

INSPECTION REPORT

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council

10 July 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learn**direct 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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council's (the council's) community employment team has the overall aim of supporting local people into employment. The Tower Hamlets borough is one of extreme contrasts where major regeneration of the former docks has taken place within what is still a deprived inner city area. Over the last decade, Tower Hamlet's local economy has undergone major changes with substantial increases in the proportion of the workforce employed in banking, insurance and other financial services. This growth has been accompanied by a steady decline in traditional distribution and manufacturing industries. However, Tower Hamlets is also one of the poorest areas in the country. It ranks in the top ten of all indices of deprivation in relation to income, employment, health, education and housing. The unemployment rate stands at 6.5 per cent, compared with 3 per cent nationally and the proportion of unemployed young people under the age of 25 is 30 per cent. The 2001 census shows that 48.6 per cent of the population of Tower Hamlets is from a minority ethnic group, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally. Seventy per cent of school pupils are from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of school leavers in Tower Hamlets achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above is 35 per cent, compared with 47.9 per cent nationally.

2. The corporate training schemes section of the community employment team manages work-based learning programmes for young people in business administration which are funded by the London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The day-to-day management of the section is the responsibility of the training schemes co-ordinator and the senior placement co-ordinator. They report to the head of community employment who, in turn, is managed by the council's head of human resources. There are seven other staff in the section, including two full-time work-placement co-ordinators, and one full-time, and two part-time assessors.

3. The Gateway to Work courses are part of a New Deal 18-24 programme which is managed by a consortium of partners involved in education and training in Tower Hamlets, including Jobcentre Plus and a local further education college. The council is the accountable body for this consortium, and holds the contract for the Gateway to Work courses which it subcontracts to the college. The council's head of community employment and Jobcentre Plus are responsible for overseeing the Gateway to Work courses, including equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

4. The council currently offers training in business administration for 32 foundation modern apprentices, 10 advanced modern apprentices and 25 NVQ learners. Four learners are employed by local companies and all other learners are employed by, or are

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on training contracts with, the council. Staff deliver all off-the-job training at the main council offices in Tower Hamlets. Learners are able to join a range of additional training programmes which are offered by the council to work-based learners and other members of the local community. Literacy, numeracy and language support is subcontracted to a local college of further education.

Foundation programmes

5. There are 25 Jobcentre Plus clients on the Gateway to Work programme, who are included in the inspection process. So far in 2002-03, there have been 26 Gateway to Work courses, each running for two weeks. Approximately 20 clients enrol on each course. All courses are subcontracted to a local college of further education which also offers a range of other New Deal 18-24 options. The Gateway to Work course includes motivational exercises, confidence and teambuilding activities and help with preparing curriculum vitae, completing application forms and practising job interviews.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	15
Number of learner interviews	48
Number of staff interviews	18
Number of employer interviews	4
Number of subcontractor interviews	7
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	9

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the foundation training programmes are satisfactory, but the quality of provision in business administration, management and professional is unsatisfactory. Equal opportunities are good, but leadership and management, and quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

Business administration, management & professional	5
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	5

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Achievement rates are poor for work-based learning.** In the past three years, only 10 per cent of all learners have completed the full modern apprenticeship framework. Most learners develop appropriate business administration skills and some are given high levels of responsibility in their work placements.

8. **Learners make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications on work-based learning programmes.** There is an increasing number of learners who do not achieve their qualification in the time agreed at the beginning of their training.

9. There are satisfactory job outcomes on Gateway to Work programmes. In 2002-03, just under 30 per cent of clients have found a job, although this has declined over the past two years. Clients' skills and understanding of employment-related issues improve as a result of their training.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	4

10. **There is good personal support for all learners.** Staff have a good understanding of learners' backgrounds and deal promptly and sensitively with concerns that learners may have. When learners have personal difficulties which require specific support, staff help them with guidance through a range of specialist agencies.

11. **Arrangements for supporting learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs are inadequate.** Work-based learners have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy levels at the start of their training, but are not always informed of the results. There are no targets set for improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Clients on the

Gateway to Work programme do not always have their support needs identified when they first join the course.

12. Off-the-job training for learners on work-based learning programmes is satisfactory. Learners' self-confidence is increased and they make useful contributions to group discussions. However, the quality of training on work placements is inconsistent.

13. Resources on work-based learning programmes are satisfactory. Employers' facilities and accommodation for off-the-job training are appropriate. Learners have access to industry-standard computers and software.

14. **There are poor assessment and monitoring practices on work-based learning programmes.** Learners do not receive enough guidance to enable them to identify evidence to meet the assessment requirements. Written feedback after assessment is not sufficiently detailed to allow learners to judge how they can improve their performance.

15. **Key skills training is poor.** Employers have little knowledge of key skills and are unable to support learners in developing these skills. Opportunities to gather key skills evidence in the workplace are frequently missed.

16. **There is some good training for clients on the Gateway to Work programme.** Sessions are well planned and incorporate a range of imaginative activities such as tips on hair and skin care by the college's hair and beauty salon. Tutors make sure that a supportive atmosphere is generated during training sessions and clients feel confident enough to take part in classroom discussions.

17. **The Gateway to Work programme is well managed to take account of clients' differing cultural and religious backgrounds.** Tutors take great care to review each new group to ensure that classes are well planned to take account of clients' backgrounds.

18. Resources for clients on the Gateway to Work programme are satisfactory. Training rooms are well equipped and comfortable. There are sufficient learning materials and computers for clients to carry out research into employment-related activities.

19. **There is inadequate recording of clients' progress on the Gateway to Work programme.** The skills they gain, and their improved self-confidence are not formally recorded and clients leave the programme without sufficient evidence of the progress they are making.

20. **Employers are insufficiently involved in the Gateway to Work programme.** They are not asked to contribute to the programme as guest speakers or role models in order that clients can develop a greater understanding of the world of work. Opportunities to secure employment for clients through the involvement of local companies are not taken.

Leadership and management

21. **The council is involved in a number of good initiatives to find employment for local people.** It has very effective links with other organisations, which leads to a wide range of training programmes which are responsive to the needs of the local community, and the requirements of local companies.

22. **Management of equal opportunities is good.** The way in which programmes are run is responsive to the needs of learners from local minority ethnic groups. Data are collected on learners' backgrounds and are analysed to identify strategies for increasing the participation of learners from under-represented groups.

23. **Learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity** and are able to recall the topics covered at their induction. Staff are positive role models. Some were previously learners on the council's training programmes and many speak the main community languages.

24. **The council has a detailed range of new, or recently revised, quality assurance policies and procedures.** There are particularly good procedures for the recruitment and selection of learners. A wide range of methods are used to evaluate the quality of training, but subsequent actions by the council have not yet resolved concerns raised by learners and employers.

25. **The management of work-based learning for young people programmes, is poor.** The planning of individual learning is weak and there is insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

26. **There is inadequate target-setting for improvement.** Success criteria identified by the council in its own business plan are not supported by specific measurable targets, and there are no objectives for the long-term development of the training programmes.

27. **There is insufficient structured staff training and development.** Staff have had very few appraisals of their performance, and important members of the training team are not allowed to take part in the council's training and development activities. There are no arrangements in place for staff to update their industrial skills.

28. **The management of literacy, numeracy and language support on work-based learning and Gateway to Work programmes is poor.** There is no strategy for the provision of additional support and the council does not monitor the support for clients on the Gateway to Work programme.

29. **There has been slow implementation of actions by the council to bring about continuous improvement.** Long-standing weaknesses in the quality of training have not been corrected, and there is insufficient recording of key interventions and activities to improve performance.

30. **Internal verification is ineffective in improving assessment practices.** A new internal

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verification policy and set of procedures have recently been written, but meetings of assessors with the internal verifier do not focus sufficiently on specific assessment issues.

31. The council produces annual self-assessment reports, the most recent one in February 2003. Many of the weaknesses identified in this report have been in place for some time and there has been little progress towards their resolution. The council has underestimated the impact of these weaknesses on the quality of its training programmes.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good initiatives to secure employment for local communities
- positive action to target under-represented groups
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- poor management of work-based learning for young people
- no specific targets for work-based learning in strategic planning
- insufficiently structured staff training and development
- poor management of literacy, numeracy and language support
- slow implementation of action plans to bring about continuous improvement
- ineffective internal verification

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good support for pastoral needs

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- slow progress
- poor assessment and monitoring practices
- poor key skills training
- inadequate use of the results of initial assessment
- inadequate arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support
- poor planning and management of training

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good training
- responsive programme to meet diverse cultural needs
- good personal and practical support

Weaknesses

- inadequate recording of clients' progress
- no systematic identification of clients' literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficient involvement by employers

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL:

- 'good opportunity to make something of your life'
- getting permanent work and experience of the workplace
- good support from friendly and approachable staff
- the college is in a central location and easy to get to

WHAT LEARNERS THINK LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL COULD IMPROVE:

- training allowances for learners on work-based learning programmes
- more frequent assessments on work-based learning programmes
- more recreational activities
- better checking of the quality of work-based learning placements
- college classes to start later
- better catering facilities at the college

KEY CHALLENGES FOR LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL:

- develop an effective long-term plan which focuses on raising achievement rates
- improve performance through better management of work-based learning programmes
- develop effective systems to quality assure learning activities
- develop strategies to support all learners who have a wide range of literacy, numeracy and language needs
- carry out better recording of learners' progress

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good initiatives to secure employment for local communities
- positive action to target under-represented groups
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- poor management of work-based learning for young people
- no specific targets for work-based learning in strategic planning
- insufficiently structured staff training and development
- poor management of literacy, numeracy and language support
- slow implementation of action plans to bring about continuous improvement
- ineffective internal verification

32. The council is involved in a number of good initiatives to secure employment for local people. A key priority for the council is to develop the local community and to support people in finding employment. It achieves this aim through a wide range of very effective links with other organisations. The council is the lead partner in a very active employment consortium, which includes a local further education college and an education business partnership. The consortium makes good use of a wide range of funding sources to offer training programmes. These programmes are responsive to the needs of existing local businesses and companies investing in the area for the first time. The councils' job brokerage service gives good advice to new employers about the employment needs and skills of the local community. The council then offers specific training courses to recruit staff. These customised training events also focus on specific employment skills needed by different sectors of the local economy, for example, in financial services and retail management, as well as general training courses in telephone techniques and customer service. The council's own graduate programme attracts graduates from minority ethnic groups, who are unemployed or underemployed, to train for entry into management positions in the council. Forty-seven graduates have joined this scheme since March 2000, of whom almost half are now working with the council. Good use is made of case studies of learners who have been successful in gaining employment through the council's initiatives to promote its training courses.

33. The council's management of resources is satisfactory. Staffing levels are appropriate for the number of learners, although long-term absences from work of key members of staff have led to significant weaknesses in the management of the training programmes. The training centre facilities at the council's offices are adequate, and

learners benefit from up-to-date, industry-recognised and commercially acceptable standards of equipment. However, there are insufficient other learning resources available to support the development of learners' knowledge. The council augments the income generated by its employment services section and uses a variety of other funding sources to ensure that it is able to offer a wide range of training programmes.

34. There is poor management of the work-based learning programmes. Achievement rates are poor on most courses. The planning of individual learning is weak. Arrangements for initial assessment are inadequate, there is late completion of individual learning plans and learners are making slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. Learners and some staff have a poor understanding of key skills. Insufficient assessment is carried out in the workplace and a number of inappropriate assessment practices are used. Some work placements are not checked before learners start their training and there are too few visits to employers' premises by the council's staff to check how learners are being treated by their supervisors. There have been key omissions in the management of the courses due to staff absences, and staff are not always clear about their responsibilities. There have been some recent improvements to the way in which the programmes are managed, together with the introduction of new policies and procedures, but it is too early to judge the impact of these changes on the learning.

35. No specific training targets for work-based learning are used in strategic planning. There is no annual planning cycle which links strategic and business objectives to target-setting, self-assessment and development planning. Success criteria identified by the council in its own business plan, are not supported by specific measurable targets, and there are no objectives for the long-term development of the training programmes. Projections for learners' achievements are not regularly updated, or prepared sufficiently in advance to assist in the management of the programmes. Many of the staff are aware of the need to improve achievement rates, but have not been given specific targets. Records are not always up to date, and some data relating to learners are unreliable.

36. There is insufficient structured training and development for the council's staff. Before the appointment of a new head of human resources in January 2002, there was no one in the council with specific responsibility for staff training and development, or any appraisal system for reviewing staff performance. Some individual meetings between staff and their managers have taken place, but the outcomes are not always formally recorded. Some staff comment that they do not discuss their training and development needs with their manager. Part-time staff employed to deliver and assess the work-based learning programmes, are not able to take part in training and development activities. There are no arrangements for industrial updating. Staff have attended a number of training and development events, but their attendance is not always accurately recorded. Their training activities are not sufficiently linked to personal development needs or strategic priorities of the council. However, some staff have received effective training in equality of opportunity and the council has recognised the need to place more emphasis on staff training and development. It is currently appointing a new training and development manager as part of a new management structure.

37. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support on the work-based learning and Gateway to Work programmes is poor. The council does not have a policy or strategy for this support. The service level agreement with the subcontracted college does not identify the specific responsibilities of either the council or the subcontractor. The council does not monitor the additional support arrangements for clients on the Gateway to Work programmes. Monthly reports from the subcontracted provider do not focus sufficiently on learners' progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The arrangements for the provision of this support during college holiday periods are inadequate.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

38. The council has a recently updated equality and diversity policy and race equality plan. Learners are given an equality of opportunity statement which identifies their rights and responsibilities, although there is no explanation of the categories of people who may face discrimination. The council has complaints, appeals, anti-harassment, anti-bullying, disciplinary and grievance procedures and learners are made aware of them during induction. The venues for on- and off-the-job training are accessible for learners who have restricted mobility. Learners who have specific health problems are able to use the council's occupational health service.

39. The council has a number of good initiatives in place to target learners from under-represented groups, and to meet their needs. Many learners are from minority ethnic groups, in particular the local Bangladeshi community. Times of training have been changed in response to concerns expressed by young Muslim women who do not wish to travel in the dark during the winter months. A prayer room is available which enables learners to observe religious practices during their training, and the council celebrates a number of religious and cultural festivals. Data are collected on learners' ethnicity, gender and disability and the information is used to identify recruitment trends. The analysis has highlighted that young white men are under-represented on the council's training programmes. Staff have identified local schools which have a significant proportion of young white men and have made presentations and handed out promotional materials in an effort to encourage their participation.

40. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity by the council. Learners are able to recall equal opportunities being covered in their induction and reinforced during progress reviews. Promotional materials, including handbooks and leaflets, reflect the diverse range of minority ethnic groups in the local community, and information is printed in many different languages. Posters and other artwork displayed in work placements and training rooms, challenge stereotypes and promote social inclusion. Staff working for the subcontractor and the council, reflect the minority ethnic profile of learners and many speak community languages. Some were previously learners on the council's training programmes. Good communication ensures that useful contacts are maintained with parents and the leaders of community-based voluntary organisations.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

41. The council has a detailed range of quality assurance policies and procedures for work-based learning programmes. However, these are either new documents or have recently been revised and it is too early to judge their impact on the quality of training. There are particularly good procedures for the recruitment and selection of learners, with clear explanations of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, including guidance for work-placement supervisors. A wide range of methods are used to evaluate the quality of training including satisfaction surveys, focus groups and exit interviews. The feedback from the evaluations identifies a number of important issues for learners and employers. The results are collated and well presented, and demonstrate an open and honest response from those surveyed. The data are used as a basis for the self-assessment report, but subsequent actions by the council have not yet dealt with the concerns. The subcontractor has its own quality assurance systems for the Gateway to Work programme, including appropriate policies and procedures. The quality of the programme is monitored by Jobcentre Plus, and managers at the provider report to a local employment consortium which includes representatives from the council.

42. There has been slow implementation of actions by the council to bring about continuous improvement. Self-assessment is a well-established part of the council's quality assurance framework and has identified long-standing weaknesses and concerns over achievement. However, actions have only recently been implemented to rectify these weaknesses and it is too soon to judge their impact on learners' achievement rates. Concerns expressed by awarding bodies about assessment practices have not been rectified. Targets are set for individual learners and assessors, but progress towards these targets is not adequately monitored and recorded. There is insufficient recording of key interventions and activities to improve performance. Minutes of meetings do not show any detailed discussion of strategies to improve achievement rates. Reviews of progress by the LSC have highlighted serious concerns in the quality assurance of the work-based learning programmes, but many of the required actions have not been implemented and continue to be carried forward to the next review.

43. Internal verification is ineffective in improving assessment practices. A new internal verification policy and set of procedures have recently been written and sampling plans clearly identify assessors and units of the national vocational qualification (NVQs) which will be internally verified. The council is currently verifying all assessments due to concerns over the quality of assessment practice expressed by the awarding body. Assessor standardisation meetings have taken place, but do not always focus sufficiently on specific assessment issues.

44. The council produced its first self-assessment report for work-based learning in 1999 and has produced annual reports since then, the most recent in February 2003. Inspectors' weaknesses matched many of those identified in the report, but the council has underestimated their impact on learners. Many of the weaknesses have been in place for some time and there has been little progress towards their resolution. There is a number of contradictions in the self-assessment report where important aspects of the training programmes are described as strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors' strengths in leadership and management did not match those in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 5

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	67	5

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good support for pastoral needs

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- slow progress
- poor assessment and monitoring practices
- poor key skills training
- inadequate use of the results of initial assessment
- inadequate arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support
- poor planning and management of training

Achievement and standards

45. Achievement rates are poor. Since 1998-99, only 8 per cent of advanced modern apprentices have completed the full framework, and a further 8 per cent have achieved their NVQ level 3. Two per cent of foundation modern apprentices have completed the full framework over the same period, with just over 30 per cent of learners achieving the NVQ level 2. Most learners are developing business administration skills in their work placements and some are taking on increased responsibility. Retention rates are satisfactory, at an average of over 65 per cent for the past three years.

46. Learners make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. There is an increasing number of learners who continue their training past the expected end date. There has been a 60 per cent increase between 1999-2000 and 2001-02 in the number of learners not achieving their qualifications by the expected end date. Many learners are on their training programmes for between five and 12 months before achieving the first unit of the NVQ.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		6		3		13		10							
Retained*	0		2		2	67	8		7	70						
Successfully completed	0		0		0	0	2		1	10						
Still in learning	8		1		0	0	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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	25		17		17		33		17							
Retained*	0		16		12	71	16	48	14	82						
Successfully completed	0		2		0	0	0	0	0	0						
Still in learning	23		9		0	0	0	0	0	0						

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	28		14		1		6									
Retained*	2		9	64	1	100	3	50								
Successfully completed	1		9	64	1	100	3	50								
Still in learning	25		0	0	0	0	0	0								

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

Quality of education and training

47. There is good support for learners who have pastoral needs. Learners come from a wide range of backgrounds and some have very specific cultural and religious needs. The council takes effective action to ensure that the training is adapted to meet learners' individual needs. Staff deal promptly and sensitively with any issues and concerns that learners may have, and a number of learners have been well supported through particularly traumatic personal experiences. Learners have access to a counsellor who is employed by the council, and staff refer learners to appropriate external agencies for

further support when necessary. Many of the staff involved in training are local residents and some are ex-learners. They have a good understanding of the issues facing young people from different backgrounds. Sheltered placements are used for more vulnerable learners and staff have good communication with social workers.

48. Off-the-job training is satisfactory. The two training sessions observed during the inspection, were both satisfactory. Classes are well planned, although there is insufficient use of teaching strategies to suit individual learning needs. Learners' self-confidence is increased and they make some useful contributions to group discussions. They demonstrate a basic understanding of the topics being covered. The on-the-job training is inconsistent. Some learners receive good training and are given challenging levels of responsibility which they enjoy. However, other learners are allocated repetitive tasks which do not allow them to progress through their qualifications at a satisfactory rate.

49. Resources are satisfactory. On-the-job work placement and off-the-job training facilities are appropriate. Learners have access to industry-standard computers and software. They are able to borrow textbooks from trainers, but there are few general learning resources to support the development of learners' knowledge. Assessors are occupationally competent and have appropriate qualifications and levels of experience, but work-placement officers do not all have the necessary administrative skills to carry out their role. Arrangements for staff to update their industry skills are inadequate.

50. There are poor assessment and monitoring practices. Planning for assessment is weak and assessors do not use a sufficiently broad range of assessment methods. Learners are not given enough guidance to enable them to identify evidence to meet the assessment requirements. Too few observations of training are carried out in the workplace. Written feedback after assessments is not detailed enough to allow learners to improve their performance. Some learners' progress has been disrupted by a series of staff absences, and in a recent survey, almost half of the learners commented that they were not regularly assessed. Their progress is not effectively monitored and evaluated against individual learning plans. Targets are insufficiently challenging and often lack specific detail and timescales. Reviews are not adequately recorded and individual learning plans are not always updated after progress reviews.

51. Key skills training is poor. Until recently, many learners did not have any training in key skills until they had been on their programme for a considerable time. There was no key skills training at all for a period of eight months due to staff absences. Employers have little knowledge of key skills and are unable to support learners in developing them. Opportunities to gather key skills evidence in the workplace are frequently not taken. However, the recent introduction of an electronic key skills teaching package is now providing learners with online training. A new programme of key skills training for communications and application of number has been designed and is currently being implemented for new learners.

52. There is inadequate use of the results of initial assessment. All learners have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy levels at the start of their training. However, they are not always informed of the results and some do not understand why they have

been placed on a particular course. The results are not recorded in sufficient detail on individual learning plans, nor are they used to develop individual programmes of learning. Some learners who have a good level of prior achievement are insufficiently challenged, while others on advanced modern apprenticeships are struggling to produce appropriate work.

53. The arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are inadequate. This support is subcontracted to a local college of further education and the range of teaching and learning resources is poor. Arrangements for additional support during the college's summer holiday period are inadequate. Learners' progress is not formally reviewed and there are no targets for developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Informal meetings focus mainly on learners' behaviour.

Leadership and management

54. The planning and management of work-based learning for young people is poor. There is poor use of individual learning plans. No interim targets are set for the achievement of individual units and no details of training or assessment are recorded on the plans. Some of the learners do not have an individual learning plan at the start of their training. The co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is poor and there is little specific training in business administration. Learners attend some useful, additional training courses which are offered by the council, but they are not clearly linked to the NVQ units or key skills. The arrangements for monitoring on-the-job training are insufficiently structured and employers do not have sufficient understanding of the training programmes. They are not given enough guidance to be able to support learners effectively.

55. Internal verification is not improving assessment practices. Awarding body reports have repeatedly identified many actions which have not been adequately resolved. Internal verifiers observe assessors, but their feedback is insufficiently detailed and actions for improvement are not identified. A training needs analysis for assessors has recently been carried out, but there has been little identification of staff development needs as a result. Most of the assessors and the internal verifier are employed part-time and do not have access to appraisals or staff development by the council. New assessment and verification documents and activities have recently been introduced, but it is too early to judge their impact on the learning.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	25	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good training
- responsive programme to meet diverse cultural needs
- good personal and practical support

Weaknesses

- inadequate recording of clients' progress
- no systematic identification of clients' literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficient involvement by employers

Achievement and standards

56. Clients gain a good level of employment-related knowledge, understanding and skills on the Gateway to Work programme. Achievement rates are satisfactory. In the contract year 2002-03, just under 30 per cent of clients found a job, although there has been a downward trend in the numbers of clients finding jobs over the past two years.

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

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 18-24																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	512		321													
Retained*	368		303	94												
Planned learning completed	105		165	51												
Gained job	105		165	51												
Still in training	25		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

Quality of education and training

57. There is some good training for clients on the Gateway to Work programme. Tutors have considerable experience of working with young people and are suitably qualified. Training sessions are well planned and are at the right level for the range of clients' abilities. The purpose of each session, and how it links to the remainder of the programme, is clearly identified. Tutors incorporate an imaginative range of activities into the programme, including sessions on self-presentation at interview, using the subcontracted provider's hair and beauty salon, mock interviews and a first aid qualification. A supportive atmosphere is generated during these sessions and clients feel confident enough to be able to contribute to classroom discussions.

58. Tutors ensure that the Gateway to Work programme is responsive to the diverse cultural needs of clients. Clients enter the Gateway to Work phase of their New Deal 18-24 programme from a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds. Tutors take great care to ensure that sessions are planned to take account of these backgrounds and regularly have more than one lesson plan for each class. Each new group of clients is carefully reviewed by tutors to ensure that their individual pastoral needs are considered. Tutors are also able to adapt lesson plans to suit the mood of the group during any part of their training.

59. Clients have good personal and practical support. Tutors are sensitive to the personal needs of individual clients and help with practical solutions to problems, such as providing bus timetables and maps to improve attendance and punctuality. Staff have a good understanding of clients' barriers to employment and, through their own personal experiences, can empathise with clients' anxieties. When clients have personal difficulties which need specific support, staff help them with guidance through a range of specialist agencies.

60. Resources are satisfactory. Training rooms at the subcontracted provider are well equipped and comfortable. A dedicated area at one of the subcontractor's premises is used for the Gateway to Work programme, which enables practical and background knowledge sessions to be integrated. There are sufficient paper-based learning resources and computers for clients to carry out jobsearch activities.

61. There is inadequate recording of clients' progress. Clients frequently demonstrate improved self-confidence and gain useful skills when giving presentations and taking part in discussions. Their skills are discussed informally, but progress is not formally recorded and learners leave the programme without any evidence of their achievements, which might contribute to future employability.

62. There is no systematic identification of clients' literacy, numeracy or language needs on the Gateway to Work programme. The subcontracted provider is not given enough information from Jobcentre Plus about clients' prior literacy, numeracy and language attainments. There is no clear method of identifying their support needs when clients first join the Gateway to Work programme. Some clients have additional support needs

which are not being met, while others have some support on an informal basis.

Leadership and management

63. There is good communication between the council and the subcontracted provider, through regular meetings of the local employment consortium which is responsible for the management of the New Deal 18-24 programmes. The performance of the Gateway to Work programme is monitored as part of the overall Gateway element of New Deal 18-24, but there is not always sufficient emphasis placed on checking the quality of training. There is an over-reliance by the council on the quality assurance arrangements of the subcontracted provider, and the council does not have any formal procedures for monitoring these arrangements.

64. Employers are insufficiently involved in the Gateway to Work programme. The council and the subcontracted provider have good links with employers, but they are not asked to contribute to the programme as guest speakers or role models, so that clients can develop a greater understanding of employment issues. Some clients are unaware of the relationship between Gateway to Work and employment, and opportunities to secure employment for clients through the involvement of local companies are missed.