

INSPECTION REPORT

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

25 September 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (the Trust) was formed as a result of a merger in April 2002 of the former Sandwell Healthcare and City Hospitals NHS Trusts. It employs over 7,000 people and provides acute 24-hour healthcare facilities on three hospital sites.

2. The learning and development department is part of the human resource division of the Trust. It is comprised of an established team of managers, trainers, assessors and administrative support staff. The department is managed by the director of learning and development, supported by 71 staff. The staff are attached to six key functions, namely: corporate learning and development; clinical learning and development; healthcare support learning and development; learning and development contracts and key skills; business informatics and learning and development; and organisational and quality learning and development. All staff are part of a multidisciplinary team.

3. The learning and development department delivers work-based learning in construction, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology, retailing, customer service and transportation, and health, social care and public services. There are currently 53 learners on the customer service and care programmes. There are two learners in construction and none in the remaining areas, and these were not graded in this inspection. All learners are employees of the Trust. The modern apprenticeship programme is supported by funding from the Black Country Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Retailing, customer service & transportation

4. The customer service foundation programme is the first stage of a specialist cadet programme run by the learning and development department. Learners are recruited in order to qualify for various disciplines known as pathways within the Trust. Currently there are 42 learners on the customer service programme. All learners are following the level 2 qualification in customer service. They are working towards six key skills and additional qualifications such as basic food hygiene and basic health and safety certificates. Learners who need a human biology advanced level (A level) qualification to gain access to university later in their training are sent to a local college. Thirty-five learners will be progressing on to care pathway programmes and seven will be following business or information technology (IT) programmes. All learners are placed in various departments across the Trust sites. They follow a four-weekly rota to experience different departments and interact with patients. The programme of learning includes on- and off-the-job training, portfolio support, assessment and review. Learners are recruited once a year usually in July or August. There are six trainers and assessors some of whom carry out the progress reviews. There are some work-based assessors in some of the

placements and supervisors are frequently used to supply witness testimony for the learners' national vocational qualification (NVQ) evidence.

Health, social care & public services

5. The Trust offers foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships which form the basis of cadet training, which spans two full years. There is a choice of six pathway programmes: nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, radiography, ultra sound and bio-medical science. All learners start their programme by completing the customer service NVQ at level 2 and key skills. Following this, nursing and midwifery cadets complete NVQs in care at levels 2 and 3. Physiotherapy and imaging cadets complete care at level 2 and diagnostics and therapeutics at level 3. Bio-medical science cadets complete clinical laboratory support at level 2 and bio-medical science BTEC qualification. Midwifery, physiotherapy and imaging cadets are also required to study human biology at A level and the bio-medical science cadets study two science-based A levels. Currently there are 11 learners on the care at level 2 stage of the programme. Nine learners have just achieved the level 3 and are now going to university. Learners have placements on three wards when completing care at level 2: a medical ward, a surgical ward and a care of elderly people ward and three placements in pathology laboratories when completing clinical laboratory support at level 2 and their BTEC. When completing at level 3 they have placements in specialised areas such as accident and emergency, theatres, community and women's unit, as well as general wards. There are six full-time trainer/assessors in their specialist areas. Three of these also have a co-ordinator role for specific groups on the programme. There is a full-time manager for nursing and midwifery and the head of care is the manager for physiotherapy. The nursing and midwifery manager, the physiotherapy co-ordinator and the head of care carry out the internal verification.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	4
Number of learner interviews	54
Number of staff interviews	39
Number of employer interviews	7
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	3
Number of visits	16

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of work-based learning in retailing, customer service and transportation, and health, social care and public services is outstanding. The leadership and management are outstanding and the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance are good. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management	1
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	2

Retailing, customer service & transportation	1
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	1

Health, social care & public services	1
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Retention and achievement rates are very good.** Retention rates for health and social care have been 93 to 100 per cent over the past three years. They were 92 per cent for NVQ training in customer service in 2001-02 and 86 per cent in 2002-03 for foundation modern apprentices. Achievement rates for both areas of learning have also been very good over the same period.

8. **Progression routes and progression for learners in health and social care are excellent.** When advanced modern apprentices complete their framework in healthcare, they are guaranteed a university place, while still employed, to work towards a professional qualification in a number of healthcare-related areas, including nursing, midwifery and physiotherapy. All learners are guaranteed a job with the Trust when they complete their studies.

Quality of education and training

9. **On-the-job training for learners in healthcare is good.** Many staff are involved in professional development and learners benefit from the positive learning environment. They gain a wide range of experience through good placements. Working alongside mentors who are qualified nurses, learners receive good instruction in practical tasks. Trainer/assessors visit the work placements at least once a week to coach or assess.

10. **Off-the-job training for both areas is well planned and well delivered.** Lesson plans

have clear aims and learning outcomes, and most show a range of valid teaching methods. During the customer service phase, customer skills and key skills are taught together and are assessed, where possible, through projects which integrate both sets of skills. Learners have access to any other courses offered within the Trust.

11. Key skills are an integral part of the customer service phase. Assessment is frequent and combines unit and holistic assessment and a range of assessment methods. Assessment records are detailed and can be used as accreditation of prior achievement for those going on to care programmes. Most learners who move on to care programmes complete all the key skills during the customer service phase. Assessment in healthcare is satisfactory for individual units.

12. Resources for healthcare are very good and for customer service are good. In addition to the resources of the learning and development department, the equipment in work placements is up to date. There are well-qualified and very committed training staff, mentors and ward managers. Both areas have access to a learndirect hub as an additional resource.

13. Support for learners in both areas is very effective. In addition to learning support through their mentors and other members of the learning and development department, learners have access to good pastoral support.

Leadership and management

14. Both programmes are well managed. The manager responsible for each programme is also responsible for the evaluation of the programme and its quality assurance.

15. Strategic management is effective. The large learning and development department effectively uses a number of the policies and procedures for all training and development in the Trust. By effective succession planning and identification of skills gaps, the Trust accurately targets the number of young people it can recruit and guarantees jobs for them on completion.

16. The Trust has good external communications. It has close working relationships with a number of local universities and colleges. It has partnership arrangements with local primary healthcare trusts and is collaborating with the emerging NHS university in a number of areas. Staff from the Trust provide information and advice to other NHS trusts and consortia on cadet training programmes.

17. Staff development is good. Individual training needs are assessed as part of an annual appraisal. The Trust has effective programmes to train its own trainers, assessors and internal verifiers with accreditation from the appropriate awarding bodies. Trainers and assessors periodically update their occupational competency.

18. Learners receive good pastoral support. In addition to support from their mentors and other staff, learners have access to individual counselling from a psychologist. Nurse accommodation has been provided for learners who are experiencing difficulties at home.

19. **Learners and staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities.** Equal opportunities is included in the corporate induction, programme-specific induction packages and throughout training and assessment. All staff receive regular mandatory training in equal opportunities.

20. **Evaluation of training is comprehensive.** All training, including that carried out by subcontractors, is subjected to four levels of evaluation, using feedback from learners, trainers, assessors, mentors, work-placement supervisors and evidence from portfolios. When appropriate, changes to programmes are made to deal with problems identified through evaluation.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective strategic management
- good external communications
- good staff development
- good pastoral support for learners
- very good understanding of equal opportunities by learners and staff
- comprehensive evaluation of training

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- very good training and development for learners
- comprehensive range of resources
- excellent support for learners
- very good assessment for NVQs and key skills
- well-managed programme

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- excellent progression routes and progression
- excellent retention rates
- very good achievement of qualifications
- good on-the-job training
- very good resources
- very effective support for learners
- well-managed programme

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SANDWELL AND WEST BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALS NHS TRUST:

- working with patients
- being paid
- getting qualifications as they work
- being in a group of people throughout training
- study weeks and study days
- the level of support
- the choices available with regard to pathway programmes
- the resources
- the good settling-in process in early stages
- the variety of work placements

WHAT LEARNERS THINK SANDWELL AND WEST BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALS NHS TRUST COULD IMPROVE:

- more choice of holiday times
- different arrangements for A levels
- work with healthcare assistants on all sites
- travel expenses or help getting to the training venues

KEY CHALLENGES FOR SANDWELL AND WEST BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALS NHS TRUST:

- maintain the very good standards
- further focus on the individual especially in the off-the-job training
- additional referencing of evidence for units other than the one planned to be assessed

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 1

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- effective strategic management
- good external communications
- good staff development
- good pastoral support for learners
- very good understanding of equal opportunities by learners and staff
- comprehensive evaluation of training

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

21. The Trust has effective strategic management of the modern apprenticeship programme. There is a strong commitment to training and continuous professional development throughout the organisation. The cadet scheme was developed primarily as a solution to a shortfall in trained nurses and has been successfully extended to other areas of employment. The large learning and development department effectively uses a number of the policies and procedures, which govern all training and development within the Trust. For example, the study leave policy and procedures which are designed for all members of staff who attend external training courses, are successfully applied to those learners who attend off-the-job training at local colleges. By effective succession planning and identification of skills gaps, the Trust is able to accurately target the number of young people it can recruit and guarantee jobs on successful completion. The Trust reviewed staffing levels, job descriptions and policies for the management of training following the merger in 2002. In the process they adopted the best practices from each of the previous organisations.

22. The Trust has good external communications. The Trust has close working relationships with the Black Country and Birmingham Workforce Development Confederation. It also works closely with a number of local universities, which cadets attend following completion of their advanced modern apprenticeships. University personnel form part of the Trust's selection interview panels for new learners. University students, including the Trust's own employees and former modern apprentices, attend placements in the Trust's hospitals. The Trust also maintains close contact with local colleges, which learners attend for the off-the-job training that cannot be provided within the Trust's own resources. The Trust has partnership arrangements with local primary healthcare trusts and is collaborating with the emerging NHS university in a number of areas, including the piloting of a new health service induction. It is subcontracted by a local college to provide healthcare training. Additionally, staff from the Trust have

addressed a number of conferences and given advice to other NHS trusts and consortia on cadet training, based on their own experiences. Internal communications are satisfactory. Managers in the learning and development department meet regularly, as do their various teams, to review and discuss the modern apprenticeship programme and most of these meetings are adequately minuted. Communication with learners is through line management, trainers, assessors and mentors and a departmental newsletter.

23. The Trust has a good staff development process. Individual staff training needs are assessed as part of their annual appraisal and form part of the organisation's annual training plan. As employees, learners also attend appropriate training in addition to the requirements of their apprenticeship frameworks. The learning and development department has effective in-house training programmes for trainers, assessors and internal verifiers, with accreditation from appropriate awarding bodies. The staff nurse development programme includes the requirement to gain NVQ assessor awards before progressing from grade D to E. Other programmes, including one to develop healthcare assistants and nursing auxiliaries, are also based on NVQs. There is a widespread understanding and knowledge of NVQ requirements in the learners' work placements. Trainers and assessors periodically return to the wards in order to maintain their currency and occupational competency.

24. Learners receive good pastoral support. The Trust provides good support for all its employees. This is demonstrated to the learners by the good pastoral support they receive from their mentors. In addition, although all employees have access to individual counselling with a qualified psychologist, this is available to cadets without an appointment. Nurse accommodation has been made available to learners who have experienced personal difficulties at home. Learning and development department staff are approachable and are always contactable by telephone.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

25. There is very good awareness and understanding by learners of equal opportunities through corporate induction, programme-specific induction packages, and through reinforcement during training and assessment activities. Learners are able to discuss their rights and responsibilities, and how to deal with problems relating to the working environment, such as bullying and harassment. Similarly, the awareness and understanding of equal opportunities by staff is very good. This is supported by mandatory training for all staff, with regular updating, such as recent Trust training on cultural diversity. This includes discrimination in the workplace, the impact of the Race Relations Act and the contribution of multicultural workers to the NHS. Other formal training is specific to particular groups. For example, equal opportunities is a topic on management development programmes. Attendance at such training events is recorded and is linked to staff appraisal and development. Equal opportunities is a regular agenda item for some minuted meetings, such as centre management meetings and contracts and key skills team meetings.

26. There are comprehensive equal opportunities policies and procedures in place. These specifically relate to recruitment and selection, performance management,

discipline and grievance, career development, training and development and terms and conditions of service. The policies make reference to recent legislation, relevant codes of practice, and are regularly reviewed and updated. The Trust promotes a non-discriminatory culture that recognises and supports individual and team needs. Zero tolerance of staff discrimination, harassment and violence at work is positively promoted. All staff have a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. There is a commitment to reinforcing equal opportunities practice, continual monitoring, review and evaluation.

27. The promotion of equal opportunities takes place through the use of appropriate recruitment literature, job advertisements, participation in careers events and visits to schools and places of worship. The Ufi centre within the Trust ensures its resources are accessible to people who have a disability, and uses advertisements which are designed to break down stereotype views. The need to widen participation and develop closer links with local communities is evident through active support for a local initiative that is aiming to positively promote diversity and community engagement. An established service level agreement with a local language and interpreting service gives support to minority ethnic groups. There has also been recent action to promote the physiotherapy cadet scheme to minority ethnic groups.

28. Equal opportunities data are monitored. Data are collected and monthly reports are produced which are used to monitor trends and contribute to decision-making. For example, information is analysed on the learners' ethnicity, age, gender and disability in relation to successful or unsuccessful applications. There is also some evidence of monitoring of the retention, progression and achievement rates of different groups of learners. However, some monitoring opportunities are not taken, such as the analysis of learner feedback from different learner groups. The new management information system is not yet being fully used to create meaningful information.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

29. The learning and development department has a comprehensive system of evaluation of training. All in-house discrete courses and phases of long courses are evaluated at four levels. At the first level, feedback is obtained from participants in training events by a standardised questionnaire to determine whether the training objectives have been met. Learners give feedback on a monthly basis about their work placements. Supervisors/managers also give feedback and attend regular meetings with learning and development department staff. The responsible manager within the department deals with problems raised. The second level determines whether learning has taken place through role-play and assignments and the assessment of evidence in NVQ portfolios. The third phase assesses, through questionnaire and interview, how well the new learning is applied in the workplace. In the fourth phase, the actions taken to meet identified training needs are evaluated during review meetings and supervisors report on how well learning outcomes are being applied. An annual evaluation report is produced and fed back to the Trust board. The same measures are applied whenever practicable to training courses which are attended outside the Trust. Quantitative data on a range of indicators such as the number of letters of complaint or praise and staff

turnover rates, also assist management in the evaluation of learning and development. Evaluation of early intakes showed the length of work placements to be too short and they were extended to their present length.

30. Self-assessment is satisfactory. It is primarily carried out by the management team in the learning and development department, but incorporates feedback from learners and work-placement supervisors. Subcontractors are not consulted. The latest self-assessment report was produced in April 2003 and updated in June 2003 and September 2003. The report gave the same grades as those given by inspectors. Most of the strengths identified were also identified by inspectors. However, the weaknesses identified in the report were judged to be satisfactory by inspectors.

31. Internal verification practices are satisfactory. Trainee assessors and verifiers are not used to support the modern apprenticeship scheme. The sampling plan is to verify all assessments. Key skills moderation is modelled on internal verification. In addition, all trainers are observed by their peers and by trained observers as part of the quality assurance programme. The department is currently piloting a new observation proforma developed jointly with a local college, and is using a seven-point grading scale for observed sessions. All trainers are observed annually, although newly appointed or newly trained staff are given priority and additional observations.

32. The management of subcontractors is satisfactory. Most training is carried out in-house and very few learners attend off-the-job training elsewhere. The Trust does not have service level agreements with subcontracted colleges, but they are made aware of the Trust's requirements through reports and feedback at enrolment. The colleges are chosen for the appropriateness of their curriculum offer and evaluation of past course attendance. Unsatisfactory provision is identified through evaluation and alternative provision is sought. For example, the Trust was dissatisfied with the provision in one area at a local college and has recently started a contract with a private training provider.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 1

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	42	1

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- very good training and development for learners
- comprehensive range of resources
- excellent support for learners
- very good assessment for NVQs and key skills
- well-managed programme

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

33. The retention and achievement rates are very good. The customer service part of the Trust's cadet programme prepares the learners for public service. Learners achieve qualifications within the first few weeks of the programme, including basic hygiene, and basic health and safety certificates. These count towards the additional qualifications needed for the customer service framework. The targets that learners are set are challenging and ensure that they achieve the NVQ within five to six months. Learners are encouraged to produce key skills evidence alongside the main NVQ evidence, so that good use is made of holistic assessment. Key skills achievement often takes place before the end of the learners' first year. Learners achieve more key skills than required for the framework. Project work has been developed to help learners build their research and evaluation skills.

34. Of the 25 NVQ learners who started in 2001-02, 92 per cent have achieved the full NVQ. Of the 21 foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03, 12 have completed the full framework and six are still in learning, awaiting the results of key skills tests or specialist external verification. Communication skills and reception skills are taught early in the programme and learners feel that this gives them self-confidence.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2003-04		2002-03													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	36		21													
Retained*	0		18													
Successfully completed	0		12													
Still in learning	36		6													

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			25													
Retained*			25	100												
Successfully completed			23	92												
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

Quality of education and training

35. There is very good training and development for all learners. There is a set off-the-job training programme which is well planned and well delivered. Attendance is constantly good on all off-the-job sessions. Learners know the programme timetable from the beginning of their learning and, where possible, they are grouped with learners from the same discipline. Key skills and customer service skills are taught together where they relate to each other, such as communication, IT and working with others. All trainers have relevant teaching or training qualifications and regularly update their knowledge and understanding by attending training as it arises. Training sessions are well planned and clear objectives are set at the beginning and at the end of sessions. The learners evaluate training after each session. Trainers use a range of methods for their training, including classroom activities, project work to encourage independent study, and individual coaching. Learners who need an A level to gain a university place for their care specialism, such as physiotherapy, enrol at a local college. This sometimes overlaps with the first-year training programme, but learners who miss sessions are offered the training again. Equal opportunities training is covered at induction and learners recall this training as positive and enjoyable. Additional coaching is available for learners who need assistance with numeracy. Learners can attend learndirect courses if they want more

confidentiality. Learners who are working towards the IT framework can attend additional training courses offered by other departments in the Trust. Two off-the-job training sessions were observed during the inspection and were graded as good.

36. There is a comprehensive range of training and development resources including sufficiently qualified, motivated trainers and assessors. Training rooms are fully equipped with training materials, and are spacious and comfortable. Learners have access to libraries on all sites of the Trust and can use the cyber café attached to the staff restaurant on the Sandwell site. Resources are being refurbished at the City Hospitals' site for a new cyber café and a department for literacy and numeracy training. Presently, none of the learners have additional needs, due to the entry requirements for the cadet programme. There are e-learning venues at the two main sites at Sandwell and City Hospitals. Computers are fully updated with relevant software and can be frequently accessed by learners. Learners appreciate the opportunity to use learndirect materials to help them with their studies. All learners have access to Trust policies and procedures through the intranet, and paper copies are also available at all placements. There is access to the health clubs at both sites.

37. Learners receive excellent support from their workplace and the supervisors training team. Learners are visited as often as once or twice a month by their trainers or assessors for coaching or assessment. Learners also attend off-the-job training once a week. They have regular reviews, which allow them to voice any concerns they may have, and workplace problems are dealt with promptly. Workplace supervisors are very supportive and have good working relationships with learners. If learners have personal problems or health problems, specialist help is also available, such as counselling or occupational health. The induction period ensures learners are introduced to Trust policies and procedures so they know their rights and responsibilities and these policies and procedures are referred to often throughout the programme. The selection and recruitment process ensures that learners are advised about the career opportunities and vacancies within the Trust and are offered a choice of pathway programme. Learning pathways can be changed during the learners' programme through a step on and off process.

38. Learners' assessment for the key skills and NVOQ components are well planned and well carried out. Learners are assessed often and very good progress is made towards the completion of the customer service modern apprenticeship. There is very effective use of integrated assessment practice with the key skills and customer service units. A range of assessment methods is used, including holistic observation, questioning, professional discussion, and work-based assignments. Learners are encouraged from the start to gather relevant witness testimony and write reflective statements. Assessor records are very detailed and can be used as accreditation of prior achievement for the care aspect of the learners' programme. However, some learners who have had customer service experience before they join the programme, do not get a specific initial assessment when they start the programme.

Leadership and management

39. There are very good quality assurance processes within the customer service foundation programme. The learners and the trainers evaluate all training events. Well-structured questionnaires are used to find out if the learners have gained new skills or knowledge. They are also asked if the training has met their own aims. Trainers gather and analyse learners' responses and if changes are needed to a training event, they are made. There are well-attended programme evaluation sessions, which are designed to give the learners a forum to voice their concerns. The customer service management and training team use the time to ensure that questions are answered and problems solved. The programme of on- and off-the-job training is well designed and excellent use is made of the expertise of the team of trainers and assessors. The customer service programme and additional training offered is well financed through various budgets. Learner feedback is used by management to make decisions for future courses. Managers know individual learners and offer support and advice. The self-assessment report reflected the findings of the inspection. Internal verification is satisfactory for this provision. There is a verification strategy and plan which follow current guidelines.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 1**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	1

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- excellent progression routes and progression
- excellent retention rates
- very good achievement of qualifications
- good on-the-job training
- very good resources
- very effective support for learners
- well-managed programme

Weaknesses

- no weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

40. Retention rates on all programmes are excellent and range from 93 per cent to 100 per cent over a three-year period. Completion rates for the foundation modern apprenticeship and the advanced modern apprenticeship are consistently very good. Pass rates are always above 82 per cent. The achievement rate for the A level in human biology is 75 per cent this year. Learners are also very successful in achieving additional qualifications in basic food hygiene, basic life support and health and safety. Learners understand well how to gather and present evidence and make good progress. They present a good standard of work in their portfolios. They express ideas and information very well orally and show the ability to think more deeply about issues and concepts. Learners with university potential and an aptitude for nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, imaging or bio-medical sciences are carefully selected through an interview process. Ward managers and university lecturers sit on the interview panels. The programme is entirely suited to the needs of the young people. There are excellent progression routes through customer service at level 2 and key skills, on to an NVQ at level 2 in care and then to an NVQ at level 3 in care or diagnostics and therapeutics. All cadets are guaranteed a place at one of the local universities if they are successful on the cadet scheme. They are all employed by the Trust and guaranteed a job when they return from university with their professional qualification. Progression into employment is excellent at 100 per cent throughout the programme, except for one learner in one year. The first cadet nurses came back to the hospital in October 2002 as qualified nurses and 11 are returning in October 2003.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		14		2		6		1		2		1			
Retained*	9		13	93	2	100	5	83	0	0	2	100	1	100		
Successfully completed	9		12	86	2	100	5	83	0	0	1	50	1	100		
Still in learning	0		0	0	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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	15		13		16											
Retained*	0		13	100	16	100										
Successfully completed	3		11	85	14	88										
Still in learning	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

Quality of education and training

41. On-the-job training is good. There is a positive culture of learning on the wards where many staff at all levels are involved in some form of professional development. Learners have a wide range of experience in good placements. A mentor, who is always a qualified nurse, is allocated to each learner on the ward. Mentors share as many duties as possible with the learners to give instruction in practical tasks and help develop learners' knowledge and understanding. However, a few learners share too few duties with their mentors. There is good communication between mentors and trainer/assessors and mentors know clearly the needs of learners. In addition, two healthcare assistants who have completed an NVQ at level 3 in care, have recently been appointed to provide further coaching for learners on the wards and to help them prepare for assessment. Trainer/assessors make contact with learners daily and visit them on the wards at least once a week to coach or assess. Although learners are employed, they are continuously supervised by another member of staff working with them. The overall scheme for off-the-job training is well planned. Lesson plans have clear aims and learning outcomes and most show a range of valid teaching methods. However, they sometimes lack creativity and do not deal with the varying needs of learners. In one lesson learners responded well, showing their understanding of the basic

concepts being presented. However, the lesson was too reliant on the teacher for the first hour and there was not always appropriate challenge for the more able learners.

42. All resources are very good. Classrooms are a good size, light, well ventilated and with good furniture. There is a wide range of up-to-date equipment and learning materials that suitably reflect cultural diversity. The library is well stocked and there is good access to computers including the internet. The staff team in the training and development unit are well qualified and experienced. They are consistently up-to-date as all do a minimum of 12 full days in clinical practice a year in addition to their frequent, regular clinical work with cadets. All staff, including those on the wards, are very committed to the achievement and maintenance of very good standards, particularly in the teaching of basic care.

43. Support for learners is very effective and helps them stay on the programme and achieve very good pass rates. Staff at all levels on the wards give support to learners to develop practical skills and knowledge and understanding. Mentors also give personal support. One learner who was going to leave the programme, stayed because of the support and encouragement she had from her mentor. Trainer/assessors provide learners with telephone numbers and bleep numbers for immediate contact. They give additional support whenever needed in personal circumstances. Some learners have received regular letters and telephone calls alongside more frequent setting of targets and deadlines. If learners need counselling they get an immediate appointment in the occupational health department. Trainer/assessors keep detailed contact records.

44. Three-monthly reviews encourage learners to progress and provide another forum to deal with personal problems. However, neither the mentors nor the managers take part in these formal reviews. Learners are required to have general certificates of secondary education at grades C or above to enter the cadet programme, so are not required to do the Basic Skills Agency initial assessment. They are required to pass an internally set skills test on literacy and numeracy. Trainers and assessors examine learners' work continuously to identify possible literacy and numeracy needs. Appropriate support is available. If learners have a specific learning difficulty, trainers refer them to the local college to assess and provide support.

45. Overall assessment and the monitoring of progress are satisfactory. Assessment is clearly planned and is carried out at the scheduled times. An appropriate range of assessment methods is used. There is good use of oral questioning to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. Sometimes learners are asked to repeat this in the form of written answers. However, this does develop the academic skills they will need at university and provides them with some of the evidence that supports their exemption from part of the university programme. Written feedback to learners is very clear and supportive and is always given to learners within one week. However, assessment is strictly unit-based and the records of direct observations do not reference any evidence other than for the planned unit. Even though there is frequently evidence for the units on the values of care, health and safety and communication and relationships, this is not acknowledged in the feedback unless assessment of one of those units was originally planned. Progress of learners is recorded in detail in portfolios and learners are aware of

their own progress. The head of care and the cadet scheme manager receive progress reports through the management information system. However, these reports are rather difficult to use as they include other learners in addition to cadets. The cadet manager has recently introduced a clear manual monitoring system for use by assessors and co-ordinators, but only one assessor is using this as yet. Internal verification is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

46. The cadet programme is well managed. Information is gathered from a range of sources. There is learner evaluation at each stage of the programme. Data on attendance, retention and achievement are consistently collected and regularly discussed by managers. Good use is made of all information in planning and decision-making. Verbal feedback from ward managers, mentors and university staff is also considered in planning changes. The overall training programme is well planned and well organised to prepare learners for professional training at university. There is an effective induction with refresher sessions to update learners. External links with several universities are managed well to benefit learners. The head of care is on the working party of one local university to design the foundation programme for nurse training. This partnership working has enabled a six-month exemption from the nurse training programme. Work is now underway to increase this to 12 months. There are good informal communications across all levels of staff. Regular centre management meetings take place which include the NVQ programmes as a standing agenda item. Regular assessment board meetings include a learner representative. There is a clear focus on learners' progress and any problems they raise. There are regular monthly meetings between the head of care and the cadet scheme manager. These include the progress of learners on the cadet programme, but no minutes are kept. Recently the manager has started weekly meetings with the co-ordinators and assessors. These deal with important operational issues, but again no minutes are kept. Regular staff appraisal is in place and staff development is good.