

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION
REPORT MAY 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
AUGUST 2001

Focus Training (Plymouth)



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

SUMMARY

The original inspection of Focus Training (Plymouth) was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in a less than satisfactory grade being awarded for equal opportunities. This area has been reinspected against the requirements of the *Common Inspection Framework* by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, which replaced the Training Standards Council on 1 April 2001. The section of the original report dealing with equal opportunities has been replaced with the findings of the reinspection. Also, the report summary, report introduction and introduction to the inspection findings have been updated and reflect the findings of the reinspection. Sections of the report, dealing with areas which have not been reinspected, have been left in their original form. The amended inspection report is published on the Adult Learning Inspectorate's website (www.ali.gov.uk).

Focus Training (Plymouth) provides satisfactory training in retailing and customer service. Learners are employed in a variety of companies throughout Devon and Cornwall. Training is carried out by employers at work. Assessors from the company visit the learners frequently, to carry out assessment and help them plan how they will collect portfolio evidence. Learners receive good guidance from assessors. Employers are insufficiently involved in learners' progress reviews. At the time of the original inspection, equality of opportunity was not promoted well, to employers or to learners. The company now promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily and states its clear intention to do so in its marketing materials. It still, however, fails to monitor the effectiveness and relevance of employers' policies on equal opportunities. Management of training and quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Retailing & customer service	2

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good assessment planning
- ◆ effective key skills integration by learners
- ◆ accessible and effective support arrangements
- ◆ effective and inclusive management style
- ◆ rigorous internal verification system

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate target-setting
- ◆ no initial assessment of basic and key skills
- ◆ training not managed effectively
- ◆ no use of data in decision-making

INTRODUCTION

1. Focus Training was established in March 1999 by a group of eight partners. The company has an office near Plymouth and provides work-based training for young people throughout Devon and Cornwall. In December 2000, the company moved to larger premises where there are three training rooms. All learners are employed and work in a variety of companies, from national retail outlets to small family-run enterprises throughout the Southwest. At the time of the reinspection, the number of employees had increased to 12. All assessors and managers are appropriately qualified and suitably experienced in various aspects of retail and customer service work.

2. At the time of the original inspection, the company had a contract with the former Prosper Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to provide training in business administration and retailing and customer service, and the employment and full-time education and training options for New Deal clients in Cornwall. At that time, the company had 164 learners, of whom 52 were modern apprentices, 80 were national trainees and 32 were on other work-based training programmes for young people. There were few learners on the business administration programme and this was not inspected. There were no New Deal clients. At the time of the reinspection, the company had contracts with Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide training for 155 learners, of whom 43 were advanced modern apprentices, 86 were foundation modern apprentices, and 26 were on other work-based programmes. There was also one New Deal client on the subsidised employment option.

3. In March 2000, the unemployment rate in Devon and Cornwall was 2.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.9 per cent, at that time. In June 2001, the unemployment was 3.2 per cent in Cornwall and 2.0 per cent in Devon, compared with the national average of 3.0 per cent. There are, however, some areas of rural deprivation in Cornwall where the unemployment rate is higher than the average for the county. In 1999, the proportions of school leavers in Devon and Cornwall who achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, were 51.6 per cent and 48.4 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In 2000, these proportions had risen to 52.6 per cent and 49.1 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. The proportion of the population in Devon and Cornwall from minority ethnic groups is less than 1 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. The self-assessment report produced for the original inspection was the first the company had produced. A staff meeting was held to identify strengths and weaknesses. Three members of staff co-ordinated the preparation of the report and discussed it with other staff at the monthly meetings. The report separated the seven aspects identified in *Raising the Standard* for each occupational area, rather than combining the first three aspects into occupational areas and reporting on the four generic aspects for the whole organisation. Many of the strengths were identified in more than one section of the report and inspectors considered some to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with the grades given in the self-assessment report for the occupational area and for trainee support. They found weaknesses in equal opportunities, management of training and quality assurance which had not been identified in the self-assessment report. Before the reinspection, the company produced a new self-assessment report, an updated action plan for improving provision, and a clear and detailed summary of action carried out since the original inspection, to rectify weaknesses.

5. The original inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors who spent a total of 12 days at Focus Training in May 2000. They visited 16 employers in Devon and Cornwall, interviewed 25 learners, 12 work-based supervisors or managers and carried out 17 interviews of staff. Inspectors examined learners' work, assessment records, portfolios and files. Inspectors also looked at the TEC contract, quality assurance manual and procedures manual, minutes of meetings, data on learners, and internal and external verification reports. Inspectors observed two assessments and three reviews of learners' progress.

6. The reinspection was carried out by two inspectors who spent a total of six days at Focus Training in August 2001. They visited 11 employers, interviewed 15 learners and six workplace supervisors and managers and carried out 10 interviews with members of the company's staff. Inspectors examined learners' files and portfolios, policies and procedures, minutes of meetings and marketing and training materials. Inspectors observed five reviews of learners' progress.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Retailing & customer service

Grade 2

7. There is a total of 154 trainees: 49 are modern apprentices, 76 are national trainees and 29 are work-based youth trainees. Trainees are working towards a variety of NVQs, with 70 on retail operations, 81 on customer service, two on sales and one on distribution and warehousing. Two work-based trainees are working towards retail operations NVQs at level 4 and the remainder are working towards NVQs at levels 2 or 3. Employers provide the majority of training but Focus Training staff provide additional coaching when required. All assessment is

carried at work by Focus Training staff. The assessors are occupationally experienced and hold various training and development qualifications. Some staff are qualified key skills assessors while others are working towards key skills qualifications. All trainees are employed and work in a variety of companies. Between 1999 and 2000, 77 per cent of work-based youth trainees achieved their qualifications, 58 per cent of national trainees achieved their awards and 30 per cent of modern apprentices completed all elements of their training programmes. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths, some of which are considered to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and awarded the same grade as that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective key skills integration
- ◆ good use of assessment planning
- ◆ flexible arrangement to meet employer needs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate review processes
- ◆ few learning resources

8. Most trainees have a clear understanding of both their occupational qualification and the key skills units which they are working towards. At the start of the training programmes assessors help trainees to gain an understanding of evidence collection and cross-referencing for assessment. Trainees are encouraged to cross-reference evidence of occupational and key skills units simultaneously. The trainees are well motivated and produce good quality portfolios. Trainees, most of whom also work towards key skills units, make particularly good progress towards achieving their qualifications. Employers provide trainees with the opportunity to complete additional NVQs, for example, two trainees are working toward NVQs at level 4 in retail operations.

9. Assessors visit trainees fortnightly, or more frequently if necessary. On each visit assessors give their trainees good-quality verbal and written feedback on their assessment and they agree an action plan for the next visit. These action plans specify the activities and evidence collection that the trainee should complete before the next assessor visit. Any targets that have not been achieved are discussed with the trainee and included in a new action plan. This assessment planning process gives trainees a structured approach to evidence collection. It particularly benefits trainees without previous experience of NVQs. The action plans help assessors to monitor trainees' progress closely.

10. Focus Training does not provide any structured off-the-job training. Employers provide most of the training. The quality and availability of training varies considerably between employers. Where necessary assessors coach trainees to develop their knowledge and understanding. Focus Training has some learning

resources that assessors can use when coaching but these are not issued to trainees systematically. The lack of ready access to learning resources mainly affects trainees employed in small retail outlets. The smaller employers often have no company guidance available on legislative and regulatory requirements. Focus Training has recently lent portable computers to those trainees without other access to computers so that they can achieve their key skills units.

11. An assessor reviews trainees' progress every four-to-six weeks. These reviews fail to identify the progress that trainees are making towards the achievement of their qualifications. As a result, many trainees have a poor understanding of how long it will take for them to achieve their NVQs. The company requires assessors to forecast qualification completion dates but the lack of an emphasis on reviewing trainee progress limits their ability to forecast completion.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

12. Focus Training's equal opportunities policy and code of conduct are updated annually. Agreements between the company and employers contain a clause whereby employers are required to uphold equality of opportunity for learners. A summary of the company's equal opportunities policy is issued to learners and also to employers who do not have a policy of their own. At induction, learners receive an agreement, which covers the complaints and grievance procedures. During their progress reviews, issues relating to equal opportunities are discussed with learners. An equal opportunities working group meets every month. Equal opportunities data are collected quarterly and discussed at meetings of the group. Of the 155 current learners, 58 are men and 97 are women. There are 23 learners who have either a disability or health problem. One learner is from a minority ethnic group.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ insufficient promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ employers' equal opportunities inadequately managed
- ◆ data not used to influence planning

13. Focus Training has an action plan and marketing strategy to promote equal opportunities. The company has developed new marketing materials for potential learners and employers and these state its commitment to upholding and promoting equality of opportunity. Staff have developed links with organisations involved with minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. Focus Training has revised and updated its equal opportunities policy. This is given to employers who do not have an equal opportunities policy. There is still insufficient monitoring of employers' promotion of equal opportunities. An information pack on the role and responsibilities during the training programmes has been developed. This covers the employers' responsibility for upholding and promoting equality of opportunity. The operations manager collects, and makes a quarterly analysis of, data relating to

equal opportunities. The findings of this analysis are discussed at the monthly meetings on quality assurance, which all staff attend. Where necessary, action to improve the promotion of equal opportunities is planned.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good facilities for people with restricted mobility
- ◆ effective training for staff on equal opportunities
- ◆ good understanding of complaints procedures among learners

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate understanding of equal opportunities issues on the part of learners
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of employers' promotion of equal opportunities

14. Focus Training moved to larger modern premises in December 2000. At the premises, there are three well-equipped training rooms with good facilities for people with restricted mobility. Additional laptop computers have been purchased to enable learners to carry out assignments in the workplace. Assessors arrange their visits to learners in the workplace, at times which suit the learners best. For example, when arranging their visits, they take account of personal circumstances which affect learners' working patterns, such as maternity leave and childcare commitments. The company has appointed an additional member of staff to improve marketing and recruit more learners from minority ethnic groups and other groups under-represented on training programmes. Staff from the company travel to the Isles of Scilly twice a month, to provide training leading to NVQs, as there are no training providers on the islands. Staff have established effective links with a number of local charities and organisations, which specialise in working with people who have disabilities and additional learning needs, and are now working with them to widen participation on training programmes.

15. Focus Training's staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues. Assessors have a wide range of skills and experience and are able to develop effective working relationships with their learners. All new staff undertake training and complete a workbook to improve their knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities legislation. For example, one assessor attended a one-day workshop organised by the local TEC, and then discussed information gathered at this with all staff at the following monthly meeting. The company has established an equal opportunities working group to gather and analyse equal opportunities data for discussion at each monthly staff meeting. This group has helped to develop the new comprehensive equal opportunities policy, as well as training and marketing materials. Staff check their current knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities by responding to a questionnaire each year.

16. Learners have a good understanding of the complaints and appeals procedures of the company and of their respective employers. Focus Training has established a confidential telephone hotline, which is available to learners seven days each week. Learners are aware of this facility and use it when necessary. Many

employers are national companies with well-established complaints procedures. Concerns which learners raise during their eight-weekly progress reviews are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Learners have a good understanding of the NVQ appeals procedures and most know who their internal verifier is. They are also aware of their right to appeal directly to the awarding body or the local LSC.

17. Most learners are aware that their particular employer has an equal opportunities policy, but many cannot remember reading it or do not know what its content is. Most learners receive little information about equal opportunities other than that given to them at their induction. They have insufficient understanding of, for example, different types of discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Some are not aware of changes which have occurred in their employers' policies, or in legislation affecting equal opportunities. The Focus Training equal opportunities work group is developing training materials for learners to improve their awareness and understanding of equal opportunity issues.

18. Employers sign a statement declaring whether or not they have their own equal opportunities policy. Employers, who do not have their own policy, are given a copy of Focus Training's policy. The company does not check when employers' policies have been reviewed or updated. It keeps no record of whether the employers' policy on bullying and harassment is a part of, or separate from, the employers' policy on equal opportunities. Whereas the company maintains detailed records of employers' health and safety policies and procedures, it keeps few records of employers' policies and procedures relating to equal opportunities. The company now keeps a record of which employers use its policy on equal opportunities, in order that it may send these employers details of any changes made to the policy.

Trainee support

Grade 3

19. All trainees are employed before they start on their training programmes. Focus Training recruits most trainees by personal recommendations and through its strong relationship with employers. Most employers refer their new staff to Focus Training if they are interested in working towards relevant qualifications. Focus Training carries out an induction with the trainees and completes a checklist that covers health and safety issues. Individual training plans are prepared and prior achievements are taken into account. Trainees discuss their training agreements with their assessors and sign and keep a copy of the plan which covers trainees' terms and conditions and contains information on their rights. Trainees' progress is reviewed every four to six weeks. Many employers promote the individual achievement of trainees in staff newspapers and by making presentations. Focus Training has rewarded successful trainees with gift vouchers. Two trainees were highly commended in the 'Achiever of the Year' awards run by the local TEC. At the time of inspection 45 per cent of trainees are working towards their second and in some cases third or fourth qualification. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

Inspectors awarded the same grade as that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good guidance from well qualified staff
- ◆ accessible and effective support arrangements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no initial assessment of basic or key skills
- ◆ insufficient involvement by employers in the review process
- ◆ no records of additional support for trainees

GOOD PRACTICE

An assessor allows trainees to visit her house in the evenings to work on their portfolios and use a computer. This enables them to type up their work and produce evidence for their key skills assessment. It has given trainees who work in busy retail environments the support and resources to produce good quality portfolios.

20. Focus Training offers good guidance for both employers and trainees. The organisation helps employers to find trainees by placing advertisements in local papers, talking to the career service and undertaking first interviews. All potential trainees are given relevant, accurate and objective guidance on the opportunities available. This guidance often involves discussion with employers and parents. Focus Training's assessors are experienced in delivering NVQ programmes at different levels and continue to advise trainees on the best routes for progression. Many trainees go on to take further qualifications. Some trainees, for example, are given the opportunity to take a fork-truck driving course.

21. Assessors visit trainees at least fortnightly to assess them at work. This gives trainees regular opportunities to discuss their progress and to raise any other additional support issues. These frequent visits to employer's premises facilitate good communication with both employers and trainees and have helped to create strong working relationships. Assessors encourage trainees to contact them outside the planned visits and are able to alter their timetables to accommodate trainees' needs for assessment and support. Assessors give trainees their mobile and home phone numbers and the Focus Training office keeps weekly schedules of where the assessors are. If trainees have any issues or concerns they are able to get a quick response.

22. When training starts, assessors take account of any prior learning and experience the trainee may have. There is, however, no initial assessment of a trainee's basic skills and additional support needs are identified more by chance than from a systematic process. Similarly trainee needs relating to key skills are not identified at the beginning of the training programme. Trainees conduct a self-assessment against each of the elements in the training programme and this is discussed with their managers and assessors. The self-assessment helps trainees to decide how they are going to provide assessment evidence for their qualifications but it does not identify specific training needs or any additional support that will be required. Focus Training is developing a new initial assessment package to identify training needs and additional support requirements.

23. Trainees have a review with their assessor every six weeks. Employers are not often involved in the review process and are unable to influence the trainee's

progress or agree actions. Assessor and trainee discuss progress, any personal or developmental issues, and issues relating to health and safety and equal opportunities. The assessor checks that trainees are aware of the appeals procedure and internal verification process. Most employers sign the review form after the trainee and assessor have completed the review but they do not add comments. Many reviews lack detail and contain bland statements. Although frequent contact encourages good communication, it does not ensure participation or involvement by employers in the decision-making and planning of the NVQ programme.

24. Trainees in need of additional support receive practical help from assessors and individual workplace managers, but this is not formally recorded. This can cause problems when assessors or key staff move or leave.

Management of training

Grade 3

25. Focus Training is owned by eight partners who are all employees of the business. There is a clearly defined organisational structure. The operations manager has overall responsibility for day-to-day operations and is supported by a team of 10 employees. There are two internal verifiers who are also assessors, five assessors, one trainee assessor and two part-time administrators. Each assessor looks after a group of trainees within a geographical area. The partners meet monthly to discuss various issues including the business plan, finances, marketing and self-assessment. There is also a monthly quality meeting. The administrators maintain the trainees' files and the variety of management information systems that are used by the staff. During its first year of operation, Focus Training has achieved the Investors in People award. Policies and procedures cover some aspects of the work but are not comprehensive. Staff appraisal takes place every six months and is linked to personal and organisational goals. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths though some were considered to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ inclusive management style
- ◆ good internal communications
- ◆ well-structured staff training and development

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some responsibilities not clearly defined
- ◆ some procedures not recorded
- ◆ training not managed effectively
- ◆ data systems not fully developed

26. The organisation structure is clearly defined and all staff are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities. The staff are mutually supportive. The operations manager encourages open debate and sharing of information. The partners meet monthly to discuss the performance of the business and review its plans. Staff attend a monthly quality meeting where the company's policies and procedures are openly discussed. The administration staff are included in part of the meeting to raise any issues relating to the records, files and management information systems they maintain. In addition to the two formal monthly meetings, regular communication is maintained with assessors through weekly movement schedules, progression logs and forecasts. There are also effective informal communications. During its first year the company arranged three social events which all staff attended. These events provide the staff with the opportunity to liaise and improve the effective teamwork that has been developed.

27. New staff are recruited by advertisements placed in local papers. Staff receive an induction and shadow different members of staff for a period so that they understand all aspects of the business. The operations manager appraises each member of staff every six months and discusses their individual training needs as well as future business needs. All the partners joining the company have experience and qualifications and they continue to work towards new qualifications. The assessors are working towards a variety of qualifications including for the accreditation of prior learning or advice and guidance, key skills and in occupational health and safety. The company is recruiting a marketing person to help develop the business. The procedures for staff recruitment, induction, appraisal and development are not documented. The current job descriptions are narrow in scope and do not reflect the current roles undertaken by each person. The role and responsibilities of the operations manager are not clearly defined. The operations manager has recently taken sick leave and some of the managerial tasks have not been adequately covered. Responsibility for trainee support and quality assurance is not defined.

28. There is no process to co-ordinate or manage training. The employers carry out most training on-the-job and there are no structured off-the-job training sessions. The assessors are not always aware of what training is planned or what has taken place. Some trainees will inform assessors when they have had on-the-job training or attended off-the-job courses but this is not recorded. Only when a gap in the trainees' knowledge is identified during assessments will the assessors discuss training with the supervisor or manager or arrange a coaching session.

29. The assessors use a matrix to record the evidence collected for each element of the NVQ and to show the progress of trainees. The assessors update the matrix after each visit and submit a copy to the office every month. Not all trainees have their progress recorded in this manner as each assessor completes the matrix in a different way. The information does not allow managers to easily identify trainees who are progressing slowly and so address issues early. Each month the assessors forecast what trainees will achieve during the next four months. These forecasts are used by the internal verifier to ensure that trainees are registered and internal

verification is planned. The forecasts are not always accurate and trainees often achieve in a different period to the one originally planned: some late, a few early. There is no systematic evaluation of the accuracy of the forecasts to improve management decisions and the performance of assessors.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

30. Focus Training has systems and procedures which comply with the TEC contract and have resulted in preferred supplier status. Several systems and procedures are still in development as the company has been in existence for only just over one year. Quality assurance arrangements are generally focussed on contract compliance and audit. The opinions of trainees, employers and training staff are collected, but they are not analysed or shared. Much data and information are collected but not analysed and used to influence business planning or quality assurance. The self-assessment process was carried out in consultation with all members of staff. The final self-assessment report gave a fair representation of provision, although many of the strengths were repeated in several sections and some were considered to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ rigorous internal verification system
- ◆ some improvement from informal arrangements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient written quality assurance procedures
- ◆ performance targets not set
- ◆ ineffective data analysis

31. The internal verification systems are rigorous and thorough. Assessors are regularly observed assessing trainees. A report is prepared recording any training needs or issues which need to be resolved. General issues are discussed with all assessors at the monthly quality meetings. New assessors are given additional support and their work is sampled more thoroughly. There is systematic sampling of all portfolios across the range of units both during the programme and on completion of the NVQ. Every time a portfolio is sampled, written feedback is given to the assessor and the trainee. The general standard of portfolios is high. They are well organised and contain a diverse range of evidence, including work products, direct observation of tasks occurring naturally at work and case studies compiled by the trainees. The external verifier visits Focus Training monthly allowing a prompt issue of certificates and portfolios after verification. The external verifier has recently attended a quality meeting to meet staff and answer

questions.

32. The current informal quality assurance arrangements have resulted in improvements which are of direct benefit to trainees. Although written procedures have yet to be developed there are many examples of improvements being made as a result of issues raised at the regular staff meetings or through communication with trainees and employers. A new system has been introduced to ensure that each trainee receives a file with all the relevant standards, optional units and key skills for their particular programme. Trainees are issued with these individualised packs within a few weeks of starting. Checklists have been developed to help ensure that trainees receive all relevant information at the start of their programmes. The checklists are also used to assist in auditing the trainees' files. Both trainees and assessors now receive copies of assessment and action planning forms. A review showed that some of the feedback given to trainees lacked detail. Following discussions at a monthly meeting all assessors now give more detailed written feedback to trainees. The action plans, which have been developed following the self-assessment process, are already taking effect. A resource library is now established, initial assessment tests are being developed and several staff have achieved additional qualifications.

33. There is no comprehensive quality assurance system, which embraces all areas of the provider's work. There are few documented systems and procedures. Many of the procedures have not been reviewed or updated to reflect the work being undertaken. There are no procedures for recruitment and selection of staff or trainees or to ensure that assessors provide trainees with the same quality of input at reviews or during coaching sessions. The current arrangements focus on contract compliance and not the trainees' learning experience. The development of quality assurance arrangements has not been the main priority during the first year of operation. The company has relied on its staff's experience and expertise. Focus Training recognises the need to review all its policies and procedures as part of its growth and development.

34. Performance targets set within the company are focussed on meeting the TEC contract. There are few company targets based on organisational requirements or as a measure for improvement. There are no targets set for measuring improved performance by staff or trainees. There are no targets for starts, retention or achievement in the programmes offered.

35. Focus Training collects information and data to meet contractual requirements. In addition, questionnaires are sent to trainees, employers and training staff at various points during the programmes. This information is being collated, but has not been analysed. The questionnaires currently used do not provide Focus Training with the information it requires to improve training. The destination and achievements of leavers are not systematically monitored. The data which are collected have not been evaluated to establish trends and inform management decisions for continuous improvement.