaching and learning in review process
- more regular internal verification

13. The managers of Partnership Training have worked well to amalgamate the staff of the two companies. By the time of the inspection, the new structure had just been agreed and a development plan completed. The staff have been involved in the discussions leading to these changes. Both staffing and training resources are, however, inadequate, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. The staff of the two previous companies are, however, still in separate buildings, with most the administrative and management staff located in the New Deal building. Staff are not always clear about the basis for decision-making. This period of change, and the recent announcement of another change in ownership, has impacted on the training programmes. Key staff have left and there is an insufficient number of staff with the qualifications and experience needed to meet the needs of the learners. The plan to find suitable alternative accommodation for the training programmes has yet to be implemented.

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14. The management of training is weak. The staff appraisal system does not include any observations of teaching or training and does not identify areas for improvement. The training programme is poorly planned. There is no systematic recording of learner progress in basic and key skills. There is no system to record other forms of progress, such as confidence in social situations. The management information systems do not provide accurate data for staff. New systems are currently being developed, but have not yet made any impact on the training programme.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

15. The equal opportunities policy is thorough and comprehensive, covering both staff and learners, and was updated a few weeks before the inspection. There is an anti-harassment and bullying policy and a complaints and appeals procedure. There is an action plan for implementation of the equal opportunities policy, but it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. Monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace is inadequate, a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The employer is provided with details of Partnership Training's equal opportunities policy statement, and signs an agreement to implement it. There is no further monitoring of the policy. Access to the training centre is poor for learners with restricted mobility.

16. Equal opportunities training for learners is good. Learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues. Equal opportunities are discussed at induction and reinforced during the training programme with practical assignments. For example, learners have carried out disability audits on the local ferries and in shopping centres.

17. Access to the training premises is poor for those with mobility difficulties. Partnership Training has not found suitable alternative training accommodation. The current building is listed and it is not possible to make the necessary adjustments.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

18. There is an extensive quality assurance manual for the Isle of Wight Partnership, but this has not been applied to the Life Skills training programmes. There is no systematic analysis of learner data such as retention and achievement rates or equal opportunities data. There is no monitoring of the training programmes or observations of the training sessions. There are no procedures for collecting learners' views about the training programmes. Though generally satisfactory, internal verification has not been carried out effectively during the recent company changes.

19. The self-assessment report is good. The self-assessment process involved all of the staff, who were able to contribute to the final document. Inspectors agreed with many of the weaknesses identified in the report, but found some of the grades to be inadequate. Inspectors agreed with the equal opportunities grade, but awarded lower grades to the other areas in the report.