

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

**27 August 2002**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

## Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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



## SUMMARY

### The provider

North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a company limited by guarantee. It has its head office and main training facility in Chesterfield, North Derbyshire, and a second training centre at Sutton-in-Ashfield in Nottinghamshire. Its training division provides work-based learning for young people and adults in engineering, business administration, accounts, information and communications technology, retailing, customer service and distribution, hospitality, oral health care and foundation for work. There are 406 learners in all, of whom 130 are advanced modern apprentices, 140 are foundation modern apprentices, and 105 learners are taking national vocational qualifications. A further 31 are clients on work-based learning for adults programmes.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training is satisfactory in business administration, hospitality, information and communications technology and in engineering. It is good on foundation programmes. Training in retailing, customer service and distribution, and oral health care is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its equal opportunities provision are satisfactory. However, its arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory.

### GRADES

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

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

## KEY STRENGTHS

- good learning resources
- good communications
- high level of support for learners

## KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate individual learning plans
- slow progress towards achievement
- weak monitoring of quality assurance arrangements

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 11 inspectors spent a total of 43 days at North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NDCCI) in August 2002. They visited 74 workplaces and five subcontractors, and interviewed 97 learners and 45 workplace supervisors or employers. They carried out 34 interviews with NDCCI staff and observed assessments, reviews and 11 learning sessions. They examined learners' portfolios, individual learning plans, progress review records, policies, procedures, minutes of meetings and internal and external verifiers' reports. NDCCI's most recent self-assessment report was completed February 2002.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Information & communications technology	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Health, social care & public services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Foundation programmes	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. NDCCI is a company limited by guarantee. Its head office is in Chesterfield. It was established in 1899 and has provided government-funded training since 1983, when it first set up a youth training scheme. Its training division now employs 34 full-time equivalent staff, and offers training in engineering, business administration, accounts, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing, customer service and distribution, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, as well as in oral health care and foundation for work. Most learners are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs). NDCCI subcontracts with local colleges and training providers for the provision of background knowledge and/or assessment in some programme areas. NDCCI's training activities include preparatory programmes for learners moving into employment or further training, work-based learning for young people through foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and foundation programmes, and short training programmes for adults. Corporate training is also available. NDCCI offers training to people across north Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire through contracts with the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). It also provides work-based learning for adults through contracts with Jobcentre Plus.

3. In May 2002, the unemployment rate was 4.1 per cent in Chesterfield, 3.5 per cent in Nottinghamshire and 3 per cent nationally. Eighty per cent of businesses in the area are small or medium-sized, and most are in the manufacturing and service sectors. The largest concentration of population in north Derbyshire is in Chesterfield. At the time of the 1991 census, people from minority ethnic groups made up 0.9 per cent of the population of North Derbyshire, 1.5 per cent of the population of Nottinghamshire, and 6.2 per cent of the population of England.

4. In 2001, the number of school leavers in Derbyshire achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 50 per cent, compared with the national average of 48 per cent. In Nottinghamshire, 42 per cent of school leavers achieved five GCSEs at grade C or above. In north Derbyshire, 68 per cent of 16 year olds continue in full-time education and 11 per cent enter government-funded training. In Nottinghamshire, 71 per cent of 16 year olds continue in full-time education and 11 per cent enter government-funding training. The national average for continuing in education is 71 per cent, with 8 per cent entering government-funded training.



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

5. Learners on all training programmes receive good support from NDCCI's staff, and have good work placements. In engineering, learners are also well supported by their employers. However, retention and achievement rates are low, and there is some poor assessment practice, particularly by subcontractors. Work-based learning in business administration is satisfactory. Learners have access to good resources. Many gain additional qualifications. Key skills assessments do not begin until late in the training programme, and many business learners make slow progress towards completing their modern apprenticeship framework. In information and communications technology (ICT), there are good work placements, offering learners a wide range of experience. The workstations at NDCCI's training centre are very good, and industry-standard software is used. However, there is poor internal verification on ICT programmes. In retailing, customer service and transportation, learners have good work placements, but they make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications, and key skills training is introduced late. In retailing and warehousing, assessment is particularly thorough, but in customer service and call-handling it is poor. The support given to hospitality learners is outstanding. The practical training and assessment is good, and learners take part in a wide range of short additional courses. Oral health care learners gain a high degree of technical skill and produce good work. NDCCI has managed the transition from an examination-based course to the new NVQ programme very well. However, there is some very poor assessment practice, and individual learning plans are ineffective. Foundation learners are given outstanding support by their NDCCI trainers. They are given a comprehensive initial assessment which ensures their additional needs are identified and met quickly. They make good progress into jobs and further training. The same judgements apply to clients on work-based learning for adults programmes.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Grade 3

6. NDCCI's training division is run by a training manager who reports to the company's chief executive. She is assisted by four team leaders, responsible for workshops, education and business links, the ICT centre, and the employer route respectively. There is also a health and safety officer. The company's quality assurance manager also oversees the quality of training. At the Derbyshire training centre, there are six project officers who are responsible for the workshops, seven tutors and assessors, and six recruitment and monitoring officers. At the Nottinghamshire training centre, there are two training officers, one tutor and two administrators. There are also finance and administrative staff who work on behalf of both centres. NDCCI has an equal opportunities policy which is regularly reviewed, and procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying. The quality assurance policy, manual and procedures cover all NDCCI's operations, including the main training functions. NDCCI carried out its first annual self-assessment in June 1998. The most recent self-assessment report was published in February 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- good communications
- comprehensive and accessible management information system
- good promotion of equal opportunities
- effective use of feedback from learners to bring about improvement
- good projects and external links to widen participation in training
- good staff involvement in the self-assessment process

### WEAKNESSES

- no systematic accreditation of prior learning
- no equal opportunities monitoring of training programme performance
- poor monitoring of employers' and subcontractors' equal opportunity arrangements
- weak monitoring of quality assurance arrangements

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better links between strategic and operational objectives

7. Good communications enable NDCCI to work effectively across its two sites. Staff are able to contribute ideas and suggestions through a well-established structure of meetings. There are regular meetings of managers, team leaders and teams, ensuring that information flows both up and down the organisation. Staff are able to speak openly at the meetings, and feedback is always given on issues raised. Staff attend very

productive training days, where they engage in team building or receive training on topics such as equal opportunities or business planning. They gain a wider knowledge of NDCCI's work, and that of their colleagues, through working lunches where individuals give a two minute presentation on their role and responsibilities. A wide range of communications media are used to help staff understand the objectives and operations of NDCCI, as well as the roles and responsibilities of their colleagues. NDCCI has good external communications with commercial and public organisations from which it collects market intelligence and information on local employment and education developments. This information is then used in strategic and business planning. Regular involvement with local commercial groups and committees, and representation on national training bodies, ensures a constant flow of information between NDCCI, employers and the local community.

8. NDCCI's management information system is used effectively. It is comprehensive and accessible. Learners' progress is monitored, and regular reports are passed to managers. These include lists of items for action, such as dates for learners' progress reviews, as well as reports on data required under LSC contracts. The computerised system has recently been updated to include the dates learners achieve each unit of their qualification. Administration staff are effectively involved in the team discussions about contractual targets. They point out to managers any emerging issues which appear in the data or in returned feedback forms from learners.

9. Although NDCCI has several general strategic objectives, they are not related directly to the operational objectives in the business plan. The operational objectives are specific and measurable and are used for business monitoring and improvement.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 3**

10. NDCCI has 406 learners, of whom 41 per cent are men and 59 per cent are women. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic communities is 2.7 per cent. This exceeds the minority ethnic proportion of the local population, which is 1.2 per cent. Following initial assessment, 26 per cent of all learners receive additional learning or personal support. Five per cent of learners have a disability.

11. NDCCI has an equal opportunities policy, procedures for its implementation, and an equal opportunities action plan. The policy is written in language which is easy to understand, and is carefully explained to staff and learners during induction. It is reviewed each year or when legislation changes. NDCCI has allocated individual responsibilities for equal opportunities. Tutors are responsible for equal opportunities induction training. Most of the other NDCCI staff have been given training on equal opportunities. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Learners have a good awareness of how to deal with harassment and bullying, how to make a complaint, and what their rights and responsibilities are.

12. NDCCI has put a great deal of work into improving accessibility to its learning programmes. Ten per cent of all its learners are on level 1 NVQ programmes, which give access to employment and higher level qualifications. NDCCI has recently moved to new premises that provide easy access for people with restricted mobility. Through its press releases, newspaper and website, NDCCI has taken care to promote equal opportunities by using positive images of women and learners from minority ethnic communities. It has developed a broad range of highly informative and well presented information. This includes colourful leaflets for employers, adult and youth learners, and an interesting range of case studies on its website. As part of its promotion of training and careers, NDCCI has also prepared specific information for employers, youth and community groups and school children. Materials used during learners' induction to equal opportunities include professionally prepared videos, activity sheets and an informative booklet covering equal opportunities legislation, learners' rights and responsibilities, and the grievance and complaints procedures. Marketing, learning and other promotional material is only available in English.

13. There are effective links with local feeder schools and the careers service. NDCCI, through a project called '39 steps', has arranged for more than 150 disaffected school students to participate in work experience and attend taster courses. Head teachers have reported that the programme is very successful in improving students' attendance and behaviour on their return to school. Some of these pupils have now progressed from school onto work-based learning programmes. NDCCI has also used funding from the European Community to employ an additional full-time member of staff. He works closely with employers and external agencies to encourage the employment and training of people with disabilities. NDCCI is part of several networks and partnerships which promote diversity.

14. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace and at

subcontracted training providers. When learners start their training, the employers and subcontractors sign an agreement which includes a commitment to equal opportunities. However, NDCCI has no effective method for checking compliance with this, and no action is taken to follow it up. The employers and subcontractors are not vetted thoroughly to ensure that they are fully committed to equality of opportunity.

15. Equality of opportunity is a standing item on the agendas of staff and management team meetings. Learners' ethnicity, gender and disabilities are monitored for LSC contractual purposes. There has also been some equal opportunities monitoring of NDCCI's staff. However, NDCCI does not monitor pass, progression and retention rates, or applications for training and employment, by gender, ethnicity and disability. NDCCI has not set any recruitment targets to redress the gender imbalances in some areas of learning.

16. NDCCI carries out a fact-finding interview with all new learners. The interview is designed to help identify the potential learner's vocational training aims, support needs, and prior learning and experience. Not all interviewees bring with them sufficient evidence of their prior learning or support needs. Most learners are given further diagnostic tests and assessments to identify their learning support needs. However, NDCCI does not undertake any further investigation to establish prior learning, and it is often omitted from individual learning plans. For example, some oral health learners have qualifications which have not been taken into account. In retailing and customer service, one learner has a level 3 NVQ in call handling which was not accredited when he started a level 2 NVQ in customer service. There are also examples of learners who are completing key skills awards when they already have the qualification.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 4

17. NDCCI has a quality assurance policy and a set of procedures which are based on nationally recognised quality assurance procedures. There is a quality assurance manager for the whole of NDCCI. The quality assurance required by the awarding body is the responsibility of a team leader in the training team. The company's quality assurance manager works with the training team leaders to analyse the key quality assurance processes for training. Each process is covered by a set of clear and detailed forms. Quality assurance has recently become an agenda item at team leaders' meetings. A number of subgroups within the training team have been set up to deal with quality assurance issues. These examine areas such as the monitoring of subcontractors, and retention and achievement rates. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these groups.

18. There is weak monitoring of the quality assurance arrangements. To date, only the review process has been audited. This involved a sample of 28 learners. The audit highlighted inconsistencies in action plans and reviews. The standard documents are not always fully completed. Some reviews and action plans are detailed and effective while others do not focus enough on the individual learner. Some targets are ineffective. Some occupational areas rely heavily on off-the-job training, but there is no consistent checking of the quality of this training. NDCCI has recently begun observations of teaching and training by its staff and subcontractors. However, there is no schedule of observations and no system to monitor who has been observed.

19. There is poor assessment planning in some occupational areas. In one occupational area, no checks are made to ensure that learners complete one stage of learning before proceeding to the next. There is weak internal verification in a number of occupational areas. In ICT, customer services and call handling, the poor assessment practices have not been identified by internal verification. Some areas have poor sampling plans. On ICT programmes, internal verification is infrequent. There is a lack of guidance for assessors. On the oral health programme, poor assessment has been identified by NDCCI and is beginning to be remedied.

20. Feedback from learners and employers is collected systematically on all programmes. Learners' views are sought after their interview, during the programme and at the end of the programme. Changes have occurred as a result of this, for example, the induction process has recently been improved as a result of negative feedback. The learners' views are analysed, and feedback is given on the results.

21. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process. They contribute significantly to self-assessment through attendance at away days and team meetings. Detailed briefings are given on the self-assessment process and the 'Common Inspection Framework', to ensure that staff understand the process and can participate in the most effective way. Information and ideas are collected and analysed, and members of staff help to devise action plans for their teams. This encourages commitment to the actions and target

dates. Learners and employers are informed of the process but apart from completing evaluation questionnaires, they do not contribute directly. NDCCI accurately identified some of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, but the grades awarded by inspectors did not match those in the self-assessment report.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	56	3

22. NDCCI provides training for 56 learners in disciplines including mechanical engineering, motor vehicle engineering, and manufacturing. There are 15 learners on motor vehicle engineering programmes, 17 on engineering programmes and 24 on programmes in performing manufacturing operations. The assessment and verification of motor vehicle engineering advanced modern apprenticeships is subcontracted to two local training providers. NDCCI staff carry out initial assessments, learners' progress reviews and monitoring visits. NDCCI has new facilities which provide a sheltered work environment for learners following level 1 NVQs in performing manufacturing operations. Many of these learners have additional learning and/or social needs. They carry out work for local companies in the workshops, and progress to work experience when their confidence improves. Young people interested in an engineering career are offered a range of options to choose from. NDCCI has links with good quality automotive, production and manufacturing companies. Work placements offer varied, interesting and challenging work, and the chance to gain additional qualifications. Learners benefit from the range of choice and diversity of challenges open to them. Most of the modern apprentices are employed.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	14		9		13		25									
Retained*	0		1		1		9									
Successfully completed	0		1		1		9									
Still in learning	12		4		1		1									

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



Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		12		3											
Retained*	0		0	0	0	0										
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0										
Still in learning	9		7	58	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	9		26		36		47		65							
Retained*	0		2		14	39	18	38	27	42						
Successfully completed	0		2		14	39	18	38	27	42						
Still in learning	9		10		3	8	0	0	0	0						

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

## STRENGTHS

- highly effective support for learners
- particularly supportive employers

## WEAKNESSES

- some poor assessment practices by subcontractors
- poor retention and achievement rates in motor vehicle engineering

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more unit certification in engineering programmes

23. NDCCI provides good pastoral and learning support for learners. Particular care is taken to help learners who have identified additional needs. Support is available for literacy and numeracy and well as learning and social needs. Learners are dealt with

sensitively, effectively and with exceptional consideration. They value the encouragement they are given. Learners are collected and taken to work if they have problems with transport. There is regular, consistent monitoring of learners' progress. Additional reviews often take place, enabling staff to identify problems and deal with them promptly. Employers are chosen carefully by the staff, and are matched with the particular requirements of the learners. One learner with dyslexia, additional social needs and a very high IQ was placed in a small engineering company that carries out many traditional, often forgotten engineering processes. In an environment without peer pressure, he was able to gain a diversity of experience and has made good progress through his NVQ. Learners interviewed said that they would have found it difficult to remain on their programmes without the support they have been given by NDCCI's staff.

24. NDCCI's work-placement providers and employers provide active and flexible support, and offer a wide range of opportunities for learners. Advanced modern apprentices in particular have access to many additional qualifications, some of which are internationally recognised. Learners interviewed expressed particular appreciation of the support they receive from their employers. Employers value the business-related training. Learners are well supported in their practical training by effective workplace mentors. NDCCI staff regularly liaise with employers, supporting both them and the learners. Employers provide a range of work activities which meet all the NVQ requirements. Some employers move learners between departments to give them a broad range of training. One employer shut down an entire production line so a learner could take part in a fire drill. There is a strong working relationship between NDCCI and the employers. Many learners continue with the same employer after their training is complete, and enjoy good career prospects. Some employers actively involve former NDCCI learners in the management of learning and support of current learners.

25. The assessment practice of some subcontractors is poor. They rely too much on witness statements, and assessment plans are insufficiently structured. The roles and responsibilities of the subcontractors are unclear, and this leads to some confusion among the learners and, in some cases, the employers. Assessments undertaken by one college subcontractor in engineering include more observation than actual assessment and the assessor relies heavily on witness statements and questioning evidence. Assessments for manufacturing NVQs at level 1 are carried out by NDCCI staff both in the workplace and at the training centre. These assessments are valid and they are well planned and well structured.

26. The retention and achievement rates in motor vehicle engineering are poor. Only two motor vehicle advanced modern apprentices have achieved their qualification since 1998-99, and of 27 learners who started programmes, only eight are still in learning. The poor achievement and retention rates in motor vehicle engineering were highlighted by the Training Standards Council (TSC) inspection in 1999. NDCCI subsequently took action to change the subcontractor, and since that time the number of learners leaving their programme early has fallen. Seven of the 11 learners who have started motor vehicle engineering programmes since 1999-2000 are still in learning. It is too early to

judge the effect of the new subcontractor on longer-term retention and achievement rates. Most learners on the performing manufacturing operations NVQ programmes have additional learning and/or social needs, and they are given substantial additional support and pastoral care. The retention and achievement rates on NVQ programmes were consistent at around 40 per cent between 1998-99 and 2001-01. Of the 35 learners who started programmes in 2001-02 and 2002-03, 19 are still in learning. In view of the large proportion of learners with additional learning and/or social needs, the retention and achievement rates on NVQ programmes are satisfactory.

27. There is not enough certification of individual NVQ units in engineering programmes. The collection and assessment of evidence, and the relating of evidence to performance criteria can be a lengthy activity. Unit certification helps to focus the learner on making progress and provide a sense of achievement.

#### **Good Practice**

*One learner is currently working towards an NVQ in performing manufacturing operations at level 1. When the learner had to move into single accommodation, NDCCI staff supported her and provided an opportunity for her to learn additional cookery skills in the company's hospitality and catering section. This was highly valued by the learner, who is far more confident about living alone as a result.*

#### **Poor Practice**

*One college subcontractor's assessor was observed reviewing the learning programme rather than assessing the learner. The employer was being given advice on future NVQ units for a learner. The advice given related to a particular optional unit of an NVQ and it was clear that the employer did not feel it was appropriate to the learner's role. Discussion with the learner also indicated that it was inappropriate, yet the subcontractor still pursued the issue.*

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	157	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	17	3

28. NDCCI provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ training in administration, accountancy and estate agency. It also offers New Deal programmes and work-based learning for adults. There are five clients on New Deal and 12 adult learners.

29. Most learners apply for training with NDCCI in response to advertisements, or are referred by the careers service. A few are already in employment and are directed to NDCCI by their employers. All learners have an interview and an initial key skills assessment before they start their learning. Those learners not referred by employers also have an initial assessment of their job skills. All learners have a one-day induction in the training centre which includes an introduction to policies and procedures, NVQ paperwork, health and safety and equal opportunities. They are given a learner pack which contains all this information for reference. Learners are employed in a wide range of organisations, including engineering companies, estate agents, the magistrates' court and accountancy offices. In addition to on-the-job learning, learners are required to attend one of the training centres for off-the-job learning. Administration learners attend for a full-day, half-day or a drop-in evening session. The frequency of attendance ranges from weekly to once a fortnight or once a month. The accounting training is managed by a subcontractor who is responsible for all aspects of the training including assessment and internal verification. Accounting learners attend off-the-job training on block release for three days each month. Training officers visit all learners in their workplaces at least once every three months to review their progress. Administration and estate agency learners are also visited in the workplace monthly by their assessor for assessment and guidance. All accounting assessment is undertaken in NDCCI's North Derbyshire training centre. Inspectors found five of the same strengths as were identified in the self-assessment report. They found additional weaknesses which had not been identified by NDCCI.

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	6		29		81		49		43							
Retained*	0		0		21		15	31	12	28						
Successfully completed	0		0		20		14	29	12	28						
Still in learning	6		26		35		12	24	8	19						

\*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							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		66		51		37		9							
Retained*	0		12		20		17	46	6	67						
Successfully completed	0		4		19		17	46	5	56						
Still in learning	15		45		3		0	0	0	0						

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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		2		6		16		42							
Retained*	0		0		2	33	11	69	22	52						
Successfully completed	0		0		2	33	11	69	20	48						
Still in learning	5		1		1	17	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 off-the-job training
- highly supportive employers
- good career progression
- good learning resources in the training centre
- high rate of participation in additional qualifications for administration learners

## **WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate development of background knowledge and understanding in administration
- some weak assessment practice
- delayed assessment of key skills in accounting
- slow progress towards achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more involvement of supervisors in NVQ process
- wider access to materials providing the supporting theory

30. NDCCI provides good off-the-job training. In accountancy, learners are given an annual plan of all the block- and day-release training which is available, and they choose which sessions they need to attend. The learning sessions are well planned. The training is delivered by a fully qualified accountant who provides background knowledge backed by many years of occupational experience. The training is supported by a good range of texts, handouts, tutor notes and practise questions to reinforce learning. There are also optional revision courses for the examination. The examination results for the past three years all meet or exceed the national average. There is also good key skills and ICT training. In business administration, off-the-job training is flexible and designed to meet learners' needs. Learners work on a range of software applications and are well prepared for external examinations and key skills tests. Staff are always available to assist learners. There are good facilities for learners who need to obtain additional experience in office procedures such as sending fax messages, photocopying, mail processing and reception duties.

31. Employers are committed to ensuring that learners are successful in their learning. They give them good support in the workplace. One employer provides all learners in the company with a mentor who monitors their on- and off-the-job learning. Other employers have formal on-the-job training plans. Many employers have provided and funded off-the-job training courses to help learners' progress within their work role, and to support the modern apprenticeship learning. The courses include health and safety training, book-keeping courses and financial planning certificates. Some accounting employers are funding learners who have completed their modern apprenticeship to continue their professional studies and become qualified accountants.

32. Learners make good career progress. Many administration and accountancy

learners have started programmes as school leavers with no occupational skills or knowledge. As their learning has progressed, they have been given more responsibilities and, in some cases, have been promoted. In accounting, some learners have advanced from being office juniors and undertaking routine tasks, to completing the company's accounts, going on audit visits, and supervising junior staff. Learners who complete the NVQ at level 4 move on to professional studies and continue to make good career progress. Administration learners have been promoted from junior positions to being administrators for office managers.

33. There are good learning resources in the training centre. There is a new, well-equipped, ground-floor learning resource centre, which is spacious and air-conditioned. Learners with mobility difficulties can get to it easily. There are 20 computer terminals, all complete with a range of industry-standard software. Learners can drop in to the centre and use these facilities at any time. Learners may also use the photocopier, franking and fax machines, and other items of office equipment which are in the centre. There is a good range of textbooks, study materials and practice examination papers to support learning and the development of ICT skills.

34. Administration learners have good opportunities to obtain qualifications in addition to their NVQs and key skills awards. These include initial text processing and word processing stages 1, 2 and 3, and audio transcription. Learners can also gain other certificates such as basic food hygiene, health and safety, and first aid. These awards give learners recognition for their developing skills and knowledge, and are extremely useful when they seek promotion in their organisations or apply for jobs in other companies. Learners receive a good standard of tuition in the information technology (IT) centre, where they use workbooks independently under tutors' guidance. They are well prepared for examinations by working through a range of past examination papers. The results they obtain confirm the good quality of the training they receive.

35. There are some weak assessment practices. Assessments in accounting are not always well planned. Accounting learners are not assessed in the workplace. Accounting portfolios are not started at the beginning of the learning process, and there is too much reliance on projects and simulations, when work-based evidence could have been used. In both accounting and business administration, the evidence provided does not always cover all the performance criteria, or the full scope and range of the NVQ units. However, the long-term planning of assessment for the administration learners is good.

36. There is a delay in the assessment of key skills. Learners have often completed or almost completed their NVQ before key skills assessment starts. In accounting, the assessment is not integrated with the NVQ, and learners complete a totally separate portfolio of key skills evidence. This has been identified as a weakness, and NDCCI now invites learners to key skills workshops. This helps learners to build skills and evidence of knowledge to satisfy the key skills requirements, and gives extra opportunities for assessment. However, it is a recent introduction, and over the past four years, 54 of the learners who left without achieving all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship

framework had gained NVQs but not key skills awards.

37. Learners make slow progress towards completing their modern apprenticeship frameworks. There are eight advanced modern apprentices who have been in learning since 1998. In administration, one learner had been in learning for eight months before completing an NVQ unit. In accounting, there is no target-setting or action-planning for non-examined units. Most learners have units outstanding from one NVQ level after they have progressed to the next level. Some learners have completed the examined units of NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4 but have not fully completed any of the NVQs. No action plans exist for the completion of the outstanding units, and learners are responsible for setting their own targets for completion.

38. Administration learners' background knowledge and understanding are inadequate. Although they answer written questions on the basis of their work experience, little or no time is devoted to increasing their subject knowledge and developing their understanding in a systematic way. Learners are not given their own copies of textbooks. When they have collected evidence from the workplace for a unit, they are given written questions to answer. Many learners' answers are based solely on their work experience. They are unable to extend their answers because their knowledge is restricted to their workplace practices.

39. There is too little involvement of workplace supervisors in the NVQ process. Some workplace supervisors and employers are not completely familiar with the details of NVQs and key skills and do not fully understand how learners are assessed. This makes it difficult for them to plan, organise and develop learners' practical competences and the related knowledge requirements.

#### **Good Practice**

*Learners with additional learning and social needs are encouraged to apply to join the work-based learning programme leading to a level 1 NVQ. They are placed with supportive employers and given good opportunities for on- and off-the-job training. During their time on the programme, their confidence and self-esteem increase and they develop a range of skills which helps them to obtain a permanent job.*



**Information & communications technology****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	9	3

40. There are 24 learners working towards qualifications in ICT, 80 per cent of learners are men. There are four foundation modern apprentices, two of whom are working towards qualifications in using IT and two towards qualifications in installing and supporting IT systems. The foundation modern apprentices attend off-the-job training for half a day or a full day each week. The 11 advanced modern apprentices working towards qualifications in using IT or installing and supporting IT systems learn on the job, with optional off-the-job support. All are unemployed when they join the programme. Seven attend the centre full time, and two are on work placements. There is also one learner working towards a level 4 NVQ in IT. Learners are recruited through careers conventions, or by recommendation by friends or relatives. All applicants are interviewed and their current skills and learning needs are assessed. They are then placed with employers. All learners are given an induction on their first day which covers basic health and safety, equality of opportunity, the agreement of an individual learning plan and an introduction to their IT programme. Work-placement providers are encouraged to employ learners. Currently, 15 learners are employed. Most learners attend the training centre for one day each week for key skills support and background knowledge training. There are nine learners on programmes of work-based learning for adults. They work towards levels 1 and 2 of a basic computer literacy qualification. There are seven trainer/assessors and two internal verifiers. They are all qualified trainers, and three also have qualifications in key skills. The learners are usually visited in their workplace every four weeks. All assessment takes place in the workplace. Progress reviews for modern apprentices take place every three months, and for adults they take place every four or five weeks.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3		3		8		6		5							
Retained*	0		0		2		3	50	1	20						
Successfully completed	0		0		2		3	43	1	20						
Still in learning	3		3		4		1	14	0	0						

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			3		5		5		1							
Retained*			2		3	60	3	60	1	100						
Successfully completed			0		3	60	3	60	0	0						
Still in learning			3		0	0	1	20	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.	%	
Number of starts	18		34		33		15		5		
Retained*	9	50	26	76	22	67	7	47	3	60	
Planned learning completed	9	50	26	76	22	67	7	47	3	60	
Gained job	3	17	9	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Still in training	9	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

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

## **STRENGTHS**

- good retention and achievement rates for adults on short courses
- good work placements providing wide-ranging opportunities for learning
- good off-the-job training
- highly effective support for learners

## **WEAKNESSES**

- poor internal verification
- inadequate use of assessment to monitor progress towards NVQs
- late introduction of new modern apprenticeship framework

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- earlier introduction to key skills for modern apprentices

41. Retention and achievement rates are very good and rising for adults. In the last full year, 76 per cent of adults stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, and these all completed their planned learning. No adults have left the programme early this year so far, and all those who have finished have completed their planned learning. The retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices are satisfactory at about 60 per cent for both.

42. There are good work placements providing wide-ranging opportunities for learning. For most learners on work placements, supportive employers rotate job roles to provide them with broader experience, and further training. Learners are engaged in real work where they can learn technical skills and the ability to work effectively under commercial pressure. Initial assessment effectively matches learners' job aspirations to work placements. NDCCI enjoys good relationships with employers. At one company, the supervisor had suggested that two new employees enrol as modern apprentices with NDCCI because she had been a learner there herself.

43. Off-the-job training is good. The ICT training room is light, airy, well decorated and air-conditioned. The workstations are very good. The hardware is very powerful, and runs the latest software used in commerce and industry. The desks are spacious and learners have enough room for their books and notes. Footrests, wristrests and anti-glare screens are available to those who ask for them. In one session observed, all three of these ergonomic aids to safe working practices were being used by learners. The computer network is robust, and learners' progress is not interrupted by computer

failures. Tutors are knowledgeable and respond quickly and effectively to requests for help. There is a good range of learning materials, from books to CD-based multimedia material. On-line assessment is available for one examination-based IT qualification. Learners who attend off-the-job training progress well and gain additional qualifications. They also have the opportunity to gain qualifications and knowledge outside ICT, such as basic food hygiene, and health and safety certificates.

44. There is highly effective support for learners. NDCCI's staff visit learners regularly and frequently. Assessors visit every four weeks, or more often if the learner needs extra support. They book several visits in advance so that timetabling difficulties can be avoided. Their visits concentrate on portfolio-building and learners' progress towards qualifications. Assessors and learners agree clear short-term action plans to be completed by the next visit, and discuss the work done since the last visit. Assessors plan effectively with employers so that learners are given the work experience they need to complete the qualification. Monitoring officers also visit every two to three months and hold a comprehensive review which involves the learners' supervisor. They are effective in helping the supervisor to participate constructively in the learner's training. They discuss learners' personal development as well as their progress towards their qualification. They also discuss whether any equal opportunities issues have arisen, as well as providing pastoral support. The young people value this support. One young learner commented that NDCCI's staff really cared about her and the other learners. Adults in the learning centre are also supported well.

45. Internal verification on ICT programmes is poor. An assessor has just retired from the organisation and now the department has no staff with the occupational competence to teach installing and supporting IT systems. This affects seven of the 16 modern apprentices. Internal verifiers fail to identify weak assessment practice where evidence is evaluated but not formally assessed. They also fail to identify slow progress. This weakness has been identified by NDCCI's managers, and the internal verifier has recently initiated a series of assessor development meetings designed to standardise their judgements. The verification sampling plan is poor. It fails to ensure that each assessor is verified against each unit. There has been insufficient attention given to the reliability of assessment decisions and the suitability of assessment practices. Only five portfolios have been sampled in the last ten months.

46. Assessment is not used adequately to monitor progress. Individual learning plans are poor. They do not include the technical certificate required to complete the modern apprenticeship framework. Some show key skills which are no longer part of the framework. They do not show intermediate targets against which progress can be reviewed. Assessment plans are not individualised, and they fail to provide intermediate targets. Assessment planning lacks an overall structure. Although there is clear short term action-planning, there is no overall plan showing how each month's activities contribute to the achievement of the unit or qualification. Neither the learner nor the assessor has a sufficiently detailed record of the progress made. One learner's progress record simply showed one of eight units completed, although he had pieces of good evidence for many of the other seven. Reviews lack clear targets against which progress

can be reviewed. Assessors visit learners, and although they provide some feedback on evidence they fail to record this as an assessment. Learners' files contain too much unassessed evidence. Assessor's recording of partial unit achievement is inadequate. Identification of poor performance and potential underachievement is insufficiently systematic. There are late reviews and learners' progress is slow. One advanced modern apprentice is in the last six months of a two-year programme, but has only completed three of the six units in her level 2 qualification, and has yet to start her level 3 qualification.

47. The modern apprenticeship framework was introduced late. A new modern apprenticeship framework came into effect early in 2001. Learners joining since then have, until recently, been working to the wrong framework. Assessors, learners and employers are insufficiently aware that learners must obtain a technical certificate in order to complete their modern apprenticeship framework. Individual learning plans do not include this technical certificate. Assessors have not discussed the technical certificate with learners and their employers. In some cases, training courses organised by the employer which would have fulfilled the requirement for a technical certificate, were not credited to the modern apprenticeship framework.

48. Overall, the teaching of key skills is satisfactory. There is no evidence that delays in starting learners' key skills programmes are affecting achievement. Assessors integrate key skills assessment with vocational assessments. However, for some learners, the key skills programme begins significantly later than the NVQ programme. Some learners underestimate the importance of key skills. Key skills are not given an equal priority with the rest of the modern apprenticeship framework.

#### Good Practice

*One young learner was placed in the IT development team in a large organisation. The learner's manager discussed the NVQ with the assessor and it was agreed that the learner's job roles would allow her to meet the requirements of the qualification. However, he believed that working in other departments as well could enhance the learner's experience, and make her a more valuable worker. He discussed the situation with the managers of the IT customer support and IT network support teams and arranged for the learner to spend significant time in those departments too. This will extend her learning and allow her to make a more informed choice of career.*

#### Poor Practice

*One able young learner is working towards a level 2 qualification because his assessor did not know that the modern apprenticeship framework no longer required this. The learner finds the work unchallenging and demotivating, and is not learning anything from it. He feels it is a tedious chore that he needs to complete before beginning his real learning.*

**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	88	4
New Deal 18-24	4	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	1	None

49. NDCCI provides modern apprenticeships and NVQ training in retailing, customer service, call handling and warehousing. It also offers NVQ training in international trade and service. There are 14 advanced modern apprentices, 48 foundation modern apprentices and 26 learners on NVQ programmes. There are also five learners on adult programmes. Many learners are employed at the start of their training. Those who are not employed are referred by the local careers service or Jobcentre Plus. Most of the learning takes place in the workplace. Some learners attend NDCCI's training centre for key skills, basic skills and other technical training. Assessments and progress reviews are carried out by NDCCI staff, with the exception of the international trade NVQ which is assessed by a subcontractor. There are two assessors and one internal verifier responsible for retailing and warehousing. A team of five staff is responsible for the assessment and verification of customer service and call handling. These assessors also assess administration and ICT qualifications. All assessors have or are working towards assessors' qualifications.

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		10		18		24		9							
Retained*	0		0		2		12	50	5	56						
Successfully completed	0		0		2		12	50	5	56						
Still in learning	1		8		5		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

NORTH DERBYSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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	24		48		35		15		2							
Retained*	0		2		13		6		1	50						
Successfully completed	0		2		11		4		0	0						
Still in learning	21		21		5		1		0	0						

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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	21		20		22		32		17							
Retained*	0		6	30	12	55	17	53	10	59						
Successfully completed	0		4	20	12	55	16	50	8	47						
Still in learning	18		8	40	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

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.	%
Number of starts	1		5		6		15			
Retained*	0	0	1	20	6	100	8	53		
Planned learning completed	0	0	1	20	6	100	8	53		
Gained job	0	0	2	40	5	83	7	47		
Still in training	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0		

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

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	5				6		15			
Retained*	0	0			6	100	8	53		
Planned learning completed	0	0			6	100	8	53		
Gained job	0	0			5	83	7	47		
Still in training	4	80			0	0	0	0		

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

## STRENGTHS

- good work placements
- good support for learners
- good achievement and job outcomes on adult programmes
- thorough assessment in retailing and warehousing

## WEAKNESSES

- slow progress towards achievement
- poorly planned learning
- late introduction of key skills training
- poor assessment and verification in customer service and call handling

50. NDCCI has developed a wide range of good work placements for learners. The employers value the learners they have on work placements and seek to employ them as soon as possible. Many of the employers have staff who themselves have been on training programmes with NDCCI. The work placements provide good opportunities for learners to develop their skills. In one work placement, a learner has redesigned the company's Internet website as part of his course. In another, a learner on a level one programme had been given responsibility for the first aisle in a supermarket, a very important role in attracting the company's customers.

51. There is good support for learners. Monitoring officers and assessors make frequent visits to learners' workplaces. Assessors visit learners at least every month, and sometimes as often as every two weeks. The monitoring officer visits at least every six weeks. If learners need to, they are able to request additional visits, and NDCCI staff respond promptly. Learners with additional needs receive good specialist support. Help



is provided to develop learners' spelling and handwriting, and to help them complete the written elements of the training programme.

52. There have been good achievement and job entry rates on the adult training programmes. Learners attend well-resourced jobsearch sessions at the training centre. Each learner must apply for at least two jobs during the weekly session. In 1999-2000, the achievement rate for New Deal clients was 53 per cent and the job entry rate was 47 per cent. In 2000-01, the rates rose to 100 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively. No learners started New Deal programmes in 2001-02. Forty per cent of those starting work-based learning for adults programmes have gained employment.

53. Assessment of retailing and warehousing programmes is particularly thorough. Learners written work is carefully marked and referenced to the occupational standards. Where gaps in the evidence are identified, the assessor asks the learner additional questions to check understanding, and records the answers given. Observation records are detailed. The assessor records any details which will be relevant to other elements of the qualification, in addition to those originally planned for assessment. Feedback to learners is clear and precise. The observation is carefully referenced and included in the portfolio.

54. Learners make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. Some learners have yet to achieve any units after a year of training. One foundation modern apprentice who started training in 1999-2000 has yet to complete the programme. Assessment plans include clear short-term targets, but these lack focus. They do not help learners to identify the best sources of evidence available. Most of the learners are working well at their workplaces and producing work of a good standard but this is not always used as evidence. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices is low. Of those starting programmes between 1998-99 and 2001-02, more than half left without achieving all the targets on their modern apprenticeship framework. Achievement rates for NVQ training are satisfactory.

55. Individual learning plans are inadequate. They are completed too early, before the results of initial assessment are known. Optional units and additional units are not included in the learning plans, and in many cases learners do not start work on these units until late in the programme. Prior learning is not taken into account and learners are required to repeat work unnecessarily. The target dates for each unit of the qualification are all set to the anticipated leaving date and there are no interim goals. Learning plans do not adequately describe what training is required and how this will be given. Some work placements provide very good programmes of training. The learning plans do not take account of this workplace learning, or set out any requirements for off-the-job training or support. Most employers do not have enough detailed knowledge of the awards to ensure that the training they provide meets the needs of the learner. Learners are not aware that they have a copy of the individual learning plan, and it is not referred to in the review. Gaps in learners' knowledge and understanding are often only identified when they are unable to complete assessments.

56. Key skills training is introduced too late into learners' programmes. Some learners have not started key skills assessments until after their planned leaving date. There is not enough cross-referencing of key skills evidence during NVQ assessment. There is little reference to key skills in most assessment plans. The assessment plans do not help learners to identify workplace activity which would meet the requirements of the key skills awards. Learners often have to carry out unnecessary simulated assignments.

57. Assessment and verification in customer service and call handling is poor. There is inadequate cross-referencing of evidence to the occupational standards. It is unclear how the range and knowledge requirements are met by the evidence. Assessors place too much reliance on written work and on copies of policies and procedures. There is not enough assessment of learners' everyday work. Much of the work in learners' portfolios is unmarked. Questioning by assessors is superficial, and does not cover the breadth of knowledge required. Answers are not checked with employers. There is a lack of attention to detail by assessors, and some observation records are not correctly signed or dated. Some learners have been told that they have completed units, although there is not enough evidence in their portfolios to meet the requirements of the qualification. Internal verification is insufficiently thorough. The performance of some assessors has not been monitored in the past year. Where portfolios have been checked, verifiers have not identified serious errors or omissions.

#### Poor Practice

*Two learners on a level 3 NVQ course in call handling had recently completed an advanced modern apprenticeship in customer service. They had been told that some of the work completed could be used to provide evidence for their call-handling qualification. However, no formal assessment of their prior learning was carried out and they were required to repeat work unnecessarily.*

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	34	3

58. NDCCI provides foundation modern apprenticeships and NVQ training in a range of sectors within the hospitality industry. There are 34 learners. Nine are foundation modern apprentices in food preparation and cooking, bar service, food and drink service, hospitality quick service, or housekeeping. One learner is working towards an NVQ at level 3 in restaurant supervision. Other learners are working towards NVQs at level 2 in food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service, and towards NVQs at level 1 in housekeeping, food and drink service, and food preparation and cooking. All learners, other than those employed, attend NDCCI's training centre full time. Most have additional social and/or educational needs. The foundation modern apprentices and some of the NVQ learners have work placements in hotels, public houses, care homes and departmental store restaurants. For these learners, most assessment takes place at work. Key skills workshops are given at NDCCI's training centres. Most NVQ level 1 learners receive training and assessment at NDCCI's North Derbyshire training centre where there is a purpose-built restaurant and kitchen. Off-the-job training takes place at both centres. NDCCI staff carry out reviews of learners' progress. All learners attend an induction at one of NDCCI's centres. They achieve a basic food hygiene certificate at an early stage of their training. Many learners also participate in short courses in basic health and safety, manual handling, first aid, fire safety, literacy and numeracy, and sex and drugs awareness. The staff carrying out training and assessment have appropriate qualifications and experience. A part-time member of staff who is not involved in the training or assessment of learners carries out internal verification.

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									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		7		3		3									
Retained*	0		0		0		0									
Successfully completed	0		0		0		0									
Still in learning	1		4		2		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																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		25		40		10		13							
Retained*	0		2		5		5	50	2	15						
Successfully completed	0		1		5		5	50	2	15						
Still in learning	11		6		8		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

- outstanding support for learners
- good assessment practice
- good practical training
- participation by most learners in a wide range of short courses

## WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates on level 1 NVQ programmes
- some slow progress on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more structured internal verification planning of assessor sampling

59. The support that learners receive from NDCCI is outstanding. Most learners have learning and social needs that are identified and met early in their programmes. NDCCI's staff are careful to ensure that learners are placed in the best environment for their development. This often involves moving learners between work placements, in some cases more than once. NDCCI has developed a network of contacts to assist staff in supporting the learners. There is a close working relationship with a registered charity which runs a centre for people with disabilities. Learners with disabilities or additional needs benefit from work placements at the charity's centre, where they gain from the special knowledge and expertise of the staff. Some former NDCCI learners who have been on work placements at the centre are now employed by the charity. These ex-learners are a valuable resource in the support of current learners. Work-placement providers have been carefully chosen to offer the best support to learners. All

employers are actively involved in the training. They attend learners' progress reviews, and contribute to the planning of assessments and training. Many employers offer much more support than is usual. One employer will change menus or put on special dishes so that learners can be assessed more easily or quickly. Another involves the learners in staff meetings to encourage them to express themselves and to build their confidence. One employer spends time helping learners with their spelling and grammar.

60. NDCCI's assessment practice is good. Assessments are well planned and documented. Learners know exactly what they have already achieved, and what further assessments are necessary. Employers are involved in the planning of foundation modern apprentices' assessments. There has been good progress by these learners over the past few months. Many of them are close to completing their qualifications. NDCCI staff will arrange to assess as often as requested by the learners, and at a time to suit them. Learners trained at the North Derbyshire centre have access to assessment every day. The assessment process is thorough and fair, and the recording of assessments is comprehensive. Feedback to learners is good, and accurate assessment records are made in learners' portfolios. Internal verification is thorough and well recorded.

61. Learners receive good practical training. The kitchen and restaurant at NDCCI's North Derbyshire centre are well equipped. The restaurant business caters mainly for NDCCI's staff, and for learners from other occupational areas. Learners produce good quality food, and the service is of a good standard. There are good links made between practical work and background knowledge. Learners receive positive feedback during lessons. They are well motivated and demonstrate a good level of independent working. Learners on work placements also receive good practical training. Employers communicate effectively with NDCCI staff to provide well-planned training that matches the requirements of the NVQ. All learners are enthusiastic about their work placements and the quality of training they receive. In most work placements, the learners work independently. Some are carrying out tasks that carry a high level of responsibility.

62. Most learners participate in a wide range of short courses. All learners gain the basic food hygiene certificate during their programme. Courses designed and certificated by NDCCI are used to enhance the learners' experience, and to help them gain jobs.

63. The retention and achievement rates on level 1 NVQ programmes are poor. In January 2001, NDCCI took over the learners from another training provider in Nottinghamshire. This created many problems for NDCCI and has had a big impact on their results. Many of the learners transferred could not be contacted, and were not in the work placements that had been indicated. Some of the learners had been put on the wrong programme, and some were not suitable for the industry. Most had not received any structured training or assessments. Some learners who wished to continue in training had to be found new work placements. For many, this meant starting again from the beginning of their qualifications, as much of the information available to NDCCI was inaccurate or incomplete. A few learners were advised to transfer to training programmes in a different occupational area. Some of the transferred learners

are still in training. Since January 2002, when the new facilities became available, the progress made by learners on NVQs at level 1 has improved considerably. Many of them are close to completing their qualifications.

64. There is some slow progress on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes. In the transfer of learners from another training provider, there were four modern apprentices. Two learners changed their programmes, and are now modern apprentices in administration, both working in NDCCI's offices. The others had made little progress towards their qualifications, but have now completed their NVQs. The previous training provider had not provided key skills training so these learners started late. In the case of some foundation modern apprentices, progress has been slowed down because too many observations have taken place in the work placement.

65. NDCCI's approach to planning the observation of assessors is insufficiently structured. Although there is evidence that all assessors have been observed, the current arrangements are not well planned or recorded.

**Good Practice**

*One employer regularly buys unusual, and quite often expensive, food to extend the learners' knowledge. He then encourages the learners to use the food in their own recipes. The prepared food is sold in the restaurant as 'dish of the day'.*

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	33	4

66. NDCCI has 33 learners working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3 in oral healthcare. All are employed and work full time in dental practices in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The NVQ in oral healthcare was introduced in January 2001. Before this, learners worked towards a certificate in dental nursing. NDCCI recruited its first learners onto the NVQ programme in May 2001. Most learners are recruited from school and are found suitable work placements by NDCCI. An initial assessment and induction is given to all learners. Assessment and internal verification are subcontracted. Learners' progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every eight weeks by NDCCI staff. In the first year of their training, learners attend lectures at NDCCI's premises on one evening a week. In the second year, they attend on one evening a week for portfolio-building and individual support. Learners are required to pass an externally assessed test before becoming qualified dental nurses. The tests take place in May and November each year. If learners fail one section of the three-part test, they can retake it at the next available date.

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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		37													
Retained*	0		0													
Successfully completed	0		0													
Still in learning	5		27													

\*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 learners' work
- good support for learners
- good progress in managing new award

## **WEAKNESSES**

- very poor assessment practice
- ineffective individual learning plans

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- wider range of teaching aids and resources
- more professional development for teachers
- better internal verification

67. Learners carry out good work in the dental surgeries, and their coursework is of a good standard. They gain a high level of technical skills and subject knowledge. Employers are supportive, and pass on knowledge and skills to the learners. Learners assist the dentists and perform a wide range of technical tasks. Some, such as the taking of X-rays, are carried out on their own. As well as working with the dentist in the surgery, each learner also spends time dealing with the administration of the dental practice. Work presented in portfolios is of a high standard. Projects, assignments and written work are neat, well presented and clearly show the knowledge learners have gained.

68. Teaching is well planned, but teaching methods are insufficiently varied. In some classes, learners receive insufficient individual help with preparing their portfolios, as time is limited. Many learners visit NDCCI during the day to meet assessors for additional one-to-one help. Assessors and tutors are all appropriately qualified and experienced in dental nursing.

69. There is good support for learners. Staff make regular visits to learners in the workplace. Progress reviews are carried out approximately every eight weeks. The reviews are thorough, and cover a range of issues, including timekeeping, motivation, equality of opportunity, safe working practices and communication skills. Targets are set and reviewed. Whenever possible, managers and employers are involved in the reviews. Problems highlighted in the reviews are dealt with promptly and efficiently by NDCCI's staff. Learners are helped to continue learning through periods when they are unable to work, and are officially no longer on the programme. If a learner wishes to move to another employer, NDCCI's staff help them find a new job. NDCCI's staff ensure that employers are kept fully informed of all aspects of the course, learners' progress and any new initiatives.

70. There has been good progress in managing the new dental NVQ programme. NDCCI's managers recognised that to be successful, the change from a formal examination-based course to a competence-based NVQ would need strategic and



operational planning. Managers subcontracted responsibility for teaching and assessment to one organisation and for internal verification to another. They worked very closely with both subcontractors and the awarding body, to plan how best to implement the qualification. Frequent formal meetings and informal discussions have taken place between everyone involved. The internal verification did not start until several months after the start of the training programme as there were no suitably qualified verifiers. Managers worked closely with the internal verifier to ensure that a comprehensive review of all assessment practices was carried out at the earliest possible opportunity. Many weaknesses were highlighted, and a development plan for assessors has brought about some improvements. The self-assessment report accurately identified the weaknesses of the programme. A detailed action plan to remedy the weaknesses has been used since the start of the programme. The programme is too new for valid judgements to be made on achievement rates.

71. Many aspects of assessment practice are very poor. Learning which takes place in the workplace is not taken into account for NVQ planning. There is no planning to identify exactly what evidence the learner requires for each unit. It is left to the learner to identify and collect evidence. The assessor is often not involved until a large amount of evidence has been collected by the learner. Many learners collect evidence for several months before they begin work on the NVQ. They then spend a considerable amount of time identifying what evidence fits into each unit. Some learners have completed units which have then been rejected by their assessor and they have had to start again. Learners are told to write assignments by hand rather than word-process them. Some learners have been told by assessors to write work out by hand which they had previously word processed. Assessors have rearranged and changed evidence in portfolios, which has left many learners confused, de-motivated and unsure of their progress. Some learners have had to completely re-number each piece of evidence because assessors decided they wanted the portfolios arranged differently. Advice and guidance given to assessors has sometimes been misinterpreted and resulted in learners carrying out unnecessary work. Learners unnecessarily cross-reference evidence of knowledge to performance criteria as well as to the knowledge requirements. Evidence of knowledge is often provided several times. There is no clear audit trail which links evidence of workplace activity to the performance requirements of the NVQ. Units have been assessed as complete when evidence is still required. Learners are often confused and do not understand exactly what they have to do to achieve the award. There is little specific written feedback to learners. At the time of inspection, learners were able to choose which units they wished to work on. This system allows learners to gather evidence for a number of units as and when opportunities arise. Assessors plan to make every learner complete units in the same order. Many learners are unsure of how to appeal against assessment decisions. Internal verification of the awards was introduced three months before inspection. Previously, because the NVQ was a new qualification, there were no trained and experienced internal verifiers available. The internal verification process is not yet complete, but has started to identify many of the assessment problems.

72. Individual learning plans are ineffective. They are not used to identify individual

progress through the qualification. All units are given the same completion date. Previous qualifications and experience are not accredited to ensure that learners do not repeat work they have already completed. There is no detailed analysis of the learners' workplace activities to ensure that they can meet the performance requirements of the qualification. Training carried out in the workplace is not recorded and used to help plan further training or assessment. Additional learning about dental nursing is incorporated into the course. This is not described in the individual learning plan, even though it is made compulsory. The results of an initial assessment of key skills are included in the individual learning plan, but dental nurses do not have to complete key skills awards as part of their modern apprenticeship framework. Learners who have already achieved key skills awards are still required to carry out the initial assessment. Most learning plans are not updated to take account of learners' progress and achievements. Copies are not given to employers and learners to enable them to check progress.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	23	2

73. Foundation learners follow a flexible individual learning programme designed to help them gain new skills, take part in work experience, and increase their confidence. There are 11 learners at NDCCI's North Derbyshire training centre and 12 at the Nottinghamshire training centre. In Nottinghamshire, the focus is on helping learners to progress to other training or employment. In Derbyshire, the emphasis is on work tasters that help lead to progression. Learners attend the training centres for 16 hours a week over an eight-week period. Learners at the Nottinghamshire centre can also take part in work tasters. Those who have decided what kind of work they would like to do are found suitable work placements. During a two-week induction programme, learners complete basic training relevant to their chosen area of work. This includes gaining certificates in manual handling, health and safety and first aid. Once they are in a work placement, learners receive a range of occupational training such as performing manufacturing occupations, dental health care, accountancy and business administration. Learners awaiting work placements build their ICT skills in the learning centre, gaining in-house accreditation for their work. In Derbyshire, learners take part in a range of work-taster programmes including construction, catering, business administration and retailing. They are given an opportunity to try more than one vocational area.

**STRENGTHS**

- exceptional level of support for learners
- comprehensive range of initial assessments
- good learning resources
- good links to key skills for learners at the Nottingham training centre
- good progression to employment or further education and training

**WEAKNESSES**

- weak reviews of learners' progress at the Derbyshire training centre
- inadequate individual learning plans

74. Learners receive exceptional support. All the learners interviewed commented that the support provided by NDCCI had enabled them to gain worthwhile experience and

make informed decisions about their future. One Nottinghamshire learner was offered work experience related to a previous qualification and was then given an opportunity to build on this in a more challenging work placement. Two learners taking part in induction were having difficulty with a project which involved setting up a business. Staff took them to the town centre and showed them real businesses to help their understanding. One Derbyshire learner who was not satisfied with his work placement, spoke to NDCCI and was quickly moved into another work placement. Learners are taken to their work placements by the tutors if transport is not available. Tutors give their mobile phone numbers to learners so that they can be contacted at any time. Tutors are in constant contact with employers, learners and, where appropriate, their parents or guardians. Employers are also in contact with parents and guardians. In one instance, a learner who was having difficulty attending her work placement was given help and support with seeking early medical advice. This is helping to resolve the problem, and once the learner's attendance improves she will be offered a permanent job.

75. There is a comprehensive range of initial assessments. Learners are assessed for key skills, basic skills, preferred learning styles, attitude, motivation and confidence. They have a formal careers consultation with staff from the careers and guidance service, who send an action plan to NDCCI. NDCCI also provides an informal careers assessment. In Nottinghamshire, the careers and guidance service finds work placements for some of the learners before they begin their training. In Derbyshire, NDCCI finds work placements for learners after their training has begun. There is a wide range of work experience available to learners at both centres.

76. NDCCI's learning resources are good. There is a high ratio of tutors to learners in both learning centres. Handouts are clear and relevant. There are good ICT resources in the Nottinghamshire centre. NDCCI provides sufficient work stations with current industry-standard software. In the Derbyshire learning centre, there is state-of-the-art manual handling equipment. Jobsearch activities are realistic, and appropriate to the learners and their needs. Training workshops are good. Literacy support is appropriate to the individual needs of learners.

77. There are good links to key skills for learners at the Nottingham centre. They are introduced to key skills training during their induction. The key skills training is thorough, and it is given in ways appropriate to the learners. The learners understand the relevance of key skills and can relate them to their learning programme and to their future training aspirations.

78. There are good rates of progression to employment or further education and training. Over the past four years, 66 per cent of learners have moved into employment, self-employment or voluntary work, gone on to further or higher education, or progressed to other types of training.

79. Learners' progress reviews are weak at the Derbyshire training centre. Learners are given formal four-weekly reviews. In the Nottinghamshire training centre, achievement

is recorded daily on review sheets. In the Derbyshire training centre, although tutors are fully aware of learners' achievement, it is not formally recorded. Tutors from the Derbyshire training centre visit learners at their work placements at least once a week. They are in regular communication with the work-placement providers and learners, but do not record this in the learners' personal files. At both centres, there is informal discussion between tutors, and information is shared at team meetings. There is insufficient information in the review documents to identify or encourage progress. There is no formal recording of learners' feedback about work tasters or in-house training provision. However, at the end of their programme, learners complete an evaluation form. The development of skills such as how to communicate effectively and interact appropriately in interviews and with colleagues is not formally identified by the tutors or learners. The careers service carries out exit reviews of learners' progress. NDCCI staff do not have the opportunity to contribute to these reviews.

80. Individual learning plans are inadequate. The results of learners' initial assessment are not recorded on the individual learning plans. However, for learners at the Nottinghamshire learning centre, this information is recorded on an action plan and passed back to the careers service. Learning plans are not updated at learners' progress reviews.