

INSPECTION REPORT

North Lancs Training Group Limited

19 August, 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
- **learndirect** 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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

North Lancs Training Group Limited is a private company limited by guarantee. It is based in Accrington. It was established in 1971 as part of the Furniture and Timber Industry Training Board, and became a limited company in 1986. It now represents 81 member companies. It has three training centres in Accrington. It provides work-based learning for 1661 young people in construction, and engineering, technology and manufacturing, and business administration, management and professional, and information and communications technology, and retailing, customer services and transportation, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. It also offers foundation programmes.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Work-based learning in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is outstanding. In information and communications technology, and foundation programmes it is good. In engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, and retailing, customer services and transportation it is satisfactory. The leadership and management of North Lancs Training Group Limited are good, as are its arrangements for quality assurance and equality of opportunity.

GRADES

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	2

Construction	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

NORTH LANCS TRAINING GROUP LIMITED

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Information & communications technology	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2
Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	1
Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good achievement rates in some areas of learning
- good support for learners
- some particularly good on-the-job training
- good progress reviews for learners
- good workplace learning opportunities in most programmes
- good teamwork and leadership
- good staff development
- good promotion of equal opportunities to learners and the community
- good quality assurance systems and procedures

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate initial assessment
- poor retention and achievement rates on modern apprenticeships in manufacturing and customer services and warehousing
- insufficient involvement of employers and supervisors in some training programmes

- insufficient training resources in business administration, information and communication technology and customer services and warehousing
- insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements
- little formal quality assurance of on-the-job training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- closer integration of key skills training with vocational training
- more use of witness statements as evidence of competence
- more opportunities for staff to gain training qualifications
- better methods of sharing good practice

THE INSPECTION

1. Twenty-one inspectors spent a total of 105 days with North Lancs Training Group Limited (NLTG) in August 2002. They interviewed 273 learners and 175 workplace supervisors, and visited 188 workplaces. They saw 224 learners' portfolios. They carried out 91 interviews with members of NLTG's staff, and observed 15 learning sessions. Inspectors reviewed learners' and employers' files, management information, awarding body records, learning materials, policies and procedures, the contracts with the local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs), and recent audit reports. The company's most recent self-assessment report, which was prepared in May 2002, was also examined.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	6
Information & communications technology	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Foundation programmes	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Total	0	8	5	2	0	0	0	15

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. NLTG is a group training association with its headquarters in Accrington in Lancashire. It is a founder member of the Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors National Training Organisation. NLTG provides work-based learning for young people. There are 99 learners in construction, 683 in manufacturing, 269 in business administration, 37 in information and communications technology (ICT), 317 in customer service and warehousing, and 269 in hospitality, and 25 on foundation programmes. Training and assessment takes place on the job in most programmes. In construction and foundation programmes, off-the-job training is subcontracted to local colleges of further education and other training providers. NLTG has links with 900 employers. NLTG employs 93 staff. It has contracts with five LSCs. Lancashire LSC accounts for 52 per cent of the training provision, Manchester LSC for 24 per cent, West Yorkshire LSC for 10 per cent, Cumbria LSC for 8 per cent and Cheshire and Warrington LSC for 4 per cent.

3. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, was 50 per cent in Lancashire, 44 per cent in Greater Manchester, and 41 per cent in West Yorkshire. The national average was 47.9 per cent. Manufacturing is declining in the northwest of England, although it remains an important source of employment. In May 2002, the unemployment rate for Lancashire was 2.7 per cent, for the northwest of England it was 3.6 per cent, and for England as a whole it was 3 per cent. At the time of the 1991 census, the proportion of the population from minority ethnic backgrounds was 3.5 per cent in Lancashire, 3.7 per cent in the northwest of England and 6.2 per cent in England as a whole.

Work-based learning for young people

4. Learners are all employed in companies and public sector organisations in the north of England. There are good achievement rates for modern apprenticeships in construction and hospitality and for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in manufacturing. In business administration and ICT, appropriate improvements have been made since the last inspection, and these are beginning to show in better achievement rates. In customer service and warehousing, achievement rates for modern apprenticeships are low, and are compounded by low retention rates. Most training is work based, and there is some good on-the-job training on all programmes, with furniture and hospitality being very good. Key skills training has been integrated with vocational training in most programmes, and there are some good approaches being followed in ICT and hospitality.

5. The overall standard of training is satisfactory or above in all occupational areas. Training officers from NLTG visit workplaces regularly and provide good support for learners. Staff are well trained, and in some cases very experienced in their trades, and all are occupationally competent. Staff development is very well organised and training officers receive good training and development for their roles. NLTG fulfils the requirements of its funding contracts. It is well managed, financially sound and has very good external partnerships. Learners are generally well motivated and keen to achieve qualifications. Some are producing work of a very high standard. There are good portfolios of evidence across all training programmes and some are outstanding. The foundation programme achieves good results and promotes self-confidence through a range of imaginative training methods. Employers are generally supportive of learners and very positive about NLTG. Learners' success, progress and achievements are celebrated, and the achievements of members of staff are also recognised and rewarded.

Life Skills

6. Learners on the Life Skills programme benefit from good training. They make good progress into jobs or further training. The programme is well managed and there are strong external partnerships. The programme promotes self-confidence through a range of imaginative training methods. However, there is insufficient training in basic skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

7. NLTG is a company limited by guarantee, and owned by its 81 member companies. Income surpluses are used to provide services to members, and to re-invest in the training group. The board of directors is made up of owners or senior directors of member companies, and two members of NLTG's staff, the managing director and the operations director. NLTG is financed through its member companies, from LSC contracts and through the provision of some private training services. The operations director manages training on a day-to-day basis. A management team of nine, supports her, including two team managers, a quality assurance and health and safety manager, two team leaders and four department heads. Most areas of learning are wholly work based. The exception is construction, where three local colleges of further education are subcontracted to provide off-the-job training and education. Foundation training takes place at NLTG's training centre in Accrington. NLTG has an equal opportunities policy and procedures. Its quality assurance system conforms to ISO 9002, an international quality assurance standard. NLTG has been carrying out annual self-assessments for five years. The current self-assessment report was produced in May 2002.

STRENGTHS

- good teamwork and leadership
- good system of rewards to celebrate the achievements of learners and staff
- good staff development
- strong external partnerships
- good promotion of equal opportunities to learners and the community
- extensive programme of activities to support learners from minority ethnic groups
- good support for young people with behavioural difficulties
- good quality assurance systems and procedures
- good self-assessment process
- thorough and well-documented internal verification

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate initial assessment in most programmes
- insufficient involvement of employers and supervisors in some training programmes
- stereotypical images on some promotional literature
- little formal quality assurance of on-the-job training and learning
- unsatisfactory methods for collecting feedback from learners' and employers
- insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more opportunities for staff to gain training qualifications
- better methods of sharing good practice

8. There is good leadership both at team level and from managers. Senior managers provide clear direction and involve all staff in business planning. Open meetings are held fortnightly and all staff contribute, planning and reviewing their activities. There are other regular management meetings which are well organised and effectively documented. Management information is openly discussed, and clear targets are set at all levels. Managers are accessible and in daily contact with staff. They effectively support staff, encourage teamwork and provide good role models for NLTG's open culture. There are one-to-one meetings, and coaching sessions. Staff members offer a good level of support to their colleagues. All staff are well-motivated and positive about their work.

9. There are regular in-house and external events to celebrate the achievements of learners and staff. All areas of learning have award schemes. Medals of excellence and framed certificates are awarded for merit and progress made. Learners are awarded free places on residential outdoor activities courses, in recognition of their progress and success. Staff are given incentives and rewards for good performance and progress.

10. The conditions of employment and benefits for NLTG staff are very good, as is the approach to staff training and development. The policy for staff development is clear, and all staff have training and development plans which are reviewed regularly. All training officers are expected, as a minimum, to progress through health and safety, assessor's, verifier's and key skills awards. This process is well managed and supported by team leaders. However, training officers' development plans do not include the opportunity to gain training skills and awards. Staff turnover is very low, and a significant number of staff members have progressed and developed through the organisation, including some who were originally NLTG learners, and who are now in positions of responsibility in the company.

11. NLTG plays an influential part in a number of external partnerships. In its role as a group training organisation, it provides services and training for, and is influenced by, its members. This has a direct positive impact on the experience of learners, many of whom are managed, supervised and trained at work by ex-NLTG learners. Staff from NLTG make a significant contribution to developments in the industry through the Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors National Training Organisation. NLTG has also developed strong links with other sectors including textiles and glass. The company makes a significant contribution to education-business partnerships and other local forums promoting learning and skills. For example, a member of staff at NLTG has been influential in a public-private partnership which has successfully set up a new furniture

training school. NLTG has good links with schools which have been sustained over a number of years. Staff from NLTG regularly visit schools, and organise programmes of work experience for pupils and staff. NLTG also regularly invites schools to nominate groups of pupils to take part in residential personal development courses financed by NLTG.

12. NLTG's procedures for the initial assessment of learners are inadequate. NLTG has tried to introduce a method of initial assessment to accommodate learners who begin their training as full-time employees. Over 75 per cent of learners are initially assessed on the job. The questions asked are not always appropriate to the individual learners' circumstances. Learners assess themselves, but this is not balanced by more objective methods of diagnosis. Insufficient time is devoted to the process in some cases. The methods used, and the records kept, are not always helpful. The initial assessment does not adequately identify learners' needs for training in basic and key skills. Learners who need additional support are not always identified at an early stage in their training.

13. NLTG does not sufficiently involve employers in training and assessment at work. There are some significant exceptions to this, particularly in the furniture industry. However across all sectors there are employers who are not fully informed about important aspects of training such as occupational standards, modern apprenticeship frameworks, NVQs and key skills. NLTG provides training for workplace assessors at no cost, but there are few active assessors in companies, and in some sectors there are none. There is a strategy for involving employers but it is not working effectively.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

14. Equality of opportunity is emphasised in all the company procedures, and in the business plans for each area of learning. It is promoted strongly on notice boards at all the centres and in all NLTG's correspondence and advertising. The publicity material also states that NLTG is an equal opportunities employer. It is evident from the way in which staff conduct themselves, and their daily activity with learners, that equality of opportunity is practised. Any specific issues regarding harassment, bullying, discrimination are dealt with swiftly and firmly. Many member companies have developed their equal opportunities policies with the help of NLTG, as have some who are not members. There is evidence that policies on harassment are applied.

15. There is an extensive range of activities to support learners from minority ethnic groups. There are two dedicated minority ethnic liaison officers with an extremely high level of commitment. They promote work-based learning at school events, community festivals, careers fairs, roadshows and youth organisations. They are able to give effective support to Asian learners by speaking to them in their own languages. There are three learners in the textile industry who are given coaching on health and safety in their own language to enable them to gain key skills evidence. The liaison officers individualised training and run English language courses. They visit families to promote the benefits of work-based learning. The proportion of NLTG's learners from minority ethnic groups is greater than that of the local training providers. It also exceeds the proportion of the local population which come from minority ethnic groups.

16. There are many examples of young people with behavioural difficulties who have been encouraged to participate in training by effective work placements and thorough monitoring. They are given good support and constructive work to motivate them. The company's good relationship with employers enables them to arrange work placement for these learners, because employers trust NLTG to monitor them properly and deal with issues in a firm and professional manner. Two learners who had difficulties at school and left without qualifications have been given permanent jobs by their work-placement providers following extensive support from NLTG.

17. One learner has a hearing impairment and is without speech. The amount of time allowed by his employer for training is insufficient for the learner to achieve his qualification. The learner does not understand sign language. The training officer, supported by another learner, gives extensive extra support to this learner. Additional support is given at meetings away from the workplace. The trainer has developed helpful pictures and drawings to facilitate the training.

18. Promotional leaflets, and parts of the website relating to specific programmes, show strong gender and racial stereotyping. Even though there are several extremely successful female wood machinists, they are not celebrated by the literature. The only representative of an minority ethnic group in this literature is a young woman who is pictured at a sewing machine. The company video does not contain stereotypes. It shows young men working in catering and upholstery, women in woodworking, and

several learners from minority ethnic groups.

19. While many of the employers, especially those in the furniture industry, are well aware of their responsibilities with regard to equality of opportunity, not all are active in promoting equality. Even on large employers' premises, there may be offensive materials on the walls, and employers are not regularly monitored to ensure that they apply their policies to learners at work. There is a target date for the training officers to monitor employers' activity. However, the process will not come fully into force until 2006. NLTG will help employers to introduce and implement equal opportunities policies. NLTG does not always adequately monitor or encourage employers' implementation of equal opportunities legislation.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

20. NLTG has a very clear policy and procedures for quality assurance, which cover most of its operations. They conform to ISO 9002, an international quality assurance standard. There have been regular reviews and continuous development of the quality assurance procedures since the original accreditation in 1994. The quality assurance policy clearly states the purpose and scope of quality assurance. A member of the management team is responsible for implementing the quality assurance policy and procedures. A series of internal audits is carried out by trained staff from across the organisation. These are effective, and issues arising are well documented and followed through. Quality assurance features regularly in team and management meetings. The staff at NLTG clearly understand the systems and procedures for assuring and improving NLTG's operations and the learners' experience. Training officers are regularly observed while carrying out their duties, and there is good evidence of constructive feedback being given and acted on.

21. NLTG's internal verification is thorough and well documented. All staff are expected to attain internal verification qualifications, and most have. A member of staff samples the assessment and internal verification of portfolios, and interviews learners regularly. This is in addition to the standard internal verification processes which also take place.

22. NLTG has a good self-assessment process. Self assessment is part of NLTG's quality assurance system and has been carried out annually for the past six years. The most recent report was produced in May 2002 and was the outcome of a thorough internal process in which all staff were involved. The self-assessment report is clear and self-critical, and identifies most strengths and weaknesses accurately. It provided inspectors with a good basis for carrying out the inspection. However, the report does not refer to financial integrity and value for money. In some areas of learning, the weaknesses associated with retention and achievement rates were not identified. Good practice is shared through team meetings and staff development, but NLTG does not have a sufficiently systematic approach to internal and external benchmarking.

23. NLTG's quality assurance arrangements do not directly cover the quality of training and learning at work. Checks are made through conversations with employers' staff during review, assessment and verification visits, but there is no formal observation of on-the-job training. There is no procedure in place for defining the training to be given on-the-job. There is an initial plan which links the occupational and key skills standards with the learner's job requirements. However, this is not followed up with a learning programme, which specifies the training learners need to achieve competence.

24. NLTG uses surveys to ask learners regularly for their views. The method used is not satisfactory and does not produce any useful information. There is also insufficient attention given to the formal collection of feedback from other stakeholders including employers.

Good Practice

The newly appointed NVQ quality assurance co-ordinator provides a very effective addition to internal verification. He makes up to 80 timetabled visits each month, supplementing the internal audit system and internal verification. The co-ordinator enhances staff development, identifying both strengths and weaknesses. The resulting action plans are put into effect promptly. The process is very useful for identifying learners who are making slow progress and providing help for them. It also helps to identify any lapses in the application of the company's quality assurance system.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	99	2

25. There are 99 learners on construction programmes, mainly in carpentry and joinery. There are 62 advanced modern apprentices, 34 foundation modern apprentices and three learners on NVQ programmes. Most learners take up to three years to complete the advanced modern apprenticeship and two years to complete the foundation modern apprenticeship. Following initial assessments by NLTG, learners attend interviews for employment with small carpentry and joinery businesses. All the learners are employed. Off-the-job training is carried out by three local colleges of further education. Learners attend for one day each week, gaining background knowledge for their NVQ and key skills. The key skills training is integrated with the NVQ core subjects. Learners spend the rest of their time at work where they receive on-the-job training. Training officers visit learners in their workplace every six to eight weeks to review their progress. All assessment and verification takes place at the colleges of further education, and is carried out by qualified college assessors.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	39		39		28		33		30						
Retained*	0		3		8		26	79	20	67						
Successfully completed	0		3		8		26	79	20	67						
Still in learning	25		26		3		0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	33		14		7		2									
Retained*	1		3		5		1	50									
Successfully completed	0		2		3		1	50									
Still in learning	28		4		2		0	0									

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts							10		5							
Retained*							0	0	0	0							
Successfully completed							2	20	1	20							
Still in learning							2	20	1	20							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices
- wide range of on-the-job training opportunities
- good support for learners
- effective monitoring of subcontracted provision
- good off-the-job resources

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient assessment in the workplace
- little understanding of modern apprenticeship frameworks by employers and supervisors

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- improved target-setting at reviews
- closer integration of key skills training with vocational training

26. Achievement levels for advanced modern apprenticeships are good. For the two years for which full data are available, the achievement rate was over 65 per cent. This is high for this occupational area. The rate fell in 1999-2000 when a large number of long-term learners finished the training programme without completing it. Learners still in learning are making good progress and producing high standards of work.

27. There is a wide range of on-the-job training opportunities for learners. Employers include large and medium-sized manufacturers of carpentry and joinery products and small companies providing carpentry and joinery services and repairs. Employers are highly supportive, and work well with learners, NLTG, and the colleges. Most employers have good, modern resources that reflect current industrial standards. Learners have access to these resources and receive good training from highly experienced workplace staff. Most learners gain good practical skills, and the tasks they carry out in the workplace more than cover the requirements of the NVQ.

28. Learners are well supported by their training officer. Training officers visit the workplace every six weeks to review learners' progress. They also visit the colleges weekly during term-time. Learners appreciate this frequent contact with the training adviser, and it has a good motivating effect on them. NLTG staff helped three learners who had experienced difficulties in their workplace to find alternative employment with the minimum amount of disruption to their training programme. The learners concerned spoke highly of this. Employers are also well supported and are very positive about NLTG.

29. Training advisers observe and monitor the teaching and training carried out by the subcontracted colleges of further education. These observations are used to monitor and continuously improve the quality of training in the colleges. Regular formal meetings are held, at which training officers and college staff review and seek to improve the quality of off-the-job training. In addition, staff often meet informally and discuss the quality of provision.

30. Off-the-job training resources are good. All training in carpentry and joinery is carried out by one of three local colleges of further education. Learners attend the college for one day each week. Resources are good in two of the colleges and excellent in the third. Learners work on up-to-date equipment that compares well with current standards in industry. One of the colleges has recently equipped its wood-working machinery workshop with new state-of-the-art equipment. There are plenty of hand tools for training learners in basic craft skills. Learners use the resources to produce good-quality work. Staff are well qualified and vocationally experienced. The

standard of training is high and challenging to learners.

31. There is insufficient assessment in the workplace. The subcontracted colleges carry out all the assessment. Some learners collect evidence for their NVQ from the workplace, while others rely solely on the simulated tasks. Learners are working towards a number of NVQs, some of which do not require assessment to be done in the workplace. However there is too much reliance on simulations. Evidence obtained is not from real work, is insufficiently diverse, and in many cases lacks substance. NLTG's training officer for construction is a qualified assessor and visits learners in the workplace frequently, but does not use the visits to carry out assessments. NLTG has recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report and is taking action, but it is too soon to judge the impact on the learners.

32. Employers and work-based supervisors have little understanding of the modern apprenticeship framework. There has been little effort to explain the NVQ system and standards to employers. Employers are supportive and willing to be involved in the training, but they do not always know what is required of them. Most employers do not know what training is being given at college. They rely on verbal feedback from learners and training advisers. A few supervisors have progressed through the NVQ system and are familiar with the requirements. They are more able to respond to learners' needs and this improves learners' progress.

33. Targets for progression are set satisfactorily at learners' progress reviews. However in some cases, the targets are insufficiently realistic, measurable and achievable. Key skills evidence is obtained and used satisfactorily, however the approach used by training officers and colleges is not standardised.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	683	3

34. NLTG offers training in performing manufacturing operations, and in textiles, glass, furniture and food production. There are 683 learners on these programmes. All learners are employed by manufacturing companies in the northwest of England and west Yorkshire. Off-the-job training in upholstery for furniture learners takes place in a company-run training school at an employer's premises. For wood machinists, off-the-job training is given at NLTG's premises. Most training takes place on the job. NLTG assessors carry out assessment and verification in the workplace. There is a small number of work-based assessors. Learners' progress is reviewed at least every six weeks. Access to training programmes is open to anyone who demonstrates an interest in the vocational area at interview, regardless of their previous academic achievement. Most learners are recruited through their employers and some through NLTG's recruitment activities. Learners can join the programme at any time of the year. They are given an initial assessment. Most induction takes place at the workplace, and learners are introduced to health and safety, equal opportunities and their NVQ programme. Learners take up to two years to complete furniture training programmes and glass production programmes. Textile programmes take one year, as do performing manufacturing operations and food production.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	60		22		47		40		59						
Retained*	0		2		18		26		25							
Successfully completed	0		2		5		23		21							
Still in learning	35		12		13		3		1							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	350		266		137		2									
Retained*	24		101		58		2	100								
Successfully completed	10		44		54		2	100								
Still in learning	254		57		3		0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	507		561		667		651		707							
Retained*	143		345		492		472	73	531	75						
Successfully completed	130		330		483		464	71	526	74						
Still in learning	289		15		1		0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good achievement rate for NVQ learners
- highly supportive employers providing good on-the-job training
- good portfolios containing a wide range of relevant evidence
- good support for learners
- good progress reviews

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices
- insufficient involvement by employers in glass and textiles

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better assessment practice on food and drink programmes
- more use of witness statements as evidence of competence

35. Achievement rates for NVQ learners are good. The rate for learners who began their programmes in 2000-01 was 61 per cent. Between 1997-98 and 1999-2000, achievement rates remained at over 70 per cent.

36. On-the-job training in manufacturing is generally good. There is some very good training in furniture and food production. Learners on most programmes are given a wide range of suitable learning opportunities. The quality of furniture produced by some learners is outstanding. Furniture companies have co-operated with NLTG to develop training programmes in wood-machining, upholstery and furniture assembly. These are well planned and carried out effectively. Learning support materials are good. They include individual training packs, textbooks and video materials to illustrate the processes. Some training is carried out in the workplace by NLTG's staff. Many of the employers are members of the training group and are very supportive of the learners and their programmes. Work placements are of a consistently high standard on most manufacturing programmes. In food production, employers supply products to retailers who demand high standards of health, safety and hygiene. The training provided by employers is of a high standard. In many instances, NLTG has been involved in the development of employers' in-house training programmes. Training undertaken as part of these programmes is used as evidence for the NVQ. In performing manufacturing operations, and furniture, learners have access to good-quality facilities and equipment. This includes computer numerically controlled (CNC) routers, beam-saws and edge-banders for furniture production, cutters, trimmers and shrink-packaging machines for processing operations and auto-processing preparation equipment and ovens for food manufacture.

37. Learners' portfolios of evidence are good. They contain a wide range of appropriate evidence including observations, witness statements, photographs and learners' work products. Some learners have produced good quality graphic storyboards to illustrate their work activities, and included various projects such as reports on product quality. Key skills evidence is integrated with the evidence for occupational competence. Documents are accompanied by explanatory notes describing how they link to the NVQ standards. Training officers regularly review, and give verbal and written feedback on, portfolios. Learners' personal development and motivation is enhanced by the process of compiling their portfolios. They are proud to discuss them and do so knowledgeably. Employers make time for learners to build their portfolios at work.

38. Training officers give good support to learners. They visit learners in their workplace at least every six weeks, and in some cases, every four weeks. Where there

are several learners in one workplace, visits are made weekly. Learners value their training officers highly, and are able to talk to them about work, the training programme and personal issues. Learners all have their training officer's home and mobile telephone numbers, and many telephone them between visits for advice and support. One learner is pregnant and her training officer is making additional visits to enable her to complete the NVQ before going on maternity leave. In one instance, NLTG helped finance a purpose-built training room for an employer. There is very good support for learners on the textiles programme. Learners benefit from counselling, frequent home visits, parental involvement and employer input. NLTG lends them lap-top computers to enable them to achieve the information technology element of their key skills awards. Training officers can speak languages in addition to English. One learner who could speak little English has been given excellent support by the training officer, and has now achieved her NVQ.

39. There are good and well-documented procedures for learners' progress reviews, which are carried out effectively across most of the manufacturing programmes. Clear targets are set and carefully monitored at reviews. The learners know when their reviews are due to take place, and what should happen at them. Training officers follow a timetable of visits and arrive punctually. Reviews are clearly recorded, and action points are discussed at length at the start of each session. The learners assess their own performance against their targets, and the employer's staff are also asked to make a judgement about learners' progress. There is then a discussion and conclusions are drawn which lead to action points and further targets. Equal opportunities, health and safety and key skills are all discussed. The review sheets include evidence which is cross-referenced to the learners' portfolios of evidence if appropriate. Learners are fully involved and keep good records.

40. Achievement rates for modern apprentices are low. Of 146 advanced modern apprentices who started programmes between 1997-98 and 1999-2000, only 33 per cent have successfully achieved all the targets on their modern apprenticeship framework, and 11 per cent are still in learning. Forty-two per cent were retained for the planned duration of their programmes. Of 405 foundation modern apprentices who started programmes between 1998-99 and 2000-01, only 25 per cent have successfully achieved all the targets on their modern apprenticeship framework, and 15 per cent are still in learning. Forty per cent have been retained for the planned duration of their programmes.

41. Most glass manufacturing employers have insufficient knowledge of the NVQ occupational standards. Work tasks and training are not properly linked to ensure coverage of the NVQ requirements. During the learners' progress reviews, training officers attempt to clarify what training the learner will need over the next month. However, employers do not have structured training programmes which would ensure that learners cover the requirements of the training programme in the allocated time. Production requirements often take priority over training needs. In textiles, some employers have little involvement in training. Most employers have a poor understanding of the modern apprenticeship frameworks and little detailed knowledge

of the NVQ and key skills awards. Many employers are reluctant to give learners sufficient time away from work to pursue their NVQ or participate in progress reviews. There are few employers with a formal approach to training. Most training consists of learners being shown specific operations by the supervisor, as the need arises. Training is not planned or structured, and does not relate to the requirements of the NVQ.

Good Practice

As part of a key skills project, a learner devised a highly effective computerised stock control system. It has been fully implemented as part of his employer's business operation.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	269	3

42. NLTG provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ training in business administration for 269 learners. There are 52 advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3 and 186 foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2. All modern apprentices take key skills awards at an appropriate level. There are also 31 learners following programmes leading to level 2 or level 3 NVQs. NLTG helps employers to recruit learners. Learners are employed in a wide range of manufacturing businesses, service organisations and government offices. All NVQ learning occurs in the workplace. Training officers visit learners in their workplaces to review their progress, and to help them to match their evidence to the NVQ standards and build their portfolios.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	52		15		76		115		145							
Retained*	45		4		31		42	37	53	37							
Successfully completed	2		4		27		41	36	47	32							
Still in learning	43		6		1		1	1	1	1							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	210		82		150		43									
Retained*	174		44		70		32	74									
Successfully completed	6		32		64		32	74									
Still in learning	168		12		6		0	0									

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	37		7		9		70		83							
Retained*	2		4	57	4	44	32	46	34	41						
Successfully completed	2		4	57	3	33	31	44	31	37						
Still in learning	30		0	0	1	11	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good review process
- good quality workplaces

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate development of learners' background knowledge
- inadequate understanding of NVQs by some workplace supervisors
- insufficient learning resources

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- closer integration of key skills training with vocational training
- further develop induction programme

43. Learners receive a high level of support from committed and enthusiastic training officers and from their workplace supervisors. Training officers visit learners in their workplaces every four to six weeks, and more frequently if required. Learners have training officers' mobile telephone and fax numbers, and their e-mail addresses, so that they can contact them whenever the need arises. The support provided is extremely effective in helping learners to progress with their NVQs and key skills training. When learners make slow progress, training officers visit them more frequently and monitor their progress more intensively. Learners appreciate the interest that training officers and supervisors take in their learning, and they speak highly of the support they receive. Employers also praise the support given by NLTG training officers. Learners' retention and achievement rates have improved since 1999-2000.

44. There is a good review process through which learners' progress is thoroughly monitored at regular intervals. Progress towards the achievement of NVQ and key skills units is assessed, and new short- and long-term targets are set. Training officers use action-planning particularly effectively to focus learners' attention on what they are expected to achieve before their next review. Although workplace supervisors are not present for the whole of the progress review, they are kept informed about learners' progress by training officers. In addition to the training officers' verbal reports, supervisors receive copies of written progress reports.

45. Many learners work in good-quality workplaces which provide good opportunities for on-the-job learning. Before learners start training, NLTG examines their job role. It is cross-referenced to the NVQ requirements and, in the case of modern apprentices, to key skills units. If they need additional experience to gather evidence for their NVQs and key skills awards, arrangements are made for them to work in other departments. However, the key skills training is not yet fully integrated with the vocational training. Workplace supervisors provide appropriate on-the-job experience to help learners develop the competences they need to carry out their work successfully. Some also provide a good level of pastoral support. This helps learners to continue with their learning programmes who might not otherwise do so. Many learners interviewed by inspectors said their on-the-job learning had developed their personal confidence and increased their self-esteem. However, work pressures sometimes hinder learners' NVQ and key skills progress.

46. NLTG's induction process for learners is satisfactory. Induction is given in the workplace during learners' first week of training. They are given appropriate information about health and safety, and equality of opportunity, and told about the rules and procedures for their work. Some of the induction training is given by the employer, and some by the NLTG training officer. However, learners are not given enough information about how the NVQ programme relates to their job role, and their understanding of this is not always clear.

47. NLTG does not adequately develop learners' background knowledge and understanding. All learning takes place in the workplace and this strongly emphasises practical work. Although learners answer written and verbal questions for assessment, little or no time is devoted to developing their subject knowledge and broadening their understanding in a systematic way. Some written answers are superficial and inadequate, although they are accepted by training officers as meeting the national standards. There are insufficient learning resources available to help learners acquire and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Learners are given booklets covering health and safety and equal opportunities, but they do not have an administration textbook. There are no programme-specific handouts, interactive work-packs or computer-based resources for improving learners' administrative effectiveness. Very few learners attend an NLTG training centre during their modern apprenticeship or NVQ programme. NLTG provides no distance learning resources to compensate for the lack of direct instruction. NLTG is developing administration and key skills computer-

based learning resources, but these are not yet available.

48. Some supervisors are not sufficiently involved in the NVQ process. Some are unfamiliar with the units and elements of NVQs and key skills. They do not know how best to help learners gain their NVQ and key skills competences. Some supervisors do not fully understand how NVQs are assessed. They are unable to help learners identify opportunities for assessment in the workplace. Although most supervisors have demanding job roles, they are very willing to help their learners. They currently lack the information to do this practically.

Good Practice

Training officers are able to help learners to resolve difficult situations. A learner who was moved to another job in her company during her training period, was de-motivated and disheartened by the change. The learner discussed the situation with her training officer, who then spoke to her workplace supervisor. Afterwards she advised the learner to discuss the situation with the supervisor. The learner acted on the training officer's advice and was delighted when she regained her former job.

Information & communications technology

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	37	2

49. There are 37 learners on ICT programmes, comprising one advanced and 23 foundation modern apprentices, and 13 learners on NVQ programmes. All learners are employed before entering training, and most learning takes place on the job, using distance learning materials. The learners are based throughout Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria. The training officers visit at four to six week intervals to carry out reviews and assessments, but will visit more frequently if asked to do so. One-to-one training in employers' premises may be provided on request. Off-the-job training can be given at the training centre in Accrington, but very few learners use this facility.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																	
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts					15		25		3								
Retained*					1		7	28	0	0							
Successfully completed					1		4	16	0	0							
Still in learning					0		1	4	0	0							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																	
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	20		13		15		6										
Retained*	0		5	38	3	20	4	67									
Successfully completed	0		5	38	3	20	2	33									
Still in learning	19		2	15	0	0	2	33									

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		4				16									
Retained*	0		2				4	25								
Successfully completed	0		0				4	25								
Still in learning	11		2				0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- excellent support by training officers
- good assessment practices
- good progression
- good action-planning

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient learning resources to develop learners' background knowledge and understanding

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more information for employers about NVQs

50. There are two ICT training officers, both relatively new to the company. They have developed comprehensive procedures for on-the-job training, monitoring and assessment. NLTG training officers are available to learners by telephone or e-mail at any time. They show an exceptionally high level of commitment and enthusiasm, combined with a thorough and systematic attitude to training. All the learners interviewed said that the best thing about their training was the support and guidance they received. One-to-one training is used effectively to teach learners skills in the workplace. Learners gain self-confidence and employers recognise the improvement in their skills. Many learners are given more responsibility and independence in their job roles as their training progresses. Training officers visit learners every 4-6 weeks, but will alter their schedules on request. Training officers have taken prompt and effective action in cases of harassment and bullying, and on disciplinary issues.

51. The assessments observed were exemplary. The learners were well prepared and supported by the training officers. As far as possible, assessments use evidence from normal working situations and observation is carried out by the training officer without interrupting the learners' work. The standard of work is high. In several cases, the work done for the assessment had provided a useful and innovative facility for the employer's business. ICT learners undergo an initial assessment which provides an effective basis for planning their programmes. During the four-week induction period, learners are issued with a CD-ROM containing detailed information about NVQs and sample key skills tests. Learners use this to decide what level of qualification to take. This is effective in making the learners responsible for their own learning. Assignments are set during this period which emphasise health and safety, and identify specific individual learning needs.

52. Learners who started their programmes in 2001-02, are making good progress towards their qualification, having gained competence in almost all the areas of their training programme. Following staff changes, retention and achievement rates have improved over the past two years from a very poor level, to what is now good. During the past 18 months, only one learner has left without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan. The programme is based on learners' individual needs and capabilities. Learners are also encouraged to progress to further qualifications, and many achieve them. Many learners take higher level key skills awards. They also gain additional qualifications in business administration, customer service, and other areas relevant to their work role.

53. Learners have clear, individual action plans with specific targets which they fully understand. On each visit, the training officer carefully reviews progress and identifies appropriate tasks. Achievable deadlines are agreed with the learner and the supervisor. The content and standards for achievement of each element are clearly identified and cross-referenced. If learners are in any doubt, they can call in the training officer for help or extra training. The learners benefit from this approach, and understand clearly what they need to do to achieve their targets. They remember the requirements well, and are able to explain confidently what they still have to do.

54. Learners' background knowledge and understanding is not sufficiently developed by the programme. Some workplaces, while providing good general work experience, do not offer learners the range of applications or knowledge they need to develop further. Some learners' job roles do not cover all the aspects of the NVQ. In these cases they require more learning support. If learners ask for extra help, they are given one-to-one training in the workplace. They are also given a set of core knowledge questions for each of the units, which have been developed by NLTG staff. The questions cover the range of knowledge required, but are rather narrow in scope. There are good learning materials available in NLTG's training centre in Accrington, but not all learners are able take advantage of them.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	317	3

55. There are 317 learners on work-based learning programmes in retailing, customer service and transportation. Of these, 126 are foundation and 14 are advanced modern apprentices, and 36 are on other work-based learning programmes in warehousing. There are 124 foundation and 17 advanced modern apprentices on customer service programmes. Learners are recruited either as school leavers, or by the sales team and training officers who identify young people already employed in the industry. All learners are employed in distribution and manufacturing companies. Induction sometimes takes place at NLTG, but more often in the workplace. Learners are visited regularly in their workplace for progress reviews and assessment. Training officers are all qualified assessors and internal verifiers, and have appropriate occupational experience. Some have teaching qualifications and are also forklift truck driving instructors. All training officers are currently working towards a key skills award.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	28		18		25		76		12							
Retained*	1		9		8		16		5	42							
Successfully completed	1		2		6		11		3	25							
Still in learning	20		6		4		1		0	0							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	257		148		108		22									
Retained*	215		74		41		14	64									
Successfully completed	8		20		36		14	64									
Still in learning	194		42		5		0	0									

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	88		104		160		79		91							
Retained*	25		64	62	97	61	53	67	69	76						
Successfully completed	24		62	60	93	58	49	62	68	75						
Still in learning	44		0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- highly effective individual support for learners
- good-quality portfolios containing a wide range of appropriate, cross-referenced evidence
- good workplaces

WEAKNESSES

- low achievement rates for modern apprentices
- lack of training resources
- some supervisors insufficiently involved in NVQ process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more use of witness statements as evidence of competency

56. NLTG staff are dedicated to helping learners succeed, and give them highly effective one-to-one support and guidance. Staff respond quickly and effectively to learners' needs and take an active interest in their personal development. Frequent and flexibly timed visits to the workplace are arranged to suit employers and learners. Training officers provide very effective support to the learners through these visits. They also encourage learners to contact them for help and advice at any time up to 8pm. Learners interviewed expressed confidence in their training officer.

57. Learners receive individual NVQ unit certificates which provide an additional record of achievement, as well as motivating them to work towards further units. In some cases, this has improved the learners' progress towards the completion of their

qualification.

58. Learners produce good quality portfolios. Training officers determine the initial structure of the portfolios, and help learners to understand the process of cross-referencing evidence, but as the training progresses, the learners take responsibility for them. Learners fully understand the structure and contents of their portfolios, and can confidently explain why a piece of evidence meets the performance criteria. There is a good variety of evidence in the portfolios including work-related documents, observations, photographs, personal statements, projects, questioning and some witness testimonies. The learners who have joined modern apprenticeship programmes in the past 12 months also have a very good understanding of how evidence generated for the NVQ can be cross-referenced and used for key skills awards.

59. Learners are employed in a wide range of workplaces over a large geographical area. The workplaces include a number of distribution and manufacturing companies. NLTG has established long-standing and good working relationships with a number of good-quality employers. Workplaces offer learners good opportunities for developing skills with the assistance of supportive employers and work colleagues. Employers are fully involved in the learners' progress reviews. Some supervisors have achieved occupational qualifications themselves and are able to assist learners with their NVQ. Learners can move between departments if necessary to gain skills, and there are good prospects for career advancement. Some employers have structured training programmes which help learners to develop knowledge of products and company procedures. Some offer additional qualifications such as lift truck driving, while others support learners in achieving ICT qualifications. Some workplace supervisors provide witness statements as evidence for learners' portfolios. Others are unsure of the exact nature of witness statements and how they can be used.

60. Achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are poor. Since 1997, no more than 25 per cent of learners each year has completed the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. There are learners still on programme from 1999-2001, whose progress has been held up by the late start on key skills training. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices fell from 64 per cent in 1998-99 to 33 per cent in 1999-2000. NLTG has taken action to find out why so many learners fail to complete their training, and has taken a number of measures to deal with the problem. It is too early to tell if these measures have resulted in any significant improvement in 2001-02.

61. There are insufficient training resources. NLTG relies on employers to provide training. NLTG trainers provide learners with background knowledge questions and discuss their answers. This helps to improve their understanding, but there are no learning resources such as handouts, textbooks or videos to provide them with a broader knowledge of the industry. Learners' answers to the questions are very narrow and show no depth of knowledge. Some supervisors are insufficiently involved in training learners for their qualification. They have little or no knowledge of the requirements of the NVQ or the key skills awards. There is insufficient assessment and

generation of relevant evidence in the workplace. Supervisors would like to participate more in assessment but have not been given training by NLTG to encourage this. Several employers are unaware that NLTG offers assessor training to the supervisors of learners.

Good Practice

A training officer from NLTG has worked closely with one employer, helping to introduce a new staff review procedure. The employer's new system is based on part of the process used by NLTG for learners. The system has been implemented and is working very well.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 1**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	237	1

62. NLTG offers modern apprenticeships and NVQ training in hospitality and catering to young people in West Yorkshire and the northwest of England. Learners are recruited directly from employers and work in a wide range of establishments including public houses, hotels, restaurants, fast food outlets, coffee shops and wine bars. Learners can join training programmes at any time of the year. There are 205 foundation modern apprentices, mainly on bar service, food preparation and cooking, or quick service programmes. Thirty-two have started since April 2002. There are 23 advanced modern apprentices, and nine learners taking NVQ programmes. Training is provided on the job, although training for some areas such as basic food hygiene can be provided at the NLTG training centre. Learners gather evidence towards key skills units from their workplace, and carry out assignments related to their particular occupational area. Progress reviews take place at least every six weeks. Learners are given an initial occupational assessment before starting their training programme. Induction is given by NLTG training officers in the workplace, and learners are given details of their programme, and the equal opportunities, health and safety and appeals procedures. All assessment takes place in the workplace.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	18		26		6		3		10						
Retained*	2		10		3		2	67	1	10						
Successfully completed	2		7		2		2	67	1	10						
Still in learning	13		9		1		0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	212		173		86		27									
Retained*	14		87		50		19	70								
Successfully completed	10		41		48		19	70								
Still in learning	157		46		2		0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		10		17		26		23							
Retained*	2		6		13	76	8	31	13	57						
Successfully completed	1		6		13	76	8	31	7	30						
Still in learning	8		1		0	0	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- very good training
- highly effective approach to key skills
- excellent support for learners
- excellent monitoring of learners' progress
- wide range of portfolio evidence

WEAKNESSES

- no significant weaknesses

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further develop management of review process

63. There are good rates of retention and achievement in this area of learning. Of the advanced modern apprentices who started programmes in 1998-99, 67 per cent were retained for the planned duration of their programme, and successfully achieved all the targets on their individual learning plans. Of those who started in 1999-2000, 50 per cent were retained, 33 per cent have successfully achieved all the targets on their individual learning plans and 17 per cent are still in learning. Of the foundation modern apprentices who began their programmes in 1998-99, 70 per cent were retained and successfully achieved all the targets on their individual learning plan. Of those who started in 1999-2000, 58 per cent were retained and 56 per cent successfully achieved all the targets on their individual learning plan.

64. Learners receive very good training in good-quality workplaces. The training covers all aspects of the qualification, practical and theoretical. It motivates learners and enhances their experience and depth of knowledge. Training officers make frequent, well-planned visits to the workplace to carry out training and assessment, and review learners' progress. NLTG ensures that each training officer specialises in the area they are assessing. For example, trained chefs only assess food preparation. Extensive knowledge of their own field enables the training officers to give very good and highly effective training. Training officers give frequent on-the-job training sessions, demonstrations, coaching, and feedback to learners on observations of practise sessions. They effectively monitor the pace and quality of learning, and adapt the training to the individual needs of the learner. All training officers have maintained their occupational competence, keeping their professional knowledge up to date by working regularly in local pubs and restaurants. Employers also use this knowledge, and the respect and collaboration between all parties is very high. One employer allows NLTG to use its function room to carry out basic food hygiene courses. All work placements are of good quality, and cover the qualification requirements. Some learners take advantage of this broad range of experience to achieve additional units.

65. NLTG has a highly effective approach to key skills, and excellent achievement rates for key skills awards. Learners begin key skills training from the start of their programme. Key skills training is fully integrated with vocational training, and extremely relevant to the learners' workplace and occupational area. Learners and training officers have excellent knowledge and understanding of key skills. Key skills projects are exceptionally imaginative and interesting, and learners are enthusiastic and eager to complete them. Learners are encouraged to collect a wide range of evidence from their workplace. Employers frequently use data from the key skills projects to help them make management decisions. In some cases, learners have extended their projects to other areas of the business at their managers request. All training officers are working towards the key skills practitioners award. Learners have good access to laptop computers and a wide range of other training resources.

66. NLTG staff and employers provide excellent support for learners. Learners are given a good induction, reinforced by booklets on health and safety, equal opportunities, and the organisation's complaints and appeals procedures. Training officers make frequent visits to learners in their workplaces, and are always available to give advice and support. NLTG gives learners the training officers' mobile and home telephone numbers, and their e-mail addresses, and there are no restrictions on when they may be contacted. Learners value this support, and often telephone for guidance on issues beyond their training programme. Training officers are available to carry out assessments at times which suit learners and their employers. They make additional visits to learners who need extra support, and to those who want to complete their qualification at a faster pace. NLTG continues to support learners who have not completed their training when LSC funding runs out. When learners attend off-the-job training, training officers provide transport to the training centre. Learners are moved to other hotels or restaurants for short periods to widen their experience and learn new skills. Employers help with this, enabling learners to practise new techniques and enhance their training.

67. NLTG's monitoring of learners' progress is excellent. Training officers produce highly effective individual learning plans at the start of learners' programmes. They are updated regularly to reflect learners' circumstances and keep track of their progress. Learners are fully aware of the content of their individual learning plans, and they know exactly what progress they have made. Learners have frequent progress reviews, at which short-term targets are agreed. The targets clearly reflect the individual needs of the learners and their employers. Learners are given lists of tasks to carry out. They record their own targets in detail, along with suitable local information to help them remember and understand what they need to do. Employers are involved in the review process, and learners and employers are given both verbal and written feedback on the progress made. There are weekly meetings of training officers, at which learners' progress is discussed and action is planned to deal with any slow progress. After each workplace visit, the learner's record on the management information system is updated. Learners are given in-house certificates when they achieve each unit of their NVQ.

68. Most internal verification is carried out in the workplace. Internal verifiers observe assessments and check learners' portfolios of evidence. They interview the learners to ensure that they understand the assessment process. Internal verification takes place during, and at the end of, the training programme. The internal verifier gives thorough verbal and written feedback to the assessor, and an action plan is devised. The internal verification co-ordinator moderates the work of the internal verifiers, checking for quality, consistency and judgement, and then gives detailed feedback.

69. There is a diverse range of evidence in learners' portfolios. This includes witness statements, learners' reports and photographs. Evidence from work includes delivery notes, customer surveys, and sales reports. Much of this evidence is generated through key skills projects, which are fully integrated with the learning programmes. The projects are individualised for the learner, their job role, and their place of work. The results are

frequently used to benefit the employer and support further business development. Portfolios are well structured and organised, and learners have a good understanding of them. Each reflects the individual learner, their place of work and job role. NLTG provides learners with resources both for the presentation of evidence and for learning.

Good Practice

Hospitality learners receive a tailor-made guidance list at the start of their programme. It describes situations and tasks that they will come across in the hospitality industry. The list gives examples of the types of evidence that could be collected for achievement of the NVQ.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	25	2

70. There are 25 learners following Life Skills programmes. Learners attend for at least 16 hours each week. Most of the training is provided at one dedicated site. There are four full-time members of staff, including a manager. The centre also uses external training staff to provide motivational and anger management courses. Two full-time staff are qualified to train and assess. External organisations provide outdoor personal development courses, physical education, and specialist support services. Learners are referred by personal advisers from the careers office. Learners visit NLTG and meet the staff, and are then invited for an interview with their personal advisers. There is a one-day induction to the Life Skills programme. This covers learners' rights and responsibilities, health and safety, codes of conduct and equality of opportunity. Personal learning programmes and timetables of learning are agreed with the learners' key workers and personal advisers.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Life Skills	2001-02		2000-01													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	118		78												
Retained*	74		56	72												
Successfully completed	52		56	72												
Still in learning	25		0	0												

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good progress by learners into jobs and further training
- good training
- strong partnerships with external agencies
- good support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- incomplete target-setting
- insufficient basic skills learning programmes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- external accreditation of Life Skills programme
- develop use of documents for individual learning programmes

71. Learners on the Life Skills programme make good progress. Of those leaving training in 2001-02, 56 per cent moved into jobs with training, or further education, or completed all their learning objectives. A further 24 per cent took up jobs without training. Learners gain personal and learning skills, and are motivated to continue learning. Many learners choose this programme as a result of word-of-mouth recommendation. Many have attended other training which has been unsuccessful. Learners make good progress in relation to their previous attainment. They regard the programme very highly and recognise that it has greatly improved their self-confidence and inspired them to make positive changes to their lives.

72. All the training observed was good or better. The training staff have a wealth of experience and qualifications. They provide a range of approaches and training methods and a rich diversity of subjects for learners to choose from when devising their individual learning programmes. However, there is insufficient space on the NLTG's individual learning plans to include full details of the learning activities. Learners appreciate the in-house certificates of course attendance they are given. NLTG is exploring the possibility of external accreditation for Life Skills programmes.

73. The training accommodation for Life Skills learners is spacious and there are good resources. Learners contribute to their environment by helping to decorate it. There are many examples of learners' work on display, individuals' success is celebrated and positive action is reinforced to motivate learners. Learners take a pride in their training centre which provides a positive and productive learning environment.

74. Training staff have strong partnerships with a range of organisations which provide valuable additional training activities and specialist support. This multi-agency approach provides a broader experience for learners, and helps them to deal with personal difficulties. Learners attend courses at a local community centre with people beyond their direct peer group. This helps to increase their confidence, gain new skills and develop independence. There are regular, good-quality service links with personal advisers from the Connexions service throughout learners' time on the Life Skills programme. Contact with a local charitable organisation ensures that learners in need can be given counselling, help in setting up a home, and emergency food parcels. There

are good links with employers who provide work placements. Thirty-nine per cent of learners who entered employment had first done work experience, and 28 per cent were employed by their work experience provider.

75. Learners receive good levels of individual support. When they begin their training, learners often have many difficulties which prevent them from progressing. Learners are allocated to a key worker who co-ordinates their learning, but learners interviewed felt they could approach, and discuss problems with, all the team members. Learners have frequent progress reviews, and personal advisers attend alternate reviews. Learners are given one-to-one advice and guidance on demand. Staff are quick to resolve immediate problems and emergencies by making arrangements with specialist agencies. Staff quickly build learners' self-confidence and motivation. Learners appreciate being treated as equals by the staff, and they benefit greatly from the safe and trusting learning environment. The level of personal support learners receive increases their learning and progress. Learners are placed in appropriate work settings and their attendance pattern is planned to meet their individual needs.

76. Records of learners' progress reviews do not always specify target dates for achievement of the actions agreed. Some records do not refer back to previous reviews to consider the progress made. Some records have insufficiently detailed action plans. In some review records, it appears that issues may not be dealt with for several weeks. Staff respond to, but do not always record, the problems and issues identified. Learners' attendance is recorded but reviews show that many attendance problems remain unresolved for long periods of time.

77. There is insufficient basic skills support. A specialist trainer has recently left NLTG, and this has left a gap in the specialist basic skills support. No other team member has specialist knowledge or qualifications, although they provide informal coaching. Two new members of staff have been recruited and are due to start very soon. All learners have an initial assessment of their basic skills. Many have identified basic skills support needs and have not received formal education for long periods of time, often due to exclusion from school. None of the learners' files examined contained individual learning plans for basic skills support. Some test results had not been analysed to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. The results of basic skills tests are not recorded on individual learning plans or passed on to learners. These weaknesses have been identified by the training manager, and are being dealt with.

Good Practice

At the start of the Life Skills programme, learners are issued with a card allowing them to make free telephone calls to NLTC. This ensures that if they are absent or sick they can stay in touch at no expense to themselves.

Events such as snooker competitions are organised by the learners. These help to improve key skills levels and raise money for the charities used by learners. These experiences are used systematically to develop good levels of key skills in number and communication, and improve learners' motivation.