

INSPECTION REPORT

Westminster Health Care (UK) Ltd

11 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 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

Westminster Health Care (UK) Ltd

Contents

Summary

| | |
|--|---|
| Description of the provider | 1 |
| Scope of provision | 1 |
| About the inspection | 2 |
| Overall judgement | 2 |
| Grades | 2 |
| Key findings | 3 |
| What learners like about Westminster Health Care (UK) Ltd | 8 |
| What learners think Westminster Health Care (UK) Ltd could improve | 8 |
| Key challenges for Westminster Health Care (UK) Ltd | 9 |

Detailed inspection findings

| | |
|--|----|
| Leadership and management | 10 |
| Equality of opportunity | 12 |
| Quality assurance | 12 |
| Business administration, management & professional | 14 |
| Health, social care & public services | 19 |

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Westminster Health Care (UK) Ltd (WHC) is a company limited by guarantee. It provides long- and shorter-term care for older people, in senior living care homes and for adults of all ages with special needs, through its specialist health service division. Since 1999, WHC has been owned by a leading financial institution and run by its management team. The company employs over 8,000 staff in 88 care homes across England, Scotland and Wales. The company started to provide government-funded training in December 2002 with contracts from the National Contracting Service. Only programmes operating in England were within scope of the inspection. There are six management and administrative staff working full time on the government-funded programmes who are supported in the workplace by 246 assessors, 17 training co-ordinators and care home managers and trainers. The company provides advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQ) training and assessment.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

2. There are 68 learners on business administration, management and trainer programmes for adults. Of these, six are working towards NVQs at level 2 and 21 towards NVQs at level 3 in administration. One learner is on the NVQ at level 2 team leading programme, 19 are completing the management NVQ at level 3, and 21 learners are working towards an NVQ at level 3 in direct training and support and learning and development. All learners are employed by WHC. Staff are recruited onto the management courses through the company's leadership and management development programme. Learners may request administration or training NVQs at any time either directly or through the appraisal process. Most training is provided in the workplace. The company provides one-day workshops in topics related to specific NVQs and other more general workshops. Assessors visit learners in the workplace at least every six weeks.

Health, social care & public services

3. There are 19 advanced modern apprentices, 75 foundation modern apprentices and 518 learners on NVQ programmes in health, social care and public services. All learners are employed and work in nursing homes, residential homes or hospitals and gain experience in a range of care environments including elderly care, mental health and physical disability. Learners are recruited through interviews with the home manager and have an initial assessment to identify the appropriate NVQ level and units. Additional support needs are also identified during this process. Modern apprentices are also assessed to identify their literacy, numeracy and language support needs. Some modern apprentices have taken further diagnostic testing. NVQ learners are encouraged to take the diagnostic testing. Learners attend an induction onto the programme that includes health and safety, equal opportunities and the NVQ requirements. Most of the training is provided in the workplace with some external training taking place. Most learners are supported by work-based assessors and NVQ coordinators who provide training and assessment throughout the programme.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of inspectors | 12 |
| Number of inspection days | 52 |
| Number of learner interviews | 111 |
| Number of staff interviews | 56 |
| Number of employer interviews | 30 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 38 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, training in business administration, management and professional; and health, social care and public services is satisfactory. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance are also satisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

| Business administration, management & professional | | 3 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Business administration</i> - Other government-funded provision | 27 | 3 |
| <i>Management</i> - Other government-funded provision | 20 | 3 |
| <i>Teacher/trainer awards</i> - Other government-funded provision | 21 | 3 |
| Health, social care & public services | | 3 |
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Care</i> - Other government-funded provision | 518 | 3 |
| - Work-based learning for young people | 94 | 4 |

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

5. **Retention rates are high in care.** Of those NVQ learners who started the programme in 2001-02 and 2002-03, 99 per cent and 79 per cent have been retained respectively. Forty-eight per cent of foundation modern apprentices were retained in 2002-03 with 52 per cent still in learning.

6. **Retention rates are high in administration.** Five of the six administration learners for 2002-03 remain. Of the 23 who started their administration NVQs in 2003-04, 22 are still in learning.

7. **There is slow progress on all programmes.** Some learners have had a number of assessors. Communication is poor between some learners and their assessors. In some homes, assessors have insufficient time allocation to fulfil their assessor duties. Effective action has been taken to appoint competent assessors and learners are now completing units.

Quality of education and training

8. Four learning sessions were observed and graded as good.

9. **Personal and professional development is good on all programmes.** Many learners have moved rapidly from NVQs at level 1 to levels 2 and 3. Some learners achieve

qualifications that exceed their aspirations. Managers have budgets to pay for training and to cover the cost of giving learners time to learn during working hours.

10. **There is good occupational training in care programmes.** The provider has an effective training ethos for all learners. The effective and comprehensive induction provides the background knowledge for employment rights and responsibilities and NVQ care theory. A wide range of training activities and formats are used to meet individual learner needs. In-house training sessions cover mandatory requirements as well as a wide range of additional courses such as dealing with adolescents, suicide management, eating disorders and infection control.

11. **Learners in business administration, management and professional learners are well supported.** Learners are well informed at the outset about what is required to achieve their NVQ. Assessment is designed to suit individual learning styles and to allow for workplace demands. Assessors visit learners at regular intervals. Additional support is provided through the recent introduction of an NVQ helpline and line managers actively support the development of the NVQ in the workplace.

12. **Key skills training and assessment and technical certificates were not introduced at the start of the programme.** However, implementation plans are in place. Key skills are currently being introduced. There has been some staff training and a small number of learners have accessed work books and taken key skills tests. One key skills workshop has been delivered. NVQ workshops have been reviewed to incorporate the technical certificates. These have yet to be disseminated to staff for implementation in July and August.

13. **Monitoring of care programmes is ineffective.** Progress reviews are inadequate, with poor target-setting and action plans. Reviews do not link to the individual learning plan or support progress. Many learning plans have no key target dates for unit and qualification achievement. Recent changes to the review process are tackling these issues, but are not yet impacting on learners.

14. Internal verification does not always identify inadequacies and inconsistencies in the assessment process, although there are several homes where internal verification is particularly rigorous and effective. Most internal verification practice does not currently include observation of assessor practice or encourage sharing of good practice.

15. **Individual learning plans are not used adequately in business administration, management and professional.** Actions were planned to introduce and operate a new system of individual learning plans linked to regular progress reviews. These plans are not yet effective. There is now a comprehensive learning plan common to all learners, but these new plans are not used consistently. Some learners do not yet have individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

16. **The mission statement and strategic direction of WHC are well understood and effectively communicated to all staff.** It is focused on delivering high levels of service in the care industry and has learning and development as a central pillar to that aim and a substantive budget is allocated.

17. **Support for staff development is very effective.** All staff are encouraged to undergo additional training. All staff have twice-yearly discussions with their line manager at which their personal career development is discussed. Care home managers ensure that training is provided for all staff.

18. **A wide range of accurate information is available to senior managers.** There are comprehensive breakdowns of numbers of learners, locations, participation rates, ethnicity, gender, homes that are exceeding or experiencing shortfalls in NVQ at level 2 statutory targets and programmes of study. This information is used effectively to aid strategic planning.

19. Participation rates of under-represented groups in care are high. Data is routinely used to monitor participation and achievement of under-represented groups. WHC has effectively encouraged men to care NVQ programmes and a high proportion of learners are from minority ethnic groups or have specific additional learning and/or social needs.

20. The quality assurance system covers all key aspects of the learners' experience. A small number of policies have not yet been fully developed. All documents related to quality assurance are controlled well.

21. **There is insufficient involvement of the care home managers in the planning of the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress.** These managers have a wide remit of responsibility, which includes the planning and budgeting for training. However, their main responsibility is in the provision of high service levels to the residents of the homes.

22. **The implementation of the modern apprenticeship frameworks has been delayed.** The programmes started in December 2002 and some learners have been on programme since that time. Arrangements were unsatisfactory for the provision of key skills, initial assessment and the provision of literacy and numeracy support. There have subsequently been staff changes and a new co-ordinator was recruited in June 2003. Key skills have only very recently been introduced.

23. **Learners do not fully understand their own rights.** Learners receive a programme handbook at the start of that training that includes equality of opportunity statements. Most learners have not read this or understood it.

24. **Evaluation of data to improve performance is ineffective.** Some data has been collected by internal audit on various aspects of the programme and on learner feedback. Currently, insufficient data is available for managers to analyse.

25. **There has been no systematic monitoring of the performance of internal verifiers across all regions of the organisation's operations.** No record is maintained of assessors who do not regularly attend standardisation meetings. Minutes from the meetings are poor and do not identify who will be responsible for targets, the timescale, how success will be measured or when progress be monitored. There has been no systematic standardisation of assessment practice across regions. There are wide variations in practice between and within regions.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategic vision understood and shared by all staff
- very effective appraisal and staff development practices
- wide range of accurate information to inform decision-making
- high participation rates of under-represented groups in care
- very effective work to ensure continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficient involvement of care home managers in the planning of assessment
- delayed implementation of the modern apprenticeship frameworks
- poor understanding of their rights by learners
- ineffective evaluation of data to improve performance
- inadequate systems to monitor nationally internal verification on care programmes

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good personal and professional development
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

Management

Strengths

- good personal and professional development
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

Teacher/trainer awards

Strengths

- good personal and professional development
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

Health, social care & public services

Care

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good occupational training
- good personal and professional development

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- no key skills training and assessment and technical certificates provision at start of programme
- ineffective monitoring of programmes

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WESTMINSTER HEALTH CARE (UK) LTD:

- the support provided by staff
- being able to work at their own pace
- access to the intranet
- wide range of learning activities
- improving their self-confidence

WHAT LEARNERS THINK WESTMINSTER HEALTH CARE (UK) LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of time they have with assessors
- the time available to use computers
- the amount of written work required
- the clarity of the NVQ questions
- the workload of the assessors

KEY CHALLENGES FOR WESTMINSTER HEALTH CARE (UK) LTD:

- improve the NVQ progress of learners
- fully implement all aspects of the modern apprenticeship programme
- improve the monitoring of programmes
- maintain the high retention rates
- maintain the high participation and success rates of under-represented groups
- improve the involvement of home managers in the assessment process
- make better use of data to improve performance
- improve the national systems that monitor internal verification on care programmes

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- clear strategic vision understood and shared by all staff
- very effective appraisal and staff development practices
- wide range of accurate information to inform decision-making
- high participation rates of under-represented groups in care
- very effective work to ensure continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficient involvement of care home managers in the planning of assessment
- delayed implementation of the modern apprenticeship frameworks
- poor understanding of their rights by learners
- ineffective evaluation of data to improve performance
- inadequate systems to monitor nationally internal verification on care programmes

26. The mission statement and strategic direction of WHC are understood well by and communicated effectively to all staff. It focuses on providing high levels of service in the care industry, central to which is well-funded learning and development. The chief executive and board of managers determine strategy based on clear business aims and government legislative targets. An annual business plan is developed that clearly identifies priorities and targets. The strategy and planning is passed on to all staff through an effective communication system comprising of national, regional and local meetings supported by the organisation's intranet. Staff views and responses are collected at these meetings.

27. Staff development and appraisal practices are highly effective. WHC actively encourages staff to carry out additional training through its appraisal and staff feedback programme. All staff have twice-yearly discussions with their line manager at which their personal career development is a key feature. Care home managers are responsible for ensuring that training opportunities are provided for all staff and appropriate time allowances and staff cover are budgeted for. Training includes a wide variety of additional skills to meet the customer service standards of the company as well as the mandatory training expected within the care homes. Additional certification is provided for this mandatory training and the targeted NVQ training, to ensure that each home reaches the government target of 50 per cent of staff to hold at least an NVQ at level 2 by April 2005. Most homes are already at or exceeding this target. The provider's self-assessment report states an intention to exceed this legislated figure in all of its residential homes, but has not quantified this target. Many learners who join WHC with no formal qualifications successfully achieve their NVQ at level 2, proceed to level 3 and

subsequently on to a nursing degree. Of these, several have returned to WHC in other capacities.

28. A wide range of accurate information is available to senior managers. There are comprehensive breakdowns of numbers of learners, locations, participation rates, ethnicity, gender, homes that are exceeding or experiencing shortfalls in NVQ at level 2 statutory targets, and programmes of study. This information is used effectively to inform strategic planning, particularly with regards to recruitment targets and levels of learning and development activity.

29. Support for literacy, numeracy and language is satisfactory. For adult workers, an initial diagnostic test is available although many chose not to take it. For those that do take the test and for whom support needs are identified, effective support is provided informally by the home-based assessors or more formally by a specialist support agency, or at a local further education college. Arrangements are in place for all modern apprentices to take a diagnostic test; however, for many learners this has not yet taken place. Although WHC has made alternative arrangements, the support required by many learners has been delayed.

30. WHC manages its resources efficiently. A budget is allocated to learning and development and care home managers and senior managers negotiate effectively budgets for resources and cover for staff time. Each care home has appropriate numbers of assessors and learning accommodation is satisfactory. There are learning resources allocated to each of the care homes, but access to these is sometimes not adequate.

31. There is insufficient involvement of the care home managers in the planning of the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress. These managers have a wide remit of responsibility that includes planning and budgeting for training. However, their main responsibility is operational in the provision of high service levels to the residents of the homes. Learners sometimes have to carry out operational tasks instead of training and assessment. Learners are generally not given this time back to complete work. Many of the care home managers are on NVQ management programmes and have a clear understanding of the requirements of NVQ assessment. However, some do not fully understand the broader requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework and the needs of these learners.

32. The implementation of the modern apprenticeship frameworks has been delayed. Programmes started in December 2002 and some learners have been on programme since that time. There were unsatisfactory arrangements for the provision of initial assessment and key skills and the provider was not able to provide the framework at that time. There have subsequently been staff changes and a new co-ordinator was recruited in June 2003. However, key skills have only very recently been introduced and not enough monitoring or recording of learners' progress has taken place. The provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is subcontracted to a specialist support agency that has not been able to provide all the support contracted. Many learners have not received an initial assessment or the support they require and many are now approaching the end of their programme.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

33. The human resource director has overall responsibility for the equality of opportunity policies and procedures. The main policy has been recently updated and includes all aspects of legislation relating to equality of opportunity. Although this change has been communicated to staff and learners, not all are aware of this.

34. Separate policies are issued relating to harassment and bullying and the NVQ appeals procedure. WHC has received few formal complaints and any complaints which are received are dealt with promptly. Informal complaints, however, are not accurately recorded or reported on.

35. WHC sets clear recruitment targets that are closely monitored, particularly with regard to participation of under-represented groups. Data is routinely used to monitor participation and achievement of a variety of underrepresented groups. WHC has encouraged effectively men to care NVQ programmes. Currently, 12 per cent of these learners are men and 34 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. However, participation by minority ethnic groups on the modern apprenticeship programmes is lower at 12 per cent. There are high rates of participation from learners with disabilities and additional learning and social needs, with 37 per cent on adult programmes and 26 per cent on modern apprenticeship programmes. The success rates of these groups are in line with the success rates of the overall programme.

36. Recruitment and learning materials are widely available in paper and electronic formats that include positive images of under-represented groups. All premises are fully accessible to wheelchair users. Access to assessment and learning resources is generally satisfactory. However, approximately a third of learners are experiencing difficulties in access to computers and assessor time.

37. Managers receive annual equality of opportunity training and then brief their staff and learners. Learners have a good understanding of the care home residents right to respect and dignity, and their responsibilities to ensure this occurs. However, learners do not fully understand their own rights. Learners receive a programme handbook at the start of their programme that includes equality of opportunity statements. However, many learners have not read it or understood the contents. Not enough reinforcement of equality of opportunity is carried out during the progress reviews. Learners' understanding of the complaints and grievance procedures is also poor.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

38. There are detailed strategic and operational plans to quality assure all aspects of training and assessment. Managers give a high priority to implementing quality assurance systems. There are detailed operational plans to ensure full implementation of all systems within specified timescales. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the company's quality assurance manager who reports to the NVQ manager. The development of policies, procedures and improvements is discussed and agreed initially with the NVQ management team and details are shared with regional staff. Self-assessment is an

integral part of the quality assurance process. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and reflects the views of everyone involved in the learning process, including assessors, learners, home managers and the NVQ training team. The self-assessment report action plan is updated each month and has evolved as the organisation has become more familiar with the process and further actions are identified. Thoughtful and prompt action is taken to make improvements as and when necessary. The NVQ assessment system has improved and learners progress well towards completing their qualification.

39. The quality assurance system covers all key aspects of the learners' experience. However, a small number of policies have not yet been fully developed, including some relating to the full modern apprenticeship framework. All documentation related to quality assurance are controlled well. Documentation is numbered and dated before being sent to appropriate staff on a CD-ROM and is soon to be made available on the intranet. The quality assurance arrangements are in various stages of implementation. Off-the-job training was identified as an improvement priority. All trainers now have detailed training plans, very good handouts, and good teaching and training aids. Teacher training has been identified as a need for all trainers and a programme of lesson observations is now planned. A regular learner review system has recently been introduced. Initial feedback from managers, learners and assessors has indicated that this is helping learners achieve their qualification.

40. Evaluation of data to improve performance is ineffective. Some data has been collected by internal audit on various aspects of the programme such as induction and initial assessment. The organisation identified that the format, quantity and quality of the data collected was inadequate for analysis to determine trends or set measurable improvement targets. The provider has introduced improved systems to collect data from learners' feedback on their training at the start, midway period and end of the programme, and detailed audits of all aspects of training and assessment in each care setting. Currently, insufficient data is available for managers to analyse.

41. There has been no systematic monitoring of the performance of internal verifiers across all regions of the provider's operations. Meetings for assessors and regional co-ordinators are regularly held. No record has been maintained of assessors who do not regularly attend standardisation meetings. Assessors, trainers and managers who work in the individual care settings rely on the regional co-ordinators to obtain information. Minutes from meetings are particularly poor. Although the minutes often identify actions required to effect improvements to training and assessment, they do not identify who will be responsible, the timescale, how success will be measured or when progress be monitored. There has been no systematic standardisation of assessment practice across regions. There are wide variations in practice between and within regions.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

| Business administration, management & professional | | 3 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Business administration</i> - Other government-funded provision | 27 | 3 |
| <i>Management</i> - Other government-funded provision | 20 | 3 |
| <i>Teacher/trainer awards</i> - Other government-funded provision | 21 | 3 |

Business administration

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good personal and professional development
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

Management

Strengths

- good personal and professional development
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

Teacher/trainer awards*Strengths*

- good personal and professional development
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- inadequate use of individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

42. Retention rates are high. Overall, 70 per cent of those learners who started their courses in 2002-03 are still in learning. Five of the six administration learners for 2002-03, remain. Of the 23 learners who started their administration NVQs in 2003-04, 22 are still in learning. Retention rates are lower for learners who started management and trainer award NVQs in 2002-03, with five out of the eight who started still in learning and six of the nine trainer learners still in learning. All but one of the 53 learners who started on administration, management or training NVQs in 2003-04 are still in learning.

43. Most learners make slow progress, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Twelve per cent of all learners have exceeded their target dates for completion. However, most learners have not yet reached the target date for completion of their training. Three of the five administration learners who started in 2002-03 have passed their target dates for completion. Of the eight learners who started management NVQ level 3 courses in 2002-03, three have left without achieving and five are still in learning and have passed their completion dates. Six learners started administration NVQ at level 2 and 3 courses in 2003-04. One left without achieving and three of the five remaining have passed their completion dates. Three of the nine learners who started training awards at level 3 in 2002-03 left without completing their qualifications. The six remaining have not yet reached their target dates for completion, but are not making sufficient progress to meet these dates. Many learners who started in 2002-03 and 2003-04 have made slow progress. Some have had three or more different assessors. Learners have not been visited regularly by assessors. In some cases, there was poor communication between learners and assessors. Learners with no prior experience of NVQs do not adequately understand what is required of them. Managers were not aware of this situation for some time. Effective action has now been taken to appoint competent assessors and learners are now completing units. Some learners who were delayed for several months in starting their NVQs are making better progress. Assessors are planning the assessment process to enable these learners to complete their NVQs as close as possible to their previous target dates. However, many learners will exceed their previous targets.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

| LSC funded work-based learning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|---------|----|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| NVQ Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2003-04 | | 2002-03 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 53 | | 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 0 | | 8 | 35 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 52 | | 16 | 70 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*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

44. Learners gain good personal and professional development. Many learners move quickly from level 1 or 2 NVQs to NVQs at level 3. For some, these are the first formal qualifications they have gained. Others have already achieved other formal qualifications including degrees. Many intend to start further courses after they complete their current awards. Some learners achieve qualifications that exceed their previous aspirations. The provider fully encourages learning and development. For example, learners' can attend courses which are not included in the provider's portfolio. Managers have budgets to pay for training and to cover the cost of giving learners time to learn during working hours. The provider works well to ensure that inhibiting factors such as educational attainment and location are overcome. Learners who started as unqualified carers are completing the management NVQ at level 3. Learners and their managers fully understand how the development of NVQ competences enhances each person's job role as an administrator, trainer, supervisor or junior manager.

45. Support for learners is good. A new team of assessors has been appointed to replace those who did not provide adequate support. These assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Learners are well informed about what is required of them in order to achieve their NVQ. Assessment is designed to suit individual learning styles and to allow for workplace demands. For example, very experienced managers can elect to be assessed by their assessor spending a whole day at a time conducting an intensive assessment in the workplace. Assessors visit learners regularly at intervals often more frequent than the six-weekly minimum. Learners are happy with their new assessors and receive good support and guidance from them when they visit. Learners contact them by telephone whenever necessary. The provider has identified the need to provide a helpline for all NVQ learners and has provided this. Problems are resolved promptly by assessors or by regional or central training staff. Management and training learners are required to attend workshops to develop their knowledge and understanding as well as an induction day to explain the NVQ process. Training award learners develop their practical skills through workshops. Administration learners receive individual coaching in

the workplace. They can also choose to attend workshops not specifically related to their NVQs. Managers are involved in the training of their learners and take part in the learning and progress review processes.

46. Learning resources are satisfactory. Assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced. They visit learners regularly in their workplaces and keep their appointments. Learners have access to appropriate learning materials. Administration learners are each given the standard textbook for their NVQ. They are able to find all necessary evidence in their workplaces as they hold key administrative appointments in homes. All learners are able to use the training computer available in each of the company's homes. CD-ROMs with content relevant to their courses are provided. Other learning materials are accessible on the intranet and there is access to the internet.

47. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. The company has taken effective action to improve previously unsatisfactory aspects. New systems are now operating to monitor and record assessors visits and the completion of NVQ units by learners. Assessors meet regularly with learners. They carry out effective short-term action-planning and ensure that evidence is diverse and includes observations. Learners take increasing responsibility for their own learning and are encouraged to complete evidence tables themselves. Internal verification is well planned and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. The degree of internal verification carried out varies according to a risk assessment, based on the experience and competence of each assessor. Assessors are given critical feedback and action points from external verification are implemented. They attend regular standardisation meetings.

48. Individual learning plans are not used adequately, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Actions were planned to introduce and operate a new system of individual learning plans linked to regular progress reviews. These plans are not yet effective. There is now a comprehensive learning plan common to all learners throughout the company. These new plans are used inconsistently. Some learners do not yet have individual learning plans and are not aware that they should have them. Others have plans that contain only basic information and have not been used to record and plan the learning process. In some cases the new plan is being used to plan and update learning. Many learners have not had their first 12-week reviews. Although assessors are working with learners to plan their learning and to overcome any slow progress, not enough use is made of the individual learning plan.

Leadership and management

49. WHC provides clear direction to managers and learners about the importance and relevance of NVQs and other training to the company. The new approach to managing the programme is satisfactory. However, some new procedures are applied inconsistently, including individual learning plans. The self-assessment report was detailed and largely accurate and inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report. Minority ethnic learners are under-represented in this area of learning at less than 6 per cent. Assessors carry out an initial assessment of learners, although all are experienced in their jobs. Learners can also choose to complete the company's

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diagnostic assessment. Although the company provides support for learners with literacy, numeracy and English language needs, this has not yet proved necessary for these learners.

Health, social care & public services

| Health, social care & public services | | 3 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| Care | | |
| - Other government-funded provision | 518 | 3 |
| - Work-based learning for young people | 94 | 4 |

Care

Strengths

- high retention rates
- good occupational training
- good personal and professional development

Weaknesses

- slow progress
- no key skills training and assessment and technical certificates provision at start of programme
- ineffective monitoring of programmes

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates are high on all courses with 99 per cent of NVQ learners who started the programme in 2001-02 and 79 per cent of learners from 2002-03 retained. Forty-eight per cent of foundation modern apprentices were retained in 2002-03 with 52 per cent still in learning. Only one advanced modern apprentice has reached the end of the programme, but of the 29 that started the programme 19 are still in learning.

51. Learners make slow progress towards achievement. Approximately 60 per cent of learners have gone beyond their expected training end date without achieving their learning goals. NVQ learners in this group have only achieved a small number of units, typically two units within an 11 month period. Turnover of assessors in the workplace has lead to new allocation of assessor to learners. Some learners have been without assessors for several months. One learner had changed assessors five times in 12 months. In some homes, assessors have insufficient time allocation to fulfil their assessor duties. Recent changes in assessment allocation and processes have improved the progression rate for learners. Some learners make satisfactory or good progress.

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 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 10 | | 19 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 0 | | 1 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 0 | | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 9 | | 10 | 53 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*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 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 45 | | 63 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 2 | | 30 | 48 | 1 | 50 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 0 | | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 41 | | 33 | 52 | 1 | 50 | | | | | | | | | | |

*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 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 313 | | 294 | | 258 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 6 | | 231 | 79 | 256 | 99 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 14 | | 80 | 27 | 142 | 55 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 284 | | 150 | 51 | 84 | 33 | | | | | | | | | | |

*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

52. Good occupational training is available for all learners. The provider has an effective training ethos that encompasses all staff. The effective and comprehensive induction provides the background knowledge for employment rights and responsibilities and NVQ care theory. A wide range of training activities and formats are used to meet individual learners' needs including e-learning, CD-ROM, intranet access with internet links, external short courses and specialist lectures. In-house training sessions cover mandatory requirements, as well as a wide range of additional courses such as dealing with

adolescents, suicide management, eating disorders and infection control. Learning is flexible and meets individual learners' circumstances. The working environment provides a good range of experiences to support the development of good vocational skills. Staff in the homes provide good individual on-the-job training for learners. NVQ co-ordinators and assessors contribute to training throughout the programme. Many learners are able to work with relevant specialist agencies.

53. Personal and professional development is good for learners and many progress from NVQ level 1 to level 2 and 3. Learners are promoted to senior carer, assessor and also to the training and development team in a variety of roles. The appraisal system identifies learners' aspirations and learners are helped to meet them. For example, one learner who started as a carer doing NVQ Level 2 has completed nurse training, returned, and is now training as an assessor. Managers help learners to identify the appropriate NVQ and choose appropriate optional units tailored to individual needs, aspirations and operational requirements. Learners working as activities co-ordinators are working towards a level 3 NVQ in promoting independence.

54. Learners have access to a satisfactory range of resources including textbooks and journals. Learners are encouraged to consult sources of information such as the internet and public library. In-house CD-ROM and access to the intranet also support learning. Some workplaces have training rooms. All workplaces are fully accessible to people with mobility difficulties. Staff are professionally qualified and experienced in nursing, education and care.

55. All learners, as part of their initial assessment, are interviewed by the home's manager. Foundation and advanced modern apprentices also complete an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Thirteen learners have been identified as having additional learning needs. NVQ co-ordinators and home trainers provide informal support for these learners. Although formal support is in the planning stage, this is not yet available. Adult learners are invited to take part in initial assessment of literacy and numeracy; many have done so and 21 have had learning needs identified. These learners and those with language needs are referred to local provision for additional support. Workbooks are available to support literacy and numeracy; however some learners have difficulty in accessing these. A pilot project is underway with a specialist support provider to provide initial assessment and support for modern apprentices.

56. Assessment is satisfactory. Learners are assessed within their workplaces by managers or senior care staff who have appropriate occupational qualifications. Assessment takes place within learners' usual work patterns, including night shifts. Modern apprentices are given four hours a week for study. Judgements made by assessors are accurate and most portfolios contain evidence of an appropriate standard. Most portfolios are well structured and evidence is easy to trace. Learners' work demonstrates sound reflective skills. There are some inconsistencies in recording by assessors. Assessment planning and feedback is satisfactory in most portfolios, but some are poorly detailed. Some learners produce large amounts of written work including accounts of activities observed by assessors, testimonies and answers to pre-set knowledge questions. This approach does not take into account the differing needs of

learners. New documentation has been introduced to tackle this issue, but not all assessors have received the required training for its use. Some portfolios contain inappropriate resource material such as handouts and leaflets.

57. Key skills training and assessment, and technical skills were not introduced at the start of the programme. Implementation plans are now in place for this to happen. Key skills are currently being introduced with 30 of the current learners having undergone diagnostic assessment. There has been some staff training and a small number of learners have accessed workbooks and taken key skills tests. One key skills workshop has been provided. NVQ workshops have been reviewed to incorporate the technical certificates. Staff have not been told how to implement these certificates. Recently recruited learners do not understand the technical certificate requirements. Only two foundation modern apprentices have completed full frameworks and 16 their NVQ.

Leadership and management

58. Most home managers are fully committed to training and development and are involved effectively in the selection process. Systems are now in place to ensure that managers are aware of their roles and responsibilities within the NVQ and modern apprenticeship training programmes.

59. Monitoring of all programmes is ineffective. Progress reviews are inadequate with poor target-setting and action plans. For example, reviews were part of a generic visit form without individual targets set. The reviews do not link to the individual learning plan or support progress, with most learning plans not containing target dates for unit and qualification achievement. Recent changes to the review process are tackling these issues, but are not yet impacting on learners. Monitoring processes are inadequate, with no monitoring of key skills. NVQ progress is monitored by co-ordinators in a monthly report submitted to head office. Management reports are not systematically produced to identify learners making slow progress.

60. Internal verification does not always identify inadequacies and inconsistencies in the assessment process, although there are several homes where internal verification is particularly rigorous and effective. Most internal verification practice does not currently include observation of assessor practice or encourage sharing of good practice. Assessor and NVQ coordinator workloads are not measured to check assessor availability for learners. Attendance at assessor standardisation meetings is not monitored and does not support effectively assessment practice. Trainee assessor practice is not always supervised, monitored, nor their work always assessed. Home managers are allocated an NVQ training budget to support assessment. This is not always used effectively to support learners' progress. Although learners are allocated paid time to take training and assessment, some learners do not access this and some have only recently become aware of the allocation. Learners have an appropriate understanding of equality and diversity in relation to the client group they care for. However, many learners do not fully understand their own rights.