

INSPECTION REPORT

Taurus Training

04 March 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 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

Taurus Training was established in Liverpool in 1995 to provide work-based learning programmes initially with Merseyside Training and Enterprise Council. Since that time, the company has continued to grow and remains now as one of Merseyside's largest training providers. The company operates contracts with Greater Merseyside and Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Councils, and also has a national contracting service contract related to the glass and glazing industry. This latter contract covers a widely diverse area throughout the Midlands and the north of England. Learners' numbers have continued to expand significantly since the first phase of inspections.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, work-based learning in land-based provision, construction, engineering, business administration, information technology is satisfactory and in health and social care it is good. Learning in retailing and customer service and hospitality and sport is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of Taurus Training Limited are satisfactory, although quality assurance is unsatisfactory. The company's approach to equal opportunities is good.

GRADES

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

Land-based provision	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Construction	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

TAURUS TRAINING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Information & communications technology	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2
Other government-funded provision	None

KEY STRENGTHS

- strong strategic direction
- good awareness of equal opportunities
- good workplaces
- good learner support
- good review practice

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient focus on the quality assurance of training
- inconsistent application of quality assurance procedures
- ineffective initial assessment
- poor assessment practice in some areas
- poor achievement and retention rates in some areas

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better understanding of NVQs and frameworks by learners
- better involvement in training by employers

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 15 inspectors spent a total of 85 days at Taurus Training in March 2003. They met 203 learners and carried out 107 interviews with Taurus Training's staff. Inspectors interviewed 79 employers and observed and graded 17 learning sessions. They observed 26 assessments of competence and 62 reviews of progress. They examined a wide variety of documents including 111 portfolios of evidence and 166 individual learning plans. Inspectors examined Taurus Training's plans, policies and procedures, management information and reports from awarding and other external bodies. They examined Taurus Training's draft self-assessment report dated January 2003 and the development plan of the same date.

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	1	2	0	0	0	3
Construction	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	4	0	1	0	0	7
Health, social care & public services	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	4	8	2	2	0	0	17

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Taurus Training operates from a head office in Liverpool and has premises in Manchester and Durham. The Liverpool head office has recently been expanded to allow for the creation of a conference facility which incorporates disabled access and a hearing loop system. The company uses the facility to promote training for staff and learners and as a training resource to local companies. Taurus Training received the national provider of the year award 2001-02 from the glass industry national training organisation.

3. There are learners in eight occupational areas and with discrete subareas of hospitality, such as licensed premises and sport. The largest numbers are in double glazing manufacturing and installation, retailing and customer service, hospitality, sport and travel, and health and social care. The company is still the largest provider of hospitality and sport training on Merseyside. In the areas of learning covered by the inspection, there are 758 advanced modern apprentices, 948 foundation modern apprentices and 312 learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes. This represents a significant expansion over recent years and Taurus Training employs 114 full-time or part-time staff. As a continuing commitment to improving standards, Taurus Training has reduced the number of staff contracted on a self-employed basis to just two specialist consultants and two internal verifiers who are currently providing cover while permanent staff are recruited.

4. In May 2002, the unemployment rate on Merseyside was 6.3 per cent, compared with 3 per cent nationally. It has been noted that in March 2003, Liverpool had the fastest rate of employment growth of any area in Britain. In Manchester, the unemployment rate was 4.2 per cent.

5. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers from Liverpool achieving five or more general certificates of education (GCSEs) at grade C or above is 35 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In the neighbouring metropolitan borough of Sefton, the rates were 50 per cent. The 1991 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Liverpool is 3.8 per cent, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally.

Work-based learning for young people

6. In five of the occupational areas, the training is satisfactory. Learners benefit from good workplaces with frequent and effective reviews of their progress. Taurus Training's assessors give good support to learners and although there has been poor retention and achievement rates in some areas, there are signs of improvement. In retailing and customer service, the retention rates are poor despite improving levels of support. This has led to poor achievement rates in the past and it is not clear that significant improvements are being made. Achievement rates in hospitality are poor, as are rates of achievement for sport modern apprentices. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ programmes in sport are good. Health and social care is good, with most learners making good progress towards the achievement of their qualification and key skills are an integral part of the vocational training.

Other government-funded provision

7. The company has 60 learners on a new management programme which is co-funded by Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF). It is directed at managers in care homes who are required by recent legislation to become professionally qualified. The first learners were recruited in October 2002 and all are progressing well. There is a comprehensive introduction to the course and the teaching is good. Learners are seeing immediate benefit to themselves and their organisation from the training they are receiving.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

8. Taurus Training is a private training company, owned and led by three directors. A senior management team, made up of three directors and three managers, has responsibility for the strategic direction of the company. Department and area of learning managers look after the operational management, including the training. Senior managers and managers meet every three months. In addition, committees meet regularly to discuss topics such as equality of opportunity and quality assurance. Teams of assessors, trainers and internal verifiers meet every month to review learners' progress and to discuss key skills, equality of opportunity and internal verification. Taurus Training employs 114 staff, who are full time and part time. Additionally two specialist consultants are subcontracted to help with curriculum development and equality of opportunity. In horticulture and care, the internal verification is currently subcontracted to a local specialist college and local authority training company. The company has an equal opportunities policy and a complaints and appeals procedure. Taurus Training has written procedures for all of its activities, and they are available on the company's intranet. The company was accredited with the Investor in People standard in 1995 and has been re-accredited since that date. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The company's first self-assessment report was produced against the framework of the Training Standards Council's (TSC's) 'Raising the Standard' in 1999. The self-assessment process takes place every year, and was updated in January 2003 in preparation for inspection. The most recent self-assessment report is written against the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Taurus Training has appointed two co-ordinators to manage the basic skills and additional social needs support for level 1 learners. There are 337 learners who have additional learning and/or social needs support. There is a planned programme of basic skills modules and individual support to develop numeracy and literacy skills for level 1 learners. Taurus Training have three tutors for basic skills support, all of whom are currently registered for additional basic skills teacher qualifications. There are no similar arrangements for modern apprentices. Support for these learners is arranged by the co-ordinators for each area of learning.

STRENGTHS

- highly effective staff development
- good health and safety support and monitoring for employers
- strong strategic direction
- good use of community links to develop new provision
- good awareness of equal opportunities by learners and staff

WEAKNESSES

- few specific targets for improving retention and achievement rates
- poor management of basic skills support for modern apprentices
- insufficient focus on the quality assurance of training
- inconsistent application of quality assurance procedures
- inadequate monitoring of potential early leavers

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better promotion of equal opportunities with some employers
- more use of data in self-assessment
- greater use of results of learners' and employers' questionnaires

9. The directors and senior managers have a clear strategy for developing the staff, resources, and programmes. Managers involve staff in many aspects of developing the company's systems and procedures. There are good opportunities for teams to share good practice at meetings and through more structured sessions for all staff on topics such as key skills. Communication is effective across the company and staff are well informed about changes and developments. Monthly team meetings are well attended and a range of topics are discussed, including equality of opportunity, staff training and individual learners. Taurus Training has an effective appraisal process, which staff find particularly motivating. Many staff have been promoted internally and are actively encouraged by managers to develop their job role and responsibilities. All managers and co-ordinating staff have completed or are taking a 12-month management qualification, which is recognised by a professional management body and is mandatory.

10. Taurus Training have a very thorough process for monitoring the health and safety of employers. All staff who carry out assessments are appropriately qualified and have good access to up-to-date information, including changes in legislation and European Union directives. Health and safety officers have recently been updating employers about forthcoming changes in legislation for young people on shift work. Many employers have benefited from health and safety resources provided by Taurus Training. For example, employers are using a CD-ROM which was developed by Taurus Training to improve their own systems for risk assessment in the workplace.

11. Senior managers of Taurus Training have developed a wide range of community links to extend and develop the range of courses available. This includes links with schools to identify appropriate programmes for excluded groups, partnerships with Somali and womens' groups to develop management programmes, and links with the care sector to develop an NVQ level 4 programme for care managers. Managers have well-developed links with staff from an institute for the deaf and are currently working with them to develop courses and a conference at Taurus Training.

12. Taurus Training's management has taken the decision to move away from using

staff on fixed-term contracts, to employing trainers and assessors to improve the quality of contact with the learners. A telemarketing company is now being used to identify companies where there may be new learners. There has been a significant increase in learners over the past three years. Taurus Training has extended their buildings and developed a large conference facility which has excellent resources, including an induction loop for people who are hearing impaired, and good access for learners who use wheelchairs. The company is currently two years into their seven-year information technology (IT) strategy, which has seen an increase in the level of computing skills in staff and an extensive intranet facility for their use. The existing Internet facility is currently being extended to include distance learning materials for learners.

13. Taurus Training has devised a system for identifying learners at risk of leaving the provision early or not completing a course, and has appointed a member of staff to monitor these learners closely. There are few targets for individual programme areas to improve retention and achievement rates. Co-ordinators, trainers and assessors have little awareness of any targets for them or their teams. Although data are available, little use is made of them to monitor retention and achievement rates.

14. Taurus Training has an agreement with the LSC where they can retain learners on programme for three months if they leave their job to help support them back onto their learning programme. There is evidence of some learners returning to their learning programme and achieving it. However, several learners have now been in this tracking system for considerably longer than this, with some being there for five to six months. Some learners have clearly moved on to other learning, moved to other parts of the country or an alternative career. This includes learners returning to full-time education or joining the armed forces. Insufficient contact is made with learners during this tracking period. No progress reviews take place with learners, and learners are not working towards any aspect of their programme.

15. While the management and arrangements for basic skills support for level 1 learners is satisfactory, there are few arrangements for level 2 and 3 learners. Taurus Training do not use an initial assessment test to identify the basic skills and additional learning support needs of learners. Support needs are usually identified by the employer, assessor or by the learner declaring a learning need. There is no relevant or appropriate support to develop the basic skills of these learners.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

16. Equal opportunities are effectively managed in Taurus Training. Their aims, values and strategies promote equality. There is a range of policies including racial equality, disability equality, gender equality, anti-harassment and bullying and they are updated each year. The equal opportunities co-ordinator is responsible for reviewing and updating policies. An equal opportunities committee meets every three months and representatives from each occupational area attend. Minutes are taken and are circulated to staff and good practice examples are requested and shared. Marketing materials reflect an awareness of equal opportunities. An external consultancy company carried out a health check in April 2002 with excellent results and the outcomes were used to produce an action plan. Progress against this is monitored by the co-ordinator and through the committee meetings.

17. Staff have a good awareness of equal opportunities and share responsibility for promoting a positive environment. Training sessions on disability awareness take place and evaluations show that they caused staff to reflect on how their own words and actions could cause offence. Other training sessions take place, particularly for the level 1 learners team, but details of the sessions are displayed and staff from occupational areas can also attend. Since April 2002, monthly quizzes are sent to all staff to identify their level of knowledge. These cover a range of topics including racial issues, visual and hearing impairment, women at work and key facts on alcohol. Answers are posted on the intranet and on noticeboards. Individual feedback is given to those staff who achieve a low score. Noticeboards specifically for equal opportunities are in all the branches and information is constantly updated. All staff have access to the equal opportunities folder on the intranet. Equality of opportunity is covered in staff induction and is a standing agenda item during meetings. A resource library containing a wide range of information which is constantly updated by the co-ordinator, is available to all staff. The Taurus Training website is currently being updated for learners and employers as a source of information.

18. Learners have a good awareness of equal opportunities. They are aware of the company's procedures, are knowledgeable about their rights and most are aware of their responsibilities and of the type of behaviour that is considered to be unacceptable. During induction, learners are given a copy of the policy statement and the grievance procedure. Assessors carry out frequent progress reviews, during which they ask questions to check the learners' awareness to reinforce their learning. However, some assessors ask closed questions and the discussion is not as thorough. Learners on the level 1 programme are given detailed information and training on a wide range of topics to increase their awareness and to improve their employment prospects. All learners are aware of the complaints system and who they should raise problems with. Complaints are dealt with.

19. Taurus Training has links with a number of external organisations, including an institute for the hearing impaired. A hearing loop has been installed in part of the training premises and the reception area. Large print materials and audiotape facilities have

recently been developed. Access to premises is currently under review. Plans have been prepared and finance allocated for alterations to the training centres in Liverpool and Manchester. A wheelchair lift is to be installed. Checks have been carried out to ensure doorways and toilet facilities are adequate to allow wheelchair access. Learners who have restricted mobility can access the IT suite in Liverpool.

20. Data on learners are collected and monitored monthly and quarterly. Of the 2,163 learners, 4 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, 10 per cent have a disability, 70 per cent are men, and 16 per cent have additional learning and/or social needs. Data on male to female ratios in stereotypical occupational areas are collected. Currently there are 10 women in manufacturing and two women tutor/assessors. There are no women in construction. In administration, 77 per cent of learners are women. Targets for recruitment are not specifically set as many learners are employed by companies before being recruited on to the programmes. Entry on to the programme is determined by discussion between the employers and the learners and that they meet the eligibility criteria of the LSC's contract. Statistics on staff ethnicity, gender and disabilities are recorded and analysed. Of the 114 staff, there are 63 men, 51 per cent of managers are women, 110 are white and three have a disability. Details of ethnicity or disability are recorded on applicants who are interviewed for staff posts.

21. At first point of contact, employers sign an agreement which includes details of equal opportunities. After an initial discussion when assessors visit the workplace, there is little discussion with some employers about equal opportunities, apart from quarterly reviews for learners.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

22. Taurus Training has developed processes for quality assuring most aspects of the learner's experience. However, there are few procedures for assuring the quality of learning in the workplace. Most areas of learning have satisfactory arrangements for internal verification, with interim and final verification of portfolios and assessments. However, in care and horticulture, where internal verification is subcontracted, the process is weak. Clear feedback is given to assessors, and areas for development and staff training are identified. A team of internal auditors check learner's files to ensure accuracy in completion of paperwork. A recently introduced system for managers and coordinators to monitor the content of progress reviews is starting to deal with problems relating to quality. However, this is not being systematically applied. In sport, inspectors identified progress review documents which contained identical comments over long periods of time. The system has not identified this or dealt with it. There is little quality assurance of most of the activities carried out by trainers. Inspectors identified inconsistencies in the time, content and quality of induction, the target-setting process, employers' involvement in progress reviews and the coaching and training for learners. A recently developed process to observe trainers has been piloted in one area of learning, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of these observations on the quality of learning. There is insufficient quality assurance of processes which are carried out by the employer, in particular on-the-job training and support. When monitoring does take place it is informal and unrecorded.

23. There is particularly good participation by staff in the self-assessment process. All staff assess their area every three months and produce a development plan. The monitoring of these development plans by the quality assurance manager is effective. Inspectors identified many of the strengths which were identified in the self-assessment report, but some of the weaknesses had not been recognised by Taurus Training. In the most recent self-assessment report, there is little use of data to make judgements. Learners' feedback is collected at the beginning, during, and at the end of their programmes through a well-written questionnaire. Employers' feedback is collected each quarter as part of the health and safety monitoring visits. A detailed analysis is produced, but this has not yet been used as a basis for improving programmes. The managing director maintains a file of complaints from learners. Taurus Training is proactive in identifying where learners may have problems and invites them to pursue these through the complaints procedure. They are then followed up in a positive and effective way.

Good Practice

Each question on the learner's questionnaires has been cross-referenced to the quality assurance statements in the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Every quarter the questionnaires are evaluated and bar charts are produced for each co-ordinator. In one area, it was identified that assessment was scoring a low response rate from the questionnaires. A more detailed analysis showed that there were problems with the written feedback from assessors and their comments about how learners could improve the quality of work. Co-ordinators then use these very detailed reports and analysis to assist with improving their development planning.

Taurus Training has introduced a system for employers to receive vouchers based on learners who start, achieve NVQs and key skills and complete learning programmes. These can be redeemed against future Taurus Training courses for the employer's staff. Employers find this particularly motivating. Many are hoping to use the vouchers towards first aid, food hygiene and management training courses.

An example of very good identification of barriers to learning, related to equal opportunities during assessment planning and reviews, was observed in the care occupational area.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	93	3

24. Taurus Training started to offer the NVQ level 1 in amenity horticulture in 2001. There are 93 learners, 68 of whom are currently in training, and 25 are being monitored by staff to determine if they are continuing on the programme. None of the learners are employed. The vocational co-ordinator and the positive action co-ordinator recruit learners either directly or through referrals from Connexions. Horticulture training takes place at four centres on the Wirral. There is a training centre at Moreton which is used for off-the-job training. Practical training is carried out in the grounds of a hotel and golf course, a garden centre and a non-league football club. Facilities include flower gardens, lawned areas, hard landscaping areas, a nursery and a sports pitch. Other opportunities exist for practical work in local community regeneration projects. There are four full-time assessors. A full-time workplace supervisor gives additional support for practical work. An induction programme covering health and safety, equal opportunities, first aid awareness and an introduction to NVQ assessment takes place during the first week of training. All learners attend off-the-job training for at least two and half days a week. Learners can start their training at any time of the year and assessments take place in the workplace or at the training centre. Most learners have additional learning and/or social needs and a learning support tutor visits the training centre to give individual or group tutorials each week. Training is scheduled to last for one year.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	48		118													
Retained*	0		29														
Successfully completed	0		29														
Still in learning	46		47														

*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 development of practical skills
- good awareness of health and safety by learners
- good levels of support to meet individual learning needs

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate internal verification
- slow progress towards NVQ achievement

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better understanding of NVQ programme by learners
- better use of workplace evidence in portfolios
- more constructive assessment feedback to learners
- better exit guidance for learners

25. Learners develop good practical skills. They are well motivated in work situations and have a good understanding of the skills required for the work they are doing. Learners are able to recall in good detail the procedures for laying turf and planting out. Some learners have gained full employment in related jobs. Tutors work with learners individually and allow them to join at any time throughout the year. Two new learners joined the programme during inspection.

26. Throughout learning, health and safety is continuously promoted and reinforced. Learners have a good recollection of health and safety and are able to take a simple risk assessment and identify hazards during practical activities. All learners understand the importance of wearing the correct personal protective equipment. Health and safety is reviewed regularly during practical activities.

27. All tutors have recognised assessors' qualifications and two members of staff have just gained the internal verifier qualification. Tutors have good industrial experience and are good role models. Background knowledge sessions and practical teaching are satisfactory. Handouts support the background knowledge sessions, and the tutor uses real materials to demonstrate techniques to the learners in these sessions. Three tutors are working towards a more advanced level of technical qualifications. Learners gain experience at a hotel and golf club, nursery, a football club and on local community projects. Opportunities cover all the requirements of the training programme. Short-term work placements in local businesses are offered to some learners.

TAURUS TRAINING

28. There is good additional learning support. Learners are given an initial assessment of their social needs and literacy and numeracy skills, and the results are used to identify additional learning and social needs. Most learners have additional learning and/or social needs and these needs have been met to a good standard. Horticultural tutors work with the learning support tutor to identify individual needs. Tutors work closely with learners to help them develop their social abilities and break down barriers to learning. The learning support tutor meets learners individually and in small groups each week. Tutors make alternative arrangements to collect at-risk learners from their homes. There are clear records of additional learning support. However, feedback is tutor-led and learner records have insufficient detail and specific targets for improvement. Exit guidance for learners is variable and does not fully inform them of progression opportunities.

29. Internal verification is inadequate and Taurus Training has identified this and has taken recent action. A newly appointed internal verifier spends one day a week carrying out 100 per cent sampling to comply with external verifier requirements. This change to arrangements started two weeks before the inspection. Taurus Training's staff appreciate the additional support that they are given by the internal verifier. An internal verification monitoring plan has been produced and is being used. Portfolios of evidence are clearly laid out and are produced to a satisfactory standard. They include written work, verbal knowledge tests, observation of performance sheets and records of oral assessments. Wider opportunities to gather workplace evidence are not taken.

30. Slow progress is made towards targets. Most of the learners who are over half way through their training programme have not achieved complete units of the NVQ. Individual learning plans have been completed for all learners, but target dates relate to the end of the training programme. Poor attention is paid to individual's abilities at the start of the training to set relevant targets. Most of the individual learning plans are designed to meet contractual requirements rather than the needs of individual learners. The initial assessment process identifies additional learning needs. Progress reviews take place every month and involve the learners and tutors. However, they are not used effectively to set meaningful targets for learners and tutors to follow. The assessment process is planned by individual tutors using standard documents. For most learners, the assessment plans are poorly completed and do not give sufficient feedback.

31. Retention rates are 64 per cent for 2001 and have improved for 2002 with 96 per cent still in learning. There is insufficient understanding of the use of targets as a basis for planning. The training centre has recently installed e-mail to improve communication between the Liverpool offices. The vocational co-ordinator attends a monthly management meeting to discuss quality assurance, health and safety and equality of opportunity.

32. Physical resources are satisfactory. The vocational manager is able to purchase additional tools and equipment to meet increased demand. A satisfactory range of workplaces including a plant nursery, gardens, sports pitch and training centre are

appropriate for developing skills to NVQ level 1. There are suitable storage facilities for tools and equipment, and essential health and safety equipment is to a good standard. Two minibuses have been purchased to transport learners to workplaces. There are a number of books available at the training centre, but they are not widely used in learning and some are not up to date.

33. Inspectors identified many of the strengths and weaknesses which were identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors noted the additional weakness of slow progress.

Good Practice

One learner is under threat from intimidation in his neighbourhood and Taurus collect him and take him home each day so that he is able to attend the training. The learner has gained more confidence and appreciates the support he is receiving from the tutors.

Construction**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	130	3

34. There are 130 learners on construction programmes, of whom 34 are advanced modern apprentices, 69 are foundation modern apprentices and 27 are on NVQ training at level 1. Modern apprentices who are already employed before introduction to Taurus Training carry out all training and assessment in the workplace and work towards NVQs at level 2 or 3 in glazing. Modern apprentices also have key skills assessed in the workplace. Employers are mainly installers of windows, doors and conservatories. Some employers also manufacture and assemble glazing products. NVQ learners attend a training centre in the Wirral for five days a week and work towards a level 1 NVQ in construction. All learners on level 1 programmes have additional learning and/social needs. None of the modern apprentices are given additional support. Training, assessment and progress reviews are carried out by one of nine assessors who cover the north of England. Four assessors are also qualified as internal verifiers.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	6		26		3		7		1						
Retained*	0		1		0		3		1	100						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		0		1	100						
Still in learning	6		24		2		2		0	0						

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	19		57		5		4										
Retained*	0		11		2	40	2	50									
Successfully completed	0		5		2	40	2	50									
Still in learning	19		50		0	0	0	0									

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
NVQ Training																	
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	33		228		57		12										
Retained*	3		97	43	51	89	12	100									
Successfully completed	3		95	42	32	56	11	92									
Still in learning	13		14	6	0	0	0	0									

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

STRENGTHS

- good standard of learners' work on level 1 programmes
- good assessment practice
- good use of progress reviews to support learning

WEAKNESSES

- weak initial assessment process
- poor arrangements for the development of key skills

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better understanding of NVQs by employers
- better accommodation at training centre

35. Level 1 learners at the training centre benefit from good teaching. All learners have

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additional learning and/or social needs and teachers use anecdotes and humour to maintain learners' interest and to reinforce important points without becoming repetitive. Good examples were used to illustrate the benefit of accurate measuring and levelling.

36. Learners have good portfolios of evidence which are well structured and have reference to work in the training centre and projects in the community. The benefit of additional support is evident when looking at the recent written work of learners compared with their work at the beginning of the course. Some of the accommodation at the training centre is not conducive to learning. There is no permanent heating in some classrooms and work areas and the communal rest areas for learners are poorly decorated and untidy, with few facilities.

37. Good assessment is carried out by observation of learners' activities in the workplace. Visits to modern apprentices are frequent and employers set time aside for training and assessment. Assessors have a good knowledge of the standards and maximise learners' activities by cross referencing jobs to relevant NVQ units. Level 3 learners keep detailed diaries and carry out projects between visits so that assessors are able to monitor activities and request further evidence to assess competence. Good guidance on the selection of optional units is given which allows learners to choose activities to match their job role and their aims in the industry. Learners' portfolios are detailed and contain photographs, witness testimonies and letters from customers.

38. Progress reviews are frequent and thorough. Discussions focus on what learners have achieved since the last visit and result in short- and long-term targets for the future. An assessor and learner had a detailed discussion on how the learner can provide evidence for a management unit on the NVQ level 3. The learner realised he was already carrying out many of the activities and needed only to formally record his activities and obtain a testimony from his manager. Reviews involve employers and often end in a request for a learner to try a new activity to match the NVQ requirements. Requests are met sympathetically, but the employers generally do not have sufficient knowledge of the NVQ to be able to plan activities without the guidance of an assessor. This does not allow the learner to take advantages of useful tasks as they occur. Pastoral issues are also explored during reviews, and this allows learners to raise problems they may not be comfortable discussing with their employer. Separate, more detailed reviews are carried out for learners who have additional learning or social needs.

39. The number of learners enrolling on glazing installation programmes has increased over the past two years. Of the 36 advanced modern apprentices who started over the past two years, 34 are still in learning. Of the 76 foundation modern apprentices, 68 are still in learning.

40. The initial assessment process is weak. Learners start on a foundation or advanced modern apprenticeship on the basis of a discussion about their ambition and the subsequent interpretation of the assessor. Little account is taken of learners' ability to read or write, or their mathematical ability. One employer discovered that a learner had

very poor reading and writing skills and was having difficulty with his portfolio. The employer gave good support and helped the learner to produce evidence. This was not acknowledged in the learning plan and the problem had not been identified by Taurus Training.

41. The key skills training is unsatisfactory for construction modern apprentices. Initial assessment is based on a conversation with the learner about their abilities. This is recorded on a tick sheet and accepted as proof of competence. Employers have little or no knowledge of key skills and opportunities to help learners produce evidence during everyday activities are not taken. The assessments primarily focus on vocational performance and do not acknowledge key skills as they occur. Installers of glazing products frequently deal with householders' requests and complaints and have ample opportunity to produce evidence for dealing with measurement and costing work.

42. Inspectors noted many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report and saw an additional strength in the high standards of learners' work at level 1. They saw weak initial assessment as an additional weakness.

Good Practice

Learners were asked to estimate amounts of materials needed for a job and to guess whether walls were level and square. Their estimations were recorded and later compared using the correct instruments. Their mistakes effectively showed the importance of using the right equipment.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	574	3

43. Taurus Training offers qualifications in glass processing, production, installation, maintenance and performing manufacturing operations. There is provision in the Northeast, the Northwest, Yorkshire and the Midlands. There are currently 245 advanced modern apprentices and 329 foundation modern apprentices. Training is carried out in the workplace by experienced supervisors. All modern apprentices are employed. A team of 19 vocationally experienced assessors visit the learners to review progress, to help build portfolios and to carry out observations in the workplace. They also teach background knowledge for the technical qualification and for key skills. Twenty of the 574 learners were referred by Connexions, and all other learners were recruited by their employers. The provider's work-development officers arrange the initial signing up of learners and the assessors complete the process by identifying appropriate programmes and setting up individual learning plans. Any additional learning or social needs are identified through the assessor and the progress review process over the first three months. Staff support includes a vocational co-ordinator, internal verifiers and two managers.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	51		227		70		51		23							
Retained*	0		21		14		23		14								
Successfully completed	0		7		8		15		7								
Still in learning	51		162		19		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		1998-99								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	110		321		51		26		9							
Retained*	4		69		24		14	54	2	22							
Successfully completed	2		35		20		12	46	2	22							
Still in learning	106		222		1		0	0	0	0							

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

STRENGTHS

- good workplaces
- good progress review system
- good assessment practice
- flexible and practical support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- ineffective initial assessment
- insufficient understanding of key skills by learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more memorable initial induction
- more ownership of programme by learners

44. Learners are employed in a range of companies across the regions. Managers and staff are very supportive of the learners who are trained by experienced supervisors and given increasing responsibility to work on their own. They quickly become part of the production team working to production schedules. Managers are also willing to allow their learners to spend appropriate time with their assessors and to move learners around to ensure a breadth of experience. Workplaces are generally well maintained with good modern machinery. Increasingly, Taurus Training are negotiating with larger employers to provide training centres where the off-the-job training can take place in a quieter environment for learning. Taurus Training has agreed to provide computers to

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support this activity.

45. A comprehensive review document is used for all formal contact with learners. It sets out the details of the framework, the units being taken and how far the learner has progressed. It gives a good and instant view of progress. This is fed into the management system each week, which gives managers an overall view of learners' progress. The assessors who carry out the reviews and assessments complete the documents and give good feedback to the learner. There are clear, short-term targets for action before the next visit. Visits are generally every fortnight and sometimes every week. Although the employer does not get involved in the review interview, they are asked to read the results and add any comments before signing them. The assessors are prepared to spend significant time on the process. There is a sequence of questions, which are intended to promote discussion on many issues such as health and safety and equal opportunities.

46. All assessors have considerable experience in the industry and go through planned development for assessors' qualifications. They have regular skills assessment where they are observed while assessing. The external verifier is also involved in this process. This is supplemented with other training such as health and safety and equal opportunities. During every other visit to the workplace the assessor observes the learner working. The observation is set up on a previous visit and employers ensure that the work to be observed remains available. Assessors spend an appropriate amount of time discreetly watching the learner working on a production line job. Assessors take care not to interfere in the process, but ask questions during and after the observation to check understanding. Before and after the observation, the assessor works through the standards with the learner to match the evidence to appropriate units of the NVQ. There is a comprehensive internal verification system, which is well supported by the external verifier.

47. Most learners are recruited by employers although Taurus Training is able to find employers for learners referred by Connexions. Learners can start at any time of the year and there is a range of qualifications to suit employers' and learners' needs. The assessors visit frequently and the visits can take place in the evenings or weekends to meet shift patterns. All contact on key skills and background knowledge is on an individual basis and there is a mature, business-like relationship between the learner and assessor. Similarly, there are good relationships between the learners and their employers. There is evidence of good pastoral support such as home visits during prolonged sickness.

48. The assessors carry out initial induction in the workplace. The induction is carried out in a series of short sessions during the first three months of the programme. The time spent on the initial induction varies, and many learners' recall is of little more than an introduction to the qualification.

49. Achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices for the years 1998-99 to 1999-2000 are 30 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively. Similarly, for foundation modern

apprenticeships for 1998-99 to 2001-02, the achievement rates are 21 per cent to 54 per cent. Even if all those still in learning for those periods were to complete the modern apprenticeship, the achievement rates could only be a maximum of 48 per cent. Retention rates for advanced modern apprentices for the years 1998-99 to 1999-2000 are 61 per cent and 45 per cent respectively. Similarly, for foundation modern apprentices for 1998-99 to 2001-02 the retention rates are 21 per cent to 54 per cent. This is satisfactory considering the large numbers of learners who have yet to reach the intended completion date. Currently, 58 learners are past the apprenticeship's completion date and many more are due to complete it in 2003. This is a programme which only effectively started in 1998, but during the past three years has seen a significant increase in numbers. Most of these learners are already employed in the industry, often for many years. In this industry, which has a high staff turnover, the workforce is increasingly recognising the value of formal qualifications. They are encouraged, but not compelled, by their employers to participate and since they are well established in the industry they are likely to stay in learning. There has been a considerable increase in staff to match the growth of learners, including one with responsibility to improve the retention and achievement rates. Most learners who stay to the end of the planned duration of the modern apprenticeship programme complete the framework.

50. Initial assessment is ineffective. There is no structured assessment of basic skills. There is guided self-assessment, but learners and some assessors struggle with some of the language used in the questionnaire. Workplace development officers carry out an initial sign up and then assessors complete the process by deciding with the employer which qualification to take. There is evidence that much of the information gathered is not actually used to make decisions. Academic qualifications are sometimes not recorded accurately, although there is some evidence of accreditation of prior experience for key skills. The decision on level and type of course rests solely on the length of experience and type of job in the industry. There are examples of learners with inappropriate levels of academic qualification who have started a level 2 programme.

51. The learners' understanding of key skills and what is required of them varies. They are introduced to key skills by a subjective assessment early in the programme, but in many cases, key skills are not completed until after they finish their NVQ. In some of the larger companies, training centres with computer equipment are being established. The introduction of laptops which assessors take into the workplace to enable learners to work on their key skills is not yet complete. The learners do not show the same depth of knowledge and understanding of key skills as they do for the vocational skills. The need for further development of staff and more resources are recognised in the self-assessment report.

52. Some learners are unclear of the programmes they are on, what is required of them and where they are in the programme. Portfolios are well structured and are considered satisfactory. However, there is little individualisation and sense of ownership. Many learners do not have their portfolios with them when they are interviewed in the

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workplace.

53. The self-assessment report accurately reflects a number of strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. It did not recognise the poor achievement rates and weak initial assessment, but partially recognised the strength of good workplaces.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	114	3

54. Taurus Training offers business administration to 114 learners, 34 of whom are advanced modern apprentices and 80 are foundation modern apprentices. None of the learners in business administration are identified as having additional learning needs, but three learners have a disability. All learners are employed at the start of their training. Learners are recruited through Taurus Training's workplace development officers or by direct application from learners, and they can start at any time of the year. The recruitment process starts with an initial interview by Taurus Training's assessor. All learners then have an induction in the workplace which involves several activities and can take up to three months to complete. During the induction process, learners have an initial assessment relating to key skills and also a job scan. Assessors visit learners in the workplace at least once a month to carry out workplace assessments, and progress reviews are completed at each visit. Off-the-job training takes place 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		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	9		40		34		30		7		4				
Retained*	0		2		14		19		5	71	3	75				
Successfully completed	0		2		9		19		0	0	3	75				
Still in learning	9		12		9		4		0	0	0	0				

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	25		61		23		3		3		4				
Retained*	1		19		14		2	67	2	67	3	75				
Successfully completed	1		8		4		2	67	2	67	3	75				
Still in learning	24		47		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

STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good workplaces

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient use of initial assessment results
- some poor assessment practice

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of updated key skills task books

55. Assessors in business administration visit learners in the workplace at least once a month and in many cases, visits are made fortnightly. Detailed progress review documents are completed at every visit and include standard questions relating to equal opportunities and to aspects of health and safety. Employers are involved in the progress reviews and are invited to make comments on learners' progress and competence on the review sheets. The learner and the employer keep individual copies of the review sheets. As part of the progress review process the assessor agrees detailed, short-term action points with each learner and they are recorded for use at the next visit. The induction includes an evaluation of the learners' key skills levels to identify their support needs. However, basic skills needs are not identified at this stage. Learners are given useful information relating to websites and are encouraged to use the Internet for research. If some of the learners do not have the use of a computer, particularly with Internet access, assessors have laptop computers which can be used to help these learners in the workplace. Learners and employers appreciate this flexible

approach for supporting learners' needs.

56. Advanced and foundation modern apprentices are employed from the start of their programmes. Employers are very supportive of their learners and provide frequent opportunities to collect evidence for their qualifications. Many learners are given the opportunity to take additional responsibility in their jobs and some learners have been promoted into supervisory positions at the end of their training period. Some of the foundation modern apprentices have been encouraged by their employers to progress from NVQ level 2 to level 3 and work towards an advanced modern apprenticeship. Workplace supervisors and managers value the qualifications achieved by learners, not only as being relevant to their job, but also as a foundation for further development in the company. Some employers have encouraged learners to attend additional training programmes to expand their capabilities to the benefit of both parties. As an integral part of this good workplace support, good relationships have been built between the employers and the visiting assessors from Taurus Training. There is some good communication between assessors, employers and learners about progress reviews and the support needed by learners. Retention and achievement rates in business administration, management and professional are satisfactory.

57. The written feedback which is given to learners after assessment is poor and does not contain enough detail to enable the learner to improve their performance. The evidence in learners' portfolios is not sufficiently diverse and little use is made of assessments or professional discussion. Learners do not produce detailed personal statements to explain their evidence or to claim competence. The short-term targets agreed at progress reviews are not sufficiently challenging for many learners and the evidence in some portfolios is minimal. Some of the evidence examined by inspectors contained significant spelling and grammatical errors, which were not identified at the time of assessment. There is little differentiation in the form, the quantity and the quality of the evidence between NVQ level 2 and level 3 portfolios. There is little evidence of detailed assessment planning taking place, such as for observations. Some learners make slow progress towards achieving their apprenticeship framework. For example, some of the foundation modern apprentices have been training for up to nine months and have only achieved one or two units to date.

58. The results of initial assessment are not used as a basis for constructing the individual learning plans. One learner has three A levels and previous work experience, but was placed on a foundation modern apprenticeship. Another learner who is in her first job after school, is working as a junior receptionist but has been placed on an advanced modern apprenticeship. Some learners who have achieved GCSEs at grades C or above in English and mathematics are not given the option of claiming concessions for key skills units at levels 1 and 2. One learner has already achieved application of number at level 3, but is working towards it again.

59. Taurus Training has recently updated and further developed task books which give good advice on evidence collection for key skills. The books also give good guidance on the links between the NVQ and the key skills. However, the task books are new,

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have only recently been distributed to learners, and as yet have not had enough time to make a significant impact on the collection or presentation of key skills evidence. The self-assessment report identified some of the strengths identified by inspectors, but not the weaknesses.

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	13	3

60. Taurus Training offers information and communication technology (ICT) training programmes at NVQ levels 2 and 3 for 13 learners. There are three advanced modern apprentices and 10 foundation modern apprentices, four of whom are men. Eight per cent of learners are from a minority ethnic group, there are no learners identified as having additional learning or social needs and none of the learners have a disability. All learners are employed. Learners are recruited by referrals from employers, through marketing activities or through Connexions 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 have an induction on their employer's premises. Assessors visit learners in the workplace every fortnight to carry out workplace assessments and portfolio reviews. Progress reviews are carried out every fortnight.

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	3				1											
Retained*	1				1												
Successfully completed	0				0												
Still in learning	2				1												

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

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	3		15		1											
Retained*	0		3		1	100											
Successfully completed	0		1		1	100											
Still in learning	3		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

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STRENGTHS

- good integration of key skills with vocational training
- very good support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- some weak assessment practice
- weak long-term target-setting for learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater involvement in the NVQ process by employers
- further reinforcement of induction content

61. There is good integration of key skills with the vocational training. When learners have completed a unit of their qualification, they examine the evidence to identify which part of the key skills standards it matches. The use of a task book, which clearly explains the various aspects of key skills, the type of evidence that will match the criteria and how NVQ evidence is integrated with the key skill framework, is used to help the learner with this process. As each unit is achieved, the relevant pieces of evidence are matched against the key skill standard. This process ensures that learners understand the relationship between work-based evidence for the NVQ and the relevant level of key skills qualification being pursued. Work-related assignments are also used to support work-based evidence through researching, identifying and compiling reports on an agreed subject matter. The learner then prepares a presentation of the evidence which includes overhead transparencies and handouts.

62. Learners are given very good support by their employers and their assessors. Workplaces are carefully assessed by the provider's staff using an occupationally based jobscan checklist at the appropriate NVQ level. This is to confirm the range of duties and tasks the learners will be responsible for and whether the requirements of the qualification can be met. The workplaces offer good work experience and employers offer learners additional learning opportunities by allowing them to cover staff absences for short periods of time. Many employers support learners to broaden their learning experience through studying for additional qualifications like accounting, insurance and medically related qualifications. Personal, short-term action-planning ensures the learner is aware of what work they need to complete by the time of the next visit and the results of the subsequent progress review are shared with the employer. However, employers are insufficiently involved in the actual action-planning process and they are unaware of potential assessment requirements which would help learners progress. Positive support

is offered by the provider's staff to learners who are experiencing problems, and additional visits are arranged when progress is slow. Learners do not always have a computer to allow access to information supplied by the employer on disk. When this happens, the provider's staff arrange to bring in a laptop computer for the learner to carry out the tasks during the visit. The provider offers additional courses in health and safety and first aid and many learners are encouraged by their employer to take advantage of this opportunity to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

63. The assessment practice is weak in this area. During observations, assessors concentrate on the specific elements of the qualification which have been identified during the planning of the assessment. When the learner becomes involved in other office tasks as a result of requests from colleagues, the actions are not followed up and noted as part of the observation. Opportunities to gather evidence for other units and elements of the NVQ are not taken. Assessors have a preference for workplace observations and make little use of witness testimony and professional discussion to enhance and extend the portfolio evidence. When professional discussion is used, it is in the form of a hand-written summary of what the learner has said and not as a verbatim report of the discussion. Portfolio evidence contains a number of spelling mistakes which have not been corrected by the assessor. In some instances, written observation reports by assessors contain grammatical errors. Portfolios of evidence are mostly neat and well presented.

64. There are no challenging targets for learners. Learners are not encouraged to focus on the broader picture of the NVQ, but to concentrate on individual elements and units. They do not have a clear idea of what they need to achieve to complete their qualification and have unrealistic views on how long it will take them. Many learners who have been training for over seven months, have only achieved one or two units of the NVQ. For foundation modern apprentices, 43 per cent of learners who started in 2001-02 have exceeded their target achievement date, but have yet to achieve the NVQ. For advanced modern apprentices, 67 per cent of learners have also exceeded their target achievement date and have yet to achieve the NVQ. Assessors make arrangements to increase the frequency of their visits to the learner, but this is often towards the end of the learners' period of training. Learners are encouraged to remain on the programme beyond their target achievement date and they continue to receive support and guidance from their assessor.

65. Employers are not given details of the NVQ so they can help the assessor plan appropriate and relevant observation in the workplace. Assessment opportunities may exist outside of the learners' immediate area of work and are not used by the assessor. There is insufficient reinforcement of induction content to check learners' knowledge, understanding and retention of the topics.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	314	4

66. There are 314 learners on work-based learning programmes in retail operations, customer service and distribution and warehousing operations. There are 243 foundation modern apprentices, 65 advanced modern apprentices and six learners on NVQ programmes. All learners are employed at the start of their programme. Employers include large national companies, small independent companies and franchised businesses. Learners are recruited onto Taurus Training's programmes through their employers. Taurus Training's staff contact employers to introduce and promote the programmes available. Learners can join the programmes at any time. Taurus Training's assessors carry out the learner's induction in the workplace during the first three months of the programme. All learning takes place in the workplace. Assessors visit learners in the workplace every one to three weeks, depending on the individual learner's needs. During these visits, the assessors carry out training, assessments, progress reviews and short-term action-planning. There are eight full-time assessors who are occupationally experienced and have gained, or are working towards, assessor and internal verification qualifications.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	9		117		56		31		32		8				
Retained*	0		23		12		10		21	66	7	88				
Successfully completed	0		15		8		6		8	25	1	12				
Still in learning	9		46		8		2		0	0	0	0				

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

Work-based learning for young people																
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	79		323		62		31		15							
Retained*	0		91		31		19		5	33						
Successfully completed	0		52		18		14		2	13						
Still in learning	78		153		9		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

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	3		4				6									
Retained*	0		1				5	83								
Successfully completed	0		1				5	83								
Still in learning	3		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 individual support for learners
- frequent and effective progress reviews

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective initial assessment
- poor use of individual learning plans
- poor achievement rates for modern apprentices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater involvement in the NVQ process by employers
- wider range of learning materials

67. Learners are given good individual support by assessors, and this strength was partly

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recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners are visited in the workplace by their assessors every one to three weeks depending on the individual learner's needs. When learners would benefit, visits take place outside normal working hours such as early mornings, late evenings and at weekends. Learners are aware that they can request extra support if they need it, and some learners do so. Assessors offer individual support for those learners who have identified basic skills needs. Learners are given the mobile telephone number of their assessor and are encouraged to telephone at any time for advice or guidance. Learners value their relationship with the assessor, and there is a good rapport between them. One assessor made arrangements for a learner to sit the key skills test in the workplace after hearing that the learner was worried about travelling into the city centre. Another learner stated that he stayed on his training programme and achieved his learning aim due to the good support given by his assessor. When learners move to new employers or a different work site, assessors monitor their employment to ensure that they complete the learning programme.

68. There are frequent and effective progress reviews, but this strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. Formal progress reviews are carried out as part of every assessor visit and involve the learner, the assessor, and the workplace supervisor in most cases. Progress is discussed in relation to the learner's NVQ and key skills and recorded on the review document. The effectiveness of the progress reviews is enhanced by good employer awareness of their learner's progress. Assessors negotiate challenging short-term targets with learners, which are then recorded on the progress review document and revisited during the next review. The learner and the employer are given a copy of the progress reviews, which are thorough, and the paperwork involved is comprehensive. As part of the review, the learner and assessor discuss health and safety and equal opportunities issues. Internal verification is also discussed, and dates are carefully recorded for interim and final verification.

69. The initial assessment process is ineffective and does not identify learners' support needs. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Historically, Taurus Training has not tested learners' basic skills. It has been left to the assessor to identify basic skills needs by asking specific and closed questions and by completing a checklist which matches the learner's job role to the NVQ and key skills requirements. A diagnostic tool is in the process of being introduced, but has yet to impact on current learners. Some learners have been incorrectly identified as having no basic skills needs, but weaknesses have been subsequently identified by the employer or assessor during training or assessment. Initial assessment is not used to plan the training or to set individual targets.

70. Individual capabilities of learners are not taken into account and initial assessment is not used as the basis for constructing the individual learning plan. Learners who have prior experience or prior learning are not given more challenging long-term targets. Some learners do not have individual learning plans in their portfolios, and most are not updated throughout the learning period. Individual learning plans in some portfolios do not include all the details of the modern apprenticeship and many do not include the learner's choice of optional units.

71. Achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices were poor for the years 1997-99 at 13 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. The potential achievement rates for the next two years show little signs of improvement at 26 per cent and 29 per cent if all learners who remain on programme actually achieve the modern apprenticeship framework. There are still significant numbers of learners on programme who have started in the past two years. Retention rates for advanced modern apprentices are declining, although learners who are retained on the programme are achieving their learning aims. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices are more satisfactory, but achievement rates are still historically weak. For 1998-99 starters, the full framework achievement rate was 13 per cent, but potential achievement rates for the subsequent two years could improve to 45 and 55 per cent if all learners complete the full framework. As with advanced modern apprentices, there are very significant numbers of learners still in learning. While the number of NVQ learners are small, the achievement and retention rates are good at 83.3 per cent for learners who started in 1999-2000. All learners who were retained achieved their learning aim.

72. Although communication between employers and assessors is generally satisfactory, training is not always well co-ordinated. Some employers are unaware of the content of the training programmes, and the on-the-job training needed by learners to complete their NVQ is usually requested by learners. Some learners do not fully use the employer's training and activities as evidence for the NVQ. Learners are encouraged to identify evidence from the workplace, and take responsibility for building their own portfolio. However some learners are not fully supported in this by their employers.

73. Learners are given a welcome pack as part of the induction process. It introduces learners to the modern apprenticeship framework, and gives information on the NVQ and key skills. Learners answer written questions on background knowledge relating to specific NVQ units. There are no other learning materials available for learners. Taurus Training are currently introducing and developing new learning materials, but they have yet to impact on learners.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	599	4

74. Taurus Training offers programmes in sport and hospitality. There are 599 learners. The foundation modern apprentices in sport are either in operational services or coaching, teaching and instruction. All foundation modern apprentices in sport complete three-months' skills training before beginning a work placement. The five advanced modern apprentices in sport are working towards an NVQ in operational services. The 'positive action' programme is an introduction to sport and recreation and is aimed at very 'hard to help' young people. Many learners progress to the foundation modern apprenticeship. Sport learners receive training at one of the seven training centres. Hospitality learners receive training on the job and have regular progress review visits from assessors. Most sport learners are referred to the provider by Connexions and can join at any time of the year. In hospitality, all learners are recruited directly by employers and work in a wide range of workplaces including large multi-national hotels, national and independent public houses, and cafeterias. Learners on both programmes are expected to achieve the modern apprenticeship framework within a 12-18 month period. Most sport learners are aged between 16 and 17 at the start of the foundation programme. All learners have an induction which includes health and safety, equal opportunities and the requirements of their programme. 'Positive action' learners who are identified as having literacy and numeracy needs at induction are given additional basic skills support. All modern apprentices in sport are assessed for basic skills and key skills needs. Seventeen qualified tutors from Taurus Training provide weekly support to the learners at their training venue.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		136		102		101		17						
Retained*	0		9		29		13		4	24						
Successfully completed	0		4		7		3		2	12						
Still in learning	2		99		22		2		0	0						

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	160		293		249		65		16							
Retained*	1		63		80		11		3	19						
Successfully completed	1		54		50		6		1	6						
Still in learning	157		180		10		1		0	0						

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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	137		472		284		275									
Retained*	0		283		226	80	244	89								
Successfully completed	0		251		223	79	238	87								
Still in learning	109		17		0	0	0	0								

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

STRENGTHS

- good arrangements for learning and support
- good integration of key skills with vocational training
- good workplaces in hospitality

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks
- some weak assessment practice
- ineffective initial assessment of key skills in hospitality
- insufficient additional learning materials to support independent study in sport
- slow allocation of work placements for foundation modern apprentices in sport

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better co-ordination and recording of employers' training in hospitality

75. Learners on all programmes are well supported. There are frequent and flexible progress reviews and visits by assessors on all programmes. Hospitality assessors normally visit learners every two weeks and occasionally more frequently. Visits are arranged out of normal working times to suit learners' working shifts. All 'positive action' learners are assessed for additional needs. On the sport programmes, very significant numbers of learners have been given additional learning support and have been supported with their identified social needs. Employers attend progress reviews for learners on work placement and at work, and are very supportive of the programme and of the standard of training. All foundation modern apprentices in sport attend a well-structured three-month skills development programme before starting on work placements. Staff are well supported and have access to teaching materials through the staff intranet. Sport staff use a common tutor pack, which ensures consistency of information and provides staff with good base material. Hospitality learners have well-presented portfolios with a satisfactory range of evidence. Assessors effectively coach learners during visits to develop skills and knowledge. Recently developed learning materials are used to support on-the-job learning, including basic skills and key skills. All learners have a good understanding of their programmes and assessors clearly explain the programmes at induction.

76. Key skills are introduced early into training programmes. Key skills have been clearly matched against the performance criteria for the NVQs. The collection of key skills evidence is directly related to the collection of evidence for the NVQ. Assignments for the NVQ are also used to provide contextualised evidence for key skills. In hospitality, assignments covering sales and profit margins are used to gather evidence for application of number. All learners are very aware of the requirements of key skills. Many learners commented that they see key skills as an important and integrated part of the programme.

77. Modern apprentices are employed in good workplaces which are effective in helping to develop their careers. Employers are very supportive of the learners programme. Line managers often attend progress reviews and they have a good understanding of the programme and progress of the learner. Employers provide a wide range of work activities and learning opportunities in order for the learner to develop confidence and competence. For example, employers allow learners to develop skills in cellar work and line cleaning which is not part of their normal job role, but which they require to complete optional units of the NVQ. Employers provide training, some of which is formal, structured and competence based. However, much of the training is informal and is not recorded. There is effective communication between employers and Taurus Training's staff between visits to discuss problems and to plan future visits.

78. In hospitality, completion rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks are poor. For advanced modern apprentices, achievement rates have been between 3 and 7 per cent between 1999-01. On the foundation programme, the achievement rates were 9 per cent in 1999, 19 per cent in 2000 and 9 per cent in 2001. There are signs of improving retention rates. Of the 132 advanced modern apprentices who started their programme in 2001, four have completed the framework and 97 are still in learning. On the foundation programme, 172 started, 16 have completed the framework and 112 are still in learning. Retention and achievement rates for sport advanced modern apprentices are poor. Only one advanced modern apprentice has completed the framework out of 23 starts between 2000 and 2002, and five learners are still in learning. In 2001-02, only 32 per cent of the foundation modern apprentices completed all aspects of the framework. A further 36 per cent of learners are still in learning. Only 21 per cent completed the framework the previous year. Retention rates for both framework programmes have been poor, but are improving. The management of the training and assessment of both programmes was brought back in-house in March 2002 and this has improved the retention rates. Retention and achievement rates for the NVQ level 1 programme are good. The learners targeted for this programme are particularly difficult to retain as many are from a background of unemployment and find the discipline of attending a programme very difficult.

79. The initial assessment of key skills in hospitality is ineffective. Learners in employment are asked to complete a checklist to identify if they are competent in the key skills. If there is a negative answer they are informed that an additional test will be used to identify their specific support needs. If the learner answers positively there is no additional check or follow-up to confirm the level of the learners' understanding. Questions do not encourage the learner to recognise skills gained in previous employment. Assessment is based on the learners' judgement of their ability to carry out a task related to key skills.

80. There are some poor assessment practices in hospitality and sport programmes. On the NVQ level 1 'positive action' programme, learners are required to produce three learning plans to identify how they would lead a sport session. All plans are very similar and are close copies of the guidance supplied in the staff handbook. These are put into learners' portfolios and used as evidence of competence for assessment. Learners are not encouraged to further develop these and other planned sessions they lead throughout the programme. Only verbal feedback is given to learners after sessions. In hospitality, assessors assess across all programmes, regardless of their specialisms. There are some areas of hospitality where assessment does not identify and challenge the inappropriate technical skills of learners. Assessors do not identify poor practice and do not give learners corrective feedback to modify their performance. Poor working practices are not challenged by the assessor, and learners are often left to believe that their performance is satisfactory and they do not have further development needs.

81. Taurus Training has been very slow in finding appropriate work placements for foundation modern apprentices. Of the 73 learners who started in 2002-03, only 20 are currently in a work placement. In November 2002, a workforce development officer

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was allocated specifically to the sport programme, but has not yet had a significant impact on increasing the number of work placements. The officer relies on individual initiative and a telemarketing group to initiate contact with potential providers.

82. There are insufficient additional learning materials to support learners on sport programmes. Staff give information and use videos during taught sessions, but additional books or learning resources are not available for learners to carry out independent study. Few learners are currently able to access materials on the Taurus intranet outside taught IT sessions. Foundation modern apprentices are given good workbooks to help them with anatomy and physiology.

83. Many of the employers for hospitality offer additional training for learners, but this is not co-ordinated or linked with the NVQ. Assessors are often unaware of any extra training provided and do not adjust the programme of assessments to make best use of the training.

84. Additional support in literacy and numeracy for the 'positive action' sport learners is effective. Learners who need additional learning support have specialist group and individual support. Specialist additional support reviews are held for learners who have additional learning needs and these are effectively carried out by the learning support staff. Modern apprentices can also access the support through referral from their tutor, although currently none do so.

Good Practice

All foundation modern apprentices undertake a minimum of three months' initial training. This provides learners with a good base level of knowledge and skills which enables them to work immediately as effective recreation assistants in the fitness industry. Training includes most of the background knowledge for the NVQ and that required to be an active employee. Learners are trained in the correct use of freeweights, weight stations and cardio-vascular equipment, as well as how to run warm-up and cool-down sessions.

A staff handbook has been developed for sport tutors to ensure consistency across the five training centres. The handbook provides a consistent approach to the teaching of sessions and is used as a resource for the development of new staff. The handbook is regularly updated by the vocational co-ordinator.

Poor Practice

During assessments for hospitality, assessors are not giving sufficient feedback to learners to identify what they need to do to improve. Competences such as poor knife skills and poor vegetable preparation techniques were not identified and in one case, the learner was also not wearing personal protective clothing. Another learner demonstrated poor practical and organisational skills which were not picked up by the assessor. The learner was also displaying poor food hygiene practices which were not challenged by the assessor.

Health, social care & public services

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	121	2
Other government-funded provision	60	None

85. There are 121 learners in care work with Taurus Training. All learners are under 25 years of age and are employed in nursing and residential homes in the Liverpool area. The 74 advanced modern apprentices are working towards an NVQ level 3 in care for 18 months and the 47 foundation apprentices are working towards an NVQ level 2 in care for 12 months. Additionally, an appropriate level of key skills qualifications is completed by all modern apprentices to complete the framework. Taurus Training's staff are responsible for enrolment, induction, assessment and internal verification. The NVQ level 4 for registered managers has 60 learners enrolled. All are over 25 and work in managerial positions in care homes. This is a new qualification and the first learners were enrolled in October 2002. Learners attend modular off-the-job training for half a day each month for 12 months. The planned length of programme is up to 15 months. Taurus Training's staff are responsible for all aspects of off-the-job training, assessment and verification.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	3		58		84		50		44		15				
Retained*	0		7		40		31		35	80	9	60				
Successfully completed	0		2		30		29		25	57	5	33				
Still in learning	3		51		18		2		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

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Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	5		50		36		23		6						
Retained*	0		41		24		20	87	6	100						
Successfully completed	0		2		15		13	57	3	50						
Still in learning	5		38		4		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

Other government-funded provision												
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	60										
Retained	0	0										
Planned learning completed	0	0										
Gained job	0	0										
Still in training	60	100										

STRENGTHS

- particularly good training for care managers
- very effective support for learners
- good retention rates and achievement of NVQs by modern apprentices

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient internal verification
- weak initial assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider use of assessment techniques

86. Detailed research and planning by Taurus Training during 2002 has resulted in a qualification specifically designed to meet the needs of the care sector. It is a comprehensive framework which meets the statutory national minimum standards. On completion learners achieve an NVQ level 4 registered managers qualification, and a professional management award. In addition, the organisational development plan which learners complete during the course contributes to the inspection and audit requirements of care homes. Taurus Training consulted with external agencies locally and nationally during the planning process. They also obtained feedback from care home managers in the local area. Qualified and experienced staff have been recruited to manage and teach the course. Learners attend off-the-job training once a month, although it is recognised that workplace pressures often make it difficult for managers to attend off-the-job training regularly. The training takes place at two locations on different days to give learners additional opportunities to attend. There is a comprehensive induction to the course and the teaching is good. The classroom is spacious and well equipped with a range of teaching aids. Varied teaching methods are used, such as video presentations, lectures and discussions. Learners are encouraged to network during and after the training sessions to exchange ideas and share good practice in care management. Feedback is constantly sought by trainers on how improvements can be made. Learners are visited each month in the workplace to discuss projects, plan assessments and discuss how they are applying learning to their job. The first learners were recruited in October 2002 and all are progressing well. Learners are seeing immediate benefit to themselves and their organisation from the training they are receiving.

87. Effective support for learners ensures that they develop a wide range of practical skills and an appropriate level of knowledge. Learners who have barriers to learning such as dyslexia or lack of confidence and those who work unsocial hours, are given good support to help them succeed. Learners are able to contact assessors by telephone at any time. Assessors visit the workplace at least every month and more often if required. If the learner is working unsocial hours, assessors plan visits for early morning or during evening shifts. During these visits, realistic targets are agreed for the collection of evidence towards the qualification. Issues which could slow progress are explored and solutions are agreed. Most learners are making good progress towards completion of their qualification. Key skills are an integral part of the vocational training and are introduced early in the programme. Learners are motivated and there are good relationships between assessors and learners. Most employers are very supportive and ensure good individual on-the-job training. Employers also provide a range of additional courses such as health and safety, manual handling and first aid. All learners are making good progress and there is good progress from foundation to advanced modern apprenticeships. Barriers to learning are identified sympathetically and are recorded in

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words learners understand and agree. Strategies to overcome barriers are discussed and agreed, and progress is closely monitored during workplace visits. Learners who are judged to be at risk of not completing the framework are thoroughly monitored. Learners who leave an employer are contacted and every effort is made to ensure that they continue in learning with their new employer.

88. Taurus Training recognised internal verification as a weakness in their self-assessment report. An internal verifier was contracted to internally verify the care awards in September 2002 following the departure of the existing verifier. During this time, significant changes to portfolios were requested by the awarding body before certification of awards could be continued. Some portfolios are awaiting external verification. The independent verifier has concentrated on verification of these portfolios to ensure that they meet awarding body requirements. There has been no significant verification of portfolios for those learners currently on programme. Since September 2002 the wider role of the internal verifier in supporting, observing and giving feedback to assessors has not been carried out. An experienced manager and two newly qualified assessors are in post and Taurus Training has recently made an appointment of a full-time internal verifier to complete the team.

89. Initial assessment does not lead to detailed individual learning plans. The length of time learners have been employed in care is not taken into account when determining the level of NVQ. Many of the learners who are working towards a level 2 NVQ have been working as care assistants for a number of years. Their job roles and experience would enable some of them to work towards a level 3 NVQ when they start the programme. There is no systematic identification of basic skills needs. Key skills exemptions are correctly identified. Areas of weakness which were identified in the key skills initial assessment do not lead to the recording of how the development needs will be met, by whom, where and when. Targets dates for units of the NVQ are often identical, which is usually the end of the planned course duration. Achievement of units is not always recorded. Progress review arrangements are agreed, but there is no identification of what training will be provided by the employer, or that the employer can offer the learner the full range of experience to meet the requirements of the NVQ.

90. Assessment planning concentrates on what is required for a single unit. There is little planning to identify specific items of evidence to be gathered which could be used for a number of units. Some observations are cross-referenced to a small number of units, but full use of observation for evidence across a range of units has not been developed. There has been little use of professional discussion for assessment. Good use is made of witness testimony from supervisors and colleagues, but this is not always sufficiently specific to allow the assessor to judge what the witness saw, and there is no use of photographic evidence to support the testimony.