

INSPECTION REPORT

B L Hairdressing Training

24 June 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

B L HAIRDRESSING TRAINING

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

B L Hairdressing Training

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. B L Hairdressing Training (BLHT) is a privately owned company that was established in 1983 to provide hairdressing training in the northeast of England, with training centres in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Middlesbrough, Darlington, Durham and Sunderland. BLHT's head office is located in the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The company is managed by the managing director, who is supported by the chairman, who contributes to strategic and financial decision-making. BLHT has 28 staff, most of whom are full-time employees. Two area managers provide day-to-day operational leadership of the five training centre managers, who direct staff in the training centres. Four additional managers supervise the functions of finance, quality assurance, information and communication technology (ICT) and administration support. The number of learners and tutor/assessors that are attached to each centre varies.

2. Training is funded by four Learning and Skills Councils (LSC): Northumberland LSC, Tyne and Wear LSC, County Durham LSC, and Tees Valley LSC. Due to a period of expansion, the number of learners at BLHT has doubled over the last three years. All of its learners are employed in one of the 270 salons that BLHT has links with, from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Harrogate.

3. According to the 2001 census, the percentage of population from minority ethnic groups in the region is low at 2.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent. The unemployment rate is highest in the Tyne and Wear area, which is also the most populated. According to the 2001 census, the unemployment rate for the Northeast is 3.1 per cent, compared with 2.3 per cent for England. There are pockets of high levels of deprivation, particularly in the Tyne and Wear area.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. BLHT has 403 modern apprentices, of whom 322 are foundation modern apprentices and 68 are advanced modern apprentices and 13 are working towards national vocational qualifications. All modern apprentices work towards key skills at an appropriate level as an integral part of their programme. Advanced modern apprentices also work towards an appropriate technical certificate. All learners are employed in one of the 270 salons that BLHT deals with across the region. There are different attendance patterns of off-the-job training; some foundation modern apprentices attend once every fortnight, while others attend for background knowledge training once each month. Advanced modern apprentices attend the training centre one day each month and they also join a schedule of practical workshops, which include advanced cutting, colouring and perming. BLHT's assessors carry out most assessments regularly in the workplace salons. However, opportunities for assessment are also available at the off-the-job practical training sessions in BLHT's training centres. There are 36 work-based assessors,

B L HAIRDRESSING TRAINING

who visit the learners every 12 weeks at their salons to provide them with support and to complete their progress reviews.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	28
Number of learner interviews	74
Number of staff interviews	37
Number of employer interviews	29
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	31
Number of visits	0

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, BLHT's provision of hairdressing and beauty therapy training is good, its leadership and management are good, and the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance are satisfactory.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hairdressing - Work-based learning for young people	403	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Achievement and retention rates overall are satisfactory. For advanced modern apprentices, achievement rates have been low, but there have been significant improvements. Framework completion rates on foundation modern apprenticeships are above national averages and learners make good progress. The standard of learners' work is appropriate to their rate of development and some produce work in their salons of a high standard, particularly in colouring and styling. Learners' portfolios are satisfactory, some of which are well laid out and contain a good range and variety of evidence.

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
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	2	2	5	3	0	0	12
Total	0	2	2	5	3	0	0	12

7. **Key skills training is good.** Learners have a good understanding of key skills and how they link to hairdressing and why they are important. Workshops are particularly beneficial and learners' progress towards the skills is well recorded. Learners are given good feedback on their developing skills and enjoy completing the relevant and interesting assignments.

8. **Learners work in good-quality salons that are highly committed to training.** All employers offer additional training, and many of the salons are of a particularly high standard. Learning is enhanced by the experience and skills of the salon staff, and the learners are motivated and encouraged by the wide range of products they have access to and the quality of technical skills they can learn from at work.

9. **Additional learning activities provide learners with a very good range of opportunities.** The annual photographic competition is well used to celebrate the achievement of many learners, and BLHT uses the photographs to promote individual learners and the company. The monthly workshops for advanced modern apprentices provide a good learning opportunity.

10. **Learners are well supported and there are flexible arrangements to ensure that training is offered to meet their needs and those of their employer.** Regular visits to the learners in their salons and the frequent contact with their assessors help learners to make good progress.

11. **The detailed reviews of progress effectively help learners plan future achievement. BLHT gathers a lot of information on the learners' achievements to date, including how aspects of key skills have improved.** Copies of the review are made available to employers, learners and parents, so that they can help to support the learner to achieve.

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Targets are generally appropriate, but some are not focused enough.

12. Arrangements to support and carry out assessment are satisfactory. Learners receive regular visits from assessors and, in some salons, a work-based assessor is available.

13. Although most teaching is satisfactory, some professional standards are not maintained in practical classes. Lesson planning is weak and standards of professional dress are sometimes poor. Learners wear inappropriate jewellery, and shoes that do not protect their feet adequately when cutting hair or using chemicals. The arrangements to ensure learners' health and safety are incomplete.

14. **Two of the training centres have poor accommodation and facilities.** One of the centres has a hazardous stairway which learners have to negotiate and there is no designated reception area. At another centre the practical training room is unsuitable. There is no area for learners to take breaks and the salon does not reflect industry standards.

15. **In some practical classes there are not enough clients for practise and assessment.** In some cases, learners spend too much time working on training heads.

Leadership and management

16. **Employers are well supported and communication with them is good.** They receive a comprehensive pack, which is well produced and contains a wide range of particularly useful materials. Regular contact with employers, such as through the employer network, effectively helps co-ordinate training.

17. **BLHT uses a wide range of formal and informal communications.** All of the company's staff are involved in the meetings structure. Staff are well informed about the outcome of other meetings and initiatives. A lively and informative newsletter helps employers and learners maintain their awareness of events and seminars they can attend.

18. **The staff appraisal process is clear and detailed.** A well-structured system helps support staff through from the induction period onwards. The regular appraisal meetings lead to the development of clear targets and planned staff development. Good records are kept of the appraisal process, but staff do not always receive a copy of their own appraisal record.

19. **There has been a particularly thorough evaluation and review of the policies and procedures within BLHT.** Following the expansion of the company, much attention has been given to ensure that a standard set of documentation has been implemented, which staff are well informed about. Quality assurance systems have been standardised, but it is too early to judge the impact of some of these changes. The grading of teaching observations is currently over generous compared with the findings of inspectors.

20. **BLHT has taken effective actions to improve the participation of learners from under-represented groups.** A number of initiatives have begun to successfully attract men into

hairdressing, including specific publicity and the sponsorship of local sports teams.

21. Curriculum management of the area of learning is satisfactory, but the arrangements to support work-based assessors are good. All assessors receive a useful guidance pack and regular visits from internal verifiers to help them standardise and improve the assessment process.

22. Health and safety is appropriately monitored, but this did not fully identify some of the concerns highlighted by inspectors.

23. Arrangements to support the development of literacy, numeracy and language skills are satisfactory. Guidance information is available in the key skills and initial assessment support procedure, but there is no specific learning support strategy.

24. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Most staff are able to contribute to the process and agree that the report is a true reflection of the organisation.

25. The company has a clear three-year plan and a current year business plan and development plan, but these processes are not always fully linked or detailed. The three-year plan is not costed or linked to the financial projections. The monthly system of recording progress on the development plan is not always completed accurately. Links between self-assessment and development planning are in place but not all managers are clear about the annual cycle of planning to support this.

26. **BLHT collects a lot of data but does not use this sufficiently to identify trends or monitor the performance of the training centres.** Analysis of this data is not effectively used to monitor progress towards meeting targets specified in the development plan.

27. **Progress reviews do not sufficiently reinforce learners' understanding of equality of opportunity.** The review process is used to identify support requirements but does not always help learners achieve a greater understanding of the wider aspects of equality of opportunity.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good internal and external communications
- good appraisal and staff development
- effective management of change
- effective strategies to engage under-represented learners

Weaknesses

- incomplete recording of business processes
- insufficient analysis and use of equality of opportunity data
- insufficient analysis of data to improve the quality of decision-making

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good provision of key skills training
- good-quality workplaces
- wide range of good additional learning activities
- good support for learners
- detailed and effective reviews of learners' progress
- good communication with and support for employers

Weaknesses

- poor practice in some off-the-job training
- inadequate accommodation and facilities at two of the training centres
- insufficient clients for practise and assessment at some of the training centres

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT B L HAIRDRESSING TRAINING:

- the individual support they receive from the helpful and friendly tutors - 'the feeling that all of BLHT's staff are working for me'
- the small groups at the training centre - 'that I am not just another learner'
- free use of the computers
- 'I can drop into the centre at any time'
- the encouragement to work faster - 'if I get stuck I can always telephone them'
- good training at the centre and the extra training I get at work
- 'the posters with contact details in case I need help'
- 'the free kit gives me something to work for'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK B L HAIRDRESSING TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of models for practise and assessment
- the explanations of how to use the log book
- the amount of stairs at some of the training centres
- the frequency of off-the-job training
- the amount of time available to complete written work

KEY CHALLENGES FOR B L HAIRDRESSING TRAINING:

- improve the promotion of professional practice in off-the-job training sessions
- improve session planning and teaching strategies to meet all learners' individual needs
- provide appropriate accommodation at all training centres
- complete and improve the co-ordination of business planning processes
- make more effective use of management information in decision-making
- ensure greater consistency in target-setting for all learners
- establish and develop the revisions to the quality assurance system

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good internal and external communications
- good appraisal and staff development
- effective management of change
- effective strategies to engage under-represented learners

Weaknesses

- incomplete recording of business processes
- insufficient analysis and use of equality of opportunity data
- insufficient analysis of data to improve the quality of decision-making

28. BLHT uses a wide range of formal and informal communication methods, as recognised in the company's most recent self-assessment report. Communication with employers is good and effectively supports the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. The employers' network and hair shows provide useful forums for discussion and sharing information. There are regular and well-attended meetings, each with a specific focus. All staff are involved in some aspect of the meetings' structure. All meetings have clear agendas and well-recorded minutes, and action points are followed up systematically at the next meeting. All staff receive copies of minutes and sign to confirm that they have received them. Staff are well informed about the outcomes of meetings, which are organised well to ensure the smooth flow of information. Staff at senior levels are long established in the company. Staff find managers open and accessible and are at ease in discussing issues with them. Key information for learners is widely displayed. A lively and informative newsletter celebrates success stories, for example, competition winners or learners who have achieved their qualification, and provides advance notification about future events such as seminars.

29. The appraisal process is clear and detailed, which BLHT identified as a strength in the most recent self-assessment report. It is cross-referenced against the 'Common Inspection Framework' for training staff and an appropriate profile is used for administrative staff to reflect their different job role. Appraisal is systematically and progressively staged for new staff. First formal appraisals take place at three- and six-month intervals before moving onto an annual cycle. Good preparation takes place, and the appraiser carefully explains each stage of the process to the appraisee. Clear development targets are agreed that lead to a wide range of staff training and development activities. These include equal opportunities, key skills, dyslexia, supervision and management or sector-related training, such as Indian head massage. The key skills staff development has led to good improvements in this aspect of the provision. Staff are allowed adequate study time. One member of staff who began work at BLHT as a school

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leaver has achieved a range of qualifications and is now studying full time for a degree, with her working hours adjusted for study in term times. The induction process for new staff is thorough and includes work-shadowing, observation and intensive training, with regular support and monitoring. Appraisal record-keeping is thorough and detailed, but appraisees do not automatically receive their own copy of the appraisal record.

30. The company has managed change effectively, a strength that BLHT recognises in its most recent self-assessment report. In the past year, BLHT has taken over two other training providers and inherited learners from a third provider that closed down. Each of these providers had their own policies, systems and procedures. These management processes have been supported effectively. BLHT has reviewed and evaluated all of these systems extensively, to produce a single, standardised set of new policies and procedures that include all aspects of training and operations and incorporate the best aspects from the different providers. All staff were involved in two training days to ensure appropriate consultation, and consistent use and understanding of the revised systems. The company has issued all staff with a CD-ROM containing the key documents to ensure their consistent use.

31. The health and safety policy is detailed and there is good evidence of monitoring by the health and safety committee. Identified staff have clear health and safety responsibilities. There are generic risk assessments for all aspects of vocational training and general administration. Quarterly premises inspection and planned fire drills take place, but the fire drill planned for March 2004 is not recorded. Hairdressing inspectors identified various health and safety concerns in the training centres.

32. BLHT's arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are satisfactory. The arrangements are identified in procedures for key skills support and initial assessment, but there is no single additional learning support strategy. Planned staff training in supporting literacy and numeracy is identified, and an area manager has completed training to support dyslexic learners. One new member of staff has updated her professional knowledge by working through the key skills builder programme. Other support arrangements include support for small groups and individuals, and extra support and re-testing after six months to check progress. One learner has made particularly good progress and progressed from pre-entry level to just below level 1 in that time. The number of learners identified as requiring literacy or numeracy support are small.

33. Business processes are not recorded fully. The company has a three-year strategic development plan and a one-year business and development plan. There are detailed financial projections over the three-year plan period, but there are some missing links between these business-planning processes. For example, widening participation is a key aspect in the mission statement, and the recruitment of male learners is identified in the development plan, but the company's strategic aims do not refer to widening participation. The three-year development plan is not costed or linked to the financial projections. Measurable targets are set, and there is a monthly system of monitoring progress against the development plan, but this is not always completely accurate. Some targets are unrealistically high, for example the target for the observation of teaching and learning grades is 90 per cent at grade 2 and above. Other targets, including ones for

retention and achievement, are set at only 50 per cent. Records of managers meetings show emphasis on operational issues rather than strategy.

34. BLHT gathers a wide range of data but there is not enough in-depth analysis to assist decision-making. The company holds the information on two separate management systems, each of which is potentially very powerful but they are not used sufficiently to identify trends or effectively compare the performance of the training centres. The company does not use data fully to monitor progress towards meeting its targets in the development plan.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

35. BLHT has taken very effective actions to improve the participation of learners from under-represented groups. BLHT sponsors local football and hockey teams to increase their awareness of opportunities in hairdressing, and the company makes useful visits to boys schools to explain careers in hairdressing. BLHT has carried out a lot of work to challenge preconceptions about who is suitable for hairdressing careers and has made good progress in gaining access to schools to promote hairdressing. The company has given careful thought to promotional material to attract men and learners from minority ethnic groups, and it has published success stories of male modern apprentices on its website. Eight per cent of the company's learners are men and this percentage is improving. There is good targeting of minority ethnic groups through liaison with specific local schools. Productive visits have been made to community centres and youth clubs to promote hairdressing to minority ethnic groups. Four of the five training centres have poor access for learners and clients with physical disabilities, but there are satisfactory alternative arrangements with employers and other partners to use their premises to alleviate this problem. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report.

36. Equal opportunities policies and procedures are satisfactory. They are current and easy to understand. The complaints procedure is accompanied by a good set of helpful examples, but there are no timescales for dealing with complaints. Each training centre has an equality of opportunity co-ordinator. They meet as a development group to review procedures and make recommendations on changes. The recommendations are well evaluated and reviewed by BLHT's quality assurance team.

37. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory and it is well covered at the learners' induction. The company uses videos to enhance the understanding of equality of opportunity at induction and learners' understanding is well checked. All of the training centres display equality of opportunity policies and information about what to do when there are concerns. Learners have a good awareness of their rights. All of them receive training in employment rights and responsibilities, even where these are not a mandatory part of their modern apprenticeship. All employers have an equality of opportunity policy. One employer revised her salon policy after using BLHT's employers' pack to identify improvements. Staff receive regular training on equality of opportunity.

38. The analysis and use of data on equality of opportunity is insufficient. The self-assessment report identifies this weakness and actions are being put in place to remedy

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it. The company collects a lot of data but does not analyse it sufficiently. It has developed powerful systems to produce good analyses but has yet to identify trends. BLHT produces information on its applicants' ethnic origin but does not analyse the percentage of those who gain employment. However, BLHT does not collect data relating to retention and achievement by ethnicity, age, gender and disability.

39. There is insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity during learners' progress reviews. The subject is covered and employers are usually present during the discussion, but BLHT does not promote equality of opportunity adequately. There is satisfactory checking that learners are being treated fairly and not being bullied. A lot of discussion focuses on support for learners, which is not always appropriate. Topics discussed during progress reviews under the heading of equality of opportunity have been audited annually over the last two years, and most of the topics identified were support issues and not equality of opportunity.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

40. BLHT has effectively updated its quality assurance systems as part of its overall update of policies and procedures. The quality assurance manager has overall responsibility and is supported by a team. Quality assurance team meetings are well attended. The new system is in transition from a previously accredited framework to the new customised system, designed to support continuous improvement. The quality assurance team carries out regular audits against all aspects of the system, which is beginning to identify and deal with weaknesses. For example, the quality assurance team identified key skills as a weakness and rectified it with intensive staff training. It is too early to judge the impact of some other aspects of quality assurance. Observation of teaching and learning is in place, and staff receive clear feedback about their performance. However, observations have been graded only very recently and the grading of teaching and learning is over-generous in comparison with that of the inspectors. Actions to rectify identified weaknesses in lesson planning are not yet taking effect sufficiently.

41. The salon contract identifies detailed arrangements for health and safety and equality of opportunity. There is a regular two-yearly review process. The management information system notifies the company of visit data and records them. BLHT also keeps paper-based records, but these are not always up to date. The company recognises that the existing review process does not monitor the quality of training at work and has recently introduced a separate document to record this, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Arrangements to monitor the quality of subcontractors' work are satisfactory.

42. The complaints process identifies clear stages, and it is displayed throughout the training centres. However, timescales for dealing with complaints are not clear. There has only been one complaint in 2004, which was dealt with promptly, but the process for monitoring closure was not recorded. An effective system of 'causes for concern' is used to record and deal with preventable matters and this is discussed at the weekly meetings.

43. BLHT has carried out self-assessment since 1998. The process involves consultation with staff, most of them have a good awareness of the report and feel that it is a true reflection of the company. Recent self-assessment reports are detailed and the most recent one shows improved levels of evaluation. Insufficiently thorough grading in observation of teaching and learning led to claimed strengths that the inspectors do not recognise.

44. The company uses a range of surveys of learners and employers to obtain qualitative data through feedback, for example by the suggestion box and the employers' network. There are some examples of the company using feedback from suggestions for improvement, but this is not always fully analysed. BLHT did not seek feedback from one hair show until a month after the event and some feedback is only collated raw data.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Work-based learning for young people	403	2

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good provision of key skills training
- good-quality workplaces
- wide range of good additional learning activities
- good support for learners
- detailed and effective reviews of learners' progress
- good communication with and support for employers

Weaknesses

- poor practice in some off-the-job training
- inadequate accommodation and facilities at two of the training centres
- insufficient clients for practise and assessment at some of the training centres

Achievement and standards

45. For advanced modern apprentices the retention rates are good. None of the 78 advanced modern apprentices who started their modern apprenticeship since 2002 has left the programme before completing it. This represents a considerable improvement in retention rates from previous years. The achievement rate for 2002-03 was 76 per cent, which again compares favourably with previous years rates. For foundation modern apprentices, achievement and retention rates are above national averages for this area of learning and are satisfactory. For modern apprentices who started on this programme in 2000, 55 per cent were retained and 52 per cent successfully completed the modern apprenticeship. Learners who remain in learning are making good progress. A significant number of learners are awaiting certification of key skills or are close to the completion of remaining aspects of their framework. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory and most of them are practising skills at a level expected of them. They are able to perform tasks such as cutting at an appropriate level. Some learners who were observed at work were producing good commercial styling techniques and colouring skills to a good standard. Learners' portfolios of evidence are generally satisfactory and some are good and contain a wide range of product evidence. They are well illustrated, with

photographs of their work and evidence from the workplace of how assessments were achieved.

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)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1996-97								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	61		17		60		82									
Retained*	2		15	88	18	30	27	33									
Successfully completed	10		13	76	14	23	24	29									
Still in learning	46		4	24	14	23	4	5									

*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)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	289		186		184		69									
Retained*	3		23	12	90	49	38	55									
Successfully completed	1		18	10	76	41	36	52									
Still in learning	222		87	47	13	7	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																	
NVQ Training	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1996-97								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	4		17		17		17									
Retained*	1		4	24	7	41	11	65									
Successfully completed	0		3	18	7	41	11	65									
Still in learning	4		9	53	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

46. The provision of key skills training is good. The company did not identify this as a strength in its most recent self-assessment report. BLHT uses thorough initial assessments to determine the learners' key skills starting points and makes effective use of work packs which deal with learners' individual learning needs. For example, when a problem is

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identified with numeracy, BLHT uses an appropriate support work pack. Key skills training is well planned and structured, and clear reference to hairdressing is made throughout. Good workshops are provided for communication, application of number and ICT. Learners and tutors are very enthusiastic about key skills and they are encouraged to recognise the value and importance of key skills in their own jobs. Many learners have a good knowledge about proxy qualifications and exemptions to the key skills tests. Progress reviews clearly identify key skills achievements. Information on key skills progression is well recorded in the learners' individual learning plans.

47. Many learners work in good-quality salons that offer good learning environments, with opportunities for the learners to develop technical hairdressing skills. Employers encourage learners and help them to achieve. Employers offer good on-the-job training and are highly committed to ensure that the learners benefit from this. This strength was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Employers effectively encourage the learners to develop their product knowledge and technical skills to a high standard. Most salons are modern and well equipped and provide a wide range of hairdressing services. Some of the salons have recently been refurbished to a high standard. There are good opportunities for learners to participate in competition and photographic work, and to join in-salon training with other staff.

48. BLHT offers a wide range of good additional learning activities, which was partly identified in the self-assessment report. All salons offer additional training, such as manufacturers' product training. For the last four years BLHT has organised an annual photographic competition in which all of its learners are invited to produce a hairstyle which is photographed and placed on the company's website. Good use is made of the competition winner's photographic images on a range of publicity materials, which includes company brochures and carrier bags. Learners are motivated by the range of prizes, which includes a professional photographic shoot. Foundation modern apprentices who successfully complete three units of the qualification receive a basic hairdressing kit and also receive a cutting kit when they complete the colouring unit. Leading local hairdressers, many of whom are employers, provide a good programme of monthly workshops and demonstrations. BLHT provides additional ICT training for all of its learners.

49. Learners are well supported and BLHT recognises this in its most recent self-assessment report. Following comprehensive initial assessment and feedback, learners are encouraged to identify their preferred learning style. This information is recorded and good use is made of this in learning sessions to inform the tutors of individual learners' needs and to note the learners' progress in the topic covered. Learners receive individual attention and group sessions rarely contain more than eight learners. Flexible attendance arrangements are available. Following appropriate consultation with employers, some learners attend less frequently for background knowledge only. Regular visits to learners in their salons, further support training and assessment, and more frequent visits are made according to individual learners' and employers' needs, such as following induction to ensure that the learners settle into their new employment.

50. Learners receive detailed and effective reviews of their progress, a strength not

recognised in the self-assessment report. There is good forward planning and reviews are carried out regularly. Discussions at review meetings focus appropriately on academic progress rather than pastoral support. Reviews are carried out by occupationally competent staff and employers are fully involved. Assessment activities are well planned at these meetings. Very detailed and supportive comments are made and recorded on the review form. Good contact with parents is maintained and all parents receive a copy of the review document, in addition to copies being provided to learners and employers. Reviewers record any significant issues raised at reviews, which they discuss with other staff and action at the weekly training centre team meetings. Target-setting is generally satisfactory, but for some learners targets are insufficiently focused.

51. BLHT has adequate arrangements to ensure that opportunities for assessment are available both on and off the job. Visiting assessors attend most workplaces every four weeks. Additional visits can be arranged. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners receive a comprehensive assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. The results of diagnostic testing are well used to determine the appropriate training programme for learners.

52. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and is provided on an individual basis, learners are re tested following support to ensure that progress is being made. There are no specific arrangements to provide language support.

53. Most teaching is satisfactory and there is some good background knowledge training provided off the job, but there is poor practice in some off-the-job training sessions. In the good sessions, aims and objectives are shared and discussed and previous learning is checked and reinforced. There is good use of commercial examples and teachers successfully link industry standards and expectations to the session. In the poorer sessions, lesson planning is weak and in some the plans are not available. Where plans exist they do not always follow schemes of work and few timings are identified. In practical sessions, some poor professional practices are demonstrated. Learners' dress is not always appropriate and some of them wear inappropriate jewellery. Tutors' and learners' shoes do not always comply with health and safety procedures. There is little obvious use of sterilisation. There is not enough storage space for learners' equipment and outdoor clothes.

54. The accommodation and facilities at two of the training centres are inadequate. At the Darlington centre most learners enter through a hazardous flight of steps to a basement where the low ceiling can be difficult to negotiate. Entrance through the main door is satisfactory but this door is often locked for security purposes. The training salon is poorly designed for training purposes. There are not always enough chairs, particularly when clients are waiting for treatments. There is no reception area and not always enough small hand equipment. Learners at the Durham centre use a local salon for practical training, but this salon has no facilities for learners to store their belongings, and there are inadequate arrangements to ensure health and safety. There is no area for learners to use at break times. Most aspects of this weakness have already been recognised by managers and there are plans to make improvements.

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55. There are not always enough clients at the training centres for practise and assessment and some learners spend too much time working on training heads. In some sessions, little contingency planning is in place for learners without clients, and some learners are not productive in these sessions. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

56. Overall curriculum management of the hairdressing area is satisfactory. Communications with employers are good, which was partly identified in the self-assessment report. Each employer receives a comprehensive information pack, which supports their understanding of legislation and the rights of employees. These packs have been updated recently to include more detailed information on how employers might support learners with specific business tasks such as an equal opportunities policy. Tutors and assessors maintain good contact with the salons and employers benefit from this. Some employers take part in the events and presentations that BLHT regularly organises for learners. A good range of employers also participate in a variety of workshop events that are used to enhance the advanced modern apprenticeship. The employer focus groups provide a good link to ensure that the teaching programme meets the needs of employers.

57. Equal opportunities are appropriately included in learners' induction and a range of teaching and learning materials is provided. Equality of opportunity is not always reinforced at learners' progress reviews, and some aspects of knowledge are incomplete. However, learners are aware of how to identify and report issues and areas of concerns from their workplaces. In one session observed on equal opportunities, there was good use of an appropriate video followed by a lively open discussion on how salons can help support clients with disabilities. Learning in these sessions is checked by effective questioning.

58. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. BLHT uses the views of employers and learners to identify areas for improvement. Internal verification is thorough and comprehensive, the process is well planned and clear records are kept of the frequent activities. The 36 work-based assessors are particularly well supported, with frequent support and guidance visits from their internal verifier. Good guidance documents and additional training are available through a programme of standardisation exercises, and a work-based assessors' handbook.