

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
AUGUST 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
NOVEMBER 2001

GeTaHead Training



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 **learn**direct 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 GeTaHead Training was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in a less than satisfactory grade being awarded for quality assurance. 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 quality assurance 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).

GeTaHead Training gives satisfactory training in hairdressing. The learners' work is of a good standard, the training options are flexible and retention rates are good. Opportunities to relate learners' skills to the national vocational qualification (NVQ) requirements are often not taken and learners make slow progress towards the achievement of NVQs at levels 2 and 3. GeTaHead Training promotes equal opportunities well in its own salon and training centre, but does not adequately monitor the equal opportunities practices of all employers. The organisation gives effective additional support for learners, but fails to record this support systematically. Good records are kept on the progress of learners but there is a general over-reliance on informality, with few established management systems and procedures. There is comprehensive, supportive internal verification, although some of the quality assurance arrangements are incomplete.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hair & beauty	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible training options
- ◆ frequent NVQ action-planning and target-setting
- ◆ comprehensive and supportive internal verification
- ◆ good retention rates

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed NVQ training and assessment opportunities
- ◆ slow achievement of NVQs
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of training activities
- ◆ over-reliance on informality
- ◆ incomplete quality assurance arrangements

INTRODUCTION

1. GeTaHead Training offers training in hairdressing. It is based in the town centre of Retford, in north Nottinghamshire and it holds a contract with North Nottinghamshire Learning Skills Council (LSC). GeTaHead Training has had a contract with North Nottinghamshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) since April 1999 and before this, it traded as S. R. Training. From 1997, it had a direct employer's contract with the TEC to train its own employees at the Scarlet Ribbon salon in Retford. Since becoming GeTaHead Training, it has offered training which leads to NVQs for modern apprentices and national trainees employed by local salons. The two partners of GeTaHead Training have been involved in education and training for over 20 years within the further education sector and for nine years as proprietors of the Scarlet Ribbon salon. They employ four members of staff, two of whom are self-employed and two work on a part-time basis. Before starting their own NVQ training, the partners used local training organisations to enable their learners to gain NVQs.

2. At the original inspection, there were 23 learners on NVQ hairdressing training programmes. At reinspection GeTaHead Training has 32 learners on NVQ hairdressing programmes at levels 2 or 3. There are 22 advanced modern apprentices and 10 foundation national apprentices and they are all employed. Some of the learners are employed in the company salon in the town centre of Retford and others are employed in 12 salons in Retford, Worksop and Doncaster. There is a training centre above the salon in Retford and a resource room at Worksop and Doncaster.

3. North Nottinghamshire is located in the heart of the East Midlands and is a rural area. North Nottinghamshire has a diverse range of industries and almost all of the companies are small or medium sized with less than 200 employees. At the original inspection the unemployment rate in Nottinghamshire was 5.2 per cent, compared with 3.8 per cent nationally. In September 2001, this has now fallen to 3.7 per cent, compared to 2.9 per cent nationally. The 1991 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in the Nottinghamshire area is 1.5 per cent, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers in Nottinghamshire achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grades C and above was 43.4 per cent, compared with 47.9 per cent nationally. In 2000, this had risen to 44 per cent, compared with 49.2 per cent nationally.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. GeTaHead Training carried out its first self-assessment report in December 1999, in preparation for the original inspection. One of the two partners took responsibility for the self-assessment report and subsequent action plan. The action plan was reviewed once before the inspection. However, the review was later than planned and a number of targets were deferred. An updated self-assessment report and action plan, which includes contributions from all staff, was produced for reinspection and it has been reviewed once.

5. At the original inspection a team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at GeTaHead Training in August 2000. Inspectors examined training materials and the awarding body's paperwork. They interviewed all four of GeTaHead Training's staff and visited all six workplaces. Six workplace supervisors and 19 learners were interviewed. Inspectors examined assessment and internal verification records, records of learners' progress and NVQ portfolios. They observed training and assessment activities in the workplaces and at the training centre. At reinspection, a team of two inspectors spent a total of four days at GeTaHead in November 2001. They visited six employers' salons and interviewed four employers. They interviewed nine learners, and carried out nine interviews with GeTaHead's staff and examined all relevant documents.

Grades awarded to training sessions at the original inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Hair & beauty	1	1	3	2		7
Total	1	1	3	2	0	7

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hair & beauty therapy (hairdressing)

Grade 3

6. GeTaHead Training has 11 trainees taking an NVQ at level 2 and 12 trainees taking an NVQ at level 3 in hairdressing. Eighteen trainees are modern apprentices and five are national trainees. Some trainees also take an NVQ at level 2 in customer service. All the trainees are employed and the trainees following NVQs at level 3 are stylists in the salons. All of the practical skills training and assessments are carried out in the trainees' salons. The GeTaHead Training trainer/assessor visits either monthly or fortnightly to teach theory, give support and, if appropriate, conduct assessments of practical work. Trainees who are working towards an NVQ at level 2 use self-study packs and textbooks. All GeTaHead Training trainers and assessors have or are working towards relevant vocational trainers and assessors' qualifications and have occupational experience. Over the past three years, 24 modern apprentices started training. Five left before

gaining a qualification, seven have achieved an NVQ at level 2, 11 have achieved an additional NVQ in customer service at level 2, and one trainee is taking an NVQ at level 3. The retention rate for this period is 75 per cent. Of the two national trainees who started training in 1999-2000 one is still in training, having achieved an NVQ at level 2 in customer service and one left with no qualifications. The four trainees who started in 2000 are all still in training. The retention rate for national trainees is 83 per cent. The inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses in GeTaHead Training's self-assessment report. Inspectors identified further occupational strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible training options
- ◆ good salon workplaces.
- ◆ good retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some slow NVQ achievement
- ◆ poor resources for theory support at some placements
- ◆ missed NVQ training and assessment opportunities.

7. GeTaHead Training offers good flexibility in its training programmes. Trainees can start their training at any time of the year. Trainees can have all their training and assessment in their salons, or attend the training centre in Retford for theory training. The trainees who are taught at the organisation's training centre are mostly those from GeTaHead Training's own salon, which is below the first floor training centre. The theory work and some practical skills training is supported by the use of good, clearly written task-books, which have been produced by GeTaHead Training. These task-books, and an up-to-date NVQ-related textbook are given to trainees to work through at their own pace. Many trainees do written work in their own time as well as in the training sessions. The completed tasks are assessed by a GeTaHead Training assessor and returned to the trainees on the next support visit. There is a good trainer to trainee ratio, with the largest group being one trainer to five trainees and some trainees receiving individual tuition. Key skills training is given at the training centre.

8. GeTaHead Training has produced three comprehensive training and assessment books. These are used to plan, record and monitor NVQ training activities, to plan assessments and to note further training needs. The books are used effectively by the level 2 NVQ trainees at GeTaHead Training's own salon. The trainers record all practical training activities in these books. This system is effective in ensuring that all the trainers are aware of what training each trainee has undertaken. Trainees can record their own progress and plan future training and assessment sessions in their record books. Trainees refer to their individual training plans and the NVQ targets set by their assessor to help their planning. Trainees who do their

practical training in other salons are not all using the books effectively.

9. The trainees work in modern, well-resourced salons. All level 2 NVQ practical skills training is given by the salons' own senior staff, usually once a week in sessions which last approximately three hours. The part-time GeTaHead Training assessor visits all the work placements regularly and assesses those trainees who do not have a qualified assessor in their salon. All trainees use GeTaHead Training's observation booklet. This contains a sheet which is used to confirm that the trainee has completed the theory element of their work before they undertake practical assessment. The work that has been assessed on a particular day is recorded together with the planned assessment for the following week. The trainee does not always complete this section of the form, which can result in some missed opportunities for assessment. The trainees have a good standard of hairdressing skills. They use a good range of hairdressing products and equipment and most develop a broad base of skills. The trainees are well presented and project a smart, professional image. There is insufficient practical skills tuition for level 3 NVQ trainees, who are all practising stylists in their salons. All employers provide extra activities which enhance the NVQ training. Many trainees attend manufacturers' courses at their own salons and some travel to London and Manchester for cutting or colouring training.

10. The retention rate is good for all trainees. Trainees are well motivated and enthusiastic and clearly enjoy their training. For the past 12 months, trainees have been given the opportunity to broaden their skills by taking an NVQ in customer service. Twelve trainees have gained this award, taking approximately six months to achieve it. Subcontracted assessors carried out practical assessments for the NVQ in the trainees' own salons.

11. There is some slow achievement of the hairdressing NVQs. Many trainees are taking over 18 months to complete their NVQ at level 2, and over a year to complete an NVQ at level 3, despite working full time in good quality salons. Some trainees are not meeting the targets set on their individual training plans and some are not assessed frequently enough. Not all salons have qualified assessors and there is little use of expert witness testimonies or other forms of evidence. The GeTaHead Training assessor works for eight hours a week, and much of her time is spent in teaching theory, undertaking progress reviews and giving general support to trainees.

12. Some salon workplaces have poor resources to support their trainees' theory work. Salon reception areas are often used for progress reviews and action-planning and sometimes for written work. These areas are inappropriate as they are often noisy, cramped, shared with waiting clients and without appropriate writing facilities. Trainees balance their work on their knees when carrying out written exercises and tests. Sometimes the trainer has to wait until the trainee is free from their salon duties before carrying out progress reviews and then the reviews can be interrupted by salon duties. One of the employers' salons has a separate room for theory work, but the facilities are poor with broken chairs, inadequate table space

and an inadequate range of training and learning resources such as text books, videos and trade magazines. The training centre above the salon in Retford is small, but it is well resourced, with a range of hairdressing and literacy-support text books, videos and other training aids. There is a separate room in which trainees can watch the training videos, which are also available for trainees to borrow.

13. There are some missed opportunities for training and assessment. Some trainers, although they are experienced hairdressers, lack a clear understanding of the NVQ requirements. They do not use salon training sessions effectively to help trainees relate the NVQ criteria to their clients' treatments. Some trainees are unclear about the NVQ requirements and how to choose appropriate clients and request appropriate assessments. During some assessment sessions the aim is to assess a single aspect and not the whole process. This means that opportunities are missed to assess for other NVQ criteria. Some assessors lack experience in NVQs and are still working towards their assessors' qualification or have just recently qualified.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

14. One of the partners of GeTaHead Training is responsible for managing equal opportunities across the organisation. The organisation has an equal opportunities policy which covers all the relevant legislation. Information is collected about trainees' disabilities, ethnicity and gender, meeting the requirements of the TEC. There are both male and female trainers. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify the organisation's strengths and weaknesses in this area. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good implementation of comprehensive equal opportunities policy
- ◆ good promotion of equal opportunities in training salon and training centre

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor understanding of equal opportunities by trainees and workplace supervisors
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of some equal opportunities practices in the workplace

15. The two partners of GeTaHead Training have put together a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. They review it annually, taking into account any new legislation relevant to equal opportunities. The policy is well written and easily understood by trainees. There is a grievance procedure, which is written in a way which makes the process clear to trainees. All aspects of the policy apply equally to staff and trainees. The policy is explained to trainees at their induction and each

trainee receives a copy of it.

16. The partners and staff at GeTaHead Training show good awareness of how to put the equal opportunities policy into practice. They know how the policy will affect their trainees. The staff work well together to ensure that any barriers to trainees joining the programme and successfully achieving their career aims can be overcome. One of the trainers who has recently returned from maternity leave now has a flexible working pattern to help her meet her family commitments. The organisation is a member of local employers' networks which help the staff to keep up to date with local and national issues which may affect trainees. Any trainees who cannot use the stairs to the first-floor training centre because of mobility problems can be trained in a ground-floor training salon at GeTaHead's premises or their own workplace.

17. GeTaHead Training promotes equal opportunities well in its own salon and training centre. The equal opportunities policy is prominently displayed. The organisation uses posters and stickers with images and messages which challenge racist attitudes and behaviour. Other posters and materials used in the training centre challenge gender stereotyping in hairdressing. The organisation does not have any promotional literature.

18. GeTaHead Training ensures that all employers have a copy of the organisation's equal opportunities policy, but their monitoring of how employers apply equal opportunities in their salons is inadequate. The employers usually recruit their own trainees, but GeTaHead Training does not check on employers' recruitment materials, interview procedures or salon tests. Those trainees who are recruited to work in GeTaHead's own salon are covered by a comprehensive recruitment policy. Trainees and employers are aware of the equal opportunities policy but do not know how it relates to their everyday activities in their salons. There is no planning to ensure that trainees' progress reviews and training sessions include discussion of equal opportunities issues.

Trainee support

Grade 3

19. Salon employers recruit, interview and select their own trainees. Before trainees agree to their individual training plan they attend a guidance session at GeTaHead Training's training centre, where induction and an initial assessment for basic skills also takes place. Trainees join the programmes, either in small groups in June or July, or individually throughout the year. One of GeTaHead Training's partners visits local schools to help with job applications, carry out mock interviews and give information on employment and work-based training in the industry. The organisation's trainers/assessors visit trainees in their workplaces. These visits are for practical assessment, theory support and action-planning. Individual training plans are reviewed at three-monthly intervals. GeTaHead Training identified a number of strengths in its self-assessment report. Many of these were contractual requirements and either were no more than normal

practice or related to quality assurance. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good range of initial assessment procedures
- ◆ frequent NVQ action-planning and target-setting
- ◆ good range of additional support measures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of systematic recording of additional support
- ◆ poor reinforcement of induction

20. There is a good range of initial assessment processes. Trainees take a basic skills test in numeracy and literacy. The results of this test are used to place the trainees on the appropriate level of programme. Trainees have recently been completing a basic check of key skills. All trainees have a trial period in their salon to help them to decide if they have chosen the appropriate career. GeTaHead Training is revising its initial assessment of basic skills in order to make it more occupationally relevant. They are also developing a checklist to assess dexterity, for employers to use during the trainees' trial period. Key skills assignments are also being redesigned to be more work related. This will help trainees to integrate key skills into their normal working day and to see their relevance.

21. There are frequent NVQ action-planning and target-setting meetings with the trainees in their workplaces. These are held monthly or fortnightly by prior agreement. They are carried out by the organisation's trainer/assessor and involve the work-based assessor or employer. An action plan is drawn up. The work-based assessor or employer, the trainee and the trainer all sign the action plan. The trainee keeps a copy of the action plan and one is filed in the office at the training centre. There is a good link between trainees' individual training plans and the progress review process. The targets set in the individual training plan are used as the basis for the progress reviews.

22. All new trainees receive a comprehensive hairdressing kit. This consists of basic hairdressing tools, a carrying bag and a model head for practical work. Trainees receive regular support on an individual basis from a member of the organisation's training staff. Trainees who need help with literacy and numeracy, or who have dyslexia, are well supported by effective individual tuition. The trainer who gives additional support has four years experience of working with trainees with learning difficulties, teaching basic skills in numeracy and literacy. The trainees are given appropriate help with their written work. The trainer visits salons to give practical advice during the course of the normal working day. For example, retail transactions are used to teach trainees how to calculate profits. The additional support trainer works effectively with the hairdressing trainer to support the trainees during their theory sessions at the training centre.

23. There is a lack of systematic recording of trainees' additional support. The type of support given to the trainees and who gave the support are not recorded. The length of time for which support is given and its effectiveness are not recorded or reviewed. Trainees undertake an induction at the training centre, when issues relating to complaints, appeals, equal opportunities and health and safety procedures are covered. They are also given an overview of the company and an introduction to the modern apprenticeship and national traineeship framework. Trainees' understanding of the issues covered at the induction is not checked. The topics covered at induction are not routinely reinforced during trainees' progress reviews and action-planning sessions. Trainees have difficulty in recalling some procedures, particularly in relation to the formal appeals process, complaints and equal opportunities.

Management of training

Grade 3

24. GeTaHead Training has had a direct contract with the TEC since April 1999, when the managers decided to extend its modern apprentice and national trainee schemes to other hairdressing employers in the area. The new organisation is still developing. The staffing structure and supporting systems are not yet fully established. There were a total of eight trainees before April 1999 and all of these were modern apprentices employed by the previous company. Since April 1999, a further 23 trainees have begun training, of whom five are national trainees. GeTaHead Training comprises two partners and two members of staff. One of the partners is responsible for daily operations. Both partners work in their salon below the training centre on Saturdays. The other partner is not physically involved in the day-to-day administration of the organisation. The resident partner and one of the other staff members give most of the training. The fourth member of staff is responsible for additional support and key skills training as well as administrative support and financial matters. Training is given both on and off the job. Some theory sessions are held at the training centre and others in the salons. Employers give their own practical training in the salons. Practical assessment is mainly carried out by work-based assessors in the six salons which contract with GeTaHead Training.

25. GeTaHead Training met most of the targets in its contract with the TEC for 1999-2000, but its achievement rates were slightly below target. The self-assessment report identified four strengths and two weaknesses. Three of the strengths were considered by inspectors to be normal practice. The other concerned the coordination of on- and off-the-job training, which was not found to be consistent across the organisation. The two weaknesses, which inspectors agreed with, both related to procedures and practices being largely informal. A weakness concerning key skills was identified by inspectors within the occupational area of the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report for management of training was largely accurate and inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good range of initiatives to develop management systems
- ◆ good monitoring of trainees' progress and achievement
- ◆ comprehensive agreements with subcontractors

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ over-reliance on informality
- ◆ late introduction of key skills

26. Staff have worked hard to develop a range of systems, procedures and paperwork to support management of training. Many have recently been implemented. Examples include: new initial assessment material with an occupational emphasis, key skills training and assessment materials, formal procedures for staff appraisal and development and materials which give a better structure to work-based training. They also include documents to record judgements about the quality of theory and practical training, the use of assessors with specific key skills expertise, and an assessment of dexterity skills for hairdressers. Few of these initiatives are presently making a significant impact, as they are not well established.

27. Managers maintain records which clearly show the progress and achievement of individual trainees. They show what training has been given, which written tests and projects have been completed, which practical assessments have been done and which units of the NVQ have been achieved. All the information is dated so that the speed of a trainee's progress can be determined. Copies of the records are passed to trainees so that they are fully aware of their own progress. This is a simple and effective manual system which is concise, accurate and up to date.

28. GeTaHead Training uses seven subcontractors. One of these is a training organisation which teaches the customer service NVQ to GeTaHead Training's trainees as part of their national traineeship and modern apprenticeship programmes. The other six are hairdressing employers, who give most of the training and assessment in their salons. The training organisation is contractually obliged to meet minimum standards for assessment and quality assurance practice, compliance with the awarding body's requirements, statutory and financial matters, and giving progress reports. GeTaHead Training obtains copies of this organisation's external verification reports, and has made it a condition of the subcontract that it can see other records, including external inspection reports. The employers operate as satellite sites of GeTaHead Training's approved assessment centre. They have been contracted to have appropriately qualified assessors, to maintain up-to-date records, to use only approved paperwork, to allow access to premises to all appropriate external bodies, and to send assessors to standardisation meetings. The subcontract arrangements make clear the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in training and assessment, and give GeTaHead Training an effective tool for monitoring and influencing subcontractors' practices.

29. The partners and employees of GeTaHead Training work closely and effectively as a team. However, there are too few written procedures or systems to support management of training. There is no business plan to direct the organisation's work or to project the planned growth of the company. Employers do not receive sufficient information about how to support their trainees effectively. Some of the organisation's paperwork, such as individual training plans, trainee's support records, health and safety documents, company policies and trainees' evaluation questionnaires, contains errors or omissions. There is a reliance on casual communication with trainees, who are not always clear about some aspects of their training or achievement. GeTaHead Training is working to resolve this situation and new systems are being introduced.

30. There has been no key skills achievement so far. Some trainees have been on modern apprenticeship programmes for three years. They have recently started working on key skills assignments, but these have yet to be assessed formally. GeTaHead Training was approved to accredit key skills by an awarding body in May 2000. Materials to support key skills development are still being designed and amended. The assessment and internal verification systems have still to be fully introduced. New trainees have been given basic information about key skills but they lack knowledge about how they can begin working on them. GeTaHead Training has identified key skills assessment opportunities arising out of the hairdressing NVQ, and are planning to incorporate them into future vocational assessment sessions.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

31. GeTaHead has a range of quality assurance systems which have been introduced or revised since the original inspection and they meet the requirements of the work-based learning contract with the LSC. Overall responsibility rests with one of the partners, but a part-time quality assurance manager has recently been appointed to support him in this role. There are written training agreements between GeTaHead and the employers. Employers sign to confirm their acceptance of the company's health and safety and equal opportunities policies. Learners complete three questionnaires during their training, and the results, together with comments gathered during progress reviews, are used to evaluate the training. Progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks and learners are also visited in their salons every two weeks. Learners' and employers' views are recorded at these meetings and form part of GeTaHead's quality assurance arrangements. Members of staff are encouraged to contribute ideas to improve the quality assurance arrangements. Internal verification is the responsibility of one of the partners and it is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ insufficient monitoring of training activities
- ◆ ineffective sharing of good practice

- ◆ inconsistencies across the training provision
- ◆ poor use of self assessment action plan

32. The organisation has taken action to remedy all weaknesses and the first three are no longer weaknesses. The current action plan has been used, but the implementation of the plan has been slow.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective self assessment process
- ◆ comprehensive internal verification procedures
- ◆ effective external links

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to meet the targets in the action plan
- ◆ incomplete arrangements for quality assurance

33. A comprehensive review and update of the original self-assessment report was produced in November 2001 for reinspection and took account of the two action plan update reports. Self-assessment included all staff and included the views of employers and learners. Staff attended a one-day training session on self-assessment at the local LSC and then attended an additional half day in-house training. Staff then put the training into practice by assessing the company's position and recording their findings in terms of strengths, weaknesses and supporting evidence. The findings were then discussed at a staff meeting in October and used by the partner and the quality assurance co-ordinator to collate the report. The self-assessment report is candid and critical and identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses.

34. Internal verification was recognised as a strength at the original inspection, and additional activities have ensured further improvements. GeTaHead have rewritten the internal verification policy to strengthen and support the comprehensive internal verification system and this is also aimed at improving consistency. One of the partners has the responsibility of internal verification and has a detailed assessment schedule. Most trainers have the assessor qualifications and the rest are currently undergoing assessor training with support and guidance from the internal verifier. This is recorded on their review sheets. As part of the quality assurance process, observation of training takes place in the salons and trainers find that the feedback not only improves their training skills but also reinforces their assessment judgements. Learners are aware of the internal verification procedure and how it relates to the assessment process. Assessments and internal verification are regular items at meetings. GeTaHead has recently started a monthly newsletter as a means of keeping all trainers and employers informed of new procedures. The first edition has information from the lead body covering occupational competence and continued professional development. The

newsletter is also used to advise trainers and employers of external verification visits.

35. Both of GeTaHead's partners and one staff member have good external links with industry. One partner has senior responsibility for external verification for the region and his knowledge of up-to-date information has been put to good use. Another partner holds a senior position in further education. Both partners are members of network and support organisations, which keep them informed about current national developments in business and hairdressing. One recently recruited part time member of staff is on the board of governors at a school and is an experienced assessor in basic skills.

36. GeTaHead failed to meet the targets on the action plan which was produced after the original inspection and this weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. The production of the induction pack was late, as was the updating of the equal opportunities policy to include a grievance and complaint procedure. A part-time quality assurance co-ordinator has been appointed and it was decided to undertake a full review of all quality assurance policies and procedures. Policies have now been either revised or introduced. GeTaHead wants the quality assurance arrangements to focus on the learners' experience and it has produced a comprehensive draft procedures manual which will follow the learner's initial contact through to the completion of their training programme.

GOOD PRACTICE

One employer was so impressed by their member of staff's progression from NVQ 3 to assessing qualifications that they too have decided to work towards the qualifications.

37. GeTaHead identified in the self-assessment report that current quality assurance arrangements are not fully established, although considerable time and effort has been given to improving them since the original inspection. Priority has been given to areas which most affect the learners. GeTaHead are in the process of producing a comprehensive quality assurance policy and many areas are complete and are already in use. Assessment procedures and documents have been effectively improved to resolve the weaknesses which were outlined in the original inspection. However, other areas are currently incomplete. For example, staff appraisal systems are written and discussions have taken place with staff to start the initial process, but appraisals are not planned to start until December. Staff training and development is recorded. Staff also evaluate their training, but the results are not co-ordinated and evaluated by management. The range of documents for employers and salon trainers has been extended and updated, but not fully evaluated. Work is not planned to begin on the self-assessment development plan until the results of reinspection are known.