

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Introtrain and Forum Limited**

**11 November 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

Introtrain and Forum Limited is a private limited company. Introtrain was established in 1988 and changed its name to Introtrain and Forum Limited in 2001. It is based in Cowley, Oxfordshire. The company provides work-based learning for young people in retailing, customer service and transportation, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. There were too few learners in retailing, customer service and transportation for this area to be inspected. There are currently 115 learners on work-based learning programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

## GRADES

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

Hairdressing & beauty therapy	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

## KEY STRENGTHS

- effective internal communications
- good flexible training arrangement to promote participation in learning
- good individual teaching
- good individual learner support

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient use of data to monitor equal opportunities
- inadequate staff training in equal opportunities
- inadequate monitoring of the development plan
- weak monitoring of training
- poor retention and achievement rates
- ineffective progress reviews

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better staff appraisal and development
- better promotion of equal opportunities
- more effective collecting of learner feedback
- more effective teaching strategies

## THE INSPECTION

1. Four inspectors spent a total of 15 days at Introtrain and Forum Limited in November 2002. They interviewed 30 learners and 16 staff. They visited 12 work placements and interviewed 10 employers and workplace supervisors. Inspectors observed and graded eight learning sessions. They also examined a range of documents, including learners' portfolios and files, individual learning plans, business plans, policies and procedures, management information, and reports from awarding bodies. Inspectors also studied the self-assessment report, which was produced in August 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Introtrain and Forum Limited is a private limited company. Introtrain was established in 1988 and changed its name to Introtrain and Forum Limited in 2001. It is based in Cowley, Oxfordshire. The company employs six full-time staff. Training programmes are funded through contracts with the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Introtrain and Forum Limited currently provides training for 119 learners, who are training as advanced modern apprentices, foundation modern apprentices or for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1, 2 and 3. All learners are employed in organisations in Oxfordshire. Staff provide off-the-job training and assessment in hairdressing and key skills. Other training and assessments are carried out on the job. There are 115 learners on work-based learning programmes in hairdressing. The remaining occupational areas had too few learners to be inspected.

3. The major employers in the area are service industries, including banking, finance and insurance. The unemployment rate in Oxfordshire was 1 per cent in April 2002, compared with the national average of 3.1 per cent. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic groups is 3.3 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. The proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 49.7 per cent in 2001, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

### Work-based learning for young people

4. Retention and achievement rates are poor. For example, the retention rate for modern apprenticeship training programmes between 1999-2002 is 16 per cent. For learners on other work-based learning programmes for the same period, the retention rate is 10 per cent.

5. There is good teaching provided to learners in groups, pairs, and as individuals. Individual learner support is good and learners are able to discuss confidently personal issues with staff. Progress reviews are ineffective and do not monitor learners' progress or achievements. Some practical skills are not developed adequately by learners during off-the-job training.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 4**

6. Introtrain and Forum Limited is a private limited company. Introtrain was established in 1988 and changed its name to Introtrain and Forum Limited in 2001. The company is managed by two directors. The managing director is responsible for the provision of training and for equal opportunities and quality assurance. The finance director is responsible for financial matters and company administration. The company employs five full-time staff, four of whom provide training and assessment in hairdressing and key skills. The fifth member of staff is the training co-ordinator responsible for administration and the management information systems. Introtrain and Forum Limited has an equal opportunities policy and procedures for quality assurance. The company produced two self-assessment reports as Introtrain, in 1998 and 2000. Introtrain and Forum Limited produced its first self-assessment report in August 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- effective internal communications
- good, flexible training arrangements to promote participation in learning

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient use of data to monitor equal opportunities
- inadequate staff training in equal opportunities
- inadequate monitoring of the development plan
- weak monitoring of training

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better staff appraisal and development
- better promotion of equal opportunities
- more effective collecting of learner feedback

7. Internal communications are effective, a strength acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The managing director works effectively with the training and administrative staff. There are effective ongoing informal discussions on relevant issues between staff and managers. Staff meetings are held monthly or more often if necessary. Assessor meetings and internal verification meetings are also held monthly. Meetings have a specific focus rather than a formal agenda and staff are able to contribute items for discussion and development. Minutes are taken of all formal staff meetings. Many minutes contain action points linked to a member of staff. These action points are monitored at subsequent meetings and checked to ensure they are completed.

8. Insufficient use is made of management information. Information on learners is collected, such as the number of starts in a particular period, training programmes being followed, achievements, and the identification of learners leaving training. Targets for retention and achievement were set in the company's 2002-03 business plan.

Management information was not used, however, to set these targets. The data collected by the organisation are not analysed effectively to produce management information for the company's development planning and target-setting. There is no monitoring of trends or patterns. Many management decisions are based on day-to-day operational considerations rather than the effective use of management information.

9. Each member of staff is appraised annually by the managing director. Progress has been made towards developing a more effective staff appraisal system which links with the development plan. A standardised staff appraisal form is now used. Staff assess themselves against listed criteria in the appraisal form. This self-assessment is discussed with the managing director and a final grading agreed. Individual staff development needs in hairdressing and counselling are identified and transferred to the company's staff development plan. There has been no formal staff development relating to the improvement of teaching and learning.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 3**

10. Introtrain and Forum Limited has written equal opportunities policies and procedures, including arrangements for dealing with harassment, appeals and complaints. These meet legal and contractual requirements. The policies and procedures have been reviewed and amended to reflect legislation changes. At induction, learners are given copies of equal opportunities policy documents. The policy documents are also issued to employers and assessors. Agreements with employers emphasise the commitment of Introtrain and Forum Limited to equality of opportunity, and outline the employers' responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities. The training centre is not accessible for learners who have mobility problems, although appropriate arrangements can be made to provide training on an individual basis. Most employers have satisfactory arrangements to provide access for learners with mobility problems.

11. There are good flexible training arrangements to promote participation in learning, and enable learners to complete their programmes at different rates, according to their individual needs and abilities. This was acknowledged as a strength in the company's self-assessment report. Learners can start a training programme at any time of the year. Most learners start in the late summer and are placed into groups for off-the-job training. Learners starting later in the year are provided with an individual induction and are given effective individual support to catch up on missed work. These learners also usually join a group for off-the-job training. There are flexible attendance patterns for off-the-job training according to employers' and learners' needs. There are good learning resources to support off-the-job training. These resources are used by learners as self-study materials. Good individual support is provided to help learners to complete these materials, both at the training provider's premises and in the workplace.

12. There is insufficient use of data to monitor equal opportunities. Data are collected about learners' age, gender, ethnicity and whether or not they have a disability. The data are not used to identify trends or patterns, or to analyse recruitment, learner progress or their achievements. Data are not used to influence recruitment policies and no targets are set to improve the recruitment and progression of under-represented groups.

13. There is inadequate staff training in equal opportunities. Equality of opportunity is not discussed during induction for new staff. There has been no recent staff training in equal opportunities. Training in equal opportunities is not included in the staff development programme. Most staff have a satisfactory awareness of equal opportunities.

14. All learners have an induction to Introtrain and Forum Limited, which includes some satisfactory training in equal opportunities. There is some reinforcement of equal opportunities following induction. Most progress reviews include reference to equality of opportunity and reinforce the complaints and appeals procedures. Most learners have a satisfactory awareness of equal opportunities, but some do not fully understand their rights and responsibilities. Staff make regular visits to employers' premises to provide additional training, assessment and progress reviews. There is informal monitoring of

#### INTROTRAIN AND FORUM LIMITED

equal opportunities issues during these visits. Equality of opportunity is not a standing agenda item at meetings, but issues relating to marketing and the appeals and complaints procedures are discussed. Some good equal opportunities resources have been issued to employers. There are satisfactory appeals and complaints procedures.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 4**

15. There is inadequate monitoring of the development plan. Staff are involved in the company's self-assessment process from which the development plan is produced. There is also a staff development plan, which has been produced using information from the staff appraisal system. Some aspects of the development plan have been reviewed during monthly staff meetings. There is no systematic procedure for the regular monitoring, review and updating of the development plan. Progress towards achievement of the aims set out in the development plan is not checked on a regular basis. There have been no amendments to the current development plan.

16. The monitoring of training is weak. There is a detailed administrative manual containing effective procedures for ensuring compliance with the funding contracts. Checks are made by staff to ensure that required procedures are followed accurately. However, there are weak arrangements to quality assure the training. There is no quality assurance policy. There are no formal quality assurance procedures to monitor on- and off-the-job training. For example, there is no system for observing teaching and learning, and no pre-planned observation schedule. Informal observation occurs and this is often accompanied by verbal feedback. Written feedback is not given to tutors when sessions are observed. Tutors also assess their own teaching sessions and complete lesson evaluation sheets. There is no accurate management information to support continuous improvement. There are satisfactory arrangements for assessment and internal verification.

17. Detailed questionnaires are issued to learners on a regular basis. These include surveys relating to the induction and review processes, and learner satisfaction while in training and upon completion. Some of this information has been used in the self-assessment process. Employers and clients complete feedback questionnaires during off-the-job practical activities. Feedback is collated and analysed and a report is produced on the results. The content of questionnaires is not always appropriate to effectively analyse learners' views. Some reports do not provide good information to improve the training programmes.

18. Staff are well informed about the purpose of self-assessment and about the self-assessment process. Staff were involved in the identification of the company's strengths and weaknesses, and the subsequent preparation of the development plan. Introtrain and Forum Limited produced its first self-assessment report in August 2002. The report is well structured and identifies some of the main strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors found some of the strengths to be no more than normal practice and identified additional weaknesses. Inspectors gave lower grades than those in the self-assessment report.

### Good Practice

*One learner, who was anxious about travelling away from her home area, was given individual workplace training by her employer. Flexible learning packs, produced by Introtrain and Forum Limited, were also provided. There were frequent visits to her workplace by training provider staff to offer additional support and help with the training programme.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hairdressing & beauty therapy

**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	115	4

19. There are 115 learners on work-based learning programmes in hairdressing. Of these, there are 23 advanced modern apprentices, 87 foundation modern apprentices, and five learners on other work-based learning programmes. All learners are employed in local hairdressing salons. Learners are recruited through the careers service, from hairdressing salons and by direct application. All learners have an initial assessment, which includes a literacy and numeracy test, and an industry-based initial assessment. Some learners who have difficulties completing the assessments, carry out a basic skills test. Results are used to determine the most appropriate training programme for each learner and any additional support. Most learners join the training programme in the late summer, although entry is possible at any time. A one-day induction takes place in the training centre. This includes an introduction to the modern apprenticeship framework, and a health and safety and equal opportunities briefing. Off-the-job training is carried out at the training centre. The training centre includes a classroom and a hairdressing training salon. There are five trainers, including two recently employed staff who are still undergoing their training and induction period. Learners attend the training centre for one day each week, or less frequently, depending on individual arrangements with their salons. Most employers provide additional workplace training. Open learning resources are available for each of the NVQ units studied. Assessment is carried out in the training centre and salons. There are 16 work-based assessors. Introtrain and Forum Limited has three peripatetic assessors who visit those learners with no work-based assessor. There are three internal verifiers, one of whom also acts as the internal verification co-ordinator. Key skills training and assessment are carried out on and off the job. Information technology (IT) workshops are also provided.

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)														
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		26		28		74		56		30			
Retained*	0		0		8		16	22	13	23	7	23		
Successfully completed	0		0		6		6	8	10	16	5	17		
Still in learning	2		19		2		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

Work-based learning for young people														
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)														
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	31		47		33		1							
Retained*	0		0		9		1	100						
Successfully completed	0		0		9		1	100						
Still in learning	29		42		16		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														
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			11		9		10		17		39			
Retained*			1		2		0	0	4	24	7	18		
Successfully completed			1		2		0	0	4	24	6	15		
Still in learning			4		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 individual teaching
- good individual learner support



## WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- ineffective progress reviews
- some inadequate development of practical skills in off-the-job training

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more effective teaching strategies

20. There is good individual teaching. Training is carried out in small groups, pairs and individual sessions. Learners are able to agree a pattern of attendance that best suits the needs of their workplace and their own individual circumstances. Most learners receive teaching in groups and on an individual basis. Trainers clearly explain all aspects of information. Learners acquire relevant theory knowledge. There is good reference to commercial practice and examples are provided to aid understanding. Learners are encouraged to discuss topics and to provide each other with mutual support. Learning is checked regularly through questioning and other reinforcement activities. There is a clear structure to learning sessions. Lesson plans show a good level of detail, although the planned objectives are not always achieved. All employers are given a copy of the training provider's training schedule. This information helps them to plan their own salon training. There is effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

21. There is good individual learner support. Learners are able to discuss confidently personal issues with staff. Effective relevant support is provided. There are good working relationships between trainers and learners. Learners are able to visit the training centre, or contact their trainer out of normal working hours, for additional guidance and support. There is good access to assessors to carry out work-based assessment. Assessment is carried out according to the needs of the learners. Learners receive frequent tutorial guidance. Most employers demonstrate a high level of commitment to training. Portfolios of evidence are clearly indexed and referenced. They are well structured with appropriate examples of evidence. There is a good key skills assignment, which is based on starting a hairdressing business.

22. There are poor retention and achievement rates. For the period 1999-2002, the retention rate on modern apprenticeship programmes is 16 per cent. On NVQ training programmes over the same period, the retention rate is 10 per cent. There are five learners still on NVQ training programmes. The achievement rate for modern apprenticeship frameworks between 1999-2002 is 11 per cent. However, 79 modern apprentices are still in training. On the NVQ training programmes, the achievement rate is 10 per cent. There is evidence that retention rates have improved over the past two years. Of the 117 learners who have started on their programmes since August 2001, 96 are still in learning.

23. Progress reviews are ineffective. Reviews do not monitor learner progress towards achievement of NVQs or the modern apprenticeship frameworks. Progress reviews include some targets, but these are not clearly measurable. Many targets are insufficiently challenging and do not help learners achieve their individual learning plans. Several documents are used to help identify further development, but these are not used to inform learners of their planned goals. When learners complete assessments this information is recorded centrally and trainers are aware of the slow progress made by some learners. However, this has not led to improvements in the review process. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace in accordance with contract requirements, but employers are not always formally involved in the review process. Comments made by the reviewer, employers and learners do not focus on future actions. Learners are issued with a copy of the progress reviews, but most employers do not receive a copy. For some learners there have been several months between their achievement of their NVQ at level 2 and the targets being set and recorded for them to begin progress towards their NVQ at level 3.

24. Some practical skills are not developed adequately by learners during off-the-job training. There is a shortage of clients in the practical sessions and learners work on artificial training heads for long periods of time throughout most of the sessions. Although many learners have satisfactory access to clients in their salons, some learners do not. Some learners do not carry out sufficient work for assessment. The training provider has recruited some clients for learners to work on, but this is still not adequate. Learners are often not corrected when they demonstrate incorrect techniques, such as when using brushes, or handling blow dryers. There is insufficient use of good hairdressing role models to help learners develop their skills. There is insufficient attention to dress code and to professional standards of work. Learners are not encouraged sufficiently to develop the professional image required within the industry.

25. The teaching and learning strategies used by Introtrain and Forum Limited are generally satisfactory. All learning sessions are satisfactory or good. There is good individual teaching. Learners are not always sufficiently involved, however, during whole group teaching sessions. For example, during some training sessions, insufficient attention is given to learners' individual needs and there is an inadequate range of learning activities.