

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Paignton Sec Info Tech Training Centre Limited**

**14 October 2002**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

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

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

## 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

Paignton Sec Info Tech Training Centre Limited is a private training provider in Paignton, Devon. It has one administrative centre which is also its head office. Paignton Sec Info Tech provides training in work-based learning for young people, New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, and New Deal for lone parents. Thirty-five learners are on training programmes in business administration. One is on an information technology training programme and 27 learners are on information technology-related short courses. Three learners are on customer services national vocational qualifications (NVQs). This area was not inspected because of the low number of learners.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, leadership and management are satisfactory, as is equal opportunities. Quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. Work-based learning in business administration is satisfactory. The information and communications technology training is good.

### GRADES

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2
Other government-funded provision	None

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

- particularly effective leadership
- particularly good staff development
- responsiveness to individual training needs
- excellent support for learners
- good achievement rates

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- inadequate involvement of employers in training and assessment

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better recording of meetings and monitoring of action points
- more challenging targets for a small number of learners

## THE INSPECTION

1. Five inspectors spent a total of 19 days with Paignton Sec Info Tech Training Limited (PSIT) in October 2002. Inspectors examined a range of documents including Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contracts, the company's business plan and related policies and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and quality assurance documents, staff training plans and materials, minutes of meetings, staff training records and achievement data. Inspectors carried out 32 interviews with learners and 27 interviews with PSIT's staff. They visited and interviewed eight employers' supervisors. Inspectors observed and graded four learning sessions. They examined 13 portfolios of evidence and 31 individual learning plans. Inspectors studied PSIT's current self-assessment report and associated development plan which were written in September 2002. The first self-assessment report was written in July 2001.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Information & communications technology	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. PSIT is a privately owned company, limited by guarantee. It was established in 1964 as a private college for secretarial training. It moved to its current premises in Paignton in 1988 and is managed by two directors, who own the company. PSIT employs nine staff, one of whom is on long-term sick leave. Four staff are part time and eight staff are directly involved with training. PSIT is accredited as an Investor in People. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

3. PSIT provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in business administration and customer services and short job-focused training (SJFT) in information technology (IT). It also provides short IT courses and single-subject qualifications. Twenty-six learners are currently working towards foundation modern apprenticeships in business administration, eight are advanced modern apprentices in business administration, one learner is working towards an NVQ at level 4 in administration. One learner is a foundation modern apprentice in IT and three learners are on advanced modern apprenticeships in customer services. There are 28 clients in IT training, including one foundation modern apprentice and two lone parents. Customer services training was not inspected, as there were too few learners in this area, but it is included in the leadership and management section of the report. The training is funded through Devon and Cornwall LSC.

4. PSIT provides training and assessment in Torbay and in the Paignton and Torquay areas. The economy of the district is dominated by the tourism, public administration and health sectors, which account for around two-thirds of all employment. In April 2002, the rate of unemployment in Torbay was 4.6 per cent, compared with 2.1 per cent in the southwest and 3.1 per cent nationally. Torbay's minority ethnic communities represent 0.7 per cent of the population, compared with 1.4 per cent in the southwest and 6.2 per cent nationally. In 2001, 52 per cent of school leavers in Torbay achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.



### **Work-based learning for young people**

5. Employed learners have good work placements and employers are supportive. Achievement and retention rates on training programmes are good. Despite a good understanding of equality of opportunity, PSIT does not promote equality of opportunity effectively. Marketing materials do not mention equality of opportunity and some discrimination in the workplace is not challenged. Employers are not sufficiently involved in learners' training and assessment. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete and do not promote continuous improvement. Leadership and management are strong, but informal and there is no recording of meetings and progress towards action points. Learners are not set sufficient targets to ensure progress. The self-assessment report was written by the principal and shared with staff. Neither learners nor employers contributed to the self-assessment process.

### **New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults**

6. The proportion of clients gaining jobs after training is good. Retention rates are satisfactory. Clients are well supported in their training programmes. There is a wide variety of appropriate courses for clients. Most teaching is satisfactory, trainers are technically knowledgeable and provide good support to clients. There is a shortage of work placements, less than 25 per cent of clients are placed.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

7. PSIT is a family business, owned by the two directors who are responsible for the overall management and development of the company. They act as principal and vice principal and are closely involved in the day-to-day running of PSIT, as managers and practitioners. PSIT employs nine staff, four of whom are part time. One member of staff is on long-term sick leave. The principal manages the training programmes and is also an internal verifier. She has the appropriate assessor and internal verification qualifications. The other assessors have, or are working towards, internal verification qualifications. PSIT has an equal opportunities policy and a general quality assurance policy. The first self-assessment report was written in 2001, the most recent in September 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- particularly effective leadership
- particularly good staff development
- good response to individual training needs

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of meetings and monitoring of action points
- better use of business planning as a business improvement tool
- more coherent management information system

8. Leadership within PSIT is extremely effective. The staff work closely as a team. Internal communications are good. There are weekly staff meetings and informal meetings are encouraged. Directors communicate with staff and learners. All staff are committed and enthusiastic. There is strong promotion and encouragement of staff development. The organisation is very responsive to staff and learners which encourages both groups to achieve objectives within their occupational areas. All staff understand that the learner is their main concern.

9. Staff development is particularly good. There is a formal annual appraisal system which leads to a detailed training action plan, including evaluation dates. Training is planned to meet business needs and takes into account the staff member's personal development and ambitions. Formal evaluation of training is carried out. Training and development opportunities are purchased from a good range of accredited sources. Any additional training needs are identified effectively through informal discussions. In-

house training is available to all staff. Development issues are covered in weekly staff meetings. All staff make significant progress. The company was re-accredited as an Investor in People in May 2001.

10. Management processes are informal, and management, staff and training provision are well integrated. Management systems are generally satisfactory. However, formal meetings are not adequately recorded. The minutes do not allow managers to monitor action points easily.

11. PSIT devises an annual business plan. This year it produced a development plan in September 2002 from the self-assessment report. It is detailed and clearly sets out targets, timescales, responsibilities, evaluation criteria and resource implications. Staff are consulted. It sets out the actions required to meet identified business development needs. But it is not a working document and does not deal with strategic objectives or operational targets. Business planning is not used effectively to improve the business.

12. PSIT's premises are satisfactory and have been extended during the past year. PSIT provides 50 desktop computers with a good range of software. The management information system comprises four separate databases. These are satisfactory for the PSIT's basic data requirements, but the management information system is not coherent enough to be an effective management tool.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 3**

13. PSIT has an equal opportunities policy which is regularly updated and which all staff and learners are aware of. At induction, learners are informed of PSIT's disciplinary procedure and the equal opportunities policy, and where to find these documents. They are required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the policy. Grievance or anti-harassment problems are also discussed, but PSIT has no written procedures. Employers are offered assistance with writing equality of opportunity policies for their own workplaces, or they may use PSIT's policy.

14. Equal opportunities is monitored sufficiently at learners' progress reviews. PSIT responds quickly to learners' barriers to learning or progress. Assessors visit learners in the workplace or at home, often outside working hours, to agree action plans for learners whose training has been disrupted. Learners receive effective help to ensure that they maintain their training. Training programmes are sufficiently flexible to ensure that learners can continue to progress towards their qualifications.

15. PSIT aims to widen access to include learners from different groups. Learners can attend part time, or full time. All learners can study for additional qualifications or work towards units of the business administration, customer services or IT training programmes, whether or not PSIT receives government funding for the learner. PSIT has successfully recruited three men to its business administration training programme.

16. PSIT has access for people with restricted mobility to its ground floor rooms. There are ramps for wheelchair access into the new IT classroom. Toilets for disabled people and the student restroom are on the ground floor.

17. Management and staff are supportive and sensitive to learners. However, there is no formal equal opportunities training for staff. There is insufficient equal opportunities training at induction. Learners' day-to-day work experience does not equip them to understand the potential problems in a workplace with a broader range of people.

18. PSIT does not promote equality of opportunity sufficiently. Although it encourages equality of opportunity internally, its marketing materials do not promote equality of opportunity in recruitment. PSIT routinely collects data on the recruitment of under-represented groups, but does not analyse trends. Learners' and employers' views on equality of opportunity are monitored through an annual questionnaire. The data are analysed but this does not significantly affect recruitment or development practice. PSIT does not plan to target under-represented groups when recruiting learners.

19. Eighty-three per cent of learners reported that bullying and harassment may be a problem with employers, and that employers need more training in equality of opportunity. Discrimination in one workplace was not challenged effectively by PSIT. Only one of PSIT's learners is from a minority ethnic group, but there is a good gender balance.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 4

20. There is no overall quality assurance system. PSIT's quality assurance policy merely outlines some general aims, but does not detail sufficiently how these will be achieved. There are no working quality assurance procedures or manuals for staff. Staff do not fully understand the need for quality assurance. In addition, most staff do not fully understand the existing quality assurance processes. The quality assurance systems are not adequate to support overall quality assurance.

21. There are some processes to ensure the quality of training. Staff set high personal standards for the individual support they provide to learners. Staff carry out informal monitoring of learners' progress through regular discussions. Staff monitor contractual targets set by the LSC and Jobcentre Plus at monthly meetings. Poor retention rates on modern apprenticeships are identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. PSIT is taking action to improve them. For example, more attention is paid to recruiting and selecting learners. Training plans are audited every three months using a basic checklist to ensure that forms are filled in correctly. Most of the monitoring carried out is not recorded.

22. Feedback is only gathered from staff informally. Feedback from learners and employers is collected annually through questionnaires and is analysed. Problems are discussed and follow-up action is planned. Jobcentre Plus holds focus groups every quarter, and follows up the main problems. For example, a request for changes to the individual learning plans was organised and introduced within days.

23. Informal observations of training are carried out and some useful feedback is given to trainers. However, there is no formal monitoring of training. In addition, there are no consistent criteria used to assess teaching and learning. Different managers use different criteria to judge training. Main aspects of the teaching and learning process, such as planning and assessment, are often overlooked.

24. There are internal verification systems and procedures. However, they are not routinely complied with. The internal verification process identifies problems, but they are not followed up effectively. There is also insufficient planning of internal verification. These weaknesses in internal verification were not identified in the self-assessment report.

25. Quality assurance processes are not systematically checked or evaluated. It is not clear how they are meant to link together to ensure the quality of training provision, or to contribute to PSIT's strategic planning and development. There are some significant gaps in the quality assurance of the training process. There are few clearly defined procedures for the recruitment, selection, and induction of staff and learners, initial assessment, individual learning plans, progress reviews and exit procedures. The emphasis on informality and on meeting learners' needs does work to some extent in this small organisation. However, there are insufficient formal quality assurance procedures and processes to maintain and improve the training provision.

26. The self-assessment process is not good, and is not integrated within a quality assurance framework. PSIT's most recent self-assessment report answers the six questions for each occupational area in the 'Common Inspection Framework'. A grade is given for each of these, but no single grade is given for the occupational area as a whole. The principal confirmed the overall grades. Managers wrote the self-assessment report. Staff discussed draft self-assessment reports at staff meetings, they are not sufficiently involved in the self assessment process. Staff do not understand the purpose of self-assessment fully. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses which were not included in the self-assessment report. A useful development plan exists, which currently forms the basis of the business plan. It deals with the main problems which were identified in the self-assessment report, but the development plan is not effectively monitored and evaluated.

#### Good Practice

*PSIT managers and staff respond quickly to unexpected barriers to learning. A single mother needed to take a break from studies over the summer to care for her child. PSIT immediately visited the learner at home to agree a revised training programme to start in August. Another learner is trying to establish a courier business. PSIT allows him to accept any courier jobs and catch up on his studies when mutually convenient. A third learner fell ill and PSIT rearranged her training programme around her hospital appointments and provided additional support.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	35	3

27. PSIT provides training in the business administration NVQ at level 2, 3 and, occasionally, at level 4 for 35 learners. Eight are advanced modern apprentices and 26 are foundation modern apprentices. One learner is working for the administration NVQ. All learners, except one, are also working towards key skills qualifications. The planned length of the training programme is 18 months for advanced modern apprentices and 12 months for foundation modern apprentices. Learners are referred by employers, Connexions, or by word of mouth. A wide variety of employers provide training for learners, including the district council, firms of solicitors, small manufacturing companies, and a local health centre. Learners have a comprehensive interview, including initial assessment, before joining the training programme and, once accepted, are given an induction to the training programme requirements and PSIT's policies. Training and assessment for business administration is provided by three PSIT staff. Two members of this team are also responsible for internal verification. Off-the-job training is provided at PSIT. Thirty-three of the 35 learners are employed and two are on work placements. Learners have progress reviews in the workplace every nine weeks.

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									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		10		9		3									
Retained*	0		6		7	78	3	100								
Successfully completed	0		4		6	67	3	100								
Still in learning	6		2		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									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	26		5		7		2									
Retained*	0		2		5	71	1	50								
Successfully completed	0		1		4	57	1	50								
Still in learning	24		2		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																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4				1		4									
Retained*	3				1	100	4	100								
Successfully completed	3				1	100	4	100								
Still in learning	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

- excellent support for learners
- good work placements
- good achievement and retention rates

## WEAKNESSES

- inadequate involvement of employers in training and assessment
- some ineffective internal verification procedures
- slow progress in key skills training and assessment for some learners

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more challenging short-term targets for some learners

28. There is frequent and effective support for learners. The self-assessment report also



identified this as a strength. Assessors visit learners in the workplace every two weeks, or more frequently if required, to encourage and support them. In addition, learners have formal progress reviews every nine weeks. Any problems are identified and dealt with early. Learners have the assessors' mobile telephone numbers and can call them at any time for advice. Most learners value this support, which is one of the main factors motivating them. Most learners also value the off-the-job training which is available most days and evenings. Enthusiastic and qualified trainers use off-the-job training sessions to encourage learners to develop new skills. If learners cannot attend these training sessions, or need more individual support, tutors provide individual coaching in the workplace. Assessors negotiate short-term targets with learners which are linked to the NVQ requirements. Assessors set tasks for learners to complete between assessors' visits. The tasks are clearly recorded, and learners have copies of the paperwork. A few of the more able learners are not set sufficiently challenging short-term targets.

29. Learners are employed in good work placements. They can acquire and demonstrate a variety of appropriate business administration skills in their work placements. Most learners can gain the skills required for their NVQ in their work placement. If they cannot, staff arrange alternative opportunities at PSIT's premises.

30. Achievement rates are good. The achievement rate in the advanced modern apprenticeships is good, although it has declined from 100 per cent in 1998-99 to 67 per cent in 1999-2000. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices are also good and range from 50 per cent in 1998-99 to 57 per cent in 1999-2000. Retention rates are good. Data show that on average, between 1998 and 2000, 60 per cent of foundation modern apprentices and 89 per cent of advanced modern apprentices completed their training programmes. The self-assessment report partly identified this strength.

31. Employers are not sufficiently involved in training and assessment. Most employers are supportive of learners, but do not contribute sufficiently towards the NVQ training. Many employers allow learners to take additional qualifications on day release, but most do not understand the NVQ requirements sufficiently to help learners progress effectively at work. Some employers would like an employers' induction pack. Learners have frequent progress reviews in the workplace, but employers are not sufficiently involved. PSIT's management has recently identified this as a weakness and have started to rectify the situation.

32. Internal verification procedures are not effective. Staff do not understand them fully and the procedures are not adequately enforced. PSIT has had some problems and has not kept to its internal verification schedule. There is currently no long-term sampling plan and internal verification has not been effective recently. For example, assessors who are new to the job have not been observed, and between June and November 2002, the plan for internal verification was inadequate. Internal verifiers question learners' understanding of the NVQ and assessment. But the answers to the assessment questions are not linked to individual assessors and so cannot be used as feedback to the assessor. Standardisation workshops also identified some inconsistencies in

assessment practice, but these were not followed up. The self-assessment report did not identify this weakness.

33. Some learners make slow progress in key skills training and assessment. A number have been on the training programme for six months and have not started their key skills training. Other learners, who have been in training for about the same period, have concentrated solely on the key skills examinations and have not completed their portfolios of evidence. A few learners have been entered for key skills examinations without being adequately prepared. Some do not understand the key skills requirements. The self-assessment report did not identify this weakness. Many learners have been offered the opportunity to extend their key skills beyond the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework.

**Information & communications technology****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	1	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	24	2
Other government-funded provision	2	None

34. PSIT offers information and communications technology (ICT) training to adults and young people who are working towards a basic computer literacy qualification at levels 1 and 2. There are 24 clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. There is one client each on the New Deal 18-24 and one foundation modern apprentice. There are two clients on the New Deal for lone parents. Learners work with a variety of computer programmes and applications. All learners have the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications. Most are referred to PSIT by Jobcentre Plus. Learners may start their training programmes at any time of the year. All applicants are interviewed by the principal and have an initial assessment, and their skills, aptitudes and attitudes to learning are assessed. Learners who are judged likely to benefit from training are accepted and have an induction in their first two weeks. This includes basic health and safety, equal opportunities, complaints and grievance procedures, an induction to their IT training programme, and an explanation of payment. All learners are assigned a tutor who acts as their mentor throughout their training. Most learners attend for 30 hours a week, over five days. Some learners, such as those who are carers, only attend for 16 hours a week. They can choose to attend morning or afternoon training sessions. Learners' study in classrooms, with individual help from a tutor. There are also occasional group classroom training sessions. Four of the longer occupational training (LOT) clients and the modern apprentices are on work placements. All learners at the training centre have half a day of jobsearch. Additional individual jobsearch support is also available. Clients on Jobcentre Plus training programmes are reviewed weekly for the first four weeks, then every four weeks.

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

<b>New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults</b>										
<b>New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults</b>										
	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		70		11					
Retained*	0	0	45	64	10	91				
Planned learning completed	0	0	45	64	10	91				
Gained job	4	36	24	34	2	18				
Still in training	6	55	18	26	0	0				

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

<b>New Deal 18-24</b>										
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>										
	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		19		1				4	
Retained*	0	0	14	74	1	100			2	50
Planned learning completed	0	0	14	74	1	100			2	50
Gained job	0	0	10	53	1	100			2	50
Still in training	1	50	0	0	0	0			0	0

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

## STRENGTHS

- good achievement rate
- wide range of appropriate courses to meet the needs of learners and employers
- good training support for learners
- good use of assessment

## WEAKNESSES

- insufficient short-term target-setting
- insufficient work placements

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more availability of manual, workbooks and reference materials to all learners
- more reinforcement of jobsearch

35. A good proportion of learners gain jobs. Fifty per cent of clients on New Deal for lone parents and 46 per cent of other adults on Jobcentre Plus programmes gained employment in 2001-02. So far this year, 36 per cent of learners have gained a job on leaving. Jobcentre figures show 58 per cent of learners in 2000-01 and 61 per cent in 2001-02 gained jobs. Eighty per cent of clients on Jobcentre Plus training programmes have gained at least one recognised qualification. Retention rates are satisfactory, at 91 per cent overall for the past year, for adults on Jobcentre Plus programmes. For 2001-02, 86 per cent of learners were retained.

36. A wide range of courses is available, covering all the common desktop programs, such as how to use the Internet effectively, website design and creation, computerised accounts and payroll, and desktop publishing using the most common packages. The ratio of learners to tutors in classrooms is satisfactory. Computer hardware is satisfactory, but some do not have Internet access. Technically competent staff provide support. Most teaching is satisfactory. There is a variety of good manuals and workbooks, but some learners are not aware that they are available. Learning is a positive experience for most learners, they develop good, practical ICT skills. They also develop good work habits of punctuality, attendance and concentration, which are valuable to employers.

37. Mentors develop good working relationships with learners, and provide good advice on the various courses, and job applications. Punctuality and attendance is monitored and any problems are dealt with effectively. All staff provide good pastoral support which is valued by learners. Tutors review learners' progress frequently, in line with contract requirements. However, progress reviews are not recorded adequately, and tutors do not pay sufficient attention to jobsearch and personal development. Many learners continue their learning with tutors' support after their funding ends. The classrooms are open all day and in the evening, so that learners can have access to tutors' support. Tutors discuss learners' progress at monthly team meetings and co-ordinate support, but do not record or document this.

38. Jobsearch support is provided by a part-time member of staff. It is effective and valued by learners. When learners begin jobsearch, the tutor provides individual sessions for them, to prepare their curriculum vitae, write application letters and identify their strengths. One learner, who had not worked for many years, said that the tutor had been particularly effective in helping her to identify valuable employment skills. However, procedures to record jobsearch activity, and to ensure that all learners carry out jobsearch are inadequate. A few learners do not make frequent contact with the

jobsearch tutor.

39. Initial assessment is effective. Tutors make good use of the assessment. Staff accurately identify learners' attitudes, potential, and ambitions at selection interviews. Interviewers emphasise the need to focus on jobs and qualifications. Most learners attend a one-day taster session to try different learning areas and levels of learning. Tutors use sample examination questions effectively to assess learners' aptitudes, willingness to learn, and their current skills. Induction is satisfactory and emphasises achievement. It includes a good assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Staff discuss the results with learners, and help them to choose an appropriate course. Learners with poor skills for life are assessed again. During their courses, learners complete sample examination papers. These are marked and tutors give learners clear written feedback. The results are used by learners and tutors when deciding which examinations to take. Learners use past papers to measure their progress and to choose their target qualifications. Most learners make appropriate choices, and 80 per cent of them gain a qualification. However, about 6.25 per cent of learners fail several exams.

40. Individual learning plans do not have intermediate targets. There is no plan showing what learning will take place, in what order. In one class, three out of four learners had been given insufficient advice about the content of their learning programmes. There is not enough target-setting for IT learning, jobsearch and personal development at progress reviews.

41. Although work experience is an integral part of these training programmes, many clients do not attend work placements or job tasters. On the LOT programme, only four of the 18 learners are in work placements. Learners on work placements make a significant contribution to the employers, and develop confidence, and work skills. Their employability is increased significantly. However, this opportunity is not available to many learners.

#### Good Practice

*One learner on work placement with a general practitioner, used her database skills to create and implement a stock control application. This saved the practice both time and money. As a result, the learner got a job elsewhere, on the practice manager's recommendation, and the supervisor used the learner's system to help define her requirements for a commercial stock control system.*

#### Poor Practice

*A learner with dyslexia had alerted staff to her particular needs. She was not receiving the extra support she needed. The tutor was unaware of what type of extra support would be appropriate.*