

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Chamber Training (Humber) Limited Reinspection**

**29 October 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. 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**

## **Chamber Training (Humber) Limited Reinspection**

### **Contents**

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Retailing, customer service & transportation	3

## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Chamber Training (Humber) Limited (CTHL) is a wholly owned subsidiary company of the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping. Established in 1997, the company operates from two main sites, in Hull and Scunthorpe. It offers work-based learning for young people in construction, engineering, business administration, health and social care, and retailing and customer service.
2. The company employs 40 staff, most of whom are based at the Hull site. The senior management team consists of the chief executive, the administration manager, the human resources, equal opportunities and quality assurance manager, the marketing and recruitment manager, the systems and new developments manager, and the centre manager for Scunthorpe. The team is responsible for the strategic development of the programmes and for achieving the company's strategic aims and objectives. Other members of staff are responsible for training and assessment, and for specific areas of operation such as recruitment and selection, internal verification and additional support. CTHL funds its training provision through Humberside Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Retailing, customer service & transportation

3. CTHL offers advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in customer service. It also offers a level 2 NVQ in international trade and services for learners in the shipping industry. At the time of the final reinspection visit, nine learners were following customer service foundation modern apprentices and six were following NVQs, five in international trade and services and one in customer service. All learners are employed or on work placements in the Humberside area. Learners are recruited from school, referred by Connexions, or by direct recommendation from employers. Learners attend CTHL's training centres for induction. Key skills training is introduced during induction, as are opportunities to complete additional courses or activities including touch typing, certificates in health and safety, examination-based qualifications in information technology (IT) and equality of opportunity awareness workshops. Learners on the international trade and services programme attend off-the-job lectures at the Hull training centre every two weeks. Learners have access to e-learning resources in the workplace.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learner interviews	12
Number of staff interviews	10
Number of employer interviews	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	8
Number of partner/external agency interviews	2
Number of visits	9

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. At CTHL's previous inspection in November 2002, its leadership and management were found to be good. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance were satisfactory. The quality of work-based learning was satisfactory in construction, engineering, business administration, and health and social care but was unsatisfactory in retailing and customer service. At the end of the reinspection process, the quality of work-based learning in retailing and customer service was found to be satisfactory.

## GRADES

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

	Inspection	Reinspection
<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	3

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

#### Strengths

- good achievement rates for NVQs and additional qualifications
- good development of occupational skills in the workplace
- well-equipped, industry standard training centres
- good support and guidance

#### Weaknesses

- poor completion rates for foundation modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficiently established target-setting
- insufficient awareness of framework requirements for learners at one centre

#### Achievement and standards

5. Achievement rates for international trade and service NVQs and additional qualifications are good. In 2000-01 and 2001-02, all learners on international trade and services programmes successfully achieved their qualification. Of the 2002-03 intake, 20 per cent of learners have already successfully achieved their qualification and 60 per cent are still in learning. Most learners' work is of a satisfactory standard.

6. Learners on all programmes are offered the opportunity to acquire additional qualifications such as an intermediate health and safety certificate and an examination-based qualification in IT. These are started at the beginning of the learners' programme and designed to contribute towards key skill qualifications. Since the previous inspection, 60 per cent of learners leaving their programme have successfully achieved a certificate in health and safety. Current learners take these additional qualifications during their initial block release. Fifty-three per cent of current learners have achieved their health and safety certificate and 40 per cent are working towards their examination-based qualification in IT.

7. Completion rates for foundation modern apprenticeship frameworks remain poor. Of the 30 foundation modern apprentices starting programmes since 1999, only five, or 17 per cent, have completed the full framework. At the previous inspection, CTHL was working with one national retailer that did not fully support the key skills requirements of

## CHAMBER TRAINING (HUMBER) LIMITED REINSPECTION

the customer service framework. Learners were not assessed for key skills and full framework completion rates were poor, as was identified in the previous report. CTHL made a strategic decision to end this partnership. Learners on modern apprenticeship programmes at that time were offered the opportunity to transfer to NVQ programmes. Only two learners took up this offer. No advanced modern apprentices have been recruited since 2001-02.

### Quality of education and training

8. Employers are keen to support and encourage their learners. Learners continue to gain valuable experience from coaching, mentoring and good specialist training sessions at work. Learners are employed or placed in a wide range of companies, all of which have well-structured policies for the training and development of young people. Learners on work placement receive well-structured induction programmes at their workplace with a clear and planned development programme. Learners experience a significant growth in confidence during their programmes. Employed learners increase their understanding of the complex industry in which they work and take on more responsibility in their organisation as they progress through their learning programme. One learner's increased responsibility has been recognised by two pay increases in the past 12 months. A learner working in a contact centre who experienced difficulties dealing with difficult customers over the telephone has been allocated a work mentor who will give advice and support. The organisation has also organised a two-day course in dealing with difficult callers, which the whole contact centre team will attend.

9. CTHL's main site in Hull is easily accessible for learners. All rooms used by learners are on the ground floor. Both of CTHL's sites have a kitchen area and a dedicated area where learners can go between learning sessions. Learners at Hull also have access to a restaurant area. Both sites have good transport access and are modern, spacious and furnished well to reflect current industry standards. Training rooms are large, well lit, and have comfortable, appropriate furniture for lectures. They are well equipped with computer projection and wallboard facilities, and TV/video units. Both sites have well-equipped IT suites and the latest software programmes. Trainers can use laptop computers to deliver on-the-job training sessions for learners who miss sessions or request additional support. The training centre at Hull offers commercial courses to local employers. One learner following the international trade and services programme is funded by her employer but attends the lectures scheduled for the LSC-funded learners, ensuring all learners work together.

10. Support and guidance for learners remains good. Staff in each area of learning are well qualified to deliver training. The specialist knowledge required for the international trade and services programme is effectively provided through the professional competence of the tutor. Staff are valued as good role models and learners welcome their depth of knowledge, which they say provides them with greater insight into the wider aspects of their job roles. Tutors systematically follow up off-the-job lectures by e-mail and with a series of questions to evaluate learners' understanding of each module. Tutors are taking teaching qualifications to support and enhance their training practice,



and one has taken specialist industry qualifications to ensure their professional competence is current. This qualification is only open to practitioners who have worked in the sector for over 10 years.

11. Extremely effective partnerships with Connexions provide good support and guidance to learners with identified additional learning or social needs. Connexions has a permanent base in CTHL's Hull premises, and all learners are fully aware that they have access to this service if required. Learners with additional social needs are allocated their own personal Connexions adviser who gives them confidential and sensitive support. Learners are on programmes appropriate to their ability and aspirations. Tutors, assessors and other members of CTHL's staff offer effective additional individual support to learners who may be experiencing difficulties at work or with their peer groups. Support is documented well, but is totally confidential. Individual literacy and numeracy skills support is effectively provided. Dedicated staff carefully monitor individual needs and provide focused support. CTHL carefully monitors the progress of learners receiving additional support.

12. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Regular assessment visits are planned by all parties to accommodate the learners' work patterns and the demands of the employer. Assessors are knowledgeable in qualification requirements and are able to guide learners effectively. Learners are issued with their portfolio and information on programme requirements during their initial block-release induction. Learners are encouraged to state how aspects of their normal work activity meet the requirements of the qualification. They are encouraged to cross-reference their own evidence. One member of staff working towards their assessor qualifications is effectively supported by a mentor.

13. Learners receive progress reviews every 10-12 weeks. Copies of the review are left with the learners and employers. Employers are involved in the review process and encouraged to identify workplace progress. The review process records learners' achievements against their qualification targets.

14. CTHL has introduced a progression form which is intended to monitor individual learners' progress, expressed in percentage terms. This is not being effectively used for all learners. A new individual learning plan format has been introduced since the previous inspection. However, the framework targets recorded on the individual learning plan relate to the last date of the learning programme. No interim goals or targets are included. Actions plans are left with the learner to be used as a guide of work to be completed by the next assessment visit, but some plans are too vague to explain exactly what the learner needs to do.

15. Learners at one site have insufficient awareness of the requirements of their framework. They do not clearly understand the importance of the key skills training they received while on their initial induction block release. They were only able to describe accurately the NVQ aspects of their programme.

## **Leadership and management**

16. CTHL has introduced a number of developments since the previous inspection to ensure that learners' programmes and placements are appropriate, and that they are fully aware of the requirements of their qualification. For example, a range of approaches to induction is used. Unemployed learners attend a block induction period at both sites. Learners at the Scunthorpe site attend in a five-day block, and then one day a week after that. A pilot six-week induction block has been run twice at the Hull site, and is being evaluated as the learners involved progress. Several learners who initially expressed an interest in business administration became aware during induction that a customer service qualification was more appropriate for them.

17. The new progression form is used by the quality assurance manager to monitor learners' progress, but is not yet fully effective. It is not always fully completed, and in some cases not completed at all.

18. CTHL has begun to evaluate provision systematically and has made year-on-year comparisons for those areas evaluated more than once. Structured observation of training and learning takes place. Tutors receive feedback on their sessions which describes what has been observed, but this is sometimes not expressed in terms that will guide their development.

19. The organisation of internal verification is satisfactory overall. A specialist internal verifier from outside CTHL quality assures the international trade and services programme. He visits CTHL regularly to review the training programme and monitor the delivery of off-the-job lectures.

20. CTHL updated its self-assessment report for its retailing and customer service provision for the reinspection. The report identified, at least in part, many of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the reinspection, and accurately graded the provision. However, the report tends to describe, rather than evaluate, the provision.