

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Training Plus (Merseyside) Limited Reinspection**

09 June 2004



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.

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Training Plus (Merseyside) Limited has provided training for young people under its current organisation since December 2001. Before that, the company provided training as Training Plus. Training Plus (Merseyside) Limited (Training Plus) is based in two adjacent buildings in the centre of Liverpool. One of these house the hairdressing training academy and its practical and theory training areas. The other building contains staff offices and training rooms for information technology, childcare, hairdressing business administration and retailing, customer service and transportation. The main reception area is also based in this building.

2. Training Plus currently provides work-based learning programmes for young people in business administration, retailing and customer service, hairdressing and childcare. The learning programmes are funded by the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council. The company is managed by three directors, each of whom has a designated area of responsibility. A number of operational managers support the training process.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

3. There are 27 advanced modern apprentices and 65 foundation modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes in hairdressing. Most learners are employed: approximately 10 per cent receive a training allowance which is paid by the employer. Progress reviews take place every six weeks. Learners can join at any time during the year. All learners attend an induction, and receive an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs, which identifies those who may need additional support. Off-the-job training is provided at the Training Plus academy. Foundation modern apprentices attend training at the academy for one day each week for background knowledge and practical training. Advanced modern apprentices are offered the opportunity to attend a training session, but most are trained in their salons. Until recently a few foundation modern apprentices attended the training centre for background knowledge training only. Assessment takes place at the training academy and in the workplace, by either a visiting assessor or a work-based assessor. Learners are mainly directly recruited by Training Plus recruitment consultants; each consultant is responsible for their area of learning. There is a manager for the hairdressing area and three additional tutor/assessors who work full time, and one support assessor who works part time. There are two internal verifiers and nine work-based assessors.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	44
Number of staff interviews	21
Number of employer interviews	8
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits	10

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. At the previous inspection, business administration, retailing and customer service, and health and social care were satisfactory. Hairdressing and beauty therapy was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, hairdressing and beauty therapy was found to be satisfactory.

## GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

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

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

## TRAINING PLUS (MERSEYSIDE) LIMITED REINSPECTION

### Grades awarded at reinspection

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

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	92	3

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

#### Strengths

- good learning materials for advanced modern apprentices
- significant progress to improve work-based assessment opportunities
- good progress reviews
- good induction and support for learners

#### Weaknesses

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient clients for practise and assessment

### Achievement and standards

5. At the previous inspection, retention and achievement rates were poor. Since then, much action has taken place to help learners remain on programme for longer and complete their modern apprenticeship framework. Retention rates are now satisfactory. Although some learners who started in 2001 and many of the learners who started in 2002-03 are still in learning, retention rates for foundation modern apprentices have risen from 27 per cent in 2000-01 to 37 per cent in 2002. At the time of reinspection 54 per cent of learners who started in 2003 are still in learning. For the advanced modern apprentices who started in 2000, the retention rate was 29 per cent. At the time of the reinspection 14 of the 19 learners who started in 2003 are still in learning. Achievement has also improved and monitoring documents show that learners' unit achievement is now progressing steadily and is more closely monitored. Standards of practical work are satisfactory, learners are generally able to produce technical skills at the standard expected of them. Standards of portfolios vary. Some are well laid out with good photographic evidence and clear explanations of the work carried out, but some are less well organised.

### Quality of education and training

6. Training Plus has developed good teaching materials to support the advanced modern apprentices. For each unit of the national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 3 there is a dedicated study pack, which comprehensively covers the knowledge and essential



skills to meet the NVQ standards. The packs reinforce the learners' knowledge of the framework requirements through simple questions and set targets to be achieved on completion of the pack. The materials are well presented and good use is made of stimulating visual images. Key information is highlighted in the packs by an easily recognisable icon to help learners match the information or activity to the NVQ, key skills or technical certificate. A similarly designed revision pack is available to help learners prepare for technical certificate examinations. However, some learners received these too late to help them prepare for the recent examinations. Additional key skills study packs are also available. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report.

7. Since the previous inspection there has been significant development of work-based assessment. The provider has exceeded the 25 per cent target for work-based assessment in the development plan. Assessment is now carried out during all visits and sometimes at review meetings. Learners have good access to assessment from visiting assessors. Since the previous inspection the number of active work-based assessors has decreased from 16 to nine; however, more work-based assessors are currently being trained.

8. Recruitment and induction processes are good and effective, a strength not recognised in the self-assessment report. Previous experience is noted and discussions are held regarding career aims. The first phase of induction incorporates detailed information about the programme, equal opportunities, and health and safety. The results of diagnostic tests are well used for the individual learning plan. Information about the learner is carefully analysed and learners are well matched to an employer or suitable work placements. Good support from the recruitment consultant is maintained throughout the programme. Learners are well supported in the workplace by regular six-weekly visits by tutor/assessors. Learners make good use of the out-of-hours contact service to obtain guidance when this is needed.

9. Progress reviews are particularly effective and there is good employer involvement. This strength was recognised at the previous inspection and in the self-assessment report. The process is particularly helpful in assisting with short- and medium-term target-setting, although key skills targets are not always recorded. There are effective links between the progress reviews and assessment plans. Good use is made of a training checklist to assist co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Equal opportunities issues are reinforced during the review through the use of well-planned questions.

10. Support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is satisfactory. Following a diagnostic test which identifies additional support needs, tutor/assessors offer individual support. A recent subcontracting arrangement has been offered to learners who need further specialist support to attend specific workshops offered by another provider.

11. The programme meets the needs of learners. Learners' programmes are enhanced by participation and attendance at local and national hairdressing competitions and industry events. There is an appropriate range of additional activities including an annual

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competition for learners, which is also extended to external participants from other local providers and colleges. There is good co-operation with other local training providers to share good practice and use specialist expertise. Future development plans include Indian head massage and African-Caribbean hairdressing. Learner success is celebrated at presentation evenings which are attended by family and friends.

12. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching, which was not identified in the self-assessment report or at the previous inspection. In the weaker off-the-job sessions, lessons are poorly planned and the content does not always match objectives or follow the scheme of work. Sessions do not always challenge and motivate learners and there is little checking to identify whether learning has taken place. In one session the tutor carried out a demonstration, but learners were inattentive and some could not see or hear. Insufficient use is made of questions to check learning or understanding. Subjects covered in background knowledge sessions are not always appropriate and learners do not always recognise the link between the activity and their programme of learning. There is no formal training input on the level 3 NVQ. Two optional support sessions are offered each week but these are not well attended. There are no alternative arrangements for learners who are based in remote salons, or for those with different learning styles.

13. There are not enough clients available for learners to practise or be assessed on, and too much use is made of training heads. Some learners do not complete tasks within commercially acceptable times. In some sessions learners demonstrate unprofessional behaviour. Lessons plans do not take account of contingency plans when learners have finished their tasks or there are too few clients for practise and assessment purposes. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

### **Leadership and management**

14. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes, and a shortage of staff at one time. These issues have now been dealt with, although two staff are still in their probationary period. Induction arrangements for new staff are comprehensive. The area manager meets regularly with the team and communications are adequate. Monitoring trends in retention and achievement is now a routine part of daily operations and reviews by senior management. Managers are given realistic targets to improve retention and achievement rates.

15. Equality of opportunity is well promoted. Learners receive good initial training, which includes case studies and exercises that help them to remember particular areas of concern such as how to identify and deal with bullying or harassment. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities is well checked during progress reviews.

16. Overall, quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. Feedback from learners and employers is appropriately used to develop the programme. There is a comprehensive range of quality assurance measures. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out twice a year, but the process is not thorough and did not identify

weaknesses in teaching and learning. Internal verification takes place regularly, follows a detailed planning process and covers all learners and assessors at appropriate stages in their assessment. The self-assessment process involves all staff, but the report did not identify all of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.