

INSPECTION REPORT

Tyne North Training

06 August 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 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

Tyne North Training

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Tyne North Training Limited (TNT) was formed in 1968 in the Northeast as a group training organisation, to assist mainly small- and medium-sized engineering companies in all aspects of recruitment, selection and training. Currently, it is located in offices between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Tynemouth, and is due to move to purpose-built accommodation on an adjacent site during 2005. TNT has held a direct contract for engineering apprenticeships with Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC) since 2002.

2. A board of eight directors oversees the work of the company. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the company and all training matters. The manager also has overall responsibility for equality of opportunity and quality assurance. He is assisted by a senior training officer, four full-time training officers, one part-time training officer and three administration staff. Four of the training officers are qualified assessors and internal verifiers. Currently, TNT has over 60 member companies.

3. TNT also currently manages a project through a local initiative to resolve skill shortages in the riverside marine and offshore-related companies. This project allows adult learners to progress through advanced modern apprenticeship programmes in two years, and is co-financed through the European Social Fund and Tyne and Wear LSC.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. TNT has 211 learners completing advanced modern apprenticeship programmes and eight learners completing national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Programmes offered include mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and manufacturing, including fabrication and welding. There are 114 learners on manufacturing courses, 49 learners on mechanical engineering courses and 40 learners on electrical engineering courses. Sixteen learners are on other engineering programmes. Engineering skills training and vocational training are subcontracted for delivery to local colleges. Adult learners attend college for 17 weeks and complete their advanced modern apprenticeships in two years. Other learners attend college full-time or one day each week for 36 weeks, depending upon their employers' needs. Advanced modern apprentices complete an NVQ at level 2 in performing engineering operations and begin key skills training and portfolio-building during this time. Adult learners complete part two of a vocational qualification and begin their key skills units. During the remainder of their apprenticeship, learners are fully employed and attend colleges on a day-release basis for vocational training and further key skills training. TNT staff visit learners in the workplace on a weekly basis to observe them in work and to complete progress reviews.

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 | 22 |
| Number of subcontractor interviews | 4 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 1 |
| Number of partner/external agency interviews | 2 |
| Number of visits | 22 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of training in engineering, technology and manufacturing programmes is satisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, as is quality assurance. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

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 |

| Engineering, technology & manufacturing | | 3 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Mechanical engineering</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 49 | 3 |
| <i>Electrical engineering</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 40 | 3 |
| <i>Manufacturing</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 103 | 3 |
| - Other government-funded provision | 11 | 2 |
| <i>Other contributory areas</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 16 | 3 |

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Achievement rates for adult learners are very good with 91 per cent of adult learners completing the advanced modern apprenticeship framework during the first intake of this pilot programme in manufacturing.
7. Adult learners are fast-tracked through their programmes in manufacturing and complete their modern apprenticeship framework in two years, rather than the standard four years.
8. **Eighty-nine per cent of younger learners have successfully achieved the NVQ at level 2**, part-way through their advanced modern apprenticeship programme.
9. **Learners achieve a broad range of additional qualifications**, including lift truck driver training, basic health and safety qualifications, manual handling and welding qualifications.
10. A significant number of learners work for, and achieve, higher-level qualifications, including some at degree level.
11. **Most learners with small to medium-sized companies make slow progress in completing the modern apprenticeship framework.** This is where assessment is completed by TNT staff.

Quality of education and training

12. **Training is well-planned**, and learners develop a wide range of skills. Each learner generally receives training in different departments or on a range of processes for set periods of time, completing progressively more complex tasks. Learners' technical knowledge, administration and communication skills are being developed effectively.
13. **Learners are very well-supported by their employers**, and counselling is provided, if required, by appropriately qualified staff. Learners produce good-quality work in real working conditions and employers comment positively about how the learners' performances improve significantly during their training period. Learners are encouraged to work where possible with minimum supervision.
14. **Assessment practices are poor in many cases.** TNT relies heavily upon witness testimonies supplied by work-based supervisors. TNT assessors do not routinely record observations of learners' work during their weekly visits.
15. **TNT does not monitor subcontractors' delivery of key skills sufficiently. Key skills achievement rates are poor for some learners.** Some subcontractors are performing this

TYNE NORTH TRAINING

activity well, but the management, testing and certification of key skills by others is particularly weak.

16. Learners are well supported, with training officers regularly visiting learners at their place of work. TNT encourages learners to achieve their targets by giving a financial incentive when learners complete their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Some employers offer learners the opportunity to participate in additional training activities.

17. **Initial assessment is weak.** Learners complete an aptitude test as the only means of identifying any support needs. Staff within TNT do not understand the issues relating to literacy, numeracy and language support.

Leadership and management

18. **TNT has established a good reputation with a wide range of employers over many years and has good communication with them.** Employers welcome the frequent visits by training officers. TNT's training officers have established a good rapport with many workplace supervisors and assessors. Training officers also have good relationships with most learners. Each learner has a named training officer and values the support they receive.

19. **The three-year development plan is largely narrative and descriptive. It was mainly compiled to satisfy local LSC requirements, rather than as a business tool.** Some objectives are set, but these are very general and are expressed in terms that do not allow progress to be measured easily. **TNT has no strategic plan or business plan.**

20. **Only the main subcontractor has signed a service level agreement. Some requirements, such as initial assessment and additional learning support are not included in the service level agreements.** Meetings occur regularly between TNT and the main subcontractor, but less frequently with other subcontractors.

21. TNT has a history of problems with key skills training involving subcontractors. The problems were not identified quickly enough by TNT to minimise the effects on learners.

22. **The company has no formal policy for staff development and appraisal** and no outline or description of the current appraisal process. Some staff have been in the organisation for a long time without any formal appraisal. The current process allows time for discussions with individuals to take place, which is valued by staff, but the recorded outcomes are narrative, do not identify specific targets and timescales and are not objective enough.

23. The company relies on aptitude tests to identify learners' additional needs. **There is a general lack of understanding within the company regarding the difference between**

literacy, numeracy and language skills, key skills and basic practical skills, which causes confusion.

24. TNT has encouraged its member companies to either develop their own equality of opportunity policies or adopt TNT's policy. It has no system, however, to monitor implementation of equal opportunities policies by companies.

25. TNT is funding an event in September 2004 intended to attract women into engineering. However, there have been no previous successful initiatives to increase the number of applicants from under-represented groups.

26. Learners receive only a brief introduction to the concept of equal opportunities at induction, which is not memorable. **TNT has few resources which promote equality and diversity. Most staff have not received any training in equality and diversity,** although many have been with TNT for a number of years.

27. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. TNT recently sought feedback from a sample of employers and learners as part of the self-assessment process. Responses were mainly very positive.

28. **TNT has no formal procedure for monitoring the observation of teaching and learning provided by subcontractors. This is a significant omission from the quality assurance system.**

29. **Internal verification is poor.** It is mainly based on the sampling of portfolios and generally takes place when a learner is nearing the end of the programme. Internal verifiers do not observe assessors carrying out assessments in the workplace sufficiently.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good communication

Weaknesses

- inadequate business planning
- ineffective management of subcontractors
- inadequate staff appraisal process
- inadequate strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support
- inadequate strategy to promote equality and diversity
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- poor internal verification practices

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Mechanical engineering

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessments
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Electrical engineering

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessment
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Manufacturing

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement rates for adult learners
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessments
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessments
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TYNE NORTH TRAINING:

- good experience gained
- regular visits from TNT
- 'always know what I am supposed to be doing'
- 'the opportunity to go to college and increase my education'
- 'the company will sponsor me to do a degree or higher'
- 'when I get my BTEC certificate I will have it for life'
- 'I am really happy to be given a second chance' (adult learner)
- 'they found me a good company'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK TYNE NORTH TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the travel allowance
- the issue of certificates - too slow at present
- assessments
- wages
- the journey to college
- 'NVQ units could have been sorted out much earlier'
- 'sometimes our lecturer is not there due to meetings and we get a double session in another subject'
- 'key skills are a fiasco'

KEY CHALLENGES FOR TYNE NORTH TRAINING:

- develop more appropriate systems for initial assessment
- further develop assessment practices by TNT training officers, in accordance with best practice in the engineering sector
- share good practice more widely among member companies
- ensure that learner progress is closely monitored near the end of their programmes to ensure achievements
- review and further develop the staff appraisal process, policy and procedures
- implement closer monitoring of subcontractors
- further develop promotion of equality and diversity in TNT and member companies
- develop an effective strategy to ensure that learners can access support for literacy, numeracy and language needs
- further develop and implement quality assurance processes
- ensure the application of thorough internal verification procedures throughout the company

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good communication

Weaknesses

- inadequate business planning
- ineffective management of subcontractors
- inadequate staff appraisal process
- inadequate strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support
- inadequate strategy to promote equality and diversity
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- poor internal verification practices

30. Communications with employers are good. TNT has established a good reputation with a wide range of employers over many years. Employers welcome the frequent visits by training officers. A good rapport has been established by TNT's training officers with many workplace supervisors and assessors. Training officers also have good relationships with most learners. Each learner has a named training officer and values the support they receive. An information pack has been developed for employers, and they are able to seek advice from TNT on a range of issues. They welcome the support they receive from TNT. Member companies are encouraged to network so that learners may move to different companies under certain circumstances. TNT is currently developing an appropriate website as part of its external communications and marketing facility. Communications with the main subcontractor are good. Regular meetings take place and are recorded, although actions are not always identified, or followed through. Informal communications with subcontractors are also effective through the regular visits made by training officers.

31. Internal communications are effective. As TNT is a relatively small organisation, informal communication is acceptable and generally satisfactory. Formal weekly staff meetings are held and are minuted, although the outcomes are sometimes simply lists of tasks rather than records of detailed discussions. Staff are reasonably well-informed about the company, although not all are fully aware of the self-assessment report in detail or longer-term development plans. The board is scheduled to meet four times each year, although these meetings have not always taken place. The board does not set the strategic direction for the company and rarely intervenes in operational decision-making. The chair of the board and TNT's manager meet informally to discuss issues that require action outside the scheduled meetings. Board minutes are sometimes not detailed enough and are not circulated to staff or other member companies.

32. Data relating to learners is recorded electronically on a variety of spreadsheets and databases by TNT's administration staff. Reports are available on request and are sometimes used to inform discussions. The use of management information is generally satisfactory. Accounting software has recently been installed to enhance the financial management systems. TNT has plans to consolidate its data requirements with a more integrated management information system.

33. Companies are checked appropriately in relation to health and safety, by qualified staff, before learners join them. Regular annual checks of insurance requirements also take place and updating of any additional identified health and safety risks takes place by exception. Satisfactory records are kept in TNT's company files.

34. The three-year development plan is the only plan produced by TNT. There is no separate strategic plan, or business plan. It was created in June 2003 and revised in April 2004. It is largely narrative and descriptive. The plan includes a substantial amount of historical information and a detailed view of current activity, rather than detailed projections and planning for the future. It was mainly compiled to satisfy local LSC requirements rather than as a business tool. Some objectives are set, but are very general and are expressed in terms that do not allow progress to be measured easily. A market assessment is included, but there is no marketing plan or marketing strategy to achieve the targets set within the development plan. Success rates from previous years are included and proposed improvements identified, but with no indication of how they are to be achieved. Generally, objectives are identified for the company as a whole and are not detailed as annual targets and no specific staff responsibilities are identified. The development plan contains no financial planning to identify whether the objectives are achievable or affordable. No budgets are set for the key areas of business activity. Although staff have a copy of the three-year development plan it is not regarded as a key tool for the business. It is not shared with employers or subcontractors. The board has limited knowledge of the plan, and does not routinely discuss it in detail.

35. The delivery of training is subcontracted to three local colleges. At the time of inspection only the main subcontractor has signed a service level agreement. This covers the minimum requirements, but is not sufficiently detailed. Some requirements such as initial assessment and additional learning support are not included in the service level agreement. Meetings take place regularly with the main subcontractor, but less frequently with the other subcontractors. TNT has a history of key skills training problems involving subcontractors, that were not identified by TNT in time to minimise the effect on the learners. This has been a significant source of dissatisfaction for some learners and employers. Subcontractors are not penalised sufficiently when they do not provide training to required standards and TNT has no formal process for quality assuring the colleges' provision.

36. Job descriptions and contracts of employment have only recently been reviewed and agreed by staff. TNT has no formal policy for staff development and appraisal and no outline or description of the current appraisal process. Some staff have been with TNT for a long time having had no formal appraisal. About half of the staff have had appraisal discussions, although the manager himself has not been appraised. The current process

allows time for discussions with individuals, but the recorded outcomes are narrative, do not identify specific targets and timescales, and are not objective enough. Discussions and outcomes are not related to self-assessment and development planning, being very general discussions under a range of headings. Any objectives set are general, not time bound, and not easy to monitor. Some training requests are being supported, but these are not closely aligned to the self-assessment, or development planning process. Although training and staff development are generally encouraged and supported by TNT, there is no specific training budget.

37. TNT is not aware of the requirement to have a strategy to ensure that learners have literacy, numeracy and language skills support. The company relies on aptitude tests that learners take as part of the recruitment process, to identify learners' additional needs. There is a lack of understanding in the company generally, regarding the difference between literacy, numeracy and language skills, key skills and basic practical skills, which causes confusion. Some initial assessments are carried out by subcontractors, but the results are not shared routinely with TNT. Initial assessments and support for additional learning needs are not a specific requirement within the service level agreement. Any literacy, numeracy and language support that may be available is not actively promoted to learners.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

38. TNT has an equal opportunities policy which states the commitment of the management and executive committee to ensuring equality of opportunity for all. Supporting this are additional procedural guidelines for the appropriate implementation of policies on initial assessment, recruitment and selection, grievances and bullying and harassment. These are displayed on the staff noticeboard. Learners are provided with information about equal opportunities, and most know about the process for dealing with issues such as bullying or harassment. Where company equality of opportunity policies do not exist, TNT encourages its member companies to either develop their own or adopt TNT's policy. However, TNT has no effective system to monitor implementation by companies or to establish if staff working with learners understand the importance of equality. TNT has no formal system to record complaints.

39. TNT keeps data about the profile of applicants, recording information such as gender and ethnicity. Positive steps have been taken recently to encourage under-represented groups. TNT is funding an event in September aimed specifically at attracting women into engineering. However, there have been no previous successful initiatives to increase the number of applicants from under-represented groups. This is identified in the development plan as an area for improvement.

40. TNT has specific entry requirements for apprenticeship programmes, and its initial recruitment procedure involves aptitude testing in mechanical awareness and mathematics. In the literature that is sent out to candidates they are invited to identify any specific additional learning needs they may have, and TNT can arrange appropriate support. The process relies on self-referral by learners. There is no diagnostic testing before the standard aptitude test. Access and facilities at TNT's current premises are not

adequate for people with limited mobility. Arrangements are being made to install a lift in the near future, and TNT plans to move to a new facility in 2005 which will meet all legislative requirements. Promotional literature and advertisements make appropriate statements about equal opportunities, but there is no attempt to use images from under-represented groups.

41. TNT's strategy to promote equality and diversity is inadequate. Learners receive only a brief introduction to the concept of equal opportunities at induction, which is not memorable. TNT has few resources which promote equality and diversity. Most staff have not received any training in equality and diversity. Many staff have been with TNT for a number of years, but they do not have sufficient knowledge of equality and diversity matters to challenge the attitudes of learners and employers. Staff are sometimes unaware of their use of inappropriate language and comments when speaking to learners. Employers are not actively encouraged to recruit from under-represented groups. This has been recognised to some extent by TNT in its self-assessment report as a key weakness.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

42. TNT has a quality assurance manual which sets out general guidelines for quality assurance throughout its operations. The manager has overall responsibility for quality assurance, and the recently appointed senior training officer has been given the task of designing and implementing policies and procedures. There are significant omissions in the quality assurance procedures, with key areas of business not adequately covered. The quality assurance awareness manual contains a well-designed graphic that illustrates the key stages of the learners' programme and sets out the responsibilities of all staff. A number of effective procedures were introduced in June 2004, covering induction; the handling of complaints; and internal auditing procedures to measure compliance.

43. TNT recently sought feedback from a sample of its employers and learners as part of the self-assessment process. Responses were mainly very positive and the only significant issue identified relates to key skills training. An external consultant has produced an action plan to improve key skills training, but this has not been implemented. Recently, questionnaires have been given to learners upon completion of short courses and, as a result, changes are planned in the delivery of health and safety modules. These feedback arrangements are very recent. Previously learners received exit questionnaires at the end of the modern apprenticeship programmes.

44. TNT's self-assessment process is satisfactory. The current self-assessment report, which is its second, identifies a number of strengths and weaknesses also identified by inspectors. The inspection team agreed with the overall grades for engineering and equality of opportunity. However, lower grades were given for leadership and management and quality assurance. There is not enough emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning, and a number of strengths identified by TNT were no more than what is expected as normal practice. TNT staff were not sufficiently involved, and some are not fully aware of its contents. A development plan has been produced and identifies issues raised in the self-assessment report. Progress has been made in some areas.

45. Many quality assurance procedures, are not in standardised form and have not been updated for many years. The quality assurance procedures produce task instructions which set out clearly the procedures that staff must follow in the delivery of services. However, only two activities are covered to date: aptitude tests and progress reviews. It is too soon to measure the effect of these task instructions on the learners' experience. TNT has no formal procedure for monitoring the observation of teaching and learning provided by subcontractors; this is a significant omission in its quality assurance system. TNT has achieved the international quality assurance standard ISO 9001/2000.

46. Internal verification is poor. It takes place mainly at the end of training programmes and is based on the sampling of portfolios. Internal verifiers carry out very little observation of assessors assessing in the workplace. Internal verification is not planned sufficiently; schedules and paperwork to record activities are frequently incomplete and inconsistent. TNT has no signatory list of company assessors available to validate assessment decisions. Standardisation meetings have recently been introduced but do not follow a standard agenda or record action points. They have not yet had any impact on internal verification practice. Internal verification is not included in TNT's quality assurance system.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

| Engineering, technology & manufacturing | | 3 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Mechanical engineering</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 49 | 3 |
| <i>Electrical engineering</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 40 | 3 |
| <i>Manufacturing</i> - Work-based learning for young people - Other government-funded provision | 103 11 | 3 2 |
| <i>Other contributory areas</i> - Work-based learning for young people | 16 | 3 |

Mechanical engineering

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessments
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Electrical engineering

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessment
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Manufacturing

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement rates for adult learners
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessments
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- broad range of additional qualifications achieved
- very good achievement of NVQs at level 2
- well-planned training
- good training support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress in advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks for most learners
- poor initial assessments
- poor assessment practice for many learners
- poor key skills arrangements for some learners

Achievement and standards

47. Achievement rates for adult learners are very good. Ninety-one per cent of adult learners who have completed the manufacturing programme achieved the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. They are fast-tracked through their programme and complete their modern apprenticeship in two years, rather than the normal four. This is a significant achievement. Of the young modern apprentices currently on programme, 89 per cent have successfully completed the level 2 NVQ element of their framework. During 2002-03, a significant number of learners left the programme.

48. Learners are achieving a broad range of additional qualifications. Additional learning opportunities are identified by having learners complete a skills analysis at the employers' premises. Examples of the additional training include lift truck driver training, basic health and safety qualifications, manual handling and welding qualifications. A significant number of learners are working for and achieving higher-level qualifications including some at degree level.

49. Some learners make slow progress in completing the modern apprenticeship framework. This is mainly an issue within small to medium-sized companies where assessments are completed by TNT staff. TNT assessors do not assess learners' work sufficiently in the workplace. A significant number of learners who are due to complete their training by September 2004 still have to complete a number of units. Where there are work-based assessors within companies, learners make better progress towards achieving their qualifications.

TYNE NORTH TRAINING

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 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 63 | | 84 | | 52 | | 40 | | 37 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Retained* | 0 | | 0 | | 11 | | 0 | | 36 | | 1 | 100 | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 0 | | 0 | | 11 | | 0 | | 34 | | 1 | 100 | | | | |
| Still in learning | 54 | | 66 | | 38 | | 40 | | 2 | | 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 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 2 | | 5 | | 1 | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Retained* | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | 100 | 1 | | | | 1 | 100 | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | 100 | 0 | | | | 1 | 100 | | | | |
| Still in learning | 2 | | 4 | | 0 | 0 | 2 | | | | 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

| Other government funded | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---|---------|---|---------|---|---------|---|---------|---|-----------|---|---------|---|-----|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2004-05 | | 2003-04 | | 2002-03 | | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | | | | | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | | | | | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | | | | | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Still in training | | | | | 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

50. Training is well-planned, enabling learners to develop a wide range of skills. Examples include: machine operations; electrical installation and maintenance of complex machines; mechanical repairs to ships, cranes and lift trucks; fabrication of sheet metal components; pipefitting; and welding operations. Each learner generally receives training in different departments and processes for set periods of time, increasing in complexity. The time spent in each area may be adjusted if required. This allows skills to be developed at a pace most suited to the learner. The learners' technical knowledge,

administration and communication skills are also developed effectively. They are very well supported by their employers, counselling is provided if required by appropriately qualified staff. Learners are producing good-quality work in real working conditions. Employers comment positively about the significant improvements in learners' work during their training period. Learners are encouraged to work where possible with minimum supervision. Although learners find this to be a daunting prospect initially, most have successfully overcome their fears and state that their confidence has improved significantly.

51. Learners are well supported. TNT's staff regularly visit learners at their place of work. Technical training and any personal issues are discussed during these visits. TNT encourages learners to achieve their objectives by giving a £150 financial incentive when learners complete their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Employers award an equal amount. In one instance, TNT paid all travel expenses for a learner who had the opportunity to attend a machinery breakdown in Norway. Staff respond well to complaints or concerns raised by learners. Some employers offer learners the opportunity to participate in additional activities.

52. The programmes and range of qualifications offered by TNT are satisfactory in meeting the aspirations of the learners. Employer needs are also given some consideration when selecting relevant programmes. Most learners are employed by small to medium-sized companies, where the training resources are satisfactory. Larger companies' training resources are significantly better. TNT staff are well-qualified and experienced. Their training skills are satisfactory. Training resources at the TNT training centre are limited; access for learners with disabilities is poor. TNT has plans to relocate to a new training centre in 2005.

53. The progress review process involves all interested parties. Feedback from the learners is discussed with the employers and the learner is informed of any comments made by their employer. Performance targets are agreed, in respect of further training. Levels of discussion regarding health and safety and equal opportunities issues during progress reviews are satisfactory.

54. Assessment practices are poor in many cases, particularly where TNT staff have responsibility for assessment in the workplace. They rely heavily on witness testimonies supplied by work-based supervisors. TNT assessors do not routinely record any observations of learners' work. Assessments are planned to begin in the fourth year of the modern apprenticeship framework. No assessments take place in the previous three years. In a few of the larger companies a number of work-based assessors monitor learners' performance effectively and carry out good assessments.

55. Subcontracted colleges are responsible for the delivery of key skills training. Some subcontractors are good at this, others are particularly weak. Arrangements for the delivery of key skills training for some learners have been poor, and achievement rates for some learners are also poor. Some key skills portfolios and examination results have been misplaced. The learners affected have had to reproduce written evidence and to resit tests. Learners are not given detailed feedback when they fail a test; they are unable

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to identify which key skills elements need further development. A significant number of learners are still awaiting issue of their key skills certificates some six months after completing the tests. TNT does not monitor the subcontractors' key skills training sufficiently.

56. Initial assessment is weak. Learners complete an aptitude test that was developed by the provider some years ago. This is the only means of identifying any support needs. Support for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs is poor. TNT relies on subcontracted colleges to identify learners' needs, even though this element is not specifically required by the standard service level agreement. TNT staff do not understand the situation regarding literacy, numeracy and language support.

Leadership and management

57. TNT staff have a basic understanding of equality of opportunity issues. Learners have an appropriate understanding of their rights and responsibilities and know what action to take in response to bullying and harassment. Most learners feel confident that they would receive the appropriate help and support from their designated training officer. Few have any knowledge of available support for additional learning needs.

58. Subcontractors, which deliver all off-the-job training, are not monitored effectively by TNT. Problems relating to key skills training have not been dealt with quickly enough and are a main source of dissatisfaction and frustration for employers and learners.

59. Quality assurance arrangements do not fully cover all training procedures. Internal verification is inadequate. TNT has not identified some poor practice within the existing processes. The self-assessment process has only recently been included in the quality assurance arrangements and has not had any significant impact on improvements to the quality of training.