

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **The Training Network Group Ltd**

**10 February 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
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

## Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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



## SUMMARY

### The provider

The Training Network Group is a limited company with 40 training centres in the Northwest, the Northeast, the Midlands and the Southeast. Learners participate in work-based learning for young people, New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, Life Skills and programme centres. They follow foundation programmes and training in the occupational areas of construction; business administration, management and professional; retailing, customer service and transportation; hospitality, sport and leisure; and health, social care and public services.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training in business administration and self-employment is good. Training in hospitality, sport and leisure; health, social care and public services; and foundation programmes is satisfactory. Training in retailing, customer service and transportation is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the company is good, and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance are satisfactory.

### GRADES

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

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	2

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

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	3

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3

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

## KEY STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good training
- very good retention and achievement rates on the self-employment route
- highly effective strategic planning
- good staff development and support
- good communication

## KEY WEAKNESSES

- low rates of achievement on some programmes
- insufficient use of initial assessment and target-setting
- ineffective monitoring of quality

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more thorough approach to internal verification
- better access to resources

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 18 inspectors spent a total of 153 days with the Training Network Group Ltd (TNG) in February 2003. They visited 26 training centres, interviewed 412 learners and held 263 interviews with staff. They visited 66 workplaces and employers and four subcontractors, and interviewed 42 workplace supervisors. Inspectors observed learners' progress reviews, assessments and initial assessments. They also observed and graded 66 learning sessions, including inductions. Inspectors examined 181 portfolios of learners' work, 241 individual learning plans, learners' records, training materials, staff records, minutes of meetings, plans, policies and procedures. In November 2002, TNG produced its fourth annual self-assessment report.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	3	5	4	0	0	0	12
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Health, social care & public services	0	5	6	3	0	0	0	14
Foundation programmes	0	4	4	13	9	1	0	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>66</b>



## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. TNG was formed in 1983 by its present chief executive. It offers a range of training and consultancy activities to public and private customers. Its head office is in Enfield, London. TNG has expanded rapidly in the past two years, following successful tendering to provide training funded through Jobcentre Plus. TNG offers government-funded training from 40 of its centres. It operates throughout the Midlands, the Southeast, Northwest and Northeast, in areas from the semi-rural to inner cities. It employs 475 staff. TNG has contracts with local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) to provide work-based learning for young people and Life Skills. The contracts with Jobcentre Plus are for a range of training programmes including New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. There are currently 1,305 learners following LSC-funded programmes and 1,188 clients following Jobcentre Plus-funded programmes. TNG also uses funding from the European Social Fund. TNG's aims are to enhance the skills of the workforce, promote social inclusion, regenerate communities and develop lifelong learning. TNG holds the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

3. TNG's work-based learning for young people comprises national vocational qualification (NVQ) training and modern apprenticeships in business administration; retailing and customer service; playwork; early years care and education; and care. TNG's work-based learning for adults and New Deal 25+ programmes include short job-focused training (SJFT), basic employability training (BET), short intensive basic skills (SIBS), Gateway, Gateway to Work and follow through. The company also offers the self-employment route and occupational training through New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults including the full-time education and training option, environment task force option, voluntary sector option, longer occupational training (LOT), and the intensive activity period (IAP). It also offers programmes in agriculture, construction, hair and beauty and transportation which had too few learners to be inspected and graded separately. TNG subcontracts all training in construction, sport and recreation and transportation.

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

4. Retention rates in administration are good, but the programme is too new to judge rates of achievement. Rates of achievement are low in retailing, customer service and transportation; and health and social care. Training in health, social care and public services is good, although there is insufficient planning of off-the-job training. Occupational training is satisfactory in all other occupational areas. All learners receive an effective level of support during their programme. Learners receive good practical support on retailing, customer service and transportation; and health, social care and public services programmes, although the additional learning support in the latter is not always adequate. In most areas of learning, there is insufficient use of initial assessment. Work placements are well matched to learners' needs in retailing, customer service and transportation; and health, social care and public services. There is inadequate use of individual learning plans and progress reviews across all areas of learning.

## **New Deal 18-24**

5. There are very good retention and achievement rates in the self-employment route of New Deal 18-24. Retention rates are good in business administration. However, they are low in retailing, customer service and transportation. The rate of progression to employment is satisfactory in business administration but low in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; retailing, customer service and transportation; and health, social care and public services. All clients receive effective support during their programme and benefit from extensive jobsearch activities. Clients receive good practical support, which includes referral to external agencies for clients on the self-employment route. Work placements are well matched to clients' needs and occupational training is good across all areas of learning. Most clients achieve additional qualifications. In hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; and health, social care and public services, most clients achieve additional qualifications. Clients' progress reviews are inadequate across all areas of learning, and individual learning plans are not used effectively.

## **Life Skills**

6. The rate of retention for Life Skills learners is good. In 2001-02, 84 per cent of learners were retained for the full duration of their programme. The rate of achievement is satisfactory. Initial assessment is good but it is not used to formulate learning plans for basic skills. Teaching is good. Learners are highly motivated and make good progress, but they are not set specific or challenging targets.

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

7. For clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, there are very good rates of retention and achievement on the self-employment route. Rates of progression to employment are satisfactory in business administration but low in retailing, customer service and transportation; and health, social care and public services. Retention rates are good in business administration but low in retailing, customer service and transportation. All New Deal clients receive effective support during their programme and benefit from extensive jobsearch activities. Clients are given good practical support in all occupational areas, and their work placements are well matched to their needs. Occupational training is at least satisfactory in all occupational areas. There are inadequate reviews of clients' progress and individual learning plans are not used effectively.

### **Programme Centres**

8. Clients receive good training at programme centres. There are good jobsearch resources and good links with external agencies which provide additional support to clients. The proportion of clients gaining jobs fell to 20 per cent in 2001-2002. Some learning plans are not updated when clients have achieved modules. Reviews are not used to set challenging jobsearch targets. Some areas of the review documents are not completed.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Grade 2

9. TNG is a national training organisation, established in north London in 1983. It has 40 training centres across England, many in areas of high unemployment, and employs 449 full-time and 26 part-time staff. TNG has a chief executive who reports to a board of five executive directors. The board meets every two months and the senior management team meets monthly. One director is responsible for quality assurance and one for the operation of TNG's business units. Four national managers run the business units and recruit staff. The group operations director discusses operational issues with each national manager once a month. At the training centres there are separate managers for each type of contract held. The contract managers meet local teams regularly. They also hold regular meetings with representatives of the LSC and Jobcentre Plus.

10. TNG has an equal opportunities policy that has recently been reviewed. All learners are given an equal opportunities and disability awareness statement during their induction. There are quality assurance policies and procedures for all aspects of the business. Self-assessment is carried out annually. The most recent report was issued in November 2002. TNG achieved the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, in 1994. It is currently being assessed for accreditation for a fourth time. TNG also gained an information, advice and guidance award in November 2002.

### STRENGTHS

- highly effective strategic planning
- strong external links and partnerships
- good internal communications
- good staff development and support
- strong ethos of equality of opportunity
- strong drive for continuous improvement

### WEAKNESSES

- inadequate monitoring and reinforcement of equality of opportunity
- ineffective monitoring of quality assurance

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better access to staff intranet
- better use of feedback from learners
- more thorough approach to internal verification
- more detailed recording of staff members' vocational competence

11. TNG's strategic planning is highly effective. The senior management team has a clear vision for the business. The mission statement, supported by four key themes, is set out in the company's strategic plan for 2002-04. A concise summary of this plan explains clearly what is to be achieved and how. The themes cover the growth of the business, increased external recognition of TNG, achievement of specific results, and staff development. Managers and staff contributed to the plan, and understand its relevance to their own areas of work. They know what they have to achieve, and by when. There are separate business plans for each main area of TNG's operations. These help managers implement the strategic plan. The senior management team communicates the company's objectives and priorities to all staff. Copies of the strategic and business plans are available to employees on TNG's intranet. The plans include actions to achieve continuous improvement. National managers, based in centres around the country, are well informed on local issues. They help product, regional, area and contract managers to achieve business planning targets. Staff prepare specific local improvement plans, and strategic planning is strengthened by this local input. TNG monitors management and financial information at national and local levels, and uses it to plan strategy. Rapid action is taken to deal with under-performance.

12. TNG has strong links with external organisations, aimed primarily at increasing the number of work-based learning and job opportunities. It has initiated joint action with such organisations to improve aspects of learning or employment. TNG has strategic partnerships with national bodies, which enable it to influence local and national policy. TNG managers sit on the boards of several organisations. Managers and staff at all levels use their local contacts to meet the needs of their learners. Links with schools, colleges, Connexions, charities and community groups are used to help widen participation. TNG works with other training providers to share good practice and plan for the future. It bids for, and obtains, grant funding to improve training for the benefit of learners and other stakeholders.

13. TNG has good internal communications. There are regular, structured meetings, which are well attended. Minutes are circulated to all relevant staff and all proposed action is followed up. Staff use meetings to exchange information and share good practice. However, information is not always shared between training centres. There are informal daily meetings for staff, ensuring that potential problems are dealt with quickly. Staff can raise concerns with managers, either at meetings or informally, and are confident that they will receive the support they need. They can discuss any work problems with colleagues in confidence. For example, administrators regularly telephone each other to discuss problems with, and ways of improving, the new management information system. The chief executive visits training centres regularly. Staff find the visits useful and motivational. TNG has a very good intranet system that is available to all staff. It holds a range of organisational information including policies, procedures and documents about all the programmes. However, staff do not always find it easy to access the system. Staff receive, and contribute to, an informative monthly newsletter.

14. There is good development and support for staff. New employees have a group induction to TNG. They also have a well-planned local induction that covers all aspects of their job roles. TNG has a well-developed staff appraisal and review system. Staff have clear job descriptions and are provided with support materials related to their job. Managers meet individual staff regularly to agree targets and objectives. Members of staff confirm that they find the appraisal process helpful and supportive. Assessors from the part of the company that offers work-based learning for young people have a thorough monthly performance review to set, review and monitor targets. TNG has a comprehensive training calendar for staff and managers that is updated regularly. All staff have a detailed individual development plan that identifies their training and development needs, and they are able to participate in a wide range of training and development activities. These are focused on improving the learners' experience. Training and development are recorded on a continuous professional development record. This, however, does not always include assessors' vocational updating. Many staff have achieved a wide range of relevant qualifications with the company. They include assessor awards, teaching and training qualifications, and key skills and basic skills qualifications. TNG develops and promotes staff from within the company wherever possible.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 3**

15. TNG has a strong ethos of equality of opportunity. There is an equal opportunities review board which monitors all activity. The quality assurance and human resources managers have operational responsibility for equality of opportunity. There is a good equal opportunities policy, which includes procedures to deal with grievances, bullying and appeals. The policy is available in larger print on request. Equal opportunities is emphasised during induction, and learners are told what to do when problems occur, although many have little recollection of this. All learners are given a copy of an equal opportunities leaflet during their induction. Staff have a good awareness of equality of opportunity. They can attend monthly training to receive updates and discuss equality of opportunity. Equal opportunities is also discussed regularly in staff meetings. TNG has recruited multilingual staff to help learners access programmes more easily. TNG's staff come from a wide range of different minority ethnic groups. A number of staff are former TNG clients or learners.

16. TNG is committed to recruiting learners from under-represented groups. It has an open and supportive recruitment procedure. Applicants sit an assessment test and then have a short interview with a member of TNG's staff. The results are used to determine the applicants' ability, but a poor result does not prevent them joining a programme. TNG checks that employers have an equal opportunities policy. If they do not, it helps them develop one.

17. TNG promotes its training programmes at careers events and local jobcentres. Promotional materials show positive images of learners from minority ethnic groups, and contain equal opportunities statements. Some promotional material is available in languages other than English. TNG has recently promoted its programmes in a local Muslim women's centre, and it advertises in local newspapers aimed at minority ethnic groups.

18. TNG collects data about learners' ethnicity, gender and disabilities. The data are analysed by managers and directors, and compared with local and national demographic statistics. This has resulted in some training centres actively recruiting learners from under-represented groups. Most training centres have adequate access for learners with mobility difficulties.

19. There is inadequate monitoring and reinforcement of equal opportunities. Some learners have limited understanding and awareness of equality of opportunity. They do not know what it means, or how they might be affected in the workplace by unfair or unequal treatment. Learners on care programmes have a better understanding of equal opportunities, as this is part of their NVQ. Equality of opportunity is discussed at induction, but rarely covered afterwards. There is inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. TNG has recently introduced a new progress review that involves discussion of equal opportunities by TNG staff.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 3

20. The people and quality assurance director is responsible for all aspects of human resources and quality improvement, including internal verification. The quality assurance manager, who reports to the people and quality assurance director, has produced a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, including a quality assurance policy statement. A small team of quality auditors visits all training centres to assess the extent to which procedures are complied with. This approach has been extended beyond compliance to cover a wider range of issues affecting the quality of training. It includes observation of assessors and trainers. TNG staff monitor subcontractors and those that do not achieve the required standards are replaced. Good practice is shared widely at meetings. Some staff use the buddy system to exchange advice on methods and procedures. TNG has demonstrated its commitment to continuous improvement through its achievement of several quality assurance awards.

21. There is a strong drive for continuous improvement throughout TNG. Policies, systems and procedures have been implemented over the past year to develop standards and improve the quality of training. Continuous improvement is an integral part of all management processes. At each training centre, staff prepare and maintain a continuous improvement plan. The plans identify strengths and weaknesses that have a significant impact on learners. Actions are planned to build on the strengths and overcome the weaknesses, and individuals are given responsibility for achieving specific targets. Managers review the actions regularly and discuss them with staff at meetings. Continuous improvement plans are regularly updated with new targets. The plans are written clearly and concisely. Staff understand them and know how they are to be achieved.

22. The monitoring of quality assurance is not yet effective in all parts of the organisation. Inspectors found examples of inconsistent practice in individual learning plans, learners' progress reviews and assessment. This included poor target-setting and action-planning for learners, and some inappropriate assessment practice. Some review forms and individual learning plans lack detail. Some internal verification is not sufficiently thorough. There are wide variations in the quality of off-the-job training and in the availability of learning resources. Some learning material includes language unsuited to the capabilities of learners. Documents used by assessors are not always of the required standard. Some poor photocopies are in use despite all documents being available in printed form. There are many examples of completed forms with signatures and information missing. TNG collects feedback from learners using a range of methods. However, the feedback is not always analysed or used to bring about improvement. Learners are not experiencing consistently good training in all centres and areas of learning. TNG has identified some of the deficiencies in quality assurance.

23. The self-assessment report is not accurate. Managers and staff in all TNG's training centres contributed to the self-assessment process. Local strengths and weaknesses were identified and used to produce a draft self-assessment report for the whole company. The local training centres fed back on the draft report, and their comments were taken



into account when preparing the final version. Despite this consultation process, many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors were not recognised clearly in the self-assessment report. In some areas of learning the strengths and weaknesses are not discussed in the text of the report. Although the report is self-critical, it does not present an accurate picture of what TNG needs to do to provide consistently good training.

#### **Good Practice**

*One training centre is making considerable efforts to attract hard-to-reach clients. An outreach worker promotes the centre's programmes through a wide range of community-based organisations, such as citizens advice bureaux and doctors' surgeries, and at local festivals. A marketing leaflet is produced in Bengali to attract learners whose English is poorly developed. Women-only classes are planned for learners who are unable to join mixed groups.*

#### **Poor Practice**

*Learners are introduced to the company's health and safety policy and the equal opportunities policy when they are inducted in to their learning programmes. When learners' first language is not English the policies are translated verbally into their first language. The company does not have written translations, so learners do not have copies of the policies in their own languages for reference.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	30	3
New Deal 18-24	95	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	297	2

24. TNG offers training and assessment in business administration through New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, modern apprenticeships and NVQ programmes. It also offers the self-employment route of New Deal 18-24 and New Deal 25+.

25. In the self-employment route, Jobcentre Plus personal advisers identify clients who are interested in self-employment and arrange for them to attend a stage one business awareness-raising session. Some clients refer themselves and are accepted providing they fulfil the eligibility criteria. During the awareness session, clients are told of the realities of self-employment. The session is followed by an appointment with a business counsellor at which clients are encouraged to decide whether or not they wish to progress to stage two. Stage two includes attendance at a structured four-day programme over four weeks, during which clients produce a business plan. The programme covers key areas of business planning such as finance, marketing and legislation. Clients are given individual advice and guidance in the further development of their business. This can include advice on funding, accommodation and market research. Clients who successfully complete stage two can enter stage three and begin a period of test trading. During stage three, clients can test trade their business idea while still receiving benefit. Clients continue to meet their advisers during this period, and can do so for a further two years.

26. There are 30 modern apprentices in business administration all of whom are employed in administrative occupations. They follow NVQs at level 2 or 3 in business administration, and take additional units in customer service or information technology (IT). They also take key skills qualifications. Clients on New Deal business administration programmes attend off-the-job training at TNG's premises. Many also gain work experience and are assessed for units of business administration NVQs at level 2. Induction and initial assessment take place in the workplace for employed learners and at TNG's premises for New Deal clients. The initial assessment process includes basic skills screening, key skills assessment and an interview. Employers provide training in the workplace. Assessors visit learners in their workplace every month, and carry out progress reviews every 10 to 12 weeks. All assessment takes place in the learners' 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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	10		11													
Retained*	0		0	0												
Successfully completed	0		0	0												
Still in learning	10		7	64												

\*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	5		11		1											
Retained*	0		4	36	0	0										
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0										
Still in learning	3		10	91	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											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			1		5											
Retained*			0	0	4	80										
Successfully completed			0	0	0	0										
Still in learning			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

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	487		972		118					
Retained*	212	44	821	84	94	80				
Planned learning completed	174	36	709	73	73	62				
Gained job	76	16	437	45	55	47				
Still in training	290	60	7	1	0	0				

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

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	220		173		16					
Retained*	35	16	92	53	15	94				
Planned learning completed	20	9	76	44	12	75				
Gained job	38	17	35	20	10	62				
Still in training	95	43	0	0	0	0				

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

## STRENGTHS

- particularly knowledgeable and supportive staff in the self-employment route
- very good rates of retention and achievement in the self-employment route
- good training in business administration
- good support for learners

## WEAKNESSES

- insufficient use of initial assessment
- insufficient access to resources on self-employment

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better accreditation of learners' work
- more responsibility by learners for their electronic portfolios
- better quality and consistency of learning materials
- more interactive training materials in self-employment

27. The staff providing the self-employment route are extremely knowledgeable and supportive. They offer flexible appointments and are willing to change existing arrangements to meet clients' needs. They visit clients at their premises so that clients do not miss any business opportunities by being away. They have a particularly good knowledge of business planning, marketing and the local economy, and some also have specialist knowledge, for example, in publishing and the performing arts. Staff keep up to date about unemployment and other benefits, so that they can help clients claim their entitlements. They can quickly assess the personal and business needs of the clients, and make them aware of the realities of self-employment. The business counsellors and tutors have good interpersonal and communications skills, enabling them to work effectively with clients from a range of backgrounds. All staff have a good rapport with clients and each other. They use humour effectively to relate information and advice to clients' business ideas. Information on clients' needs is shared between tutors, business counsellors, and administration staff.

28. There is a high level of support for all learners and clients. They value the support, easy access and the professionalism of all staff, particularly the business counsellors and tutors. Clients are referred to other agencies for funding applications and job opportunities. Outside organisations which can help and support clients with self-employment are invited to give talks and presentations. TNG's highly effective support for self-employment clients includes a small loans scheme, incentive payments on completion of their business plan, and continued business counselling for two years after the formal launch of their business. In training centres near a programme centre, clients can access computers or resources for jobsearch.

29. The retention and achievement rates on the self-employment route are very good. During the past three months, 50 per cent of TNG's clients progressed to test trading their business or gained employment. The national target set by Jobcentre Plus is 30 per cent. Eighty per cent of TNG's stage two clients completed a business plan. Eighty-five per cent of those who have completed test trading, at stage three, are still trading independently after 12 months. Clients acquire new skills and knowledge in business and financial planning. These are not nationally accredited. Some business administration clients on short courses gain no transferable qualifications to confirm their new skills and knowledge. In 2001-02, the retention rate for business administration was good for advanced modern apprentices, at 64 per cent, and very good for foundation modern apprentices, at 91 per cent. However, achievement is slow for both these groups.

30. There is good off-the-job training for business administration clients and learners. There is a useful range of well-planned additional training available, including first aid and health and safety. Clients and learners enjoy this training, and the skills learned increase their employability. Jobsearch is imaginatively structured. The programme includes interactive teaching in interview and telephone techniques. Clients and learners improve their skills in completing job applications and this gives them confidence. Tutors are adequately qualified. Business administration assessors and tutors monitor learners' development and progress extremely accurately. There is good access to employers' training workshops for employed learners. Learners are given good, accurate information about their learning programme. They produce good paper-based portfolios. However, some contain evidence that is inadequately authenticated, and there is little involvement of employers in producing witness statements. TNG has invested much time and money in introducing a system of electronic portfolios for business administration learners. However, the learners do not take responsibility for their electronic portfolios. The training methods used in some self-employment sessions are not interactive. Clients are expected to sit and listen to the tutors for long periods of time.

31. There is insufficient use of initial assessment for business administration learners and self-employment clients. On the self-employment route there is inadequate assessment of clients' knowledge of business, financial planning and the management skills required to run a small business. For example, some clients have experience of accounting and marketing which has not been identified by TNG's staff. Initial assessment is of the business plan rather than the person, and it is not used to design the individual learning plan. For business administration clients and learners, initial assessment is of workplace tasks rather than the learners' potential. Some learners have no access to work experience. Others have work placements which are well matched to their career aims. Learners' learning style and ability are not taken into account sufficiently. Learners are not told the results of basic skills screening. Learners who need additional help with basic skills are referred to specialist providers. Some learners have too few visits from assessors. They complete the tasks set for the next assessment quickly and cannot progress further until the assessor returns. Progress reviews have recently been improved. The benefits of the changes have not yet been recognised by learners. Some learners are unaware that their progress has been reviewed. Clients' progress is reviewed at every counselling session and targets for the next consultation are set. However, these targets are sometimes too broad, and are not recorded in sufficient detail to clearly indicate timescales or responsibility.

32. Self-employment clients have insufficient access to resources. In some training centres there are few resources for clients to use to research and develop their business idea. Some centres have only one computer and telephone for clients to use. The main sources of information for clients are leaflets and factsheets from licensed specialist websites, aimed at the self-employed. Some centres do not have resources such as books, videos or tapes on topics such as interviewing skills, writing curriculum vitae, marketing or carrying out market research. Clients in some centres are not aware of the

physical resources and support available to them. Training rooms at some centres are too small for groups bigger than eight to 10 people, and the arrangement of furniture and equipment in some training rooms makes it difficult to move around. Handouts do not have consistent typefaces or layouts. There is little use of colour or pictorial images to make them more interesting. The quality of photocopying of some learning materials is poor.

#### Good Practice

*TNG offers a small loan of up to £500 for individuals and £1,000 for partnerships to clients who have no other source of funding. The loan is interest free. In some cases the loan can help clients access matched funding from other sources.*

#### Poor Practice

*One business administration learner at a call centre is only allowed to leave her workstation to speak to the assessor or inspector on specified days of the week. Her employer does not contribute to reviews or her training. Her progress review documents are signed by anyone in a supervisory position regardless of whether they are involved in her work.*

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	76	4
New Deal 18-24	93	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	17	3

33. There are 186 learners on programmes in retailing, customer service and transportation. Of these, 93 are on New Deal 18-24, 17 are on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, 37 are advanced modern apprentices and 39 are foundation modern apprentices. The clients on New Deal 18-24 are on the voluntary sector option. Those on New Deal 25+ are on LOT. New Deal clients are referred to TNG by Connexions and Jobcentre Plus. Learners on work-based learning for young people are recruited through their employers. Clients on New Deal programmes receive an induction in the training centre, and work-based learners are given an individual induction in their workplace. All learners have an initial assessment of their occupational skills to determine what level of programme they should follow, and most are also given a basic skills assessment. Employed learners are trained on the job and assessed in their workplaces by TNG's assessors. Learners on New Deal programmes are trained by TNG staff at the training centre and take part in work placements.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		21		45		16									
Retained*	0		0	0	5	11	4	25								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	4	0	100								
Still in learning	17		12	57	5	11	3	19								

\*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	12		62		30		4									
Retained*	0		11	18	6	20	2	50								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	7	2	50								
Still in learning	10		25	40	4	13	0	100								

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

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

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	69		146		14						
Retained*	28	41	91	62	11	79					
Planned learning completed	14	20	16	11	7	50					
Gained job	12	17	39	27	8	57					
Still in training	16	23	1	1	0	0					

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

New Deal 18-24											
New Deal 18-24											
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	239		140								
Retained*	36	15	44	31							
Planned learning completed	7	3	18	13							
Gained job	33	16	41	29							
Still in training	91	38	2	1							

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

## **STRENGTHS**

- good support for learners
- good off-the-job training for New Deal clients

## **WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient target-setting
- weak internal verification practice
- slow progress
- poor rates of achievement

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better involvement of employers in progress reviews
- more memorable induction for learners
- better involvement of learners in referencing their evidence

34. There is good support for all clients and learners. Work-placement officers visit them in their workplace every month to carry out progress reviews. Assessors make interim visits, and additional visits can be made on request. Staff make daily telephone calls to vulnerable clients to provide additional support. There is an effective system for referring clients to mentors to discuss housing, personal and social problems. Clients do not have to explain to their training advisers why they want to see a mentor. Discussions are entirely confidential and clients value and recognise the importance of this support. There is a positive exit interview system. Clients are given 10 copies of their curriculum vitae, written references from their work placement, an internal certificate of programme completion and certificates from awarding bodies recognising the achievement of individual units from their award. Even when clients are not working towards complete NVQs, they recognise that they have made significant personal progress. This often includes a change in their attitude towards seeking employment.

35. All learners' portfolios of evidence are structured logically and contain evidence of their competence and useful documents and information from TNG. The documents include a copy of the appeals procedure, and an explanation of the roles of the assessor, internal and external verifiers, and the awarding body. The portfolios also contain an introduction to NVQs, but this is out of date and refers to regulatory bodies that no longer exist. Learners understand the structure of their paper-based portfolios and are easily able to locate their evidence. There is a wide range of evidence in the portfolios, including records of observed assessments, witness statements and workplace

evidence. This evidence takes into account the needs of the employer and relates to the learners' job role. Employers are prepared to vary the duties of the learners to help them achieve their awards. Learners and their employers are aware of how learners' skills and confidence have increased during their training programmes. Employers recognise the skills that learners have and give them more responsibility in the workplace. Learners are given an initial assessment that helps to identify their basic skills needs. The dedicated basic skills tutors employed by TNG have a wide range of qualifications and appropriate experience. Some learners on youth programmes have had insufficient support from assessors because of staff changes.

36. There is good off-the-job training for New Deal clients. They attend training centres for weekly jobsearch sessions which include access to the Internet and the local Jobcentre Plus database for current vacancies. Clients are trained in word processing to help them produce their curriculum vitae. They are given a comprehensive jobsearch information pack. This contains standard letters that can be amended to suit individual vacancies, and a record of their jobsearch activities and applications made. Basic skills sessions are part of the off-the-job training for all clients who require additional support. They are well attended, take into account the clients' interests and reinforce their work activities. Clients find the sessions contribute to their personal development and they recognise the progress they are making. They enjoy attending the sessions and look forward to their training. Every two weeks, clients attend TNG's training centre for training in the background knowledge requirements of their learning programme. There is a detailed schedule of work and comprehensive lesson plans for these sessions. They are well resourced, with clear handouts, appropriate videos, and relevant group exercises. They are interactive and well presented. The aims and objectives of the sessions are clearly referenced to the background knowledge requirements of clients' programmes. The assessors have appropriate qualifications and experience for the occupational area, and a range of additional relevant qualifications. Learners' main memory of their induction is of form filling. When prompted, they can remember being given handouts on topics such as health and safety, and equal opportunities.

37. For learners on modern apprenticeships, individual learning plans do not always identify short-term targets. The target for achievement of their modern apprenticeship framework is often recorded as being shortly before the end of the learners' funding period. Little use is made of interim targets to encourage individual progress. For some learners, key skills training is not introduced until the NVQ is almost finished. There is insufficient planned assessment of key skills. Targets are not monitored at learners' progress reviews. Learners are given copies of their individual learning plans, but these are not always kept up to date. There is insufficient recording of unit achievement.

38. TNG's internal verification practice is weak. The internal verification process uses monthly regional quality meetings to review assessors' work. There is an overall plan to ensure that every assessor's work is monitored. The quality assurance meetings focus on compliance with regulatory body expectations, and the correct completion of TNG's documents. A team of lead internal verifiers is responsible for the direct observation of assessors in the field. In this area of learning, the lead internal verifiers are qualified as

internal verifiers but not always occupationally competent. They do not always identify shortcomings in assessment practice. Their observations of assessment focus on the correct completion of TNG's paperwork. New team members are not observed carrying out assessments in the workplace by an occupationally competent person. Some qualified assessors without customer service experience have not been directly observed in the workplace. TNG has recently begun seeking learners' feedback on the assessment process. However, the criteria being used are the national standards for assessors, and these are inappropriate for use by learners.

39. Learners make slow progress. Some of the learners have been working towards their qualification for almost two years without achieving any aspect of it. There is no unit accreditation for learners on youth programmes. All the units are assessed together towards the end of the programme, which does not encourage progress. Learners are employed in modern, well-equipped workplaces. Most are in responsible positions, and carry out a full range of practical tasks that will enable them to meet the requirements of their qualification. There is an electronic system for recording observations, verbal questioning, and learners' progress. Learners whose evidence is stored electronically have no control over the process. In some cases, progress is recorded in percentages and learners do not fully understand what they have achieved. The progress of some learners is recorded on paper by the assessor. When learners record and reference their own progress, they do so under the instruction of the assessor. Employers are invited to comment on their learner's progress, and receive a copy of the progress report. However, they do not sit in on the review. The review form is completed and then the assessor asks the employer to add their comment and sign it.

40. Retention and achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes are low. Over the past four years, only 3 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 6 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have achieved their qualifications. In August 2002, TNG took over 10 customer service learners from another training provider. Some of these learners have already achieved aspects of their framework and are now working towards their key skills awards. Clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults have low achievement rates both for the learning programme and for progress into jobs. The rate of achievement of learning plans fell from 50 per cent in 2000-01 to 11 per cent in 2001-02. The proportion of clients gaining jobs fell from 57 per cent in 2000-01 to 27 per cent in 2001-02. In 2001-02, 13 per cent of New Deal 18-24 clients completed their planned learning programme and 29 per cent gained a job.

### **Good Practice**

*The basic skills tutor used the clients' hobbies to make learning sessions more interesting to them. He helped a client use his skill at calculating darts scores to demonstrate competence in solving numerical problems. This motivated the client, who had not realised how proficient he was at mental arithmetic.*

### **Poor Practice**

*One learner working towards a level 3 NVQ had little appropriate supervisory experience in his workplace to enable him to meet the requirements of his learning programme. A second learner who had the relevant job role and the opportunity to demonstrate competence at level 3 was, in fact, on a level 2 learning programme.*

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	15	3

41. There are 15 clients in sport and recreation on the New Deal 18-24 voluntary sector option. All clients are referred to TNG by Jobcentre Plus. TNG provides a three-day induction to the programme that covers clients' responsibilities, administration, health and safety and equal opportunities. Two subcontracted training organisations are used to provide training and find employment for the clients. A separate induction is given by the subcontractors to familiarise clients with the requirements of the training programme. Clients work in the community, coaching and providing leadership in schools, youth clubs and sports centres. They are expected to achieve the community sports leadership award and an emergency first aid certificate. They also have the opportunity to gain a range of additional qualifications. All clients have an initial assessment of their learning needs, and appropriate support is provided. Clients attend TNG's training centre for jobsearch on one day each week. TNG work-placement officers visit clients in the workplace every month to review their progress.

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

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3		9							
Retained*	1	33	3	33						
Planned learning completed	0	0	1	11						
Gained job	0	0	0	0						
Still in training	0	0	0	0						

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

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	31		74							
Retained*	12	39	46	62						
Planned learning completed	12	39	46	62						
Gained job	5	16	15	20						
Still in training	15	48	0	0						

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

## STRENGTHS

- good training
- good support for clients throughout their training programme
- good rate of achievement of additional qualifications

## WEAKNESSES

- poor rate of progress into employment

42. Clients receive good training which is well planned and structured. All clients have an individual learning plan and this is kept up to date. Training staff are experienced and display good levels of competence. Sessions are well prepared and skilfully taught. Information is clearly presented and clients' understanding is checked. The work covered is appropriate to the needs of individual learners and improves their knowledge and understanding considerably. All clients build up a portfolio of information and work documents as evidence of their learning. Clients develop their abilities and organisational skills. Their self-esteem grows and this improves their effectiveness in the workplace. Clients' needs are identified through initial assessment, and appropriate support is given when and where required. TNG has skilled, qualified staff who can help clients overcome obstacles to learning.

43. There is particularly good support for clients. Staff from TNG and the subcontractor have excellent working relationships with clients. Staff respond quickly to requests for assistance and they devote additional time to clients in order to overcome problems. Pastoral issues are dealt with sensitively and effectively. Clients' induction and progress reviews are effective in introducing, monitoring and guiding clients through their programme. Work-placement officers and jobsearch advisers help clients to take responsibility for their own future. Clients appreciate the assistance they receive and

recognise the genuine concern that staff display for their welfare, personal development and progress.

44. Clients achieve a range of additional sports coaching and related qualifications that significantly enhance their motivation, competence and employability. These include life saving, football coaching, basketball coaching, fitness instruction and other relevant awards. Clients are often given preparatory training to improve their chances of success on the courses. Pass rates for the additional awards are high. Almost all clients who take a course achieve the qualification.

45. Clients make poor progress into employment. In 2001-02, only 20 per cent, and in 2002-03, only 16 per cent of clients gained employment. TNG has few links with employers in the sport and recreation industry. Retention rates and rates of achievement of the community sports leadership qualification are satisfactory. Many clients on the programme have little previous work experience. These young people make significant personal progress during the programme and show improvements in life skills, independence, confidence and motivation.

46. TNG's internal verification procedures are satisfactory. There is a sampling strategy for verifying and monitoring training and assessment. Clients' progress is recorded by TNG on a central monitoring system which is regularly updated. Learners' timekeeping, attendance and commitment to the programme are monitored, and issues of concern are dealt with quickly.

#### Good Practice

*Before taking a life saving qualification, clients participate in several swimming improvement and stamina-building sessions. This prepares them for the course and significantly increases the likelihood of them achieving the qualification.*



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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	1179	3
New Deal 18-24	54	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	66	3

47. There are 1,179 learners on programmes in care and early years care and education at 11 centres throughout the country. There are 584 advanced modern apprentices, 555 foundation modern apprentices and 40 NVQ learners. There are 66 clients on New Deal 25+ following LOT programmes, and 54 on New Deal 18-24 on the voluntary sector option. The modern apprentices are all employed in playgroups, day nurseries, centres for adults with learning difficulties, and nursing and residential homes. Most learners are referred to TNG by their employers. TNG's employer development consultants liaise with Connexions, and match potential learners to job vacancies as they arise. Learners receive an initial assessment and induction by the employer development consultants, and an induction into training by assessors. TNG's assessors carry out most of the training and all the assessment in the workplace. They also share the internal verification. Computerised assessment has been introduced for some learners. Learners can attend weekly drop-in sessions and occasional workshops for NVQ and key skills support. Three of TNG's training centres have Jobcentre Plus clients. They attend their local training centre for occupational training and jobsearch, and take part in a work placement related to their career aspirations.

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	185		437		404		228		113							
Retained*	1		33		140		73		48	42						
Successfully completed	1		24		51		36		30	27						
Still in learning	177		282		91		30		4	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	245		500		427		216		21							
Retained*	5		106		199		80	37	13	62						
Successfully completed	0		19		73		48	22	8	38						
Still in learning	226		253		64		12	6	0	0						

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

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	12		51		19		12									
Retained*	0		15	29	9	47	6	50								
Successfully completed	0		2	4	0	0	6	50								
Still in learning	11		27	53	2	11	0	0								

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

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	163		380		62						
Retained*	90	55	260	68	42	68					
Planned learning completed	68	42	152	40	25	40					
Gained job	12	7	80	21	19	31					
Still in training	63	39	3	1	0	0					

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

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	125		100							
Retained*	27	22	56	56						
Planned learning completed	12	10	49	49						
Gained job	13	10	14	14						
Still in training	54	43	0	0						

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

## STRENGTHS

- good training sessions
- good rate achievement of additional qualifications by New Deal clients
- good support for learners
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- thorough induction for modern apprentices

## WEAKNESSES

- insufficient planning of training for modern apprentices
- poor achievement rates
- inadequate learning support on work-based learning programmes
- some inappropriate assessment practice

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more information for employers
- better access to resources
- more careers guidance for adults on short courses

48. TNG provides good off-the-job training sessions. On modern apprenticeship programmes, there are knowledgeable tutors who communicate well with the learners. Good use is made of visual aids to enhance learning, and information is frequently related to the workplace. In most sessions, all learners are encouraged to contribute and tutors frequently check their learning. There is some good use of questioning to extend learners' thinking. Learners make good progress. Good practical

demonstrations are followed by well-supervised practice for learners. Training sessions for Jobcentre Plus clients are given by well-qualified and appropriately experienced trainers. Jobsearch trainers have personnel experience. Eighty per cent of jobsearch sessions seen by inspectors were good or better. There were no unsatisfactory sessions. Vocational sessions on health are taught by trainers with recent occupational experience. The sessions are carefully planned and schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive. Diagrams and demonstration materials are of a high standard and capture the clients' attention. The training is delivered in an informative and interesting manner. Most clients are keen to contribute to discussions and to ask questions. However, learning is not always checked at sufficiently regular intervals. In some sessions there are insufficient strategies to bring non-participants into the discussions and at times, in some sessions, discussion is too trainer-led. Key skills lessons for modern apprentices and clients on work-based learning programmes are taught well. However, there is no overall plan for the key skills programme. Learners are encouraged to collect key skills evidence through their vocational work, but key skills evidence is not always gathered alongside NVQ evidence, particularly from direct observations and from witness testimonies. When assessors are trained key skills practitioners, vocational and key skills work are well integrated.

49. There is good achievement of additional qualifications by learners on Jobcentre Plus. One-day training courses are provided at TNG's premises either by appropriately qualified members of staff or by occupational specialists. Training is offered in first aid, food hygiene and health and safety. At one training centre during 2002-03, 66 per cent of clients achieved certificates in first aid, 86 per cent in food hygiene and 80 per cent in health and safety. Sixty per cent of learners achieved all three qualifications. During the same period at another centre, learners on LOT and those on SJFT averaged two additional qualifications each. The achievement of these qualifications adds to clients' employment chances and enhances their confidence and self-esteem.

50. There is good support for learners. Assessors normally visit learners in the workplace every four weeks to give individual coaching and to plan and carry out assessment. Most assessment planning is detailed so that learners are clear about what they need to do. Some learners needing additional support, or nearing the end of their programme, are visited more frequently. However, a few learners at some centres wait for five or six weeks between visits. Assessors are flexible in the timing of the visits, with some taking place in the evenings or at weekends. Learners telephone assessors if they need help and they receive a quick response. Observation of work practice is carried out on most visits. There is good informal communication between assessors and employers. Assessors discuss the learners' progress with their employers on every visit. Thorough progress reviews take place every eight weeks. In some cases this is a three-way process. In others the assessor has a detailed discussion with the learner followed by a discussion with the employer. Records of reviews are kept, but these do not always reflect the detail of the actual review. Assessors are responsive to the needs of individuals, often using alternative methods of evidence collection such as extra observation and verbal questions, tape recorders and word-processed work. In one training centre, all staff have attended dyslexia awareness training. Workplaces are

monitored either six-monthly or annually by TNG's employer development consultants, to ensure that a good quality environment is provided for the learners. Health and safety, equal opportunities, employers' insurance and inspection reports are all examined. Employers provide a range of occupational experience. Some provide learning resources such as books and journals and most offer opportunities for additional training.

51. There is good monitoring of learners' progress. The manager, the lead internal verifier, the assessor and the learner all know what point of progress has been reached at any given time. The assessor keeps manual records of each learner's progress in the assessor's workbook. This is used to present accurate information to the lead internal verifier at regular monthly meetings. Issues that could affect learners' progress are carefully noted by the internal verifier and followed up. Clear monthly records are kept for each learner.

52. Induction for modern apprentices is thorough, and effectively prepares them for their training. For early years care and education learners there is a clear emphasis on the 10 underlying principles of early years care and education. Assessors ensure that learners have a basic understanding of each one, and impress upon them the need to apply these continuously in their work with children. It is explained clearly that the assessor will look for application of the principles during assessment observations. Equal opportunities issues are introduced appropriately. Assessors check learners' understanding of key points. The complaints and appeals procedures are explained fully and supporting written materials are provided. There is a very thorough and enthusiastic explanation of the NVQ process, including the range of ways to present evidence and how assessment will be carried out. Learners' responses show a clear understanding of the whole process. TNG's computerised assessment system is also introduced, and learners are given a choice of whether they want to use this or the more traditional paper-based portfolio system. When a learner has completed a foundation modern apprenticeship and is progressing to the advanced programme, the induction is amended appropriately.

53. There is insufficient planning of training for modern apprentices. There is very little planning of on-the-job learning to ensure that learners achieve practical competence and good background knowledge. Employers receive copies of the visit report forms and review records, but these do not give specific details of learners' progress, or set tight enough targets. Some employers are keen to be involved in the training but are hindered by the lack of detailed information. There are occasional workshops for learners at the local training centres, including some to prepare for key skills tests. These are good, but neither learners nor employers receive a planned programme of training. Workshops are poorly attended. At one workshop, seven learners were expected but none attended. Assessors give good individual coaching in practical skills and gathering evidence for the NVQ, but they have limited time for detailed teaching of background knowledge. Some important aspects of training, such as the early years curriculum, developmental observations of children, and the social and emotional needs of older people, are not dealt with adequately.

54. Assessors recommend a single textbook which most learners buy. Some assessors give relevant handouts and information to their learners, but this is not routinely done at all training centres. Learning packs have been purchased for all centres but they are not in general use. Learners have little opportunity for discussion with learners from other settings. Learners are invited to weekly drop-in sessions at the centres, where they can ask for help and use resources, but few take advantage of this. Not all workplaces provide good resources. Some employers are reluctant to release learners to attend the training centre because of staff ratios. Though some assessors take laptop computers for learners to use in the workplace, overall there is not enough access to computers. One learner who had been on the programme for nine months had had no access to a computer apart from during the initial assessment.

55. Few learners achieve their full modern apprenticeship framework. Of those who started the advanced modern apprenticeship programme in 1998-99, only 27 per cent successfully completed it. Completion rates for foundation modern apprentices are also low. Thirty-eight per cent successfully completed their apprenticeship framework in 1998-99 and 22 per cent in 1999-2000. Some learners who did not achieve the full apprenticeship framework did achieve an NVQ. Most learners are making good progress with their NVQs and key skills. Evidence in some learners' portfolios shows clear competence and good understanding of the background knowledge for the qualification. There is a low rate of progress into work for Jobcentre Plus clients. Between 2000-01 and 2001-02 the percentage of clients gaining a job declined. It has never reached the Jobcentre Plus target of 40 per cent. For many the training time is too short for them to acquire the knowledge and confidence necessary to gain work.

56. There is inadequate additional learning support on work-based learning programmes for young people and adults. The assessors work hard to provide all the additional support that learners need, but they do not have basic skills training. Many assessors have a high caseload of learners and cannot always give the extra time required to provide additional support. If one learner is given additional support another sometimes receives less than they need. In one case, a learner needed further observation in order to progress, but the assessor could not visit her again for a month. Employers are not fully informed about the additional needs of learners. Basic skills needs are not always accurately identified at initial assessment. Some learners who had scored well below level 1 in the basic skills agency test were placed on key skills programmes at level 2 but not offered additional learning support. Initial assessment is not effective in identifying possible specific learning difficulties.

57. There is much good practice in assessment but it is not consistent and there are some inappropriate assessment practices. Some elements or units are completed without observations being carried out. Sometimes projects are used for the whole of the child protection unit, although at least one element should be observed. In observation reports, assessors do not always describe how learners demonstrate skills in the workplace. There is too much reliance on written questions. Assessors sometimes give learners lists of questions to demonstrate their background knowledge before

carrying out observations. Some assessment plans do not require a sufficiently diverse range of evidence. Assessors do not always encourage the learners to refer to the occupational standards when planning assessment. There is little encouragement from some assessors for learners to reflect on their own work practice. Written feedback in portfolios is not always detailed enough. Internal verification does not adequately identify and deal with the full range of assessment issues. Some learners on the computerised assessment system do not fully understand how their evidence relates to the standards.

58. Some clients on short courses for adults are unclear about the programmes they are following. During the course, many clients have their career aspirations raised and wish to complete a full NVQ. These clients do not receive enough information about how to do this. Some employers need more information about the clients' courses.

#### **Good Practice**

*One new learner was so timid and lacking in confidence that she sat with her face to the wall while children were playing around her. She could hardly talk to the assessor and had great difficulty with reading and writing. She did a large part of her level 2 NVQ through observation and oral questioning. Her assessor and employer recognised that she would need help with her reading and writing if she was to go on to level 3. They both gave her specific support to develop these skills, and she is now progressing well with her level 3. She is now a confident member of staff, able to contribute fully to staff meetings.*

**Foundation programmes****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	48	3
Life Skills	20	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	313	3
Programme Centres	190	3

59. There are 571 learners on foundation programmes. There are 313 clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, 190 on programme centres, 48 on New Deal 18-24 and 20 on Life Skills programmes. Clients follow a range of options including Gateway initiatives, BET, SIBS, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and jobsearch training. Foundation training takes place at 32 sites across the country. Learners and clients are referred to programmes by Jobcentre Plus and Connexions. They spend between 16 and 30 hours training each week. Some clients spend all their time in TNG's training centres while others attend a work placement for between two and 26 weeks. Achievement on Jobcentre Plus programmes is measured by the number of clients moving in to employment. The focus of the training is to develop their job readiness. The success of Life Skills is judged by the number of learners moving in to further training, or employment with training, at the end of the 12-week programme. All clients receive an induction of one to five days' duration. Life Skills learners can attend additional training and gain accreditation in health and safety, food hygiene and basic first aid. If clients or learners are identified as having literacy or numeracy needs, additional support is made available.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Life Skills																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	25		25		21											
Retained*	15		21	84	14	67										
Successfully completed	1		8	32	0	0										
Still in learning	20		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



New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	522		1237		197					
Retained*	117	22	566	46	102	52				
Planned learning completed	82	16	342	28	81	41				
Gained job	60	11	282	23	52	26				
Still in training	297	57	16	1	0	0				

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

Programme Centres										
Programme Centres										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	676		1948		298					
Planned learning completed	244	36	615	32	95	32				
Gained job	77	11	395	20	80	27				
Still in training	188	28	2	0	0	0				

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	128		189		6					
Retained*	32	25	106	56	4	67				
Planned learning completed	12	9	54	29	0	0				
Gained job	23	18	76	40	2	33				
Still in training	46	36	2	0	0	0				

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

## STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good learning environments
- good training in Life Skills and programme centres
- good and increasing retention rate on Life Skills

- comprehensive initial assessment on Life Skills and on one ESOL programme

## **WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient involvement of employers in the BET programme
- inadequate planning of learning
- some inadequate learning resources for BET clients
- low and declining job entry rates on programme centres

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more appropriate course paperwork for learners
- better keyboard training for learners

60. Learners are given good support. Tutors develop good relationships with their learners which help them to settle into, and make progress with, their learning. The self-assessment report identified well-motivated and dedicated tutors as a strength. There are generous staffing ratios in some classes. Learners on the Life Skills programme make rapid progress. Learners' progress is reviewed regularly. Some training centres have good links with a range of organisations to which learners can be referred for help with drugs misuse, housing and other problems. Some advice leaflets are produced in languages other than English. Some tutors are able to speak several languages, which helps learners who have a poor command of English or who are learning English for the first time. However, this can mean that some learners do not practise their English sufficiently. Many learners express considerable satisfaction with their studies. They comment on their increasing confidence and on their ability to work with other learners. They also believe their training will enable them to obtain paid employment and improve their lifestyles.

61. Learners have attractive learning environments in which to work. There is a range of pleasant training rooms which are light and brightly decorated with well-displayed wall posters. The successes of previous learners are displayed on posters, with case studies and details of their employment. Some rooms are equipped with computers, reference books, newspapers, stationery and a photocopier. Learners have tea- and coffee-making facilities. Most training centres are accessible to learners who have mobility difficulties. Accommodation is arranged in a professional and work-focused manner.

62. All the Life Skills and programme centre training observed was good or better. Lessons are thoroughly planned and prepared. There is a wide variety of good-quality handouts. Staff use a range of effective teaching methods and resources. Subjects are presented in ways that are thought-provoking and stimulating. Sessions are lively and

interesting. There are good levels of participation by learners. Good use is made of learners' experience, and learners are given positive feedback. Training staff have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. The self-assessment report identifies the Life Skills programme as a strength in the foundation provision.

63. There is comprehensive initial assessment for learners on Life Skills training and on one ESOL programme, covering literacy, numeracy and wider personal skills. In Life Skills, good use is made of a computer-based initial assessment programme to identify levels of motivation and attitudes at the start of the programme. Learners respond positively to initial assessment and subsequent analysis of their answers. This provides a good basis from which learners' programmes can be planned. Learners are retested on completion of the programme to measure their progress. On one ESOL programme, learners are required to complete a range of written tasks and then they are interviewed by a tutor. Their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are assessed. The results of the assessments provide tutors with helpful information which can be used to plan learners' programmes.

64. The retention rate on the Life Skills programme is good and increasing. During 2001-02, 84 per cent of learners were retained. This was an increase of 18 per cent on the previous year. Achievements on Life Skills programmes are satisfactory, with 32 per cent of learners successfully completing the programme.

65. There is insufficient involvement of employers in the BET programme. Employers do not help TNG to plan the BET programme. If the content of the programmes is not matched to local job opportunities and employers' requirements, this affects learners' chances of obtaining work. The self-assessment report refers to the need to raise the understanding of employers about the needs of learners on foundation programmes. TNG's BET programme is poorly designed. It does not integrate learning in the training centres with work on employers' premises. Too much time is spent in the training centres before any work experience is introduced. Learners who are studying English as an additional language need regular practise throughout their course. Some of these learners have 10 weeks in a work placement and no language tutoring in the training centre. Employers do not visit training centres to talk to learners about job-related topics or to help them with their jobsearch activities. Learners do not have opportunities to shadow employees in various workplaces for short periods to obtain first-hand experience of the occupations that they may wish to enter. Some training centres provide insufficient commercial work placements and rely too much on voluntary placements. The difficulty of obtaining suitable work placements is identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. However, one of TNG's training centres has very good links with employers. Employers are invited into the centre to talk to learners about current vacancies, and work placements are organised as work trials leading to employment. Work placements are made available to learners on all programmes. Learners are actively marketed to local employers by TNG.

66. Some learning is poorly planned and ineffectively taught. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report. The results of initial assessment are not used to plan

individual learning programmes. Individual learning plans do not contain detailed long- and short-term targets and completion dates. Learners do not have copies of their learning plans and are unaware of the targets they are working towards. Life skills learners do not always have basic skills' learning plans. There is too much class teaching and too little individual learning. Learners are given too little opportunity to progress at their own speed and work on activities matched to their individual needs and levels of attainment. Individual learning is particularly important when learners can join programmes at any time. Learners sometimes go over the same topic two or three times, which contributes little or nothing to their personal and occupational development. Some class teaching is insufficiently challenging and some learners do not make adequate progress. Although they are given project work to do in the training centres and at home, some of this is unrelated to their job prospects. In some centres there is too much reliance on project work. In some BET sessions there is insufficient reference to the workplace and learners are not helped to link what they are studying with the world of work. Too little time is devoted to developing learners' computer skills. Sixty-eight per cent of the foundation training sessions observed were satisfactory or better. Thirty-two per cent of sessions, however, were unsatisfactory or poor. Some progress reviews are ineffective. Some reviews are not carried out in accordance with the Jobcentre Plus contract. Some parts of the reviews are incomplete, and learners are not given copies of their review forms. Some review paperwork is difficult to read, and some contains spelling and grammatical errors.

67. Learning resources on the BET programme are inadequate. There are too few computers in learning centres. Some of them are old and they process information slowly. Insufficient importance is attached to equipping learners with basic computing skills to improve their job prospects. Keyboard training is neglected, and learners acquire incorrect keyboarding techniques. There are insufficient literacy and numeracy CD-ROMs in learning centres. There are insufficient audio and visual resources for learners who are learning English as an additional language. Learners find working through photocopied worksheets monotonous. The range of basic skills textbooks is limited and there are too few class sets for learners to use at the training centres or at home. There are too few basic skills resources related to specific occupations. The shortage of resources was not identified in the self-assessment report.

68. There are satisfactory rates of progress in to jobs for learners on New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. There are very good job entry rates at one centre which provides a specific ESOL programme for learners from Turkey. However, there are low and declining job entry rates at programme centres. The numbers of learners gaining jobs decreased from 27 per cent to 20 per cent between 2000-01 and 2001-02. TNG is reducing its programme centre provision.

### Good Practice

*One training centre runs a BET programme for Turkish learners, some of whom have recently arrived in Britain. During their programme, learners are given opportunities to improve their English language and to develop their jobsearch skills. Those learners who wish to have a work placement are placed with local employers after approximately 16 weeks of training. Between 1 August 2001 and 31 July 2002, 42 per cent of the learners obtained paid employment. The programme gave them a very good opportunity to restart their careers in England.*