

INSPECTION REPORT

Security Industry Training Organisation

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

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

Overall judgement

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

Security Industry Training Organisation

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Security Industry Training Organisation (SITO) was established in 1991 as the approved national training organisation for the security industry. It is responsible for occupational standards and is a joint awarding body in addition to its role as a provider of commercial training. SITO National Training Programmes (SNTP) was established in 1997 as the training branch of SITO which is responsible for government-funded training programmes. SNTP trains foundation and advanced modern apprentices working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in construction and in health care and public services. There were not enough learners in health care and public services for this area to be inspected separately.

2. SNTP is based in Worcester and provides training in six regional training co-operatives throughout the UK. These co-operatives consist of employers, a SITO representative and subcontracted training providers. The separate regional co-operatives are: West London, the Southeast, Wales and the Southwest, Midlands, Yorkshire, and the Northwest. SNTP funds its training provision through London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC). All of the learners are recruited by the employers and then trained at the relevant regional centre.

3. SNTP is managed by a national training programmes manager who is responsible to the general manager of SITO. The general manager of SITO is responsible for the company's policies and procedures, including quality assurance and finance. SNTP also employs a supervisor and a co-ordinator who assist in the management of SNTP.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Construction

4. There are 182 learners on construction training programmes. One hundred and fourteen learners are advanced modern apprentices, 61 are foundation modern apprentices and seven are following a level 2 NVQ in fire, security and emergency alarm systems. All learners are employed, most by small- to medium-sized companies throughout the country. Off-the-job training is provided at six subcontracted colleges throughout the country. On-the-job training is provided by the learners' employers. Assessment is carried out on and off the job. Progress reviews are carried out by SNTP. The first 24 months of the programme are spent working towards the NVQ at level 2, key skills level 1 or level 2 depending on the level of modern apprenticeship framework, and part 1 of the vocational qualification, knowledge of security and emergency alarm systems (electrical principles and intruder alarm certificate). The final 18 months for learners is spent achieving the NVQ at level 3 and part 2 of the vocational qualification.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learner interviews	49
Number of staff interviews	11
Number of employer interviews	1
Number of subcontractor interviews	11
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	19

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, SITO's leadership and management are unsatisfactory, its quality assurance arrangements are also unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The quality of work-based learning in construction is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

Construction	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Portfolios are generally completed to a good standard. Written descriptions of assessments are good and there is good use of photographic evidence. **Learners demonstrate good practical skills and a sound knowledge of security systems.** In one domestic alarm installation, the learner had been involved in installing cabling in a newly decorated house. All of the wiring was very effectively concealed without damage to the decorative state of the house. Learners from one regional centre were entered in a national skills competition for the alarms industry and produced work to a good standard.

7. **Retention and achievement rates are poor.** For the two years for which full data is available, achievement of advance modern apprenticeship frameworks is 31 and 33 per cent, respectively. Retention rates are 48 per cent and 46 per cent, respectively. There is no effective action plan to resolve these problems in retention and achievement.

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	1	1	0	0	3
Total	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3

8. **There is good off-the-job training.** Training is well planned over the duration of the programme. Each session has good integration of background knowledge and practical sessions. In most sessions, lessons have clear aims and objectives and good-quality handouts are used effectively. Practical training sessions are effectively planned to progressively develop practical skills. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in the industry and are enthusiastic to pass on their knowledge and skills to learners. However, one subcontractor's planning and quality of off-the-job training is not as good. At one college there are insufficient teachers to provide practical training to first-year modern apprentices.

9. **There are good off-the-job specialist training resources.** The practical training workshops are well arranged for safe working conditions. Learners develop their skills in a controlled environment using good quality resources which reflect those used in the security industry. Learners produce good-quality work for their practical assignments. Teaching rooms at most centres are good with good access to computers.

10. Most assessment and internal verification carried out by colleges is satisfactory. Assessments are well planned and recorded. NVQ assessments are frequent and carried out on site either by the assessor, or in some cases an expert witness trained by SITO, but assessment opportunities for some learners are restricted because of the nature of their work. **In some colleges, assessment and verification is unsatisfactory.** There are weaknesses in recording and validating evidence. Internal verification is not sufficiently planned.

11. **Initial assessment is ineffective in identifying support requirements.** SITO has only recently passed on results of initial assessment to the colleges for learners who started their programmes in September 2002. There is no evidence of on-the-job planned **training.** In one region, many employers do not co-operate with assessors in arranging learners' NVQ assessment opportunities. Some employers have not allowed learners to attend day release off-the-job training because of work demands.

12. **Progress reviews are weak.** At some colleges, reviews are carried out primarily in the college, with few occurring on site. Target-setting is not effective and not sufficiently monitored. There is insufficient direct involvement by employers in the review process.

Review dates are often missed.

13. Individual learning plans are not effectively used and are not active documents. They are completed, with copies retained by the employers, but not always shared with the learners and not all of the colleges receive copies. The individual learning plans are not used as part of the progress review process.

Leadership and management

14. SNTP has good formal and informal internal communication. All SNTP staff work closely together and there is frequent and open discussion and formal meetings. SNTP management staff attend meetings at each of the regional co-operatives and are responsive to issues arising. These meetings are effective in informing co-operatives of important developments within the provision and to discuss issues of common interest. There are also good communications with the sector inspectorate bodies, trade associations and trade press, as well as relevant manufacturers.

15. Resources are good and are effectively managed. Some employers contribute good equipment for use in training and assist in curriculum development. There is good networking with the co-operatives and other relevant bodies. At some colleges management of the learning programmes is effective, with good co-ordination of the on- and off-site provision, effective assessment programmes and good involvement by employers.

16. SNTP effectively promotes equality of opportunity in the community. Promotional materials feature images of learners from under-represented groups. Equality of opportunity policies and procedures are updated annually, but make no reference to the relevant legislation. SNTP requires employers to confirm their commitment to equality of opportunity by accepting SNTP's policy as their minimum standard. However, SNTP are not aware if their learners are proportionally representative of minority ethnic groups in the community. Data are collected on gender, ethnic origin and disability at recruitment, but these are not collated or analysed to inform management. **There is no active targeting of under-represented groups in SITO's recruitment strategies.**

17. Colleges are not supplied with retention and achievement statistics and use their own figures when interpreting these performance indicators. At some colleges there are insufficient specialist staff to manage and develop the programmes effectively. There is no systematic evaluation of prior learning or attainment linked to possible accelerated completion of the programme.

18. The quality assurance system is not effective. SITO has a comprehensive quality assurance manual which contains policies and procedures for all the main activities of the organisation, but this has not been effective in motivating improvement and raising standards. **There is insufficient performance management and target-setting.**

19. SNTP does not effectively manage support for the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. All learners have their literacy and numeracy abilities

tested during induction, but SITO has only recently passed the results of these tests to the tutors in the colleges.

20. SNTP does not promote or reinforce equality of opportunity sufficiently with learners.

The existing information sheet does not cover the full range of diversity issues and was not supplied to learners who joined the programme this year. **Equality of opportunity is not discussed sufficiently at progress reviews and learners receive no training in equality of opportunity or diversity.** Some learners have a poor understanding of these issues.

21. SNTP does not consult sufficiently with all learners and employers.

Feedback from learners has not been gathered regularly, however a recent questionnaire survey is currently being collated and analysed. Feedback from employers was attempted by questionnaire three years ago, but was abandoned because of a poor response. There have been no further attempts to collect employers' views.

22. The self-assessment report was produced in December 2002 and updated in March 2003. It was written by two of the three SNTP staff and shared with the general manager, but there has been no consultation with learners, employers or colleges. The regional co-operatives did not produce contributory self-assessment reports.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective communications
- effective relationships with employers and colleges to provide learning opportunities

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity with learners
- insufficient performance management and target-setting
- insufficient use of management information system
- weak self-assessment
- inadequate implementation of quality assurance procedures

Construction

Strengths

- good knowledge and skills acquired by learners
- good off-the-job resources
- very good monitoring of learners' NVQ progress

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficient involvement by employers
- poor use of individual learning plans
- poor progress reviews of learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SECURITY INDUSTRY TRAINING ORGANISATION:

- good off-the-job training
- flexibility of college staff
- worthwhile qualification
- block-release provision
- ability to earn money while learning

WHAT LEARNERS THINK SECURITY INDUSTRY TRAINING ORGANISATION COULD IMPROVE:

- meeting the needs of some learners more effectively
- the number of assessors' visits
- the justification for key skills training
- the employers' involvement in planning of training
- informing learners about off-the-job training and key skills training
- learners' understanding of SITO's role in their training programme
- distances travelled for off-the-job training
- outdated syllabus referring to old technology

KEY CHALLENGES FOR SECURITY INDUSTRY TRAINING ORGANISATION:

- improve retention and achievement rates
- increase employers' involvement
- more critical self-assessment with broader consultation
- improve adherence to quality assurance procedures
- improve monitoring of progress against targets

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- effective communications
- effective relationships with employers and colleges to provide learning opportunities

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity with learners
- insufficient performance management and target-setting
- insufficient use of management information system
- weak self-assessment
- inadequate implementation of quality assurance procedures

23. Formal and informal internal communication is good. All SNTP staff work closely together and there are frequent and open discussions. Monthly SNTP staff meetings are adequately recorded and action points are effectively monitored from meetings. SITO also holds monthly management meetings. These are attended by the SNTP manager and ensure good and effective communication throughout the organisation. Separate meetings are held to discuss quality assurance and development. SNTP management staff attend meetings at each of the regional co-operatives and are responsive to issues arising. These meetings are also used to inform co-operatives of important developments within the provision.

24. Representatives from the colleges which provide training meet termly with SNTP managers for a focus group to discuss issues of common interest. There are also good communications with the sector's inspectorate bodies, trade associations and trade press, as well as relevant manufacturers. These manufacturers also sponsor awards for learners. Some employers contribute good equipment for use in training and assist in curriculum development. Good networking with the co-operatives and other relevant bodies has enabled learners to gain access to recognised qualifications.

25. There are good, specialist off-the-job training resources in the colleges, including good, safe practical construction workshops with well-equipped working areas and good teaching rooms. Resources are well maintained and are to industry standards. Some of the equipment is donated by employers or has been built by previous learners and is now used as an effective training aid. SNTP manages its own resources effectively. The manager prepares a draft budget each year to be considered by the executive within SITO's business plan. The accountant produces monthly accounts which are monitored against each regional co-operative. The board of SITO meets monthly to receive the accounts. There are adequate contracts and service level agreements in place between

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SNTP and its partner colleges within the regional co-operatives, but these agreements do not identify targets for performance or monitoring mechanisms.

26. SNTP has an adequate management information system, but does not use the data effectively. Learners' details are recorded on a database which gives access to individual learner's information. This is not effective in identifying trends and does not identify significant weaknesses in retention and achievement rates.

27. There is not enough performance management and target-setting. There is a one-year business plan for SNTP, which contains ambitious targets. There is no documented strategic plan for SNTP or for SITO. This means that SNTP's staff are not yet fully aware of any future strategy. This also means that there are no SMART targets available. There is no systematic monitoring of the performance of the organisation.

28. Staff appraisals are scheduled to take place every six months, but the last staff appraisals for SNTP's staff took place in April 2002. It is now proposed that appraisals will occur annually. The actual appraisal consists of an informal interview, during which a checklist is completed to assess a variety of different working practices. These appraisals are not thorough and do not result in measurable targets. Where targets are set, they are not timebound or staged to be realistic, or to be effective as a tool for improvement. There is no systematic monitoring of staff performance between staff appraisals. Staff training and development needs are also discussed at these interviews, but training attended is largely in reaction to imminent organisational need, rather than a pre-planned exercise. The existing training evaluation forms are not used.

29. SNTP does not provide satisfactory support for the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. All learners have their literacy and numeracy levels tested during induction, but SNTP has only recently passed the results of these tests to the tutors in the colleges. For example, the literacy and numeracy support needs of learners who began their training in September 2002 were only communicated to the tutors in April 2003. Before the inspection, none of SNTP's learners were identified as having additional learning and/or social needs.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

30. Equality of opportunity policies and procedures are updated annually and include disciplinary and appeals procedures, and grievance and personal harassment procedures, but make no reference to the relevant legislation. The effect of the policy is not systematically evaluated during these updates.

31. SNTP actively promotes its programme to community groups through positive images in their promotional and marketing literature. Promotional materials feature prominent images of learners from under-represented groups. Currently, there are 10 learners from minority ethnic groups, no women learners and no learners with disabilities on the programme. SNTP participated in an initiative to promote and encourage more women to apply for modern apprenticeship places. SNTP has recently taken steps to ensure learners' equality of opportunity rights by requiring employers to confirm their

commitment to equality of opportunity by accepting SNTP's policy as their minimum standard. It is too early to judge whether SNTP is conducting effective monitoring of employer's compliance with the equal opportunities policy.

32. Learners are not made sufficiently aware of their rights and responsibilities with respect to equality of opportunity. SNTP has produced information sheets concerning equality of opportunity, but these were not included in the induction for the most recent intake of learners and have not featured on the induction checklist for previous intakes. The existing information sheet does not cover the full range of diversity issues. There is insufficient re-emphasis of equality of opportunity issues to learners. Equality of opportunity is not discussed sufficiently at progress reviews and learners receive no training in equality of opportunity or diversity. Some learners have a poor understanding of these issues.

33. Systems to plan, monitor and evaluate equality of opportunity are not sufficiently developed. At the recruitment stage data are collected about gender, ethnic origin and disability, but these have only recently been collated and have not yet been analysed or discussed. SNTP are not aware if their learners are proportionally representative of minority ethnic groups in the community. There is no active targeting of under-represented groups in SNTP's recruitment strategies. Equality of opportunity is not a regular agenda item at any of the SNTP formal meetings. One member of SNTP's staff has had training in equality of opportunity issues.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

34. SNTP has a comprehensive, well-documented quality assurance manual that contains policies and procedures for all the main activities of the organisation. There is a schedule for frequent reviews of these documents and this is currently up to date. There are six controlled copies available within the organisation and one of these is located in the offices of SNTP. All SNTP staff are aware of the availability of this manual. There is a schedule for internal audits, which is also up to date, but these audits have not identified weaknesses in the implementation of quality assurance. Teaching observations take place, but these have only become formalised to include graded reports within the last three months, resulting in three current reports. Retention and achievement rates are not adequately monitored and there is no comparison of performance between the regional centres. Individual learning plans are not used effectively to monitor learners' progress or achievement. They are not adequately updated and some learners do not receive copies.

35. Most assessment and internal verification carried out by colleges is satisfactory. NVQ assessments are frequent and carried out on-site either by the assessor, or in some cases an expert witness trained by SNTP. However, in one region, many employers do not co-operate with assessors in arranging learners' NVQ assessment opportunities. Less than a quarter of the planned assessments in this region have taken place. In some colleges assessment and verification is not satisfactory. Learners' performance is not always sufficiently recorded and there is not enough feedback to learners. Internal verification is not well planned. Internal verification events are recorded retrospectively,

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with insufficient pre-planning. Some internal verification of portfolios takes place towards the end of the programme when portfolios are near completion.

36. SNTP produced its first self-assessment report in August 1998 and has produced annual self-assessment reports ever since. SNTP's current self-assessment report is not accurate. Many of the strengths identified in the report were no more than compliance with contract. It did not identify some significant weaknesses, particularly in retention and quality assurance. Weaknesses in retention and achievement rates were not given sufficient priority. The self-assessment process is linked to SNTP's development planning. The current report was produced in December 2002 and updated in March 2003. It was written by two of the three SNTP staff and shared with the general manager. There has been no direct consultation with learners, employers or colleges. Minutes of meetings were used to obtain general views, but these were not sufficiently focused on the production of the self-assessment report. The regional co-operatives did not produce contributory self-assessment reports. Many weaknesses identified by inspectors during the inspection were also identified in the previous inspection which took place in December 2000.

37. Feedback from learners has not taken place regularly, however, a recent questionnaire survey is currently being collated and analysed. A questionnaire was used three years ago to obtain employers' feedback, but was abandoned because of a poor response. There have been no further attempts to gain employers' views.

38. There is no evidence of on-the-job planned training. Some employers have not allowed learners to attend day-release off-the-job training because of the company's work schedules.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	182	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good knowledge and skills acquired by learners
- good off-the-job resources
- very good monitoring of learners' NVQ progress

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices
- insufficient involvement by employers
- poor use of individual learning plans
- poor progress reviews of learners

Achievement and standards

39. Portfolios are generally completed to a good standard. The written descriptions of the assessment are good and there are examples of good use of photographic evidence. Learners are able to demonstrate good practical skills and a sound knowledge of security systems. In one domestic alarm installation, the learner was involved in installing cabling in a newly decorated house. All of the wiring was very effectively concealed without damage to the decorative state of the house. The learner was able to explain fully how the system worked. Retention and achievement rates are poor. For the two years for which full data is available, achievement of full advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks has been 31 per cent and 33 per cent respectively, and retention rates have been 48 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

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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)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	51		64		66		54		46							
Retained*	0		1		34	52	25	46	22	48							
Successfully completed	0		1		0	0	17	31	15	33							
Still in learning	36		36		34	52	5	9	3	7							

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	63															
Retained*	0																
Successfully completed	0																
Still in learning	61																

*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	2001-02																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	12															
Retained*	10																
Successfully completed	2																
Still in learning	7																

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

Quality of education and training

40. There is good off-the-job training. It is well planned over the duration of the programme. Most learners attend college for one day each week for off-the-job training. Each session is well planned with good integration of background knowledge and practical sessions. In most sessions, lessons have clear aims and objectives and handouts are of good quality. Handouts are well written and used effectively during training. There is good use of demonstration techniques by teachers to emphasise certain aspects of the training programme. For example, a training rig was used to show the operation

of an intruder alarm system. Practical training sessions are effectively planned to develop practical skills progressively. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in the industry and are enthusiastic to pass on their knowledge and skills to learners. However, one subcontractor's standard and planning of off-the-job training is not as good.

41. There are good off-the-job specialist training resources. The practical training workshops are well arranged for safe working conditions. There are well-equipped individual working areas for learners' training and assessment of NVQ units. These include, testing and commissioning rigs for intruder systems, with alarm modules that reflect current practice in domestic, commercial and industrial installations. The areas for installation training provide good simulations of typical dwellings and other properties, providing an environment for realistic exercises in wiring and the fitting of sensors. The wide range of good-quality resources gives learners the opportunity to develop their skills in a controlled environment. Resources are in good condition and reflect those used in the security industry. Some employers provide equipment and components for training and assessment to ensure that their modern apprentices are trained on the latest equipment to meet the needs of individual employers. Some learners have produced good-quality work for their practical assignments, which are then used to train other learners. Teaching rooms at most centres are generally good and there is good access to computers. Teachers are well qualified with many years in the industry. However at one college there are not enough teachers to provide practical training for first-year modern apprentices.

42. Most assessment and internal verification carried out by colleges is satisfactory. NVQ assessments are frequent and carried out on-site by assessors or an expert witness. Learners actively identify assessment opportunities. Most on- and off-the-job assessments are well planned and recorded against NVQ requirements. Many employers ensure that learners have appropriate opportunities for on-site assessment and collection of NVQ evidence. In one region, employers do not co-operate with assessors in arranging assessment opportunities.

43. There is no evidence of on-the-job planned training and some employers do not allow learners to attend off-the-job training because of work schedules.

44. In a few colleges, assessment and verification are unsatisfactory. Most companies have an expert witness for assessment purposes. Some do not and in these cases learners' progress is slow. In some simulation observations assessors simply sign the learner's achievement record sheet without recording the learner's performance. Learners' feedback on assessment is not always recorded. NVQ portfolios do not include witness status lists with witnesses' signatures. Some expert witness evidence is not signed and dated by the assessor. Assessment decisions by an unqualified assessor are not signed and dated by the qualified assessor. Internal verification is not well planned. Internal verification of NVQ portfolios is poorly recorded and records are not kept after the portfolio is completed. Some internal verification of portfolios only takes place towards the end of the programme, when the portfolio is almost complete.

45. Most colleges have effective and established paper-based recording systems for

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learners' progress and achievement. SNTP has recently introduced an electronic system to record learners' progress and achievement. This allows SNTP to closely monitor the learners' progress and learners and tutors can access the system to view progress over the Internet. This system has been enthusiastically received by learners and colleges. Those learners who started in September 2002 benefit from this system as they can access it either from college or at home. Most of these learners have a good understanding of their NVQ progress, what is yet to be achieved and how to do it. Most learners have been given training in the use of the system.

46. The foundation modern apprenticeship and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of employers within the industry. These frameworks provide a good combination of competence development and the teaching of background knowledge. One employer interviewed was particularly supportive of this programme, given the proposed new legislation aimed at a fully skilled future workforce. At one centre an additional qualification, in portable appliance testing, has been provided for all level 3 NVQ learners, following discussions at the regional co-operative meetings. These meetings are attended by SITO's staff, college staff and employers and are a good forum for development of the provision.

47. Where additional learner support is required, it is effectively provided through the colleges' normal support provision. Some college progress reviews were carried out primarily in the college, with relatively few on-site reviews. In these cases there were no set targets for the next review. The comments and summaries of progress by the reviewer were often minimal and unclear. There is insufficient direct employer involvement in the review process and review dates are often missed. Individual learning plans are completed with copies retained by the employers, but these copies are not always passed on to the learners and not all of the colleges receive copies. The individual learning plans are not active documents, to be used as part of the review process and many learners can not recall them. There is insufficient individuality in the plans. Although they record a learner's prior qualifications and target qualifications, they have little further effect on the training programme.

Leadership and management

48. Some colleges manage the learning programmes effectively with good co-ordination of the on-site and off-site provision, effective assessment programmes and good involvement by employers. This is not the case in all training centres. The management of learners with prior achievements is poor. Those exempt from key skills training simply do not attend the lessons and one learner with qualifications as an electrician was told that he would still need to complete the three-year programme. In these instances, the programmes are unnecessarily long. Colleges are not supplied with retention and achievement statistics and use their own figures when interpreting these performance indicators. At some colleges there are not enough specialist staff to manage and develop the programmes effectively.