

INSPECTION REPORT

Total People Limited

11 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
- **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

Total People Limited is a company limited by guarantee, set up in March 2001. Its headquarters is in Macclesfield in Cheshire and it has further training centres in Macclesfield and Crewe in Cheshire, and in Burslem in Staffordshire. It provides work-based learning for young people in construction and electrical installation, in engineering, motor vehicle and manufacturing, in business administration, accounts, management and professional, in retailing, distribution, warehousing and customer service, in social care, childcare and oral health care, in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in hospitality. It also provides Life Skills programmes, and training for New Deal clients in the voluntary sector. Young people work towards a wide variety of modern apprenticeship frameworks and national vocational qualifications (NVQs).

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. There is good training in construction, in business administration, management and professional, in health, social care and oral health care, in hairdressing and beauty therapy, in hospitality and in Life Skills. Training in engineering, technology and manufacturing, and retailing, warehousing and customer service is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the work-based learning at Total People Limited are good, as are its quality assurance and equality of opportunity.

GRADES

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

Construction	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

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

TOTAL PEOPLE LIMITED

Business administration, management & professional	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
New Deal 18-24	None

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Hairdressing & beauty therapy	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2
Life Skills	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good training
- good assessment practices
- good support for learners
- good links with employers, work-placement providers and other organisations
- good use of management information
- good staff induction and development
- effective quality assurance arrangements
- good promotion of training to under-represented groups

KEY WEAKNESSES

- some low rates of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- some ineffective management of subcontracted provision and programmes
- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better monitoring and recording of learners' progress

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 24 inspectors spent a total of 152 days at Total People Limited (Total People) during a three-week period in March 2003. Inspectors visited 148 employers' premises where they interviewed 367 learners and 127 supervisors or managers. They examined learners' files and 270 portfolios of evidence. They visited all Total People's training centres, and the centres of 16 subcontractors, where they interviewed 34 of the subcontractors' staff. A total of 186 interviews were conducted with Total People's staff. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report and development plan and a wide range of other evidence including, the strategic plans, business plans, quality assurance policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, contracts, and internal and external verification reports. Inspectors observed many progress reviews and assessments, and 31 learning sessions.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	6
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	1	2	4	1	0	0	0	8
Health, social care & public services	1	2	4	1	0	0	0	8
Foundation programmes	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	6
Total	2	11	10	8	0	0	0	31

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Total People was formed in 2001 from the direct training delivery department of the South and East Cheshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). It has 160 staff, and a board of directors who have experience in the private and public sectors. Its headquarters is in Middleswich, Cheshire, and it has additional training centres in Macclesfield, Burslem and Crewe, and an engineering workshop in a college of further education in Crewe. It has contracts with Cheshire and Warrington and Staffordshire Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) to provide work-based learning for young people, and with Jobcentre Plus to provide New Deal training. There are 2,175 learners working in over 1,450 different companies. Total People works with local sites of large international companies as well as small- and medium-sized enterprises. Total People subcontracts some training to 30 different local colleges of further education. Most off-the-job training in construction, engineering and accounts is subcontracted and so is some off-the-job training in hairdressing and hospitality. Off-the-job training in early years care, oral health care, administration, and Life Skills takes place in Total People's own training centres.

3. In May 2002, the unemployment rate in Cheshire was 1.9 per cent and in Staffordshire it was 2.5 per cent. The average rate for England was 3 per cent. At the time of the 1991 census, the proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups was 0.9 per cent in Cheshire, 1.4 per cent in Staffordshire and 6.3 per cent nationally. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers gaining general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 55.8 per cent in Cheshire, 48.1 per cent in Staffordshire and 47.9 per cent nationally.

Work-based learning for young people

4. Achievement rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks in construction and engineering are good. However, they have been low in business administration, accounts, retailing, customer service and warehousing, hospitality, hairdressing, health care, childcare, and oral health care. In many of these areas, improvements have been made and over 90 per cent of the current year's learners are still in training. Learners' work is of a high standard and they often carry out complex tasks and activities with high levels of responsibility early on in their programmes.

5. Training both on and off the job is good in all occupational areas. Total People's staff work very closely and effectively with employers, subcontractors and learners to ensure training is planned and delivered to meet individual learners' needs. The resources at Total People's training centres and most subcontractors are good. Assessment practices are generally thorough. Assessments are planned effectively with learners and employers, and detailed verbal and written feedback is given to learners after assessments. Nearly all learners are observed in the workplace by their assessors, and detailed reports are written and cross-referenced to the NVQ standards. Total People's internal verification is comprehensive and thorough. Reviews of progress are generally good. However, not all are as detailed as they need to be, and in some cases there is insufficient involvement of employers and few clear targets are set. Learners receive very high levels of support from Total People's training advisers and from their employers. There is good additional support for learners from basic skills specialists, some of whom have relevant occupational knowledge and experience. There is also good additional support from a specialist team of key skills trainers and assessors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

6. Total People is managed by a chief executive who reports to a board of directors. The chief executive and five of the nine managers are responsible for training and training-related areas, while the deputy chief executive and the four remaining managers run the financial, administrative and support services. Training is divided into 15 occupational areas, each with a programme co-ordinator. There are 126 training advisers and 2,175 learners. Most training advisers are qualified NVQ assessors and many are qualified internal verifiers. Some of the training advisers are based at a college in Crewe and at Life Skills centres at Macclesfield, Crewe and Burslem. There are 20 administrative and support staff. Total People has detailed quality assurance and equal opportunities policies and procedures that cover all aspects of its work. It holds the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, and ISO9000/2000, an international quality assurance standard. The company's most recent self-assessment report was published in September 2002. Self-assessment is part of the company's strategic and business planning process.

STRENGTHS

- good, well-linked business, self-assessment and strategic planning
- good management of training
- good staff induction and development
- good use of management information
- good links and partnerships with other organisations
- comprehensive and effective complaints and anti-harassment procedures
- good promotion of training to under-represented groups
- effective quality assurance arrangement

WEAKNESSES

- some ineffective management of subcontracted provision
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better monitoring of learners' progress

7. Total People has good business planning, self-assessment and strategic planning which are closely linked. With the clear and effective guidance of senior managers, occupational area teams produce their own business plans which contribute to the company's overall business plan. The plans include detailed targets for learners' recruitment, retention and achievement, with measurable milestones to be achieved

TOTAL PEOPLE LIMITED

during the year. The progress made towards achieving the targets for retention and achievement rates are effectively discussed and actions are planned at each monthly team meeting. Staff begin self-assessment with a detailed review of their sector business plan for the previous year. They then begin their self-assessment and development plans for the coming year. The focus is clearly on improving the experience for all learners and increasing the retention and achievement rates. The directors and managers decide the strategic direction of the company. All staff contribute to identifying the key strategic issues. The strategic plan sets out the company's strategic objectives, financial targets and accommodation needs, and includes likely areas of risk.

8. Training is well planned and managed. Vocational and Life Skills training are effectively managed by one of three senior managers. Each occupational area has a well-qualified programme co-ordinator whose responsibilities include the registration of learners, the administration of learners' records, the allocation and training of assessors, internal verification and liaising with external verifiers. The programme co-ordinators ensure the assessors and training advisers support the learners appropriately. Programme co-ordinators also carry out some assessments of learners, but they do not manage staff. All occupational teams meet formally each month to discuss their progress towards their business plan targets. Equal opportunities, health and safety and administration are standing agenda items at these meetings, which are well attended and carefully managed. Programme co-ordinators meet the quality assurance manager every two months to discuss specific issues relating to quality assurance. Every four months the managers review the progress of the company, and each occupational area, against the business and strategic plans, including the retention and achievement targets. Good quality data are used at all the meetings, and the progress of individual learners is discussed.

9. Total People has appointed almost 100 staff in the past two years. During their first six months, all new staff are given a good, well-planned induction. New members of staff are introduced to the company's vision, mission and values, and the policies and procedures for health and safety, quality assurance and equal opportunities. New members of staff are allocated a mentor to guide them through the first months in their new job and to provide good levels of support. They are also enrolled onto a number of training courses including information technology (IT) and health and safety. During induction, managers agree targets with staff and identify their training and development needs. There are regular constructive reviews of progress for new staff throughout their probation.

10. The company provides good development and training for staff. Every year, staff members complete a competence assessment and are interviewed by their senior manager to identify their development needs. They can also request training at other times. A training development adviser logs all staff development requests and arranges the appropriate training. Training advisers attend good internal courses on conducting progress reviews, time management, business planning, sales and assertiveness. They are also thoroughly trained in assessment and internal verification. Most staff development is intended to meet the business needs of the company and more

specifically, the needs of the learners. Staff are also supported to attend courses that do not have immediate business benefits. Some staff are attending further and higher education courses to meet their own development needs.

11. The company has a computerised management information system that is used well to manage contracts and training. During learners' progress reviews and assessment visits, training advisers collect a range of useful data. These are checked and entered weekly onto the management information system. The system is up to date and reliable. A good range of data reports are produced for a variety of uses including managing the LSC contract, managing training, and monitoring which qualifications have been claimed and issued. Managers and training advisers can use the company's intranet to access data on learners. Reports are produced each month for use at occupational team meetings to evaluate learners' progress and manage the learners who have gone beyond their funding period. Data are also effectively used by managers in their three-yearly review of the company's performance.

12. Total People has very good relationships with local colleges, companies and statutory bodies. It has detailed contracts with 10 further education colleges which each provide off-the-job training for more than 10 learners, and clear agreements with 20 colleges which provide training for fewer than 10 learners each. Some of Total People's engineering training staff are based at one subcontracted college. The company is in the early stages of negotiations to provide all this college's practical engineering training, and will contribute to the cost of the college's new training facilities. Total People regularly conducts employer satisfaction surveys, and analyses of these influences the company's planning. The company also has good relationships with the two local LSCs and with Connexions. In 2002, Total People worked with an employer, the local LSC and other agencies to provide additional funding to ensure that 15 advanced modern apprentices could complete their training. These learners would otherwise have been made redundant following a decline in the fortunes of their employer.

13. Total People does not always manage its subcontracted training effectively. In some colleges learners have complained about the quality of teaching. In some, key skills training has not been introduced at the start of programmes or has not been properly integrated with them. In others, poor assessment and internal verification by colleges have had the potential to prevent learners achieving their intended learning goal. Total People's training advisers and managers have brought most of these issues to the attention of college staff, but improvements have not always resulted.

14. Learners' progress is not always monitored well. Some learners on childcare and retail programmes have been in training for as long as a year without completing any NVQ units. Although learners' progress has been reviewed and they have been assessed regularly, assessment has not led to the achievement of a whole unit. For many learners, achievement of a unit early in their programme is an incentive to further success. At one college, a number of construction learners are making slow progress towards completing their level 2 NVQ portfolios. These learners are left for long periods without support and guidance from a tutor to help them assemble work-based evidence

TOTAL PEOPLE LIMITED

and build their portfolios.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 2**

15. Total People has an effective equal opportunities policy. It is clearly identified in the business plan, and in the handbooks for learners, staff and employers. The policy has recently been updated to reflect changes in legislation, and covers harassment, discrimination, bullying and victimisation. The quality assurance manager has overall responsibility for equal opportunities. Equality of opportunity is discussed at monthly meetings of staff and management, and is part of learners' satisfaction surveys and questionnaires. There is a clear equal opportunities strategy with improvement targets, objectives, timescales and responsibilities that are monitored by the senior management team during quarterly reviews. Equal opportunities data are used effectively to ensure improvements in equality and diversity. A highly responsive marketing team works closely with each occupational area to produce sector-specific promotional and training materials.

16. There are comprehensive and effective complaints and harassment procedures. Learners are aware of the procedures and feel confident about discussing any issues with their training advisers. Training advisers recommend appropriate specialist agencies to learners who are experiencing personal problems. Total People deals quickly and sensitively with issues raised by learners and employers. Inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated and Total People ensures learners are protected from all forms of harassment. During the inspection, one learner and the training adviser were subjected to verbal harassment. The quality assurance manager contacted the learner's employer and quickly and successfully resolved the issue. Total People has run equality and diversity workshops and mentoring training for employers. The employers' surveys now include questions on equality and diversity. Total People's checklists for potential work placements have been expanded to include an equal opportunities section.

17. Total People has a strong commitment to providing effective training for disadvantaged and under-represented people. It is involved in several innovative projects that reflect this commitment. One initiative, supported by two large local engineering and manufacturing companies, is aimed at improving the gender balance in engineering. Promotional literature has been produced, and there has been a half-day workshop to promote engineering to women learners. Total People has worked effectively with Staffordshire LSC to open a new Life Skills centre in the north of the county. This is part of the strategy to increase participation by people from minority ethnic groups by two per cent, and is on track to meet its targets in the first year. Total People runs a programme providing work placements for year 10 and 11 students who have been excluded or referred by their school. The company is committed to improving progression rates from this to other learning programmes by 20 per cent. Total People is part of a Northwest regional project to offer engineering NVQs to adult learners. The company has extensive links with external agencies, such as support and community groups. A senior member of staff is a member of the local LSC's equality and diversity forum. These valuable links have helped Total People to share knowledge and experience with other training providers and with agencies dealing with different aspects of equality of opportunity.

18. There is insufficient reinforcement of, and training in, equality of opportunity for some learners. Equality of opportunity is included in the induction programmes for staff and learners. Learners' progress reviews are not always used to reinforce equal opportunities or to check that employers' practices are appropriate. In care and childcare, equality and diversity are an integral part of the training programme. A simple and very effective guide to equal opportunities has been developed for Life Skills learners. However, systematic reinforcement does not take place in all areas of learning. In engineering, learners' understanding of equal opportunities is not reinforced during reviews and the subject has only recently appeared on review documents.

19. At most training centres, access for learners with restricted mobility is satisfactory. However, at the Burslem centre access is particularly poor. Total People does have policies and procedures for supporting people with restricted mobility who cannot access the training centre. The company responds to the additional needs of its learners and provides special equipment if required.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 2**

20. Total People has a clear commitment to quality assurance. Quality assurance is the responsibility of a senior operations manager. The company's first strategic aim is 'to ensure the highest quality of delivery against nationally recognised standards'. Its quality improvement strategy has clear targets to be achieved between 2002 and 2005.

Flowcharts illustrating quality assurance procedures for most aspects of the company's work are available on the intranet, as are standard forms for recording training, assessment and internal verification. The company has trained some assessors and internal verifiers to carry out annual audits of the quality assurance procedures. Written audit reports are fed back to staff at team meetings. Feedback from learners and employers is used systematically as part of the quality assurance arrangements.

21. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the quality assurance manager. Self-assessment, business planning and strategic planning are good. All staff are involved in self-assessment and it is conducted annually as part of the business and strategic planning cycles. At a self-assessment workshop all staff were introduced to the 'Common Inspection Framework'. They were required to evaluate their work and that of the company by proposing strengths and weaknesses in small groups and then discussing them with the whole staff. Training staff were required to analyse and evaluate learners' retention and achievement data as part of this exercise. All staff were also asked to evaluate leadership and management in the same way and share their findings with colleagues. The outcomes of the event were collated and fed back to the staff. The company's resulting self-assessment report is an accurate reflection of each vocational area, although in most cases the strengths have been underestimated. The staff have correctly identified the weaknesses and are working effectively to remedy them and improve the provision for the learners. The monthly team meetings ensure retention and achievement rates are reviewed regularly and progress towards achieving the targets is continuously evaluated.

22. The company's assessment and internal verification procedures are good, and they are clearly outlined in the quality assurance management system. The training adviser agrees an assessment plan with each learner. Each assessment visit is agreed with the learner and their employer. Assessment decisions are well recorded and carefully cross-referenced to awarding body requirements. The recording of assessment decisions and feedback given to learners is good. Internal verification is also good. Most internal verification is planned with assessors and carried out by the programme co-ordinator. Internal verification records, including monitoring reports, activity plans and sampling reports, are detailed and well maintained. Internal verifiers and assessors meet regularly to review assessment practice and ensure standardisation of assessment decisions. Assessors' training needs are identified through internal verification, and training is organised by the company. The internal verification for manufacturing qualifications failed to identify some poor assessment practices by an assessor who has now left the company.

Good Practice

Total People runs one-day workshops for employers who wish to train as mentors for modern apprentices. The workshop covers the modern apprenticeship frameworks, the roles of all the people involved in the apprenticeship programme, and an introduction to and guidance on the practical skills required by an effective mentor. There are currently 85 trained mentors in seven different occupational areas.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	353	2

23. Total People has 353 learners on construction programmes, of whom 247 are advanced modern apprentices, 90 are foundation modern apprentices and 16 are following NVQ programmes. All the modern apprentices are employed and most NVQ learners have work placements. Employers range from large national companies to small businesses employing fewer than ten people, and include local authorities and housing associations. Learners gain experience of new building work, refurbishment, extension work and maintenance. The main trade areas covered are trowel occupations, carpentry and joinery, wood machining, decorative occupations, electrical installation, roofing, scaffolding and window installation. There are also programmes for surveying, architectural, and civil engineering technicians. The largest programmes are electrical installation with 130 learners, carpentry and joinery with 86 learners and bricklaying and masonry with 51 learners. Learners are trained in background knowledge and key skills by subcontracted colleges. Most learners are referred to Total People by Connexions, the Construction Industry Training Board or their employers. All learners have an initial assessment of their basic and key skills. Some are also given an aptitude test. The test results form the basis of their individual learning plans. All learners have an induction at college and at their workplace. This includes health and safety, equal opportunities, the modern apprenticeship framework requirements, and company policies and practices. Training advisers carry out learners' progress reviews at work every eight weeks. They also assess learners and monitor health and safety in the workplace. All training advisers are occupationally competent and appropriately qualified. Most learners gather evidence for their modern apprenticeship framework at work.

TOTAL PEOPLE LIMITED

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		1996-97			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	73		99		93		81		74		94		12			
Retained*	0		7		15		23	28	29	39	50	53	10	83		
Successfully completed	0		7		14		21	26	28	38	42	45	10	83		
Still in learning	70		73		50		27	33	17	23	10	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

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	55		51		22		28		20		5					
Retained*	0		1		6	27	16	57	13	65	3	60				
Successfully completed	0		1		5	23	16	57	11	55	3	60				
Still in learning	48		34		5	23	3	11	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		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		12		14		9		29		10					
Retained*	0		1	8	13	93	7	78	21	72	8	80				
Successfully completed	0		1	8	11	79	7	78	19	66	8	80				
Still in learning	7		7	58	2	14	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

- outstanding support for learners
- good retention and achievement rates
- good training
- good assessment practices

WEAKNESSES

- some weak target-setting at learners' progress reviews
- insufficiently broad range of on-the-job learning opportunities for some learners

24. Total People's staff give outstanding support to learners. Staff visit learners frequently at construction sites and college. There are monthly meetings between staff from Total People and the subcontracted colleges, which are fully documented. Information gained on college visits and during meetings is used to monitor learners' progress. Most of Total People's construction training staff are qualified assessors and internal verifiers. Newly appointed staff are working towards these qualifications. Many members of staff are qualified to teach key skills, and most have health and safety qualifications. A few are qualified teachers who teach part time in further education colleges. All construction staff hold appropriate occupational qualifications and have extensive industrial experience. Learners are encouraged to maintain contact with training staff between visits, and to call outside normal office hours if they have problems. All learners sit basic skills tests, and the results are fed back to them. Learners needing additional basic skills support are quickly identified, and support is provided promptly and sensitively. Where learners need specific support in other areas this is provided by appropriately qualified staff.

25. There are good rates of retention and achievement. In most years, two thirds of foundation modern apprentices have been retained or are still in learning. For advanced modern apprentices, the proportion retained or still in learning is slightly lower at an average of 60 per cent between 1997 and 2001. The achievement rate for advanced modern apprentices was 45 per cent in 1997-98 and 11 per cent are still in training. The potential achievement rates for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 is around 60 per cent for all modern apprenticeship programmes, with a quarter of learners still in training and progressing well.

26. There is good training both on and off the job. Most employers have a good understanding of learners' programmes, and some of them have taught part time in the colleges. They are enthusiastic, supportive and committed to their training obligations. Learners gain good, varied on-the-job experience. Most of them have a wide range of opportunities to develop skills by taking responsibility for challenging tasks in their workplaces, under the supervision of experienced and carefully selected mentors. Learners frequently carry out tasks in their workplace which are above the level, or even outside the scope, of their NVQs. This is highly valued both by learners and their employers. Learners produce good practical work at college, and carry out work on site to industry standards. Most off-the-job training is well planned, flexible and responds both to learners' and employers' needs. Learners can join their programmes at any time

of the year. Their learning needs are met by the good use of work packs and the setting of individual tasks and targets. Learners can negotiate the combination of background knowledge and practical work that best suits their abilities and needs. Most employers are small businesses or sole operators, and they often need their learners at short notice or for extended periods to complete particular jobs, making it difficult for them to attend training sessions. Employers often ask that learners be taught specific skills to suit the jobs in hand, and they appreciate Total People's positive response to this. In some cases, where learners cannot gain the full range of experience and skills with their own employer, they may be given the opportunity to do so with another employer. Training advisers, tutors and employers work hard to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training and identify opportunities for workplace experience. Learning resources at the colleges are good. Workshops and classroom areas are generally well equipped with tools, materials, teaching aids, work packs, textbooks and trade literature. College staff are well qualified and committed to providing consistent, good quality teaching and support.

27. Total People's assessment practice is good. Learners following NVQs in electrical installations are observed and assessed entirely on the job. Although learners in most of the other construction trades are assessed at college, every opportunity is taken to assess them on the job. Assessment is well planned and systematically and promptly carried out as soon as learners are ready. Learners receive good, timely feedback on their background knowledge and practical work. There is good recording and monitoring of assessment and achievement. Detailed weekly schemes of work indicate how and when practical work and background knowledge are provided, together with the methods of assessment. In brickwork, learners have an individual learning plan and assessment programme which shows exactly where they have got to with each unit of their NVQ. Learners regularly and diligently collect good quality, varied evidence of experience gained at work. Training advisers, employers and tutors play a full part in helping learners to make good use of this evidence for their NVQ. Surveying and civil engineering technician learners are visited every four weeks by their assessor, who helps them to compile their portfolios of evidence and provides prompt and helpful written feedback after each visit.

28. There is some weak target-setting at learners' progress reviews. Some targets are unchallenging. They do not include timescales or measures of achievement. A carpentry and joinery learner who has dyslexia has made exceptional progress by achieving the intermediate construction award. He has gained good on-site experience and progressed rapidly through his practical assignments at college, completing them well in advance of his peers. However, early completion has left him with nothing to do during his off-the-job training sessions. He is no longer making progress and has not been offered help to complete his portfolio of evidence. Total People has recently run a series of staff training events on learners' reviews, and more are planned.

29. Some work placements for carpentry, joinery and brickwork learners offer restricted opportunities to gather evidence of competence. Opportunities are not always available to gain experience for first and second fixing, flat and pitched roofing and for

laying brickwork and blockwork. Whilst employers are very supportive of on-the-job training, work is not planned well enough to ensure that learners are employed on sites that will give them the best opportunity to gain the necessary site-based evidence.

Good Practice

Staff at Total People have developed an excellent key skills assignment for use by all construction learners. It involves interpreting a construction specification, researching appropriate methods of carrying out the work, analysing data and estimating the project costs. In addition, learners have to produce a report of how they would organise the project, a written estimate for the client and a programme of work. They are then required to prepare and present a talk to the rest of the group.

Poor Practice

There was poor health and safety practice at one workplace. In September 2001 the employer had an action plan to register with the Health and Safety Executive. In March 2003 this action was still outstanding. The workshops were generally untidy and unsafe. Some machinery did not have appropriate safety notices. Empty gas containers were stored in the workshop close to machines and wood shavings. A learner was observed using a wood-cutting machine without eye protection. The safety goggles available next to the machine were unusable.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	557	3

30. There are 557 engineering, technology and manufacturing learners, of whom 458 are advanced modern apprentices, 71 are foundation modern apprentices, and 28 are following NVQ programmes. Total People offers training in the general occupations of engineering production, engineering maintenance, engineering design and technical services, performing manufacturing operations, performing engineering operations and the specialists areas of motor vehicle maintenance and repair, vehicle mechanical and electronic systems maintenance, vehicle body and paint operations and aircraft engineering maintenance. Learners are employed in local businesses ranging from large international companies manufacturing advanced products, through to small, highly specialised motor vehicle garages.

31. Most advanced modern apprenticeships have a planned duration of three to four years. Learners complete an engineering foundation qualification at level 2 during the first year of their programme, either by block or day release at local colleges of further education or at Total People's training centre at a further education college in Crewe. Aircraft maintenance modern apprentices are recruited at the end of a two- to three-year full-time college course, having completed a level 2 NVQ, key skills and a vocational qualification in aircraft engineering. Most learners follow craft or national certificate programmes and key skills programmes as part of their modern apprenticeship framework. This training is provided either by Total People, or a subcontractor. Learners have the opportunity to pursue qualifications to higher national certificate level and beyond. All aircraft maintenance learners work towards an aircraft engineers' licence. Most on-the-job training is provided by employers. NVQ assessments are carried out in the workplace by Total People's training advisers, subcontractors, or qualified work-based assessors. Training advisers meet learners at least every eight weeks to review their progress.

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	120		212		147		129		120		123					
Retained*	0		5		5		38		76	63	97	79				
Successfully completed	0		5		5		34		74	62	89	72				
Still in learning	118		161		108		51		12	10	8	7				

*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	29		25		40		32		17		1					
Retained*	0		0		9		17	53	11	65	1	100				
Successfully completed	0		0		6		8	25	8	47	1	100				
Still in learning	28		15		21		5	16	2	12	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		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	17		4		11		85		92		106					
Retained*	0		1		3		57	67	69	75	72	68				
Successfully completed	0		1		3		55	65	65	71	70	66				
Still in learning	17		1		2		8	9	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 training
- good support for learners
- good retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices

WEAKNESSES

- poor review practices
- poorly managed programmes in performing manufacturing operations and aircraft maintenance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better linking of on- and off-the-job training on motor vehicle programmes

32. Total People provides good training. Many employers plan training to ensure that learners get a good range of experiences and can gather the evidence needed for their NVQ. Learners are trained quickly by experienced staff. Early in their programmes they are operating advanced equipment under supervision. Many employers take a keen interest in the training programmes and encourage learners to carry out work activities over and above the requirements of the NVQ. Employers also fund a range of additional specialist courses, higher national certificates and higher national diplomas for learners. Some learners have the opportunity to progress to degree level.

33. Most engineering modern apprentices complete level 2 NVQs in performing engineering operations, through day or block release. Training is given by Total People at its engineering workshop in a local college, or by other subcontracted colleges. The training programmes are well structured to cover electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, design, and fabrication and welding. Many learners achieve additional NVQ units and additional qualifications in response to employers' needs for multi-skilled engineers. Learners are trained and assessed by suitably qualified and experienced instructors. They speak highly of their experience at the training centre. They gain good engineering skills and knowledge, which their employers value. Total People's training accommodation is good. Workshops are well-laid-out and equipped with a range of well-maintained machinery, workbenches, and welding bays. There are good resources for training in computer-aided design.

34. Most learners begin their training at the start of the academic year, although they can start at any time. General engineering and motor vehicle modern apprentices attend local colleges to gain the necessary background knowledge. Most of the teaching and learning is good, but the links between on- and off-the-job training in motor vehicle programmes are not always fully effective. Individual learning plans and action plans for motor vehicle learners identify their expected completion dates, but individual NVQ units and assessments are not always planned separately. Aircraft maintenance learners attend college full time, achieving a formal qualification in aerospace engineering, and an NVQ and key skills at level 2. At the end of their college course they are recruited by employers and begin their modern apprenticeship training with Total People. They receive good training towards a level 3 NVQ and an aircraft

engineer's licence at a local subcontracted college.

35. Key skills training and assessment are provided by Total People or its subcontractors. Good use is made of evidence from the NVQ portfolios and college assignments. Some employers use outdoor education courses to further develop learners' key skills. For learners who have been on programmes for three or more years, key skills training has not been integrated with vocational training. Training advisers are helping these learners to use their existing NVQ evidence for their key skill awards. Most learners demonstrate good communication skills and have a good grasp of the programme they are on and of the assessment process. Many portfolios are constructed well by the learners. They contain good quality, diverse evidence and learners take great pride in them.

36. There is good support for learners from experienced and qualified staff and employers. Staff offer a high level of pastoral care, and have a good rapport with learners and employers alike. Many employers give learners additional support, such as weekly meetings with a senior manager, to encourage their progress. Time is allowed for portfolio work. There are regular meetings of Total People's staff, college staff, employers and learners which have resulted in clearly identified changes to training. Total People provides evening classes for advanced modern apprentices who are unable to attend day release or who are near the end of their programmes and need extra support to complete their portfolios. Total People has developed a level 1 NVQ in tyre fitting and valeting for disadvantaged learners or those with additional support needs. The Life Skills team works with the motor vehicle training advisers to provide additional support for these learners. Many of them go on to full-time employment and take NVQs at level 2.

37. The provision of literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. All learners are given an initial assessment, covering their key skills and training needs. Where appropriate, the basic skills tutor will carry out a computer-based diagnostic assessment to identify any additional learning needs. Some learners on engineering programmes have additional learning needs. They are referred to Total People's basic skills team or a local subcontractor for appropriate support.

38. The retention rate for advanced modern apprentices is good. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. For learners who started programmes in 1997-98, the rate was 79 per cent and for 1998-99 it is 63 per cent with 10 per cent of learners still in training. Over 90 per cent of those who complete the programme achieve the full modern apprenticeship framework. The overall achievement rate in 1997-98 was 72 per cent and in 1998-99 it was 62 per cent. For foundation modern apprentices who started programmes in 1998-99, retention and achievement rates were satisfactory, although they declined in 1999-2000. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners have declined, as has recruitment onto the programme. Foundation modern apprentices make up 13 per cent of the total engineering learners, and NVQ learners 5 per cent.

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39. There is poor review practice. Although they take place frequently, learners' progress reviews are seldom used to set targets which are challenging or measurable, or which encourage completion of NVQ units. Much of the comment on review documents focuses on past activities rather than future objectives. One learner had eight reviews containing the same action point. Individual learning plans are not updated as a result of the reviews. The written feedback is minimal although learners comment favourably on the verbal feedback. Learners' and employers' comments are rarely in evidence on the review forms. Employers are not always actively involved in the progress reviews and often just sign the form. A few employers are unaware of the targets set and do not support the learners in achieving them.

40. There is poor management of training programmes in performing manufacturing operations and aircraft maintenance. In one company, on-the-job training in aircraft maintenance is well planned and includes secondments to a wide range of other organisations to cover the full range of skills required. However, for most other learners there is little planning of on-the-job training. Learners do not always have clearly identified supervisors. Learners' progress is reviewed by Total People every eight weeks, by the subcontracted college every 12 weeks, and by their employer at varying intervals. Each review results in a different action plan for the learners. The different reviews overlap and confuse learners. Employers and learners are unclear about the role of Total People in the management of the programme. The monitoring of subcontracted provision is weak. The subcontractor has few qualified assessors, and a qualified assessor does not always countersign the assessments carried out by unqualified assessors. The evidence in learners' portfolios is often inadequate to demonstrate competent performance, and is not always valid and reliable. Work-based assessors do not routinely take part in standardisation meetings. These problems were reported by the external verifier 11 months ago, but have not yet been resolved. Learners in one company are following NVQs in performing manufacturing operations. They are six months into their programme but have not received an introduction to key skills, and have had little contact with their assessor. Another group of learners working towards performing manufacturing operations, some of whom have been on the programme for more than two years, have not achieved any units of the NVQ. They have had very little meaningful assessment, and have gathered little work-based evidence. There has been no cross-referencing of the evidence to identify any gaps or to measure their progress towards completion of the NVQ.

Good Practice

Evening classes were held to provide background knowledge for a learner whose employer was unable to release him for college during the daytime.

Poor Practice

One learner on a motor vehicle programme was not given accreditation for some prior learning. The learner was entered for key skills exams at college even though he did not need the qualification.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	255	2

41. Total People has 255 learners on business administration, management and professional training programmes, of whom 102 are advanced modern apprentices, 130 are foundation modern apprentices and 23 are following NVQ programmes. There are nine management learners, 142 learners on business administration programmes and 104 on accounting programmes. Most learners are referred to Total People by their employers, which include public and private sector organisations, ranging from the local county council to small private businesses. All learners are given an induction both to their place of employment and to the requirements of their training programme. There is a team of 17 staff in this area of learning, all with appropriate teaching and occupational qualifications. They provide assessment and internal verification for all learners. In the case of accounting learners, this is carried out in partnership with local colleges of further education. Members of the training staff visit learners in their workplaces at least every eight weeks to monitor and review their progress, and more frequently to offer support. Business administration and management learners receive off-the-job training at Total People's training centres in Middlewich, Macclesfield and Crewe. Accounting learners attend local colleges. Learners who cannot attend off-the-job training are given individual coaching at their workplace, reinforced by open learning materials.

42. All learners are given a comprehensive initial assessment, covering their key skills, training needs and social circumstances. Where appropriate, the basic skills tutor will carry out a computer-based diagnostic assessment to identify any additional learning needs. Action plans are agreed to support learners and this information is circulated among team members. Basic skills support and training is provided by a specialist. Key skills training is also provided by a team of specialist staff. Eight one-day workshops prepare learners for key skills examinations.

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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	47		56		66		112		68							
Retained*	0		9		15		59	53	33	49						
Successfully completed	0		5		12		53	47	32	47						
Still in learning	47		28		21		5	4	1	1						

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

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	63		106		28		28		22							
Retained*	0		33		13	46	21	75	15	68						
Successfully completed	0		26		12	43	20	71	15	68						
Still in learning	62		61		6	21	1	4	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		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	17		14		11		29		49							
Retained*	0		8		6	55	20	69	38	78						
Successfully completed	0		8		6	55	20	69	35	71						
Still in learning	16		6		1	9	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

- very effective on-the-job training
- good support for learners
- effective partnerships with subcontractors leading to particularly good training in accounts

- good integration of key skills training with vocational training in administration
- thorough internal verification in administration

WEAKNESSES

- slow progress towards achieving modern apprenticeship frameworks
- some poor application of initial assessment in administration
- poor paper-based resources in some administrative sessions

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better management of subcontracted provision

43. Most learners on business administration training programmes are employed. Their employers give them a range of duties which allows them to develop their skills and gather evidence for their qualifications. All learners receive effective, well-structured and well co-ordinated on-the-job training, through an effective partnership between Total People's training advisers and their workplace supervisors. Learners are given a variety of work-related duties, sometimes in different parts of their employers' businesses, to ensure that they can meet the requirements of their qualification. The employers interviewed speak highly of the contribution learners make to their businesses.

44. Total People provides all learners with very effective technical and pastoral support. The training advisers are very approachable. Learners are visited frequently in their workplace to be assessed. Visits are made to fit in with learners' other commitments, and sometimes take place outside normal working hours. Training advisers provide additional coaching when it is needed. There is an effective review procedure. The learners are given comprehensive feedback, and realistic targets are set to help them maintain their progress. The training advisers are wholly committed to ensuring that the learners have a positive and worthwhile training experience.

45. All learners enrolled for accounting qualifications receive off-the-job training at subcontracted local colleges. Most of this training is of a high standard. The learners benefit from qualified tutors who focus particularly on the background knowledge requirement for external examinations. Total People's training advisers have sufficient occupational expertise themselves to complement the colleges' tuition. The self-assessment report identified the excellent liaison and communication with colleges as a key strength. This partnership ensures that learners provide a full range of evidence for their qualification and enables them to make good progress with their NVQs.

Whenever possible, the training advisers assess learners by using real workplace evidence. This effectively complements the college assessment, which is predominantly through simulation and examination. One of the subcontracted colleges offers excellent support to learners. It is well in excess of that normally provided, and this is the result of exceptionally good links between Total People and the college. Some learners have progressed from NVQs at level 2 to professional accounting qualifications.

46. Key skills training is integrated well with the NVQ requirements. Total People's training advisers are quick to recognise and accredit learners' existing qualifications. There is a range of up-to-date, good-quality open learning materials available for all learners to use to build upon their existing key skills. Individual and small group training is available to coach learners through the key skills requirements. Key skills training is provided by specialist competent, experienced staff who liaise effectively with the business administration team to ensure that training materials are appropriate.

47. Total People has a clear, well-documented strategy for internal verification. The business administration team demonstrates a clear commitment to this strategy, and carries out internal verification in accordance with Total People's policies. All internal verification records clearly meet awarding body requirements and in many instances exceed them. All the assessors are regularly observed by the internal verifier, and records are kept of any actions required. There are frequent standardisation meetings, attended by the whole team, including part-time staff. Total People's assessors also carry out assessments, and attend internal verification meetings, at the subcontracted college. The learners' portfolios contain clear written records of any internal verification.

48. Until recently, there has been a low rate of achievement, particularly for advanced modern apprentices. Achievement rates have improved significantly during the past six months. The factors that contributed to the low achievement rates have been identified by Total People, and specific measures are now in place to improve the situation. During 2000-01, there were staffing problems and some learners were allocated to inappropriate qualifications. Achievement rates were poor. Before 2000, learners were recruited directly to an advanced modern apprenticeship regardless of their potential. Many learners now start with a foundation modern apprenticeship and progress to an advanced modern apprenticeship if appropriate.

49. All learners receive an initial assessment of their basic and key skills. However, their aptitude for their selected occupation is not always assessed. Isolated examples were found of learners registered for inappropriate qualifications.

50. Some learning materials are less than satisfactory. The content of the some materials is basic and contains errors. The photocopying is of poor quality. The presentation materials do not reflect the standards expected in this sector.

51. All off-the-job training for accounting learners is subcontracted to colleges of further education. Ninety per cent of learners attend two colleges. There are arrangements for

managing the subcontracted provision, but they are not very thorough. The current arrangements do not ensure that the internal verification systems at the colleges satisfy all the requirements of the awarding bodies.

Good Practice

One learner had problems with her childcare arrangements. Total People supported the learner and agreed to meet the cost of her childcare to enable her to continue with her learning programme.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	204	3
New Deal 18-24	9	None

52. Total People has 246 learners on retailing, customer service and transportation programmes, of whom 106 are advanced modern apprentices, 61 are foundation modern apprentices and 37 are following NVQ programmes. There are 50 retailing learners, of whom nine are unemployed learners on a New Deal 18-24 voluntary option programme. There are 79 customer services learners, 65 warehousing and distribution learners and 19 learners on programmes in buying and purchasing, telesales and call centre operations, and international trade and services. Most learners are recruited directly through their employers. All are given a comprehensive initial assessment, covering their key skills, training needs and social circumstances. Where appropriate, the basic skills tutor will carry out a computer-based diagnostic assessment to identify any additional learning needs. Action plans are agreed to support learners, and this information is circulated among team members. Basic skills support and training is provided by specialist tutors. Key skills training is also provided by a team of specialist staff. Eight one-day workshops prepare learners for key skills exams. Learners are mainly trained in their workplaces, and in some cases supplementary training is given by Total People. Learners are visited in their workplaces for assessment every two to four weeks, depending on their needs. Learners' progress is reviewed formally at least every eight weeks.

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	57		53		62		64		59							
Retained*	0		8		13		18	28	29	49						
Successfully completed	0		8		7		8	12	21	36						
Still in learning	54		28		14		6	9	4	7						

*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	26		80		102		60		25							
Retained*	0		4		46	45	34	57	14	56						
Successfully completed	0		3		13	13	25	42	14	56						
Still in learning	22		31		8	8	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		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	25		37		19		103		107							
Retained*	0		3	8	11	58	82	80	84	79						
Successfully completed	0		3	8	9	47	75	73	79	74						
Still in learning	21		16	43	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

New Deal 18-24											
New Deal 18-24				2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000	
				No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts				25		43					
Retained*				9	36	21	49				
Planned learning completed				9	36	14	33				
Gained job				3	12	18	42				
Still in training				9	36	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 learning and progress
- good assessment practices
- good guidance and pastoral support
- good links with employers

WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient integration of key skills training with vocational training in some areas
- slow rates of unit achievement for some warehousing learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better updating of individual learning plans
- more involvement of employers in learners' progress reviews

53. There are good learning opportunities for learners and they make good progress. All training is carried out in the workplace either by the workplace supervisors or by Total People's assessors. The training is thorough, effective and challenging. The assessors have a clear understanding of the occupational areas and use their experience effectively to improve learners' knowledge and understanding. Assessors spend between three and four hours a month with each learner. They identify the relevance of the qualification to the learner's role. Additional qualifications are offered including manual handling, first aid at work, basic health and safety, lift truck and food safety. More than half the learners take additional qualifications, which enhance their employability. Learners completing their modern apprenticeship framework are encouraged to progress to higher qualifications.

54. There are good assessment practices. In customer service and retailing the initial assessment of learners is thorough. Evidence in learners' portfolios is of a high standard. There is a wide range of work-based evidence including assessors' observations, detailed records of professional discussions, candidate statements and witness statements. Learners have a clear understanding of when assessment will take place and what is expected of them. Assessments are well documented and are efficiently cross referenced between units. Internal verification of portfolios is thorough. It is well planned and consistent. Feedback is provided to assessors and learners with recommendations for any additional requirements. These are promptly acted on. Learners working towards customer service qualifications are motivated by having units certificated as they are completed. This encourages them to remain on the programme and achieve the full qualification.

55. Total People provides good guidance and pastoral support for learners. Assessors' visits to learners are frequent and flexible and often include early morning and evening visits to match the learner's shift patterns. Assessors provide additional support to learners who attend off-the-job training for key skills by collecting and returning them to

their workplace. When learners experience personal difficulties, assessors provide good advice and practical support. Progress reviews are carried out every six to eight weeks. They are detailed and relevant to the learner's progress. They include discussion of clear actions for the next visit and the setting of challenging but realistic goals. The review of progress supports the learner in understanding what they need to do in order to complete their qualification.

56. Total People has established good links with employers. There is regular contact to ensure employers are satisfied with learner's progress and also to arrange visits so that they do not disrupt the work schedule. Some employers have a waiting list of employees wishing to be trained by Total People. Employers are of a good quality and range in size from small businesses to multi-national organisations. Some employers have recommended Total People to other employers in the area following their satisfaction with the support provided to learners. Some employers use Total People to help recruit new staff. Total People has helped one employer to design its own in-house training programme in line with level 2 NVQ in retail operations. Employers are not always involved in the reviews of learner's progress. Some employers are asked to sign the review form but do not contribute to the discussion. A few employers are unaware of the learner's development and other training needs.

57. There are poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks. Achievement rates for advanced modern apprenticeships has dropped from 36 per cent in 1998-99 to 12 per cent in 1999-2000, although in both years there are learners still in learning who have progressed very slowly and gone beyond their expected completion date. Eleven per cent of learners who started programmes in 2000-01 have achieved their modern apprenticeship framework and a quarter are still in training. There are some signs of improvements in retention. In 2001-02, two-thirds of learners are either still in training or have already achieved the framework. There have been poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices in warehousing and distribution. In 2000-01 less than 5 per cent completed the framework. In many cases, employers did not release learners to complete their key skills training. A third of foundation modern apprentices successfully completed the NVQ at level 2. In 1998-99 and 2000-01 three-quarters of foundation modern apprentices in retail operations successfully completed their programmes.

58. Retention rates are poor. This occupational area experiences a high turnover of labour. Total People makes every effort to track and support learners who find suitable alternative employment. The closure of one local warehouse employer accounted for the loss of 21 learners who were unable to find other warehousing roles. Total People was contracted to provide training in retail operations for 34 learners from a national company. The learners' managers were not sufficiently aware of the support they needed to provide, and many learners left the programme through lack of interest or employer support. These learners made up nearly 60 per cent of the 58 retail operations modern apprentices in 2001-02. Total People have now suspended any further dealings with the employer.

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59. Key skills training is not always effectively linked with vocational training from the start of the programmes. Some learners who have been on a foundation modern apprenticeship programme since August 2001 have only recently started key skills training. Some employers in warehousing do not support learners' key skills training. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors are aware of this and are working with employers to deal with the problem. Projects have been produced which are of interest to the learners and relate to their job roles. Assessors have also received additional training in key skills so they can effectively support the learners.

60. There is slow progress in the rate of unit achievement for some learners. One foundation modern apprentice in warehousing and distribution has not completed any units after nearly one year on the programme. Other learners taking NVQs at level 3 have not achieved any units after 18 months on programme. There are 10 learners on advanced modern apprenticeship programmes and eight on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes who have exceeded their expected completion date. Total People continues to work with these learners to help them complete the full programme. Individual learning plans are not always updated to show the progress that learners have made.

Good Practice

One learner was made redundant and the assessor helped him find new employment. His training continued with his new employer and he is still expected to complete the qualification within the expected time.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	112	2

61. There are 112 learners on hospitality programmes, of whom 86 are foundation modern apprentices and 26 are advanced modern apprentices. Learners are following a broad range of programmes including housekeeping, reception, bar service, food and drink service and food preparation. They are recruited through their employers, Connexions, and directly from school. Their employers range from small independent businesses to large national companies, and include public houses, restaurants, hospitals, hotels, golf clubs, conference and banqueting suites and industrial catering companies. Four subcontracted colleges carry out some of the training and assessment. Learners who are trained by the subcontractors attend the colleges on one day each week for practical and background knowledge training, and assessment. They can start their programme at any time during the academic year. Training advisers employed by Total People carry out progress reviews in the workplace.

62. Learners trained directly by Total People can start their programmes at any time of the year. Training advisers carry out inductions at learners' workplaces, explaining their programmes, and telling them about their rights and responsibilities. Learners' basic skills and key skills are also assessed during the induction. All training and assessment takes place on the job, and is provided by training advisers who are also qualified assessors and workplace supervisors. Learners are visited frequently in their workplaces. Training advisers review learners' performance and progress at least every eight weeks. There are six qualified training adviser/assessors, of whom four are qualified internal verifiers, all with key skills qualifications at level 3. Eight learners have been identified as having additional learning needs. A specialist tutor who also has relevant occupational experience provides additional individual training to these learners.

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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	4		20		17		12		23							
Retained*	0		0		0		2	17	3	13						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		1	8	0	0						
Still in learning	4		10		8		1	8	3	13						

*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	25		79		21		25		13							
Retained*	0		1		1	5	14	56	4	31						
Successfully completed	0		1		1	5	8	32	3	23						
Still in learning	24		47		11	52	4	16	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		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts									10							
Retained*									9	90						
Successfully completed									8	80						
Still in learning									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 progress by learners
- good training
- good assessment practices
- very good involvement of work of workplace supervisors and employers in training

- good learning and pastoral support

WEAKNESSES

- low rates of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- inadequate monitoring of subcontractors' quality assurance procedures

63. Learners make good progress. Some have progressed from level 2 to level 3 NVQ programmes, and are now working in supervisory or advanced craft roles. Learners also progress from key skills awards at level 2 to key skills awards at level 3. Some progress into other occupational areas. Employers support the learners, providing a good range of learning opportunities in the workplace. In 2001, one learner was named the Hospitality Training Foundation National Apprentice Housekeeper of the Year and one learner was named the Hospitality Training Foundation Regional Apprentice Chef of the Year.

64. The training provided is good. Most learners are trained in the workplace by Total People's training advisers, who are well qualified and have broad, relevant and recent industrial experience. The training advisers continually update their practical skills through work experience with local employers. The training is planned with the workplace supervisor, and is appropriate for the individual learner. Training is also carried out by workplace supervisors and this is co-ordinated and incorporated into the learners' individual learning plans. Health and safety and food safety training is carried out at Total People's training centres and an excellent range of resources is used. Training for the technical certificates required for the modern apprenticeship framework is carried out by Total People. Foundation modern apprentices complete the basic food safety and basic health and safety certificates, and advanced modern apprentices complete the technical certificate which best meets their individual needs and job role. Training for key skills units is carried out in a variety of ways, to meet individual learners' needs. Some learners attend eight one-day courses held by Total People, and others have individual training sessions in their workplaces. Key skills training is linked with the NVQ training through relevant projects, which are valued by the learners and employers. Some learners receive most of their training on day release at their local college of further education. They are given practical training in well-equipped kitchens, and background knowledge and key skills training in suitably equipped classrooms.

65. For learners trained directly by Total People, assessment is thorough and takes place throughout the programme. Learners take initial assessment tests, which identify their basic and key skills needs. During the initial assessment, learners' individual experience and current skill level are identified and used to plan training. Training advisers check the workplace to ensure that learners will be able to cover all the units of the NVQ. Assessors visit learners in their workplaces at least every four weeks, and will make

additional visits to meet individual learners' needs. Assessors negotiate assessment plans with the learner and the workplace supervisor. Most assessment is by observation in the workplace. Learners have a wide range of diverse evidence in their portfolios, including annotated digital photographs, witness statements, candidates' statements and logs and operational data sheets. Professional discussions are also used, particularly at NVQ level 3. Assessors plan their visits to ensure full coverage of the performance criteria required for the qualifications. This includes visits to learners in the evenings and early mornings in order to observe as many different daily activities as possible. Portfolios of evidence are well structured and clearly presented.

66. Workplace supervisors and employers are fully involved in the learners' training. The learner, the employer and the training adviser decide whether training will take place in the workplace or at college. Supervisors and employers have detailed knowledge of the NVQ and key skills requirements. They participate in learners' reviews and ensure that the targets agreed meet employers' operational requirements and constraints. Supervisors and employers provide opportunities for learners to develop their skills in the workplace and progress onto more complex tasks where appropriate. They also ensure that resources are available for learners to practice their skills and that learners have sufficient time to study. Learners are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to broaden their knowledge, particularly in food preparation. Learners and workplace supervisors are aware of their progress and understand what they need to achieve and how they can achieve it.

67. Total People provides good support for learners. Training advisers and assessors visit learners frequently in the workplace to ensure that they are progressing. They give pastoral support including careers advice and guidance. Learners are encouraged and motivated by their training advisers and assessors, and have a good rapport with them. Total People selects workplaces carefully to ensure that it meets the individual needs of the learners' and provides transport for learners to attend key skills examinations and training events. Learners who have not completed their learning within the LSC-funding period, continue in training and are supported by Total People until they complete it. A specialist trainer supports learners who have additional learning needs. They use a range of resources including packs which cover the identified skills need. If learners' additional basic skills needs are identified later in their programme, appropriate individual support is immediately made available. One hospitality training adviser is joining Total People's new basic skills support unit and will work mainly with learners in the hospitality sector.

68. The achievement rate for modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor, but is improving significantly. In 1999-2000, some local employers were taken over by a national company with its own training provision. This meant that some learners left Total People early, and affected the company's retention and achievement rates. The poor rate of achievement of key skills units was identified by Total People as a weakness in its self-assessment report. Action has been taken to deal with this, including preparing vocationally relevant key skills projects, and introducing a series of day courses, project development days and individual training sessions in the workplace. There has been a

recent significant improvement in the rate of achievement of all key skills units. Of the 79 learners who started foundation modern apprenticeships in 2001-02, 28 have now completed their level 2 NVQ, 19 have recently completed the modern apprenticeship framework and 29 are still in learning. Of the 20 advanced modern apprentices who started in 2001-02, two have completed their framework, five have achieved an NVQ at level 2, three at level 3, and eight are still in learning. Between 1998 and 2001 most advanced modern apprentices left the programme early, although half achieved their level 2 NVQ before leaving. Learners who leave without completing their qualification receive unit accreditation, and some learners return to complete their qualifications at a later date.

69. There is inadequate management of the quality assurance procedures at one subcontractor. Total People has recognised this and has been working with the subcontractor to rectify the problems. The subcontractor's internal verification process is insufficiently thorough, and actions identified by the external verifier had not been carried out. Thirteen learners' portfolios are awaiting a further visit by the external verifier before their certificates can be issued. These learners believe they have completed their modern apprenticeship frameworks.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	233	2

70. There are 233 learners on work-based learning programmes in hairdressing, of whom 64 are advanced modern apprentices, including two learners on beauty therapy programmes, and 169 are foundation modern apprentices. They are employed in 118 salons in Cheshire and Staffordshire, ranging from small independent salons to members of large national chains. Training programmes are flexible. Training is given at salons, training centres, and subcontracted colleges. Learners are given off-the-job training in practical skills, background knowledge and key skills on one day a week. Total People's training advisers carry out assessments at 72 of the salons. Staff from the subcontracted colleges assess learners at 12 salons, and 22 work-based assessors assess learners at 34 salons. Training advisers visit learners at their salons approximately every two weeks.

71. Most learners are recruited directly through their employers. The remainder are referred by Connexions, or apply directly. Induction is carried out mainly in the salon and learners receive a comprehensive induction handbook covering health and safety and equal opportunities. All learners are given a detailed initial assessment, covering their key skills, training needs and social circumstances. Learners who have had part-time Saturday work in salons have this experience acknowledged when developing their learning plans. Where appropriate, the basic skills tutor will carry out a computer-based diagnostic assessment to identify any additional learning needs. Action plans are agreed to support learners and this information is circulated among team members. Five per cent of learners have additional learning needs. Basic skills support and training is provided by a specialist who also has a relevant occupational background. Learners' progress is reviewed formally at least every six to eight weeks.

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	11		53		36		71		40		50					
Retained*	0		0		4		37	52	14	35	26	52				
Successfully completed	0		0		4		30	42	13	32	24	48				
Still in learning	10		31		9		13	18	1	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																
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	91		99		65		26		37		4					
Retained*	3		3		26	40	17	65	25	68	2	50				
Successfully completed	3		3		16	25	11	42	25	68	2	50				
Still in learning	82		60		23	35	4	15	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		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			3		3		3		6		23					
Retained*			1	33	3	100	3	100	5	83	17	74				
Successfully completed			1	33	3	100	3	100	5	83	17	74				
Still in learning			0	0	0	0	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 standard of learners' work
- good on- and off-the-job training
- good integration of key skills training with vocational training
- good learning resources
- good support for learners

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- good links with employers

WEAKNESSES

- low but improving achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more guidance for staff on the use of the company's documentation

72. Learners' technical skills are good. They are productive members of salon staff at an early stage of their training, and work well as part of a team. Employers train some learners to use techniques such as colouring, which are well beyond the NVQ standards. Learners are often given high levels of responsibility and the standard of their work is high. Learners' portfolios are well presented, and include good photographic evidence as well as a range of other work-based evidence.

73. There is good training both on and off the job. The training adviser and/or the salon trainer give formal training in the salons. All Total People's hairdressing staff are occupational specialists who are well-qualified, and have up-to-date experience of working in the industry. The training is well planned and carefully recorded on the feedback sheets, which are cross-referenced to the NVQ. Trainers carry out professional demonstrations and effectively include most learners in the discussions during the training sessions. There is a good supply of clients for practice sessions, and the sessions cover the full range of NVQ activities. Most learners have the opportunity to attend external events including training by manufacturers and other external events. Some learners have worked in the salons at weekends and during school holidays, and attended the salon's training evenings. These learners have their prior experience acknowledged and are often fast-tracked through the programme. Training is flexible to suit learners' abilities.

74. Key skills training and assessment is integrated well with vocational training. An effective initial assessment identifies learners who need additional support with key skills. Key skills training is carried out by specialist trainers at the Total People's training centres. The training materials used are carefully linked to the occupational area. Learners clearly understand the relevance of key skills and collect good evidence from their workplaces. Most employers are committed to key skills training, but in a few salons, learners start their key skills training late.

75. Learners have access to good learning resources. Learners attend Total People's premises, which are excellent, for some off-the-job training in background knowledge

and key skills. Some of the larger salons have separate training areas with appropriate learning resources. Most salons are of a good standard, well equipped and offer a modern and pleasant environment. Trainers use a laptop computer to teach key skills in the salons. However, there are few opportunities for learners to use computers in the salons, and few textbooks are available in some salons.

76. There is good individual support, particularly for learners with additional needs. Staff use effective initial assessment and interview techniques to identify learners' basic and key skills needs, ensure that they are on the correct programme, and determine their individual learning plan. Total People have recently employed a basic skills adviser, who is an experienced hairdresser, to help learners with additional needs. There are effective additional resources available for these learners, such as recording equipment and scribes. Training advisers plan their visits to give appropriate support to learners. Visits are often made in the evenings and at weekends. Learners have their advisers' mobile telephone numbers so they can contact them if they require additional support or guidance.

77. Total People has good links with employers and is responsive to employers' needs. Most salons give learners the chance of a trial period of training before starting the modern apprenticeship programme. Total People tailors learning to the employers' requirements by introducing work-related units at appropriate points in the programme. Visits are arranged to fit in with the salon's workloads. There are regular assessments in the workplace conducted by Total People's training advisers or the work-based assessors. The work-based assessors are invited to standardisation meetings that are held two to three times a year. Total People offers a good range of training activities to employers. It also works with employers to provide a range of additional activities for learners, such as competitions and fashion shows. There is well-designed paperwork for salons and trainers to use to record learners' progress. Most employers are actively involved reviewing learner's progress. However, there is insufficient guidance on the use of the documents, and they are not always used appropriately or effectively.

78. Between 1997-98 and 2000-01, a third of advanced modern apprentices achieved all the requirements of their modern apprenticeship framework. A further 22 per cent completed NVQs at level 2 and 12 per cent are still in learning. There was a decline in the achievement rate in 2000-01 when a large salon moved and seven learners who lost their jobs left the programme. In 2001-02 Total People took over a contract from a training provider that was in difficulties. A significant number of these learners left as they were not on an appropriate programme. Only 58 per cent are still in training. There are indications of an improvement in the retention rate with all but one of this year's learners are still on programme.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	348	2

79. Total People has 358 learners on programmes in health, social care and public services. There are 117 learners on care programmes, of whom 70 are foundation modern apprentices, 45 are advanced modern apprentices, and two are following NVQ programmes. Six of the learners are men. Learners are employed in over 60 workplaces, including residential and nursing homes for elderly people, homes for adults with physical and learning disabilities and residential schools for children with behavioural difficulties. Learners follow NVQ programmes at level 2 and level 3 in care, promoting independence and care of children and young people. Learners are supported by a team of five training advisers who co-ordinate their learning and assessment. Three of the advisers are also internal verifiers. There are 58 work-based assessors, 35 of them qualified. All assessors and internal verifiers are occupationally qualified. Learners are trained in the workplace by their employers. In some cases this training is supplemented by Total People.

80. There are 193 learners on childcare programmes, of whom 92 are foundation modern apprentices and 101 are advanced modern apprentices. They have work placements or are employed in nurseries, schools and out-of-school care. Off-the-job training is given at four centres in Cheshire and Staffordshire through day release, evening sessions, workshops, and distance learning. There is a team of 12 childcare staff from Total People, comprising two co-ordinators, five trainer/assessors and five assessors. There are also several work-based assessors. There are 38 learners training as dental nurses, 32 working towards a level 2 NVQ in oral health care (support), and six towards a level 3 NVQ in oral health care (dental nursing). These qualifications were introduced in 2001. Most learners are in full-time employment in dental practices. All attend off-the-job training at Total People on one evening each week. There are five training advisers, who are appropriately qualified and hold relevant assessors' and internal verifiers' qualifications. Staff visit learners monthly for assessment, action-planning and to help them with portfolio-building.

81. All learners are given a comprehensive initial assessment, covering their key skills, basic skills, training needs and social circumstances. Action plans are agreed to support learners with any identified additional learning or social needs. With the agreement of the learners, this information is circulated among team members. Basic skills and key skills training is provided by a team of specialist staff. Eight one-day workshops prepare learners for key skills exams. Learners are trained in their workplaces, and in some cases supplementary training is given by training advisers. Learners' progress is reviewed formally at least every eight weeks.

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	43		58		128		123		86							
Retained*	0		1		14		51	41	42	49						
Successfully completed	0		1		12		49	40	36	42						
Still in learning	41		42		47		15	12	1	1						

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

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	87		146		27		36		34							
Retained*	0		22		5	19	17	47	17	50						
Successfully completed	0		20		3	11	14	39	17	50						
Still in learning	81		76		4	15	1	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		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	28		20		28		17		39							
Retained*	0		3	15	12	43	7	41	26	67						
Successfully completed	0		3	15	7	25	7	41	26	67						
Still in learning	28		5	25	6	21	1	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

STRENGTHS

- good training
- good assessment practice
- good relationships with employers and work-placement providers
- effective learning and pastoral support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention rates on some programmes in care
- insufficient involvement of employers in NVQ process in oral health care

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better monitoring of learners' progress

82. Training is good both on and off the job. Seven out of eight of the off-the-job training sessions observed were good or better. In care, learners are given on-the-job training in manual handling, health and safety, and food hygiene. One-to-one coaching is provided if learners are unable to attend training sessions. They are also given opportunities to develop their learning and practical skills through new work activities. Total People provides additional training in areas such as first aid, if required. The training centres are spacious and well equipped. Total People's staff are well qualified and have recent relevant occupational experience. In oral health, learners have access to good training resources, including modern dental surgeries, infection control equipment, radiography units and dental instruments and materials. They use computer programmes to gain experience of appointment systems and managing patient records. Learners are supplied with up-to-date learning material including textbooks, work packs and detailed, well-produced handouts. Learners in childcare are given handouts, question packs, a course booklet, the awarding body standards and evidence guidelines. There are displays of learners' work in the training rooms. Off-the-job training is evaluated both by learners and tutors, and action points for improvement are identified and monitored.

83. Evidence in learners' portfolios is of good quality and reflects good assessment practice. Performance evidence is cross-referenced to more than one unit in an efficient and clear manner. Good use is made of direct observation, and records are detailed and well referenced. A range of assessment methods is used to enable learners to progress. Portfolios are clear and well presented, and standard documents allow evidence to be tracked easily. Workbooks are used to ensure that all learners gain the same background knowledge for each unit. Learners' progress is reviewed formally at least every eight weeks, and action plans are agreed. However, the recording of achievement and progress is not always detailed enough to encourage and motivate learners. Employers are given copies of learners' action plans so that they can identify learning or assessment opportunities. Work-based assessors in care attend six-monthly support meetings to share good practice and receive awarding body updates. Childcare assessors attend such meetings every three months, and oral health assessors, every month. Minutes of the meetings are circulated to all staff. Refresher workshops are available to assessors who have had periods of inactivity. Key skills are introduced early

in the training programmes. They are particularly well integrated with the childcare NVQ. Internal verification is effective in all areas. Work is underway to prepare for the provision of technical certificates.

84. Total People maintains good relationships with employers and work-placement providers. Training advisers give verbal feedback to employers on learners' progress after each visit, and provide them with copies of learners' eight-weekly reviews and action plans. Childcare employers are encouraged to join progress review meetings and comment on the learners' progress. Total People's staff are easily accessible to employers to provide support and guidance. Communication with employers is good. Inexperienced work-based assessors are offered individual support and coaching by Total People to build their confidence. Total People has also helped employers to cope with contingencies such as the long-term absence of work-based assessors. Training advisers give employers their mobile telephone and e-mail details so that they can be contacted between visits. Total People checks all workplaces for health and safety before learners begin their training programmes, and again every 26 weeks. Advice is given to employers where health and safety concerns are raised. Employers value the support of Total People's staff, and have confidence in the quality of training they provide. In oral health, Total People has been involved employers' recruitment of staff.

85. Learners receive effective support from their training advisers both in learning and pastoral matters. They are given their adviser's personal contact details and feel able to contact him or her whenever they need to. Learners are visited in their workplace at least every eight weeks, and receive copies of their progress review documents and action plans. Advisers arrange visits to fit in with learners' work routines. Visits are made in the evenings if required. More frequent visits are made to support learners with specific needs. Visits can be made to the learner's home if necessary. Learners with additional learning needs receive individual support that is agreed after the initial assessment. They often receive more visits, additional coaching with key skills, and are assessed using appropriate alternative approaches. All childcare learners interviewed said they would recommend the training to others. They appreciated the effective individual support they received.

86. In care, retention rates on foundation modern apprenticeships are poor. The retention rate fell from 50 per cent in 1998-99, to 10 per cent in 2000-01. This coincided with a period when there were staffing problems and major changes in the organisation of Total People, and several care homes were closed, leading to the loss of learners. New initial assessment procedures, additional staffing and more comprehensive induction for learners are beginning to have an impact. Fifty-seven per cent of the foundation modern apprentices who started programmes in 2001-02 have been retained or are all still in learning and 19 learners who started since August 2002 are still in learning. Retention rates for advanced modern apprentices in care are satisfactory. In childcare, retention rates on all programmes are satisfactory with between half and three quarters of the learners staying on the programme and completing their qualifications. Changes in the oral health qualifications contributed to a decline in achievement rates from 64 per cent in 1998-99 to 33 per cent in 2001-02.

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This weakness was identified by Total People, and the action taken is on course to improve the achievement rate in 2001-02.

87. In oral health there is insufficient involvement of employers in the NVQ process. Some employers show poor understanding and awareness of NVQs, and play little part in assessment planning and learners' progress reviews. There is some slow progress by learners, and insufficient assessment in the workplace.

Good Practice

Excellent support is given to deaf learners training in care. There is a deaf work-based assessor, and Total People provides a sign language interpreter and a key skills tutor with specialist experience of teaching English as a second language (ESOL). Learning materials have been produced in appropriate format for hearing-impaired learners. This co-ordinated approach is enabling a deaf learner to make good progress.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	2
Life Skills	87	2

88. There are 87 learners on Life Skills programmes, all aged between 16 and 19, and 17 learners following level 1 NVQ programmes in retailing, distribution and hospitality. They are referred to the programme by Connexions. The programme is intended to last for 13 weeks, but many learners stay for longer. Learners follow a range of activities including jobsearch, communication, vocational and basic skills training, and confidence-building and teamwork. All learners receive a three-day induction covering health and safety and equality of opportunity. They have an initial assessment to identify their existing skills, their learning styles and their additional needs. Learners with additional learning needs are given support. Learners take part in work tasters and work placements with a range of employers. The Life Skills programme is managed by a Learning Gateway manager, supported by teams of staff at three training centres. There are three basic skills advisers, four work-placement officers and seven tutors. Learners' progress reviews take place at least monthly. Learners can gain additional qualifications in manual handling and first aid if appropriate.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		19		4											
Retained*	1		7	37	2	50										
Successfully completed	1		7	37	2	50										
Still in learning	12		5	26	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																
Life Skills																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	191		274													
Retained*	32		114	42												
Successfully completed	32		114	42												
Still in learning	84		3	1												

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

STRENGTHS

- good progress made by learners
- good training
- good resources
- wide range of initial assessment methods ensuring that learners' needs are identified and met
- effective links with employers

WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently detailed recording of learners' programmes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further integration of basic skills with other elements of the programmes
- wider range of training materials
- further development of the database to record learners' achievement

89. Learners make good progress towards completion of their Life Skills programme. Work is maintained in ordered files and learners are clear about which subjects areas they have covered. In one training centre, a new database is used to record learners' achievements, but this is not yet available to learners in other centres. Many learners gain additional qualifications. During 2001-02, learners gained 37 manual handling certificates and 36 first aid qualifications. Learners are very positive about the benefits of Life Skills. Those interviewed commented on how much their confidence had increased. The success of Life Skills programmes is judged by the numbers of learners

moving into further training or employment with training. In 2001-02, 42 per cent of learners completed the programme, 20 per cent entered further education or training and 29 per cent have found jobs.

90. Learners receive good training. Total People's tutors are appropriately qualified, and provide training which motivates learners. They interact well with learners. Lessons are well planned, with clearly identified objectives. The range of teaching methods used allows for different learning styles and encourages learners to participate. There are many activities to build confidence, enhance communication and develop team skills. Learners find the training sessions interesting and fun. They appreciate the positive impact of the learning, and report that they have gained significantly in confidence in a short period of time. Individual support is provided for learners with identified additional learning needs. Learners who have work placements are able to identify the skills they have learned from on-the-job training. Some training takes place in groups, with one tutor teaching while another supports the learners with additional learning needs. Lesson plans link basic skills at entry level 2 with other aspects of learners' training. However, links are not yet made between the full range of basic skills levels and learners' wider curriculum. There is too much reliance on the written word in some training materials.

91. Total People provides good learning resources. All its training centres are well equipped, with spacious training rooms suitable for large and small group learning. Centres are light and airy with appropriate, comfortable furniture, and give a professional impression. Each centre has well-equipped IT suites with laser printers, scanners and Internet access. Basic skills training rooms have at least one computer with Internet access and laser printing facilities. Learners and training staff make good use of on-line learning resources for basic skills learning. One basic skills tutor carries out all basic skills training and assessment through on-line activities. Attractive wall displays contain a balance of training materials and learners' work. Most materials used during the training sessions are well designed and of good quality. Training centre staff are particularly well qualified and appropriately experienced. All staff take part in continuous professional development to update their skills and knowledge.

92. A wide range of initial assessment methods is used to identify learners' literacy and numeracy skills, career preferences, aptitudes and potential for key skills development. Learners' basic skills are assessed using paper-based and on-line tests. The on-line test is used again during the course to monitor the learners' progress. Learners' key skills are also assessed. Early in the programme, learners participate in a group learning session to identify their preferred learning styles. The results are used to plan how they will be taught. Learners are referred to the Life Skills programme by Connexions personal advisers. Following initial assessment, learners have a clear understanding of their own training requirements.

93. Work-placement officers have established effective working relationships with many local employers. Employers understand learners' development needs and trust the work-placement officers. The work-placement officers develop job descriptions for learners

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which clearly identify their roles and responsibilities in the placement. This makes learners' expectations more realistic. Thirty-one per cent of Life Skills learners are in work placements. Their progress at work is reviewed in detail every four weeks, with the full involvement of their employers. Employers are very positive about working with Total People. Learners are able to take part in a number of work tasters, giving them a chance to identify the type of work they prefer.

94. The recording of learners' programmes is insufficiently detailed. In most cases, learning objectives lack detail of specific activities. Many learning plans contain generic information and do not show learners how to make progress. There is no system to ensure that learning plans are kept up to date. Learners make good progress at their work placement, but this is not recorded in enough detail. There is no system to measure learners' progress against their original training plan. Important information which may have implications for learners' programmes and progress, such as absences, is not always recorded. There is too much reliance on informal communication in the training centres. There is insufficient co-ordination of different aspects of the learning process. For example, learners' monthly progress reviews do not take account of their basic skills development activities. Learners' comments rarely appear on review documents. Actions planned at reviews are not recorded in sufficient detail to help learners achieve them. Total People has recognised the weaknesses relating to learning plans and is piloting a redesigned plan.