

INSPECTION REPORT

YMCA Training

02 December 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

YMCA Training is an independent charity and company limited by guarantee, and is affiliated to the National Council of YMCAs. YMCA Training operates throughout the country and is committed to helping individuals achieve their potential and play a full part in society. It contracts with 16 local Learning and Skills Councils and 12 Jobcentre Plus districts. At the time of inspection, there were 3,318 learners, of whom 2,283 are on work-based learning for young people and 855 clients are on Jobcentre Plus. YMCA Training offers work-based learning for young people in land-based provision, construction, engineering and manufacturing, business administration, information and communications technology, retailing, customer service and distribution, hospitality, hairdressing, care, graphics, and foundation programmes. The Jobcentre Plus contracts enable clients to work in any of the above areas, but they are all reported on under foundation programmes.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of provision in land-based provision, engineering and manufacturing, business administration, information technology, retailing, customer service and distribution, hairdressing and care is satisfactory. Hospitality, visual arts and foundation programmes are good and construction is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, equal opportunities is good and quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

Land-based provision	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Construction	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

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Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Information & communications technology	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Health, social care & public services	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
Visual & performing arts & media	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2
Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3
Life Skills	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3
Programme Centres	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- particularly effective support and guidance for learners
- very supportive employers in most occupational areas
- good development of personal and employment skills for learners
- good standard of work in most occupational areas
- very effective implementation of equality and diversity policy and procedures
- particularly effective management of change
- good self-assessment process

KEY WEAKNESSES

- some poor retention and achievement rates
- poor management of aspects of health and safety in construction
- ineffective key skills training for many learners
- poor progress reviews for many learners
- inconsistent approach to improving retention and achievement rates
- slow action to deal with internal verification problems
- some ineffective quality assurance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice across vocational areas and training centres
- better monitoring of equal opportunities on employers' premises

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 31 inspectors spent a total of 237 days at YMCA Training in December 2002. All 11 areas of learning were inspected for the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contracts. Jobcentre Plus contracts are reported under foundation programmes. Inspectors interviewed 758 learners, carried out 360 interviews with YMCA Training's staff and 26 interviews with other individuals. They visited 242 work placements, interviewed 201 employers or workplace supervisors and interviewed four subcontractors. They reviewed 576 individual learning plans and 430 portfolios of evidence. They observed and graded 107 learning sessions. Inspectors also looked at learners' files, training records, internal and external verification reports, staff development records, policies, procedures, strategic planning documents and minutes of meetings. They visited every training centre.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Construction	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	8
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	4
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Health, social care & public services	0	1	6	9	4	2	0	22
Visual & performing arts & media	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Foundation programmes	1	9	26	20	3	1	0	60
Total	1	12	46	36	8	4	0	107

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. YMCA Training was founded in 1978, in the north of England, in response to the growing number of young people who were unable to find employment during the recession. It was a department of the National Council of YMCAs in England up until July 2002, when the business was transferred into a new corporate and governance structure. YMCA Training was established as an independent charity and company limited by guarantee, and as a YMCA affiliated to the National Council. YMCA Training operates throughout the country and is committed in helping individuals to achieve their potential and play a full part in society by providing good training and learning opportunities. It is one of the largest voluntary sector training organisations in the country and operates in 52 locations. YMCA Training employs approximately 500 full- and part-time staff.

3. YMCA Training contracts with 16 local LSCs and 12 Jobcentre Plus districts. The contracts with LSCs cover all work-based learning programmes for young people which are advanced modern apprenticeships, foundation modern apprenticeships, national vocational qualification (NVQ) training, Life Skills and preparatory training programmes. The contracts with Jobcentre Plus include New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults and programme centres. All the Jobcentre Plus provision has been reported on in foundation programmes. All learners work towards either formally accredited NVQs, vocational qualifications, short course provision and/or other awards appropriate to their personal and social development, and training and employment needs. The range of training programmes and areas of learning matches the needs of learners in the local labour market. YMCA Training covers 11 of the 14 areas of learning and all 11 areas were inspected. Health, care and public services and foundation programmes are the two largest areas of learning with 37 per cent of learners in each. In work-based learning for young people, 47 per cent of learners have additional learning and/or social needs. YMCA Training also has funding for additional pilots and projects from several local LSCs and from other funding sources including neighbourhood support funds, direct from schools, private funding and European Social Fund (ESF). All these projects have links with, and supplement, the government-funded training programmes.

4. YMCA Training is accredited with the Investor in People standard, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. It also has ISO 9001, which is an international quality assurance standard.

Work-based learning for young people

5. Many of the learners on the work-based learning programmes require significant additional support to enable them to develop personal and employment skills. YMCA Training is very aware of the need for this individual support and it is a priority in all the training centres. Most areas of learning have a good initial assessment in basic skills, key skills and the occupational skills. Some training centres have a preparatory training contract which enables learners to sample work tasters and undertake some initial training. It also gives trainers more information about any additional support the learner might need. Learners make significant progress in these skills, but they are not always measured and recorded.

6. Retention and achievement rates are poor in some areas of learning and across some training centres. In care, achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices range from zero per cent to 36 per cent, for foundation modern apprentices from zero per cent to 41 per cent and in NVQ Training from zero per cent to 60 per cent. In engineering, only 16 per cent of leavers in the past three years have achieved the NVQ, yet 49 per cent of all leavers over the past 18 months progressed into employment or further training. In construction, 41 per cent of leavers in the last three years achieved the NVQ and 35 per cent of all leavers over the past 18 months progressed into employment or further training. There is slow progress by many learners particularly within modern apprenticeships, where the key skills training is ineffective for some learners.

7. Training programmes are well-designed and meet learners' needs. Much of the training is adapted to meet the needs of the individual. Resources for training vary. Good use is made of the programme design files where resources have been developed, but some resources and handouts are poorly reproduced. There is some very good accommodation and some poor accommodation.

8. In all occupational areas, except construction, work placements are good and are used effectively. Great care is taken to match learners to work placements to ensure that they have the support they need and that the NVQ requirements are covered. There are close links with employers. However, one training centre does not have enough placements for business administration and learners have a retail placement until a more suitable one can be found. There is no on-site work experience for construction learners.

9. Training advisers carry out regular progress reviews, but they are poor in many areas. Employers are not always involved and there is insufficient use of targets on the individual learning plan and in the progress reviews. Many actions points are not measurable and to a timescale. There is effective assessment practice in most areas of land-based provision, hospitality and care. In other areas, assessment paperwork is not always fully completed. There is poor internal verification in many of the training centres. A new internal verification strategy has been developed and this is being implemented.

New Deal 18-24

10. New Deal 18-24 training is satisfactory. The retention rate in 2001-02 was 42 per cent. At present, 27 per cent of clients have been retained and 65 per cent are still in learning. Job outcomes are unsatisfactory. The job outcome rate in 2001-02 was 18 per cent, which was a 3 per cent increase on the previous year. However, there are regional variations and in one training centre, the retention rate is 80 per cent and there is a 56 per cent job outcome rate. Clients are able to gain a range of additional accredited qualifications during their training. In one training centre, 43 per cent of clients on the voluntary sector option and 86 per cent of clients on the environment task force option gained a qualification.

11. Training is good. Staff use good questioning strategies to develop skills and enhance learning. Practical activities reinforce concepts and clients' understanding. Good links between training sessions reinforce learning points and provide continuity.

12. There is good client support. On the voluntary sector and environment task force options, clients gain valuable work experience in supportive environments. However, there are insufficient work placements at some training centres. There is insufficient use of short-term targets on individual development plans and at reviews. Some reviews do not take account of employers' views and rarely include written comments by the clients. Some reviews are missed and do not always take place in the required timescale.

Life Skills

13. Life Skills provision is good. In 2001-02, the retention rate for learners was satisfactory at 43 per cent, with 6 per cent of learners still in learning. Thirty-eight per cent of these learners progressed onto other training programmes, further education, or found jobs. The remaining 5 per cent of learners achieved an NVQ or relevant units. Achievement is celebrated by displays or through presentation events. Learners also gain personal and work skills.

14. Training in Life Skills is good. Learners receive excellent pastoral support and support for learning. Very effective links with external agencies provide specialists on problems relating to homelessness and welfare benefits which enable learners to continue with their training. Learners' self-esteem and confidence improve during their training programmes.

15. The training programmes are designed with maximum flexibility to meet the learners' individual needs. They include a wide range of activities to build social skills and counteract the learner's negative values. These include residential training, orienteering, sports activities such as canoeing and a range of creative activities including music, art and drama. Staff have good knowledge and expertise in their subject areas and have the skills to engage learners with a wide range of abilities and learning needs. Information technology (IT) is used very effectively to reinforce learning in many training centres.

16. Most Life Skills learners have a work taster, a work placement or are involved in a work project. A wide range of good work placements allows the learners to carry out real work activities while on their training programmes. Learners make good progress, but there is insufficient formal recording of their achievements.

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults

17. New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults are satisfactory. In 2001-02, 51 per cent of clients were retained on the training programmes which is slightly less than the previous year of 54 per cent. In the year to date, 15 per cent of clients have been retained and 72 per cent are still in learning. However, job outcomes are unsatisfactory at 20 per cent for 2001-02 and 20 per cent currently. There are regional variations. In one region there is good progression into employment at 66 per cent for those who maintain a work placement. Fifty-eight per cent of the clients on the intense activity period (IAP) progress into jobs or further training and 58 per cent of clients on longer occupational training (LOT) achieve their qualification. Job outcomes for short job focused training (SJFT) are good in one training centre at 69 per cent for 2001-02.

18. Clients are given good personal support. There are good links with employers and specialist agencies to tackle the many barriers facing clients who are experiencing long-term unemployment. Clients develop good social, vocational and occupational skills.

19. The learning activities for jobsearch are generally well planned, interesting and motivate the clients. However, some sessions do not involve the clients sufficiently and some learning resources are poor. Records of jobsearch do not always show the outcomes. Many clients have literacy, numeracy and language needs. In some training centres, the development of these basic skills is well planned and the clients' progress is regularly reviewed. However, there are regional variations and some of the basic skills training is not well planned or effectively integrated with the clients' vocational or employability skills development. Reviews do not always accurately reflect the full extent of the clients' progress. Learning targets are not sufficiently specific in individual learning plans or progress review records.

Programme Centres

20. Provision within the programme centres is good. Progression into jobs is satisfactory at 35 per cent in 2001-02. Most clients attend on a voluntary basis. YMCA Training offers a good range of jobsearch activities and modular learning. Modular activities include skills development and role-play in interview techniques, curriculum vitae preparation and completing application forms. Support and guidance for individual clients is very good and training sessions are very effective. Some individual learning plans set few targets for jobsearch activities and are not regularly updated to show ongoing achievements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

21. YMCA Training was transferred into a new corporate and governance structure in July 2002 after three years of uncertainty about its future. This was the result of a decision by the national board of the YMCA to review the options for the future of its training section. Before this, YMCA Training was a department of the National Council of YMCA's in England. YMCA Training appointed a provisional board of trustees in February 2002 to oversee the transfer to the new organisation. The board meets every two months and has contributed to decisions about governance, finance and strategy for the new organisation. The board is made up of representatives from other parts of the YMCA movement as well as the financial and learning and skills sector. Three task groups support the work of the board of trustees. These groups focus on strategy, finance and human resources. The chief executive of YMCA Training reports directly to the board. Four directors oversee specific aspects of the organisation's work and are responsible for a number of training centres. A fifth director is responsible for finance. The directors report directly to the chief executive. There are 25 managers who oversee the work of YMCA Training from its 22 training centres across the country. Five additional managers oversee the organisation's work with a national perspective. The organisation has two quality assurance managers, one based in the north and one in the south. The organisation employs approximately 500 staff.

22. Individual training centres are managed daily by either a manager or co-ordinator, depending on the complexity of the training centres' activities. Some training centres have more than one point of delivery. Training advisers work with learners and some have particular responsibilities such as work placements. Each training centre has a health and safety, and equality and diversity adviser. Their roles are to support staff and they, in turn, are supported by two of the directors who have particular responsibility for these aspects of the organisation's work. There are two national health and safety advisers for YMCA Training.

23. YMCA Training has a strategic plan which includes goals for the next three years. The plan includes references to equality and diversity. The organisation has a policy and procedures for the promotion of equality and diversity which include procedures and responsibilities for staff and learners in dealing with harassment, victimisation and discrimination. The policy reflects current legislation. The organisation has a quality assurance policy and quality assurance manual. Written procedures cover a range of activities including key training processes. Both quality assurance managers are responsible for the development and implementation of quality assurance across the organisation. Each training centre has a copy of the quality assurance procedures as well as a range of local variations. YMCA Training is in its fifth year of self-assessment.

STRENGTHS

- clear strategic plan
- particularly effective management of change
- good internal communications
- effective recognition of staff expertise
- comprehensive equality and diversity policy and procedures
- detailed analysis of equality and diversity data
- effective widening of participation
- good self-assessment process
- effective use of development plans

WEAKNESSES

- lack of an established management information system
- high staff turnover at some training centres
- insufficient strategic management of staff training and development
- inconsistent approach to improving retention and achievement rates
- insufficient use of data for equality of opportunity and diversity
- slow action to deal with internal verification problems
- some ineffective quality assurance
- little ongoing formal feedback from learners
- no routine observation of teaching and learning

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of timescales for actions agreed at meetings
- more monitoring of equal opportunities on employers' premises
- greater use of the intranet to share good practice
- greater independence in the audit process

24. YMCA Training's strategic plan effectively summarises the organisation's vision for the next three years. It is written in clear and straightforward language and sets out seven key goals with statements which describe how each goal will be achieved. The plan is clearly linked to other strategic documents including the business, human resources and finance plans. Initial drafts of the plan were drawn up using an external consultant who worked with senior managers. There was good consultation with managers and staff as part of this process. The plan was regularly discussed at board, manager and staff meetings. The plan does not state the way in which progress towards the goals will be monitored. However, senior managers have discussed how existing review arrangements will contribute to decisions about whether goals have been met. The plan is the culmination of a significant period of change for YMCA Training and is

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well understood. Its aims are clearly supported by staff. Each member of staff has a copy of the plan.

25. Staff were particularly well supported by senior managers during the period of uncertainty about the organisation's future. They were frequently updated during staff meetings about progress towards a solution. The chief executive of YMCA Training wrote directly to staff at their home address to provide them with up-to-date information on how the transfer of the business was going. The potential changes to the business were discussed fully at board meetings and decisions were made about how much information should be shared with staff and how to do this most effectively. The chief executive attended staff meetings at local centres to give presentations and answer questions.

26. YMCA Training has a clear communications structure. It clearly states the nature, purpose and frequency of each type of meeting at the different levels in the organisation. The creation of the board of trustees has meant that additional meetings have been added to the structure to ensure a strong link between the board and senior managers. The minutes of most meetings are satisfactory, but some have no timescales for the actions which have been agreed. Work reviews take place every six months between each staff member and their manager. These are seen as an important part of the communication structure of the organisation. They provide a useful opportunity to discuss and agree goals and targets. There is a diverse range of newsletters and bulletins used to provide information to staff on a range of subjects. Specific newsletters include health and safety, and equality and diversity and are well produced and informative. The intranet is used to share information and resources with staff, but this is a new development and is underused. There are a range of opportunities for staff to meet to share good practice, but staff do not necessarily recognise the collective value of these opportunities. YMCA Training provides regular information and training sessions on new developments in areas of learning and in the wider world of education and training.

27. There is good recognition of the expertise of staff within YMCA Training. The organisation has a number of national advisers who effectively use their knowledge of particular subjects to support staff and introduce developments into areas of learning. National advisers have helped to introduce significant changes to retail and administration training. In one training centre, good training was observed for people who have dyslexia. This has now been shared with most training centres. Advisers attend meetings twice a year to share practice and information. Managers have a good understanding of the role of national advisers, but most staff are uncertain about the role of the adviser. The expertise of members of the board of trustees is effectively used. Senior managers are encouraged to attend board meetings where they discuss issues and solutions to problems with board members. Board members attend task group meetings linked to their background and expertise. This allows them to share their knowledge and support the work of the group. One board member who has extensive experience in the learning and skills sector has provided staff training to improve initial assessment.

28. The organisation does not have an established management information system which provides accurate data on all aspects of the learners' experience. YMCA Training has recently installed a system which has improved its capacity to produce data, but, the system is not being used to its full capacity. Managers were consulted on what kind of data they want the system to produce. Training has been given to managers and staff, and local training centres are gaining confidence in the generation of data and reports. However, data are not used to make judgements about individual areas of learning or programmes. Senior managers are making significant progress in encouraging staff to use data to measure the quality of their work. The board of trustees is now able to use some data to make strategic decisions. The organisation had difficulty producing accurate data for inspectors and senior managers have some concern about the integrity of data generated by the system.

29. There is a high staff turnover at some training centres. In one training centre, 75 per cent of staff have left in the past 12 months. The organisation has recognised this as a problem and there are local and national initiatives to improve the situation, but there is no national strategy to improve the retention of staff. There are a number of areas of learning where the turnover of staff has had a detrimental effect on the progress and achievement of learners. Data are produced quarterly on the number of staff who join and leave the organisation, and are discussed at board meetings. The development of standardised schemes of work, session plans and resources in areas of learning are helping to ensure continuity for learners when staff leave.

30. YMCA Training has well-established human resources policies and procedures, but there is insufficient strategic management of staff training and development. Most staff training needs are identified and met locally and staff are able to attend a wide range of training courses. Individual logs of staff training are kept in training centres. A national database is being developed, but this is incomplete. YMCA Training has identified that it has to make strategic decisions about the infrastructure needed to support effective employee development.

31. There is an inconsistent approach to improving poor retention and achievement rates in some areas of learning. This is identified in the self-assessment report. There is no clear strategy for improvement across the organisation, yet this is identified as a key goal in the strategic plan. Where some areas of learning have poor retention and achievement rates, they are discussed at national programme review meetings. Managers are giving a higher profile to discussions about retention and achievement rates and it is recognised by most managers as a measure of the quality of learning programmes. A range of local initiatives are in place, but these are not always shared between training centres. Four training centres are receiving funding from the local LSC for the post of a retention officer. In another training centre, it was identified that learners are leaving because there are not enough work placements. Following the recruitment of a training adviser with specific responsibility for finding work placements, early indications are that learners are more settled and the retention rates are showing signs of improvement.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 2**

32. YMCA Training has a detailed policy statement on equality and diversity. There are clear statements on how the organisation recognises and encourages diversity and equality of opportunity. The roles and individual responsibilities of learners and all levels of staff are clearly stated. Monitoring and enforcement of the policy is also detailed. Learners are given detailed information on equal opportunities during induction and the role of the equality and diversity adviser is discussed with learners. Explanations of equality and diversity are presented through booklets, discussion, video and CD-ROM. Learners who require special equipment are provided with it. In one training centre where learners have reading difficulties, a CD-ROM is used with a commentary through headphones.

33. Centre managers provide accurate recruitment data through equality and diversity advisers. The data are gathered and analysed on all learners who are referred to the organisation. The analysis includes minority ethnic groups, gender, disability and age. The data are passed to the director responsible for equality and diversity who collates and compares the data against regional population statistics. This gives a clear and detailed analysis of the performance of each region in recruiting learners against the regional figures. A further analysis takes place of the number of learners starting on programme, how many are rejected, the number not attending for interview and those waiting to start the programme. Well-presented and detailed analysis in the form of bar charts and spreadsheets give clear indications of the performance of each region. However, these data are not used for local or national target-setting.

34. There is effective widening of participation. Policies for the recruitment and selection of learners are clearly written. Staff are actively involved with external organisations to improve the participation of young people in work-based learning. There are good links with external agencies who refer learners to YMCA Training. Flexible and innovative methods are available to learners to maintain progress on their training programmes. Assessment takes place during night shift working. At one training centre, there is a Saturday club for learners, where learners can attend for additional tutorial support. Inductions also take place on Saturday if learners are unable to attend in the week. Staff visit local schools to explain the training programmes available. There are effective images in publicity materials and most accommodation is accessible to people with restricted mobility.

35. Employers are not formally monitored for compliance with equal opportunities legislation. During frequent progress reviews, staff communicate with employers and learners to ensure that learners are not subject to discrimination, victimisation or harassment. Some checks are made for offensive or inappropriate material displayed in workshops. Employers are approached and asked to remove any material of this nature.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

36. YMCA Training has a well-established self-assessment process and is in its fifth year of producing a national self-assessment report. The report is comprehensive and contains judgements about the national situation as well as for each local training centre. The self-assessment report was very helpful in planning and carrying out the inspection. There is effective consultation with staff as part of the self-assessment process. An annual questionnaire is sent to staff, employers and learners to ask their views about the training. The responses are analysed and used to make judgements which are included in the report. A national programme review takes place each year and staff look at data from the surveys and make judgements about training. Staff are encouraged to use the report from the chief inspector of the Adult Learning Inspectorate to compare training in their area of learning with judgements made by inspectors. Judgements made by local training centres are included in a local self-assessment report which are then summarised into a national self-assessment report. Some local reports are very accurate, but a number of training centres did not identify significant weaknesses. The national report identified that there are problems with internal verification and the lack of observation of learning, but these were not identified as individual weaknesses.

37. YMCA Training produces good development plans which capture the outcomes of self-assessment. The organisation has a national development plan which is supported by plans for each local training centre. All plans include developments which reflect the requirements of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. There is a good link between the development plans and YMCA Training's strategic plan. The plans are regularly used to monitor progress in improving training as well as developing the business. They are used effectively during work reviews to set targets with each member of staff. The plans are routinely referred to by managers and staff.

38. YMCA Training has been slow to take action to improve internal verification problems. While there has been support for some training centres to improve internal verification, inspectors identified examples of poor practice in some areas of learning. Local training centres are responsible for managing assessment and internal verification, but there are inadequate central systems which routinely check the quality of internal verification. A national verification manager was appointed 12 months ago, but following a restructuring, one of the quality assurance managers leads on internal verification. There are insufficient resources to ensure effective internal verification. A new internal verification strategy and paperwork is in place and regional internal verification events are being piloted in training centres in the northwest. The strategy is comprehensive and reflects the revised national guidance for internal verification. Managers and staff have received training in the new procedures and paperwork. The organisation's current internal verification procedure is satisfactory, but its implementation is not consistent in all training centres.

39. YMCA Training has some ineffective quality assurance systems. The quality management system is well established, but is not up to date. Internal audit reports are not in sufficient detail. Directors carry out audits every six months and sample decisions

made by managers during local audits. Directors audit the training centres that they are responsible for, but there is a lack of independence in these audits. There is a range of inconsistent practice in different areas of learning, but these variations have not always been identified by YMCA Training's quality assurance arrangements. There is no quality assurance strategy which effectively links the quality assurance activities at local and national level. There are good links between some activities, for example development plans and the work-review process, but other activities are carried out in isolation. The organisation has identified that quality assurance should have a higher national and local profile. Many managers and staff do not see activities, other than internal audit, as helping them to make decisions about the quality of learning programmes. A system of quality assurance reviews has recently been introduced which reflects the requirements in the 'Common Inspection Framework', but the system is in the early stages of development.

40. There is little ongoing formal feedback from learners. Some training centres use evaluation sheets to ask learners views about training sessions, but this is not consistent across all training centres. Training centres gather information about different things, in different ways. There is no central systematic gathering of learners' feedback, other than the annual survey as part of the self-assessment process.

41. There is no routine observation of learning sessions. Some local training centres are carrying out observations, but they are not routine. New procedures have been developed and managers have received training, but the procedures have not been implemented. However, of the 107 learning sessions observed during inspection, 89 per cent were graded by inspectors as satisfactory or better.

Good Practice

Training centres are invited to send two representatives to training events and information updates, a manager and a practitioner. The rationale for inviting both is to ensure a consistent message is given to the different levels of responsibility in each training centre. This approach encourages managers to understand the expectations placed on practitioners.

One region has developed training and assessment materials to support key skills qualifications and they are being shared across the organisation. Before this, the materials were seen by the awarding body's chief external verifier to ensure that they were acceptable and fully met the requirements.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	18	3

42. Land-based programmes take place in two training centres. There are six foundation modern apprentices and six learners on NVQ training in animal care at one centre, and there are six learners on NVQ training in horticulture at the other training centre. Animal care learners now do an eight-week preparatory training programme before starting their programme, to help clarify their career aims and expectations. Learners are referred from Connexions. All learners are unemployed when they start the programme. They are interviewed and receive an initial assessment to identify support needs, and to help identify career aims and goals. Many learners have additional learning and/or support needs. Learners attend the training centre for off-the-job training for one day each week. If additional support is required, some learners attend the training centre for a further day each week. Assessment is carried out by qualified staff, and takes place in the workplace. Internal verification is carried out by YMCA Training's staff for horticulture and by a subcontractor for animal care. Key skills, where required, are taught as part of off-the-job training at the training centre. Progress reviews take place each month either at the learner's place of work or during off-the-job training.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	1		24		2											
Retained*	0		4		0	0											
Successfully completed	0		0		0	0											
Still in learning	1		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																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		24		28		13		2							
Retained*	0		4		13		13	100	2	100						
Successfully completed	0		4		9		2	15	0	0						
Still in learning	5		5		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

STRENGTHS

- good use of work placements
- good range of support for learners
- effective assessment planning and recording for animal care learners

WEAKNESSES

- weak management of horticultural training
- late introduction of key skills for animal care modern apprentices
- poor retention rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better reinforcement of health and safety and equality of opportunity

43. Work placements offer a wide range of work for the generation of evidence towards the learner's NVQ. Some workplace supervisors are very supportive of the training needs of their learner. One placement in animal care has offered support with literacy and numeracy. Learners are sometimes moved to different work placements to help gather sufficient evidence for their qualification. Extensive use is made of assessment opportunities in the workplace. Animal care work-placement providers have a very well presented and structured work-placement file in which copies of NVQ standards, the contract, the learners' individual learning plan, all progress reviews, and other documents, are kept. This enables reminders to be given to the employer about relevant aspects of the training programme.

44. There is a good range of support available for learner's personal and NVQ needs.

Almost all the learners have additional learning, or social needs, or both. There is a comprehensive initial assessment and a programme of additional support is provided by qualified staff. Animal care learners are reassessed to see how much progress has been made, but additional support for horticulture learners is less structured. Horticulture learners take additional vocational qualifications, such as pesticide application tests, to enhance their employment prospects. There are two computers available in the classroom used by animal care learners which enables them to develop relevant IT skills throughout the programme. Staff go to considerable lengths to give support for learners' personal needs. Useful links have been made with a range of external agencies to supplement the support available.

45. There is effective assessment planning and recording for animal care learners. Assessment plans are completed for each learners' observation and copies of the plan are given to the learner and the workplace supervisor. Records of observations are completed in detail. Internal verification is carried out by a subcontractor. Frequent observations are included in the verification strategy. Portfolios are well structured, and learners have a good understanding of the different types of evidence and how to reference them to individual units or elements. However, opportunities are not taken to include more diverse evidence in portfolios. Revised qualifications have recently become available, but recording documents for the new award are not fully developed. Progress reviews involve the learner and the workplace supervisor and are carried out regularly. The previous review is routinely referred to, to identify progress made on actions, and specific actions are recorded for completion before the next review.

46. There is weak management of horticulture training. Insufficient account is taken of learners' previous experience. All learners start at NVQ level 1 and work at the same pace throughout the training programme. Some learners have insufficient assessment in the workplace. Progress reviews are carried out regularly, but they are poor and targets for achievement are often not set. Workplace supervisors are not consistently given a copy of the review. Some of the work placements do not have a copy of the relevant NVQ standards or understand their requirements. Portfolios are poorly organised making it difficult to ensure that evidence is complete. Planning of off-the-job training is taking place but is still incomplete, with no dated plan for the component parts of the qualification. The assessor for horticulture is well qualified, but the training centre does not have full arrangements for internal verification at present.

47. Key skills are introduced late for foundation modern apprentices in animal care. There is little relevant evidence in learners' portfolios, and practical assessment records contain very few references to key skills. At the time of inspection, no one had completed the foundation modern apprenticeship framework. YMCA Training has recognised the problem with the teaching of key skills, and has started to revise the training programme to include key skills earlier in the programme.

48. Retention rates are poor. While achievement among learners who complete their training programme is good, less than half the learners reach the end of their planned training. YMCA Training has recognised the problem, and analysis shows that of 60

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learners who started the animal care programme between March 2001 and December 2002, 40 per cent left within nine weeks of starting. In response to this, an innovative preparatory training programme has been developed for all learners who wish to train in animal care. This eight-week training programme includes a significant work-experience element, with the aim of helping learners clarify their expectations of working in the sector. They have weekly reviews to help focus attention on career aims in relation to the requirements of the animal care industry. However, programme review meetings do not set clear targets for the recruitment, retention and achievement to ensure focus on improvement in each of these criteria. Some learners gain employment with their work-placement provider. The rate of progression for leavers over the past 18 months into employment or further training is good at 40 per cent.

49. Induction covers health and safety and equality of opportunity, but insufficient attention is given to their reinforcement during progress reviews. Learners have a weak recollection of some of these areas.

Good Practice

Horticultural learners have been given a disposable camera at their work placement to enable them to take photographs of their work. This helps them generate good evidence for their portfolio.

Work-placement files for animal care learners contain a useful employer record in the inside front cover. This records all employer contact, and makes it easy for different staff who may be dealing with the work placement to see what has already been dealt with.

Construction**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	27	4

50. Construction is offered at two training centres. All 27 learners are on NVQ training, working towards an NVQ level 1 in either wood occupations or decorative occupations. YMCA Training offers additional qualifications to all learners. Recruitment of learners is by referral from Connexions or through recommendation. Successful applicants take an initial assessment. All current learners have additional learning and/or social support needs. Learners do not attend work placements, although some external project work is undertaken by a small number of learners in wood occupations. In one of the training centres, a subcontractor delivers the off-the-job training and assessment. Subcontractors carry out internal verification for the NVQ programmes. YMCA Training's staff and the subcontractors' staff are occupationally qualified, have suitable industrial experience and have relevant assessors' qualifications. Formal reviews of learner's progress are carried out every 12 weeks.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	17		40		21		10		2						
Retained*	0		8	20	14	67	4	40	2	100						
Successfully completed	0		8	20	13	62	4	40	2	100						
Still in learning	15		12	30	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

- well-structured portfolios
- good additional qualifications
- good standard of work by most learners
- good level of awareness of NVQs by learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor management of aspects of health and safety
- no site-based work experience
- ineffective strategy to deal with punctuality problems
- insufficient basic skills support
- weak management of internal verification

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better assessment practice for assessing and recording learners' job knowledge and understanding

51. The presentation of portfolios is very good. The structure of the portfolios enables evidence to be easily cross-referenced to individual units of the NVQ. Learner's progress towards achievement of the NVQ is clearly recorded. Learners' work is neat and maintained in logical order. There are various sources of evidence including photographs, assignments, written questions, learner's statements and practical tasks. There are dedicated individual sessions with learners and trainers in order to concentrate on portfolio-building. Learners are proud of their work in the portfolios.

52. Additional qualifications are offered to all learners. In wood occupations, learners work towards the basic woodworking skills tests as well as the NVQ level 1. This award allows the learner to cover aspects of the occupational area which are not covered by the NVQ programme. The range of skills being developed by the learners are assessed on a regular basis. On the decorative occupations programme, all learners are offered a basic IT qualification. Work for this qualification is integrated with the NVQ and learners are producing work related to their vocational area. Learners have a good understanding of how IT can be used within their trade area.

53. There is a good standard of work being produced by most learners. In most instances, practical work is above the NVQ level 1 standard. Intricate and detailed work is carried out well and to a good finish. This is evident in decorative occupations where radiators and metal work are gloss painted to a very high standard. Learners have very good working relationships with their trainers and are keen to receive constructive feedback and acknowledgement of their achievements. Learners are highly motivated and take great pride in the standard of work they produce.

54. There is a good level of awareness among the NVQ learners. Most learners can identify the units of competence which make up the NVQ. All learners are fully aware of what they have achieved to date and how they are progressing towards the completion of remaining units. They are also aware of other qualifications available to

them. Learners have a good understanding of the types of evidence they can present for assessment. Most learners are aware of their right to fair assessment and what to do in the event of unfair treatment. Many learners can identify the assessment documents.

55. There is poor management of aspects of health and safety. Safety footwear is not worn in any of the construction workshops. In the wood occupations workshop, hand-held woodworking saws are hung on nails directly above the learner's workbench. These saws are not secured and have no covers on the cutting edges. Wood machines are positioned very close to the workbenches and dangerously close to the learner's workstation. The workshop is very small and at times can become overcrowded. There is very limited space to store tools and materials and lengths of timber are stored directly above the work area. Toilet facilities at one training centre are inadequate. Some learners are not aware of good health and safety practices. Some learners in the painting and decorating workshop were wearing earphones connected to personal stereos. One learner was in possession of a laser-beam device and operated this in the vicinity of other learners and staff.

56. There is no site-based work experience. Learners are not allocated work placements and do not get the opportunity to experience the pressures and constraints of a real working environment. Working hours at the training centres do not reflect industry working hours and realistic site conditions cannot be replicated. Some external project work has been carried out in the wood occupations area, but this has been under the guidance and supervision of the assessor. The requirements of the NVQ for work-based evidence gathering is not being fully met.

57. There is an ineffective strategy to deal with punctuality problems. Although the attendance of most learners has been dealt with and is improving, punctuality is poor and inadequately controlled. Learners in one centre do not officially start their training day until 10.00am. Most learners who arrive late are sent home and their pay is deducted, but this has not improved punctuality. This problem also extends to learners returning late from lunch breaks.

58. There is insufficient basic skills support in one training centre. Some learners have been identified as needing additional learning support, but they are not receiving any. Although some good basic skills training was observed, some learners stated that the level of basic skills support was inappropriate and did not meet their needs. Other learners had received some additional support on the Life Skills programme, but once they transferred to their vocational area of training, this support stopped.

59. The management of the subcontracted internal verification is weak. Internal verification visits to the training centres are not formally planned and in most instances are arranged at the request of the assessors. This is normally when most of the evidence for the qualification has been generated and assessed. Assessors rely on awarding body information and external verification visits to update them and keep them informed of new developments and quality assurance. Assessors' team meetings are not planned in

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advance, are infrequent and some of the assessors do not attend these meetings. There are regular, informal discussions between assessors, but they are not recorded and no action plans are generated. Internal verification documents are not consistent across the training centres. YMCA Training's documents are not used.

60. Most assessment practices are good, but the methods for assessing and recording learner's job knowledge and understanding are not complete. Oral questioning is the main assessment method, but most of this information is not recorded. Written questions are used and the learner's responses are recorded, but this can only be used as supplementary evidence as the learner has access to learning materials when answering the questions.

61. Retention and achievement rates on construction programmes are satisfactory. Retention rates were good, but show a decline for starters in 2001-02. There is a similar trend with achievement rates. The leavers progressing into employment or other training over the past 18 months is 35 per cent.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	101	3

62. YMCA Training offers engineering and manufacturing training in two training centres. Motor vehicle is offered in one training centre and the manufacture of hand crafted furniture in the other. There are two advanced modern apprentices and three foundation modern apprentices on motor vehicle, plus 67 learners on NVQ training. All modern apprentices are employed. All 29 learners on the manufacture of handcrafted furniture are on NVQ training. Learners are recruited from a variety of sources including employers, schools and Connexions. All applicants are interviewed and given a series of diagnostic tests covering basic skills. Most of the learners have additional learning and/or social needs. All motor vehicle learners attend the training centre for training in background knowledge. Practical training is carried out by employers in the workplace. Where key skills and basic skills training are required, these are provided in the training centre. Motor vehicle employers range from large council-owned garages, independently owned garages and repair centres, as well as fast fit exhaust and tyre centres. Many motor vehicle learners who achieve an NVQ at level 1 progress to NVQ level 2 and some have progressed to NVQ level 3. Manufacturing learners following the hand crafted furniture option have all their off-the-job training in the training centre on day release. Many of the hand crafted furniture learners have work placements.

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												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts			1		1											
Retained*			0		0												
Successfully completed			0		0												
Still in learning			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

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Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			5													
Retained*			0													
Successfully completed			0													
Still in learning			3													

*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.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	25		143		74		17		5		2					
Retained*	0		21		21		10		5		1	50				
Successfully completed	0		9		16		3		4		1	50				
Still in learning	22		60		7		6		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

STRENGTHS

- effective support and guidance for learners
- clear understanding of portfolios by learners
- effective workplace assessment for motor vehicle learners
- good off-the-job training for hand crafted furniture learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for NVQ Training
- limited resources for off-the-job training for motor vehicle
- no co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training for hand crafted furniture learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more consistent follow up of internal verification action points
- better use of the employer's file
- better target-setting and follow up of reviews for hand crafted furniture learners

63. There is effective support and guidance for learners. A comprehensive initial assessment and interview process determines learner's additional support and learning needs. There is clear evidence of learners' improvement and development, including the significant and continuing improvement of descriptive notes on job cards. Off-the-job training in background knowledge is carried out in the training centre and trainers offer learners good support and guidance. Broader skills are developed during off-the-job training and learners are encouraged not only to work independently, but also to help one another. Progress reviews are comprehensive with previous targets reviewed and new targets set. In addition to review visits, learners are assessed every three to four weeks. Many learners are offered additional qualifications such as first aid, drugs awareness, abrasive wheels and manual handling.

64. Learners clearly understand their portfolios. Portfolios are good and are well indexed. They contain a variety of NVQ evidence and supporting documents. Motor vehicle learners complete comprehensive job cards which detail workplace activities and these are countersigned by employers and carry the garage's official stamp. The NVQ monitoring documents are clear and are regularly updated. All learners are able to identify evidence in their portfolios and can identify NVQ progress to date and any outstanding items which need to be completed.

65. There is effective NVQ assessment in the workplace for motor vehicle learners. All assessment is carefully planned and learners are given a copy of their assessment plan before the assessment. Comprehensive assessment documents are used but they are not the national YMCA Training's documents. Learners are able to request additional assessor visits to observe workplace activities when required. Learners are given thorough and detailed feedback at the end of all assessment activities and employers are also involved in the assessment process. At all stages of assessment, assessors check learners' health and safety awareness and ask detailed oral questions to check their understanding.

66. Off-the-job training for hand crafted furniture learners is good. Trainers are responsive to learners' needs and adjust their training accordingly. Learners work independently and well and learning is clearly taking place. The attainment of learners is appropriate for the level of the NVQ, however, some learners are able to progress to a higher level. All learners are producing a good standard of work.

67. There is poor achievement of NVQs for NVQ learners. For hand crafted furniture learners, only 25 per cent of those who started in 2000, achieved the targets on their

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individual learning plans. However, rates are showing signs of improvement. For motor vehicle learners who started in 1999-2000, only 20 per cent achieved their learning aims and 40 per cent remain in learning. Numbers on modern apprenticeship programmes are too small for meaningful judgements to be made. Learners make considerable progress in personal development and employment skills. In the last 18 months, 49 per cent of leavers have successfully gained employment or progressed into further training.

68. Resources for off-the-job training for motor vehicle are limited. There are no practical resources or workplace examples in the training centre to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of components and subassemblies. There is an adequate number of modern computers for each learner. Learners work at their own pace under the guidance of an occupationally competent and experienced tutor. Some activities are carried out collectively to enable tutors to check the learners' understanding.

69. There is no co-ordination between on-and off-the-job training for hand crafted furniture learners. Off-the-job training is at NVQ level 1 and 2 in hand crafted furniture. On-the-job training and experience is in installing window frames, construction maintenance, site joinery and other construction crafts which are not related to the NVQ. There are no work placements in furniture production. There is no use of site-based evidence or on-site assessment.

70. Action points identified on motor vehicle internal verification reports are not consistently followed up. There is an effective system of internal verification planning and reporting. Sampling of assessment practice is regularly carried out and internal verifiers carry out regular observation of assessment activity. Internal verifier documents are comprehensive and there is clear feedback to assessors. On some internal verifier's reports, action points have not been acted on and some are still outstanding on several reports over a period of nine months. Internal verification for hand crafted furniture is subcontracted. Internal verification is well planned and samples cover different types of assessment. The internal verification report does not identify or share good practice, nor does it contribute to the development of assessors.

71. There is an inconsistent approach to the use of the employers' files by the training provider and the employers. The value of the file is not reinforced during review and assessment visits in order to facilitate understanding of learner's progress and ongoing training needs.

72. Reviews and individual learning plans for hand crafted furniture learners are satisfactory. Feedback is clear and comments are helpful to the learner. Individual learning plans are well structured and outline the full training programme, including additional support. However, the targets are not measurable or to a specific time.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	305	3

73. Business administration is offered in 18 training centres. Learners work towards NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in business administration and level 4 in management. Learners who need to improve their basic skills work towards entry level literacy and numeracy qualifications. Additional qualifications in first aid, health and safety and IT are offered in most training centres. Learners are referred through Connexions, their employer or by personal choice. They attend an interview and carry out initial assessment in basic skills and key skills where appropriate and the vocational area. Many learners have additional learning and/or social needs. Learners attend an induction into the most appropriate learning programme. Unemployed learners attend work preparation training at the centre until they find a work placement. Off-the-job occupational training, numeracy, literacy and key skills training are offered in the training centres. Training is planned over 12 to 24 months. The frequency of work-based assessment ranges from two to six weeks and is carried out by the training advisers. Internal verification is carried out at each training centre. Learners' progress is reviewed at between one and three months by their training adviser.

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							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			18		30		5		2						
Retained*			1		19		3		2	100						
Successfully completed			1		8		0		2	100						
Still in learning			13		8		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

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Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	31		112		85		22		2						
Retained*	1		26		32		19		1							
Successfully completed	1		5		10		9		0							
Still in learning	30		63		18		8		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																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	77		246		152		30		4				1		
Retained*	2		59		67		17	57	2	50			1	100		
Successfully completed	2		34		52		13	43	0	0			0	0		
Still in learning	68		90		3		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 development of personal and employment skills
- good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- thorough induction and initial assessment
- particularly effective support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- late introduction of key skills in modern apprenticeships
- weak internal verification at some centres
- slow progress towards qualifications
- some weak progress reviews
- unsatisfactory retention and achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of learning resources
- better access to the Internet for learners

74. There is significant development of occupational and personal skills by learners during the programme. Many learners have additional learning and/or social needs and have not completed a formal education or achieved qualifications. During their first two weeks in the training centre, many achieve certificates in health and safety, manual handling and first aid. The development of curriculum vitae writing and good interview techniques gives learners confidence to apply for jobs and attend interviews for work placements. Learners also develop teambuilding and self-confidence through outdoor adventure training. Learners receive excellent training in office work and develop useful interpersonal, presentation and timekeeping skills in the workplace. This greatly increases their employability and improves their self-esteem and confidence. Some learners lack the confidence to enter a work placement at the beginning of their programme and the training centres provide sheltered work placements at reception as a transitional stage to prepare the learner for employment. Employers recognise and value the improvement in skills and confidence shown by the learners during the programme. Over the past 18 months, 45 per cent of learners from all programmes have either gained employment or gone into further education or training.

75. There is very good liaison between training advisers and employers. Training advisers visit employers to plan how to integrate the NVQ requirements with the learner's job content. Employers are involved in choosing the optional units to suit the tasks included in the job. Training advisers visit the learner regularly in the workplace to plan assessment and training. Some well-structured off-the-job training, detailed planning of programmes, session plans and professionally produced handouts at NVQ level 1 are available, but the resources for other levels have not yet been fully developed. Comprehensive training logs detail all the training given to learners. Access to the Internet is restricted in a few training centres and learners are unable to use it adequately for research purposes. Employers are very supportive and work closely with the training advisers to ensure that all learners' individual needs are met. They are fully aware of the training which learners take at the centre and complement this with tasks in the workplace to prepare learners for assessment.

76. Initial assessment and induction is thorough and effective. Learners are interviewed and good advice and guidance is given about the various options. Occupational questions are used to determine which NVQ is the most appropriate for the learner. Learners have diagnostic tests for basic and key skills, where appropriate. Learners with additional learning needs receive a combination of individual support at work and group sessions in the training centre. Induction is comprehensive and covers health and safety, equal opportunities and how the NVQ will be assessed. An information pack provides a valuable source of reference for learners. Learners are aware of their rights and

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responsibilities and know how to complain or appeal against unfair treatment. They understand the NVQ assessment process.

77. Pastoral support on all programmes and at all training centres is good. Most learners have weekly or fortnightly contact during off-the-job training. Training advisers visit learners regularly in the workplace to support and assess them. Learners' progress is monitored closely. Staff are particularly sensitive when helping learners deal with personal problems which are proving to be barriers to learning and employment. The training advisers intervene with employers on matters such as pay and personality conflicts, and move learners to other work placements if necessary. The training provider has gained external funding to help learners to obtain jobs. They also provide financial incentives to encourage learners to achieve milestones such as units of the NVQ or other qualifications. Off-the job training is flexible and fits in with learners' working patterns.

78. Key skills have been introduced towards the end of most modern apprenticeship programmes and many learners have had insufficient preparation for external assessments. One learner has failed the key skills external assessments on more than one occasion. No specific training has been given and no portfolio work has been carried out in preparation. These problems have been dealt with for recent starters. Key skills are now started much earlier in the programme and portfolios contain recent key skills assessments. The staff's key skills are now being developed, and recently designed materials are now used.

79. Staff changes in some training centres have led to some weak internal verification and delays in assessment for some learners. In a few training centres, assessment planning is weak and learners often have no overall plan for assessment of units. Weak assessment practices are not identified by internal verification in some training centres. Dates and signatures are missing from some evidence and documents. New internal verification systems are currently being introduced. A few training centres have good internal verification procedures.

80. Many learners make slow progress towards their qualifications and do not complete them by their target date. Units are often planned to be completed by the last date of funded training. There has been a high turnover of assessors in a few training centres which has delayed assessment for some learners. A few learners have had to wait for several weeks before being found a suitable work placement where they can train and progress towards their NVQ. At one training centre, some learners are placed in retail outlets until an office work-placement becomes available. The review process is weak at a few training centres, and the monitoring of the overall progress of the learner does not always identify the slow progress. Additional support is often monitored separately, so that individual parts of the programme are viewed in isolation.

81. Retention and achievement rates are varied. Over the three-year period up until 2001-02, 55 advanced modern apprentices have started with 24 still in learning. Eighteen have achieved the NVQ and 11 have completed the full modern

apprenticeship framework, which is 35 per cent of leavers. Retention rates range from 53 per cent to 77 per cent in 2001-02. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices are poor. There have been 252 starters in the past five years and there are 120 still in learning. Fifty have achieved their NVQ, but only 25 have completed the full modern apprenticeship framework, which is 19 per cent of leavers. Retention rates have been above 50 per cent for four out of the past five years, and have been improving over the past three years. They are 100 per cent for the present year. For NVQ training, 509 learners have started over the past five years and most of these learners have additional learning and social needs. There are 161 still in learning. One-hundred and one have achieved the NVQ, which is 29 per cent of leavers. The retention rate is above 43 per cent for three of the past four years and has been improving. It is 91 per cent for the current year. The self-assessment report identified that achievement and retention rates are in need of improvement and this has been part of the development plan for all training centres. New initiatives appear to be working.

Good Practice

One learner has completed two work-based projects which are linked to the five key skills. The evidence has been cross-referenced to a business administration NVQ at level 3. The learner has almost completed the advanced modern apprenticeship in 13 months.

Poor Practice

One learner was working in an unheated reception area where customers were constantly entering and leaving the premises. The learner was unable to move about to keep warm and wore indoor clothing appropriate to his position.

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	36	3

82. There are three foundation modern apprentices and 33 learners on NVQ training. Most learners are working towards NVQs at level 2 in either desktop publishing or using IT. Learners also work towards additional examination-based IT qualifications. Most of the learners are based in one training centre. Most learners have a work placement, but a few are placed within YMCA Training. All learners undergo initial assessment of their basic literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Many have additional learning and/or social needs. The results of the assessments are used as guidance onto the appropriate level qualification, and also to determine whether an internal or external placement is most appropriate.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			5		5		1		2						
Retained*			0		4	80	0	0	0	0						
Successfully completed			0		2	40	0	0	0	0						
Still in learning			3		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																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	11		40		74		27		1						
Retained*	0		22		27		12	44	0	0						
Successfully completed	0		9		20		10	37	0	0						
Still in learning	10		22		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 support for learners
- particularly good training in desktop publishing

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for the NVQ

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement in progress reviews by employers
- better use of target-setting in progress reviews
- better opportunities for staff to share good practice
- better follow-up support when learners progress from one programme to another

83. There is good encouragement given to learners to build their confidence and promote progress. Off-the-job training is good and concentrates on supplementing on-the-job training and portfolio-building. A small number of learners are placed in the training centres where they are given additional support, mainly in the form of individual tutorials with staff. Learners' files show supportive comments and some include materials which are produced in the training centre to support learning. Staff show sensitive concern for the welfare of learners. Learners in one training centre have a particularly good understanding of internal verification.

84. Learners in desktop publishing have good training. There is a wide range of placements in printing companies and a well-qualified and experienced assessor who has good contacts with local industry. The good support from employers enables learners to take sole responsibility for producing work for customers. Learners produce a good standard of work and they are proud of it. The off-the-job training is good. New learning materials are being introduced to support training, but they have yet to be used by all learners. Portfolios have a wide range of evidence in them. The work produced requires skills in merging text, graphics, charts and pictures. Some on-and off-the-job training is not well co-ordinated and one learner is unclear about the purpose of his two days off-the-job training.

85. The retention and achievement rates have been poor for the past three years. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Some learners are making slow progress through the NVQ and do not know how much more work they need to do or when they can expect to finish. Most assessment is well planned and learners are well

briefed about what they need to demonstrate when assessors observe them in the workplace. However, learners are not always clear about which parts of the qualification they have completed as a result of the observed session. Some learners rely heavily on paper copies for evidence. There is no mechanism for recognising achievement of individual units within the NVQ, unless learners leave the programme early. Learners on short courses, which includes some who are not IT learners, make good progress. Over the past 18 months, 60 per cent of the learners have progressed into employment or further training, which represents significant progress for many of them.

86. Some learners have all their progress reviews carried out in the training centres, and employers do not have the opportunity to contribute fully to the process. Some employers are familiar with the structure of NVQs and would like to be able to give better support to their employees. They do not have detailed information on the NVQ, or how well the learner is progressing on it.

87. The review forms include space for recording action points for the next review period. In some cases, this is used to record what was discussed in the review and in other cases, the actions required are sometimes described in very general terms, with no timescales. Other forms show much more detail and in some cases, show specific units to be completed by a set date.

88. Staff in the training centres have regular monthly meetings where they are able to discuss matters of common interest and share good practice. Staff who attend the annual national meetings are encouraged to bring examples of materials they use to display for their colleagues. However, it is not carried out in a structured way, or with any evaluation by managers. Opportunities to meet at regional level are not generally available except to co-ordinators and centre managers, who are expected to share their experience. The national adviser role has recently changed from an occupational focus to a more generic focus. This means that the IT trainers have fewer opportunities to discuss detailed technical issues with their colleagues or other subject specialists. The intranet which is being developed, is intended to provide a forum for some of this discussion and sharing of materials, but it is not yet widely used, and few staff realise that they can use it to share materials. Staff in some training centres are spending a lot of time producing learning materials which other colleagues have already produced.

89. Some learners who start on foundation programmes are receiving additional support for basic literacy and/or numeracy needs. However, when learners progress onto the IT training programmes, this additional support sometimes stops, although some learners would still benefit from it. In some cases, learners make the decision themselves to give up the additional support, but others would welcome an appropriate form of ongoing help.

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

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

90. Retailing, customer service and transportation is offered at 14 training centres. There are 269 learners, 33 advanced modern apprentices, 84 foundation modern apprentices and 152 learners on NVQ training. Learners work towards NVQ level 1 in distributive operations and NVQ levels 2 and 3 in distribution and warehousing operations, retail operations and customer service. Learners are referred through Connexions, directly from school, by personal recommendation or have progressed from the Life Skills training programme. Learners have an interview and initial assessment and 95 per cent of learners have additional learning and/or social needs. Learners are placed in local companies to gain practical skills in a retail environment. Some training centres offer off-the-job training, while some learners have mainly individual training 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)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		22		17		6		4				
Retained*	0		2		8		3		3					
Successfully completed	0		0		2		2		1					
Still in learning	2		20		8		1		2					

*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		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	23		109		75		10		3				1
Retained*	1		20		21		8	80	1	33			0	0
Successfully completed	1		3		7		4	40	0	0			0	0
Still in learning	20		54		10		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																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	81		240		157		35		4		2					
Retained*	44		48		70		19	54	4	100	2	100				
Successfully completed	4		35		53		15	43	3	75	2	100				
Still in learning	63		82		7		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 support for learners
- good progression for learners
- well planned off-the-job training
- good staff development opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- weak progress reviews
- no short-term targets on individual learning plans
- slow progress for some learners towards target qualifications

91. Learners have a wide range of good support. Thorough initial assessment clearly identifies learner's individual needs. Staff are well qualified to teach the target qualifications and also have expertise in sensitive support for learners who have additional needs. Work placements are well matched to individual learners to ensure maximum benefit. Training advisers have strong, effective links with employers and have no difficulty in gaining access for assessment or progress reviews. Employers support learners who have additional social and learning needs by integrating them into the work teams and they are treated with respect and care. Each employer is carefully checked to ensure that the skills offered are appropriate to the learners' needs. In most training centres, learners who have additional learning needs attend the centre each week and are given support in literacy and numeracy. The sessions are well attended. Other learners are given individual help in the workplace. Many learners have little or no knowledge of money management and at one training centre there is a strong link with a local building society to offer money management workshops. There is also an agreement that learners can open a bank account on production of a letter from the training centre, eliminating barriers that are normally associated with such an activity.

YMCA Training acknowledges and celebrates learners' success. There are visible displays of learner's achievements, and in-house certificates are given to learners to mark the milestones they achieve.

92. Ninety-five per cent of learners have additional learning and/or social needs and many of them have had contact with YMCA Training through other programmes. Many learners have been involved in school projects, in which YMCA Training offers alternative curriculum opportunities such as work tasters. This breaks down barriers at an early stage and learners are then comfortable at the training centre. Many learners progress from the Life Skills training programmes which increases the confidence of learners who are then able to progress into mainstream NVQ training programmes. Over the past 18 months, 43 per cent of leavers have progressed into employment or further education or training.

93. YMCA Training has a range of structured training sessions which are well planned and have good lesson plans and supporting resources. Resources are well reproduced, and at an appropriate level. The sessions are highly interactive and involve the learner in appropriate, work-related activities. Learners are encouraged to measure the value of knowledge gained and are confident to take this back to their workplaces. The content and structure of the sessions are matched to the target qualification and are well attended. Employers are informed in advance of the date and content of each session.

94. The retailing staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. They have occupational updating and this is recognised on their continuous professional development log. There are good opportunities for staff training and development, through half-yearly work reviews where training needs are identified and targets are set. There is a range of training events held at national and regional level and there are regular national networking meetings to share good practice and benchmark regional approaches. There is a wide range of nationally accredited qualifications as well as equality and diversity workshops, dyslexia workshops, and workshops to support training advisers.

95. YMCA Training has standard documents to record progress reviews and the frequency of the reviews varies according to the learner's programme. Employers are not always included in the review and on many occasions they are only asked to sign at the end of the process. The importance of the progress review is not fully understood by many learners or employers. Targets and achievement are not always clearly identified and there are very few specific actions which have timescales agreed with the learner.

96. Individual learning plans are given to all learners, but they are not a working document which records the learners' progress. There are no short-term targets and on many occasions the target for each unit is the same, and corresponds with the end date of the learners' programme. Additional training and support needs which are identified on the individual learning plan do not include target dates. The learners are unclear about the purpose of the document and where it is kept. In some of the training

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centres, the individual learning plans are kept in the employer's file and are not taken out on visits.

97. There is slow progress for some learners towards their target qualifications. Staff turnover in some of the training centres has resulted in some irregular visits and opportunities for assessment have not been taken. In many areas, the range of assessment methods is limited and there is slow achievement of units. The training advisers are focusing on observations and verbal questioning.

98. Retention and achievement rates across the occupational area are satisfactory. Over the past four years, the retention rates have averaged 52 per cent, and are improving. Achievement of qualifications has been poor, with only 9 per cent of advanced modern apprentices achieving them although 70 per cent of the learners remain in learning. Completion of NVQs has averaged 56 per cent over the four-year period. An average of 22 per cent of learners on NVQ training programmes have achieved their qualification, but 34 per cent of them are still in learning. NVQ achievement for foundation modern apprentices has averaged 21 per cent, with 38 per cent of the learners still in learning. As 95 per cent of the learners have additional learning and social needs, personal achievement in terms of progression into employment and further training has been good, at 43 per cent over the past four years.

Good Practice

An internal verifier has implemented a yellow and red card system which is clearly matched with the NVQ code of practice to monitor assessor practice. Assessors are given a card and return it when they have carried out corrective action. This is a motivational approach to keep the assessment team consistent.

A team of staff had approached local businesses to raise funds to support learners with interview clothing. A considerable sum was raised and is now available to be used for learners.

Poor Practice

In one training centre, assessment plans are not structured and lack sufficient detail. Observation records are expansive but not related to the NVQ standards. Cross-referencing is carried out without the learner present and there are no assessment plans to enable learners to prepare for their next assessment. The use of leading questions is accepted as competence. A totally simulated activity for a retail learner has been accepted by the training adviser, despite the assessment guidance clearly advising against such activity.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	10	2

99. Hospitality training takes place at one training centre. There are five foundation modern apprentices and five learners on NVQ training. YMCA Training has several learners working towards the NVQ level 1 in housekeeping and these learners are reported on under health, social care and public services, as the qualification is used as the entry qualification for learners wanting to work within the care area. There are two members of staff working in the hospitality area and both the training adviser, who carries out the training and assessment, and the internal verifier, are qualified and experienced. Learners are recruited through Connexions, links with local schools, progression from the Life Skills programme and by employers. All learners are given an initial assessment which identifies additional needs and most learners have additional learning and/or support needs. Support arrangements are identified on the individual learning plan for each learner. There is a mentor who helps learners who have difficulty in the transition from the Life Skills programme onto the hospitality programme. Off-the-job training takes place in the training centre every two weeks and learners who attend the training programmes are given an in-house certificate.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	2		7		17											
Retained*	0		2		3												
Successfully completed	0		1		1												
Still in learning	2		2		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																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	6		20		19		5									
Retained*	0		10		6	32	4	80								
Successfully completed	0		10		5	26	4	80								
Still in learning	4		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

- particularly effective support for learners
- thorough assessment practice
- good internal verification
- good induction to support progress from the Life Skills programme

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate use of targets on individual learning plans to plan learning
- poor achievement rates for key skills

100. Learners are visited in the workplace at least every two weeks and many are visited either every week or twice a week. Each visit builds on the progress from the last visit and reinforces the learning that has taken place. The training adviser ensures that goals agreed between the employer and learner have been met. Learners who lack confidence and have poor recollection skills are helped to progress through the programme by frequent visits. Employers' views are sought during the review process. Training is reinforced during the progress review and appropriate notes are made on the review sheet. All reviews include details on how the training adviser has covered equal opportunities, harassment and bullying and health and safety. Actions agreed between the learner, training adviser and employer are made verbally and in writing and learners fully understand what is required of them. Learners who have completed the off-the job elements of their programme, such as the equal opportunities course are given an in-house certificate which further reinforces their learning. Learners who have additional support needs are well supported.

101. The assessment practice is thorough. All portfolios are well presented and clearly laid out. Assessment plans are completed and agreed with learners and they are also

shared with employers so that learners can practise the areas that are going to be assessed. The assessor makes comprehensive observation reports on each assessment and the evidence is clearly referenced to the performance criteria and range of the NVQ. Thorough supplementary questioning is carried out to ensure that the range is covered. The feedback to learners is comprehensive and is given in a way which helps the learner to understand what they have achieved as a result of the assessment. Learners are proud of their progress and are motivated to continue with their work towards the NVQ.

102. The internal verification is good. There is an effective working relationship between the internal verifier and assessor and meetings take place each month. Minutes of meetings are recorded in a minutes book which is kept in the training adviser's office for easy access. Detailed internal verification sampling plans are produced which cover all aspects of the assessment process. Observation of assessment practice takes place each month and records are comprehensive and detailed. Clear feedback is given to the assessor after all verification activity, both verbally and in writing.

103. There is a well-structured induction into the NVQ programme. There are good links between the catering team and the Life Skills team, which allows the catering team to inform learners of the opportunities in catering. The catering training adviser and the internal verifier offer well-structured induction sessions for learners in Life Skills as a taster session for the work-based learning programme. Clear language and simple examples are used to develop and reinforce learning during the session. Induction is carried out over a period of time to help learners fully understand each aspect of the programme. However, for learners who have difficulty understanding the induction, additional formal training is not carried out until late in the programme.

104. All learners have an individual learning plan which is drawn up at the start of their programme. Some learners have been given a copy of their plan, but others have not. Targets for completion of NVQ units are not realistic and most individual learning plans identify the same start and completion date for each unit. One individual learning plan does not show any dates. Individual learning plans are not used during progress reviews.

105. In the training centre where hospitality programmes are taught, there has been no achievement of key skills. There is an action plan in place to deal with the key skills weakness identified in the self-assessment report. A key skills computer programme has now been purchased to use as an initial assessment and development tool. However, none of the learners have used it as yet. Laptop computers have also been purchased to support key skills in the workplace, but they have not yet been used. Trainers have the key skills practitioner qualification, but the observed training did not engage the learners in the learning process. Completion rates of the framework for foundation modern apprentices are poor. Achievement rates for NVQ learners are good at 40 per cent and are showing a year-on-year improvement. Current learners are making significant progress towards achieving their NVQ.

Good Practice

All learners have a 'progress wheel' which identifies all elements of their training programme. As each aspect of the progress wheel is completed, it is shaded in by the learner at the review.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	20	3

106. Hairdressing is offered at one training centre. There is one learner on NVQ training at level 3, 13 foundation modern apprentices and six advanced modern apprentices, all of whom are employed. YMCA Training recruits learners through career conventions and exhibitions, through talks given to school leavers and parents and close liaison with Connexions. The off-the-job training takes place one day a week at a fully equipped hairdressing salon and covers practical work and sessions on background knowledge. Assessment takes place in the workplace or during off-the-job training. There are two part-time hairdressing trainers who are also qualified assessors. One is also a qualified internal verifier and both work part-time in local salons. There is a part-time key skills trainer who also has a hairdressing background and internally verifies the hairdressing training. There is also a full-time key skills trainer who teaches key skills to one group of learners. Currently there is one work-based assessor and two salon staff currently being trained. YMCA Training offers assessor training free of charge to salon staff to encourage them to be involved in assessment.

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								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	1		2		5				1							
Retained*	0		0		4				1	100							
Successfully completed	0		0		0				0	0							
Still in learning	1		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

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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.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	3		13		10		3								
Retained*	0		2		7		3	100								
Successfully completed	0		0		0		3	100								
Still in learning	2		6		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	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			1		1				1						
Retained*			0		0	0			1	100						
Successfully completed			0		0	0			1	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

- good standard of practical work by learners
- good resources in work placements

WEAKNESSES

- poor training resources for background knowledge training
- poor progress reviews

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better co-ordination of key skills
- further development of the training plan
- better recording on internal verification plan

107. Off-the-job-training is carried out in a local salon which has up-to-date products

and equipment and learners can work on paying clients. Practical training sessions observed showed a range of hairdressing services carried out to a good standard. Learners were active throughout the session and received good support from the trainer. Individual training showed good interaction between the learner and trainer. The practical work of learners in the salons is good. Learners progress well through their practical assessments and quickly start working on their own clients. They produce good hairdressing techniques and portfolios are well structured.

108. All salons used by YMCA Training are well resourced with up-to-date products and equipment. There is also a variety of clients to ensure that all aspects of hairdressing can be covered. Employers are supportive and take an interest in the learner's progress. Many employers give learner's additional training support on their practical skills. Annual questionnaires are sent out to employers and results show that 61 per cent of employers understand the individual learning plan and 76 per cent agree that they match the learners' workplace duties. The training provider organises a visit each year to a large hairdressing exhibition and learners enjoy this event and use it constructively to find out about the hairdressing industry and what it has to offer them as a career.

109. Resources for background knowledge are limited. Trainers use their own supply of textbooks as there are only two books available for learners. Training packs contain minimal information and are poorly photocopied. Most of the background knowledge is taught using a pre-prepared flip chart and dictating information to the learners. Handouts are used to support the learning. Learners are given assignment packs for the NVQ assessment requirements and question packs which cover the requirements for the background knowledge.

110. Some learners have not achieved the target achievement dates on their individual learning plans. Progress reviews take place every four weeks, where progress in achieving hairdressing and key skills are discussed, but no targets are set. Some of the reviews do not take place in the workplace and employers are not always involved. Some reviews take place during off-the-job training and the learner is asked to give the review to the employer to sign. Employers have concerns that they are not involved in the learner's training and do not have the opportunity to discuss the learner's progress. In one salon, the employer has only had one visit from YMCA Training's staff in the past eight months and that was from the health and safety adviser. At each review, the trainer uses one of the 12 discussion points from a pack which was developed for national use on equal opportunities. Health and safety and pastoral support are also discussed.

111. Key skills training takes place in the workplace and in the training centre. Training starts three months into the hairdressing training, but there are a number of modern apprentices who have yet to start key skills assessment. Key skills are taught approximately every three weeks and learners are given workbooks which are good and easy to follow. However, the workbooks are generic and assignments are not produced in a hairdressing context. Assignments and work activities for the NVQ are not used as evidence for key skills. Learners who need additional support receive individual

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training.

112. There is an overall training plan and trainers know the NVQ unit activities which will take place, and the resources which will be used. However, this does not include the key skills activities or when individual key skills training will be carried out. There are no formal session plans for either the background knowledge or practical training which give the structure of each session, aims and objectives, resources needed and contingency plans.

113. Internal verification is satisfactory and is carried out every three to four months. Observation of assessors is carried out every four months, but new assessors are observed more frequently. Internal verification meetings take place every five to six months and assessors' meetings take place each month. The meetings are minuted and actions are followed through. The internal verifier reviews three to four different units from each learner to ensure that all units have been covered and the process is well recorded. However, the plan does not record which assessor's work has been reviewed and by which method.

114. There is an initial assessment of basic and key skills, usually six to eight weeks after the learner has been on programme. The team leader uses results from the initial assessment test to identify additional support needs. Currently there is no staff member trained to give basic skills support, but one of the hairdressing trainers has been trained to support learners who have dyslexia. Individual support is available for any learner who has identified learning difficulties and special arrangements for learners taking written tests are discussed and agreed with the awarding body.

115. The small numbers of learners on the hairdressing programme mean that it is difficult to make meaningful judgements on data. At present, the retention rates are satisfactory.

Health, social care & public services

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	1189	3

116. Care, early years and housekeeping training is carried out in 14 training centres. There are 375 advanced modern apprentices, 566 foundation modern apprentices and 248 learners on NVQ training. Ninety-six per cent of learners are women. Learners are employed or on work placements in a variety of settings including nursing and residential homes, day-care settings, nurseries, playgroups and primary schools and are always on duty with more senior, qualified staff. Learners are supported by teams of staff comprising training advisers, assessors, internal verifiers, basic skills tutors and key skills specialists. Diagnostic tests for key skills and basic skills are used for initial assessment, where appropriate. There is a planned induction for the workplace. Off-the-job training is offered in some training centres and includes key skills and training skills sessions. Training sessions cover the background knowledge of the NVQs and there is some additional training planned by employers such as basic food hygiene and first aid at work certificates. All staff are occupationally competent and experienced and new staff are mentored by more experienced staff. Assessment is carried out by peripatetic and work-based assessors and each assessor has between 14 and 40 learners. Training in key skills is carried out by a trainer who has achieved the key skills qualifications. Progress reviews are carried out regularly between two and six weeks by training advisers.

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		1996-97			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	87		272		275		98		28		3		2		
Retained*	1		9		127		65		21		2	67	1	50		
Successfully completed	0		3		68		35		11		2	67	0	0		
Still in learning	87		190		84		10		4		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

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Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	163		548		372		76		8						
Retained*	3		98		203		55		6							
Successfully completed	0		14		81		37		4							
Still in learning	159		317		82		7		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																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	88		261		182		66		25		1		2		
Retained*	2		67	26	103	57	50	76	21	84	1	100	2	100		
Successfully completed	0		30	11	67	37	36	55	14	56	0	0	1	50		
Still in learning	82		149	57	16	9	0	0	1	4	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
- some good assessment practice
- some good achievement rates
- good career progression

WEAKNESSES

- poor development of key skills
- inadequate progress reviews
- some poor internal verification
- slow progress by some learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more sharing of good practice
- better attendance for off-the-job training
- better use of data in some centres

117. Learners are well supported doing regular visits and additional visits if needed. Training advisers respond effectively to learners' problems which can be financial, social or personal. Some assessment takes place out of normal office hours including night shifts. One training centre has introduced a Saturday club for learners who can drop in for extra tutorials and personal support and evening sessions are offered for learners who cannot attend during the day. In some training centres, learning materials have been developed to specifically meet the individual needs of the learners. However, in a number of training centres there is poor accommodation and poor access to these areas. Communication between the employers and YMCA Training is effective and enables learners to be moved into different work placements to cover all the requirements of the NVQ. Employers offer support to learners and there is regular advice and guidance from the training centre. There is often poor attendance at off-the-job training. Learners do not have the opportunity to experience different learning styles or to use additional resources. Individual support is given to learners who have identified additional learning needs.

118. There is some good assessment practice. The assessments are planned well in advance of assessment and they are recorded in detail. Learners and employers are given copies of all assessment plans and observations. Learners are given clear, constructive and sensitive feedback after each assessment, verbally and in writing. Learners have frequent assessments, which are arranged at times to suit their individual needs. Staff have appropriate qualifications and are occupationally competent. They attend regular meetings at local, regional and national level, but the opportunities for sharing good practice are often not identified and used effectively.

119. There are some good achievement rates. Twenty-four per cent of learners have been identified as having additional learning and/or social needs. Taking into account the large number of learners still in learning, the achievement rates for all programmes are at least satisfactory and may become good. However, the achievement rate of learners varies across the training centres. The achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices range from zero to 36 per cent and from zero to 41 per cent for advanced modern apprentices. The rates for learners in NVQ training range from zero to 60 per cent. One area has only had contracts for advanced modern apprentices and all learners in care work had to go onto this programme. Some training centres have now negotiated a preparatory training contract to enable learners to sample work tasters and have some initial training before they sign onto the main training programme.

120. There is good career progression for learners. Many learners enter at NVQ level 1

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and when they achieve they are encouraged to move to NVQ level 2 and then to NVQ level 3. In some training centres more than 50 per cent of learners follow this progression route. One learner entered at NVQ level 1, progressed through the training and then moved into higher education. Other learners have entered at NVQ level 2 and progressed into jobs, nurse training, or teacher training.

121. The development of key skills is poor. Key skills training is not always an integral part of training sessions and is not always referred to during the progress review and assessment sessions. Learners work on separate assignments and some of these are not related to care work. Work-related evidence is not used routinely in the assessment of key skills. Some assessors, trainers, learners and employers do not fully understand key skills and fail to value their importance. Some training centres have improvement plans in place, but they are too recent to have had any significant impact. Some learners are entered for tests without adequate preparation and this is reflected in slow and poor achievement. Many learners do not complete the full modern apprenticeship framework.

122. Some progress reviews are inadequate. Previous reviews are not discussed and in some cases progress since the last review is not evaluated. There are no clear targets to measure learners' progress and achievement. There is insufficient detail recorded on the review form and some comments give insufficient direction to allow the learner to progress. Reviews are often informal and do not always involve employers. In some cases, training advisers give informal feedback to employers after the review. In some reviews, NVQ progress is not discussed and learner's recall of induction, equal opportunities and health and safety is not checked in any detail. Individual learning plans are not used as the basis for reviews and are often not fully completed or updated.

123. There is some poor internal verification. There is insufficient standardisation of assessment. Observation of everyday tasks does not take place in the workplace. There are some inconsistencies in completion of the assessment paperwork and some records are unsigned or undated. There are some instances where insufficient feedback is given to assessors by internal verifiers. Poor internal verification in the past is still having an effect on some learners' achievements. Action has been taken to deal with this situation and some learners have now achieved the NVQ. No internal verification has taken place for over six months in one training centre.

124. There is slow progress by some learners. There are 14 advanced modern apprentices still in learning from before 2000 and 90 foundation modern apprentices still in learning from 2000-01 and before. Some learners have been training for 12 months or more and have not achieved any individual units, although they have collected sufficient evidence. One training centre has employed a mentor to target unit achievement with learners.

125. Data are collected but have not been analysed and used as a basis for action plans to improve performance or recruit under-represented groups. In some training centres,

data on additional learning needs are not used to ensure resources are available to meet the needs of individuals.

Good Practice

In one training centre, all new staff shadow training advisers from other occupational areas to share good practice. Established staff also carry out annual peer observation to share good practice.

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	12	2

126. YMCA Training offers visual arts in two training centres. One training centre has two learners working towards NVQ level 2 in printing, but this was not inspected. There are 10 NVQ learners in the other training centre working towards NVQ level 2 in design support. On-the-job training takes place in the workplace and off-the-job training is held one day a week at the training centre. Learners are referred to YMCA Training by Connexions and schools, or apply to the training centre themselves. Learners are required to provide a portfolio of artwork when they attend for interview. Acceptance on the training programme is based on the portfolio rather than previous qualifications. An initial assessment is carried out and many learners have identified additional support needs. There is one training adviser who is occupationally competent, and is a qualified assessor. The part-time support tutor has recently completed the design support NVQ level 2 qualification. Basic skills training is offered at the training centre in addition to the off-the-job training. A subcontractor carries out the internal verification.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	4		19		9		4		1							
Retained*	2		7		5	56	3	75	1	100							
Successfully completed	2		4		3	33	2	50	1	100							
Still in learning	2		10		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

- effective support for all learners
- good standard of graphic design work
- good resources
- effective links with workplace providers

WEAKNESSES

- weak target-setting
- slow progress towards achievement of qualification

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more frequent internal verification
- more formal involvement of employers in review and assessment

127. Effective support is given to all learners. There is regular contact with workplace providers and learners and learners are offered sensitive pastoral support. They are given regular encouragement and praise, especially when a new skill has been gained. The monthly newsletter celebrates success by identifying learners and their achievements. There is good support for learners who have additional learning needs. All learners have their basic skills needs assessed as part of their initial assessment. Support needs are clearly identified and are included on their individual learning plan. Learners have good specialist support and external agencies are used when necessary. A learner who has dyslexia is provided with special equipment and additional individual support. This is the first time the learner has received support, and he is now making good progress. Learners with additional learning needs make good progress and achieve at an appropriate level.

128. Learners are confident about their abilities. On- and off-the-job training are effective and learners have a good understanding of design and the design process and confidently discuss their work. Portfolios are well organised and have a good level of individuality in design solutions. Design work is good and learners take pride in their work. Most design briefs are set by employers, are unique to each learner and most are set in a real work environment. Learners are expected to present their design solutions to employers and clients, justifying the decisions they have made. Learners are encouraged to produce experimental work, and use a wide range of resource material and media. Learners are clear about their qualification and can relate their learning to the different units. They are involved in regular evaluation of the effectiveness of their own, and other learners, design brief solutions. Learners are regularly involved in work which benefits YMCA Training and the wider community as a whole. They design and produce the monthly newsletter which is circulated to all employers, staff and learners at YMCA Training and a wide range of public places in the community. Learners have recently designed the YMCA Training's web pages.

129. Resources for on- and off-the-job training are good. Learners use industry-standard equipment at the training centre and at work placements. They use a wide range of up-to-date graphics packages and use a full range of resources for research. Training is well planned and there are effective learning materials. The trainer and workplace

supervisors are skilled.

130. Links with workplace providers are effective. Initial contact with employers, before learners are placed, includes a detailed assessment of the employer's ability to support learners and their achievement of the qualification. Employers are given comprehensive information about the training requirements and contracts are specific to each learner. They are amended promptly to reflect any change in circumstances. The training adviser maintains contact at least each week on an informal basis and every eight weeks as part of the review process. In addition, the training adviser for work placements maintains contact for general issues and monitoring activities. Monitoring arrangements are comprehensive and are clearly recorded. There is a clear understanding about the needs of employers and learners in the workplace. Employers are satisfied with the very good relationships that exist, and are confident that problems are quickly resolved.

131. Target-setting is weak. The individual learning plan does not sufficiently reflect the different starting points of learners. Previous achievements for most learners are poor grade general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs), but some have five or more passes at grades C or above including one grade A in art. A few learners have AS level or IT qualifications, but these achievements are not fully reflected in the individual learning plans and assessment planning. All learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2. One learner was identified at a progress review as having potential to take a degree, but it is not clear how high achievers are advised about progression. Many target dates for specific training are overdue.

132. Learners make slow progress towards achievement of their qualification. There is only evidence of one learner having completed units. Recording of achievement is not always kept up to date and units are not signed off in learners' records even when assessment records show that units have been completed. Learners have their own achievement monitoring chart and value the progress shown, but they do not consistently record assessment outcomes on them. There is no evidence of a central record to monitor achievement. Assessment is thorough and is continuous throughout training, but all units are signed off on the same date. Assessment deadlines are insufficiently challenging for some learners.

133. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Over the past four years there have been 35 starts. Sixteen learners have been retained, and 12 are still in learning. Half of the learners who started have achieved the NVQ and two learners have progressed into employment.

134. Internal verification only takes place at the end of the course. A subcontractor makes one visit and makes a postal sample. Recent comprehensive developments are in place to improve this, but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.

135. Employers are given full reports about the progress and achievements of learners immediately after a review or assessment. A few are actively involved in the review and assessment processes, but this is not standard practice. One employer is a qualified

assessor.

Good Practice

Learners are made fully aware of the wider issues for designers. Learners understand the health and safety problems of using strobe effects in animation or the implications of different styles of lettering for people who have reading difficulties.

One employed learner effectively supported a school work- experience pupil to complete a design brief in the workplace. This reinforced his own learning and developed his confidence and interpersonal skills.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	179	3
Life Skills	296	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	249	3
Programme Centres	427	2

136. There are 1,151 learners on foundation programmes including the 296 learners on Life Skills and preparatory training programmes and the 855 clients on Jobcentre Plus programmes.

137. Most of the Life Skills training programmes last for 14 weeks and extensions are available if required. The Life Skills training programme aims to re-engage young people in learning and help them to gain a job or progress into further training. YMCA Training also offers preparatory training in several training centres across the country. This programme enables learners to have work tasters and some initial training in an occupational area to see if they are interested in progressing into the full training programme. These programmes have been reported on under the relevant areas of learning. Learners on Life Skills and preparatory training programmes are usually referred by Connexions, but some learners refer themselves. All learners are interviewed and are given an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Assessments for dyslexia screening are available for some learners. Most learners have additional support needs. Most of the training is in-house and all programmes have an induction process. Life Skills learners take a range of qualifications to improve their employment prospects including first aid, health and food hygiene certificates and basic IT qualifications. All learners on foundation programmes have regular reviews.

138. Jobcentre Plus programmes aim to help clients gain jobs. Clients spend between two weeks and 12 months on training depending on the programme they follow. Clients are following a variety of programmes including the New Deal 18-24 voluntary sector and environment task force options, the Gateway to Work programme, the New Deal 25+ IAP, basic employability training (BET), short intensive basic skills programme (SIBS) and SJFT. The two-week Gateway to Work course is designed to increase the client's chances of getting a job by helping them with skills such as appropriate social behaviour, commitment and readiness to work. IAP is for a minimum of 13 weeks and aims to deal with more deep-seated barriers to work and to provide work experience. BET is for 26 weeks and aims to improve employability, literacy, numeracy and oral communication as well as developing jobsearch skills. The SIBS provision is designed for clients who lack the basic literacy and/or numeracy skills, which are needed to compete in the labour market. SJFT is available for clients who have generally been out of work for at least six months and lack the specific work-related skills required by employers. Fifty per cent of YMCA Training's Jobcentre Plus training is through programme centres which have jobsearch as the main element.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Life Skills																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	386		993		548		15										
Retained*	0		0		0		0	0									
Successfully completed	75		699		370		0	0									
Still in learning	270		26		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

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults												
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults												
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	232		1125		201							
Retained*	35	15	569	51	108	54						
Planned learning completed	17	7	176	16	24	12						
Gained job	29	12	208	18	55	27						
Still in training	166	72	81	7	2	1						

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

Programme Centres												
Programme Centres												
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	232		2137		962		3					
Planned learning completed	12	5	71	3	8	1	0	0				
Gained job	72	31	748	35	229	24	1	33				
Still in training	157	68	259	12	11	1	0	0				

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New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	203		925		304		1			
Retained*	54	27	392	42	143	47	0	0		
Planned learning completed	3	1	75	8	34	11	0	0		
Gained job	14	7	159	17	81	27	1	100		
Still in training	131	65	46	5	2	1	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

- very good individual support for learners
- good teaching and learning
- very effective links with external agencies and organisations
- good use of work placements and projects
- wide range of activities to enhance learning
- good accommodation and equipment in many training centres

WEAKNESSES

- some poor progress into jobs for New Deal 25+ and New Deal 18-24
- poor progress reviews
- inadequate short-term learning targets
- some poor learning resources
- limited sharing of good practice

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better reinforcement of induction topics
- better recording of achievement on work placements and projects
- more comprehensive and appropriate initial assessment in some training centres
- better systems to monitor punctuality and attendance

139. There is very good individual support for learners across the foundation programmes. Good pastoral support enables learners to discuss social and personal

problems with trainers. A variety of initiatives are used to increase the learners' self-esteem and personal development. Vouchers are given for improved attendance, punctuality and appropriate social behaviour. Learners' achievements are regularly celebrated with presentation ceremonies. In some training centres, staff organise a breakfast club before training begins. The kitchens are also used to teach cooking and related topics. There is a mediation service to help those who are estranged from, or experiencing difficulties with, their family. Some learners are supported in their role as carers and are helped to make financial claims on behalf of members of their family. In some training centres, close liaison with parents or carers includes discussions about learning or social concerns and changes in the learner's behaviour, levels of motivation or appearance. Where a mentor has been appointed to act as a friend and a support worker, learners report more stability in their lives. This has supported some learners to deal with their housing and welfare problems. Learners express a high level of satisfaction and feel supported and respected.

140. Teaching and learning are good. Sixty sessions were observed and 60 per cent were graded good or very good and 33 per cent were satisfactory. Sessions are well planned and there is very effective team teaching and peer learning. Staff have good knowledge and expertise in their subject areas. All have the required skills to engage learners who exhibit a wide range of abilities and additional learning needs. There is good interaction with learners. Staff use good questioning strategies to engage learners and enhance their learning. Practical activities reinforce concepts and learners' understanding. The good use of IT reinforces learning and learners find sessions stimulating and fun. However, there is insufficient reinforcement of induction topics during the learners' programmes.

141. YMCA Training has developed very effective links with external agencies and organisations. Excellent partnerships with external organisations enable training centres to offer community-based projects, which develop and challenge the personal skills of unemployed young people and adults of all abilities. Effective links with a training provider enables lift truck training and links with local retailers give learners access to work in this field. Training centres have strong links with personal advisers from Jobcentre Plus and Connexions. Information and guidance staff offer interview practice as well as advice and guidance. Links with local organisations allow seminars from drug and alcohol misuse counsellors and sessions dealing with sexual orientation and racial and sexual harassment. There is good use of external funding to enhance the provision of sports, visits, residentials and orienteering. A therapist comes to one training centre to offer aromatherapy, reflexology and relaxation sessions to groups of learners.

142. YMCA Training has developed a wide range of good work placements and projects which allow learners to carry out real work activities during their training programmes. Work placements are very well matched to individual learners' needs and their chosen career path. Employers and supervisors are very supportive and try to ensure that learners gain a range of transferable skills at work. Some learners can take vocational qualifications such as retailing and care. Clients on the environment task force option are able to take part in a range of excellent projects which offer real work

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situations and allow them to gain a range of skills. Two of the training centres have excellent links with local museums, and a railway. Clients on these projects are able to take part in a wide range of activities alongside a qualified trainer and many skilled volunteers. Clients are extremely positive about their project experience and the enhancement of their skills. However, they only keep diaries as a record of their work on projects and there is nothing to record the range of tasks done or the skills they achieve.

143. YMCA Training offers a wide range of activities to enhance learning. Learners are able to gain a range of additional qualifications during their training to enhance their prospects of progression to employment and/or further training. Qualifications include licences for counterbalance lift trucks and dumper trucks, first aid, basic health and safety, basic food hygiene, driving lessons and a basic computer qualification. In one training centre, 50 per cent of Life Skills learners achieve at least one qualification, and 71 per cent of those gained more than one. In another training centre, 43 per cent of clients on the voluntary sector option and 86 per cent of clients on the environment task force option achieved a qualification. Learners at some training centres take part in outside activities which are designed to increase their personal development, such as working as part of a team. Residential training is also part of the programme at some training centres. At one training centre, learners are able to take part in a residential which is organised and funded by Connexions. Learners are extremely positive about these initiatives. Some training centres use additional funds to enhance their programmes. Projects are highly beneficial to the local community and help to challenge negative values and behaviour of learners. In one training centre, staff organise a programme for pregnant teenagers and young mums aged 13-19.

144. Most of the training centres have good accommodation and equipment. The rooms are light and airy with comfortable and appropriate furniture. Recent examples of learning activities and learners' work are displayed to celebrate success, along with case studies of positive employment and progression outcomes. Displays are appropriate for the age group and produce a lively and stimulating working environment. Most centres have a caring, family atmosphere, which is non-threatening. They are easily accessible in town centres or close to good transport links. Many are well resourced with IT equipment. A few of the training centres have poor accommodation. They have poorly lit rooms, which are often inadequately heated and poorly cleaned. There is some poor access for learners who have restricted mobility. Some sessions are constantly interrupted by staff and learners walking through to gain access to other rooms.

145. There is poor progress into jobs for New Deal 25+ and New Deal 18-24 clients in some training centres. New management information systems have recently been developed for the adult programmes, but the data are not complete. Judgements have been made on the national data collected by YMCA Training over a four-year period. For 2001-02 on New Deal 25+, 18 per cent gained employment, and in the year to date 17 per cent have gained employment. On New Deal 18-24, 20 per cent gained employment in the year to date, and in 2001-02, 20 per cent were successful. Of the

clients who attended programme centres in 2001-02, 35 per cent gained employment and in the year to date, 31 per cent are successful. The data for Life Skills are not complete and judgements have been made on YMCA Training's national data and other data which can be verified. Based on this data, completion is good and progress into employment or further training for Life Skills learners is satisfactory at 35 per cent for this year, and 38 per cent for 2002-03.

146. Progress reviews are poor. Reviews are not carried out in a systematic manner and the quality varies. There are wide variations in the types of documents used and learners are not always given a copy. Reviews do not include full details of learners' achievements, or set specific timescales. There is insufficient co-ordination of all parties involved in the learning process. For example, some reviews do not take account of employers' views or learners' literacy and numeracy development. Some reviews do not always accurately reflect the full extent of the learners' progress. Learners are not actively encouraged to contribute fully in the process and rarely make personal comments. The subjects of health and safety and equality of opportunity are not always adequately dealt with or reinforced. Where subcontractors are used they are not always involved in the reviews. Some of the reviews are missed and others are not always carried out at the required time.

147. Most of the short-term learning targets in individual learning plans are inadequate. Individual learning plans contain few developmental targets which have sufficient emphasis on progress. Many individual learning plans contain only generic targets, such as improving reading or spelling. They do not have sufficient detail on learners' programmes. Some describe how initial assessment will be carried out but do not record the results. Initial assessment in some training centres is not comprehensive or appropriate. Targets do not include strategies for improving attendance or communication techniques and there are few targets for jobsearch activities beyond the production of letters and curriculum vitae. Learning plans are not regularly updated to show ongoing achievements. Learners make good progress in placements and projects, but their work is insufficiently recorded.

148. Some learning resources are poor. In some cases, there is insufficient differentiation to reflect the various levels of learners' abilities. The poor reproduction and small font size of some task sheets makes them difficult to read. In others, the language is too difficult for the learners to read. A few documents contain spelling and grammatical errors.

149. There is limited sharing of good practice. Examples of good practice were observed, but they are not being shared between training centres. In one example, good practice in one part of a training centre was not being shared with staff working in another part of the same building. The formulation of session plans differs widely throughout the organisation. In some centres, learners have mentors who give good support, but this good practice is not carried out consistently in all training centres. Very good practice in basic skills in one training centre is not replicated throughout the organisation. Staff in one training centre requested further development of individual

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learning plans as part of the basic skills quality initiative. They were unaware of the good practice established at a nearby training centre. Some training centres have good systems to monitor punctuality and attendance, while other training centres have problems managing this area.

Good Practice

All employers used by one training centre produce a detailed training plan which outlines the skills and competences which the client can expect to gain as a result of their work placement. The training adviser for work placements monitors this during the client's reviews.