

INSPECTION REPORT

Fareport Training Organisation Ltd Reinspection

04 April 2003



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. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

SUMMARY

The provider

Fareport Training Organisation Ltd's head office is based in Fareham, Hampshire. It provides modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQ) training for disadvantaged young people and others in business administration, accounting, retailing, customer service, warehousing, health, care and public services. The organisation also offers a successful foundation entry to employment programme. Fareport Training Organisation Ltd has three training centres. Two in Fareham and the other in Gosport, Hampshire. Twenty-two full-time staff are directly involved in training, including five administration staff. The company carries out off-the-job training at these centres with additional off-the-job training being carried out by local colleges.

Overall judgement

The ALI's inspection in May 2001 found that training for learners in business administration, foundation, and health, care and public service was satisfactory. However, training in retailing and customer service was unsatisfactory. Although the arrangements for equal opportunities were satisfactory, those for quality assurance and Fareport Training Organisation Ltd's overall leadership and management of provision were unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

Grades awarded

	Original	Reinspection
Leadership and management	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	3	2
Quality assurance	4	3

	Original	Reinspection
Business administration, management & professional	3	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	3

	Original	Reinspection
Retailing, customer service & transportation	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

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	Original	Reinspection
Health, social care & public services	3	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2

	Original	Reinspection
Foundation programmes	3	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

KEY STRENGTHS

- effective links with employers and external organisations
- good programme of staff development
- effective action to recruit disaffected and disadvantaged young people
- good additional support for learners

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ineffective feedback from observations of learning
- significant shortfalls in retention and achievement

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of progress reviews
- more detailed recording in individual learning plans

THE REINSPECTION

1. Reinspection was carried out in three stages. Seven inspectors spent a total of 14 days reinspecting Fareport Training Organisation Ltd (FTO Ltd) between December 2002 and April 2003. The first visit was on 5-6 December 2002. The other stages were completed on 6-7 March 2003 and 7-8 April 2003. Inspectors observed and graded 10 learning sessions. They interviewed 35 learners and held 23 interviews with FTO Ltd's and subcontractors' staff. Inspectors visited 18 workplaces and interviewed 15 employers and work-based supervisors. Inspectors examined the revised self-assessment report and updated development plans which were written following the first inspection. They also inspected company documents relating to the learners, including learners' files, portfolios of evidence, learning plans, progress reviews and retention and achievement data. Inspectors also examined other paperwork, including internal and external verification reports, other external reports, minutes of meetings, and policies and procedures.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Health, social care & public services	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	5
TSC Business administration	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	2	4	3	0	0	0	9

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	7
Total	0	5	4	1	0	0	0	10

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- effective links with employers and external organisations
- good programme of staff development
- effective action to recruit disaffected and disadvantaged young people
- good analysis and use of learner and employer feedback

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective feedback on observations of training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more thorough business planning
- better recording of meetings
- clearer questions on some learner questionnaires
- clearer recording and monitoring of quality assurance outcomes

2. Since the first inspection, FTO Ltd has developed good working relationships with two local colleges to offer additional training more effectively to its learners. The company has developed good internal communication links between its three sites and staff hold regular weekly and monthly meetings to share best practice, deal with issues effectively and to discuss improvements to the training provision. Meetings are not always clearly recorded, however, and minutes do not indicate what action has been taken since the previous meeting. Staff work hard to ensure that all learners are given suitable support. Staff have developed strong links with a broad range of community organisations to help learners in need. For example, external organisations are employed to provide well-organised and informative training sessions on drug and sex awareness. FTO Ltd's staff regularly visit local schools to promote learning. They also have good links with other training providers and employers. These links have helped to ensure that the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is well planned. Employers are given detailed packs which contain clear information relating to their learners' programmes or courses. The pack also contains information about all other key aspects of the learning process.

3. All learners are given good basic skills support if this need was identified at initial assessment. Good individual support is provided, in addition to groupwork if required.

4. Staff development is good. Most staff are either qualified teachers, or are working

towards certificates in education. Nearly all staff have completed assessor awards and some are qualified internal verifiers. Staff training needs are clearly identified through the annual staff appraisal and detailed personal development plans are devised for all staff. The induction programme for new staff is good and includes detailed equal opportunities training and health and safety. All new staff are assigned an experienced member of staff as a mentor for the first three months of employment. Staff like this system and clear guidelines have been written to help them through the process. Most staff have received other training, either in-house or externally, such as first-aid and health and safety training. One member of staff has recently completed a newly introduced level 4 qualification in equal opportunities and diversity and has already held one training session for staff in this area. Staff regularly visit training exhibitions and attend conferences to help improve their knowledge and understanding.

5. Data analysis is now good and staff and managers regularly use data in a variety of forms to analyse trends and to make improvements. FTO Ltd has not developed a business plan for this year. The business plan for 2002 was not sufficiently detailed and had few clear targets. Targets did not refer to any strategic direction that would help the organisation plan for the future and develop the provision.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

6. The company has an open access policy and works closely with local authorities and schools to encourage young people who have been excluded from school or other training to join work-based learning. FTO Ltd participates in the education and business partnership by providing training for those who did not complete secondary education. The company is successful in getting large numbers of these disaffected young people into jobs or further training or education. The training facilities at Fareham and Gosport are well equipped for those with learning difficulties. For example, the company has recently invested in large-screen televisions and has good facilities to help those who have hearing difficulties. However, access to the training sites is difficult for those with restricted mobility. FTO Ltd tries to accommodate learners with restricted mobility by using ground floor rooms.

7. The company has updated its equal opportunities policy since the first inspection to reflect recent changes in the law. All staff and learners are given copies of this policy and learners have a well-planned and taught induction to equality of opportunity. Learners' knowledge of equal opportunities is now regularly and thoroughly checked and monitored at progress reviews. Employers are also monitored for equal opportunities. Staff have been well trained to ask appropriate questions and to probe learners' understanding. All learners have a good knowledge of the broader issues relating to equal opportunities. Learners' and employers' complaints are thoroughly investigated and problems are dealt with promptly. Any actions taken are followed up and monitored for effectiveness.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

8. Learner and employer feedback is collected regularly throughout a learner's programme. Most questionnaires receive a good response, although the early leaver questionnaire is not always completed by learners. Results are thoroughly analysed using a computer programme which gives staff useful information. However, some of the questions are not easy to interpret. The information and results generated by the computer are simple to understand and regularly checked and discussed at staff meetings. The information is used to help make improvements and identify issues and trends. Actions taken or improvements made are clearly recorded.

9. Senior staff regularly observe training in the workplace, at the subcontracted provision and at the company's off-the-job training centres. The results of these are not clearly recorded with sufficient critical detail to help make improvements. The organisation has now developed a thorough process of quality assurance that regularly checks all aspects of the provision. However, not all actions taken on identified issues are clearly recorded so that improvements can be checked and monitored.

10. Self-assessment is more thorough since the first inspection and is carried out annually. The organisation took good account of feedback from all those involved in the learning process and included this with the report. A well-written and detailed development plan was prepared and has been continuously updated throughout the period of reinspection. Timescales for action are realistic and all staff have a clear understanding of the key issues. The self-assessment process had clearly identified most of the strengths and weaknesses that were found through inspection.

Good Practice

Staff who had previously qualified as assessors and internal verifiers have all recently completed the newly revised assessor and verifier awards. This has helped them to improve their performance as assessors and verifiers and better understand the new qualifications that recently appointed staff are completing. FTO Ltd is now offering assessor and verifier training to staff from other local training providers.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	116	3

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good off-the-job training
- effective timetabling of training sessions to meet individual learners' needs in accounting
- good additional support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- slow implementation of key skills training in accounting
- poor modern apprenticeship framework completion rate

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed records in accounting learners' individual learning plans
- quicker introduction to portfolio-building in accounting
- better use of progress reviews

11. Off-the-job training is good in accounting and administration. FTO Ltd has 79 learners on either foundation or advanced modern apprenticeships in accounting and 37 learners on programmes in administration. Training sessions are well planned, using a good variety of teaching methods. These are supported by a wide range of good-quality texts and handouts. Practice questions are used effectively to help learners with external examinations. All learning sessions are evaluated and the results are used to make improvements where needed. All accounting training is given by highly qualified and experienced accountants, and provided by a subcontractor. This is a new provision and there has only been one external examination since it began, with a high number of learners gaining their accounting qualifications. Of the 89 examinations taken, 80 learners passed, giving a 90 per cent pass rate.

12. FTO Ltd uses well-qualified staff to provide basic skills support. Support for literacy and numeracy needs is good. Individual and group sessions are available as appropriate. The subcontractor for accounting offers highly individualised training sessions to ensure that the learners' needs are met. Off-the-job training is provided on afternoons, evenings or in blocks of two days each month. Sometimes training is offered at weekends to ensure learners have a good chance to attend. This gives all learners the chance to attend. Training is supported by well-planned revision courses twice a year. Individual teaching and extra sessions are given to ensure that all learners can benefit. Trainers in accounting are on call to the learners seven days a week for individual guidance and support. Learners have good individual training either at work or in their homes if needed. Well-planned off-the-job training is also given to administration learners. Learners attend training sessions one day each week. If they have difficulties they are given individual training to accommodate their needs. Administration learners are also well supported by staff from FTO Ltd. They are visited in the workplace once a fortnight by their trainer/assessor for guidance, assessment and learning support. FTO Ltd responds effectively to learners' learning and pastoral problems, although the support that is given is not always clearly recorded on individual learning plans. There have been significant improvements to assessment and internal verification procedures since the first inspection. They now fully comply with awarding body requirements.

13. FTO Ltd encourages employers to give good additional support to learners. The FTO Ltd training staff also give good support to learners. All job roles are well matched with the requirements of the NVQ, to ensure that learners are able to cover the necessary range of work. Employers are encouraged to move learners between different departments to ensure that they gain a broad range of experience and to give the best opportunities for assessment. Some employers provide specialised additional training courses which broaden the learners' employment skills. In some cases, learners are given additional time off work to allow them the chance to complete their portfolios or catch up on background knowledge work.

14. Although accounting learners recognise that key skills are a mandatory part of their training they have a poor understanding of key skills requirements and the additional work they need to do to achieve their full modern apprenticeship framework. Learners are often confused about exemptions to key skills. Training staff with the subcontractor have been slow to integrate key skills training. This has been identified by FTO Ltd and by the subcontractor themselves. A good deal of work has been done towards this and plans for the provision and assessment of key skills training are now in place.

15. Portfolio-building is introduced towards the end of the accounting programme. Although learners are made aware of the need for portfolios, they are not encouraged to start collecting evidence or building their portfolios until late in the programme.

16. Although progress reviews are carried out regularly, they sometimes do not provide clear medium-term target-setting to enable learners to progress more quickly if necessary.

17. Modern apprenticeship framework achievements are poor. Of the 64 foundation modern apprentices (FMAs) who started in 2001-02, 33 per cent have completed the full modern apprenticeship framework. For advanced modern apprentices (AMAs), the figure is lower, with 12 per cent of the 32 starters completing in the same period. For the previous year, 53 per cent of FMAs completed the framework and 48 per cent of AMAs. However, over the same period, recruitment has increased and the retention rates show a strong trend of improvement. For the current year, which is almost complete, the retention rates are 85 and 96 per cent for FMAs and AMAs, respectively.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	9	3

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good short-term action-planning
- effective additional learner support
- good retention and achievement rate for NVQs in warehousing

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates on modern apprenticeships

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of progress reviews
- wider range of learning materials

18. The assessment process has improved since the first inspection. Staff from FTO Ltd provide thorough, short-term action-planning for learners. Learners have clear assessment plans drawn up at each visit for the work that they will be assessed on. Clear, short-term targets are set which are demanding, but realistic. Learners are now encouraged to identify opportunities to use evidence for their NVQs and key skills qualifications. They have a good understanding of key skills and what units they are working towards. Employers and trainer/assessors work together effectively to develop opportunities for the learners to generate evidence for key skills from the workplace. Trainer/assessors and learners reassess target dates for the completion of individual components of their qualifications on a regular basis, to ensure that learners are on target. Employers are kept well informed of their learners' progress.

19. Trainer/assessors provide good individual support for learners. This is given through well-planned individual coaching in the workplace to those learners who are unable to attend off-the-job training. This is sometimes given outside of normal working hours. Coaching provided to learners by trainer/assessors is effective in developing their knowledge and understanding. Those learners who cannot be released during working

hours for training are provided with laptop computers to enable them to develop their information technology (IT) skills. Trainer/assessors provide effective pastoral support to those learners who experience personal difficulties which might affect their ability to complete their programme. Well-qualified staff provide basic skills support appropriately, to identified needs. Learners have a very good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and how to complain if necessary. Learners' knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities is regularly checked by the use of thorough questioning at progress reviews. Staff have all been trained to relate these questions to life situations and to make them realistic. Trainer/assessors have developed very good working relationships with employers. Employers and FTO Ltd staff discuss and agree additional job roles that increase learners' opportunities to gather evidence for their qualifications. Some learners are given additional time off to help them with their studies.

20. Of the 16 learners who have begun programmes since 1999-2000, 11 have successfully completed their planned qualifications. In the year 2001-02, both learners who started the programme successfully completed their NVQs. FTO Ltd recognised the previous poor performance on this programme and has taken effective management action to reduce the number of learners while improving the quality of provision. These improvements have included the recruitment of two new and very occupationally experienced assessors. Over the past four years, 98 modern apprentices have started the programme, of whom 29 per cent successfully completed their planned qualifications and a further 7 per cent are still in training. Of the 60 learners who have left the programme without achieving their planned qualifications, 23 did achieve their NVQ. Since 2001-02, the retention and achievement rates have improved. Twenty-two learners have joined the programme during this time, of whom four have achieved their planned qualifications and seven are still in training.

21. A high percentage of learners on warehousing programmes at FTO Ltd have achieved their NVQs. During 1999-2000, the two learners who started their AMA in warehousing achieved the NVQ and three out of the four FMAs also achieved their NVQs. In the same year, almost all of the 15 learners completed their NVQ programmes in warehousing. In 2000-01, of the 37 FMAs, 67 per cent achieved the NVQ and three of the five NVQ learners in warehousing also completed their qualification. In 2001-02, four of the six FMAs and one of the two NVQ learners also completed their qualifications. The other learner is still on programme. In the current year, 2002-03, FTO Ltd has only recruited one AMA in warehousing. This learner is still in training. The company has had difficulties finding suitable placements for learners on warehousing programmes and is now recruiting fewer learners in this area than in the past.

22. Progress reviews are carried out regularly in the workplace, but information is not always clearly recorded or updated on the learners' individual learning plans.

23. Learners are provided with some training materials to support the development of background knowledge. The range of learning materials used in this area is limited.

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There are very few learning materials specifically designed for customer service and warehousing.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	40	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- effective short-term action-planning and target-setting
- good workplace training
- well-planned off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- slow progress by some learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- updating of individual learning plans
- better use of progress reviews

24. Training advisers visit learners frequently in their workplace to plan and assess their work. Visits usually take place every two weeks, but can be more frequent if required. The training advisers are responsive to learners' work patterns and employment constraints and often visit learners at weekends and evenings to accommodate this. Clear, short-term targets are set at progress reviews which are shared with the employer. Action plans are broken down into manageable, realistically achievable sections. Those learners interviewed indicated that they felt well supported by their training advisers. All learners clearly understand what they have to do and how they are progressing.

25. FTO Ltd ensures that all employers understand the NVQ requirements and are kept well informed. The liaison between FTO Ltd and employers is good. All employers receive an employer pack with details of their rights and responsibilities. They send learners on a wide range of additional short courses to help them improve their skills. Some employers give learners, or make available to them, books, videos and professional journals. Staff from FTO Ltd now check that learners can gain a wide range of experiences in the workplace, and where the workplace is unable to provide this they

organise additional work experience with other employers. For example, some learners were given additional experience in pre-school work in local holiday clubs during the summer to ensure that they gained experience of dealing with a wider age- range of children.

26. A well-devised programme of off-the-job training is made available to learners. Training sessions are well taught and imaginatively planned with clear aims and objectives. Evaluation of each session informs future developments and improvements. Team teaching is used effectively, especially when less-experienced trainers are paired with more experienced ones. The basic skills tutor gives good support to learners in the training sessions and at other times. The training room is attractive and well resourced, and the good-quality materials are well used. Learners are encouraged to use the available computers and many access the Internet effectively to gain supplementary material for their portfolios. There is good cross-referencing of key skills to the NVQ, and trainers have devised occupationally specific key skills worksheets which use real-life situations to practise language and numeracy skills.

27. Progress is still slow for some learners. This was recognised in the self-assessment report and during the first inspection. There are 16 learners still in training from previous years and nine of these have gone well beyond their expected completion time. One learner has taken over three years to complete her foundation modern apprenticeship. FTO Ltd has recognised this problem and has recently improved the number of care assessors, and a new assessor is due to start.

28. Although short-term action-planning is good, individual learning plans are not used effectively to support long-term goals and long-term planning. Some learning plans are not updated and details are sometimes missing. Progress reviews are not used to help to set medium-term targets for learners who need to progress more rapidly.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	59	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good teaching and learning
- good induction
- effective integration of key skills training
- frequent and effective visits to learners in the workplace

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate achievement of key skills through examination
- poor retention rate

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more regular support for learners with level 1 basic skills needs

29. Teaching and learning on foundation programmes is good. Training sessions are carefully planned and structured. A wide variety of resources is used to good effect. Learners are actively involved in setting their own targets. They are highly motivated and participate well in group work. Comprehension and information retention are checked regularly throughout lessons. There are clear links between on-the-job and off-the-job training and tutors make good reference to duties in the workplace.

30. Learners undergo a thorough, effective and memorable induction. This takes place during the first week of the learners' programme. Induction actively involves learners in a variety of activities using good-quality learning materials. Induction includes basic skills screening and, since the first inspection, a detailed initial assessment.

31. There is effective integration of key skills and basic skills with vocational training where appropriate. Key skills work is introduced at induction week. It is completed as part of the training on health and safety, equal opportunities and citizenship. IT skills are

taught well. This takes place whenever learners are involved in Internet research, or preparing for presentations. Evidence towards key skills is also collected through a wide variety of activities, both on and off the job. Learners produce good portfolios of evidence towards accreditation in key skills or basic skills. Work in the portfolios is of a high standard and contains a wide variety of evidence. There is good use of learners' personal experience and clear evidence of self-correction and self-criticism.

32. There are frequent and effective visits to learners in the workplace, usually every two or three weeks. Through these visits the work-placement co-ordinator has developed supportive personal relationships with the learners and employers. She is also able to keep learners focused on developing and evidencing key skills at work.

33. Although key skills accreditation is not a contractual requirement for this programme, all learners have key skills training through portfolio development. Learners are encouraged to enter for key skills examinations, although the achievement level is poor. From January 2001 to August 2002, 50 per cent of those learners who were entered for the examinations passed, and for learners on the Life Skills/entry to employment programmes only 48 per cent passed. FTO Ltd works with a particularly difficult client group. Learners are often those who were excluded from school, but they achieve high levels of confidence and motivation through the work they do for key skills. This includes working with others and communication skills. Staff work hard to try and develop appropriate skills for learners to help them pass the examinations.

34. The retention of learners on foundation programmes is poor, but improving. Between April 2001 and July 2002, 34 per cent of learners left the programme before completion. FTO Ltd follows up those learners who leave before completion, many of whom leave to gain employment or to go to other training programmes. Young people who live in hostels are particularly difficult to trace, however. Some leave the programme due to circumstances beyond FTO Ltd's control, such as pregnancy or moving out of the area. Since August 2002, 32 per cent of learners have left before completing their programmes, but over 50 per cent of these have gained a qualification. Most of them have completed portfolios in key skills. Training staff have worked hard to improve retention rates. Since August 2002, most learners who left before completion of the programme did so after the 17th week of the 24-week programme. Previously, this group had been leaving before the 12th week of the programme, with few qualifications.

35. Learners with level 1 basic skills needs are still not effectively supported. Learners who are assessed at level 1 or above do receive support, but this is not routine practice and not always clearly recorded.