

INSPECTION REPORT

Steps to Work (Walsall) Ltd

24 June 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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
- **learnirect** provision
- adult and community learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of her majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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 Jobcentre Plus programmes 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

Steps to Work (Walsall) Ltd is a limited company which offers a range of services for the local community. The Jobcentre Plus contracts offer work-based learning for adults and New Deal 25+. There are 54 clients in the programme centre and 66 in Gateway which were inspected under foundation programmes. One client is on short job-focused training and 20 are in the intensive activity period. The one client on short job-focused training and 11 of the clients in the intensive activity period are in retailing and transportation work placements. The other nine clients in the intensive activity period are on work placements in engineering, business administration, and health, social care and public services. The numbers were too small for these areas to be inspected separately.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is inadequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically the quality of the training in retailing, customer service and transportation, and foundation programmes is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of equal opportunities and quality assurance are also unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

| Retailing, customer service & transportation | 4 |
|---|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | 4 |

| Foundation programmes | 4 |
|---|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | 4 |
| Programme Centres | 4 |

KEY STRENGTHS

- well-written and comprehensive equal opportunities policy
- good partnerships with internal and external agencies
- effective use of additional funding
- very good achievement rates on short job-focused training
- good individual support for clients

KEY WEAKNESSES

- no quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities
- poor management of training
- weak management of subcontractors
- poorly planned training
- ineffective induction
- unstructured work experience

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further develop target-setting to drive improvements
- better use of management information

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at Steps to Work (Walsall) Ltd (Steps to Work) in June 2002. They visited four workplaces and interviewed 26 clients. They carried out interviews with all staff including the chief executive, the project co-ordinator, the funded provision manager and the former chairperson of the board of directors. They also interviewed four staff from Jobcentre Plus, staff from partnership organisations and three subcontractors. Inspectors observed and graded four learning sessions. They examined a range of documents including clients' records, personal development plans, policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, reports to the board of directors and operational plans. Inspectors also reviewed the organisation's self-assessment report and development plan which was published in February 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

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

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Steps to Work was founded in 1999, after the successful implementation of a training and employment creation project funded by the single regeneration budget (SRB). Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) approved the establishment of a company limited by guarantee on the understanding that it would be managed by a board of directors from the community, voluntary, public and private sectors. One of the company's aims is to assume contractual responsibility for the management and delivery of New Deal initiatives on behalf of Walsall MBC. In 2001, Steps to Work secured three-year contracts for Gateway, work experience in the intensive activity period (IAP) and short job-focused training (SJFT) under work-based learning for adults. In August last year, the company also secured the contract for a programme centre. The Gateway and programme centre are offered at the training centre in Walsall. Work placements are with a wide range of local employers and are managed from the training centre. SJFT is subcontracted to a local training provider which specialises in lift truck training. Two other subcontractors offer training in computer skills and personal development.

3. Walsall's local economy is heavily dependent on a declining manufacturing industry. This sector employs 35.6 per cent of the population. There are few large private-sector employers and most businesses are small. The unemployment rate for Walsall in April 2002 was 4.5 per cent, compared with 3.1 per cent nationally. The 1991 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 9.6 per cent in Walsall, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 40.6 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults

4. Steps to Work offers training in retailing and transportation for 12 clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. One client is undertaking SJFT for lift truck driving for one week. This specialised training is well taught and a large proportion of clients gain the qualification. The remaining five weeks of SJFT are spent on jobsearch activities and in work placement. Eleven clients are in the IAP gaining work experience in retailing. They spend up to 30 hours each week in the workplace and the remainder of the time in the training centre undertaking jobsearch. The work experience is unstructured and has few clear targets and objectives. There are no learning materials to support the on-the-job training. There is a wide range of work placements, and clients are carefully matched to the employers. There is good individual support with jobsearch. However, there is insufficient development of specific skills such as confidence building and motivation.

5. In 2001-2002, of the 47 clients who started in SJFT and the IAP, 81 per cent were retained on their training programme, 32 per cent completed their planned training and 49 per cent gained a job. Achievement and employment rates, specifically on the SJFT, are particularly good. All clients who worked towards the lift truck licence achieved and 81 per cent of the clients gained employment.

Programme Centres

6. Steps to Work offers training in the Gateway and a programme centre. Both programmes offer jobsearch support to clients in identifying job vacancies, in constructing a curriculum vitae and in applying for jobs. Clients referred to Gateway have been unemployed for 18 months or longer and are referred to the option without choosing it. Clients referred to the programme centre have been unemployed for six months or longer and attendance is voluntary. However, failure to attend may result in the clients' availability for work being questioned by their advisers. Gateway clients attend for a minimum of eight hours each week for 16 weeks. Programme centre clients attend for six hours each week for 13 weeks. The company offers additional training modules to Gateway and programme centre clients, which includes basic information technology (IT) units, general computer familiarity and personal development skills. Individual coaching sessions are effective, but there are insufficient materials. The training modules are not scheduled at times to suit all clients and are inadequately promoted. The training centre is well appointed but there are insufficient resources to support jobsearch and development of computer skills.

7. In the Gateway, there are still 38 clients in training from the 247 starters from 2001-02. Sixty-two per cent of the clients were retained in the Gateway but only 47 per cent completed their jobsearch activities. Ninety-seven clients gained employment while in Gateway. In 2001-02, 64 per cent of the 138 clients who attended the programme centre spent the full 13 weeks on jobsearch, with only 25 per cent completing their planned programme of activities. Thirty-three clients gained a job while attending the programme centre. It is too early to make firm judgements about retention and achievement rates as 15 per cent and 30 per cent of clients are still in training in Gateway and programme centre, respectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

8. Steps to Work was established as a private limited company in March 1999. It employs 32 staff, three of whom are seconded from the citizens advice bureau. Programmes which are funded by Jobcentre Plus are managed by a project co-ordinator, who reports to the funded provision manager. She in turn reports to the chief executive, who is responsible to a board of non-executive directors. The board consists of representatives from local community and statutory organisations including the MBC, a local college of further education, housing associations and the local NHS trust. Four tutors and an administrator report to the programme co-ordinator. Some of the training courses are subcontracted to other training organisations, including computer courses, confidence building and lift truck driving. Steps to Work has an equal opportunities policy but does not have one for quality assurance. Staff have a formal appraisal of their performance every six months and this results in an individual development plan. Steps to Work produced its first self-assessment report in February 2002 and, as a result, developed an action plan to deal with the identified weaknesses.

STRENGTHS

- effective use of additional funding
- good partnerships with internal and external agencies
- good internal communications
- good understanding of the company's mission by all staff
- well-written and comprehensive equal opportunities policy
- effective complaints procedures

WEAKNESSES

- weak management of subcontractors
- insufficient staff training in key areas
- poor management of training
- insufficient promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities
- no quality assurance framework
- weak quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of management information
- further develop target-setting to drive improvements
- develop equal opportunities guidelines for clients

9. Steps to Work identified in its self-assessment report the good use of other sources of funding to support clients. This includes using European Social Fund (ESF) projects to offer additional training activities and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) to provide

protective clothing and other items to help clients gain employment. Another project allows the clients to be paid a wage while working in the local health trust.

10. The board of Steps to Work includes community representatives from single regeneration areas, the local council, the citizens advice bureau, a local college of further education, an NHS trust and housing associations. A senior manager from Jobcentre Plus is an adviser to the board. Many of these organisations are able to offer work placements and work experience for clients. The company has strong links with local businesses through its own employment agency, and this is used effectively to help clients into employment. The organisation has good links with local jobcentres. New Deal personal advisers have a good understanding of the opportunities available for clients at Steps to Work and speak highly of the staff. One of the projects run by the organisation involves working with small businesses in the area. Links with the companies are used to find placements and work experience opportunities for clients.

11. Communication within Steps to Work is good. The board of directors are well informed about the projects and are able to make informed decisions. They receive a report on the performance of each project every two to three months. Managers meet every month, as do project teams. The Jobcentre Plus team meets regularly to discuss performance and how it can be improved. Staff are well informed about the organisation's aims and objectives. They have clear job descriptions and understand their job roles. Informal communications are also good. Steps to Work recognised the good communications at board level in its self-assessment report and identified a weakness in internal communications. This weakness had been resolved by the time of inspection.

12. The company has a clear vision which is understood throughout the organisation. The board of directors are well informed about the organisation's activities and give a clear direction to the senior management team. There is good understanding of the mission of Steps to Work across all staff and the whole organisation works together effectively to achieve the aim of getting clients into employment.

13. Data are collected on each client and this enables the company to analyse retention and employment rates. These data are maintained on a computer, and monthly reports are given to the programme co-ordinator. A new database is being introduced to enable Steps to Work to analyse data more quickly and to measure performance over a wider range of indicators. It will enable them to identify performance by gender and ethnic group and to monitor achievement and retention rates in more detail.

14. In addition to the contractual targets for employment rates, the team has introduced their own targets to achieve employment rates of 10 per cent above the minimum requirement of the contract. On the Gateway programme, there is no contractual employment rate, but the team have set their own target of 50 per cent. The team has also identified a target to increase client attendance from 40 per cent to 70 per cent. The process of target-setting for improvement is relatively new and is not fully developed.

15. Steps to Work did not identify that training is not well managed in the self-assessment report. There is a lack of structure to learning and work experience, and inadequate planning of training for clients in the training centre. Clients are not able to identify a plan or schedule which informs them what training is available and when it will take place. Some training activities take place at times when it is difficult for IAP and SJFT clients to attend. Schemes of work and lesson plans are not used effectively to plan training.

16. Subcontractors are not managed effectively. The company has service level agreements with its subcontractors, but they do not have measurable performance targets. There is little monitoring of the performance of subcontractors. Training courses are not systematically observed, and there are no formal reviews of performance. When subcontractors collect feedback from clients, these data are not routinely analysed. This area of weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

17. Two members of the team are working towards a level 3 NVQ in advice and guidance. Each member of staff who has been appraised has a development plan, but the needs of the programmes or client group are not considered. For example, no member of staff has had any recent formal training on equal opportunities or health and safety monitoring, and there are no plans to do so. Part of the project officers' role is to present an induction programme to groups of clients. Staff who have no previous experience in training have not been trained in this important role. Recently, the team introduced a competency chart for staff, which identifies the key activities they undertake and who is competent to perform these tasks. However, this is a new process and has not been fully implemented as yet.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

18. The chief executive is responsible for equal opportunities, although the organisation encourages all staff to take responsibility. Steps to Work has clearly written policies covering harassment, complaints and procedures. All staff job descriptions state that staff are required to observe these policies and follow operational procedures. A well-written clients' charter outlines the learners' rights and responsibilities and this is displayed prominently in all areas of the training centre and is included in the clients' induction booklet. All staff and clients are treated fairly and with respect.

19. Procedures exist for dealing with grievances and complaints for staff and clients. Clients know how to make a complaint and are aware of who to contact to raise problems. There have been two written complaints from clients in the past year, which were dealt with promptly and appropriately. Complaints from work-placement providers about clients' performance are also dealt with effectively and are well recorded. The form clients use to record complaints is also used to make suggestions and share compliments. This encourages clients to participate in improving the company's performance.

20. Promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is insufficient. Clients have little understanding of equal opportunities and there is insufficient emphasis made during the initial induction and in progress reviews. Clients are not offered training in their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. During inspection, a number of clients used language that could cause offence, but staff did not actively challenge them. Under the terms of the work-placement agreement with Steps to Work, work-placement providers are required to have an equal opportunities policy. A copy of the providers' policy is held in some files, but the company has no procedures for checking that such policies are implemented. Work-placement providers are not given a copy of the company's policy on equal opportunities. Review documents do not record problems relating to rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

21. The building which houses the interview rooms, training rooms and jobsearch has good access for those with restricted mobility. Currently, 16 per cent of clients are from minority ethnic groups, 8 per cent have a disability and 75 per cent are men. Data are collected and updated each month on clients' gender and ethnicity as well as those with disabilities.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

22. Steps to Work does not have a policy or framework in place for quality assurance. There are very few quality assurance procedures. Document control is weak and many documents are not dated. Insufficient attention is given to the quality and accuracy of documents given to clients. The self-assessment report did not identify the lack of framework and established arrangements for quality assurance.

23. The team has started to develop a system that will assure the quality of their activities. Flow charts have been produced for the activities of the team and work has started on producing procedures. However, this is at an early stage of development.

24. There is no systematic monitoring of the quality of key activities such as induction, advice and guidance, and training. The programme co-ordinator has observed some activities recently and these are recorded, but there are no standards against which activities can be measured. A competency chart has been developed for staff, but it is only a list of tasks and does not contain measurable standards. There is no systematic monitoring of the performance of subcontractors. Steps to Work does not have a plan for observing or monitoring the work of subcontractors.

25. The company produced its first self-assessment report in February 2002. The team responsible for Jobcentre Plus contracts carried out the self-assessment, and strengths and weaknesses were identified during a series of workshops. The programme co-ordinator then produced the draft report which was reviewed by the management team and the chair of the board of directors. The report was comprehensive, but many of the strengths were no more than normal practice. The self-assessment report did not identify some key weaknesses. The action plan has some clear and measurable targets for improvement, but it does not identify how the strengths will be maintained. Some actions have been carried out but it is too early to judge the impact of the self-assessment process.

26. Recently, feedback has been sought from clients about their experiences. This has been analysed, but there is insufficient data to make reliable judgements or to identify trends.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 4

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | 12 | 4 |

27. There are currently 11 clients on the IAP gaining work experience in retailing or transportation. This is for a period of 13 weeks for 30 hours a week unless employment is found earlier. Clients are referred to the option without choosing it and attend work placements on four days a week, plus one day at the training centre for jobsearch. There is one client on SJFT in lift truck training. This programme is for up to six weeks, the first week of which is spent at a subcontractor for a lift truck training course, the remainder being scheduled for jobsearch activities. The tables do not show the clients who have started since April 2002. Clients are referred from jobcentres and undergo an initial assessment interview to identify previous experience, training needs and employment objectives. An individual induction is held with the client to explain the programme and the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Work placements are arranged for work experience. With the exception of lift truck driving and other transport qualifications, clients do not work towards vocational qualifications. Progress reviews are carried out each month. One project officer has specific responsibilities for the clients on these training programmes.

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

| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----|---------|---|-----------|---|---------|---|---------|---|
| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | 1997-98 | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 47 | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 38 | 81 | | | | | | | | |
| Planned learning completed | 15 | 32 | | | | | | | | |
| Gained job | 23 | 49 | | | | | | | | |
| Still in training | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | |

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

STRENGTHS

- good individual support for clients
- wide range of work placements
- very good achievement and employment rates on SJFT

WEAKNESSES

- unstructured work experience
- insufficient opportunities to develop jobsearch skills
- weak monitoring of health and safety in work placements
- ineffective induction process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better target-setting at progress reviews

28. There is good pastoral care for clients in the training centre and in the work placement. From induction to completion of programme, a good relationship is developed between the staff and clients. Effective coaching is particularly helpful at jobsearch sessions where clients are trained in appropriate interview skills, and confidence is built to help clients move into employment. Staff make telephone calls to employers on behalf of clients to arrange job interviews and make a good effort to secure a suitable work placement. Clients are visited each month in the work placement to check on their progress and the visits are supplemented by frequent telephone contact. Clients and work-placement providers speak highly of the good communication and support given by staff.

29. There are good work-placement opportunities and this was identified in the self-assessment report. Employers offer good work experience and supervision and help clients to develop their occupational skills and knowledge. Most work placements allow the clients to progress into employment. Those that do not, are used specifically to help clients who need to gain experience in a more sheltered environment such as a charity shop.

30. The SJFT is used for those clients who have potential employment arranged but need a specific lift truck training qualification. This is arranged through a subcontractor. Resources are appropriate and include a variety of trucks to widen experience. Most clients undergo an assessment before starting the programme to ensure that they show a reasonable aptitude. The course is arranged for the first week of the programme. All

clients referred to date have achieved certificates for a counterbalance truck and 90 per cent have also achieved a certificate for a reach truck. For the year 2001-02, 81 per cent of the 16 clients starting the SJFT programme have gained a job. Only 25 per cent stay to the end of their scheduled programme, but most of those who leave early do so to start a job. On the IAP programme, 32 per cent of the 31 starts clients have moved into a job. Retention rates for the year 2001-02 on the IAP programme were 35 per cent.

31. There is a lack of planning and structure to work experience, but this was not identified in the self-assessment report. Initial assessment does not form part of the individual learning plan and work activities which need to be carried out are not shown. The personal development plan is inadequate in relation to the training needs of clients. It does, however, meet the requirements set out in the Jobcentre Plus contract. There are no clear targets and objectives. Work activities are sometimes recorded as having been undertaken, but there is no overall record to show successful competence of skills and knowledge. There is a work-placement provider agreement for structured work experience but some of the providers have not signed the agreement. There is no evaluation of the quality of the work experience. There are no learning materials to support the on-the-job training. One employer has a 10-week programme for all new staff which clients could attend during their 13-week placement, but Steps to Work are not aware of this.

32. There is some good individual support to help with jobsearch, but there are insufficient opportunities for clients to develop the skills to help them gain employment. There is no structure or timetable of courses for clients to attend. Clients generally attend jobsearch on a Friday, while the only structured group training activities for interview skills are only held on a Tuesday. There are no learning materials to support the development of jobsearch skills. Some clients have attended training but it is not recorded in their files. Some clients have attended jobsearch training while on Gateway, but this information is rarely recorded and is not used to identify future training needs when they move on to the IAP. Clients do not value the time spent at the training centre on jobsearch.

33. The induction process is ineffective. There is no questioning of the clients to ensure their understanding of induction, either at the time of induction or subsequently. There are inadequacies in the work-placement induction. The latest work-placement checklist only includes health and safety information and does not cover hours of work, named supervisor, standards of dress, awareness of equality of opportunity and job description. Clients are not accompanied at the start of a work placement and the first visit by Steps to Work is not until one month later. Some clients' files do not contain evidence of a work-placement induction. On the SJFT, induction takes place after the first week's course with the subcontractor.

34. Monitoring of health and safety in the workplace is weak. A risk assessment is carried out but sometimes by unqualified staff. Recording of risks and hazards is sometimes incomplete. At one work placement, the employer has completed a detailed

risk assessment identifying high risk hazards, but these were not identified by the training provider. When action is identified, such as manual handling training, it is not reviewed. At the time of risk assessment, the review dates are identified, but they are not adhered to. On one employer file the risk assessment form has not been completed.

35. The monthly progress reviews are generally satisfactory, with a good record of work-placement activities, attendance and attitudes, and constructive comments from clients and managers. They occasionally set specific targets, such as to send out speculative letters, but are generally not reflective enough to identify if past targets have been met.

Foundation programmes

Grade 4

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | 66 | 4 |
| Programme Centres | 54 | 4 |

36. Clients are referred from Jobcentre Plus and each has a confidential individual interview. Before the interview, each client completes a questionnaire detailing previous work experience, qualifications, interests and aims. They are also invited to complete a form detailing any barriers to employment such as debt, alcohol/drug dependency, criminal history or housing problems which they may wish to reveal. The questionnaires form the basis of an initial assessment during the interview. An initial assessment document is completed during the interview with comments related to job preferences, previous learning and basic skills. This document is also used to record agreed attendance and future actions. Clients are invited to attend an individual or group induction depending on the numbers referred each week. At induction, company policies on equal opportunities and health and safety are explained, along with procedures on attendance, punctuality, behaviour, grievances and complaints. Clients are also given information on the training modules available on topics such as computing, interview preparation, confidence building and preparing job applications. There are 66 clients in Gateway and 54 in programme centres, but the tables do not show the clients who have started since April 2002.

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

| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----|---------|---|-----------|---|---------|---|---------|---|
| New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | 1997-98 | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 247 | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 153 | 62 | | | | | | | | |
| Planned learning completed | 115 | 47 | | | | | | | | |
| Gained job | 97 | 39 | | | | | | | | |
| Still in training | 38 | 15 | | | | | | | | |

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

| Programme Centres | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|----|---------|---|-----------|---|---------|---|---------|---|
| Programme Centres | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | 1997-98 | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 138 | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 89 | 64 | | | | | | | | |
| Planned learning completed | 35 | 25 | | | | | | | | |
| Gained job | 33 | 24 | | | | | | | | |
| Still in training | 41 | 30 | | | | | | | | |

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

STRENGTHS

- good individual support for clients
- accessible and well-appointed training environment

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective induction
- inadequate target-setting
- insufficient learning resources
- poorly planned training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- increase staff awareness in recognising literacy, numeracy and language needs

37. Clients speak positively about the individual support they are given. Four members of staff are available to clients for individual coaching, supported by a co-ordinator and an administrator. There is a wide range of relevant experience within this team. Clients' problems and queries are resolved quickly. Staff work with clients in the production of a good curriculum vitae which identifies work-related skills and experience. Alternative and additional funding is used to enable some clients to enter waged employment as part of their progress into full-time sustainable employment.

38. Training takes place in town centre premises that are accessible by public transport and to wheelchair users. The premises are well decorated, clean and comfortably

furnished. Group training rooms are appropriate and there are rooms available for confidential, individual interviews. Clients respond positively to the environment by conducting themselves well.

39. Induction is inadequate. Each client is given a detailed induction booklet and the content is supported by verbal explanation using presentation slides. However, the presentation has little logical sequence, is not supported by handouts and important topics are not prioritised or reinforced through varied activities. Equal opportunities is not covered adequately, nor are clients' rights and responsibilities. The booklet is not easy to read and the terminology is beyond some clients. The presentation slides and induction handbook have not been checked for accuracy or for correct spelling. Clients do not remember much of the induction and have little understanding that attendance at the training modules may help them develop important employability skills.

40. There are a number of training modules available to clients, but the sessions are not planned. Clients are not aware of when sessions are scheduled, nor of any progression between them. Clients may attend a session on inter-personal skills, but are not aware of when subsequent sessions will be offered nor how the content of one session will differ from another.

41. Individual coaching sessions are effective but there are insufficient materials to support them. There are few materials to allow clients to work on their own in either jobsearch or in the development of computer skills. There are insufficient computers working reliably when computer tuition is given. While there are videos available on topics such as interview skills, curriculum vitae preparation and dealing with difficult interviewers, only one of these is supported by a structured session plan. There are no materials to develop literacy through activities relevant to jobsearch or to develop independent research skills.

42. The results of initial assessment are not shown in personal development plans. Clients' individual development plans contain broad aims which have not been expressed as challenging, timebound, achievable targets. Reviews of progress do not reflect on progress towards specific goals and do not show revised goals. There is no means of measuring how an increase in confidence or in motivation has been achieved. Clients are not routinely given the outcomes of their initial assessment.

Poor Practice

At their first visit to the company, clients are given a form to identify personal barriers to employment. The barriers include sensitive areas such as debt, alcohol or drug dependency and homelessness. Some clients decline to give this information.