

REINSPECTION REPORT

Hull Business Training Centre Ltd Reinspection

03 September 2003



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. 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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

SUMMARY

The provider

Hull Business Training Centre Ltd is a privately owned partnership, which has nearly completed the process of becoming an incorporation. The two partners who founded the organisation are now its directors. One director has responsibility for corporate business and the other is responsible for training and assessment. The directors manage a team of 18 staff. The organisation provides work-based learning for young people and Jobcentre Plus training programmes in business administration; information and communications technology; and retailing and customer service. At the time of the previous inspection, only training programmes in business administration were in the scope of the inspection as there were too few learners in either information and communications technology or retailing and customer service. At the reinspection, there were sufficient learners on information and communications technology training programmes for it to come in the scope of the reinspection. Retailing and customer service remained out of scope for the reinspection. Most learners are studying for modern apprenticeships and are either employed or have work placements in local companies. Many clients on Jobcentre Plus training programmes are also on work placements. Work-based learning for young people is funded by Humberside Learning and Skills Council. New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults is funded by Jobcentre Plus.

Hull Business Training Centre Ltd operates out of different premises to those during the previous inspection. The organisation now has two training centres. One is used for work-based learning programmes and the other is used for the Jobcentre Plus-funded provision.

The unemployment rate in Hull was 5.7 per cent in July 2003, compared with the national average of 2.5 per cent. In 2002, the proportion of school leavers in Hull achieving five or more general certificates in secondary education (GCSEs) was 28.9 per cent, compared with 51.6 per cent nationally. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups in Hull is 2.3 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

Overall judgement

The inspection carried out by the ALI in September 2001 found that training for learners in business administration was satisfactory. However, leadership and management of the provision was unsatisfactory. The organisation's arrangements for quality assurance and equality of opportunity were also unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

Grades awarded

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

	Inspection	Reinspection
Business administration, management & professional	3	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2
New Deal 18-24		2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		2

	Inspection	Reinspection
Information & communications technology		2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people		2
New Deal 18-24		2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

KEY STRENGTHS

- good communications
- successful approach to widening participation in training
- good achievement by learners whose previous attainment has been poor
- good work placements
- good support for individual learning

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently well-established formal quality assurance systems
- insufficiently detailed planning of individual learning on work-based learning programmes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further analyse data in relation to equality of opportunity

THE REINSPECTION

1. The reinspection was carried out in two stages, by three inspectors. A total of 12 inspection days was used. The first visit was on 13 and 14 May 2003. The second stage was completed on 2 and 3 September 2003. In addition, the lead inspector spent three days on monitoring visits with the provider. During the reinspection, 32 learners were interviewed and 17 interviews were carried out with Hull Business Training Centre Ltd's (HBTC's) staff. Eleven work placements were visited and nine work-placement supervisors interviewed. In addition, inspectors examined portfolios and learning plans, and a range of documentary evidence. HBTC had prepared a revised self-assessment report in March 2003 and this was also available for inspectors to examine.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good communications
- constructive links with external organisations
- successful approach to widening participation in training
- good promotion of equality of opportunity to learners

WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently well-established formal quality assurance systems
- insufficient facilities for people with restricted mobility

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further analyse data in relation to equality of opportunity

2. Internal communications at HBTC are good. As noted in the original inspection report, the directors have an open management style and managers and staff form a cohesive team. Staff share the directors' commitment to the organisation's core values and aims which focus on the learner and give the organisation direction. Informal communication is constant within and between the two training centres. There are regular management meetings which are minuted, and contain standard agenda items to ensure that topics such as equality of opportunity and quality assurance are discussed. There is also regular discussion of individual learners' progress and achievement and the achievement of different year groups. There are indications that achievement is improving since the original inspection, and that those learners facing significant disadvantage and barriers to learning are being particularly well supported to achieve their learning goals. There is an effective exchange of information during management and staff meetings. A meeting of all of the organisation's staff was held to work on the draft self-assessment report which had been prepared by one of the managers. Staff worked in small cross-organisational teams to analyse and amend the draft, and are aware that their feedback impacted on the final version of the reports. All of HBTC's staff are receiving clear information about the organisation's new quality assurance system. The new quality assurance system focuses on the organisation's operation and can provide analysis of learners' feedback which leads to action-planning. The recently introduced newsletter is effectively communicating information about the organisation to staff, learners and employers. The newsletter is motivational as it celebrates learners' achievement. A recent award evening also recognised learners' successes.

3. HBTC has maintained constructive links with external organisations and is improving

those links. A personal adviser from Connexions is now based at HBTC for one learning session every two weeks. Management at HBTC set up this arrangement, recognising the value of enabling learners on the work-based learning programme to access information and advice on a range of personal, educational and work topics. HBTC participates in the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus networks for training providers, and in the work-based learning quality support network. The organisation is a member of the Association of Learning Providers, and a member of the Chamber of Commerce. HBTC works with other training providers to ensure continuity for those clients who are unsuccessful in finding employment. HBTC is improving its existing good links with work placements and employers by tailoring information to them in the newsletter.

4. Business-planning at HBTC is now satisfactory. The business plan is much more coherent than it was previously and relates to the values and aims of the organisation. The targets set in the business plan relate to the organisation's objectives. However, not all the targets are sufficiently precise or timebound. The achievement of the organisation's objectives and targets, as identified in the business plan, are constantly monitored. Increased competence in the planning process is in evidence by the organisation's action plan produced after the first reinspection visit, the action plan generated by the quality assurance system, the action plan for literacy, numeracy and language, and the three-year development plan produced for the local LSC. An understanding of and commitment to planning and monitoring is currently being established across the organisation. There is evidence that targets are constantly monitored and analysed. An increased strategic approach to business-planning is evident in recent staff appointments and in the changes made to staff responsibilities. A member of staff has been recruited to have overall responsibility for quality assurance and equality of opportunity and another has been recruited with responsibility for key skills.

5. Professional support for staff remains satisfactory. New staff are appropriately supported, and are given an initial appraisal interview after being in their job for two months. Appraisals for existing staff are scheduled to take place every year, and notes kept about them are now sufficiently detailed. However, different documents are used at the two training centres. A process for conducting the appraisal of managers has recently been agreed, but has not yet been fully introduced. The professional development needs of staff are identified during appraisals and are matched to the organisation's needs.

6. Financial management of the organisation is appropriate. The resources available are appropriate. In response to feedback, a new computer suite has recently been purchased for one of the training centres. Improved facilities and resources are available to learners in the new information technology (IT) suite. IT resources are in place to support learners with disabilities.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 2**

7. HBTC is successful in its approach to widening participation in training, and provides good support for learners experiencing particular disadvantage, encouraging them to achieve their potential. A good proportion of clients with a disability access the adult programme. There is also good support on the adult programme for learners who are ex-offenders, refugees or asylum seekers and those coping with alcohol dependency. Currently, 5.3 per cent of clients starting on Jobcentre Plus training programmes are from minority ethnic groups, and this proportion is rising. However, a lower proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups access work-based learning programmes. Currently, 40 per cent of learners on work-based learning programmes have additional learning needs. Those learners who have literacy and numeracy needs are well supported. Dedicated learning sessions are designed to support additional learning needs. These learning sessions are well organised and motivational. Attendance at these classes is good. Learners are aware of the progress they are making. Single parents are well supported by HBTC as the timetable for the training programme is arranged to accommodate childcare responsibilities. HBTC recognises the importance of maintaining motivation by effectively celebrating success in the newsletter that has recently been introduced and through the introduction of a presentation evening.

8. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted to learners. Discrimination is covered during the induction. Problems related to discrimination raised by learners are effectively dealt with by HBTC. There are now good training materials relating to equality of opportunity designed to engage learners during induction. Learners indicate that the equal opportunities training is memorable and that they have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is being effectively covered during progress reviews through a bank of questions. Different questions are asked at progress reviews to ensure that different topics and aspects of equality of opportunity are covered. A bank of questions about equality of opportunity is now used to monitor employers' arrangements for equality of opportunity. There is also a guide on equality of opportunity now available for employers. HBTC has not yet monitored its effectiveness. A section in the newsletter attempts to engage employers in aspects of equality of opportunity which are directly relevant to them.

9. HBTC now has an appropriate equality and diversity policy which is comprehensive and refers to the relevant legislation. The policy is located in an up-to-date policies and guidelines file, which also contains a range of other policies relevant to equality of opportunity, including anti-harassment, complaints, disability, drugs and staff recruitment policies. However, some of these policies remain predominantly descriptions of procedures rather than policies.

10. There are adequate data collection systems to gather information relevant to equality of opportunity. Information for the Jobcentre Plus training programmes is appropriately analysed. However, HBTC recognises in the organisation's self-assessment report and as part of its quality assurance system that this is an area that requires further development.

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11. The training provision for learners with literacy and numeracy needs is appropriately managed. On work-based learning programmes, learners receive an appropriate initial assessment to identify literacy and numeracy needs. Support sessions for those identified as having such needs are well designed and delivered, and motivate learners to achieve their potential. On Jobcentre Plus programmes, clients who have literacy and numeracy needs are given individual support. There is an appropriately experienced member of staff responsible for the provision of literacy and numeracy support. A number of staff have attended relevant training sessions for this, although none have yet achieved a specific qualification in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and language.

12. Changes in location since the original inspection have presented HBTC with some problems in relation to equality of opportunity. Neither training centre has accessible toilets for people with restricted mobility. HBTC has recognised that this situation is unsatisfactory and is seeking solutions to this problem.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 3**

13. There is a strong commitment to, and an informal understanding of, the quality of the training provided by the organisation. Although there were some mechanisms for quality assurance at the time of the previous inspection, they do not constitute a coherent formal quality assurance system. HBTC has maintained, since the previous inspection, an effective chart which records in detail learners' progress on work-based learning programmes. HBTC introduced a quality assurance system and timetable after the original inspection, but it proved to be inappropriate. HBTC recognises the need to establish a formal quality assurance system and has recently appointed a new member of staff with responsibility for quality assurance and equality of opportunity. This member of staff has very recently introduced a new approach to quality assurance, based on a comprehensive and analytical monthly report. This monthly report is discussed at management meetings where quality assurance is a standing agenda item. An action plan is produced in response to the analysis of the report. Progress with the action plan is monitored. Information generated by the quality assurance system is communicated to staff during staff meetings. Staff are enthusiastic about the improved focus on the quality of the training programmes. However, the system is insufficiently mature to have yet had a significant impact on quality assurance across the organisation. The quality assurance policy prepared for the organisation remains a statement rather than a fully developed policy. A routine approach to the evaluation of training has recently been established. Feedback from learners is now being collected near the beginning of their training programme, in the middle, and near the end, using a standard format. Analysis of the feedback is included in the monthly report generated by the quality assurance system. An electronic system to elicit feedback from both staff and learners is currently being trialled. HBTC is introducing a system to collect feedback from employers every six months. However, the systems for gathering feedback are not yet sufficiently well established to show a cycle of improvement in the organisation.

14. The current self-assessment report, updated for the reinspection, is considerably more analytical and evaluative than that produced for the original inspection. Most of the strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed which are identified by inspectors in the areas of learning, and in leadership and management, are recognised by HBTC in the self-assessment report. The organisation's action plan is detailed, but does not contain target dates for the completion of actions. A supplement to the action plan was produced following the first stage of the reinspection, to deal with problems identified during the visit. Staff were involved in analysing and suggesting amendments to the draft of the self-assessment report. The grades given by inspectors were the same as most of the grades in the self-assessment report.

15. Internal verification remains satisfactory. There is a procedure outlining the internal verification system, timescales and responsibilities. Verification records indicate that procedures are being satisfactorily followed and any problems identified are being remedied. There is an appropriate system for the observation of assessments which is documented in the procedures for assessment and internal verification. Observations are carried out every six months using a standard form. The observations are graded. However, the formal observation of training is less standardised across the organisation.

16. HBTC has recently updated its system for recording electronic data about learners. The organisation has access to appropriate information for quality assurance purposes. Routine analysis of that data are now being included in the monthly report generated by the quality assurance system. The information provided by this analysis is accessible to staff throughout the organisation. However, HBTC has recognised the need for increased analysis of data relating to equality of opportunity.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	57	2
New Deal 18-24	5	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	33	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good work placements
- good support for individual learning
- good systems to monitor learners' progress
- good achievement by learners whose previous attainment has been poor

WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently detailed planning of individual learning on work-based learning programmes

17. Following their recruitment to HBTC, learners are quickly found good work placements. All learners on work-based learning programmes are either employed or in work placements. Only 12 learners on Jobcentre Plus training programmes are still in training without a work placement. Work-placement officers consider the aims and interests of the learners and match them with the requirements of the work-placement providers. From the first contact, employers understand that HBTC's aim for the learners is to gain employment as a consequence of taking up the work placement. This is an effective strategy as most learners are employed in three to four months. Allowances for training and employees' salaries are reviewed to encourage learners to progress in their place of employment. Within a few days of starting the training programme, learners begin to attend interviews for work placements. Learners can attend more than one interview. Both employers and learners are involved in the selection process and both parties have plenty of choice. Some companies use practical exercises as part of the selection process, but most are satisfied with HBTC's selection methods. Once learners start a work placement, their workplace supervisors are involved in their development. Most participate in progress reviews with the learner and the assessor, and regularly monitor and sign for work-based national vocational qualification (NVQ) evidence. They are however, not always involved in the initial planning for the achievement of the NVQ.

18. Learners and employers value the individual support provided by HBTC's staff. A genuine commitment to help learners succeed is evident at all stages of the training programme, including careful matching to work placements, regular visits and prompt responses to learners' problems. Off-the-job training is well planned and covers the NVO, key skills and technical certificate. Additional learning sessions about drug awareness, family planning, and equality of opportunity are incorporated into the off-the-job training. There is a comprehensive and well-planned induction which lasts for a week and ensures that learners have a good understanding of what they have to achieve to complete their modern apprenticeship. Learners have a good basic knowledge of many aspects of office work before they start their work placement. Of the 57 learners studying for a foundation modern apprenticeship, 26 have been identified as requiring additional support with literacy and numeracy. These learners receive exceptionally good support with planned learning sessions and individual support. All training sessions are well attended. Resources to support training are good. Learners enjoy off-the-job training and tutors ensure the learning sessions, including those for key skills, are lively and interesting. Learners who experience family and social problems are promptly referred to a variety of specialist external agencies if staff are unable to provide the necessary support. HBTC encourages parents and guardians to become involved in students' learning and to work as a team to encourage them to complete the modern apprenticeship framework. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory.

19. Learners are very clear about the progress they are making towards achieving their qualifications. Several methods are used to provide learners with this information. There is a tabular record which learners and their assessors use to indicate when units or elements have been achieved. There is also a progress chart of all learners, which is kept and updated in the training centre. Some learners prefer to use their progress review sheets. These list the elements of all the units of their qualification and indicate which ones have been achieved. There is also a chart in the front of the learner's portfolio, where completed units are highlighted to ensure learners, supervisors and assessors have an up-to-date overview of the progress made.

20. Sixty-one per cent of learners on work-based learning programmes have entered training with qualifications equivalent to level 1. Seventy-four per cent of these learners have either gained an NVO, a full framework or are still on programme and making satisfactory progress towards completion of a framework. Of learners on the work-based learning programme who started training having previously achieved level 2 qualifications, 82 per cent have either completed a full modern apprenticeship framework or are still in training. Despite the high rate of unemployment in Hull, 35 per cent of Jobcentre Plus clients gain employment while at HBTC. Particularly valuable individual support is given to refugees, ex-offenders and other potentially excluded adult groups, such as lone parents and people with disabilities. They are encouraged to gain a range of qualifications, particularly in IT, to enhance employment prospects. Clients gain in confidence, improve their communication skills and are supported to overcome barriers to taking employment.

21. The planning of individual learning is insufficiently detailed. Some learners quickly establish themselves in the workplace and perform a wide variety of tasks. Employers provide good on-the-job training and some learners are provided with detailed training programmes by their employers. The emphasis on the completion of key skills at the start of training means that planning for the assessment of the NVQ competences can be delayed, despite learners' progress in the workplace. Observations of learners' workplace practice by assessors is not always planned to make maximum use of opportunities available to watch learners perform a wide variety of tasks. Learners can be given up to three assessment plans to work on at any one time. This can be confusing for the learner. Internal verification is satisfactory. HBTC has recently introduced a comprehensive programme of planned off-the-job training. Lesson plans have been developed and are supported by a range of resources. Teaching methods are varied, but lesson plans do not include sufficient opportunities to test learners' knowledge. Lesson objectives and learning objectives are not always planned to ensure that their success can be measured.

22. All learners who start the foundation modern apprenticeship training programme are appropriately assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills. Where learners' needs are identified, learners are well supported through a motivational weekly workshop session. The workshops are taught by an experienced literacy and numeracy tutor. Learners are aware of their progress and know what help the workshop sessions provide them with in their completion of the framework. On Jobcentre Plus training programmes, clients are given appropriate individual support where literacy and numeracy needs are identified.

Good Practice

One learner was not progressing with her NVQ and was not attending off-the-job training. A member of HBTC's staff discussed this with her and she admitted that she lacked confidence and ability in spelling. Arrangements were made for her to attend literacy and numeracy classes. The learner has attended these classes regularly. She has also had 100 per cent attendance at off-the-job learning sessions. She is now also on target to complete her NVQ in the agreed timescale.

Information & communications technology**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	18	2
New Deal 18-24	5	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good achievement of qualifications
- very motivated learners
- good support for learners
- good range of additional learning opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently established off-the-job training programme

23. There are 18 learners on the work-based learning programme in information and communications technology (ICT). Learners are working towards the foundation modern apprenticeship. Learners are recruited from the local area through Connexions and local schools. HBTC also offers Jobcentre Plus training programmes. Nine clients are on training programmes which last between six and 52 weeks. These are rolling programmes and client numbers vary weekly. All clients are recruited from Jobcentre Plus. All learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship training programme take an initial guidance interview where they are assessed for literacy, numeracy and language to establish if they have any additional learning needs. Learners have a week-long induction which covers equality of opportunity, health and safety and the agreement of the individual learning plan. Learners are employed or are found work placements in a wide range of local organisations. Assessment takes place in the workplace. Progress reviews are carried out by HBTC every four weeks. Off-the-job training takes place one afternoon every week to reinforce training. Key skills and portfolio-building also takes place at HBTC's training centre. There are eight staff who manage the provision of training on ICT programmes. All staff have relevant occupational experience and qualifications.

24. The achievement of qualifications in ICT at HBTC is good. Over the past three years, completion of the foundation modern apprenticeship framework has been good. Sixty per cent of learners starting the training programme in 2000-01 have completed the framework and 46 per cent of learners starting in 2001-02 have completed it. Of the

15 learners who started in 2002-03, two have completed the framework and the remaining 13 are still in learning. Twenty-eight per cent of learners working towards the foundation modern apprenticeship attend weekly workshops at HBTC for support with literacy and numeracy. On Jobcentre Plus programmes, HBTC ensures that all clients leave with a qualification in IT at a level appropriate to the client's ability. HBTC recognises that this improves employment prospects for clients. Clients on Jobcentre Plus programmes overcome a range of barriers to learning to achieve these qualifications. Many learners speak English as an additional language. Job outcomes are improving for learners on work-based learning for young people and Jobcentre Plus programmes. Job outcomes are currently satisfactory.

25. Learners are very motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and compare HBTC's training very favourably with their past educational experiences. Learners are clear about their progress and enjoy their training and work placements. Learners and clients can progress from introductory training programmes to more advanced ones. Learners and clients support and assist each other in learning. One client on the adult learning programme volunteered to provide workshops about interview skills for other clients. A large proportion of learners have additional learning needs and more than 20 per cent of clients starting on Jobcentre Plus programmes in the past year have disabilities. HBTC builds and maintains learners' motivation through the support it provides and by effective celebration of their success. HBTC has recently employed two learners from the adult learning programme.

26. HBTC's staff work effectively to provide good support for learners. Staff regularly visit learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship training programme in the workplace. Progress reviews are carried out every four weeks. The progress reviews are thorough and effectively cover a range of topics including equal opportunities, safe working practices and motivation. Problems identified during progress reviews are dealt with promptly and efficiently by HBTC. E-mail is used to communicate between HBTC, employers and learners to ensure that set targets are on schedule. All learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship training programme are tested for numeracy and literacy. Learners who are identified as having literacy and numeracy needs during the initial assessment receive support for these at workshops provided by HBTC. These workshops are well attended. A basic skills tutor provides these workshops and is supported by another member of staff who is training to be a basic skills tutor. Learners are enthusiastic about the support they receive at these workshop sessions, and are aware of the progress they are making. Where clients on Jobcentre Plus training programmes have literacy or numeracy needs, they are provided with individual support. HBTC's staff provide good support for learners coping with a range of personal and learning problems. On Jobcentre Plus training programmes, staff support a good proportion of clients with a disability, as well as single parents, refugees, asylum seekers, ex-offenders and those coping with alcohol dependency. On foundation modern apprenticeship training programmes, there is a partnership arrangement with Connexions, whereby a personal adviser supports learners facing personal and practical difficulties at a fortnightly surgery.

27. HBTC provides a range of extended learning programmes to enrich learners' experience. Learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship training programme can attend weekend learning breaks in the United Kingdom and abroad. All learners can attend these activities, which take place throughout the year. Learners who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly encouraged to attend. Learners become more confident and their learning is enhanced during these breaks. Communications and relationships between learners and staff are also improved. Photographs of these activities are displayed near the training suite to celebrate achievement and further motivate other learners. HBTC's staff volunteer to attend these extended learning breaks to supervise the learners. On Jobcentre Plus programmes, all clients work towards and achieve IT qualifications at a level appropriate to their ability.

28. Off-the-job training is insufficiently established. Until recently, off-the-job learning sessions at HBTC were used for portfolio-building rather than for training. A structured programme for off-the-job training is now in place and is being provided. It is too early to judge its impact on learning.

Good Practice

At the venue used for Jobcentre Plus training programmes there is a board where clients' success is celebrated. All clients who gain a qualification or employment have their names placed on the board identifying their achievement. This improves clients' motivation.

One client at the venue used for Jobcentre Plus training programmes volunteered to set up workshops for fellow clients to learn about interview techniques and body language. These workshops were well received by other clients. This client has now been employed by HBTC and more workshops are planned.