

INSPECTION REPORT

Hair & Beauty Industry Training Limited

04 November 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

Hair & Beauty Industry Training Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hair & Beauty Industry Training Limited (HABIT), is a private training organisation offering apprenticeships in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The company has offered work-based learning programmes since 1998. Until July 2002, the company traded as Sinclair's Hair and Beauty Academy. At this time, the partners reviewed the organisation. Sinclair's Hair and Beauty Academy became a limited company and commenced trading in August 2003 as HABIT. Following this review a new management structure was put in place. HABIT operates from the company's head office in Sunderland and has two training centres. HABIT has a commercial hair and beauty salon in Sunderland that is also used as the practical training centre for learners. The other training centre is in the centre of Newcastle. There are seven learners based in two salons in Scotland.
2. The senior management team consists of the two directors, a general manager, a commercial manager and a financial information systems manager. The general manager is responsible for the operational management of the company and has shared responsibility along with one of the directors for all the policies and procedures, including those for equality of opportunity and quality assurance. One of the directors has occupational competence and acts as an assessor and internal verifier for the hairdressing programmes. The other director is the company secretary. The commercial manager is relatively new to the post and has responsibility for the assessment team.
3. HABIT is funded by the Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. HABIT provides apprenticeship training for 147 learners on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. Currently there are 131 learners on apprenticeship training programmes and 16 on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes. Thirty-seven learners are on beauty therapy programmes and 110 are on hairdressing programmes. All learners are employed. There are six vocationally qualified staff employed by HABIT that assess the hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. There are 34 qualified work-based assessors: 17 in hairdressing and 17 in beauty therapy. HABIT currently has learners employed in 41 hairdressing and 32 beauty salons. Key skills training takes place in the training centres and at the salons when HABIT's assessors visit. Some learners attend the training centres every two weeks, and some do all the training and assessment in their own salon. HABIT offers apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship training programmes.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learner interviews	41
Number of staff interviews	9
Number of employer interviews	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	34

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, training in hairdressing and beauty therapy is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management, including quality assurance, are also unsatisfactory. The company's arrangements for equality of opportunity are 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

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i>		
- Work-based learning for young people	110	4
<i>Beauty therapy</i>		
- Work-based learning for young people	37	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Achievement rates on hairdressing advanced apprenticeship programmes are poor.

The achievement rate for learners starting training in 2001-02 has declined to 13 per cent. In beauty therapy, achievement is satisfactory for the apprenticeship programmes, and there is good achievement of NVQs. Retention rates are satisfactory.

7. Most learners make satisfactory progress with the NVQ, with some learners making rapid progress, particularly where there is a work-based assessor available in the salon every day. **Progress with key skills for learners that started in 2003 is slow.**

8. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Portfolios contain a good variety of evidence. Learners receive feedback on their written work, but insufficient guidance is given to help learners improve the standard of their assignments. **Development of skills is good with salons offering regular training. There are too few assessment opportunities for learners on beauty therapy training programmes.** These learners are making slow progress towards achieving their qualification.

Quality of education and training

9. Eighty-three per cent of learning sessions observed during the inspection were judged to be satisfactory or better.

10. **Learners are employed in good salons.** A good range of services, products and retail ranges are offered and learners have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in good industry environments.

11. HABIT accommodates individual employers' and learners' needs. Programme design allows some employers to fit the NVQ training into their own house style. Some learners are able to do all the training and assessment in the workplace, negating the need for excessive travel to the training centre.

12. **An effective strategy to recruit school leavers into the beauty industry has been very successful.** Learners gain units in manicure, pedicure and facial treatments, giving them an accelerated start to full-time employment in the salons.

13. Training in hairdressing and beauty therapy is satisfactory. In the better background knowledge sessions there is good reference to industry practice. Practical training in most cases allows learners to develop their skills appropriately. Most salons offer effective regular practical training.

14. **Learners are able to do additional development activities in the workplace.** There are adequate opportunities for learners to progress in the salons in which they work.

15. **The arrangements for key skills training and assessment are poor.** Learners that started in 2003 have a poor awareness of the key skills aspect of the apprenticeship framework. Learners are insufficiently prepared for external tests. There is insufficient knowledge of key skills across the staff team to adequately support the learners on their programme.

16. **There are insufficient resources in beauty therapy.** Many learners have no access to specialist equipment in the workplace. Arrangements for HABIT's staff to take equipment out to learners, are not providing sufficient opportunity for learners to practise and develop their skills and confidence or prepare for assessment.

17. **Assessment practice is weak.** There are too few qualified assessors in beauty therapy. Learners do not have sufficient opportunities for assessment. There is no qualified assessor to support the new assessors. HABIT's staff have not visited hairdressing learners frequently enough in the workplace. Many learners do not have the opportunity to be assessed in the workplace. **Assessment planning is weak.** Learners have a poor understanding of the standards and criteria that they will be judged against.

18. **There is poor use of initial assessment.** Learners are unaware of the results of the screening tests and the results are not recorded on many of the individual learning plans. There is no record of any support given.

19. **Monitoring of progress is poor.** Learners have insufficient awareness of the progress that they have made or the work they need to complete. Progress reviews carried out in the workplace are, for many learners, infrequent and employers are not sufficiently involved in the meeting.

Leadership and management

20. **There is a good range of work-based programmes.** HABIT has formed good relationships with the local beauty industry. This has given learners the opportunity to gain employment in good salons where learners make good progress and develop their commercial attitudes and technical skills.

21. **HABIT has instigated good networks with local employers, training providers and schools.** Good collaborative working arrangements are promoting the sharing of good practice and the exchange of ideas.

22. Organisational target-setting is satisfactory. However, staffing problems have affected the achievement of these goals.

23. Communication is satisfactory. HABIT's senior management team communicates with employers' staff on the visits to the training centres. Contact with employers is variable. When salon visits are regular, communication is effective. However, too many learners and employers are not well informed.

24. There are insufficient qualified and experienced staff to meet the needs of learners' programmes. There are no qualified assessors or verifiers in beauty therapy. In hairdressing, there are too few qualified assessors and many learners miss the opportunity for assessment.

25. The strategy to support learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is incomplete. Although HABIT recognises that it does not possess the specialist resources, the plans to outsource the provision are not finalised.

26. The collection and use of management information is inefficient. Information is not always correct, produced in a timely manner or used effectively as a basis for management decisions.

27. HABIT has used appealing advertising and promotional activities to attract male learners into the hair and beauty environment.

28. Equal opportunities policies and procedures are satisfactory. Employers' policies and procedures are monitored during salon visits by HABIT's staff to ensure learners are not at risk. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity; however, there is little promotion of equality and diversity issues to the employer or to learners during progress reviews.

29. HABIT's staff, learners and employers were not sufficiently consulted during the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is insufficiently critical. While recognising many of the weaknesses, some of the strengths in it were no more than normal practice. The report did not reflect HABIT's situation at the time of the inspection.

30. Internal verification is poor. There is no qualified internal verifier in beauty therapy. Without one, certificates cannot be claimed. In hairdressing there has been insufficient sampling of assessment decisions or support for assessors. Internal verification has failed to highlight most of the poor assessment practices.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good range of work-based learning programmes
- good networking initiatives
- good action to recruit male learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient experienced and qualified staff
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- inefficient collection and use of management information
- incomplete strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support
- poor access for people with restricted mobility

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good employers
- flexible training arrangements

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of advanced apprenticeship frameworks
- poor implementation of key skills training and assessment
- weak assessment practices
- poor initial assessment
- inadequate monitoring of learners' progress

Beauty therapy

Strengths

- good employers
- very effective strategies to recruit school leavers

Weaknesses

- poor implementation of key skills training and assessment
- inadequate resources to meet the needs of learners' programmes
- inadequate assessment
- no qualified internal verifier
- inadequate monitoring of learners' progress

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HAIR & BEAUTY INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED:

- the background knowledge training - 'I enjoy the theory sessions in the training centre'
- having the opportunity to work with clients - 'the practical sessions are good'
- the ratio of teacher to learner - 'working in small groups is good'
- the support they receive - 'I have been given extra time, and they have lent me books'
- the duration of off-the-job training sessions - 'the days are not too long'
- the good atmosphere at the training centre
- 'we are treated like adults'
- the convenient location - 'travelling to work is easy'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HAIR & BEAUTY INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the rate of progress - 'my NVQ at level 3 has really dragged - they should set us tighter deadlines'
- the supply of models at the training centre
- the organisation of the course
- the high rate of staff turnover
- access to assessment - 'I feel that I am falling behind - we need more salon visits'
- the training - 'we need to be taught more'
- communications
- the amount of repetition - 'I have to go over things that I have already done'

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HAIR & BEAUTY INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED:

- recruit sufficient, high-quality staff
- develop and implement thorough and effective quality assurance policies and procedures for all key training activities
- improve assessment and internal verification
- improve the awareness of and provision for key skills training and assessment
- improve target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress
- engage employers effectively in learners' training programmes
- significantly raise the achievement rates for the apprenticeship frameworks and NVQs
- more strategic and efficient use of data
- extend specialist resources for beauty therapy

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good range of work-based learning programmes
- good networking initiatives
- good action to recruit male learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient experienced and qualified staff
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- inefficient collection and use of management information
- incomplete strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support
- poor access for people with restricted mobility

31. There is a good range of work-based learning programmes. HABIT has pioneered work-based learning in beauty therapy and built a well-established base of salons with whom they enjoy good working relationships. HABIT works well with the beauty industry to equip salons with a future workforce. Beauty therapy learners have a good and often rare opportunity to enter the beauty career through working in a commercial salon and building their employability skills. Learners quickly develop their skills and are able to work on clients, earning a good wage or receiving a training allowance. The usual route to careers in hairdressing and beauty therapy is through full-time courses at colleges. Learners do not usually have the opportunity to gain experience in a commercial environment. Hairdressing learners can start on apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship programmes. Some learners who start on the apprenticeship programme transfer to the advanced apprenticeship programme at a later date. In addition, HABIT offers work experience to those still at school interested in a career in the industry. This gives these learners credit for units in hairdressing or beauty therapy courses. This enables these learners to make a smooth transition from school onto apprenticeship programmes.

32. HABIT has instigated a number of good networking initiatives. The company has successfully started a local hairdressing training providers' forum. This gives members the opportunity to exchange ideas and good practice. The providers' forum is also used as a means of contacting the awarding body and national associations. HABIT maintains good working relationships with local salons by encouraging employers to become work-based assessors and tailoring the training provision to the needs of learners and employers. HABIT has established contacts with local schools where it promotes work-based learning as a route to vocational qualification. Effective links have been made with local colleges of further education. HABIT works collaboratively with a network of employers in the industry.

33. The company carries out satisfactory strategic planning. The three-year development plan is regularly reviewed and updated. The plan sets out the company's vision and key objectives.

34. HABIT's targets for retention and achievement rates and the number of learners recruited are satisfactory. HABIT expects learners to complete one unit each month. Staff targets are developed to support learners' progress. The company has a system to prioritise the support needed. Learners were not well aware of their targets.

35. Communication with staff is satisfactory. Senior management team meetings are held frequently and decisions are passed to other members of staff either directly or through line managers. There is also frequent communication with staff during senior management visits to the training centres and learners' workplaces. However, communication with some learners is ineffective, as they are not well informed about their programmes. HABIT has some good communications with employers, through regular visits and telephone calls. However, some employers have had too few visits and communications are poor.

36. There are insufficient experienced and qualified staff to deliver the training programmes effectively. Since the company was reviewed in 2003, a number of established staff have left the organisation. Although some have been replaced, other key positions remain vacant and a number of new staff are still in their induction period. HABIT has too few assessors and internal verifiers, particularly in beauty therapy. HABIT's senior management are aware of this problem and are currently recruiting for suitably qualified and experienced staff. Too few of the current staff have knowledge of key skills training and assessment. Many learners have been making slow progress, particularly those learners who do not have access to an assessor in the salon in which they are employed.

37. The strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is incomplete. HABIT's management team realises that the company does not have the resources to provide this support directly and has employed a consultant to investigate the best way to outsource this provision. At the time of the inspection the company was still waiting for the consultant's report.

38. The collection and use of management information is inefficient. The company's head office, training centres in Sunderland and Newcastle and the learners' workplaces are geographically dispersed. The distribution of hard copy information either in person or by post is slow. The company uses standard computer spreadsheet software to store data from which it generates the reports needed for contract compliance. HABIT has not however devised reports to generate other management information on demand. Such information is not produced at appropriate times and is not used effectively as a basis for management decisions.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

39. HABIT takes good actions to recruit male learners. The hairdressing and beauty therapy area of learning traditionally attracts female learners. Seven per cent of HABIT's learners are men, compared with an industry standard of 10 per cent. HABIT uses advertising strategies that attract and appeal to men. The company sponsors entries to motor rally events and effectively uses the advertising space on the vehicle and the press coverage and publicity to raise the profile of male learners. HABIT also uses successful male stylists and salon owners as positive role models for male learners. Through contacts in local schools, the provider also targets the recruitment of more young men.

40. The company's commitment to equality of opportunity is satisfactorily expressed in its equal opportunities policy. The policy covers recruitment of staff and learners, induction, communication and widening participation in learning. The policy was last updated in April 2003, but does not make any specific reference to any current legislation. A satisfactory disability discrimination policy was produced in March 2003. Disability and equal opportunities statements which use appropriate and simple language are displayed in salons and training rooms. There is a clear anti-harassment policy and a grievance procedure, with which learners are familiar. The policy does not however include a named contact or a telephone number for the company. Learners' complaints are dealt with effectively. All complaints are investigated, appropriate actions taken and the results are recorded at the main office in the form of a case history for each complaint.

41. Equality of opportunity is adequately covered during learners' induction and there is some reinforcement of it during the vocational training programme. HABIT monitors new employers' equal opportunities policies when a learner is employed. These are reviewed every year. At the same time as the company carries out a health and safety review of employers' premises. HABIT's staff satisfactorily monitor employers' equal opportunities practices when visiting learners. However, there is too little promotion of wider equal opportunities issues during progress reviews. HABIT's staff receive regular equal opportunities training and show a satisfactory awareness of equality and diversity issues.

42. HABIT is sympathetic to learners with dyslexia and gives additional support with written work when required. Support has also been given to a salon owner who has dyslexia, to help them achieve the assessor qualification to carry out work-based assessments. Work experience is being provided for a New Deal client with learning difficulties from another training provider who is interested in a career in hairdressing.

43. The use of equal opportunities data is limited to contract compliance reports. HABIT does not use this data to monitor the progress and achievement of learners by groups to identify trends or remedy problems.

44. Access to both of the company's training premises is difficult for people with restricted mobility.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

45. HABIT has a quality assurance manual, which satisfactorily outlines the company's commitment to the quality assurance of all its procedures. The manual gives details of how the procedures are to be carried out and examples of the paperwork to be used. There are however inadequate arrangements to assure the quality of the processes, which lack sufficient systematic audits and feedback loops.

46. The management team carries out observations of training sessions and assessment without notice. A seven-point grading scale is used and feedback is given to the trainer or assessor involved. The information is used as part of the appraisal system and to improve performance. However the observation system is not yet fully established or systematic. There has been no training for the observers. It is too early to judge the impact of the observations on the overall quality of the provision. There are currently insufficient qualified internal verifiers to adequately verify assessment and give developmental advice to assessors.

47. HABIT has introduced an innovative approach to the standardisation of assessment by inviting work-based assessors to the company's premises to exchange examples of best practice. Attendance at these events has been poor.

48. There is insufficient collection and use of feedback from learners. Learner satisfaction questionnaires are used four times a year. This gives an indication of broad levels of learners' satisfaction. Areas in which significant numbers of learners have expressed dissatisfaction are investigated. However, return rates are poor. A form of the questionnaire is now used at the periodic review. Learners finishing their training programme and those leaving training without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan are asked to complete satisfaction questionnaires. A written test is used at the end of the induction to judge its effectiveness. Learners make entries on an evaluation sheet after each off-the-job training session to record their activities and what they have learnt. Learners are not however asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the different elements of the training itself. Insufficient guidance is given to learners on how to complete this activity sheet and much of the information received is of little value to the company.

49. Employers provide HABIT with informal feedback during visits to their premises and during other meetings and telephone calls. Staff were not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process.

50. The self-assessment report is insufficiently critical. While recognising many of the strengths and weaknesses found at inspection, it also noted a number of strengths, which were either no more than normal practice or not identified by inspectors. Inspectors also identified additional weaknesses. The development plan written in response to the findings of the self-assessment report is reviewed every month. However, the company has not made much progress against the development plan. Since the self-assessment plan was produced HABIT has lost a number of key staff. Some of them have not yet been replaced and those replacement staff who have been recruited are still in their induction period. The report did not therefore represent the situation at the time of the

inspection.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Work-based learning for young people	110	4
<i>Beauty therapy</i> - Work-based learning for young people	37	4

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good employers
- flexible training arrangements

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of advanced apprenticeship frameworks
- poor implementation of key skills training and assessment
- weak assessment practices
- poor initial assessment
- inadequate monitoring of learners' progress

Beauty therapy

Strengths

- good employers
- very effective strategies to recruit school leavers

Weaknesses

- poor implementation of key skills training and assessment
- inadequate resources to meet the needs of learners' programmes
- inadequate assessment
- no qualified internal verifier
- inadequate monitoring of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement rates on the hairdressing advanced apprenticeship programme are poor. They fell from 58 per cent in 1999-2000 to 42 per cent in 2000-01. Achievement rates on beauty therapy advanced apprenticeships is satisfactory. Retention rates on

both hairdressing and beauty therapy are satisfactory. Most current learners are making satisfactory progress and some hairdressing learners are making rapid progress through the units of the NVQ. Progress with key skills for learners that started in 2003-04 is slow. Learners' work is generally satisfactory and some is good. For example, in one hairdressing session, learners showed their competence by using good techniques when working with hairpieces to complete high-fashion styles. Other learners demonstrated good professional skills when applying foil highlights and most displayed satisfactory skills in working in real working environments. Hairdressing learners adopt professional working practice and have an appropriate awareness of health and safety. Beauty therapy learners develop the skills and attitudes in the salon appropriately, with some learners working with clients early in the programme. Portfolios are satisfactory, containing a variety of evidence to support learners' work. Portfolios are appropriately indexed and cross-referenced. Learners receive satisfactory written feedback on their practical work but trainers and assessors give insufficient guidance on ways of improving their written assignments.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships																
	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	13		33		35		76		91		36		12			
Retained*	0		0		16		34		64	70	20	56	9	75		
Successfully completed	0		0		7		15		43	47	18	50	8	67		
Still in learning	13		29		12		16		2	2	0	0	0	0		

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		61		12		2		2							
Retained*	0		1		4		0	0	2	100						
Successfully completed	0		1		0		0	0	2	100						
Still in learning	13		42		4		0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	14		21		22											
Retained*	3		17		16	73										
Successfully completed	2		11		16	73										
Still in learning	11		5		0	0										

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Quality of education and training

52. HABIT works with good hairdressing and beauty salons where learners have permanent employment. Salons are busy and many are in high-street locations. Learners work with a diverse range of clients. Salons work with the latest equipment and facilities. Salons use a good range of quality products and retail ranges. All employers have stylists and therapists who act as good role models. Most salons offer good training for learners where they can work on clients to develop their skills. In beauty therapy, learners spend time shadowing experienced therapists.

53. HABIT's programmes are often designed to suit employers' and learners' needs. For example, one employer wanted his learners trained in his own house style. HABIT adapted the training for the NVQ and the apprenticeship framework to match this employer's needs and those of his learners. The learners in work placements with this employer were able to practise more advanced practical skills. HABIT has accommodated requests by employers and learners to do all the training and assessment in the workplace.

54. There is a very effective strategy to recruit school leavers into beauty therapy. HABIT provides training for Year 11 pupils to obtain skills and accreditation in manicure, pedicure and facial treatments. This enables the learners to progress into employment and on to the advanced modern apprenticeship when they leave school.

55. Hairdressing and beauty therapy training is satisfactory. Training activities are clearly linked to a real working environment in the salon. The training satisfies industry standards and learners are given challenging practical tasks. Most practical training takes place on the job. Some employers have assessors in the salon and are allocated training times throughout the week.

56. Additional development opportunities are carried out by learners in the salons. For example, learners at one hairdressing salon worked with a national hairdressing company at an international trade exhibition. There are adequate opportunities for hairdressing and beauty therapy learners to progress in the workplace and with their career.

57. Learners are not aware of the key skills requirements of the apprenticeship framework. HABIT's staff have insufficient knowledge in this area to support learners. Learners do not know if they are working towards the key skills qualification as part of their programme and do not see the relevance of key skills. Learners are not clear on the levels of key skills required for their framework. There is insufficient key skills training to prepare learners for external tests. For example, some learners have been sent a letter informing them of the need to attend for a test but they are unsure what this is for. External verification reports identify similar weaknesses to those identified by inspectors.

58. There are insufficient beauty therapy resources to meet the national standards. Not all learners have access to specialist equipment in the workplace. After observing a specialist electrical treatment demonstration, learners were unable to practise the treatment because there is insufficient equipment available. In one of HABIT's training centres, there are only two beauty couches, which are situated in separate rooms on different levels of the building, which effects access to practise sessions. Learners have too few opportunities to experience the treatments on themselves, which effects their ability to advise and recommend treatments to the clients.

59. Assessment practices are weak in hairdressing and very weak in beauty therapy. There are no qualified assessors in beauty therapy. Monitoring of learners' progress is poor and learners are unclear about what they have achieved and what assessments they have left to complete. Some assignments have been marked as correct but are incomplete. Written tests are marked incorrectly and there is insufficient attention to detail.

60. Target-setting is poor. Learners and employers are not sufficiently involved in target-setting. Targets in individual learning plans are not shared with the learner. The individual learning plan is not used effectively and it is often incomplete. Assessments are not always planned and learners' assessment needs are not prioritised. Learners and employers do not have access to assessment log books. Employers are not able to support or drive learners' progress. Assessors are not sufficiently monitored for the quality of their assessments.

61. Initial assessment in hairdressing and beauty therapy is poor. Learners are initially assessed but the information produced is not used to support learners' needs. The outcome of the tests are not always recorded in the individual learning plan. Learners are not given the results of their assessment and do not understand the use of the assessment. There is no formal support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. Trainers help learners with written work, however incorrect spellings and grammar is not corrected. There is no formal support in place to help learners to improve their literacy or numeracy skills.

62. Monitoring and recording of learners' progress is inadequate in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Learners and employers do not use a structured learning plan and the quality of training in the workplace is not monitored. There are too few links between on- and off-the-job training. Progress reviews are poor and are infrequent for many

learners. Most learners' progress reviews take place at the training centre and employers are not sufficiently involved. Paperwork is confusing and repetitive and learners do not understand the purpose of many of the documents. HABIT has recognised this problem and is currently reviewing all the documents.

Leadership and management

63. The restructuring of the company and the subsequent loss of key members of staff has had a significant impact on the quality of the hairdressing and beauty therapy provision. New staff are still in their induction period. Internal verification and assessment procedures are poor. Quality assurance is inadequate, with no qualified internal verifiers in beauty therapy. There is insufficient support for the assessors who are presently working towards their qualifications. There is insufficient attention to basic health and hygiene in beauty therapy, which does not promote good industry standards. Where there are regular salon visits, communication with employers is effective. However, many salons have too few visits and are not well informed.