

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Somerset County Training Reinspection**

**10 June 2004**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

### 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. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

# **REINSPECTION REPORT**

## **Somerset County Training Reinspection**

### **Contents**

#### **Summary**

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	3
Overall judgement	3
Grades	4
Key findings	5

#### **Detailed reinspection findings**

Leadership and management	11
Equality of opportunity	12
Quality assurance	13
Construction	16
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	19
Business administration, management & professional	23
Health, social care & public services	26
Foundation programmes	29

## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Somerset County Training (SCT) was established in 1990 and is part of Somerset County Council. SCT is the largest provider of work-based learning in Somerset and has 545 learners on work-based learning for young people programmes, including Entry to Employment (E2E), funded by Somerset Learning and Skills Council. This is approximately 120 fewer than at the previous inspection. Apart from E2E, most learners follow programmes in construction, manufacturing, engineering, business administration, and health and social care. SCT also offers programmes in installing and supporting information technology (IT) and customer service, although too few learners were following these courses for them to be included in the reinspection. In addition, 132 adult clients are on programmes centres and 25 on basic employability training (BET) funded by Jobcentre Plus. These clients were not within the scope of the previous inspection. SCT has training centres in Bridgewater, Frome, Taunton and Yeovil, and training also takes place in Street, Chard, Wellington and Minehead. Training in engineering, electrical installation, plumbing, bricklaying, painting and decorating, accounting and some business administration is subcontracted to eight local further education colleges. SCT has 86 staff, of whom 62 are full time and 24 part time.

2. Three-quarters of all businesses in Somerset have fewer than five employees. SCT deals with approximately 450 small employers. Agriculture and manufacturing are important to the Somerset economy, but most employment is in hotels, distribution, public administration, education and health. The unemployment rate in Somerset in April 2004 was 1.3 per cent, compared with 2.4 per cent nationally and 1.5 per cent in the Southwest. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Somerset is 1.2 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally. In 2003, the proportion of school leavers gaining five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 55 per cent in Somerset, compared with 53 per cent nationally.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Construction

3. SCT has 122 learners on construction programmes. Ninety of these are following courses in plumbing, 14 in electrical, six in brickwork, 10 in carpentry and joinery and two in painting and decorating. Eighty-seven are foundation modern apprentices, 25 are advanced modern apprentices and 10 are on national vocational qualifications (NVQ) programmes. All off-the-job training is subcontracted to three colleges and one private training provider. Most learners are in employment before starting training, although in a few cases SCT finds employment for learners who contact them directly after leaving school or who are referred by Connexions. Learners are visited in the workplace by training officers who review progress and pastoral matters. Most assessment takes place in the colleges.

### **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

4. SCT provides training in engineering production, maintenance, technical services and manufacturing, together with training for the security industry. It has 20 advanced modern apprentices, 35 foundation modern apprentices and 14 NVQ learners in this area of learning. Three per cent of learners are women, 6 per cent have declared a disability or have a learning difficulty, and none are from minority ethnic groups. Learners are recruited through Connexions, directly from employers or by personal recommendation from other SCT learners. Eighty-four per cent of learners are employed. Each learner is linked to one of four SCT centres. Most learners attend one of four subcontracted further education colleges one day each week for the off-the-job training. SCT carries out NVQ assessment and key skills training and assessment.

### **Business administration, management & professional**

5. One hundred learners are following business administration programmes. Thirty-four are advanced modern apprentices and 60 are foundation modern apprentices in administration. Two are advanced modern apprentices and two are foundation modern apprentices in accounting, and two are working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3 in administration. Seventy-five of the learners are women. Most learners attend off-the-job training at SCT one day every two weeks. Training includes preparation for the technical certificate, key skills qualifications and an IT award. Most learners are employed in a wide range of businesses, many by Somerset County Council. Training and assessment for five advanced modern apprentices and one NVQ learner are subcontracted.

### **Health, social care & public services**

6. SCT offers training in care, early years care and education and oral health care for 128 learners. Employers and work placements include public and private nurseries, schools, residential nursing homes and day centres and dental practices. Fourteen are advanced modern apprentices and 18 are foundation modern apprentices in care. Seventeen are advanced modern apprentices and 42 are foundation modern apprentices in early years care and education. Twenty-four are following level 3 NVQs in oral health, and 13 learners are following NVQs in care or in early years care and education. Most care learners are employed, as are a minority of foundation modern apprentices in early years care and education. All learners attend a centre weekly for off-the-job training and are visited at work at least monthly for assessment and progress monitoring.

## Foundation programmes

7. SCT is one of two providers of BET and programme centres linked to Somerset County Council, which is the only provider of these programmes in the county. SCT offers programmes at six centres, with all clients being referred by Jobcentre Plus. Twenty-five clients are on BET programmes. These clients have been assessed as needing literacy, numeracy or language support. In addition, many clients have additional social needs. One hundred and thirty-two clients judged to be ready for employment by Jobcentre Plus attend programme centres.

8. SCT is the main E2E provider in East Somerset. It has 114 learners, including 56 who transferred from Life Skills programmes. Fifty-two learners are trained directly by SCT and the rest by four subcontractors. Programmes include literacy, numeracy, social and personal skills training and level 1 NVQs in business administration, motor vehicle and construction. All learners take part in work experience with local employers. Learners' attendance at training centres is flexible to cater for their individual needs and career aims.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	11
Number of inspection days	50
Number of learner interviews	135
Number of staff interviews	92
Number of employer interviews	42
Number of subcontractor interviews	14
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	29
Number of partner/external agency interviews	10
Number of visits	51

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. At the previous inspection of March 2002, SCT's leadership and management were found to be very weak. Its approach to equality of opportunity was unsatisfactory, and its arrangements for quality assurance were very weak. Work-based learning was unsatisfactory in construction, engineering, business administration, and health and social care, satisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT) and good in foundation programmes. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision reinspected were found to be satisfactory.

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

### GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	5

<b>Construction</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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



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

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

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

Health, social care & public services	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Entry to Employment	3
Programme centres	3
Work-based learning for adults	3

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

10. **Learners in construction and engineering develop good practical skills.** The standard of learners' written and practical work in these areas is high and many are given a high level of responsibility in their jobs. Learners on foundation programmes gain new skills and increased confidence to seek progression and employment opportunities.

11. Retention rates in most areas of learning have improved since the previous inspection. **Retention rates have remained high on the foundation modern apprenticeship in engineering** and have improved significantly on most programmes in most areas of learning.

12. **Rates of progression to other programmes and employment are good on foundation programmes,** as are rates of achievement of individual learning plan targets, including qualifications.

13. Achievement rates have improved in most areas since the previous inspection, and are now satisfactory in most. However, they remain low for foundation modern

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

apprenticeships in early years care and education.

**14. Learners on foundation modern apprenticeships in business administration make good progress towards achieving their qualifications,** rectifying a weakness found at the previous inspection. **However, progress remains slow for learners in construction, engineering, early years care and education and for some advanced modern apprentices in business administration.** Many go beyond the planned duration of their training before they complete all parts of the programme.

### Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Construction	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Business administration, management & professional	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Health, social care & public services	0	2	3	4	0	0	0	9
Foundation programmes	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>

**15. Teaching and learning on BET programmes for adults are good.** IT is integrated well into literacy and numeracy learning sessions. Clients are encouraged to work on topics of interest to them.

**16. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is good in health and social care programmes.** Off-the-job learning is good and topics are closely linked with what learners do at work.

**17. Good work placements are provided in construction, engineering and business administration.** Learners have access to a wide range of up-to-date resources, have the opportunity to gain a high level of skill and collect a wide range of evidence towards their qualifications.

**18. Target-setting, action-planning and monitoring learners' progress are particularly thorough in engineering, business administration, and health and social care.** Learners are set clear targets linked to achieving specific qualification units or performing tasks. Action plans are agreed with learners, and also with employers in many cases, and progress is regularly reviewed.

**19. Learning and employment aims are identified very clearly on adult foundation programmes,** through the use of thorough initial and subsequent diagnostic assessment of clients' individual needs and aims. **However, identification and recording of employability skills is weak on E2E programmes.**

**20. A wide range of learning opportunities is available on E2E programmes.**

Programmes are available across Somerset and learners can take part in many different vocational and other qualifications and personal development activities.

**21. Support is particularly good in construction, health and social care, and foundation programmes,** and is good on all other programmes. Learners with additional learning needs are identified through initial assessment and provided with appropriate support, sometimes through good use of external agencies. **However, insufficient structured literacy and numeracy support is provided for some E2E learners.**

**22. On- and off-the-job training in construction are not adequately co-ordinated.** Employers are often not aware of the content of off-the-job training, and receive insufficient feedback on their employee's progress in this area.

**23. Resources are inadequate in some programme centres for adult clients.** Insufficient IT and telephone resources are provided to adequately support jobsearch activities.

**24. Initial assessment is used inconsistently in engineering.** Some learners do not receive an initial assessment. Sometimes the results of initial assessment are not passed on to colleges providing off-the-job training. **Induction to engineering programmes is also insufficiently thorough.** Many learners are insufficiently aware of the structure of their programme and their rights and responsibilities after attending induction.

**25. Some business administration learners are placed on insufficiently challenging programmes.** Many learners are placed on foundation modern apprenticeships when initial assessment results, prior attainment and work-placement opportunities indicate a higher level programme may be more suitable. Some adult clients are also referred to inappropriate programmes.

**26. Insufficient career and progression guidance is provided in health and social care,** particularly for level 3 learners wishing to progress to higher education.

## Leadership and management

**27. SCT now makes good use of management information to monitor learners' progress.** Data from a newly introduced management information system is reviewed regularly to monitor learners' progress. In health and social care, where the system has been in use the longest, the number of learners not completing the programme in the expected time has significantly decreased. However, analysis of data on E2E programmes is weak.

**28.** Management of learning programmes is now satisfactory. The organisation has been restructured and managers can now focus on supporting learners in each area of learning. Support for learners, employers and staff is now more consistent, communication is good, and sharing of good practice is better. Retention and achievement rates have improved in most areas of learning since the previous inspection.

**29.** Staff continue to have access to a wide range of staff development opportunities,

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

including professional updating, assessing and teaching qualifications and training in equality of opportunity.

30. SCT has a satisfactory strategy for developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills, and manages its resources effectively. Staff turnover has decreased significantly since the previous inspection.

31. **SCT provides good support to widen participation in learning.** It provides extensive help to learners who are disadvantaged, and works closely with a number of partners to increase the number of learners on its programmes from under-represented groups. A number of successful strategies are in place to enable learners living in remote rural areas of the county to engage in training. These include making training available at several venues, carrying out individual training in workplaces and providing taxis for travel to training venues.

32. Quality assurance at SCT is now satisfactory. The organisation has put in place or strengthened a number of quality assurance arrangements since the previous inspection. Observations of training are carried out. Although some poor teaching has been identified and remedied, feedback does not identify how trainers could improve. SCT does not carry out quality assurance of on-the-job training, or observation of learners' progress reviews. SCT's latest self-assessment report accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

33. SCT uses a well-established internal audit system to identify non-compliance with procedures. Feedback is collected frequently from learners and employers and results are analysed, but the system is new and significant improvements to training programmes have not yet taken place.

34. SCT's management of subcontractors is now satisfactory. It has introduced more detailed service level agreements and more frequent monitoring meetings, and overall the service provided by subcontractors has improved. However, SCT has been slow in improving the quality of learners' experience with one subcontractor.

35. Internal verification is now satisfactory and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies.

36. **Staff and learners have poor understanding of equality of opportunity.** Equality of opportunity is not covered sufficiently at induction, and too little reinforcement takes place during training programmes. Many work-based learners and adult clients have a poor understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They are not aware of language or behaviour which is inappropriate. Staff have been given training in equality of opportunity but have insufficient knowledge and skill to tackle these concerns effectively.

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good use of management information to monitor learners' progress
- good support to widen participation in learning

### **Weaknesses**

- poor awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity by staff and learners

## **Construction**

### **Strengths**

- good development of learners' practical skills
- good support for additional learning needs

### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress for many learners
- inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

## **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

### **Strengths**

- good use of work placements to develop learners' skills
- high retention rates for learners on foundation modern apprenticeships
- highly effective use of target-setting

### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress towards completion of modern apprenticeships
- insufficiently thorough induction
- inconsistent use of initial assessment

## **Business administration, management & professional**

### **Strengths**

- good progress by many learners on foundation modern apprenticeships
- good work placements and employers
- very effective action-planning

### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress for some learners on advanced modern apprenticeships
- insufficiently challenging programmes for some learners

### **Health, social care & public services**

#### **Strengths**

- particularly thorough monitoring of progress
- good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- good additional support to meet learners' individual needs

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow completion of early years care frameworks for some learners
- insufficient career and progression guidance

### **Foundation programmes**

#### **Strengths**

- good rates of progression, employment and achievement
- good teaching and learning on BET programmes
- very clear identification of learning and employment aims on adult programmes
- wide range of learning opportunities on E2E programmes
- very good learning and personal support

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate resources in some programme centres
- weak identification and recording of employability skills on E2E programmes
- insufficient structured literacy and numeracy support for some E2E learners
- insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity
- weak analysis of data on E2E programmes

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

#### **Strengths**

- good use of management information to monitor learners' progress
- good support to widen participation in learning

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity by staff and learners

37. SCT now makes good use of management information to monitor learners' progress. It has introduced a monitoring system which produces data on the progress learners are making in all components of their programmes. This data is reviewed monthly by training officers and team leaders. Learners not progressing at the expected rate are identified and the reasons for their slow progress followed up. In care, where the system has been in place longest, the number of learners not completing the programme in the expected time has significantly decreased. This information is now being used systematically to identify construction, engineering and business administration learners nearing the end of their programmes, so they can be given additional support to complete their qualification. The management information system now routinely provides retention and achievement rate data, identifies when progress reviews are due and monitors adherence to financial targets. However, SCT makes insufficient use of data to monitor the progress of learners on, and the performance of, E2E programmes.

38. Management of learning programmes is now satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the company has been restructured to enable managers to focus on supporting learners in each area of learning rather than by geographic area. SCT now has a more consistent approach to supporting learners and employers and better sharing of good practice. Staff meet regularly and ongoing communications between staff, employers and learners are good. Staff turnover has reduced significantly since the previous inspection and is now below the average for the county council as a whole. A recently produced three-year development plan outlines an appropriate strategy to fulfil the company's mission. This sets targets for improvements in retention and achievement rates. However, targets for completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks are low when compared with anticipated retention rates. SCT has strong links with a range of other agencies including Connexions and Somerset County Council.

39. Staff continue to have access to, and participate in, a wide range of staff development activities. New staff are appropriately supported in their roles. All staff

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

participate in an annual appraisal process which includes identification of their training needs. A wide range of in-house and externally provided training is offered and participation rates are high. Staff are actively supported to work towards assessor and verifier and teaching qualifications. Targets have been set to increase the number of staff holding teaching qualifications. Where required, staff are supported to maintain and update professional qualifications and expertise. However, not all training is effective. Many staff have taken part in equality of opportunity training, but many still have a poor awareness of equality of opportunity matters.

40. Management of resources is satisfactory. SCT has an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to train and support learners. The number of specialist staff to support key skills and literacy and numeracy learning has recently been increased. Training officers support an appropriate number of learners to enable assessment and progress review visits to take place in a timely fashion. The performance of staff is now routinely monitored and reviewed by team leaders, supported by the increased availability of management information. Most training centres are adequately resourced with learning materials and IT, and provide a good learning environment. However, some programme centre venues have insufficient IT and telephone resources.

41. SCT has a satisfactory strategy for developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills. A skills for life team provide initial assessment and learning support for all learners on work-based learning programmes. However, clients' literacy and numeracy support needs are not sufficiently identified in programme centres. Staff on the skills for life team are all working towards qualifications in teaching literacy and numeracy skills at levels 3 or 4. Learning support staff make good use of action plans and share information routinely with training officers. Analysis of data shows that the learning support is effective in helping learners to achieve their NVQ or complete their modern apprenticeship. However, the results of initial assessment are not, as yet, used effectively across all programme areas. In some cases, they are not shared with subcontractors providing off-the-job training.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

42. SCT is strongly committed to supporting any learner irrespective of gender, race, disability or difficulty. A senior manager has overall responsibility for equality of opportunity. Extensive help is offered to individuals who are disadvantaged. SCT works effectively with several partners to widen participation in training. It works effectively with Somerset County Council to increase the number of its employees aged under 25 through modern apprenticeships. SCT has successfully targeted young people who have left care and are not in full-time education or on training programmes. Currently the number of care leavers on SCT's training programmes exceeds the proportion in the local community. SCT also runs successful projects with local schools to provide vocational training and work experience for disaffected pupils. It has an equal opportunities action plan and has set itself targets to increase the numbers of learners it recruits from under-represented groups. New initiatives with industry training boards are aimed at increasing the number of women in construction and engineering.



43. Somerset has extensive rural areas and travel presents difficulties to many starting training. SCT has four centres throughout the county and also uses other venues as outreach centres. It provides taxis for learners who can not access public transport. Great care is taken at recruitment to make sure that learners can travel to both their off-the-job training and work placements. In some cases training officers visit learners to carry out individual training. They work closely with employers to ensure comprehensive and supportive on-the-job training to help their learners' progression to an NVQ. SCT has recently acquired a mobile motor vehicle training resource to provide taster days for E2E learners in remote rural districts. It has excellent partnerships with Connexions to provide welfare support personal advisers for learners identified with additional social needs. It has an effective system for providing learning support where needs are identified by initial assessment. SCT has held workshops to help staff to understand the special requirements of learners with autism or Asperger's syndrome.

44. SCT makes satisfactory use of data to monitor equality of opportunity. SCT's learners are representative of the local community. It analyses data to check learners' achievements in relation to their gender, ethnic background and disabilities. However, it makes insufficient use of this information to investigate or rectify any imbalances.

45. Staff and learners have a poor understanding of equality of opportunity. SCT's equal opportunities policy is written in language which is not appropriate for some clients and learners on foundation programmes. Many learners have a poor understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They are not aware of language or behaviour which is inappropriate and could cause offence. All staff have had training in equality of opportunity but this has not given them sufficient knowledge or skill to tackle these concerns effectively. Staff training dental nurses have difficulty in supporting them effectively to achieve the unit of their qualification which relates to equality of opportunity. Although SCT has introduced a new confidential phonenumber for learners to call if they have concerns over equality matters, it is too early to judge what effect it might have.

46. Equality of opportunity is not covered enough at induction and not reinforced enough during the training programmes. Good activities are organised during some training sessions, but trainers do not have the necessary experience and knowledge to make full use of them. Progress reviews include only superficial discussion of equality of opportunity. The monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies is cursory and their content or effectiveness are not checked. Most learners are unaware of SCT's complaints procedures, although learners and their training officers have good working relationships.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 3

47. SCT has carried out a complete revision of its quality assurance arrangements since the previous inspection. A senior manager has responsibility for the implementation of the new policies and procedures. The new arrangements include successful strategies to increase retention and achievement rates across all areas of learning.

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

48. SCT has established a schedule for the observation of off-the-job training, and most trainers have now been observed. However, the observations are carried out by staff who have no expertise in the area of learning who are unable to judge the content of the sessions. Many of the observation records are too descriptive and contain too few judgements about the quality of the training observed. Some provide little useful feedback to enable trainers to improve their teaching. However, SCT has identified some poor teaching and taken rapid and effective action to remedy this.

49. SCT currently has no procedure for the quality assurance of the on-the-job training. However, it uses a vetting process to ensure that all new placements meet the learner's training needs. All employers and supervisors receive a comprehensive handbook which includes information about NVQs, key skills qualifications and the responsibilities of SCT, the learner and the employer.

50. SCT has a well-established and thorough internal audit system which involves staff at all levels and across all functions. Any non-compliance is resolved promptly with appropriate corrective action. It has also introduced a new system to check the quality of progress reviews. Team leaders are required to read and sign all reviews to endorse their content and check their effectiveness in setting targets and monitoring progress. However, as yet no system exists to observe reviews to ensure that they are being carried out in accordance with SCT's requirements.

51. Feedback is collected frequently from learners and employers and is analysed and discussed at management meetings. The results of learners' questionnaires show that their satisfaction with their training is increasing steadily. Responses to individuals' concerns are quick and effective, but the system for the collection and use of feedback is still new and significant improvements in the training programmes have not yet been seen.

52. SCT has increased the frequency and thoroughness of its monitoring visits, and its monitoring of subcontractors is now satisfactory. It has introduced new service level agreements which clearly detail its own responsibilities and those of the subcontractor colleges. Contracts are specific for each subcontractor and for the individual parts of the programmes which they provide. Despite these new measures SCT has had great difficulty in improving the quality of the training provided by one of its main subcontractors. SCT is now providing some elements of this training directly, but it waited a long time before taking effective action. The service level agreement with subcontractors providing E2E training is weak and does not include sound criteria to assure the quality of their training.

53. SCT's internal verification is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. Since the previous inspection SCT has introduced a standard system across all its programmes. Internal verifiers meet regularly to share good practice and assessors receive good support.

54. Performance data is analysed regularly and discussed at management meetings.

SCT is now able to monitor learners' progress effectively and accurately. However, many aspects of the quality assurance arrangements are new. SCT has yet to carry out any evaluation of the success of their implementation and is still developing performance indicators. For example, it has not yet evaluated the new system for providing learning support.

55. SCT's self-assessment report is sufficiently self-critical and accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Construction

### Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	122	3

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

#### Strengths

- good development of learners' practical skills
- good support for additional learning needs

#### Weaknesses

- slow progress for many learners
- inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

### Achievement and standards

56. Learners develop a high level of practical skill in good workplaces. Many are employed by companies with operatives or managers who were previously learners at SCT. Training in the workplace is well planned. This helps ensure learners get an appropriate range of activities and do not spend too much time doing one particular type of work. Many take high levels of responsibility for installing plumbing and heating systems. For example, one learner was solely responsible for installing a bathroom in a new residential home. The work was neat. Pipework was accurately bent and secured, with little disruption to the day-to-day working of the home. His supervisor monitored the work closely and provided support when necessary. Other learners gain good skills working on domestic and commercial projects and high-specification building renovations. Many learners gain additional qualifications. Some achieve manual handling or first aid certificates and plumbing learners gain additional gas qualifications.

57. Retention rates have improved since the previous inspection, and are now satisfactory for many learners on most programmes. Most learners on programmes at the time of the previous inspection remained to the end of their planned learning period, although few achieved the full requirements of their qualification. Of those recruited in 2002-03 and 2003-04, most are still in learning. SCT has significantly improved its monitoring and target-setting for learners and staff, and managers and training officers can now monitor the progress of learners more closely. Achievement rates have improved since the previous inspection, although it is too early to judge the effect of improved retention on achievement rates.

58. As at the previous inspection, progress remains slow for many learners. Some

remain in learning well past their predicted completion date, often with considerable amounts of work to do before they achieve their qualification. One college does not have centre approval, and first-year plumbing foundation modern apprentices there have yet to be assessed for the technical certificate which forms a significant part of the framework. Few visits to the workplace are made to assess learners or to validate evidence they produce. Most of the progress reviews carried out by SCT take place in the colleges, with insufficient visits to the workplace to monitor progress. However, employers are contacted to seek their opinions on learners' progress before reviews are carried out.

### **Quality of education and training**

59. Support for learners with additional needs is good. A new initial assessment is being used which identifies additional learning needs in a more systematic way. It is too early to judge whether this is affecting retention rates, but some learners have been referred to E2E programmes which better meet their needs after taking the new initial assessment. Results of initial assessment are entered on learning plans and shared with colleges and appropriate members of SCT's staff. Those with additional literacy or numeracy support needs receive good support in college and the workplace. In one case a support worker visits a learner at work early in the morning so that support can be provided without interrupting the business or college day. Another learner received good additional support from a member of SCT's staff towards a construction skills certification safety assessment, which is an important part of the framework. The learner achieved the qualification, which he had failed twice previously. Good support for another learner with dyslexia is provided by one of the colleges.

60. Learners' progress reviews are now satisfactory. Targets are set for learners during reviews and followed up at the next review. One learner was observed wearing inappropriate footwear on site which was not challenged by the member of staff carrying out the review. Internal verification carried out by the subcontracted colleges is also satisfactory.

61. SCT provides a satisfactory range of training to meet the needs of employers and learners in Somerset. Training is available across the county. Centre approval has been sought by SCT to provide assessment for plumbing qualifications to provide a better service to learners and employers.

62. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is inadequate. Employers are often not informed about what learners do at college and are not aware of how they can help learners with their qualification. Feedback to employers is infrequent in many cases, and many do not know if their learners attend college punctually or whether they are making appropriate progress towards qualifications. Employers find it hard to act promptly in remedying problems or to plan training at work. In one case an employer sent his learners to college during half-term when it was shut, as neither the employer or the learners had been informed of the closure. Off-the-job training provided by one college subcontractor is inadequate. Learners taking the gas element of their training, which has

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

to be independently assessed, are poorly prepared. The training provided by the college has not kept pace with developments in the industry and several learners need considerable extra training before they are able to take the assessment confidently.

### **Leadership and management**

63. Leadership and management have been effective in raising achievement rates since the previous inspection. Better monitoring of learners' progress using accurate management information has been introduced. Achievement of full qualifications and progress towards them has improved. An evaluation of subcontracting arrangements has led to SCT deciding to offer a significant part of the plumbing framework itself. This initiative has involved identification of employers who have staff suitable to train as assessors. SCT has also reviewed other aspects of the framework, such as employment responsibilities and rights, and key skills, to see if it is viable to deliver these in another way which will benefit learners.

64. At the time of the reinspection many of these initiatives were too new for their effect to be measured. SCT has placed the emphasis on ensuring learners are on the right programme. Staff are set targets to support learners to achieve NVQs and complete frameworks. The self-assessment report for construction is largely accurate in its identification of strengths and weaknesses.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	69	3

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

**Strengths**

- good use of work placements to develop learners' skills
- high retention rates for learners on foundation modern apprenticeships
- highly effective use of target-setting

**Weaknesses**

- slow progress towards completion of modern apprenticeships
- insufficiently thorough induction
- inconsistent use of initial assessment

**Achievement and standards**

65. Retention rates on foundation modern apprenticeships have remained high since the previous inspection. Of the 77 learners who started their programme during the previous five years, 78 per cent have been retained or are still in learning. For the three most recent intakes, 85 per cent have been retained or are still in learning.

66. Poor achievement rates were identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. These have improved and are now satisfactory. Over 40 per cent of the learners following advanced modern apprenticeships at the time of the previous inspection have successfully completed, and approximately another 40 per cent are nearing completion of their programmes. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprenticeships are showing an improving trend, with achievements of 38 per cent for the 1999-2000 intake and approximately three-quarters of those starting in 2002-03 are making good progress towards achieving their qualification.

67. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ programmes are satisfactory and improving. The overall retention rate for the previous five intakes is 51 per cent. For the 25 starters in 2002-03, 24 per cent have already gained their NVQ and another 32 per cent remain in learning.

68. As identified in the previous inspection, learners make slow progress towards the completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks. Of the 60 learners who started their advanced modern apprenticeship in 1998-99 and 1999-2000, with a planned duration of three years, 17 per cent are still in learning. One-third of the 2000-01 intake on the

foundation modern apprenticeship, which lasts between 18 and 24 months, remain in learning as do 40 per cent of the 2001-02 intake of 25 starters. SCT has introduced measures to improve the rate of completion, and greater emphasis is now placed on the early completion of key skills external tests through access to online testing. Management information systems now provide comprehensive information on each learner's progress and give timely warnings of slow progress towards achievement.

### **Quality of education and training**

69. SCT makes good use of work placements to develop learners' skills, a strength recognised in the previous inspection. Learners gain a range of engineering experience, from the manufacture of large and complex concrete structures, to the programming of computer-controlled machines producing components for life-support systems. Learners develop good skills in areas such as welding, manual and computer-controlled machining and the manufacture of specialist recycling machinery. Learners in the security industry become skilled in the installation and commissioning of closed-circuit television and fire alarm systems. Employers provide good on-the-job training and many encourage learners to take responsibility for complex projects and to interact with clients. At one company, a learner is responsible for co-ordinating and ordering welding supplies for a number of local businesses.

70. Highly effective use is made of target-setting to aid learners' progression. The previous inspection highlighted progress reviews and assessment as strengths. Portfolios are carefully assessed and detailed written feedback is given to learners, who are set specific and timebound targets to make improvements. Learners are effectively supported by training officers. There is now good awareness of the need to complete apprenticeships within planned timescales. Regular progress reviews are used to set short-term targets that are effective in encouraging learners' progress. Subsequent reviews carefully check progress against targets and set new ones. However, too few reviews involve employers in planning work to contribute towards the learner's progress. Many reviews rely upon written contributions, or a separate meeting with the training officer. Although learners are at the centre of the review process, they do not have the opportunity to make a written contribution. The review provides an opportunity to explore and record learners' understanding of equality of opportunity. However, this is rarely done and learners are simply asked if they have points they want to discuss or if they are subject to discrimination, harassment or bullying.

71. Key skills training is satisfactory. It is an integral part of NVQ programmes. Learners collect evidence of their engineering competence in a way that encourages identification of evidence towards the key skills qualification. However, some evidence is collected towards the end of NVQ training, and early completion of key skills is made more difficult. Well-designed, work-related exercises are given to some learners to help them develop specific key skills. Workshops at SCT's centres provide good support for learners who need additional help towards completion of their key skills qualifications.

72. Learners' portfolios are well structured and contain evidence of the skills they have



developed, supported by witness statements. The standard of presentation of many portfolios is very high. They contain evidence such as step-by-step photographs of work in progress, clear method statements, engineering drawings, project management charts, spreadsheets and job cards. This was recognised in the previous inspection.

73. Physical resources for training are at least satisfactory and in some cases very good. Some companies have invested in the latest computer-controlled machines and have the latest computer-aided design programs that can simulate production of components before machining. Other companies have small but adequately equipped workshops for complex welding and fabrication tasks. SCT's staff are sufficient in number and suitably qualified for their roles. However, some learners were left without a training officer for some months following staff illness. SCT has worked hard to help learners make up lost time, but some learners have been slow to complete. One subcontractor has been unable to replace a member of staff, and has had to suspend its welding course for a significant period of time.

74. SCT provides a satisfactory range of programmes to support the needs of employers in Somerset. NVQs are chosen by SCT in consultation with employers and learners. Off-the-job training provided by subcontracted colleges effectively supports training. Learners enjoy their day-release courses and are able to use their vocational studies to support their workplace training.

75. Induction is insufficiently thorough. Induction is planned as a half-day session covering the induction handbook and a manual handling course, but this format is inconsistently applied. Most learners have a poor recollection of the purpose and content of induction. Many learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is poor, as is some learners' recall of the complaints or appeals procedures. Some newer learners are unsure of which key skills they should study or how their college course relates to their training. The handbook tells learners that their individual learning plan gives details of these, but learners do not receive a copy. The induction questionnaire does not adequately monitor learners' understanding of induction. Completed questionnaires are held in the learners' files rather than being marked and returned to them.

76. SCT's use of initial assessment remains inconsistent, having been identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. A standard initial assessment process is now in use, but some learners have not received this. Results are not discussed with some learners even though they might provide an insight into occupational strengths and help guide career objectives. One learner was not identified as having dyslexia, even though they had a statement from school. One subcontractor does not receive any initial assessment information about learners. Learners diagnosed as needing additional learning support can receive help from the college subcontractor and from their training officer. During one assessment, a training officer wrote evidence notes for a learner with additional support needs. Skilful questioning of the learner ensured that the evidence was the learner's own. However, the same learner was resentful of having to attend learning support sessions at college and was unsure why they had to attend.

## **Leadership and management**

77. SCT has introduced effective measures to rectify the weaknesses and other improvements needed that were highlighted in the previous inspection report. Improvements in learners' progress are encouraged through targets for training officers and learners. Standard systems now support the training process. Internal verification systems are sound. Planning ensures formative and summative sampling of portfolios and the observation of assessors. Meetings are used to share good practice and to ensure a standard approach to assessment and verification. The availability of data has improved and now provides good monitoring of learners' progress and other management information. For example, SCT now carries out a detailed analysis of early leavers. The training team meets regularly to review learners' progress and share good practice. SCT has developed productive links with subcontractors and employers. Learners' and employers' views are sought through questionnaires, the results of which are analysed and considered by the management team. Training staff are encouraged to take relevant development opportunities and keep up to date with changes in qualifications and modern apprenticeship frameworks.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	100	3

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

**Strengths**

- good progress by many learners on foundation modern apprenticeships
- good work placements and employers
- very effective action-planning

**Weaknesses**

- slow progress for some learners on advanced modern apprenticeships
- insufficiently challenging programmes for some learners

**Achievement and standards**

78. Learners on foundation modern apprenticeships are now making good progress towards completing the framework. Retention rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Of the learners starting in 2002-03, 36 per cent have completed the full framework, and an additional 28 per cent have achieved most of the NVQ and key skill units required and are due to complete the full framework in the near future. Seventy-eight per cent of learners recruited in 2003-04 are still in learning. Many have achieved over 50 per cent of the NVQ units and are on target to complete the framework by August 2004.

79. The standard of work produced by learners is satisfactory. Portfolios are well organised and contain an appropriate range of evidence including logs, memos, faxes and case histories. Evidence is clearly referenced and, where units have been completed, assessment decisions are clear and appropriately recorded. Learners develop good skills, and many have responsible jobs as part of teams which enable them to gain confidence in their work.

80. Learners trained by the subcontractor makes slow progress towards completing their advanced modern apprenticeship. Some learners are on programme for eight months before achieving any units. Progress towards key skills qualifications has been slow. For example, one learner who has failed the key skills test in application of number has practise papers to work on over the summer, but the subcontracted assessor is unavailable to mark them. Other learners have to increase their speed of working towards the end in an attempt to complete the framework by the planned date. However, learners starting advanced modern apprenticeships during 2003-04 are making good progress with all components of the framework.

### **Quality of education and training**

81. The quality of work placements remains good. SCT has strong links with Somerset County Council and employers throughout the county. Work placements reflect the local economy and include county and district local authorities, mental health projects, the motor industry and a musical instrument maker. Placements provide appropriate opportunities to collect evidence for qualifications and for competence to be assessed. Learners are well supported and employers' understanding of training has been enhanced by an employers' handbook introduced since the previous inspection. Many learners perform important jobs including responsibilities such as processing pay claims, providing secretarial services to solicitors and supporting care services.

82. SCT carries out very effective action-planning to support learners' progress. Action plans are agreed with learners every two weeks during attendance at off-the-job training. Measurable targets linked to NVQ or key skills units are identified and agreed with learners. The plan is used as a framework for learners to collect evidence at work. Action plans are monitored during subsequent off-the-job training and updated as required. Action-planning is also used to identify assessment opportunities and contributes to learners' understanding of the assessment process. When learners are ready for assessment they arrange for assessors to observe them in the workplace. Targets agreed are used to monitor learners' progress during the 12-weekly reviews. They are also used well to involve employers and improve their understanding of training requirements.

83. Teaching and training for business administration learners is satisfactory. Learners attend training sessions at SCT's premises fortnightly. Background knowledge teaching and preparation for examination is good. Guidance on portfolio-building is given to learners on an individual basis. Product evidence from work and completed units are assessed at the training sessions. Learners at the subcontracted provision attend off-the-job training more frequently. Training at work is planned effectively between training officers and supervisors. Learners are confident in using new knowledge and skills at work. In some cases, insufficient distinction is made between assessment and training, contrary to awarding body guidelines.

84. Sufficient qualified and experienced staff are available to meet the needs of learners. Assessors support an appropriate number of learners. Attendance at training events related to assessment is satisfactory, but few plans are in place for staff to update their occupational competence. For example, one member of staff has worked at Somerset County Council for 17 years and only holds assessor qualifications. Resources used for training, such as handouts and textbooks, are adequate, but in one learning session not enough computers were available for each learner to carry out the tasks. Accommodation is satisfactory, with appropriate access for learners with restricted mobility.

85. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory.

Initial assessment has improved and is comprehensive, but the results are not always used to prepare individual learning plans. Recommendations for the level of qualification most appropriate to learners' abilities are not always followed. For some learners' initial assessment is not carried out until a few months after they have started the programme. Literacy and numeracy support has been delayed for these learners, who have made slow progress towards their key skills qualification. When learners are identified as needing literacy or numeracy support they receive individual tuition and their progress is monitored well.

86. Some learners are on programmes which are insufficiently challenging for their abilities. Many learners recruited to modern apprenticeship programmes have successfully gained GCSEs at grades C or above in eight subjects including English and mathematics. Initial assessment has identified learners for whom a level 3 programme would be most appropriate. However, most start training on a level 2 programme before progressing to level 3. Many collect workplace evidence for the level 3 award before they have completed the level 2. One learner expressed disappointment at not being given the option of joining the advanced modern apprenticeship scheme when leaving school despite good GCSE grades.

### **Leadership and management**

87. Recent changes in curriculum management have improved the quality of many procedures. Internal verification is now satisfactory, and formative sampling of portfolios has been introduced that includes action points that are rectified. However, some learners are unaware of the appeals procedure or the internal verifier's role. Some standardisation of assessment has been carried out. Staff attend regular standardisation meetings, although records of these are insufficiently detailed and contain few action points. Learners' personal files are well organised. They are audited and amended and provide an accurate record of each learner's progress. Teaching is observed, but it is unclear what developmental action is taken as a result.

88. Learners have a poor understanding of equality of opportunity. Reinforcement of equality of opportunity through training and progress reviews is inadequate. Some learners are unaware of aspects of indirect discrimination. They do not understand the importance of some incidences at work and do not report them to their managers or training officers. One learner experienced a significant delay in resolving a case of harassment they had reported. When the seriousness of the situation became apparent it was quickly resolved.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	128	3

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

**Strengths**

- particularly thorough monitoring of progress
- good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- good additional support to meet learners' individual needs

**Weaknesses**

- slow completion of early years care frameworks for some learners
- insufficient career and progression guidance

**Achievement and standards**

89. Rates of retention and achievement have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Retention and achievement rates for learners on advanced modern apprenticeships in early years care and education have improved and are now satisfactory. The retention rate was around 58 per cent for learners starting in 2000-01. Eighty-two per cent of those starting in 2002-03 are still in learning, and are on target to complete the framework. Retention and achievement rates on care programmes are now satisfactory. Over 50 per cent of learners on foundation modern apprenticeships at the time of the previous inspection completed the full framework. Over 80 per cent of learners starting advanced modern apprenticeships since the previous inspection have either completed or remain in learning. Both retention and achievement rates for foundation modern apprenticeships in early years care and education have steadily improved but are not yet satisfactory. In oral health care 58 per cent of learners in learning at the time of the previous inspection achieved the NVQ and 21 per cent are still in learning. Of those recruited since the previous inspection, 80 per cent are still in learning.

90. Many learners on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in early years care and education make slow progress, and too few complete within the planned duration. The rate of progress of oral health care learners is improving and achievement rates in the independent assessment are good. Some learners who do not complete their framework do achieve an NVQ. Learners' portfolios of work are satisfactory and the key skills qualification achievement rate has risen in the past two years. Many learners on foundation modern apprenticeships progress to the advanced modern apprenticeship and employment. Learners develop a good level of skills and knowledge and many have responsible roles in their jobs.

## Quality of education and training

91. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is good. Off-the-job training is planned and taught well. The best learning sessions observed use a range of learning styles and challenge learners and develop their confidence. Learning is well co-ordinated, with learners benefiting from the excellent communications between all those involved. However, some early years employers are not given sufficient details of off-the-job training, and too much reliance is placed on the learner providing this information.

92. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is particularly thorough. Training officers visit learners regularly at the work placement to assess and monitor their progress. Learners and employers are able to contact the training officers between visits. Workplace supervisors participate in progress reviews and action plans are agreed with them. Many now have a good understanding of the requirements of the NVQ, which rectifies a weakness identified at the previous inspection. Learners have individual meetings with their training officers during weekly off-the-job training. Short-term targets are set for tasks to be completed for assessment at the next off-the-job session. A progress monitoring system has been in operation for six months and information from this is discussed at monthly meetings between the team leader and each training officer. Learners falling behind their target completion rates are identified and an individual action plan is drawn up. The unit completion rate has improved since this monitoring was introduced. Effective communication between training officers and workplace supervisors, training officers and learners, and team leaders and training officers supports the monitoring process.

93. Learners receive good support for their individual needs, as was identified at the previous inspection. All learners are initially assessed to identify learning needs, and those who are in need of additional support are offered weekly individual support sessions guided by an individual scheme of work. Many learners are given additional support to develop numeracy skills and enable them to complete key skills qualifications. Training officers and employers encourage learners' development within a supportive environment. Learners receive feedback which constructively supports the learning process. A Connexions initiative for level 2 learners provides additional pastoral and counselling support when required.

94. Resources are satisfactory. Learners have access to a range of textbooks and magazines and have access to computers at each of the training centres. Workplaces and training rooms are appropriately resourced to support learning programme. Staff are qualified in the vocational area and receive regular training to update their skills. They are trained and supported through the assessor and verifier awards if required. All learners have access to computers.

95. Courses and programmes meet the needs of the learners. Many care learners are referred through Connexions. Oral health care learners are usually referred by their employers, as SCT is the only provider in the area. Early years care and education



## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

learners are offered training once they have demonstrated a commitment to working with children. Some care learners are recruited by social services. They are placed into a day centre for the first six months and then work in a residential home to gain experience and evidence for the NVQ. These learners work under strict guidelines appropriate to their age and experience.

96. Learners receive insufficient careers and progression guidance, particularly those working at level 3. Learners receive informal careers guidance from training officers and insufficient information from Connexions. Learners are encouraged to progress from foundation to advanced modern apprenticeships, but further careers guidance is limited. For example, one learner nearing the end of her qualification wanted to become a dental therapist but had not received any information about how to proceed.

### **Leadership and management**

97. Management of learning programmes has improved since the previous inspection. The technical certificate, NVQ and key skills qualification are now taught in an integrated way. Selection and initial assessment have become more thorough. Significant developments in monitoring learners' progress have been introduced, retention and achievement rates have improved and effective use is made of management information systems to monitor learners' performance. The working relationship between SCT and employers has been strengthened. Co-ordination and contact between sites has standardised training. Learners have an appropriate understanding of equality of opportunity.

98. Internal verification is well organised. A sampling schedule is followed and units are verified within four weeks. The internal verifier interviews learners and observes assessment. Formative and summative internal verification are used when it assists the learner to achieve.



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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Entry to Employment	114	3
Programme centres	132	3
Work-based learning for adults	25	3

*During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:*

**Strengths**

- good rates of progression, employment and achievement
- good teaching and learning on BET programmes
- very clear identification of learning and employment aims on adult programmes
- wide range of learning opportunities on E2E programmes
- very good learning and personal support

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate resources in some programme centres
- weak identification and recording of employability skills on E2E programmes
- insufficient structured literacy and numeracy support for some E2E learners
- insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity
- weak analysis of data on E2E programmes

**Achievement and standards**

99. Rates of progression, employment and achievement are good on adult and E2E programmes. Development of personal and learning skills in adult programmes is good. In addition to qualifications, most clients gain additional self-confidence and many have made improvements in their social skills and have overcome behavioural problems. The employment rate for the past three years averages 40 per cent. In addition, approximately 50 per cent of BET clients achieve their learning goals. In the past three years, 100 additional qualifications have been achieved by 126 BET clients, including 44 in literacy and numeracy, 23 in first aid, 26 in manual handling and seven in IT. All adult clients have gained increases in personal and team skills.

100. Between August 2003 and June 2004, 133 new learners started on E2E programmes. Forty-one learners have left, with 17 progressing to a positive outcome. Eleven of these learners went on to full-time employment, three to work-based learning programmes and three to further education. Additionally, eight learners were transferred to other E2E programmes. Ninety-two learners are still in learning. Of the 56 learners transferred from previous Life Skills programmes, 34 have left of whom 19 progressed to a positive outcome. Thirteen of these learners went on to full-time employment, three to

## SOMERSET COUNTY TRAINING REINSPECTION

work-based learning programmes, three to further education, and four transferred to other E2E programmes.

101. Most E2E learners have the opportunity to work towards the achievement of accredited qualifications. Nine learners have achieved an NVQ at level 1 and 40 have achieved units towards NVQs. Forty-seven have achieved communication, application of number or other key skills qualifications, 23 have gained a first aid certificate, 30 have gained a food hygiene certificate and 26 have gained a variety of other awards. Over 80 per cent of learners take part in either work experience or work tasters. SCT attaches great importance to attendance as a key employability skill and positively encourages learners to attend regularly. The attendance rate currently exceeds 80 per cent.

### **Quality of education and training**

102. Teaching and learning on BET programmes is good. The use of IT is integrated very well with literacy and numeracy learning sessions. Clients use the internet and newspapers well to research current events. In one learning session clients learned how to work out a travel route and write it up. The learning was reinforced effectively by using the internet to look up the route chosen. Classrooms are well resourced. Examples of clients' work are displayed, together with posters that reinforce clients' rights and opportunities. Work in portfolios is individual and often incorporates clients' interests. Examples include the use of calligraphy, individual historical and fashion research and writing plays.

103. Learning and employment aims in adult programmes are very clearly identified. Jobcentre Plus carries out initial assessment of BET clients. They then receive a detailed diagnostic assessment from SCT to identify their literacy and numeracy skill levels and the levels that need to be worked towards. These are used to draw up individual learning plans which form the basis of target-setting and are routinely updated. Clients referred to programme centres take part in a detailed discussion that establishes their employment aims. Good individual coaching is given to help with curriculum vitae preparation, jobsearch and employability skills. Programme centre clients have a clear understanding of employment aims which match their abilities and potential.

104. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for E2E and programme centres. Learning sessions are planned and the resources needed are made available. Some good use is made of activity-based learning to engage learners. Learners and trainers work well together. Learners are encouraged to take a full part in learning sessions by taking part in debates and discussions and asking relevant questions to ensure their understanding. In E2E there is little linkage between many learning sessions, and trainers do not routinely devise learning projects that include and encompass literacy and numeracy skills, IT and personal effectiveness training, for example.

105. SCT offers a wide range of learning opportunities for E2E learners. Programmes are provided at six centres over a wide geographical area of Somerset. Learners can work towards a range of vocational and other qualifications that best suit their needs and

aims. They can move between centres during programmes, although geographical and transport difficulties make this difficult for many. Some providers have devised special projects to engage learners and support their progression. These include use of a youth centre with cooking facilities, a sports hall and landscape gardening possibilities, a residential centre for young people which has facilities for art and craft, IT and music production and an African Centre which aims to raise money for an orphanage in Kenya. However, these projects are new and experiences and skills gained are not routinely used to update E2E programmes, as evidence towards key skills qualifications or for other aspects of the programme.

106. Support for clients is very good. Trainers and centre staff on adult programmes have a very good understanding of clients' needs. Classrooms and centres are welcoming places where clients feel able to express themselves and share their aims with staff. Staff have good connections with other agencies and are able to support clients with problems relating to alcohol or substance misuse. Clients trust the staff and work with them productively.

107. E2E learners receive a high level of individual support. Many have significant difficulties to overcome before they can learn effectively. In most learning sessions trainers are assisted by other members of learning support staff and are able to support individual learners comprehensively. Trainers also support learners to overcome both personal and social problems. Connexions personal advisers work well with staff and routinely support learners, taking a full part in progress reviews at training centres and workplaces. Learners on work experience receive good support from employers and regular visits from SCT's staff.

108. Some programme centres are not adequately resourced. One centre is cramped and several centres do not have enough computers. Many clients do much of their jobsearch on the internet and use computers to write curriculum vitae and letters, and their work is being delayed. In most centres the only telephone available to clients is in the training room where other clients are able to hear personal details including addresses and telephone numbers. Clients are concerned that they have to discuss very personal details within the hearing of others. In one programme centre the photocopier produces very poor copies.

109. Most E2E resources are satisfactory. Trainers and other staff are appropriately qualified, are enthusiastic and work effectively to support learners' progress. Some specific E2E training has taken place to support trainers. Some specific E2E staff do not have the necessary experience and qualifications to provide literacy and numeracy support effectively. Accommodation is satisfactory and classrooms are equipped with suitable teaching resources and information learning technology. Some E2E learning materials are of poor quality in content and presentation and are not relevant to learners' interests or occupation.

110. The identification and recording of learners' employability skills in E2E passports is weak. Information from the comprehensive initial assessment carried out jointly by SCT and Connexions is not used effectively to identify barriers to learning that could form key

learning objectives. For example, one assessment states that a learner had poor attendance at school. However, attendance was not identified as a key objective on this learner's learning programme. Targets agreed at progress reviews are too general and do not enable progress to be effectively measured.

111. Literacy and numeracy skills support is inadequate for some E2E learners. Learners identified as needing additional support receive a diagnostic assessment to identify specific support needs. The results of this assessment are not routinely used to draw up learning plans for literacy and numeracy. No systematic recording takes place of initial screening results or additional support in the E2E passport. Clients in programme centres receive little support for any additional learning needs in literacy and numeracy. Although this support is not part of contractual obligations, some clients are disadvantaged by the lack of it.

112. Some adult clients are placed on inappropriate programmes. Not all clients referred to programme centres by Jobcentre Plus are job ready. Some clients on programme centre have additional literacy and numeracy support needs. Other clients have medical conditions that would make taking up employment difficult. On the BET programme some clients have severe barriers to employment which the programme is unable to deal with. SCT does refer some clients back to Jobcentre Plus, but in the meantime learning for these and other clients is often disrupted.

## **Leadership and management**

113. Equality and diversity are not adequately reinforced. Inappropriate behaviour on adult programmes is not adequately challenged by staff. An inappropriate poster produced by a learner as part of an exercise in equality was displayed in one centre, implying that it was acceptable. In another centre a learner from a minority ethnic background experiencing difficulty in finding employment received no additional help, despite recognition that they could be the victim of discrimination. Some clients do not understand the grievance procedure. E2E learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is weak. Although covered at induction, it is not memorable and learners have a poor recall of topics covered. There is little reinforcement of equality of opportunity during progress reviews and in the workplace. Some small employers have insufficient understanding of their responsibilities under current and proposed legislation.

114. Management procedures and quality assurance arrangements for E2E are new and not yet fully established. Some practices are inconsistent between centres, such as the completion of E2E passports and the quality of progress reviews. Target-setting is weak. Many centre managers are unclear about the roles and responsibilities of senior managers and co-ordinators. Many staff have recently been appointed and roles and responsibilities are currently being formally identified. Training relevant to both E2E and literacy and numeracy is planned for the near future for some staff. However, staff are enthusiastic and committed to the E2E programme's aims and objectives. Learners appreciate the support, advice and guidance given by staff and representatives of other

agencies.

115. SCT makes insufficient systematic use of data to assess and improve the quality of the E2E provision. The results of initial assessment are not used to identify where the main support needs are, or to plan the level of resources needed and the range of progression routes. Reports on timekeeping, attendance or the achievement of awards are not produced. However, some use is made of learners' and employers' feedback. Most data on progress and achievement is compiled to comply with contracts rather than to identify and improve the quality of provision.