

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Rathbone Training

27 January 2003



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Arlygiath Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg  
A Hylloddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
For Education and Training in Wales

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

## Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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



## SUMMARY

### The provider

Rathbone Training is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. It mainly works with unemployed people to improve their quality of life. It has 53 training centres across every region of England, except the Southwest, and eight in Wales. Over half of the 4,377 learners are either training in social care work or are on foundation programmes. Most young people in other areas of learning are working towards NVOs at level 1. Around 1,100 learners are in Wales. Rathbone runs Workstep in the West Midlands and London, and a programme centre in Cumbria. Most of the 500 New Deal clients are in Cumbria, including many on Gateway to Work, a few on the environment task force, and some on basic employability training or longer occupational training courses. Rathbone employs about a 1,000 staff and has a head office in Manchester.

### Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the needs of those receiving it. Foundation training is good, and disengaged young people are successfully motivated to take up learning opportunities. Learning in construction; engineering; administration; retailing; hospitality and sports, and health and social care are all satisfactory. Less than 2 per cent of learners are in the unsatisfactory areas of information and communications technology and land-based learning. A lot of the training for New Deal clients is also unsatisfactory, including foundation programmes and retailing training for clients aged 18-24. Leadership and management, including quality assurance arrangements, are satisfactory. Equal opportunities is good.

### GRADES

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

<b>Land-based provision</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	4

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<b>Construction</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	3

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	None

Health, social care & public services	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	4
Life Skills	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4
Programme Centres	3
Workstep	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- excellent pastoral support and guidance
- good development of learners' occupational and personal skills
- clear strategic direction
- extensive and effective partnerships and initiatives
- public recognition and celebration of learners' achievements
- well-integrated quality assurance with all aspects of the business

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- unsatisfactory retention rates and NVQ achievements
- high staff turnover
- inadequate literacy, numeracy and language teaching
- insufficiently challenging learning targets

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of unit accreditation
- more active approach to converting work placements into employment

## THE INSPECTION

1. Thirty-two inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate and Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, spent a total of 298 days at Rathbone Training (Rathbone) over two consecutive weeks in January and February 2003. They worked closely with two auditors from the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) national provider financial assurance team. They visited all Rathbone centres where they had 523 interviews with managers and staff. They visited 283 workplaces, where they interviewed 233 supervisors. They spoke with 1,029 learners, and observed and graded 170 learning sessions. They examined 515 national vocational qualification (NVQ) portfolios, 683 learners' plans, audit reports from funding and awarding bodies, records of meetings, policies and procedures, and achievement data.

### 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	0	4	1	1	0	6
Construction	0	2	9	3	0	0	0	14
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	5	10	4	1	1	21
Information & communications technology	0	0	2	3	3	0	0	8
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	2	3	11	1	0	0	17
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	6
Health, social care & public services	0	3	7	14	3	1	0	28
Foundation programmes	3	8	27	19	6	3	1	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>170</b>



## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Rathbone Training is a charity which has contracts in Wales, Scotland, and with the LSC to provide work-based learning for young people. It also contracts with Jobcentre Plus for Workstep and a range of programmes for unemployed people. Its main activity is to provide learning and training support to people experiencing disadvantage. Its work in Scotland, its independent living projects for young people and its work with young people aged 14-16 are outside the scope of this inspection. Its head office is in Manchester, and it runs eight training centres in south Wales and 53 in England. These are in every region of England except the Southwest. There are approximately 1,150 learners across South Wales, from Haverfordwest to Crumlin. Most are following foundation, care or retailing learning programmes. Around a quarter of the 3,200 learners in England are based in Cumbria, mainly in Barrow-in-Furness or Workington. Nine hundred learners are in the Midlands, around 500 are in Merseyside, Manchester and Lancashire, 450 are in London and the Southeast, 250 in the Northeast, and 300 in West Yorkshire. The 500 Jobcentre Plus clients are all based in England, and are mainly on foundation programmes. Approximately 1,100 learners and clients are following foundation programmes: 1,100 in care work, 750 in retailing or warehousing, and 650 in administration. None of the other areas of learning have more than 300 learners or clients.

3. Most learners in vocational areas are working towards NVQs at level 1 or 2 and most have social or learning needs. Very few achieved five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above.

4. Rathbone has a board of non-executive trustees, and a chief executive, and is organised into four main divisions of personnel, finance, new development, and operations. The director of operations is responsible for the training provision. A quality assurance manager and eight regional managers, including one for Scotland and one for Wales, report to her. At each centre, a centre manager manages the training and administrative staff, and the day-to-day running of the provision. Rathbone employs about 1,000 people, including approximately 40 ex-learners or clients. Rathbone is accredited with the Investors in People, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, and ISO 9001:2000, an international quality assurance standard.

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

5. Around 750 of the 3,800 young people in work-based learning are on prevocational foundation programmes. Around 2,000 others are on programmes leading to an NVQ at level 1. Only 500 are on foundation or advanced modern apprenticeships. Most young people are not employed when they start and staff help them to overcome the barriers in their personal lives which impede their progress. The staff prepare the young people well for work, and take care to find work placements which match their needs. Workplace supervisors are helpful and supportive, and learners gain useful vocational skills. Rathbone's staff visit them frequently at work, to review their progress. However, too few young people stay with Rathbone long enough to gain qualifications, and few progress to employment.

## **New Deal 18-24**

6. In most areas of learning, New Deal clients aged 18-24 are integrated well with other learners. Like other learners, their pastoral care is good, and staff find good work placements for them, particularly in Cumbria. They become motivated and generally progress well. However, too few are helped to improve their literacy or numeracy and too few progress to employment.

## **Life Skills**

7. Life Skills teaching is motivational. Training advisers are committed to helping their learners develop and progress in stimulating learning environments. Learners are involved in decorating their training centres, and the training rooms are bright and well decorated. Practical activities such as cookery and motor vehicle maintenance motivates learners. There are also innovative approaches to parenting skills. The variety of activities and style and pace of some of the sessions maintain the learners' interest. Training sessions concentrate on the development of learners' personal effectiveness, social skills, timekeeping, personal hygiene and raising their self-esteem and confidence. Learners' success is publicly celebrated. Most learners progress to vocational training or further education.

8. There is inadequate literacy, numeracy and language training and in some centres there is no formal provision. Much literacy and numeracy teaching is unimaginative and teachers rely on worksheets. Some of the staff are not sufficiently qualified or competent to deal with the literacy or numeracy needs of the learners.

### **New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults**

9. Most of the 300 clients aged over 25 are in foundation programmes, but there are some in every area of learning. There is good and very individual pastoral support. Training advisers work effectively with external agencies to support learners. There are incentives for learners including breakfast and catering facilities and vouchers as rewards for good attendance and punctuality. Learners are praised and encouraged at every appropriate opportunity. At some centres, learners are given suitable clothing for interviews. Staff develop good relationships with learners. In some centres there is good literacy teaching, and learners are proud of the awards they gain. Too few clients gain employment however, and strategies to improve the employment rates are ineffective.

### **Programme Centres**

10. There are good and improving job outcomes for programme centre clients. This has been offered since April 2001 and staff have a wide range of experience in working with unemployed and disaffected people. Job entry rates for the period between April to December 2001 were 26 per cent. This doubled between January and December 2002. Rathbone staff were unable to produce an achievement data table for programme centre clients in the format normally expected by the inspectors.

11. There is ineffective monitoring of clients' progress in programme centres. The programme is flexible and clients attend the sessions which they believe will benefit them most. Reviews of clients' progress are infrequent and do not result in the setting of clear and well-defined objectives. There is no systematic approach to reviewing clients' progress. Some clients are given little individual support. Although clients' attendance is recorded, little action is taken if they stop attending.

## Workstep

12. Rathbone has Workstep provision in Walsall and Balham. The provision in Walsall has been established for a number of years and was originally part of the supported employment programme. Most of the 31 Workstep employees in Walsall have been with their employers for a considerable number of years. The Balham centre has started to offer Workstep in the past year. In Balham, 10 clients have been recruited under the Workstep contract, none of whom are in employment. One employee has progressed into open employment since June 2000.

13. Employers have a good understanding of the difficulties their employees face and have strategies in place to develop communication, confidence building and occupational skills. Job roles and working hours are adapted to suit the employees' needs. On-the-job training is relevant and allows the clients to develop occupational skills.

14. There are good opportunities for employees to gain additional qualifications either through their employer, through Rathbone, or by arrangements made by the training adviser with the local college. Workstep employees have achieved qualifications in first aid, health and safety, basic food hygiene and customer care. Certificates for good attendance and timekeeping have also been effective in motivating the employees.

15. In one region, there is strong support by the Workstep training adviser to maintain clients' employment. Relationships and communication between the client, employer and the training adviser are excellent. There are well-structured three-way reviews covering a wide range of issues with clearly identified actions. There is good, short-term planning and target-setting to improve work performance. There is effective mediation between clients and supervisors, which is supportive and reduces conflict. Clients who face disciplinary problems at work are given strong support and guidance by the training adviser.

16. Assessment for Workstep clients is inadequate. Jobcentre Plus' disability employment advisers complete the initial interviews and the individual development plans. There is no system for standard in-depth vocational profiling or social skill assessments. There are no further diagnostic assessments. Provision to support the basic skills needs of clients is inadequate. Rathbone does not assess the basic skills needs of Workstep clients, and those with basic skills needs are not given additional support or tuition.

17. There are limited strategies for progression and development. Clients who have transferred from the supported employment programme do not have an individual development plan to clearly identify their future plans. However, all clients have short-term development plans and clients who join Workstep directly have an individual development plan. However, the plans are insufficiently detailed and do not identify strategies to move the clients towards unsupported employment. There is insufficient use of job coaches, support workers or adapted technology to support clients in the workplace. Employers are given a wage subsidy for Workstep clients, but there are

insufficient strategies to reduce the subsidy and to provide further support or training. Support for clients' employment is through regular contact with the training adviser and on-the-job training by employers. For some employers, the pressure of a busy workplace prevents adequate support or training.

18. There is insufficient attention paid to the direction and management of the Workstep programme. The Workstep training adviser has a generic job description and her role and responsibilities are not clearly defined. The training adviser has not had formal training for her role and has not had an appraisal. There are no regular formal meetings regarding Workstep and there is little feedback on the performance of the programme or the training adviser. There was one programme review to monitor the quality of the programme, but the review and the self-assessment report did not identify the weaknesses identified by inspectors. The training adviser was not involved in the self-assessment process.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

19. Rathbone's chief executive and senior management team run the organisation under the overall direction of the board of trustees. About 1,000 staff work in six regions in England, and in Scotland and Wales. Most of the employees are full-time. The senior management team is made up of the chief executive and the directors of operations, personnel and training and finance. The regional directors for Scotland and Wales and the six English regional managers are supported by operations, business support and finance managers. The regional managers are responsible for more than 70 training centres (centres) headed by managers or senior training advisers. Each centre has teams of training advisers led by senior training advisers. Their work is verified by regional and national internal verifiers. Each centre has the Rathbone quality assurance policy and procedure manuals. The quality assurance manager is responsible for the quality assurance process as well as for internal verification for the entire organisation. Head office, regional and centre staff carry out regular reviews of business plans, quality assurance development plans and internal processes within centres. There is an equal opportunities policy and procedures. The equal opportunities forum meets every quarter to raise awareness, discuss equal opportunities and to share good practice. The fifth annual self-assessment report was produced in September 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- clear strategic direction
- effective internal communications with widespread sharing of good practice
- good staff development strategy
- extensive and effective partnerships and initiatives
- excellent levels of individual pastoral support and guidance
- public recognition and celebration of learners' achievements
- good reinforcement of equal opportunities within centres
- well-integrated quality assurance with all aspects of the business
- well-established and inclusive self-assessment process

### WEAKNESSES

- slow implementation of strategy to improve retention rates and achievement of qualifications and jobs
- high staff turnover
- inadequate use of equal opportunities data for decision-making
- weak monitoring of subcontractors
- insufficiently challenging learning targets

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- less duplication and overlap of paperwork
- more consistent monitoring of training
- wider analysis and use of learners' feedback
- better access at some centres for learners with restricted mobility
- better monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- more systematic recording and analysis of complaints
- greater implementation of basic skills strategy

20. The organisation has strong strategic direction. Policies and plans are developed in line with Rathbone's defined mission, values and six strategic aims. They are informed by the many strategic partnerships with external bodies which the organisation has developed. The chief executive and his senior management team direct operations nationally through the board. Senior managers meet each week to plan, review and take decisions on all aspects of the business. They examine the performance of all regions and centres once a month against key performance indicators. They use the summary report for each region to monitor performance, identify significant variances and oversee corrective actions. Regional managers and their staff work with centre managers to produce the monthly regional reports. These reports help managers at national, regional and centre levels to focus on maintaining and improving performance. Key performance indicators and targets cover a small number of activities which impact significantly on learning. Rathbone's values, strategic aims, objectives and priorities are understood by staff at all levels. Performance targets are passed through from national, regional and centre management to teams of training advisers, as well as to individual staff. Data produced by centres are used at all levels of the organisation to monitor and improve training performance. Rathbone has sound financial management and information on performance against budget is made available in centres. Centre managers have sufficient autonomy to make decisions within a clear framework of strategies, policies, budgets and performance targets. They are supported by regional management when required. However, the organisation's strong leadership and direction is comparatively recent and the impact on improvements in performance by centres is not yet widespread.

21. The organisation has effective internal communications. There is a well-structured programme of meetings in regions and centres. Some meetings involve staff in individual areas of learning, while others are aimed specifically at improvements in quality in all aspects of learning. Managers and training advisers meet to discuss opportunities as well as problems. Instances of good and poor practice are shared. Inspectors identified examples of good practice which had spread from one centre to others in the region. In some cases, this has led to changes affecting all 70 centres nationally. Information of all kinds is shared throughout Rathbone. Managers operate an open-door policy and staff at all levels feel that they can communicate freely. The opinions and ideas of learners and staff are sought through formal and informal

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consultation. Newsletters are sent out and learners contribute to some of them. The Rathbone intranet allows open access to company-wide information as well as to some training materials. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report.

22. Rathbone has a good strategy for developing its staff. Centre managers and training advisers are recruited against a profile of competences, including appropriate personal qualities as well as experience in a relevant industry or profession. A standard programme of training and development covers all new entrants. It extends over 12 months and is aimed at raising the competence of each person as an assessor and trainer. Formal training includes assessor qualifications, a three-day course in training skills and courses in health and safety, challenging behaviour, child protection and drug awareness. Those who work with offenders attend appropriate training. Targets are set for staff to complete specific qualifications and courses within three, six and twelve months of their appointment. A training handbook describes these as well as other courses available to Rathbone's staff. Employees are encouraged to pursue other aspects of personal development. They can apply to be sponsored for education and training courses other than those offered by Rathbone. New staff, including managers, follow a comprehensive induction programme which can extend for as long as a month. They shadow their peers and are mentored for as long as necessary. Experienced and new managers are supported by regional teams whenever they need it. Appraisals, staff performance and progress reviews are used to identify additional development needs related to individuals' ability to achieve key performance targets. Centre managers maintain training plans for all their staff and have specific amounts of money allocated for training.

23. Some staff teach literacy and numeracy, although they are not competent to do so as yet. Rathbone has paid close attention to national developments in basic skills and has liaised closely with local representatives of the adult basic skills strategy unit. Rathbone recognises the need for staff to become qualified in this area. There is a clear staff development plan for all relevant staff to do basic skills teacher training as soon as approved qualifications and courses become nationally available.

24. There has been slow implementation of strategies to improve the retention and achievement rates of learners. The rates are low in most areas of learning and have worsened in some cases over the past three years. Overall, two out of five learners who start their training with Rathbone leave before achieving the targets on their individual learning plans. However, many of those who remain with Rathbone for longer than 12 weeks, achieve the NVQs. Some who leave early return to continue their course or change to another qualification with Rathbone. Many learners who complete their training do not enter employment when they leave Rathbone. There is no effective strategy to ensure that learners on work placements get jobs with their host organisations, even in industries such as retailing and hospitality where jobs are widely available. Support to develop learners' literacy and numeracy is inadequate in some areas of Rathbone. The organisation has recognised the need to improve retention and achievement rates and entry into jobs. National strategies and local initiatives have started to resolve these problems. Initial assessment has been improved, courses to



motivate learners are offered and retention officers have been appointed. However, these efforts have not yet made a significant impact on the problem.

25. Rathbone has a high turnover of staff and this was identified in the self-assessment report. This has contributed in some cases to slow progress by learners. About 40 per cent of employees left the organisation in the past year, and a similar proportion was recruited. Centre managers have contingency plans for temporary replacements to cover for vacancies and staff absence, but these arrangements are not always effective. Some staff are unqualified. Internal verifiers have countersigned work by unqualified assessors, and some assessors are not occupationally competent. Staff absences and vacancies have resulted in some long gaps in assessment and little monitoring of learners' progress. Some learners do not make adequate progress.

## Equality of opportunity

## Contributory grade 2

26. There is wide participation by some of the most disadvantaged learners in society. Rathbone have developed effective partnerships at strategic and local levels to lobby government and re-engage young people into training, many of whom were excluded from school or left with no formal qualifications. The company is running national pilots for the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme. It also targets young offenders, many of whom are under intensive supervision and surveillance, known as tagging. At local level there are numerous initiatives to recruit people with multiple barriers to learning. For example, the Wales region has particularly good links with travellers, offering them small packages of training and library books. There are outreach activities in isolated communities, market stalls, and on the streets. In some regions there are particularly good initiatives with criminal justice agencies to ensure that ex-offenders have access to training in secure and safe surroundings. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report.

27. The excellent pastoral support and guidance given by Rathbone's staff enables learners to overcome barriers to learning and to gain practical and personal skills for employment. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Many of Rathbone's staff have qualifications and experience in counselling and working with vulnerable people. A range of specialist counselling and advice is readily available to learners from external support agencies, who visit centres regularly to give advice and guidance on topics such as housing, drug misuse, debt management, and sexual issues. Learners often have free transport, clothing and personal protective equipment. Centres provide refreshment facilities and breakfast clubs where learners can get tea and toast early in the morning. One in five of the early leavers returns to Rathbone for training.

28. Learners' achievements are particularly well-celebrated. This motivates learners, who take pride in achieving a qualification, often for the first time in their lives. There are rolls of honour, displays of learners' photographs and success stories on centre walls, with copies of certificates gained. Rathbone holds local and national ceremonies where celebrities present awards to learners. A glossy newsletter celebrating success is sent to local employers and organisations.

29. There is good reinforcement of equal opportunities. Centres have a welcoming atmosphere and interpreters for deaf learners are available. Policies and procedures for complaints are displayed prominently. Most centres have a suggestion box which is well-used by learners. Learners at many of the centres have designed stimulating displays to raise awareness of such topics as smoking, drug misuse, bullying and sexual issues. Equal opportunities is covered well in staff and learners' inductions by discussion, activities and a video. Learners have a good understanding and recall of the topics raised. At some centres, learners are helped to overcome barriers to learning by participating in outdoor activities. Cultural differences are celebrated through events and displays. There is sensitive awareness of religious practices. An equal opportunities forum meets throughout the country, rotating the venue to give learners and staff the opportunity to attend. Issues discussed are circulated to staff in centres. The forum recently created an

equal opportunities manual for centre managers, outlining their responsibilities including training materials and monitoring of employers. Some centres have poor access for learners with restricted mobility. Although employers are monitored for compliance with equal opportunities legislation and practices before a learner is placed there, it is not reinforced during training.

30. Rathbone collects data on ethnicity and gender to meet its contractual obligations, but little effort is made to analyse and use it for decision-making. Although there is good participation by minority ethnic groups in general, no work has been carried out to analyse which other groups are not participating. In care and engineering, a few centres have attempted to redress the gender balance. There is still a predominant take-up of information technology (IT) programmes by men and this is not being dealt with. In retailing, there is little attempt to deal with gender stereotyping when finding work placements. There is insufficient systematic recording and analysis of complaints and feedback to identify trends and make improvements.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 3

31. Quality assurance arrangements cover all key aspects of learning, and this was identified in the self-assessment report. They are effective in ensuring that most of the provision is satisfactory or better. The quality assurance arrangements are an integral part of the operational and strategic planning and all staff are involved in the continuous improvement process. Quality assurance is discussed at all staff meetings. Centres submit development plans to the regional managers at regular intervals which feed into the regional development plans. These form the basis of the national strategy, identify regional or local issues and instigate improvements and staff development. Regional improvement teams meet at least once a quarter to review the quality assurance arrangements across the region and the impact on the learners. They give effective support to under-performing or failing centres, and implement rapid remedial action. All staff are invited to contribute ideas for improvement and to evaluate their own performance. Good use is made of programme evaluations to bring about improvements in occupational areas. National internal inspection teams make very effective monitoring visits to centres, inspecting occupational areas or aspects of training on a rotational basis. Where particularly good practice is observed, the centre is recognised as a centre of excellence. Staff from other centres can then implement the good practice in their own centres. There are awards to recognise very good performance of staff at national ceremonies. File audits are bringing about improvements in record-keeping and this is increasing the consistency of practices across the organisation. Arrangements to verify the quality of assessment against NVQ standards are effective and commended by the awarding bodies. Assessments are carried out satisfactorily or well in all areas of learning.

32. The self-assessment process is thorough and critical. The self-assessment report is well-written and accurately identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses which inspectors identified, apart from in the land-based occupational area. The self-assessment process takes place each year and is an integral part of development planning. Centre staff and occupational teams identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Managers and senior training advisers attend regional workshops where they review each region's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. The national self-assessment report was based on these reviews and other information, including the results of internal verification.

33. Rathbone has a few subcontractors, but does not monitor their performance sufficiently. Most contracts do not contain detailed service level agreements to measure the performance of subcontractors. Little formal monitoring takes place, although there is some informal monitoring of training at Rathbone's premises. Rathbone's managers have recognised this weakness and are already improving the system.

34. The targets in individual learning plans and in progress reviews are not challenging. Target dates for completion of NVQ units are often the same and coincide with the end of the training programme. These targets do not motivate learners to achieve units more quickly. Action plans in reviews often have insufficient focus and are not linked to

learning plans. Some support for basic or social skills does not take place or is not monitored. There are inconsistencies across centres in how reviews are carried out and dates and signatures are often omitted.

#### **Good Practice**

*Suggestion boxes in centres have brought positive results for learners. Vending machines for drinks and confectionery have been purchased for use by learners. One centre has a football team as a result of a suggestion and this is helping learners to develop teambuilding and social skills.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Land-based provision

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	15	4

35. There are 17 clients in land-based provision, of whom eight are on the environment task force option of New Deal for 18-24 year olds and two are on environment task force for New Deal 25+. Seven clients are on the full-time education and training option. The environment task force option lasts for 26 weeks and the full-time education and training option is for up to 52 weeks. Clients are referred to the programmes from jobcentres. Rathbone carries out an initial interview and informal assessment to determine their suitability for the option and the level and type of training. Induction takes place at the beginning of the programme, and lasts for three days. It consists of relevant paperwork, health and safety, and equality of opportunity. Clients are given a series of initial and diagnostic assessments during the initial weeks of their training programme, to determine the clients' learning needs and styles as well as their ability to cope with the training programme and level of work. Many clients are identified as having additional learning needs or social needs, or both. The individual learning plan is completed during the first two weeks of the programme. The training is managed from one of the Rathbone offices in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Specialist training on the full-time education and training option in animal care, horticulture and hard landscaping is subcontracted to two local colleges. Other clients on this option work towards an NVQ in hard landscaping and are placed with local landscape contractors. They work towards either a full NVQ or two units of an NVQ in hard landscaping and are visited on site by one of the college's assessors. Environment task force clients are given practical training on a number of Rathbone's many environmental projects by their own training staff. The training includes tasks such as fencing, dry stone walling and path construction. All work placements and projects are checked for suitability and safety, and they provide a broad range of work activity. All environment task force clients attend the equivalent of one day a week off-the-job training towards specialist qualifications or background knowledge for the NVQ. Additional training in safe lifting and handling, health and safety, driving lessons and site safety certificates is offered to all clients. These courses are taught by specialist trainers. Clients attend jobsearch training for six hours a week for 18-24 year olds and four hours a week for those aged 25+. During the jobsearch training, clients write job application letters, practise interview techniques and update their curriculum vitae. Clients have a series of progress reviews which are held each month to cover achievement towards qualifications, personal needs and target-setting. There are no data tables for land-based provision as Rathbone keeps its data regarding achievements on New Deal programmes by option rather than by type of learning.

### **STRENGTHS**

- good achievement of relevant and useful qualifications
- wide range of effective support
- very stimulating project work

### **WEAKNESSES**

- weak training reviews
- insufficient basic skills training for environment task force clients
- poor health and safety practices in environment task force
- some poor training and assessment practices

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better publicity for environment task force and full-time education and training options
- better teaching environments

36. Since taking over the contract for the land-based training provision in May 2002, 38 per cent of clients have found jobs, 31 per cent have gained a qualification and 16 per cent have completed their training programme. Nearly all the clients are referred to the option without choosing it. Nearly all the clients are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have considerable additional learning and social needs.

37. Project work is very stimulating, and this was partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Clients work on a wide range of practical environmental projects, including dry stone walling at local stables, landscape maintenance in public parks and gardens and work at local pet centres. Clients take pride in their work and recognise the benefits to themselves as well as to the public, the environment and local schools. Clients are motivated by the work and this stimulates them to attend regularly and on time. They speak enthusiastically about the projects they work on and look forward to attending these practical training sessions. Clients' time sheets show a clear improvement in timekeeping and attendance over the period they spend on the option. Working in public areas and open spaces improves the clients' social skills as they interact with members of the public. The clients work as a group on these projects and team building and general work skills are gained as a result. They also improve their communication skills while working in teams. Clients learn a range of vocational skills which are required by local employers. The full range of skills gained on the project work make the clients more employable.

38. Client support is wide ranging and effective. During induction, clients are made aware of the full range of support available to them while they are on the option. They are given a card which lists the contact names and telephone numbers of members of

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the training provider's staff who they can contact for help. Some clients have had public transport costs paid so that they can travel to remote specialist colleges for their chosen training. Other clients have been given additional specialist tuition or have had their time on the option extended to allow them to complete their training. All clients are given tutorial support and some have additional tutorials to help them overcome personal problems with drug and alcohol misuse or difficulties with accommodation. Some clients on the full-time education and training option are given support with literacy and numeracy to allow them to complete their training. Personal tutors and training advisers travel to remote locations in order to meet clients and their vocational tutors to offer support and guidance.

39. There is good achievement of relevant qualifications. Clients are offered training in a wide range of short courses, some of which are additional to the clients' main vocational qualification. These lead to certificates which are recognised by local employers and make clients more employable. Some clients achieve two or three of these qualifications in the first couple of months of their training. Other clients achieve four or five qualifications in areas such as chainsaw handling, site safety and first aid. Additional training courses further motivate the clients to attend and seek employment. Clients are keen to achieve the certificates in order to get a job.

40. There are some poor training and assessment practices. There is little formal planning of training in environment task force. Tutors plan their teaching sessions without full consideration of the clients' individual learning needs. There is little structure to the practical training sessions, which are more about completing a job rather than learning. Lesson and training plans contain few details about the content of the training session and most are poorly structured. Many of the formal off-the-job training sessions are tutor-led with a narrow range of teaching styles. There are few opportunities for the clients to make positive contributions to these sessions. Most clients are bored, take a passive role and little learning takes place. Clients who are working on practical tasks produce good work which clearly shows their competence. However, there is no recording of the evidence for use in wider basic skills or to give unit accreditation for vocational qualifications. One experienced trainer is unaware that this form of accreditation is available. Little formal recording of on-the-job evidence is carried out and the trainers rely on memory to record the detail when they are next in the office. Some clients who are working towards NVQs have little assessment in their place of work. Workplace supervisors provide some evidence for the clients' portfolios, but opportunities to capture the full range of workplace evidence are not taken.

41. Health and safety practices in environment task force are poor. Clients complain about insufficient personal protective clothing. On site they are expected to work in extreme weather conditions without enough protective clothing. Clients sometimes handle hazardous materials, such as cement powder, under windy conditions without a dust mask or goggles. Each work site has a written assessment of the risks involved, but they are insufficiently thorough and do not fully identify all the risks involved. Trainers are unaware of the dangers on site and clients are put at risk of serious injuries. Tools and equipment are transported to work sites using unsafe methods and set a poor



example to clients. Some of the transport is faulty and unsuitable for the intended purpose. Access to some work sites is dangerous in adverse weather conditions.

42. There is insufficient basic skills training for environment task force clients. All clients are given a thorough assessment of their training needs during the first weeks of their training programme and are then offered training in literacy and numeracy if required. All clients who have been offered this training have declined to take up the offer. They see this aspect of the programme as academic classroom work which they feel is not relevant. Many clients do not have good communication skills and are unable to carry out basic calculations competently. The provider is currently planning to introduce an award which will allow these skills to become an integral part of vocational training, but this is not in place as yet. Clients' progress with the vocational training is not helped by their lack of basic skills.

43. Training reviews are weak, and this was partially recognised in the self-assessment report. All clients have their progress reviewed every four weeks by their training adviser or course tutor. The reviews cover the clients' vocational achievements, on-site project work and what they are preparing to do next. The jobsearch tutor also reviews their progress. However, the reviews are generally weak and are not recorded in sufficient detail. Some have very limited information to help the clients progress further between reviews. There is no systematic review of the clients' current health status, or their understanding of equality of opportunity or general health and safety. Reviews on the jobsearch element set some targets for clients to achieve, but they are insufficiently thorough. Reviews of the vocational training do not include targets for clients to achieve. Some of the recorded details do not clearly show what has taken place in the review and interpretation of this information is difficult. Some topics are inappropriately dealt with by the progress review process, rather than the grievance procedure and problems take up the whole of the review, and none of the essential aspects of the review are covered. Some reviews give the same information and comments in a number of consecutive reviews. In some cases, weaknesses in the clients' training are identified, but are not targeted for improvement. Clients are insufficiently challenged and developed by these training reviews. One client's personal file contained four copies of a series of reviews but the client had not received his copies. In general the reviews are not thorough or consistent across the provision.

#### Good Practice

*Through jobsearch, some clients identified that employers were asking for a driving licence in their job advertisements. These clients were subsidised to take their driving tests in order to make them more suitable for employment.*

#### Poor Practice

*During the observation of a jobsearch session, 75 per cent of a group of clients were disinterested in the content of the lesson. The two tutors taking the session did nothing to encourage the clients to join in the activities. There was no lesson plan for this session and the tutors relied solely on a basic training pack to teach the session.*

**Construction****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	230	3
New Deal 18-24	22	3

44. In England and Wales there are 255 learners on construction programmes, 230 of whom are on work-based learning for young people. Of these, 223 are on NVO training and seven are on foundation modern apprenticeships. There are 22 clients on New Deal 18-24 and three on the New Deal 25+ programme. One hundred and one of the total learners are based in Cumbria, 64 in London, 59 in the Northeast, 29 in Wales and two in Yorkshire. Most of the young people are referred from Connexions, but a few are referred by the probation service. New Deal clients are referred from Jobcentre Plus. New Deal clients are fully integrated with learners on other programmes. Many young people on Life Skills or foundation programmes are trained in construction skills as part of their development. Some go on to enrol on full-time construction programmes. Training takes place in six centres in England and two in Wales. After an initial off-the-job training period, Rathbone arranges a work-placement or project work. Projects are mainly with local authorities or charitable organisations where learners renovate council properties or work on community projects. Work placements are mainly with companies who employ less than five people, carrying out domestic and small commercial building work. Learners who are on work placement spend four days in the workplace and one day at a centre where they develop practical skills, work on portfolios and are given basic skills support if needed. Most of the learners in construction have additional learning and/or social needs. Learners attend a three-day induction during which they take initial assessment tests to measure literacy and numeracy. Rathbone keeps records on the way learners participate in activities and their interpersonal skills. This information and that from their interview record and results from initial testing, forms the basis of an individual learning plan. Two full-time internal verifiers oversee the assessment process for all construction centres in England and Wales.

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

<b>Work-based learning for young people</b>															
<b>Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)</b>															
	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	4		35		43		3								
Retained*	0		2		1	2	0								
Successfully completed	0		0		0	0	0								
Still in learning	4		1		0	0	2								

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

<b>Work-based learning for young people</b>															
<b>NVQ Training</b>															
	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	318		485		483		203								
Retained*	8		66		121		73	36							
Successfully completed	12		58		93		53	26							
Still in learning	171		47		5		0	0							

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

<b>New Deal 18-24</b>											
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>											
	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	36		58		47		7				
Retained*	0	0	7	12	11	23	6	86			
Planned learning completed	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0			
Gained job	5	14	3	5	6	13	0	0			
Still in training	21	58	1	2	0	0	0	0			

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

## RATHBONE TRAINING

### STRENGTHS

- significant practical and pastoral support
- memorable and interactive induction
- good practical skills development
- good additional learning support
- comprehensive internal verification practice

### WEAKNESSES

- unsatisfactory rates of achievement and retention
- inadequate progress reviews
- insufficient work placements

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more workplace evidence in portfolios

45. The initial assessment process is comprehensive and involves tests for literacy and numeracy, and an interview with an occupational specialist. Diagnostic assessments are given to those learners who are below level 1 to identify the level of support needed. An interview is used to measure the learners' attitude and aptitude in several areas. Further assessment of these skills is made throughout the induction and the results are used as a basis for a detailed learning plan and to record additional learning and social needs. Numeracy and literacy support is given on a regular and planned basis to all learners who need it. Progress is well reviewed and measured. Learners take a formal qualification in literacy and numeracy at the end of their programme which enables Rathbone to check how much progress they have made.

46. The induction is thorough, involves games and role-play and encourages learners to become involved. Learners have a clear and lasting memory of the induction and are able to recall information about equal opportunities and health and safety. Learners' understanding is frequently checked throughout the induction. Learners also give regular feedback on their evaluation of induction.

47. Learners develop good practical skills at Rathbone. Instructors are skilled and well-qualified in their respective trades. Practical training sessions are all good or very good. Learners are working to high occupational standards. One building site in the Southeast has a learner who recently left Rathbone and is now supporting a current learner. They are working together in an occupied house installing new windows and doors. Employers appreciate the skills learned in the training centres and the work ethic that is instilled throughout training.

48. A wide range of practical support agencies are available to learners, including

counselling, drug awareness and alcohol misuse. The training centres run well-attended breakfast clubs to encourage attendance and to improve the learners' timekeeping. Effective practical help is given to learners in many areas such as the provision of clothing for interviews and transport to meetings. Each training centre holds achievers' awards events to encourage and motivate learners in areas such as attendance, timekeeping and attitude. Significant help is available to homeless learners through fully staffed support houses. Rathbone maintains contact with its leavers who are in employment to offer any support that may be needed by either the ex-learner or the employer. Rathbone also recognises the continued employment of the ex-learner and the ongoing support of the employer by awarding certificates. This also helps to secure further work placement opportunities.

49. Internal verification is thorough and leads to improvement in the assessment process. Two full-time verifiers work nationally visiting centres regularly to observe assessors and to check the validity of the assessment process. Good feedback on performance is given to assessors and any action points are recorded and followed up during subsequent visits. The verifiers meet regularly with the assessors to share good practice. They are also members of the independent organisation for licensed verifiers and assessors where updating to new standards and best practice is carried out.

50. Retention and achievement rates are poor in construction. The main problem is the retention rates with three quarters of the learners leaving before the end of their learning programme. Around one in 10 early leavers take up employment, without further formal training. A further 20 per cent return to Rathbone at some point. Of those learners who remain, most achieve their qualification, but this means that the success rate can be no better than 25 per cent. A lot of good work is carried out to improve the personal skills of learners, most of whom have additional social and learning needs.

51. Progress reviews are incomplete. Targets are not routinely set and where targets are identified, they are not demanding enough. Many of the targets are not monitored at the next review, although this is beginning to improve. The involvement of employers in the progress review process centres on learners' performance in the workplace and they are not made aware of the progress that learners are making towards their qualification. Employers do not have adequate knowledge of NVQs and many are unaware of the work which learners carry out when on day release. There is no link between on- and off-the-job training and in many cases this leads to duplication.

52. There are insufficient work placements for learners and most assessment takes place in the training centres. Less than half of the learners are on work placement in every centre but one. One centre only has work placements for 14 per cent of the learners and Rathbone relies on projects with local authorities and charitable organisations to provide work experience.

### Good Practice

*One centre has secured funding from the local LSC to provide a full-time counsellor. This has particularly helped learners who have additional social needs and has begun to show measurable improvements in retention rates.*

*In recognition of employers' poor understanding of the NVQ progress, one centre has recently produced simplified guidance for employers on the content of the qualifications.*

**Engineering, technology & manufacturing****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	198	3
New Deal 18-24	5	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	1	None

53. Rathbone offers training in general engineering, motor vehicle engineering and in manufacturing in a number of training centres across England. In Barrow there are 58 learners working towards advanced modern apprenticeships in engineering. However, the table does not include the six in laboratory sciences. In Barrow, Bolton, Bury, Walker and Wigan, there are 96 learners, including six New Deal clients working towards NVQs at levels 1 and 2 in vehicle valeting, fast fit technician, and service replacement. Elsewhere, there are 44 learners mainly in the Midlands who are working towards NVQs in performing manufacturing operations at levels 1 and 2.

54. The engineering advanced modern apprentices attend the training centre for practical training in their first year. They work towards the NVQ level 2 and key skills and are assessed by the training staff. They also attend a college to complete a national certificate. All learners are employed in companies where they complete the remainder of their four-year programme. They work towards the NVQ level 3 and continue to attend college to complete a higher national certificate. Assessment is carried out by work-based assessors or the training provider's staff. The laboratory sciences advanced modern apprentices complete their modern apprenticeship through a college. Assessment is carried out in the workplace by the college's staff. In motor vehicle engineering and in manufacturing, learners work towards the NVQ in placement companies. These include privately owned garages, main dealerships and a variety of small to medium-sized companies. They attend the provider's centre on a weekly or two-weekly basis for training in background knowledge, and also for basic skills and other support. In manufacturing and motor vehicle engineering, most of the training and assessment is carried out in the workplace.

55. Most learners are recruited by Rathbone direct or through referrals from Connexions. Some are recruited by employers. The initial assessment includes aptitude testing, basic skills testing and, where appropriate, initial testing for key skills.

## RATHBONE TRAINING

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	14		24		29		16										
Retained*	0		0		3		1										
Successfully completed	0		0		0		1										
Still in learning	12		22		13		11										

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	218		181		136		123										
Retained*	3		36		28		37	30									
Successfully completed	9		25		21		33	27									
Still in learning	113		18		3		0	0									

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

### STRENGTHS

- good workplaces
- good support for learners
- wide range of additional qualifications
- good off-the-job training
- good retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices

### WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners
- poor understanding of NVQs by learners and employers
- weak monitoring of on-the-job training



## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better short-term target-setting

56. Workplaces are good and employers are highly supportive of the learners' training. This was identified in the self-assessment report. There are many effective employer-provider partnerships which benefit learners, particularly those concerned with modern apprenticeships. Learners are often encouraged by their employers to participate in a wide range of engineering disciplines. The range of activities exceeds the requirements for both the NVQ level 1 and level 2 programmes. Learners complete work activities under the guidance and supervision of experienced supervisors and there are good opportunities for learners to collect a wide range of work-based evidence. Work schedules are often adjusted to allow learners the opportunity to participate in more complex tasks. Companies which have advanced modern apprentices, plan the three-year programme to ensure a variety of experience. Any problems relating to the learners' progress are effectively resolved. Employers are actively involved in the monitoring visits and performance reviews carried out by training staff. Employers encourage the learners to use their initiative and set demanding targets. Most learners speak highly of their workplace training and the support given by their employers.

57. Learners' additional learning needs are thoroughly established through a series of diagnostic tests during initial assessment. All learners are given feedback on the results and where appropriate, individual action plans are agreed. Individual learning plans clearly detail the levels of support needed. Numeracy and literacy training sessions now include vocationally specific material. There are many instances where employers are able to identify improvements in the learner's ability to contribute to the company's business. There is good celebration of success. Staff give frequent and regular encouragement to learners for all progress related to the qualification and to personal development. Actual achievements of qualifications are displayed on walls and in rolls of honour and there are also trainee of the month awards. Pastoral support is excellent. Training advisers give a wide range of support to learners who have serious additional social needs. This includes staff knowing their learners' backgrounds and making them aware that they can drop in to centres when in need.

58. All modern apprentices attend a local college to complete a higher national certificate which is beyond framework requirements. Advanced modern apprentices generally cope well with the mathematical content of their courses, although a few have had additional tutoring. Learners in motor vehicle engineering complete certificated short courses in health and safety, first aid and manual handling. At some centres, learners who have basic skills support are encouraged to take key skills to recognise their achievement.

59. Modern apprentices attend a satisfactorily equipped training centre for the first year of their programme. They train in mechanical engineering, welding and fabricating or electrical engineering. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and set up a full

## RATHBONE TRAINING

year's programme with programmed assessments based on practical exercises. Key skills are taught during the first year and good use is made of team working and an adventure training programme. There are good staff/learner relationships and all learners are complimentary about the programme. The quality of learning support materials used for the background knowledge in motor vehicle training is good and there is a standardised approach across the training centres. The learning sessions include a variety of good quality resources. The computer-based training programmes are interactive and are especially effective. They allow individual learning sessions or group activities to be planned and allow learners to work at a pace suitable to their needs. The IT facilities across centres are satisfactory. Technical workbooks expand on motor vehicle systems technology with clear instructions and graphic representations. There are no practical resources used during off-the-job training for motor vehicle or manufacturing engineering.

60. All the modern apprentices who remain on the programme, achieve the NVQ level 2. Retention rates have also significantly improved over the past four years from 37 per cent to 88 per cent.

61. As recognised in the self-assessment report, retention rates on NVQ programmes are poor. They vary over the past four years from zero to ten per cent rising to only 52 per cent in the current year. Achievement rates in NVQs are similarly poor, starting at 27 per cent in 1999 and 15 per cent and 14 per cent the next two years. Progression in personal development is often significant. Learners leave early, often for reasons not associated with their training.

62. Learners on NVQ programmes and their work-placement supervisor do not fully understand the NVQs. There is significantly slow progress by learners through their NVQ programmes and with basic skills development. The frequency of assessor visits is variable at each training centre. A member of staff visits learners either every two weeks or every month, but work-based assessment opportunities and observations of learning are regularly missed. For a large number of learners, attendance at off-the-job training and basic skills training is poor. Some learners have been in training for 10 months and have not yet produced any workplace evidence for their portfolio. The methods by which learners' performance reviews are carried out are inconsistent between training centres. The completed review documents do not always show challenging targets for progression.

63. There is no quality arrangement in place for reviewing working practices other than through assessment and performance reviews. There is insufficient monitoring of training in the workplace. The quality of workplace training is dependent on the commitment of the employer towards training and on the training skills of individual supervisors. Training advisers do not carry out any formal observations of training in the workplace.

64. Although training advisers carry out health and safety assessments of workplaces, some of the provider's staff do not adequately reinforce health and safety in workshops.

Work placement evaluation forms on health and safety arrangements clearly identify the restrictions placed on the learners' workplace activities. Nevertheless, there are poor health and safety practices in a few work placements, where employers allow learners aged 16 and 17 to use equipment such as welding appliances and bench grinders during their daily work, even though these are restricted to older workers. There is also inappropriate and dangerous use of compressed air. This failure to reinforce correct work practices with learners and employers has resulted in at least one case of eye problems.

#### **Good Practice**

*At one centre, a wide range of questions covering equal opportunities and health and safety are routinely covered during learners' progress reviews. The checklist of questions ensures that all areas of the appropriate legislation are reinforced with learners throughout their training period.*

#### **Poor Practice**

*In two centres, internal verification arrangements in motor vehicle have failed to properly ensure that judgements from trainee assessors are suitably monitored and evaluated. The regional internal verifier is countersigning judgements made by trainee assessors. The same internal verifier is then completing the internal verification documents.*

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	596	3
New Deal 18-24	24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	28	3

65. Rathbone offers business administration training programmes for 648 learners in most of its centres, including 11 in Wales. There are 35 advanced modern apprentices, 78 foundation modern apprentices, 483 NVQ learners, 24 New Deal 18-24 clients and 28 New Deal 25+ clients. There are 230 men and 418 women. Thirty-five per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and 58 per cent are identified as having additional learning or social needs. A further 12 per cent have a disability. Eighteen per cent of learners are employed. Learners are recruited through referrals from Connexions, Jobcentre Plus, or by direct application from learners or by employers, and can start at any time of the year. The recruitment process includes an initial assessment of basic and key skills and an interview. All learners attend an induction on the provider's premises. Some learners attend off-the-job-training sessions at the provider's training centre on one day each week. Learners who do not have a work placement attend the training centre every week. Training advisers visit learners in the workplace on a regular basis to carry out workplace assessments and portfolio reviews. Progress reviews are carried out every month. Centres have administration training advisers who report to a senior training adviser.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	17		26		35		20								
Retained*	0		4		12		9									
Successfully completed	0		4		9		6									
Still in learning	17		10		7		1									

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	72		80		95		21										
Retained*	0		17		24		13	62									
Successfully completed	0		8		12		1	5									
Still in learning	56		15		7		0	0									

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	658		834		501		276										
Retained*	26		209		160		115										
Successfully completed	29		154		122		76										
Still in learning	383		91		8		1										

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

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults												
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults												
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	65		53		116		66					
Retained*	16	25	35	66	67	58	42	64				
Planned learning completed	4	6	17	32	30	26	21	32				
Gained job	4	6	7	13	14	12	9	14				
Still in training	28	43	0	0	0	0	0	0				

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

## RATHBONE TRAINING

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	72		104		114		22			
Retained*	6	8	28	27	30	26	9	41		
Planned learning completed	1	1	6	6	2	2	0	0		
Gained job	16	22	20	19	23	20	3	14		
Still in training	24	33	0	0	0	0	0	0		

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

### STRENGTHS

- good support to overcome barriers to learning
- good range of work placements matched to individual learner needs
- comprehensive and effective initial assessment
- particularly effective induction
- well-structured training for adult programmes

### WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of retention and NVQ achievement
- inadequate staffing arrangements
- insufficient involvement by employers in the NVQ process
- inadequate development of learners' background knowledge
- insufficient learning resources

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more concise recording of assessment judgements
- more access to additional qualifications for learners in business studies and administration
- further development of unit accreditation
- better training in keyboarding techniques for learners
- better vocational focus in basic skills training

66. There is good pastoral and social support for learners and clients. Staff deal with individual difficulties, issues and concerns positively and promptly. Many of the learners have been effectively supported through traumatic experiences. Centres have the

capacity and can accommodate religious and cultural issues and are sensitive to mature learners' needs. Many staff have good local knowledge and use external agencies to further support the learners. Additional information and counselling is available in substance misuse, drug awareness, housing and debt management. Some staff have been trained in child protection, drug awareness and dealing with challenging behaviour. Learners who have significant disabilities have been given specialist support, including the purchase of adapted equipment. These learners are actively encouraged to be independent travellers and take responsibility for managing their own development. Learners are financially supported on accountancy programmes through the availability of additional IT qualifications and payment of tuition and registration fees. Most learners are in work placement and all have regular contact with their training adviser, sometimes weekly. Progress reviews are thorough and accurately recorded. In most centres the review includes the learners' personal and social developments, their contribution to the workplace, basic skills and NVQ achievements. Some reviews conclude with good short-term action plans and a detailed assessment plan. However, some of the training and assessment logs are not completed concisely and do not include judgements. Learners who have lost work placements for various reasons, are encouraged to reflect on their experiences positively. Learners who have outgrown a work placement are moved to another where new challenges and learning opportunities continue to develop their skills. Learners who are having difficulty in a work placement are given the opportunity to work with a more experienced learner for short periods of time.

67. Individual learners are usually well matched to their work placement. Time is taken to examine the potential of each placement and to match it with the development needs and personal aims of the learners. Careful selection is carried out including consideration of the geographical location, cultural needs and vulnerability of the learners. Learners' transport needs are accommodated where possible, especially in the more rural regions. Work placements are in small businesses, large organisations and a variety of industrial environments and offer an extensive range of learning opportunities. Learners work as members of staff and some have development plans. In some centres there is insufficient development of learners' keyboarding skills before taking up their work placement. Most employers are very supportive of the learners and give good individual coaching. There is comprehensive and well-structured training for employers in the larger organisations and the learners are included in this training. However, it is often poorly recorded and rarely used as part of the learner's NVQ development.

68. Learners attend an initial assessment, which includes an in depth interview, followed by a basic skills assessment of literacy and numeracy. Use is also made of a diagnostic test to identify preferences, aptitudes and skills. Some training centres use a clerical aptitude test, which also includes a preference questionnaire to identify the type of work placement preferred by the learner. A key skills screening toolkit is used to assess strengths and areas for development. The results are then transferred to a profile, which identifies the learners' strengths and developments needs and the appropriate level of qualification. The final results are used to develop an individual learning plan and a basic skills and key skills action plan which identifies how these needs will be met.

## RATHBONE TRAINING

There is insufficient vocational focus in the basic skills provision. Much of the content is based on administration but links are not made between the sessions, work carried out in the workplace and the NVQ.

69. Rathbone has a particularly effective induction programme. It is well structured and encompasses all relevant topics. The programme incorporates a range of activities, which meets the varied learning needs of the learners. These include trainer-led discussions, learner group discussions, exercises and tests. Health and safety, rights and responsibilities and the NVQ process and content are thoroughly covered. Learners are also told what is expected of them during work placements. Learners are given an exercise which is designed to encourage the team to explore new thoughts and ideas on equal opportunities and discrimination. The induction is supported by a comprehensive resource pack. At the end of the induction, learners are asked to complete feedback questionnaires, which are analysed and evaluated to identify areas for improvement. Induction for adults is not always appropriate and jobsearch is uninspiring.

70. Adult learners benefit from a well-planned and comprehensive in-house training programme. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and the training is good. Tutors use a variety of teaching styles and a range of activities. They are knowledgeable and experienced in their occupational area. Teaching points have good practical examples, which help the learner to understand. There is some use of IT, but it is not well developed. Adults on longer occupational training (LOT) in some centres achieve NVQ units during their programme and if they are able to return, they complete the full qualification. Adult learners achieve additional qualifications in IT. There is an in-house business administration certificate which is awarded for achieving a competent standard in 10 office administration skills. Seven adult learners have been awarded entry-level literacy certificates for achievement through basic skills sessions. These were the first certificates to be awarded nationally.

71. Retention and NVQ achievement rates are poor. In the past three years, the overall retention rate is 30 per cent for young people and 44 per cent for adults. NVQ achievement is 21 per cent for young people and 16 per cent for adults. Nineteen per cent of young people and 16 per cent of adults gained employment. However, all NVQ learners and most adults have additional learning or social needs. Twelve per cent of learners have a disability. The needs of these learners and other basic skills needs are given priority over vocational training in the early stages of the programme. There are many examples of learners progressing from Life Skills programmes on to NVQ level 1 training. There is some accreditation of NVQ units, but it is not used regularly. Fifteen per cent of learners leave and subsequently restart on training programmes. Rathbone has identified that retention and achievement rates are a weakness and are giving high priority to this in their development plan. There are some good local initiatives to improve retention and achievement rates, such as rewards for good attendance, achievement and effort, and this includes good behaviour, personal hygiene and appearance. Learners' views are regularly sought through learners' forums. There is good achievement of additional qualifications at some centres such as nationally accredited IT courses, health and safety, first aid and manual handling. In some centres,



learners attend other courses in communication, attendance and timekeeping, confidence and self-esteem. Rathbone has introduced a system to record and monitor such outcomes. There is very good celebration of success with learners' certificates and photographs displayed in centres.

72. Staffing arrangements are inadequate. There is significant staff turnover with some delays in appointing new staff. One region was without an internal verifier for three months. Staff from other centres and sometimes other regions, cover for staff absence or vacant positions. Learners experience delays in visits and assessment by training advisers: in one instance up to three months. There is also inconsistency in training and assessment and one learner has had four training advisers since starting. There is slow accreditation of completed units for some learners when internal verification is delayed. Many new staff are still working towards assessors' qualifications. A small number of training advisers have insufficient administration experience and too few have an administration qualification. Arrangements for updating occupational competence of training advisers and internal verifiers are weak. There are insufficient staff who are experienced or qualified to support learners who speak English as an additional language.

73. Employers are insufficiently involved in learners' NVQ programmes. Some employers do not know which NVQ learners are working towards. Employers are inadequately informed about the different levels and job match to the NVQ to effectively develop the learners' competence in administration tasks. Most learners do not have on-the-job learning programmes which are co-ordinated with the NVQ standards. There is no co-ordination between the employer and the training advisers to make use of off-the-job training activities. Employers have insufficient knowledge of NVQ assessment and the value of witness testimonies, and some assessment opportunities are not taken. Employers who are not present during the progress review cannot contribute to learners' future action points. Learners' progress towards NVQ achievement is slow.

74. Learners' knowledge and understanding are inadequately developed. Although they become competent with a range of office-based activities, in many cases they do not always have the knowledge and understanding to support those activities. There are too few off-the-job learning sessions to cover the background knowledge. There are few structured programmes of off-the-job training. This weakness is identified in the self-assessment report. Training advisers ask learners questions on background knowledge which they answer orally or in writing. In some cases their answers are incomplete or inaccurate, although tutors accept them as fulfilling the NVQ requirements. Some answers contain grammatical and spelling errors, which are not marked as incorrect.

75. There are insufficient resources in training centres. In some cases there is insufficient space and insufficient up-to-date computers. There is little use of interactive software to give learners practise in a range of simulated office tasks, and few portable resources such as laptops, audio equipment, dictation machines or digital cameras. Rathbone has recently ordered a wide range of computer equipment to remedy this. There are not enough administration textbooks for advanced modern apprentices.

## RATHBONE TRAINING

Learners can develop and practise administrative knowledge and skills in their workplaces, but it has not been adequately reinforced in the Rathbone training centres. Basic skills resources are not sufficiently focused on specific administration tasks.

### Good Practice

*Good use is made of virtual reality websites for learners who are awaiting a work placement. This is used immediately after induction to prepare less-experienced learners for the workplace.*

### Poor Practice

*One learner has a health problem and has been allocated a work placement where smoking is permitted. Insufficient attention has been given to the irritation that the smoke can cause and this has resulted in some absence from the placement.*

**Information & communications technology****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	48	4
New Deal 18-24	6	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3	None

76. There are 57 learners, including nine New Deal clients, across training centres in England. Most are working towards NVQs at levels 1 and 2 in using IT, or installing and supporting IT. Two of the training centres offer supplementary qualifications in using common desktop applications. Most learners spend part of the week on work placement and some time in the training centres. Others receive all of their training in the workplace. Jobcentre Plus or Connexions refer most learners; others apply direct, or are referred by their employer. All applicants are interviewed, and their current skills, aptitudes, attitudes to learning and barriers to employment are discussed and assessed. All are accepted, with the exception of those judged likely to harm themselves or others. Learners can start their training programmes at any time of the year. Learners have a further period of initial assessment to identify development needs, including interpersonal skills, key skills, preferred learning styles and vocational aptitude. The results are recorded in an initial learning plan. Learners attend an induction in the first weeks of the training programme. This includes basic health and safety, equal opportunities, complaints and grievance procedures, and an induction into their training programme. There is typically one full- or part-time assessor in each training centre where information and communications technology (ICT) is offered. Many of the trainers also train the administration learners. There are three internal verifiers. Trainers formally review the modern apprentices every 13 weeks. Other learners and clients are reviewed every four weeks.

## RATHBONE TRAINING

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	61		188		205		107									
Retained*	4		45		52		39	36									
Successfully completed	4		40		50		35	33									
Still in learning	34		7		3		0	0									

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

### STRENGTHS

- particularly effective initial assessment
- good individual support for learners
- good development of practical IT skills in work placements

### WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement and retention rates for young people
- inadequate off-the-job training for NVQ learners
- insufficient use of target-setting
- insufficient work placements

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further implementation of skills for life qualifications
- better reinforcement of good working practices in computer workshops

77. Initial assessment is particularly effective. Training advisers identify learning needs accurately and agree comprehensive individual learning plans, which cover the achievement of vocational qualifications, the development of personal, social and key skills, jobsearch, and meeting literacy and numeracy needs. They assess the existing IT skills of adults on Jobcentre Plus courses well. All the retained learners achieve their target qualification, but there is no challenge in the IT qualification for the more able learners. The induction process is good, with activities which involve the learners well. Learners have good recall of topics covered.

78. Training advisers give good pastoral support. They are caring and give appropriate

advice on personal hygiene and appearance, and their likely impact on prospective employers. Training advisers at one centre donated items of furniture to support a learner who was moving into a flat after becoming homeless. Others help learners with clothing suitable for interviews and the workplace. Individual learning plans include personal development. Training advisers encourage learners who have poor interpersonal skills to take part in discussions in literacy sessions. They organise further valuable learning to improve learners' social skills and teach them first aid and basic health and safety awareness. Reviews are generally comprehensive and supportive, but they do not pay sufficient attention to jobsearch for unemployed learners on work placement. In one region where there are staff shortages, reviews are infrequent. Training advisers challenge poor behaviour, attendance and punctuality appropriately. They are particularly effective in maintaining good relations with work-placement providers. In one centre, training advisers involve existing learners effectively in motivating and encouraging new learners. For example, they invite learners who are reaching the end of their programme to discuss the NVQ process with new learners, and show them examples of portfolio evidence. Achievement and retention rates are good in this centre for the last complete year.

79. Learners who are in work placements have good learning opportunities. For most learners, supportive employers work well with training advisers to rotate job roles to develop personal skills, and to meet the requirements of the qualifications. A few offer further training. Learners are engaged in real work and have the opportunity to learn a wide range of technical skills, and the social skills to work effectively under commercial pressure. For example, three learners are providing help desk and technical support to large numbers of users. Training advisers develop and maintain good professional relationships with employers. Initial assessment effectively matches job aims and development needs to work placement opportunities. Training advisers are quick to replace learners on work placement who display unacceptable behaviour, poor attendance or punctuality. However, there are insufficient work placements. NVQ learners without a work placement spend all their time in training centres, and are slow to develop the work ethos and practical IT skills. In one region some learners progress slowly. Training advisers have visited and assessed learners infrequently. Internal verification is generally satisfactory, but it did not identify slow progress in one case.

80. The achievement and retention rates for young people are poor. For example, in 2001-02 only 10 per cent of the young people starting New Deal achieved their target qualification, and only 5 per cent found a job. The achievement rate for those in NVQ training is poor, and fell from 33 per cent in 1999-2000 to 21 per cent in 2001-02. Retention rates fell from 36 per cent to 24 per cent over the same period. The job outcomes are also poor.

81. Off-the-job training is inadequate for NVQ learners. At one centre, there has been insufficient IT training. Learners do not actively participate in some sessions and there is poor classroom management. In some classrooms, computer chairs are unsuitable. Training advisers do not reinforce the need to develop good posture while working at computers, and there is not enough promotion of ergonomic aids such as footrests and

## RATHBONE TRAINING

wristrests. There are insufficient manuals and reference materials. Jobsearch and skills for life sessions do not engage and motivate many learners, and attendance is unsatisfactory. Training advisers give insufficient jobsearch support for non-employed learners. The lesson plans are not detailed and there is insufficient access to computers and inadequate technical support at two centres. There is inadequate planning of on-the-job training, and poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

82. There is insufficient use of target-setting in individual learning plans and reviews. Some individual learning plans lack intermediate targets and training advisers do not agree clear action plans, or to refer to learning plans, in some reviews. This has been recognised by Rathbone, and more recent plans and reviews have improved. Many reviews do not refer to jobsearch activities and targets. Skills for life reviews do not refer to learning plans. Training advisers' use of assessment plans to drive and monitor progress is ineffective.

83. Training advisers assess skills for life needs thoroughly, using common diagnostic tools. At one centre this is effectively enhanced by more detailed assessment based on the details of the core curriculum. All learners are assessed and very few learners have no literacy or numeracy needs. Learners attend classes for half a day each week and gain in confidence and self-esteem as a result. However, there is insufficient vocational focus in the sessions, and they do not engage the learners fully. Attendance is poor at between 50 and 60 per cent. Basic skills tutors review literacy and numeracy progress. Some of the action plans are poor and there is insufficient reference to learning plans. Vocational area tutors include attendance at skills for life sessions in their reviews. Some tutors do not have basic skills teaching qualifications and this has been recognised in the self-assessment report. There is not enough use of computers to support skills for life learning. There is a wide range of resources including books, CDs, videos, games and specialist teaching aids. However, some sessions and resources do not motivate or interest learners. All skills for life learners are encouraged to work towards recognised qualifications at one level above their current skills level. Recent achievement in numeracy is very good, but systems are not yet providing access to certification in numeracy and literacy for all learners. Too few learners have been put forward for the literacy qualification. There is no English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) support provided.

**Good Practice**

*One learner was identified as unhappy at a work placement, and lacked confidence in her ability to carry out the work expected of her. The manager was concerned about the quality of the learner's work, and was considering ending the work placement. Rathbone's staff asked an experienced learner to join her in her work placement, to act as a mentor, and to tackle these problems. The mentor spent two weeks with the learner and the learner's performance improved significantly. Her confidence and self-esteem improved and the manager allowed the learner to complete her work placement.*

**Poor Practice**

*In a training session on health and safety, the tutor asked one learner to demonstrate the appropriate way to sit at a computer. The learner demonstrated a position which was too low and did not actually sit at the computer. Also, the view of two thirds of the class was obscured by two rows of computers and desks. These learners were unable to see the demonstration.*

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	717	3
New Deal 18-24	33	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	21	3

84. There are 771 learners on work-based learning programmes in this area of learning. Qualifications include retailing, customer service and warehousing. There are 685 learners working towards NVQs at levels 1 and 2, and 32 on foundation modern apprenticeships. A further 54 clients, including 33 under the age of 25, are on programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus where employment is the main goal. Learners can work towards some units of the NVQ, or a full qualification. All learners are on work placements with commercial retail employers or voluntary organisations, most of which are close to a training centre. Learners are referred to the programmes by their Jobcentre Plus personal advisers, from Connexions, as a result of personal recommendations from family and friends and through Rathbone's marketing activities. Some learners progress from other Rathbone programmes or have restarted after a period away. Following an induction programme at the training centre for up to two weeks, learners start a work placement. During the induction period, learners do a range of initial assessment tests and attend health and safety and equal opportunities training. Initial assessment of learners' basic skills is also carried out. Each learner is then assigned to a training adviser who visits the learner in the workplace at least every month. Training advisers also encourage learners to attend the training centre for off-the-job training. Some employers carry out vocational training, and this is supplemented by additional courses. In some cases, on-the-job coaching takes place when learners are unable to attend the training centre. Progress review meetings take place every four weeks in the workplace.



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

Work-based learning for young people															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)															
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	39		57		61		25								
Retained*	1		7		18	30	7								
Successfully completed	1		4		10	16	1								
Still in learning	26		5		0	0	1								

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

Work-based learning for young people															
NVQ Training															
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	1084		1339		1115		693								
Retained*	55		423		323		230	33							
Successfully completed	74		325		272		184	27							
Still in learning	571		108		6		0	0							

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

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

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	56		64		178		139			
Retained*	13	23	41	64	100	56	89	64		
Planned learning completed	2	4	10	16	56	31	45	32		
Gained job	10	18	12	19	19	11	31	22		
Still in training	21	38	0	0	0	0	0	0		

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

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New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	140		106		141		57			
Retained*	11	8	22	21	36	26	25	44		
Planned learning completed	4	3	8	8	4	3	2	4		
Gained job	26	19	29	27	20	14	14	25		
Still in training	33	24	0	0	0	0	0	0		

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

### STRENGTHS

- proactive marketing and recruitment
- carefully chosen work placements well matched to learners' needs
- good off-the-job training
- effective development of occupational and personal skills
- particularly effective pastoral support

### WEAKNESSES

- slow progress towards achievement of qualifications
- poor progress reviews
- poor retention and achievement rates

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more active approach to converting work placements into employment
- better use of information from initial assessment
- better induction process
- wider range of workplace evidence
- further continuous development of vocational competence for training advisers

85. The centre has a proactive approach to marketing and recruitment. Rathbone carries out imaginative work in schools, which includes the placing of pupils who have dropped out of mainstream education onto Life Skills programmes. Pupils are encouraged to attend the centre for two days a week and then spend some time in work placements, ensuring a smooth transition from education to work or training. Outreach work is carried out in the local communities and is funded by the

neighbourhood social fund. Other marketing activities include displays and information sessions at schools, jobcentres, youth clubs and community events. Local agencies are used to identify groups of young people who are likely to benefit from further information about the range of programmes Rathbone have available. Additionally, young people are recruited through recommendations from friends and family. Many learners move on to NVQ training from Life Skills or through prevocational training programmes.

86. Work placements are carefully chosen and are well matched to learners' needs. Many of the work placements are with national retailers and include home improvement stores, food retailers and music stores. Employers state that learners make a valuable contribution to the operation of the retail stores. Placements are found quickly and learners are able to start after their induction. Detailed discussion takes place between the training adviser and the work placement to ensure that work placements are supportive of individual learners' needs and interests and will help to meet their career aims. In many work placements the learners become valued members of staff and in some cases are the only people who work full time except the management team. Rathbone take insufficient action to ensure that these learners are offered employment in the retail stores. Some of the learners attend the stores on work placement for four days a week, attend the training centre for one day a week and are then employed by their work placement on Saturday.

87. There is good off-the-job training in most centres. Rathbone have set up a comprehensive off-the-job training schedule which covers all areas of the retail and distributive qualifications. Each session is supported by a detailed lesson plan. This is working well, but it has not yet been implemented in all Rathbone centres. Sessions are repeated at regular intervals so that all learners can benefit from the training, regardless of their start date. A good range of resources are also available and are either produced locally or are issued as part of a national policy. However, some of the resources contain a number of spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. Some of the centres have a careers library at the centre, which gives learners access to information and guidance on job applications and interview techniques. An internal 'train the trainer' award is available as part of the staff development.

88. There is effective development of learners' occupational and personal skills. Learners gain a range of skills which are necessary for a career in retail. Their confidence and self-esteem increases significantly while they are working towards their qualification. Learners are motivated and supported by training advisers who are enthusiastic and highly committed. Learners benefit from fortnightly visits and the frequency of visits is increased according to individual learner's needs. Rathbone motivates learners by celebrating the achievement of individual NVQ units with certificates from the awarding body. Photographs and certificates are displayed throughout the centres and include an achiever of the year award. Many employers have their own training programmes which learners follow. When training advisers are aware of these training programmes, they use them to assist with the planning of assessments. Rathbone recognises the achievement of other skills including improved

## RATHBONE TRAINING

attendance, personal presentation and attitude and behaviour. A range of additional qualifications are also available including IT, food hygiene, health and safety and first aid. Many learners in Wales work towards a programme which specialises in personal development and improving self-image. Most centres have basic skills tutors who are appropriately qualified. Off-the-job training in basic skills is available for most learners. This is sometimes relevant to their occupation, but is not linked to the NVQ programme and learners' work is kept in a separate portfolio.

89. Pastoral support is particularly effective. Training advisers have close working relationships with all their learners and additional visits to workplaces are arranged to help learners overcome some of their barriers to learning. These may include problems with their work placement, their qualifications or their personal circumstances. Protective clothing is bought for learners when it is needed. Rathbone also buys clothes for learners to attend interviews. Each centre has a small kitchen where tea and toast are available for breakfast at no cost to the learner. Rathbone has strong links with external agencies and are able to refer learners to assist in areas such as low-cost housing or sheltered accommodation. Learners who have recently left the programmes are welcomed back to the centres as they provide a secure location.

90. Learners make slow progress towards achievement of their target qualifications. Learners' prior learning and experience is not fully taken into account. One learner who started in May 2001 only completed the first element of the NVQ during the inspection, even though initial assessment had identified that no training was required. Learners' achievement of the NVQ at level 1 is not taken into account if they progress to level 2. The introduction to the NVQ session is not clear and does not help learners to understand how the NVQ process works. Learners do not have a copy of the NVQ standards and not enough information is given to employers to enable them to play an active part in the process. Many employers and learners are not aware of the progress made towards the qualification and some employers do not know which part of the qualification their learners are currently working on. Assessment of some learners' skills does not start until four months after the start of training and others have had long delays between assessments due to staff shortages. Centres do not accredit key skills consistently. Key skills are assessed individually and there are different training advisers for key skills and the NVQ. Assessment of learners is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements. Assessments are properly planned and the plan is recapped at the beginning of the assessment. Assessors' records of observation are clear and detailed and record all activities seen. Learners are assessed in the workplace predominantly by using observations and subsequent questions. However, much of the evidence that is available and occurring naturally in the retail environment is not being collected by learners and assessors. Learners are not sufficiently encouraged to use readily available material such as delivery notes or stock sheets to provide evidence of their competence. Work-placement managers or supervisors are not sufficiently encouraged to use witness testimonies to help accredit the learners' performance. Inspectors noted a number of occasions when learners had completed tasks at the workplace which had been witnessed by a manager or supervisor, but they had not been encouraged to prepare a statement for the learner. In some cases, the assessor had not evaluated

evidence that had been prepared by learners, either through project work or in response to written questions. Internal verification is carried out to a satisfactory level although the lack of witness testimonies is not always identified.

91. Progress reviews do not identify and rectify the learners' slow progress towards their target qualifications. The NVQ learning plan is not referred to during the review and learners' achievement towards personal, basic and key skills goals are not reviewed at the same time. Learners' basic skills development is reviewed once a month, but this is a separate process and the paperwork is kept by the basic skills training adviser. There is little long-term target-setting and short-term goals are very general. Employers are not always present at the review and, in some instances, the forward plan is agreed and written before the employer is consulted. There is limited in-depth discussion, and the main focus is on completing the paperwork. Some reviews are held in inappropriate locations. For example, one review was carried out while the learner was operating a checkout in a busy supermarket between serving customers. In some centres, learners are not given a copy of the completed review paperwork. Learners' knowledge of equal opportunities and health and safety is not reinforced during reviews.

92. The achievement rates on all retailing programmes are poor. Twenty-four per cent of learners on NVQ training achieved the targets on their learning plan in 2000-01 and 2001-02. Over the same period, the rate of achievement for New Deal 18-24 was 3 per cent and 8 per cent and those for New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, 31 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. The number of learners from New Deal and work-based learning for adults who enter employment is low. Fourteen per cent of New Deal 18-24 learners gained employment in 2000-01 and 27 per cent in 2001-02. The proportion of New Deal 25+ and adults who found a job over the same period was 11 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. Training in jobsearch techniques is unimaginative and uninspiring. Around one in five of all learners who leave early subsequently rejoin. Furthermore, another 14 per cent of learners who left NVQ training in 2000-01 and 2001-02 without achieving their target qualification, gained employment on leaving, and gave up their training programme. Rathbone uses unit certification to reward learners' achievements. Learners also achieve other certificates such as first aid and basic food hygiene.

93. Induction programmes vary in length between three days and two weeks, and although the initial content of the programmes is similar, there are differences in the amount of time spent on the various activities. Some induction programmes include jobsearch facilities for one week, while others use a second week to develop a more extensive jobsearch. Learners' development needs are identified using a range of initial assessment activities, but the results of these are not always given to the learner. The induction process is not memorable to most learners. Most centres have a dedicated induction tutor, but due to staff shortages some tutors have not completed the relevant training. All learners start work placements on completion of their induction programmes. Checks on workplace induction vary in length and detail.

94. Staff have detailed development plans, but vocational competence is not

## RATHBONE TRAINING

adequately updated. Rathbone organises a full training and development programme for newly appointed training advisers. This programme ensures that training advisers are able to meet the professional demands of their jobs and the delivery of the various training programmes.

### Good Practice

*Centres in one region have recently introduced a youth forum where learners and training advisers from each training programme meet once a month to discuss issues relating to the centre. Meetings are formally structured and minutes are taken, but the atmosphere is relaxed and all learners are encouraged to contribute to discussions. Suggestions and ideas for improvements are welcomed and, where possible, action is taken before the next meeting. The forum is also used to seek learners' views about issues such as the number of learners leaving without completing their qualification. Two learners from one forum have now been invited to attend a meeting at another centre and this creates further opportunities for learners to develop their communication skills.*

*One centre gives each learner a gift bag during induction, which contains useful items including an alarm clock, a calculator, soap, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrush. These items are then used as the basis for discussions on topics such as the importance of good timekeeping and personal hygiene in the workplace.*

### Poor Practice

*One progress review was carried out in a small staff restroom where other members of staff were eating their lunch. The learner's poor timekeeping and general behaviour at work were openly discussed.*

*One learner started training when she came to Britain 18 months ago. At the time she had a very limited knowledge of English, but was not offered any language support by Rathbone. When she started a work placement she worked in the stockroom with the hope of working with customers as her English improved. The learner is still working in the stockroom and arrangements for language tuition were only made at the time of the inspection.*

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	177	3
New Deal 18-24	12	None
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3	None

95. Rathbone offers training in hospitality, sport and leisure to learners and New Deal clients, at levels 1 and 2. Learners are recruited directly from Connexions, schools or self-referral and can join the programmes at any time of the year. There are 192 young people who are on NVQ training, modern apprenticeships or other work-based learning programmes for adults or young people, or are following the full-time education and training option of New Deal. There are NVQ programmes in quick service, food preparation and cooking, food and drink service, kitchen portering, sport and recreation and housekeeping. Specialist Rathbone staff carry out the induction and the initial assessment. Learners and clients are all in work placements or employment, and training is carried out on- and off-the-job at training centres and by employers. Off-the-job training in basic skills, portfolio development, background knowledge, first aid, food hygiene and some skill development, is provided in weekly structured training sessions in the training centres. Most of the training takes place on the job. Learners take additional qualifications in basic food hygiene and health and safety. Staff are vocationally experienced, and have teaching and assessor or verifier qualifications. Monthly reviews help to identify NVQ evidence and identify learners' progress towards the achievement of personal and learning goals.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	1		8													
Retained*	0		0														
Successfully completed	0		0														
Still in learning	1		1														

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

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Work-based learning for young people															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)															
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	2		9		5										
Retained*	0		0		2										
Successfully completed	0		0		2										
Still in learning	1		2		0										

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

Work-based learning for young people															
NVQ Training															
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	263		388		340		213								
Retained*	10		101	26	91	27	77	36							
Successfully completed	14		80	21	88	26	73	34							
Still in learning	148		22	6	2	1	0	0							

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

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	22		17		13		2				
Retained*	7	32	1	6	4	31	1	50			
Planned learning completed	6	27	1	6	0	0	0	0			
Gained job	1	5	4	24	3	23	1	50			
Still in training	11	50	1	6	0	0	0	0			

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



**STRENGTHS**

- wide range of good placements
- good assessment practice
- effective additional support

**WEAKNESSES**

- unsatisfactory retention and achievement rates
- lack of detail in individual learning plans
- inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- greater involvement by employers in supporting learners' literacy and numeracy needs

96. There is a wide range of good work placements. Hotels, restaurants, national companies, residential homes, private and public leisure facilities, offer specialist equipment and resources for learners. Learners are given challenging and demanding job roles and play a full part in real work activities. Work placements are carefully chosen to meet the needs of learners and often offer extra earning and employment opportunities. Learners receive the same benefits as company employees. Extra qualifications and training are provided by the employers and some have worked with Rathbone and understand their policies and procedures. Managers in the work-placement providers are supportive and committed to training which is flexible and realistic and meets the needs of learners. Some employers are accredited with the Investors in People standard and have a good knowledge of NVQs.

97. Assessment practice is good. Initial assessment takes place through a range of tests which identify further support needed for basic skills and any additional social, behavioural and occupational needs. The assessment of learners' skills is used to place learners at the appropriate level of training programme. The assessment identifies the support needed by the learner in their occupational area. Assessment in the workplace is well planned, effectively carried out and recorded, and is sometimes linked to basic skills. Learners are highly involved in the assessment and have a good understanding of the process. Internal verification is effective and Rathbone offers single unit accreditation of the NVQ. Reviews are frequent and some action points are identified and negotiated with the learner. There are three lead internal verifiers who cover the national programmes and they provide good levels of support and development for the team of assessors. Sampling plans, observations and assessments are well recorded. Learners are interviewed in order to identify further training needs or help needed to achieve their qualification.

98. There is effective additional support for learners. This is provided on an individual

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basis or in a group work situation where learners further develop their basic skills. The learners also develop their personal skills of confidence, independence and motivation through the support they are given. They are offered help with budgeting and are given practical support with clothing for interviews, hygiene packs and accommodation. There are good links with other support agencies and counselling is available. There are specific support groups to deal with individual needs. Rathbone has good links with schools.

99. Additional needs are identified as short, medium and long term. Through the learner forum, learners can raise problems and topics of concern and find out about the support available to them. Learners have a good understanding of the appeals and complaints procedures. Basic skills are accredited and support is available through well trained and qualified staff. Training advisers encourage parental involvement in the support of learners who are under eighteen. Support covers a wide range of disabilities and Rathbone's staff accompany learners who have hospital appointments and learners who are not confident to travel to work.

100. There is good celebration of success in the centres and in Rathbone publications. Learners' progress and success is frequently celebrated locally and nationally. At the time of inspection, learners' achievements have been noted in LSC and awarding body publications. There is a learner of the month award in operation and achiever awards which operate on a regional and national basis. Achievements are displayed on the walls of all Rathbone centres. There is good monitoring of learners after they have left Rathbone. Learners are encouraged and motivated through the use of reward schemes for achievement.

101. Retention and achievement rates are poor for all programmes. In 2001-02, 35 per cent of learners completed their training programme, and less than half the learners gained a full NVQ or employment. Around a quarter of all learners need police checks before they can start their work placement and the negative outcome of some checks affects the provision of work placement. Many learners have a combination of social problems which impact on their lives. Workplace providers in this occupational area have a high turnover of staff and many of the jobs do not require a qualification. Fifty-three per cent of learners leave the training programme with positive destination outcomes, including employment, college, and other training programmes and qualifications.

102. Individual learning plans lack detail and do not reflect the individual nature of learning. Some unit achievement dates are the same and do not recognise that units are achieved at different learning stages throughout the programme. Unit achievement is seldom entered into the plan. Learning plans are generated at induction and are held in the learner's file. The employers are not involved in the development of the plan, and opportunities to collect work-based evidence are often not taken. Some targets are not individual, nor are they used to develop learners' skills. The plans are not updated in response to the review process and do not reflect individual progress.

103. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is inadequate. Learners are not accredited with single units of their qualifications and progress is slow for some competent learners. Off-the-job training is not sufficient to ensure that learners progress. Some newly appointed training advisers do not have detailed knowledge of NVQ programmes. Some employers have their own training programmes, but training advisers are not aware of them. There is no link between on- and off-the-job training. Most of the training takes place on the job by experienced employees, but it is not always monitored or evaluated. Reviews do not always record what training has taken place, or what training is needed for future assessments.

#### Good Practice

*Staff in one centre are becoming trained counsellors in order to support learners and fellow members of staff during training and the delivery of their programmes.*

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	1116	3
New Deal 18-24	12	None

104. Rathbone has 106 advanced modern apprentices, 162 foundation modern apprentices and 848 learners working towards an NVQ programme. They are working towards NVQs in care and early years care and education at levels 2 and 3. There are 12 New Deal clients who are working towards units of an NVQ or a full NVQ. Modern apprentices work towards key skills at level 2.

105. Learners are employed or are gaining work experience in nursing homes, residential homes, hospitals, family support units, primary schools, and nurseries. All work placements are checked for safety and suitability. Learners may join the programme at any time of the year and are recruited from Connexions, New Deal personal advisers and by referral from employers. All learners are interviewed by training advisers and carry out an initial assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills. Induction and training, including portfolio-building, takes place in the training centres or in the workplace. All assessment takes place in the workplace by qualified assessors, who are either Rathbone training advisers or staff in the workplace.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	70		47		54		9								
Retained*	1		2		12		1									
Successfully completed	2		2		5		0									
Still in learning	61		32		9		4									

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	127		131		120		23										
Retained*	2		12		29		10										
Successfully completed	0		9		17		1										
Still in learning	98		46		14		4										

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	1016		1057		760		351										
Retained*	24		361		299	39	188	54									
Successfully completed	19		278		226	30	135	38									
Still in learning	670		151		24	3	3	1									

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

New Deal 18-24												
New Deal 18-24												
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	27		28		38		10					
Retained*	2	7	13	46	8	21	6	60				
Planned learning completed	0	0	4	14	1	3	0	0				
Gained job	3	11	1	4	8	21	2	20				
Still in training	12	44	0	0	0	0	0	0				

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

## RATHBONE TRAINING

### STRENGTHS

- effective induction
- very good learner support

### WEAKNESSES

- poor retention rates for NVQ learners
- slow progress towards unit completion in some centres

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider use of NVQ level 1 programmes
- more consistent provision of resources for learners
- more consistent adherence to review process

106. All learners attend a thorough and memorable induction. Following induction, learners are aware of what is expected of them in the workplace and are prepared for the work environment. Learners are aware of safe working practice and most learners have a good understanding of their own rights and responsibilities. They are aware of the support available to them. When learners change programmes they are given a new induction. Comprehensive initial assessment of basic skills and key skills takes place during induction, and the results are analysed and support is planned. When learners do not immediately have a work placement, they continue to attend the Rathbone centre and attend sessions which are relevant to their occupational and personal development.

107. Learners are well supported. Learners are allocated a training adviser, with whom they have frequent contact. The training advisers have a very good knowledge of the circumstances of each learner and their work placement, and also have good relationships with the work placements. Forty per cent of the learners have additional learning and/or social need, some of which are profound. Provision for the support of these learners is very good in most centres. They have generous time allocated for basic skills in addition to their main programme. In many centres, basic skills are an integral part of the occupational area. Innovative ways are used by Rathbone to motivate learners in basic skills. Short courses are offered, some of which are certificated. Achievement is celebrated by the display of certificates, in newsletters and award ceremonies. The training advisers offer good social support and there are good links with other agencies for specialist help. Training advisers respond quickly when learners ask for help. They give learners their mobile telephone numbers to improve their accessibility. Training advisers contact the workplace weekly to check that there are no problems. In some centres, a breakfast club has been introduced to benefit the more disadvantaged learners, and in some centres tabards are supplied for the learners on work placements which do not provide a uniform.

108. Thorough initial assessment results in a learning plan, which identifies the learning

needs of each individual. Rathbone has a positive approach to learners with additional and social needs. Learners' who lack confidence are offered planned support or short courses to build their self-esteem. Work placements are carefully chosen to match learners needs and employers have a good understanding of the NVQs. They are fully briefed by Rathbone, and workplaces make good use of the employers' pack. Some learners are allocated a mentor in the workplace. The practical skills are well taught and learners gain background knowledge for the NVQ. Learners progress steadily towards competence in the workplace. Rathbone ensures that the employers are aware of the learners' progress. The employer is involved in the progress review either by direct involvement, or by feedback from the training adviser. Most of the training advisers are vocationally experienced and appropriately qualified. There is a well-planned and well-taught programme of off-the-job training in most centres for non-employed learners and they progress steadily towards competence. Across regions, some standardisation of sessions has taken place. Training advisers go to the workplace for employed learners, and provide individual training, which is usually recorded on the individual learning plan. Assessment takes place at least monthly, but many learners are assessed more frequently. The direct observation and feedback given by the training advisers is good. A copy of the training and assessment support log is given to the learner and the workplace supervisor. Key skills are part of learners' programmes in centres in Wales and a few centres in England. Key skills training and assessment start early in the learners' programme and are an integral part of the vocational training. Specialist key skills trainers are appointed. In some centres, former Rathbone learners are employed as training advisers, and many of the work placements have employees who have trained with Rathbone. Many work-placement providers express the wish to employ a Rathbone learner after their courses, but budgetary restraints do not always make this possible.

109. Retention rates are poor. NVQ training accounts for 80 per cent of all training in care work. Retention rates over the past three years average 48 per cent. Rathbone offers particularly good support to learners who have additional learning and/or social needs, for whom opportunities for training are few. Despite the high level of individual support, many learners leave before completing their qualification. However an improvement in retention rates is evident in some centres. Additional learning outcomes are identified for many of the learners. These are achieved and improve the learner's confidence and self-esteem. Some learners leave the programme and return at a later date, which makes the retention rates look worse and this accounts for at least 10 per cent of all starters.

110. In some centres the assessment practice leads to slow achievement of the NVQ units. Learners have gathered a range of evidence, have been observed in their workplace and can show an understanding of background knowledge for many units, but none of the individual units have been assessed. Learners have a good understanding of the assessment process but some of the qualification remains unfinished until the final assessment. The external verifier has asked the provider to rectify this by focusing on individual units as the learner progresses. In some cases, particularly in Wales and in the Northwest, this is already happening.

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111. Some learners are on inappropriate programmes, particularly those who have additional learning needs and are on a level 2 programme. There is no level 1 NVQ in either care or childcare, but the provider has tried to resolve this. Rathbone has recently gained approval from an awarding body to offer a foundation programme in childcare and are seeking approval for funding. In Wales, good use is made of the level 1 caring in the community and good use has also been made in some regions of the level 1 housekeeping in a care environment.

112. Resources are variable. Some centres have a broad range of books, practical resources and demonstration equipment and have designated training rooms. In other centres resources are poor. In some instances, the photocopying of handouts is poor.

113. There is a clear procedure for progress reviews. However, while the reviews are thorough, in some instances there are insufficiently detailed action points to enable the learner to work independently.

### Good Practice

*A short evaluation form which is given to learners after their off-the-job training session helps them to link training to work and reflect on what they have learned. The sheets build into an evaluation diary.*

*A regional internal verifier has arranged to hold standardisation meetings during the late afternoon in libraries and similar centres near to workplaces. This makes attendance easier for work-based assessors.*



## Foundation programmes

## Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	97	4
Life Skills	750	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	133	4
Programme Centres	56	3
Workstep	43	3

114. There are 1,079 learners on foundation programmes for young people and adults. Four of the programmes are aimed at meeting the needs of young people, prevocational training in Wales and Life Skills, preparatory training and the new E2E programme in England. These four programmes share the broad aims of helping unemployed young people progress to mainstream education, training or employment. There are 400 young people in Wales, 250 Life Skills learners across 24 centres in England, 60 learners on the E2E programme at three locations in England and 40 on preparatory training. All of these are included in the contributory grade for Life Skills. There is no table shown for Life Skills as the information is not collected in this way.

115. The full-time Gateway to Work courses are offered at five centres in England, including three in Cumbria. This programme focuses on improving clients' job prospects and also helps to identify future training needs from the New Deal options. The 69 clients are at four centres. A further 28 clients are on the full-time education and training option to improve their basic literacy, numeracy or language skills, but these are not included in the table.

116. Rathbone provides training for 133 clients in England. Most, including some clients who speak English as an additional language at Bury, are on basic employability training (BET). A few are on the four- to six-week short, intensive basic skills courses.

117. Programme centre provision is available at one location and provides clients with a programme of support to help with individual jobsearch needs over a 13-week period. Attendance on the programme is voluntary and jobsearch activities are modular with additional individual guidance. There are 56 learners attending programme centres.

118. Most learners are recruited from Jobcentre Plus or Connexions and some are recruited as a result of self-referral or transfer from links with pre-16 provision. Most learners have significant learning barriers, including literacy, language and numeracy needs as well as additional social needs. A member of staff from Rathbone interviews all learners. They then begin a process of initial assessment which identifies eligibility as well as other barriers which may impact on the training. An individual learning plan is drawn up as a result of initial assessment. All learners attend induction training, which

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gives learners information on the course, as well as the terms and conditions which apply. Training advisers review learners' progress each month once the learner has settled into the programme. On some programmes, progress reviews take place every week during the first month.

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

<b>New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults</b>										
<b>New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	794		915		656		470		
Retained*	492	62	608	66	329	50	223	47		
Planned learning completed	86	11	192	21	242	37	47	10		
Gained job	47	6	88	10	89	14	107	23		
Still in training	127	16	5	1	1	0	0	0		

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

<b>New Deal 18-24</b>										
<b>New Deal 18-24</b>	<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>		<b>2000-01</b>		<b>1999-2000</b>		<b>1998-99</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	467		363		272		208		
Retained*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Gained job	98	21	131	36	95	35	62	30		
Still in training	69	18	0	0	0	0	0	0		

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

Other government-funded provision										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	1346		1146						
Retained	0	0	0	0						
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0						
Gained job	0	0	0	0						
Still in training	0	0	0	0						

### STRENGTHS

- good and very individualised pastoral support
- particularly good recognition of learners' achievements
- highly motivational teaching
- stimulating learning environments
- strong support to maintain Workstep clients in employment
- good and improving job outcomes for programme centre clients
- good progression from preparatory training in the Wales and London regions

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate initial assessment of adult learners and those with ESOL needs
- inappropriate learning plans for some learners
- inadequate literacy, numeracy and language training
- poor rate of job outcomes for New Deal clients
- ineffective monitoring of clients' progress in programme centres

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better access to ICT resources
- better range and use of work placements in England

119. Most teaching in foundation is good, very good or outstanding, and highly motivational. Most of the learners on preparatory programmes progress to further training, education or employment. However, too few New Deal clients find a job.

120. There is good and highly individualised pastoral support in all aspects of Rathbone's foundation provision. Training advisers work effectively with external

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agencies to support learners who have problems which include drug and alcohol misuse, sexual health needs and mental health difficulties. There are incentives for learners to attend including breakfast and catering facilities and vouchers as rewards for good attendance and punctuality. At some centres, staff transport learners who live in remote rural locations from home to centres. Learners are praised and encouraged at every appropriate opportunity. At some centres, learners are given suitable clothing for interviews. Staff have good relationships with learners and often take part in practical activities with them. For example, team building sessions during outdoor activities and structured sports events.

121. There is particularly good recognition of the achievements of young people and adults. There are good opportunities for learners to gain internally and externally accredited awards from an early stage in the programme. These include in-house certificates for attendance, punctuality and the successful completion of induction. National awards include qualifications in basic IT, basic food hygiene, health and safety, manual handling and first aid. The achievement of these and other awards are celebrated on a regular basis at formal presentations. National celebrities are often invited to present the awards and the local press frequently report on these events. Other initiatives include monthly and annual achiever awards and the prominent display of the names of successful learners on the training centre walls.

122. The teaching is very motivational. Most teaching is good or better. Training advisers are committed to helping their learners' develop and progress and practical activities such as cookery and motor vehicle maintenance motivates learners. There are also innovative approaches to parenting skills. The range of activities and style and pace of most sessions maintain the learners' interest. Training sessions concentrate on the development of life skills such as personal effectiveness, social skills, timekeeping, personal hygiene and raising self-esteem and confidence.

123. There are stimulating learning environments. Training rooms are bright and well decorated. There is a strong involvement of learners in creating and decorating their training centres. There are professional and well-presented displays of learners' work, and posters and photographs of learners reinforce positive attitudes. Resources are satisfactory, but there is insufficient access to ICT resources in many centres.

124. Rathbone has Workstep provision in Walsall and Balham. The provision in Walsall has been established for a number of years and was originally delivered under the supported employment programme. Most of the clients in Walsall have transferred from the previous supported employment programme and have been with their employers for a considerable number of years. The Balham centre has started to deliver Workstep in the current financial year. In Walsall there are 31 clients employed either full time or part time in their chosen occupations. There are nine unfilled places. In Balham, 10 clients have been recruited under the Workstep contract, none of whom are in employment. The main focus of Workstep is to support people who have disabilities to move into open employment if it is appropriate. One client has progressed into open employment since June 2000.

125. In Walsall, a wide range of vocational sector occupations is reflected in the work carried out by clients. Occupations include kitchen assistants, packing and mailing operatives, factory workers, domestic cleaners, trolley porters, administrative assistants and receptionists. New clients are referred mainly by the disability employment advisers, although the provider can recruit their own clients.

126. Employers have a good understanding of the difficulties which their employees face and have strategies in place to develop communication, confidence building and occupational skills. Job roles and working hours are adapted to suit the clients' needs. On-the-job training is relevant and allows the clients to develop occupational skills.

127. There are good opportunities for clients to gain additional qualifications either through their employer, through Rathbone or by arrangements made by the training adviser with the local college. Workstep clients have achieved qualifications in first aid, health and safety, basic food hygiene and customer care. Internal certificates for good attendance and timekeeping have also been awarded to motivate the clients.

128. In one region, there is strong support by the Workstep training adviser to maintain clients in employment. Relationships and communication between the client, employer and the training adviser are excellent. There are well-structured three-way reviews covering a wide range of issues with clearly identified actions. There is good short-term planning and target-setting to improve work performance. There is effective mediation between clients and supervisors, which is supportive and reduces conflict. Clients who face disciplinary issues at work are given strong support and guidance by the training adviser.

129. Assessment for Workstep clients is inadequate. Disability employment advisers from Jobcentre Plus complete the initial interviews and the individual development plans. There is no system for standard in-depth vocational profiling or social skill assessments and no further diagnostic assessments take place. Provision to support the basic skills needs of clients is inadequate. Rathbone does not assess the basic skills needs of Workstep clients. Some clients who have basic skills needs are not given additional support or training.

130. There are limited strategies for progression and development. Clients who have transferred from the supported employment programme do not have an individual development plan which clearly identifies their future plans. However, all clients have short-term development plans and clients who join Workstep directly have an individual development plan. The plans are insufficiently detailed and do not identify strategies to move the client towards unsupported employment. There is insufficient use of job coaches, support workers or adapted technology to support clients in the workplace. Employers are given a wage subsidy for Workstep clients, but there are insufficient strategies to reduce the subsidy and to provide further support or training. Support for clients' employment is through regular contact with the training adviser and on-the-job training by employers. For some employers the pressure of a busy workplace prevents

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adequate support or training.

131. There is insufficient attention paid to the direction and management of the Workstep programme. The Workstep training adviser has a generic job description and her role and responsibilities are not clearly defined. The training adviser has not had formal training for her role and has not had an appraisal. There are no regular formal meetings and there is little feedback on the performance of the programme or the training adviser. There is evidence of one programme review to monitor the quality of the programme, but the review nor the self-assessment report identified the weaknesses identified by inspectors. The training adviser was not involved in the self-assessment process.

132. There are good and improving job outcomes for programme centre clients. This provision has been offered since April 2001 and staff have a wide range of experience in dealing with unemployed and disaffected people. Job entry rates for the period April to December 2001 were 26 per cent and this has doubled between January and December 2002. Rathbone staff were unable to produce an achievement data table for programme centre clients in the format normally expected at inspection.

133. There is good progression from preparatory training in the Wales and London regions. Progression in Wales is currently 64 per cent and in the London region is 68 per cent. Retention and achievement rates for other foundation programmes is satisfactory.

134. There is inadequate initial assessment for many adult learners and those with ESOL needs. Initial assessment on adult programmes is varied. In Workstep and programme centres, there is no system for standardised vocational profiling or social skills. Disability employment advisers complete the initial interviews and the individual development plan, but there is no further diagnostic assessment once learners start on the programme. The needs of adults and young people with English as an additional language are not adequately or systematically identified. The basic skills initial assessment is inappropriate for these learners. The assessment identifies learners' literacy and numeracy skills only and does not assess language needs. There is no formal assessment of speaking and listening skills. It is not possible to accurately interpret the results of the numeracy assessment as it does not take account of learners who may be numerate but not literate in English.

135. There are inappropriate learning plans for some learners. Learning plans often state the general learning aim, but they do not specify short measurable targets, nor do they enable progress to be appropriately measured. Many reviews are reflective and some do not set challenging targets. Progress is not regularly reviewed.

136. There is inadequate literacy, numeracy and language teaching in many centres, and in some centres there is no formal provision. In centres where it is provided, some of the staff are not sufficiently qualified or competent to deal with the needs of the learners. A lot of literacy and numeracy teaching is unimaginative and learners do not

see the relevance of some activities. There is an over-reliance on worksheets, some of which are poorly reproduced. In some regions, no formal basic skills teaching is provided once learners find a work placement. There is some inappropriate language teaching with too great a focus on reading and writing rather than spoken language. There is little structure to the provision. Insufficient attention is given to the development of literacy, numeracy and language, despite most learners having low levels of these basic skills.

137. There are poor job outcomes on New Deal 25+ and there is a declining trend. During 1999-2000, 23 per cent of clients gained employment. In 2001-02 it was 10 per cent and in the current year, only 6 per cent of clients have gained employment so far. In the past year, the proportion of New Deal clients aged 18 to 24 gaining jobs has fallen from around one in three to one in four.

138. The monitoring of clients' progress in programme centres is ineffective. The programme is flexible and clients attend the sessions which they believe will benefit them most. Reviews of clients' progress are infrequent and do not result in the setting of clear and well-defined objectives. There is no systematic approach to reviewing clients' progress. Some clients are given little individual support. Although clients' attendance is recorded, little action is taken if they stop attending.

139. The availability of work experience is satisfactory. However, the range and use of work placements in England is too limited.