

INSPECTION REPORT

BTCV Enterprises Ltd

04 November 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

SUMMARY

The provider

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers is a national charity. BTCV Enterprises Ltd is a limited company and a trading subsidiary of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. All Jobcentre Plus contracts are with BTCV Enterprises Ltd which helps unemployed and other disadvantaged people to enter employment. It has nine regional training centres in the Northeast, the Northwest, Yorkshire and Humberside, the East Midlands, the Southeast and the Southwest. In addition, there are training centres in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. BTCV Enterprises Ltd subcontracts the retailing provision in Swindon and land-based provision in Workington. Clients participate in New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. They are following foundation programmes and training in the occupational areas of land-based provision, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology, and retailing, customer service and transportation. In addition, the BTCV Institute for Environmental Conservation is operated as a franchise through a local college, but this did not fall within the scope of the inspection.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training in information and communications technology and in land-based New Deal 18-24 provision is satisfactory. Training in retailing and warehousing, land-based New Deal 25+ provision and foundation programmes is unsatisfactory. Training in business administration is very weak. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance are very weak.

GRADES

Leadership and management	5
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	5
Quality assurance	5

Land-based provision	3
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4

Business administration, management & professional	5
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	5

Information & communications technology	3
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

Foundation programmes	4
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- good work placements
- good pastoral support

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor strategic management of programmes
- few opportunities for sharing good practice across the company
- very weak quality assurance system
- inadequate organisational strategy for equal opportunities
- poor induction
- inadequate development and support for literacy and numeracy
- inadequate review of clients' progress
- inconsistent initial assessment

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 13 inspectors spent a total of 64 days with BTCV Enterprises Ltd (BTCVE) in November 2002. They visited 11 sites, including all the training centres and subcontractors, interviewed 222 clients, and held 124 interviews with staff. They visited 43 workplaces and interviewed 33 workplace supervisors. The inspectors observed 21 progress reviews, and observed and graded 19 learning sessions. Inspectors examined 56 portfolios of evidence, 134 individual learning plans, clients' records, training materials, staff records, minutes of meetings, and plans, policies and procedures. Each region produces a self-assessment report each year and BTCVE produced a national self-assessment report in preparation for the inspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Land-based provision	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	7
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Information & communications technology	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	4
Total	0	0	3	9	1	5	1	19

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) is a national charity which works with local communities to bring about and maintain positive environmental change. It was established in 1959 and operates as BTCV in England and Wales, Scottish Conservation Project in Scotland, and Conservation Volunteers in Northern Ireland. BTCV is governed by an elected council which endorses and monitors the strategic plan and governs the activities of the charity across the United Kingdom and Europe. BTCVE is a trading subsidiary of BTCV which was established in 1985 to manage and deliver employment and training programmes including Jobcentre Plus funded provision. The charity board appoints a board for BTCV which includes two directors of operations (England), one for the charity and one for BTCVE. The latter is responsible for the operational management of BTCVE. In addition, the director of enterprises is a member of the board and reports to the council. BTCV has a head office in Oxfordshire and an administrative office in Doncaster. All Jobcentre Plus provision is managed strategically from the Gateshead office, where the director of operations for BTCVE is located, but the provision is managed locally through the BTCV regional structure. The regional training centres report to the director of operations on performance against Jobcentre Plus contracts. There are eight regional directors who line manage the nine regional training centres in the Northeast, the Northwest, Yorkshire and Humberside, the East Midlands, the Southeast and the Southwest. The director of operations for BTCV (charity) line manages these directors and staff in the regional training centres. The Northeast currently does not have a regional director and the director of operations for BTCVE has this responsibility in addition to his own. His areas of responsibility include partnerships with further education colleges, commercial training on environmental issues and private sector-led contracts. BTCV and BTCVE operate through the same nine regional training centres. BTCV employs 727 staff, of whom 261 are involved in BTCVE.

3. BTCVE specialises in a range of foundation training programmes, such as basic employability training (BET) under work-based learning for adults, and employment skills under New Deal 25+. In addition, BTCVE offers occupational training through New Deal 18-24, the intensive activity period (IAP) of New Deal 25+, and longer occupational training (LOT) across several areas of learning.

4. In October 2001, unemployment across the nine regions in which BTCVE operates ranged from 2 per cent in the Southwest to 5 per cent in the Northeast, compared with a national average of 3 per cent. The 1991 census shows that minority ethnic populations across the nine regions range from 1.4 per cent in the Northeast and Southwest to 4.8 per cent in the East Midlands, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally. In October 2001, the proportion of school leavers across the nine regions of operation achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above ranged from 53 per cent in the Southeast to 43 per cent in the Northeast and Yorkshire and Humberside, compared with 47.9 per cent nationally.

New Deal 18-24

5. Work placements are well matched to clients' needs and clients receive good pastoral support from tutors and employers. On land-based programmes, there are good practical projects and effective development of environmental skills across a range of land-based work including hard landscaping, environmental conservation and fencing. Relevant qualifications are provided for New Deal 18-24 clients. Progression into jobs is satisfactory, with 30 per cent of New Deal 18-24 land-based clients achieving a job in 2001-02, an increase of 10 per cent on the previous year. There is good assessment practice for the very small number of business administration New Deal 18-24 clients. Retention rates for the information and communications technology (ICT) New Deal 18-24 programme are good. In 2001-02, 64 per cent of clients were retained, while 32 per cent progressed into a job. Clients are given good individual support at the BTCVE computer training centre and work placements are well matched to clients' needs. In retailing and warehousing, the monitoring of the subcontracted provision is weak and one subcontractor does not have a formal contract. At one training centre, one client out of 60 leavers achieved the national vocational qualification (NVQ) in retailing. The assessment practice is also poor. In foundation programmes, there is inconsistent and inadequate teaching and learning. While data are inconsistent in foundation, progression into work is satisfactory for clients on New Deal 18-24. In general, induction is weak, initial assessment is not consistently thorough, and monitoring and recording of progress is inconsistent and in some instances inadequate. The quality of the jobsearch training varies across the provision from good to poor. Basic skills development and support is inadequate across the provision.

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults

6. New Deal 25+ clients on land-based programmes can take relevant qualifications. At some training centres, additional qualifications are offered to enhance the clients' employability. Project work is good and provides good opportunities to develop skills through effective teamwork. In 2001-02, only 14 per cent of New Deal 25+ clients progressed into jobs. Business administration clients on work-based learning for adults and LOT are offered very poor provision. There is weak programme management, ineffective initial assessment and induction, poor off-the-job training and inadequate individual learning plans. Employers are not involved in the learning process and assessment practice is very poor. There is poor but improving progression into jobs for New Deal 25+ clients in ICT. Good work placements are closely matched to clients' needs and have supported this improvement. ICT clients are given good individual pastoral and training support. Most clients on foundation programmes receive good pastoral support. There is some poor teaching on BET programmes, with inconsistency in planning across foundation programmes. For New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, pastoral support is good and work placements are generally well matched to clients' needs. Induction is weak, initial assessment is not sufficiently thorough, monitoring and recording of progress are inconsistent and in some instances inadequate, and the quality of the jobsearch training varies from good to poor. Basic skills development and support is inadequate across the provision and there are few planned opportunities for clients to develop their literacy and numeracy skills on practical programmes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 5

7. BTCVE's board reports to the BTCV council of elected members. BTCVE has a director of enterprises who reports to the council and a senior director of operations (England), located in Gateshead, who is responsible for strategically managing the BTCVE provision. The director of operations for BTCV (charity) has line management of nine regions for BTCV and BTCVE provision. The BTCVE activity in the Northeast region is line managed by the director of operations for BTCVE. Eight regional directors line manage the regional training centres and staff which includes both BTCV and BTCVE. These regional directors report to the director of operations for BTCV (charity). Each region produces a self-assessment report each year and BTCVE produced a national self-assessment report in preparation for the inspection. BTCV reviewed its equal opportunities policy in February 2002. There is no central quality assurance team or procedures to monitor the quality of the Jobcentre Plus provision. Each regional training centre follows its own procedures to assure quality.

STRENGTHS

- good general management procedures
- some good regional management

WEAKNESSES

- poor strategic management of programmes
- inadequate collection and use of data
- few opportunities for sharing good practice across company
- poor management and monitoring of subcontractors
- inadequate organisational strategy for equality of opportunity
- weak monitoring of equality of opportunity within work-placement providers
- very weak quality assurance system
- inadequate self-assessment process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better staff development

8. BTCV has clear procedures for the general management of the company, including BTCVE, which cover all key aspects of the business such as document control, human resources, finance, premises and health and safety. All regional offices have copies of the procedures and frequently use them to manage the business. Procedures are developed by a central document control department to ensure that they comply with company specifications and conventions. Documents are reviewed regularly and when appropriate, they are updated and issued to regional teams. All staff are fully aware of

the procedures manual and its contents. Regular audits are carried out to ensure compliance with the procedures. Proformas are used to highlight non-compliance and actions are taken to ensure the procedures are followed subsequently. The procedures manual has ensured that there is a consistent approach to key aspects of the general management of the business across a disparate work force. There is an effective staff appraisal system which is consistently applied. Regional staff have been supported locally by two training managers in the implementation of the human resources procedures. BTCVE consistently monitors the financial aspects of its contracts with Jobcentre Plus. Within eight of the nine regions operated by BTCV there is a consistent approach to business planning.

9. There is some good management in the regions. There is clear evidence that two regions have improved the retention and achievement rates as a result of systematic action-planning. Two regions have developed good self-assessment reports. However, the work carried out within the regions which relates to Jobcentre Plus-funded provision is not co-ordinated, monitored and developed on a national basis.

10. BTCV is half way through its four-year strategic plan, but there are no strategic targets which specifically relate to BTCVE. BTCV does not set any strategic targets for Jobcentre Plus programmes which regional directors can build into their business plans. Regional directors identify how they will manage their specific programmes, but there is inconsistency of approach as each plan varies in detail. Each region has also developed an operational plan to manage its ongoing delivery of Jobcentre Plus programmes. Inspectors identified inconsistencies within the provision of New Deal programmes across all areas of learning in all regions of BTCV. Review and monitoring of Jobcentre Plus-funded provision at a senior management level is based on financial performance against contract, and not on the quality of the provision.

11. BTCV's management information system has been developed to gather data on the regional needs of each Jobcentre Plus contract. The company collects and monitors data on job outcomes and paid elements of the contract. There is no evidence that data are used systematically to provide information for planning or decision-making, or to bring about continuous improvement of the provision. Regional directors are not required to report to the director of operations for BTCVE or to the enterprises board on clients' progress. There are no targets set for the proportion of learners achieving qualifications in the same way that there are targets for the achievement of jobs against contract. In one region, the delivery team can identify how their improvement activity had led to the region exceeding the job outcomes target by 10 per cent over a given period of time. However, they cannot identify the achievement rate for qualifications during the same period, despite significant changes to the qualifications being delivered.

12. BTCV's organisation structure does not allow for the sharing of good practice across programmes. Jobcentre Plus forms part of a broader range of provision offered by BTCV and BTCVE. There is a curriculum development group for programmes delivered by BTCV's staff. However, staff at delivery level do not have sufficient opportunity to

meet to discuss and share good practice. The Jobcentre Plus provision in land-based, ICT, business administration and retailing is carried out in small groups across a number of regions. Staff have few opportunities to meet to discuss their particular area of learning. There is little sharing of good practice on assessment and internal verification across the company.

13. BTCVE does not have formal procedures to monitor its subcontractors. In one training centre, there is no formal contract for one of the retailing subcontractors. There are few checks carried out on formal qualifications held by the staff who provide the retailing training, and no checks of occupational experience and competence of the assessors and verifiers.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 5**

14. There is little organisational strategy for the management of equality of opportunity. There is an equal opportunities policy and an equal opportunities action plan, but the plan has not been implemented. There is a harassment policy, but it is primarily aimed at BTCV's employees and volunteers and most of it is not relevant to New Deal clients. All New Deal clients are given a participants' handbook which includes an equal opportunities statement, but the language is complex and would be very difficult for most clients to understand. Half of all BTCV's training centres are not accessible to clients who have limited mobility and there is no strategy to deal with this. In most centres, equality of opportunity is not covered effectively during induction and it is not reinforced throughout the programme. Clients do not remember the equal opportunities training they have received. In a small number of centres, there is good promotion of equal opportunities during the induction and within the programme. In one centre, clients are given a series of topics to promote discussion about equal opportunities and deal with the rights and responsibilities of the clients. BTCV does not analyse the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy. Data are recorded on ethnicity and gender, but there is little evidence that the data are used systematically to provide information for planning or decision-making. However, one centre has worked closely with the local Jobcentre Plus office to try to recruit more women on to the New Deal environment task force option. Jobcentre Plus staff have observed the client teams working to gain a better understanding of the programme and to positively promote this option to women. Most of BTCVE's staff have some understanding of equal opportunities, but very few have received any formal training. BTCV has offered training courses, but they have not been open to all staff and the location has meant that some staff have had difficulty attending. BTCV is aware of this and there is a plan to train all staff.

15. BTCVE uses a number of employers for work placements for clients. However, it does not fully ensure that they have an adequate equal opportunities policy. BTCVE examines the equal opportunities policies of larger employers, but does not retain a copy for the files. Some very small employers who do not have an equal opportunities policy are asked to confirm that they will adhere to BTCVE's equal opportunities policy, but some are not. BTCVE does not formally record this.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 5**

16. Quality assurance of Jobcentre Plus provision is very weak. BTCVE has developed a procedures and document manual for New Deal which has been given to each region. However, there is no central up-to-date manual to cover the programme delivery of New Deal. All regions have adapted the manual to reflect the individual requirements of the local contract and there is no overall monitoring of the implementation of these procedures. For example, progress reviews have not been monitored to ensure that the procedures are still relevant to New Deal clients and that each region's local interpretation is appropriate. Inspectors identified variation in the quality of the review process, which ranged from good to poor. There is no quality assurance system in place which covers all aspects of the New Deal provision. There is a recently introduced process for monitoring the training delivery, but the observations of staff training delivery are inconsistent. Some have detailed reports and others are limited in content and description of the activity observed. There is no evidence that the observations have led to planned continuous improvement of New Deal provision over the past two or three months. Nor is there evidence of a co-ordinated approach with formal planning or a sampling plan. BTCVE's staff, managers and directors highlighted external audits and external verification activity as part of the company's quality assurance process, but there is little evidence of actions arising from these activities. For example, in business administration, the external verifier's actions from their visit six months before the inspection have yet to be implemented.

17. The self-assessment report produced by BTCVE, is the first national annual report the company has produced to reflect the national New Deal provision. The process for implementing and monitoring the national action plan to bring about continuous improvement is very weak. All regions produced a self-assessment report which fed into the national report. The regional reports and the involvement of staff in their production is inconsistent. In some regions, a number of staff were involved in the production of the report, whereas in other regions, only one or two people were involved. The self-assessment reports developed within the regions and nationally do not reflect the areas of learning delivered by BTCVE. The structure of the reports did not adequately identify BTCVE's strengths and weaknesses. Self assessment has been carried out as part of its contractual requirement by most regions for the past two to three years. Two regions out of the nine had, before the introduction of the BTCVE national format, developed a self-assessment report which was effective in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. In these two regions, there has been clear development of the quality of the New Deal provision. One of the regions had a clear plan and strategy to deal with retention and achievement rates, which resulted in the training centre exceeding its contract targets. One region had produced nine self-assessment reports during the past 12 months to meet its contractual obligations. As a result, the manager concerned had little time to monitor implementation of the resulting action plans. Where BTCVE had been involved in inspection before through a New Deal Unit of Delivery or through its subcontracts from other providers, there is little evidence that this process had been used to bring about consistent continuous improvement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	88	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	32	4

18. There are 120 clients in land-based provision, of whom 88 are on the environment task force option of New Deal 18-24, and 32 are on New Deal 25+. Training is carried out from eight BTCVE training centres located in Gateshead, Torquay, Widnes, Workington, Northampton, Morecambe, Hastings, and Huddersfield. Prior to joining, clients are interviewed either at their local Jobcentre Plus office, or at a nearby BTCVE training centre, depending on which is more suitable for the client. Induction takes place at the beginning of the programme, and usually lasts for between three hours and two days. It consists of relevant paperwork, health and safety, equality of opportunity, and an initial assessment to help determine employment goals. The individual learning plan is completed during the first two weeks of the programme. Many clients are identified as having additional learning needs or social needs, or both. Clients receive practical training at their workplace on one of BTCVE's projects, working in groups of between four and 10. Background knowledge is part of on-site practical work, although classroom facilities are sometimes used when they are available. One centre uses a subcontractor for commercial horticulture for two clients. Clients attend jobsearch training each week, but it varies in duration between centres, from half to one day each week. Qualifications are offered to all New Deal 18-24 clients, and to New Deal 25+ clients at some centres. The qualifications vary between centres, but aim to provide accreditation for environmental, horticultural, or generic employability skills. Clients have a series of progress reviews which are held each month, and at some centres, more frequently. Assessment is carried out by trainer/assessors. Internal verification is carried out by BTCVE's staff, or in one centre, by an external consultant.

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

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	343		658		987					
Retained*	238	69	429	65	604	61				
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Gained job	115	34	197	30	196	20				
Still in training	83	24	5	1	0	0				

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

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	83		103							
Retained*	47	57	58	56						
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0						
Gained job	8	10	14	14						
Still in training	28	34	4	4						

*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

- effective development of environmental skills
- good projects
- effective teamwork to benefit clients

WEAKNESSES

- poor induction
- insufficiently developed support for clients' literacy and numeracy needs
- inadequate progress reviews

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more opportunities for accreditation of occupational and transferable skills
- more imaginative jobsearch training

19. Development of environmental skills is effective. Staff are qualified and experienced in environmental work, and benefit from good professional development with BTCV. There is a good range of training opportunities available for clients. Good practical work provides opportunities for skills development in a range of land-based work, including hard landscaping, environmental conservation, and fencing. Practical work is carried out to a good standard. Relevant qualifications are offered to all clients on New Deal 18-24, and to some clients on New Deal 25+. At some training centres additional qualifications are also offered to enhance the clients' prospects. For example, clients at one centre can take their driving test. In another centre clients are offered qualifications in first aid or health and safety. In one region, clients regularly attend short vocational courses in conjunction with a college of further education. However, clients in some other centres do not have the same opportunities to gain accreditation for occupational or transferable skills. In some regions, additional funding has been gained to support the project work and experience of the clients. Where formal assessment and internal verification are required, they are carried out satisfactorily.

20. The project work for clients is good. BTCVE has a close working relationship with local organisations and there is extensive and valuable work available in parks, housing estates and country estates. Some of these are of real benefit to the community as well as to the client. For example, one group of clients was carrying out work with the local housing services department, renovating gardens and properties on a local housing estate. Additional funding is used to provide wages for the clients and this enhances their self-esteem and helps to rebuild the confidence lost through a lengthy period of unemployment. Results from this project include a better appearance of the estate, leading to tenants making more effort to care for their own properties. Good attention is given to health and safety on project sites, with comprehensive risk assessments carried out before commencement of work.

21. There is effective teamwork within BTCVE which benefits clients. Clients work as members of a group along with a trainer/assessor, and this helps to develop their team skills. BTCVE is flexible in meeting the needs of clients to maximise their chances of achieving a successful outcome. Clients are given good personal support from their trainer/assessor, as well as from the co-ordinators and other support staff. Clients at some centres benefit from free transport to and from the project site, with pick-up points near to their home. Clients gain social and transferable skills by working as part of the project team. For example, one project is based in a country park which is open to the public and, in addition to a high standard of work, clients must have good standards of personal tidiness and social interaction. Feedback from the park manager expressed appreciation of the high standard achieved by clients. Clients recognise the contributions made by BTCVE's staff and speak highly of the support they receive.

22. The induction is poor but this was not identified in the self-assessment report. It varies between centres, but consistently fails to provide a stimulating introduction to the clients' programme. Delivery is classroom based and many clients only recall filling in forms and signing their name. Important topics such as equality of opportunity are not delivered in imaginative ways which stimulate interest, and are not reinforced after induction. Materials used at some centres are not appropriate to meet the needs of the client group. For example, one training video displayed poor health and safety practice. The language used in some documents is too complex for some clients to understand. Some centres carry out an evaluation of the induction but it is poorly constructed. For example, an evaluation at one centre asked clients to answer questions such as their views on the length of induction, which staff agreed they could not change. Clients at this centre stated in their evaluation that the induction was too long, but no action was taken. Initial assessment is carried out as part of induction, but in most centres it consists mainly of a pack of client self-assessment materials which are insufficiently related to the clients' individual learning plan.

23. Arrangements for the support of clients' literacy and numeracy needs are insufficiently developed and this was identified in the self-assessment report. Some centres do not carry out a formal assessment to identify the literacy and numeracy needs of the clients, and the support offered does not help clients to search and apply for suitable employment. When formal support is offered, few clients choose to attend. Informal support is given in jobsearch sessions and during project work, but staff have not been trained to deliver this effectively.

24. Progress reviews are inadequate. Separate reviews are carried out at some centres for jobsearch, personal development, and for progress towards qualification goals. Some centres carry out frequent reviews, and some make good use of constructive and positive comments to motivate the clients. However, some are insufficiently evaluative, and do not set specific targets which the clients can achieve before the next progress review. When targets are set, their achievement is not always monitored to ensure progress is being made. At one centre, the trainer/assessor is not involved in the review of personal skills, even though they have most contact and knowledge of the clients. The overall review process does not ensure that all necessary aspects are dealt with in a timely and effective manner. Most staff who carry out reviews have not been trained and have not had the opportunity to observe others to encourage the sharing of good practice.

25. The proportion of clients who progress into employment is improving. For New Deal 18-24, it is over 30 per cent in 2001-02 and this trend is continuing in the current year. Progression into employment for clients on New Deal 25+ is lower, at 14 per cent, although they account for only 36 per cent of the overall number of clients currently in learning. There is significant variation between centres in the degree of success in clients gaining employment. Some centres have achieved 40 per cent progression into employment, although another centre has only achieved a progression rate of 13 per cent. There is insufficient communication between centres to enable ideas and good

practice to be shared.

26. Although the proportion of clients who progress into employment overall is satisfactory, the jobsearch training is unimaginative. At some centres, Internet access is inadequate and few paper-based materials are available apart from local papers and telephone directories. Attendance at the jobsearch training at some centres is poor, and this has prompted BTCVE to introduce measures to encourage clients to attend. One centre provides breakfast during the session, and another varies the day on which jobsearch is held so that clients do not know which day to avoid. However, this has not dealt with the main problem of the quality of the jobsearch sessions. Staff are not trained to deliver jobsearch effectively. BTCVE has started to introduce more structured materials for jobsearch in some centres, but they have not been fully implemented or shared between centres. One centre has improved the jobsearch training by giving daily updates of current vacancies from the Jobcentre. There are good displays of relevant materials in the room, such as how to construct a letter of application and a curriculum vitae.

Good Practice

BTCV has developed a sophisticated information technology (IT)-based health and safety and risk assessment system. The health and safety manager records all project sites available for training purposes. The database is updated after each site visit and is used to store standard risk assessment for routine activities such as tree planting. Project co-ordinators can select risk assessments from the database and customise them for every activity the group carries out. The risk assessment is stored on the intranet and is available to all staff.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 5**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	5	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	17	5

27. There are currently 22 clients in business administration, of whom five are in Northampton and 17 in Gateshead. The five in Northampton are on New Deal 18-24 in the voluntary sector option. Of the 17 clients in Gateshead, 16 are over 25 and on work-based learning for adults LOT and one is on New Deal 25+. All clients are referred from the Jobcentre having been through the Gateway programme. They attend an interview and initial assessment at BTCVE to identify their career aims, the most suitable training programme, and any additional support or training required. All work placements are checked for suitability and safety, and provide a broad range of work activity. Recruitment advisers visit the clients every month to review their progress. Clients on work placement attend the training centre for one day a week to work on their portfolios and to carry out jobsearch. Clients who are not on work placement attend the training centre and produce work for their portfolio in the IT suite or training centre office. These clients work closely with the recruitment adviser on jobsearch to find a suitable work placement. There are no data tables for business administration as BTCVE was unable to provide consistent data about the number of learners on programmes and reliable data about annual retention and completion rates.

STRENGTHS

- good employer placements
- good pastoral support for clients

WEAKNESSES

- weak management of the programme
- weak initial assessment
- weak induction
- poor off-the-job training
- inadequate individual learning plans
- insufficient use of employers in the learning process
- poor assessment practice

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better communication channels with Jobcentre Plus

28. BTCVE has a broad range of employer placements which provide good on-the-job training. This was identified in the self-assessment report. There are good working relationships between clients, workplace supervisors and BTCVE's staff. Recruitment advisers take good care to place clients with employers who offer work which is suitable for the level and type of qualification they are taking. Emphasis is placed on providing the right environment to enable clients to gain confidence and be given appropriate support.

29. There is good pastoral support for clients in the workplace and at the training centre. Staff are approachable and easy to contact between visits. Recruitment advisers regularly visit the workplace every four weeks to carry out progress reviews. However, the advisers are not occupationally competent to assess progress against the qualification and the discussion only ensures that the learners are satisfied with their programme. Reviews do not include discussions on equal opportunities or health and safety in the workplace. Reviews involve the clients and the workplace supervisor.

30. There is weak management of the programme, including inaccurate data. The data provided by BTCVE did not show any clients for 2002-03 on New Deal 18-24, but there are five on programme in Northampton. Data reports indicate fewer clients in training than interviewed by inspectors. Client files indicate there are clients on programme who are not identified on client lists. In addition, some clients on the list did not have a file. Such unreliable management information made it difficult to accurately identify clients and their programme and qualification. Although data are inconsistent, retention rates for work-based learning for adults are good and achievement of planned learning is good on the New Deal 25+ IAP. However, the numbers are small. There is no effective co-ordination of the business administration programme, nor is there a planned approach to improve the quality and consistency of the clients' experience.

31. Initial assessment is weak and does not give sufficient information to analyse the further training needs and the level of support required. BTCVE relies on the initial assessment from Jobcentre Plus, but some clients are referred with multiple problems which are not evident until the clients have been in training for a few weeks. Staff do not have the skills and experience to deal with some of these complex problems. Communication is poor between BTCVE and the Jobcentre and does not ensure adequate initial assessment and sharing of information.

32. The induction is weak. All clients attend a one-day induction, but they cannot recall the information they are given and it is not reinforced throughout the learning programme. Clients are aware of the importance of health and safety, but do not understand equality of opportunity, the complaints procedure and the awarding body appeals process.

33. Individual learning plans do not include information on clients' prior learning and experience, nor do they show the target qualification or dates for completion. Clients and workplace supervisors do not have a copy of the individual learning plan. Achievement dates are all the same and relate to the date when funding expires. Clients and employers are unaware of the progress being made.

34. There is insufficient involvement of employers in the learning process. Employers offer good on-the-job training but it is not recognised or recorded in the learning plans. The training is not linked to the qualification and employers are unaware of what additional training is required to enable the clients to progress. Employers want to be involved in the learning process, but do not have a copy of the qualification standards. They are not involved in assessments and are unclear about targets for achievement.

35. Off-the-job training is poor. There is no structured off-the-job training plan which details what the learner will be doing on a week-by-week basis. Employers and clients cannot link work activity to learning sessions. There is poor planning of off-the-job training, sessions are not prepared, there are no aims and objectives and the training is poor. Training rooms are basic and do not have wall displays, books or information which helps to provide an effective learning environment. Computers are available in an IT suite, but tutors who are helping with portfolio work do not have access, and work which requires a computer is delayed. Handouts are poorly photocopied.

36. Assessment practice is poor. Clients collect large amounts of evidence but are unclear how this relates to their qualification. Some have a copy of the NVQ unit and element sheets but do not understand how to reference evidence to the standards. At Gateshead, none of the NVQ clients has had their work assessed and their assessor has only visited two clients in the workplace. In Northampton, assessment takes place, but documents are not detailed and feedback does not clearly state what the clients have achieved and what further action is required. Internal verification is not ongoing and many portfolios have not been through this process. Seven clients who left the programme over five months ago are still waiting to have their portfolio internally verified. The provider is unaware that clients are not being assessed or that achievement is being delayed. External verification reports in Gateshead detail several concerns but there is no action plan and no evidence of improvement. Although client numbers are small, the external verifiers' reports in Northampton highlight good assessment practice and detail no further action required. However, there are no opportunities to share this good practice with other staff in business administration.

Information & communications technology**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	12	3

37. There are 36 clients in ICT, of whom 24 are on options under the New Deal 18-24 programme. These options last for 26 weeks and involve either full-time education and training at the BTCVE computer-training centre or a work placement within the voluntary sector. Clients on work placements typically spend three days in the workplace, one day on jobsearch activities and one day attending their IT training course. There are 12 New Deal 25+ clients who are either on a three-month IAP training at the BTCVE training centre, or on a LOT programme of up to six months. Occasionally clients are referred for a short period of job-focused training (SJFT) to prepare them for a specific vacancy. Some Jobcentre Plus contracts specify that clients are found appropriate work placements or that they carry out project work or additional training at the centre. All clients have jobsearch training, either at the BTCVE centre or at a local jobcentre. All clients are referred to BTCVE by their New Deal personal adviser. Some clients are directed to a specific IT course by their advisers, but others are interviewed by BTCVE's staff who advise them on the most appropriate type of IT training. Clients have an induction period which includes initial assessment. A range of IT courses leading to NVQs at level 1 and 2 are available for clients. According to the period of training, clients can study for a whole qualification or units towards a qualification. Courses are provided by either the BTCV computer-training centre or by the local college. Courses include website design, computer applications for the office, and computer programming. The BTCVE computer centre in Gateshead has two full-time tutors who assess clients' progress as they work at their own pace through the study materials. Clients who attend courses with other training providers are assessed by the providers' staff.

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

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	24		22							
Retained*	0	0	14	64						
Planned learning completed	0	0	14	64						
Gained job	0	0	7	32						
Still in training	24	100	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 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	23		20							
Retained*	0	0	19	95						
Planned learning completed	11	48	19	95						
Gained job	3	13	1	5						
Still in training	12	52	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 individual support for clients
- good work placements, closely matched to clients' needs
- good completion and retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- poor progression into jobs for New Deal 25+ clients
- weak induction process
- inadequate review process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of resources at the BTCV training centre
- more updating of individual learning plans
- better recording of clients' progress during off-the-job training

38. Clients are given good individual support. At the BTCVE computer training centre, an initial interview with a trainer identifies the most appropriate starting point for training, based upon the clients' existing level of IT experience. Clients then work at their own pace by following well-prepared learning materials. Trainers have a good understanding of the barriers to learning which many clients face and provide appropriate support and assistance. They build up an effective rapport with clients, helping them to progress and enhance their self-confidence. They develop skills in office software, website design and computer programming. As clients' skills increase, they complete assessment tests which count towards recognised qualifications. These assessments are marked by a trainer who then gives constructive feedback to the client. The trainers take care to emphasise the progress made, as well as guiding clients to improve their performance. For clients who make rapid progress, advanced study modules on specialist computer languages are available to further enhance their skills and improve their employability prospects. Training at the BTCV training centre and at other locations, including those operated by subcontractors, is delivered by appropriately qualified trainers. Resources are at least adequate for the IT programmes, but vary between regions. Different training methods are used at different locations. Some clients are introduced to computers through group teaching and individual practical work. Other clients receive individual IT training at their local college outreach centre or are assisted through a work-based qualification by a visiting assessor supplied by a subcontractor. The teaching sessions observed during inspection were all satisfactory.

39. Work-placement officers take great care to ensure that work placements are well matched to clients' needs. Clients speak enthusiastically of the benefits they gain and of the opportunities they have to use newly acquired skills. Clients in the New Deal 18-24 voluntary sector option are placed in settings which allow them to use their developing IT skills. For example, one client is based at the regional office of a charity for young people. The work-based supervisor has designed a six-month training plan which will enable the client to experience a full range of computer-based office activity, as well as to carry out tasks which will develop the client's interpersonal skills. Another client is based in an office which provides printing services for a voluntary action group. The range of activities available is sufficient to generate evidence for units toward an NVQ level 2 in using IT. A client on a New Deal 25+ programme had gained a computer programming qualification while attending the BTCVE training centre, but lack of commercial experience was proving a barrier to gaining a job. The client has now been placed as a programmer with a specialist software company, which is providing relevant experience. The client and the company are benefiting from the arrangement. Another client needed to develop a portfolio of photographs on a CD-ROM that would enable

him to apply for work as a professional photographer. A work placement was found at a community centre where he was able to work on real photographic assignments while receiving expert practical tuition in the computer techniques required. Again the work placement was mutually beneficial and the supervisor spoke highly of the quality of work produced by the client.

40. Retention rates are good. During 2001-02, 19 out of 20 clients on the New Deal 25+ programme completed their learning programme. For the current year, all 23 of the clients who started have either achieved the targets on their learning plan or are still in learning. All 24 clients on this year's New Deal 18-24 programmes are still in learning. During 2001-02, all clients who were retained, completed their planned learning programme. For the current year, all learners who had left at the time of the inspection had also completed their planned learning, reflecting their own commitment and the support they received during training.

41. Progression into jobs for New Deal 25+ clients is poor but improving. In 2001-02, only 5 per cent of clients gained a job. For the current year, 13 per cent of clients have gained a job, with another 52 per cent still in learning. The range of IT programmes available to clients has increased since last year. This strategy is aimed at further improving the employability of clients. The progression of New Deal 18-24 clients into jobs is satisfactory.

42. Induction is weak and the duration varies widely. For some clients, induction is completed in an hour but others attend for a half-day or longer. Some clients are given a diagnostic assessment to assess their basic numeracy and literacy skills, but they are not always given feedback on the results. The results are not used in a systematic way to plan the training programme. All clients complete a skills self-assessment which is aimed at encouraging clients to identify their own personal skills and qualities and to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. Clients lose interest in the completion of the lengthy forms and their responses are rarely discussed with them. Health and safety and equal opportunities are discussed during induction, but clients do not recall the equality of opportunity. Many clients are unaware of the type of Jobcentre Plus programme they are attending or whether work placement is a part of that programme. Some clients are unaware of the assessment arrangements for their programme.

43. Progress reviews are inadequate. Some clients have not received regular reviews and others, although visited regularly in the workplace, have received reviews which have only lasted for 10 or 15 minutes. Most progress reviews do not adequately record the progress made by the clients since the previous review, nor do they set challenging and specific targets to be completed before the next review. Reviews in the workplace do not always take place with the client and the supervisor present, nor do they always provide a mechanism for recording the supervisor's opinion of clients' progress. Many reviews do not reinforce the discussions from the induction programme. Reviews do not make reference to the clients' development of transferable skills which are identified in some learning plans. Clients follow flexible individual training at the BTCVE training centre but the system for recording client progress over the period of their attendance is

poor.

44. Use of resources at the BTCVE training centre is poor. Friday is a 'drop-in' day when clients and other learners can use the computers for jobsearch or other activities. Clients have complained that, occasionally, the number of people wanting to use computers has exceeded the number of computers available. There is no system to prioritise access to the resources.

45. Individual learning plans are not systematically updated. The plans usually list the dates for progress reviews but are not consistently updated to record that reviews have taken place. Some learning plans do not show the full list of the modules to be studied for a particular qualification and some have not been updated when training objectives have been extended.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	22	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	8	None

46. There are 30 clients in retailing and warehousing, of whom 22 are on the New Deal 18-24 voluntary sector option and eight are on New Deal 25+. Training is carried out from three training centres based in Swindon, Chesterfield and Northampton. BTCVE uses subcontractors for the retailing NVQs. All clients are referred to BTCVE from Jobcentre Plus and undergo an initial assessment before joining the programme. Induction takes place at the beginning of their programme and includes health and safety, equal opportunities and job-related skills. An individual learning plan is drawn up for each client. Some clients are involved in trial work placements of between four and eight weeks, mainly on the voluntary sector or environment task force options. Some clients are working towards NVQ units in retailing, warehousing and distribution. At one centre, a small number of clients has just started working on a newly introduced national foundation qualification for employment skills. This certificate has four mandatory units and an external assessment carried out at the end of the qualification. It is designed to give evidence of clients' achievement towards structured jobsearch activities and enhance their employability prospects. In addition, in-house certificates are offered for training in health and safety, first aid, and basic food hygiene. BTCVE finds work placements for clients where they spend a number of days each week, depending on their programme, with the remaining time spent in the local training centre for jobsearch activities. There are no data tables for retailing and warehousing as BTCVE was unable to provide consistent data about annual retention and completion rates. It was impossible to determine the trends in retention and achievement rates, although a recent marketing initiative by one centre has resulted in an increase in job outcomes.

STRENGTHS

- good work placements
- effective pastoral support

WEAKNESSES

- weak management of programme
- incomplete planning and review of learning
- some weak assessment practice

47. There are good work placements which have supportive employers. The good range of work placements includes charity shops and a large chainstore. Employers carefully plan work tasks to help clients achieve their personal objectives. For example, two clients who have returned to the programme are being given the opportunity to develop their management skills. There is very good support for clients. Clients are treated as part of the retail staff and are able to take part in the in-house training available. Some clients have been unemployed for long periods of time and many have personal difficulties. Work placements are well matched to client needs. At one centre clients have been involved on trial work placements for up to eight weeks. As a result, one client was employed after five weeks and another client will be employed shortly.

48. Clients have benefited from sensitive pastoral support from BTCVE's staff. For example, some clients have had personal and emotional problems that have been dealt with in a responsive manner. Continued support is offered to clients after the end of their programme to help them update their curriculum vitae and to further develop work preparation skills. Some clients have been able to achieve their NVQ units even when they have secured full-time employment. The support includes a flexible timetable of induction activities, which is carefully adapted to suit the individual client's needs. Clients begin to develop their confidence, motivation and communication skills during induction which covers health and safety and equal opportunities, as well as many relevant activities to develop clients' job skills. These include team-building, letter writing, producing curriculum vitae, and telephone techniques. However, the reproduction of the materials used at induction is poor.

49. There is weak management of the programme. This relates to the subcontractors at two centres for the retailing NVQs. There is very little evidence of BTCVE monitoring this provision and records do not inform BTCVE of client progress. Correspondence between BTCVE and the subcontractor only records concerns regarding suitability of the qualification and the client needs. There is no evidence of the subcontractor providing copies of certificates, or details of occupational updating and experience. There are no standards for BTCVE to relate to in relation to client progress. BTCVE is unaware of the internal verification schedule, and whether observations of the assessment practice have taken place and whether clients are judged to be competent. Achievement of the qualification is recorded in percentage terms and it is not clear how many units each client is working towards. At one centre, one client out of 60 leavers achieved an NVQ in retailing. At another centre, two clients who started the programme in December 2001, have been waiting for final external verification of the qualification since June 2002 when they left the programme. Another client who started in April 2001, left the programme in October 2002 and is also awaiting external verification.

50. The process of planning and reviewing clients' learning is incomplete. All clients are involved in drawing up their individual learning plan and personal development plan during the induction. The client and tutor discuss job expectations, prior learning and

additional support requirements. The information and detail on the individual learning plans varies considerably. They do not all show clients' targets, milestones and progress. In many cases, the actual learning programme is not identified. Several clients are unsure of what programme they are following. Recording of on- and off-the-job training is poor. Achievement is not always recorded and the plan is not always used as part of the review process. Comments on the review forms are not sufficiently specific to support progress and do not identify short-term targets and achievements. Many clients do not understand the review process.

51. The assessment practice is weak. The subcontractor for one centre does not have a formal agreement with BTCVE and clients do not have a copy of the retailing standards. Most clients did not know how they were progressing. While action-planning for the NVQ takes place, evidence is not linked to specific units or elements of the NVQ. Assessment plans are not detailed and are not monitored by BTCVE. There is a limited range of assessment methods used, such as pre-set written and oral questions, observations and witness testimony. When observations of clients' daily tasks have taken place there are no judgements on the competence of the learners. Feedback is given verbally but it is poorly recorded. Clients' portfolios are retained by the subcontractor and brought to the next planned appointment. Clients do not have full ownership of their qualification and are not aware of their progress.

Foundation programmes**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	45	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	143	4

52. There are 188 clients on foundation programmes, of whom 45 are on New Deal 18-24, 120 are on New Deal 25+ and 23 are on work-based learning for adults. BTCVE offers foundation programmes across all regional training centres, but there are different management arrangements for each region. Clients are all unemployed and attend for 30 hours each week for up to 26 weeks. Programmes include three or four days' work experience with an employer or on projects, plus one day of jobsearch activity at the local BTCVE centre. Clients on BET spend most of their time in off-the-job training. Clients' progress with jobsearch activities is assessed by their trainers. Progress in work placements is reviewed with the clients by BTCVE's recruitment officer or work-placement officer in conjunction with the employer or supervisor. Most clients develop the skills of communication, working together and general employment skills. Few clients achieve the qualification identified on their learning plans, but some regional centres offer additional generic work qualifications such as first aid, food hygiene, or manual handling. There are no data tables for foundation programmes as BTCVE was unable to provide consistent data about annual retention and completion rates. It was impossible to determine the trends in retention and achievement rates, although clients on New Deal 18-24 and New Deal 25+ make satisfactory progression into work. Progression for clients on work-based learning for adults is less satisfactory.

STRENGTHS

- well-chosen work placements
- good support for clients

WEAKNESSES

- poor induction
- weak assessment
- weak monitoring and recording of progress
- inadequate basic skills development and support
- some inadequate teaching and learning

53. Work placements are well chosen with clients' particular needs in mind. Small local

firms are carefully sought out and good relations are established with employers that understand the clients' requirements. Clients develop their skills in work placements and value BTCVE's support in matching them to employers. Environment Task Force (ETF) projects are of benefit to the community. Some are effective in developing clients' skills, but some are focused on conservation, in some very challenging locations, and take little account of individual client's needs. Some centres provide clients with opportunities to gain additional qualifications, while others do not. Some centres plan for alternative projects for skills development in bad weather, while some do not. Labour market information is not of primary concern at some centres and most of the clients on ETF programmes who obtain work, do so outside the conservation area. There is little co-ordination of off-the-job training and work placement to allow learners to practise their skills at work.

54. Guidance and support for clients are good. Personal support from trainers is particularly good and is greatly valued by clients. Staff spend considerable amounts of time encouraging clients and advising about a range of practical and personal problems. However, this support is not generally recorded. Where specialist advice is necessary, referrals are made to external agencies, but it is inconsistent across regions and at some centres there is little contact with outside agencies. Measures are in place to deal with poor attendance and punctuality, and these are recorded in clients' files. Jobsearch activities are compulsory and in some cases well designed. However, it is not well attended by learners on practical skills programmes at some centres.

55. Induction is poorly designed and delivered. There is a hard to read welcome booklet and too much information at the start of the session. Self-assessment is useful and is designed to build clients' confidence in their existing skills and qualities, but an objective measurement of skills is not carried out.

56. Assessment and monitoring of clients' progress are unsatisfactory. All ETF clients follow the same programme regardless of their ability when they start. Reviews of progress for off-the-job training take place regularly but dates are not entered against the targets achieved. Comments on written assignments do not encourage learners how to improve or show why their work is good. Reviews of progress in work placements and projects are not always carried out regularly and there are no evaluative comments and specific targets for development on the paperwork. There is good monitoring of progress on projects at one centre and of jobsearch progress at another. However, some centres do not evaluate work placements and, in others, little use is made of clients' and employers' comments.

57. Basic skills development and support are inadequate. The results of the assessments by Jobcentre Plus are not generally passed on to BTCVE and many clients do not have their literacy and numeracy skills reassessed by BTCVE. Basic skills support is not available at all centres. Some of the staff are not trained to develop literacy and numeracy skills and have basic skills needs of their own. There are too few staff to support learners who have basic skills needs or learning difficulties, although additional staff have recently been appointed. Basic skills awareness training is not planned for

vocational trainers. In a few centres where basic skills training by a specialist teacher is available, learners make progress with literacy and numeracy. Few clients on practical programmes develop their literacy or numeracy skills.

58. Some teaching is inadequate. Good practical training on ETF projects contrasts with some poor and unstimulating work on other projects. There is no off-site work on background knowledge. Schemes of work and lesson plans are used in painting and decorating, but there is little formal planning on ETF programmes and little evaluation of projects or recording of progress. There is some poor teaching on BET programmes and on induction. Training in jobsearch varies from good to weak. There is no strategy to co-ordinate the quality of the foundation programmes and to ensure continuous improvement of the clients' experience. Trainers give encouraging verbal feedback to clients on their tasks and there are good relationships between staff and clients. All clients make some progress on their programmes, some acquire good practical skills, and most develop some general employability skills such as communication and teamwork. Few clients on practical programmes have planned opportunities to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. There are sufficient staff for the foundation programmes, but not enough, in some centres, to allow effective cover for sickness or to release staff for staff development. Some skills, such as use of a chainsaw on environmental projects, are unavailable to clients as they require higher staffing levels.