

INSPECTION REPORT

A & R Training Services Limited

22 July 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** 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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

INSPECTION REPORT

A & R Training Services Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. A & R Training Services Limited (A & R) is a private limited company which was established in 1992 in Huddersfield. It contracts with West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeships for young people and work-based learning for adults on employer training pilots (ETPs) and European Social Fund (ESF) training programmes. A & R also contracts with Jobcentre Plus to provide training for unemployed adults on work-based learning for adults programmes. The company is managed by two directors and there are 52 staff.

2. A&R offers training for apprentices and advanced apprentices in construction, business administration, information and communications technology (ICT), retailing and customer service, hairdressing, and health and social care and public services including early years care and education. Currently, there are 544 learners.

3. Within the region there has been a decline in the traditional manufacturing sector with an increase in personal service occupations. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 14.4 per cent in Kirklees, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

4. From 2002-03, A & R became a key contractor for LSC and Jobcentre Plus contracts and has developed subcontracting arrangements in business administration and hairdressing for Kirklees Metropolitan Council NVQ Training Unit, Mark Betts Hair Education (Mark Betts), S&S Training Services Ltd and Direct Training.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** A & R's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. In business administration, management and professional, and in hairdressing and beauty therapy the provision is satisfactory, while in health, social care and public services, the provision is good.

6. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The report was critical and analytical. The process of self-assessment was inclusive and effectively engaged staff, learners, employers and partners. Most of the strengths and weaknesses identified were also identified by the inspection team.

7. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** A & R has robust quality improvement procedures. The provision is effectively audited and monitored, and concerns are dealt with quickly. Responsibilities are clear and quality assurance procedures are reviewed regularly.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR A & R TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED:

- continue to improve retention and achievement of the framework
- further develop strategies to attract men to early years programmes
- better match the staff profile to learner profile
- work with Mark Betts subcontractor to develop better understanding of equality and diversity for staff and learners
- work with Kirklees Metropolitan Council subcontractor to improve coherence of the business administration framework
- continue to work with Mark Betts to improve record-keeping
- build on collaborative work to continue to improve the learners' experience

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		2

Business administration, management & professional			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Business administration		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	28	3	
Other government-funded provision	18	2	

Hairdressing & beauty therapy			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Hairdressing		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	51	3	

Health, social care & public services			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Care			
Apprenticeships for young people	68	2	
Other government-funded provision	6	2	
Work-based learning for adults	60	2	
Early years			
Apprenticeships for young people	243	2	
Other government-funded provision	39	2	
Work-based learning for adults	2	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. A & R has had two previous inspections, one of which was a reinspection in retailing, customer service and transportation. Three areas of learning were chosen for this inspection. The first is care, as this represents the main business for the provider with the largest numbers of learners. Two others areas of learning were hairdressing and business administration. They are new provision for the provider and both are subcontracted. The inspection was carried out over time with a visit to the provider five weeks before the main inspection.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learners interviewed	108
Number of staff interviewed	43
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of subcontractors interviewed	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	10
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	3
Number of visits	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. Learners on ESF programmes in business administration make good progress.

The learners are enthusiastic and are keen to develop their ICT skills to seek employment. The programme is well delivered by subcontracting arrangements with S & S Training and Direct Training.

10. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ programmes in care and early years are good. For example, over a three-year period, retention has ranged from 81 per cent to 100 per cent in early years. In care, achievement has ranged from 60 per cent to 100 per cent in the past three years.

11. Learners at A & R are well motivated and develop good knowledge and skills.

They are confident and enthusiastic and are keen to learn. Many learners progress from foundation programmes to level 3 programmes.

12. Retention and achievement rates for apprentices in hairdressing are satisfactory and improving. The upward trend has increased significantly in the current year. Portfolio evidence indicates that some learners who started in 2004-05 may achieve ahead of their target date.

13. Achievement rates for apprentices in business administration and care programmes are unsatisfactory. A & R has recognised this and has implemented several initiatives to improve them. Key skills and technical certificates are now an integral part of the vocational programmes for care. However, in business administration programmes which are subcontracted, the key skills are not sufficiently integrated.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Health, social care & public services	0	5	0	0	5
Total	0	5	0	0	5

14. The table above only shows areas of learning in which two or more learning sessions have been observed and graded.

15. **The teaching and learning are good.** Teaching sessions are well planned and good learning materials are used effectively. Learners are challenging and confident. Tutors deliver well-paced sessions enthusiastically and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Training facilities are to a good standard.

16. **Learners are well supported by employers and A & R's staff.** They have good opportunities for assessment in the workplace. There is a wide range of well-resourced work placements available to learners. Employers are flexible and provide good off-the-job training. A & R and subcontracting staff visit the learners very regularly and provide extremely good support for learners with personal needs. Where possible, learners attend A & R's training centres on day release.

17. The arrangements for additional literacy, numeracy and language support are satisfactory. Learners have an initial assessment and are supported well. Not all staff are formally qualified to offer learning support.

18. **The arrangements for learning support in hairdressing programmes are inappropriate** and some learners are not receiving the support they need.

Leadership and management

19. **A & R manages its provision well.** There is a good strategic mission which is well understood by staff. The management style is open and responsive. There is good communication within the company and effective communication with employers. Staff feel well supported. The training is well managed and A & R monitors the performance of its subcontractors closely. Targets are used well to monitor performance and improve retention and achievement rates.

20. **A & R has good collaborative partnerships to improve the learners' experience.** Staff regularly keep in touch with employers and there are particularly good links with all curriculum areas. All subcontractors are very positive about the support they receive from A & R. A & R also has good links with a range of other organisations like Connexions, counselling services and local schools.

21. **The promotion of equality and diversity is good at A & R.** The premises display colourful and imaginative displays of learners' work which celebrate diversity. Equality and diversity is included in the induction and is reinforced effectively through progress reviews. Respect for difference is encouraged

throughout A & R and there are opportunities for learners to comply with cultural needs. However, the learners' understanding of equality and diversity is limited with the subcontractor which provides hairdressing.

22. A & R has particularly rigorous procedures to assure and improve the quality of provision. All aspects of the provision are audited regularly and the strength of the monitoring process was acknowledged in an LSC publication on good practice for work-based learning. The monitoring of subcontractors is effective. There is an inclusive approach to self-assessment which includes all staff, learners, employers and subcontractors. There is an appropriate system for the observation of teaching and learning. Internal verification is robust.

23. Staff development is satisfactory. All staff have an induction and are appointed a mentor. There is an appraisal system which helps to identify staff development needs.

24. The arrangements to meet learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory. All learners have an initial screening and further diagnostic assessment where necessary. A high proportion of learners have additional learning needs. On-going learning support is provided by dedicated staff, as well as assessors. However, in hairdressing the additional learning support arrangements provided by the subcontractor are unsatisfactory.

25. Participation by men in early years programmes is low at 4 per cent. There is also an under representation of men and minority ethnic groups in the staff. A & R has recognised this and has developed strategies for improvement, but to date these have not yet had an impact on recruitment.

26. Strategies to improve completion of the framework have not been sufficiently implemented. Low achievement rates for apprentices have been recognised and strategies to improve have been tried, but to date this remains unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of provision
- good collaborative working to improve learners' experience
- good promotion of equality and diversity for learners at A & R
- particularly rigorous procedures to assure and improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- under representation of men in early years and in the staff
- insufficiently implemented strategies to improve framework achievement

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Grade 3

Strengths

- good progress on ESF programme
- very good work placements
- well-motivated learners

Weaknesses

- some slow progress on level 3 business administration programmes
- insufficient integration of framework components

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Grade 3

Strengths

- good work placements
- very supportive employers
- very good training resources at Mark Betts
- well-managed programme

Weaknesses

- inappropriate structure for literacy and numeracy support
- very little understanding of equality and diversity by learners

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good retention and achievement on NVQ programmes
- good knowledge and skills development by learners
- good teaching
- flexible approach to learners' and employers' needs
- well-managed training

Weaknesses

- some poor framework achievement

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT A & R TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED:

- availability of the assessors
- coming into the centre
- very flexible and supportive assessors
- 'love my placement'
- well-delivered training
- group discussions
- meeting learners from other salons (hairdressing)

WHAT LEARNERS THINK A & R TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- more internet access
- more books and resources for childcare
- more time with my assessor
- 'I don't think it could be improved'
- discussions on equality ask the same questions (hairdressing)
- clearer structure in the first year for business administration
- technical certificate needs to be more relevant to business administration

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good management of provision
- good collaborative working to improve learners' experience
- good promotion of equality and diversity for learners at A & R
- particularly rigorous procedures to assure and improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- under representation of men in early years and in the staff
- insufficiently implemented strategies to improve framework achievement

27. A & R manages its provision well. The organisation has a clearly stated mission, and strategic planning is linked to it. There is comprehensive analysis at a strategic level, and plans include a business strategy overview plan for 2001-07, a three-year development plan, an annual business plan, a market analysis and a marketing plan. The senior management team meets at six-monthly intervals to carry out a full analysis of progress against the plans, and to identify strategic and operational issues. In the interim, monitoring of all aspects of the organisation and its provision is carried out by one of the directors. The reports from the auditing process are disseminated to all members of A & R's staff and a copy is sent to subcontractors. Internal communications are good. In addition to the senior management strategic planning meetings, there are regular meetings of staff teams, within and across programme areas. These meetings are minuted, although some minutes are insufficiently detailed and responsibility for actions is not always sufficiently clear. A monitoring system to ensure consistency and effectiveness of minutes has been introduced. In addition to established formal communication systems, informal communication within the organisation is effective, with management adopting an open and consultative style. Staff at A & R are well supported. New staff are allocated a mentor, and staff appreciate the flexibility which allows them to balance work with family responsibilities. There is an appropriate staff handbook which informs all staff about current policies and procedures. Subcontractors are well managed. They are closely monitored, and supported in making improvements to their provision.

28. A & R engages in good collaborative working to improve the learners' experience. It has particularly good links with employers across all curriculum areas, and employers are very supportive towards learners. A & R has very constructive links with its subcontractors. All existing and former subcontractors are particularly positive about the support they receive from A & R. In some instances, that support has improved the quality systems of subcontractors. Some subcontractors are aware that the support has improved the learners' achievements. A & R has good links with Connexions, and this increases the co-ordination of support available to vulnerable young people. All three A & R centres have a link Connexions personal adviser for young people and these link advisers visit their respective centres on a very regular basis. A & R has established links with local schools and has a developing provision for 14-16 year olds, creating a possible progression route to

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Entry to Employment (E2E) or apprenticeship programmes. A & R is a key player in the local E2E partnership.

29. Staff development is satisfactory. Induction for new staff is followed by mentorship and shadowing opportunities to ease inexperienced staff into the new role. All staff are appraised annually, using a system that encourages self-analysis and that identifies staff development needs, linked to organisational and personal development priorities. A & R supports staff development through its own resources and by identifying external funding streams. Staff are appropriately qualified for their main occupational functions, however, there has not been sufficient focus on staff training to support the learners' literacy and numeracy needs.

30. The management of arrangements to meet learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory. All learners have an initial assessment during induction and further diagnostic assessment. A high proportion of learners have additional learning needs. Individual learning plans are set up for learners and reviews monitor progress. If a learner has literacy or numeracy needs, support is built into the off-the-job training. There is a high level of individual support given to learners at A&R. However, the arrangements for literacy and numeracy support with one subcontractor are inadequate.

31. Financial management of the organisation is satisfactory. The rigorous monitoring procedures ensure that A & R have up-to-date information on company performance. Concerns which could have affected contracting arrangements have been energetically dealt with.

32. Learners are given appropriate advice and guidance to ensure that they are on appropriate programmes. A & R has appointed a member of staff with a level 3 qualification in advice and guidance. Her expertise is currently being used to support the E2E programme, but consideration is being given to using her skills for learners on other A & R programmes.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

33. A & R recruits many learners from minority ethnic groups, and learners with additional learning needs. Some programmes cater for the needs of lone parents. E2E provision is focused on the needs of young people who are not currently engaged in employment, education or training.

34. Equality and diversity are well promoted at A & R. The premises have professionally produced posters and learners' project work displayed, which is colourful, imaginative, and shows engagement and understanding. Equality and diversity are included in the learners' induction, and are reinforced at progress reviews. Learners develop a clear understanding of equality and diversity in taught sessions. In one session, role-play was successfully used to explore a range of issues linked to equality and diversity. Learners were able to articulate how their understanding had increased throughout the session. Respect for difference is encouraged. For example, there is a prayer room at the main A & R centres. Tutors encourage understanding and sensitivity towards learners who are fasting and the timing of teaching sessions is adapted. A suitable placement was identified for a female Asian learner to accommodate her perceived cultural requirements. However, the understanding of equality and diversity is limited at one subcontracted provider.

35. Staff at A & R have a good level of understanding and awareness of equality and diversity. A member of staff is currently taking a level 3 qualification in diversity training in the workplace. A further member of staff has attended a counselling course and is currently extending that expertise to higher national certificate level. A & R has an appropriate policy on equality of opportunity which is up to date, recognises the relevant legislation and is regularly reviewed. There is an equality of opportunity steering committee at senior management level which has met quarterly during the current year, and also an equal opportunities action plan which is appropriately monitored. Staff at A & R are well supported, and management make adaptations to accommodate family pressures and responsibilities.

36. Access to premises and resources are satisfactory. One of A & R's main training centres is a listed building, and currently has limited access. The landlord confirms that he is aware of his responsibilities regarding access and is considering alternatives. In the interim, A & R has put contingency arrangements in place to transport learners to one of the other two main centres if the need arises.

37. Promotional and marketing materials are satisfactory. Leaflets contain an appropriate range of images and most identify A & R's commitment to equality of opportunity. Leaflets are targeted at potential learners to deal with under representation. Advertising and recruitment procedures for staff are satisfactory. There is a commitment to training in recruitment and appointment procedures for staff who have those responsibilities.

38. There is appropriate and regular collection, collation and analysis of data which is relevant to equality of opportunity. Participation information is collected and analysed by gender, disability and ethnic background and targets are set for achievement. Learners' additional learning needs and additional social needs are also recorded. However, analysis of achievement by these learners is not yet routinely carried out. A & R recruits particularly high numbers of learners from minority ethnic groups and learners with additional learning needs.

39. Participation by men in early years provision is low at 4 per cent. Similarly, representation of men on the staff is low, as is representation from minority ethnic groups. A & R has recognised these issues through its analysis of data, and marketing strategies have been introduced. However, they have not yet had an impact on recruitment to early years programmes.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

40. The procedures to assure and improve the quality of provision are particularly rigorous. All aspects of the business are audited and a senior member of staff has responsibility for this process. Each separate audit of each aspect and function leads to a report with recommendations, identified responsibility for action, and a timescale for completion. The audits are used for the self-assessment process and the self-assessment report. The audit process is also audited. The strength of the monitoring process was acknowledged in an LSC publication recognising good practice in work-based learning. Data collection, collation and analysis for quality assurance purposes is robust and gives the organisation a clear basis for planning and target-setting.

41. A & R monitors the performance of its subcontractors closely. In a number of instances A & R has, at the request of the LSC, taken on subcontractors whose monitoring

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systems were not developed. For example, a specialist organisation which works with particularly disadvantaged young people lacked robust administrative and quality assurance systems. A & R worked with them to successfully support their development and the subcontractor now has a contract within the E2E partnership.

42. All curriculum teams are involved in a self-assessment process which is part of the auditing schedule. The teams identify strengths and weaknesses and the reports produced by the curriculum areas are used in the self-assessment report. The report is detailed and analytical and identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses also identified by inspectors. The action plan has been acted on and monitored.

43. Feedback is regularly gathered from learners and employers. The feedback from both sources is analysed as part of the auditing process, with actions identified to improve the provision.

44. An appropriate system is in place for the observation of teaching and learning. The observations are well recorded with recommendations for action at the end of the form. However, there is no formally monitored action plan for each observation. The observations are graded and are used in the staff appraisal process.

45. Internal verification is robust. A senior member of staff has overall responsibility for internal verification and the system is common across all accredited programmes. A detailed monitoring sheet has been introduced for all assessors so that clear information on learners' progress and achievement is available to all relevant staff. Regular meetings are held with assessors.

46. Strategies to improve the completion rates for the framework have not been sufficiently implemented. Framework achievement has been low across the organisation, and this has been recognised by A & R through its auditing and analysis procedures, and acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Strategies have been developed to deal with the situation and improvements are now being identified. However, achievement rates for apprentices remain unsatisfactory.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		3
Apprenticeships for young people	28	3
Other government-funded provision	18	2

47. A & R offers level 3 apprenticeships in business administration for 16-18 year old learners and the national vocational qualification (NVQ) in ICT and business administration at level 2 to Jobcentre Plus participants through the ESF-funded programme. Kirklees Metropolitan Council Training Unit delivers the apprenticeships and S&S Training and Direct Training delivers the ESF programme. At the time of the inspection, there are 28 learners on the level 3 apprenticeship programme, four learners following the ESF course at S&S Training and 14 learners on the ESF programme at Direct Training. Of the total number of learners, 32 per cent are men and 19 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. Learners on the apprenticeship programme are recruited in September onto a three-year employment contract with the Kirklees Metropolitan Council. They are expected to complete the NVQ technical certificate and key skills portfolio in the first year before beginning the NVQ units. Apprentices are employed in a range of administration roles in departments at Kirklees Metropolitan Council. They attend a monthly half-day off-the-job training session at Kirklees Metropolitan Council Training Unit, where they are helped to achieve the NVQ, key skills and technical certificate. They also have the option of attending a half-day off-the-job training session at the centre each week for further support. Participants on the ESF programme receive training for up to 45 weeks, which involves working towards a level 2 ICT or business administration qualification.

Business administration

Grade 3

Strengths

- good progress on ESF programme
- very good work placements
- well-motivated learners

Weaknesses

- some slow progress on level 3 business administration programmes
- insufficient integration of framework components

Achievement and standards

48. In 2002-03 there were 18 starters on the level 3 business administration apprenticeship programme at Kirklees Metropolitan Council Training Unit. Retention was 72 per cent and six learners are still in learning. All 18 learners exceeded their funding period. All early leavers progressed to employment. However, 50 per cent of leavers achieved an NVQ at level 2 and 39 per cent achieved the NVQ at level 3. For 2003-04, there were 17 starters.

Retention declined to 47 per cent, with eight learners remaining on the programme. Of the nine early leavers, eight progressed to employment. For 2004-05 there are 14 starters and one early leaver, who has progressed to employment.

49. Learners on the ESF programmes make good progress towards their qualification. They are enthusiastic and are keen to increase their skills in order to gain employment. The level and content of the course is appropriate to learners' needs, prior learning and achievements. Learners are developing good practical skills and an understanding of the software they are using. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners are gaining new skills and see the relevance of how the qualification can help them gain employment. Some have specific aims to the type of employment they would like to progress to and their training is tailored towards this where possible.

50. Learners following the business administration NVQ at level 3 make slow progress towards completing their apprenticeship framework. Most of the learners who join the programme with Kirklees Metropolitan Council are aged 16-18 and have no work experience or prior learning in business administration. Their positions of employment do not usually match the level of skills demanded by a level 3 qualification. Some learners join the programme having already achieved a level 2 apprenticeship in administration or prior experience in an administration environment. However, no account is taken of their prior learning and all learners begin the programme at the same point. After joining the programme, they attend a comprehensive induction to the organisation and the apprenticeship programme. They then work towards the technical certificate, and where appropriate, a key skills qualification. This takes approximately one year, after which they start work on their NVQ units and portfolio. Learners do not usually complete the framework within the funded period. A large proportion of learners gain permanent employment while on the programme and do not continue with their qualification.

The quality of provision

51. Learners are well motivated. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn and progress in their qualification. They are confident and articulate and are keen to gain permanent employment using their new skills. Learners are interested in the area of work and are well matched with their placements. Learners at Kirklees Metropolitan Council are quickly integrated into the workplace and are valued team members. Learners have a good working relationship with their assessors and training staff who support them with personal and training issues. Learners are self-motivated and work well independently. Learners at Kirklees Metropolitan Council visit the open learning resource centre regularly to further their studies. This is in addition to the mandatory sessions.

52. Most of the teaching is satisfactory. In the better sessions teaching is lively, well paced and suitably demanding. Learners at S&S Training attend an ICT workshop where they work mainly on an individual basis, assisted by a tutor. However, there are no specific individual learning goals for each session. Overall weekly targets are set and learners progress towards these at their own pace. Learners at Direct Training attend an ICT workshop, which is planned to deal with their individual learning needs. Very detailed records are kept about the learners' progress, tasks completed and skills developed. Completed work at both training centres is checked and marked regularly in lessons. Learners at Direct Training attend a period of work experience to enable them to apply their ICT skills in the workplace. Employment liaison staff work closely with employers and learners to arrange the best possible match between learners and the work placements.

Work trials which last for approximately four weeks are offered to learners and organisations as an induction to a longer-term work placement.

53. The framework components are not an integral part of the vocational training. Apprentices at Kirklees Metropolitan Council Training Unit attend mandatory and optional off-the-job training sessions to develop the background knowledge through the technical certificate and to complete their key skills training. These are taught separately to the main NVQ programme and before learners start working towards the NVQ units. Most learners are confused about how the technical certificate fits into the apprenticeship framework and do not understand the relevance of tasks. Key skills are delivered through project-based assignments. The assignments enable learners to research and extend their knowledge and experiences within the context of their own workplaces. However, learners do not cross-reference their project work to NVQ units. Learners on apprenticeship programmes are unsure about their progress and cannot easily identify when they will start their NVQ or complete their framework.

54. Learners at Kirklees Metropolitan Council Training Unit attend several short in-house training courses as an integral part of their training programme. These include change management, customer service skills and various software packages. Learners are also able to access other training courses through their workplace supervisor, which are specific to particular council departments. These include computer packages for systems management and updates in working practices for specific departments.

55. Assessment and monitoring of learning are satisfactory. Trainers and assessors for all learning programmes communicate regularly and share information about their learners formally at meetings and informally on a day-to-day basis. This enables them to identify areas for concern and provide extra support for learners when required. Trainers at Kirklees Metropolitan Council monitor learners' progress through individual portfolios. However, there is no overall record showing ongoing progress with NVQ units. Learners on apprenticeship programmes are assessed every four to six weeks and have quarterly reviews. These take place in the workplace during the second and third year of their training programme. NVQ assessments are carried out by their assessor and are thoroughly planned. Additional assessments are carried out if required by negotiation between the assessor and the learner. Assessment feedback is provided verbally and in written form. It is detailed and learners understand what they have to do to improve. Quarterly reviews involve the employer, the learner and the assessor. The employer is fully involved in all discussions and has an active role in reviewing and planning the learner's progress. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements.

56. Resources to support all programmes are satisfactory. ICT and other training rooms are equipped appropriately and have a clear identity, focusing on education and learning. Off-the-job training for apprentices takes place in the open learning resource centre at Kirklees Metropolitan Training Unit. There is a small range of textbooks to support learners in business administration, three computer workstations and areas where learners can work on their assignments or NVQ units. Learners are encouraged to visit the centre to extend their learning experience, and they do so regularly. Tutors are usually available if they need help. Training staff have relevant qualifications, but some do not have recent work experience in business administration and ICT.

Leadership and management

57. Strategies for improvement are in place to improve achievement and retention rates on all courses. Joint activities between A & R and all subcontractors such as exhibitions, events, leaflet distribution and presentations to different groups are taking place to increase the intake for the ESF courses. Strategies for improvement of achievement and retention rates on the apprenticeship programmes are in place. However, to date they have been ineffective and A & R is currently reviewing these strategies. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements. There is a good working relationship between A & R and the three subcontractors. However, good practice is not shared between organisations. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Diverse classes work well together and teaching staff recognise the differences between groups of learners and plan their training appropriately. The self-assessment process was thorough and many of the strengths and weaknesses in the report matched those identified by inspectors.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> Apprenticeships for young people	51	3 3

58. A & R offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing. There are 45 apprentices and six advanced apprentices. Nine per cent are men and 14 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. The training is subcontracted to Mark Betts Hairdressing which is situated in Dewsbury. Recruitment is by referral from Connexions or through advertisements, but most of the learners are referred by their employers. The training for the level 2 apprentices is delivered in a three-week block at Mark Betts' training centre in Dewsbury. Learners attend the centre for practical work and background knowledge sessions for two of the weeks, and during the third week they are in the salons. During this time they are visited by Mark Betts' staff for assessments and progress reviews. Learners are offered support sessions for literacy and numeracy training and key skills. The delivery of the level 3 programme takes place entirely in the salons, including all assessment. Learners have NVQ workbooks to help them acquire the background knowledge. The apprentices are assessed on and off the job by a team of four trainer/assessors who visit every three weeks.

Hairdressing***Grade 3******Strengths***

- good work placements
- very supportive employers
- very good training resources at Mark Betts
- well-managed programme

Weaknesses

- inappropriate structure for literacy and numeracy support
- very little understanding of equality and diversity by learners

Achievement and standards

59. Achievement rates are improving. During 2003-04, 29 learners started the apprenticeship programme and 10 have completed the full framework. Portfolio evidence indicates that eight more learners will complete the framework by September 2005. Evidence also indicates that some learners who started their programme in 2004-05 may complete ahead of their target achievement date. The six advanced apprentices are on target to complete the framework within the target achievement date.

The quality of provision

60. The training resources are very good at Mark Betts. The training centre is well equipped, modern and has a good range of commercial products. There is a wide range of

equipment and resources available to enable learners to carry out practical activities. A broad range of models are available to learners. A fast-track course has recently been introduced for learners who are able to work through the programme more quickly. The fast track is available if the learner, the employer and Mark Betts' programme manager agree that this will benefit the learner, and they have the ability. During the summer the training centre is closed for eight weeks to accommodate learner and salon holidays, but Mark Betts offers additional training days for learners during this period. There are good ICT resources which learners make good use of.

61. There are very good work placements for learners. The salons used for work placements have good resources and promote high standards of professionalism and technical skills. Most of the salons offer additional training sessions for the learners. Learners attend leading hairdressing product manufacturer's workshops and seminars, to enhance their skills and gain product knowledge and understanding. Most employers encourage learners to attend regional and national training events and to visit other salons to gain further experience.

62. Learners' portfolios contain satisfactory evidence, including clearly presented assignment work. The evidence shows that learners have carried out a wide range of client treatments.

63. Written assignment work is very well produced, with neat hand-drawn diagrams. The written assignments are linked to workbooks which have been developed for each unit of the NVQ, to help the learners with the background knowledge. Learners are required to produce written assignments linked to each of the units.

64. Learners are well supported, with weekly visits. Learners' progress is monitored during these visits, and problems or concerns are identified and discussed at staff meetings. The progress review process is carried out every six weeks with the learners in the workplace. The process includes a detailed discussion with the learner and the employer on the learners' progress in the workplace, and at the training centre. Actions are agreed with the learner and the employer for completion by the next review. However, much of the discussion is not recorded onto the review paperwork, particularly some of the comments made on the practical progress they are making. There are no target dates recorded which relate to actions to be achieved by the next review.

65. The structure for literacy and numeracy support is inappropriate. This support is offered to learners on a 'drop in' basis every three weeks at Mark Betts' training centre. Learners attend the support sessions on a voluntary basis and not as part of a structured programme, and many do not attend.

Leadership and management

66. The hairdressing programme is managed well. A & R has supported Mark Betts in the implementation of an effective strategy to improve the quality of their delivery and improve the outcomes. The retention and achievement rates are improving. The well-managed hairdressing programme ensures staff within the department have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, the service level agreement for employers is out of date. There is a new version of the agreement currently being produced which includes changes in legislation. Employers have little recall of the agreement or of its contents. The self-assessment report and development plan identifies the progress made, since the

previous inspection. Some significant improvements have been made, and additional weakness has been identified. Staff have played an active role in improving the quality of the training, which has had positive results on the retention and achievement rates. Considerable development work on the delivery of the practical sessions and background knowledge has taken place. New schemes of work and associated lesson plans have been produced, but these systems are not yet fully implemented and it is too soon to determine the effect on the learners.

67. The internal verification system is satisfactory. It forms part of a thorough quality assurance procedure within A & R. The system informs internal verifiers of due dates for sampling of direct observations or portfolios, and of any non-compliance since the last verification check.

68. Learners have very little understanding of equality and diversity. They are asked questions on equality in the workplace during their progress reviews. However, they do not fully understand the principles, particularly on the law. Also, some of the staff who carry out the reviews do not fully understand the law and aspects of the working environment or practices to comply with the laws.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care		
Apprenticeships for young people	68	2
Other government-funded provision	6	2
Work-based learning for adults	60	2
Early years		
Apprenticeships for young people	243	2
Other government-funded provision	39	2
Work-based learning for adults	2	2

69. A & R has NVQ programmes in care and early years at levels 2 and 3, an ESF programme and an ETP programme. There are currently 418 learners. There are 237 apprentices, 74 advanced apprentices, 45 adult learners on an ESF programme and 62 on the ETP programme. Twenty-nine per cent of the current learners are from minority ethnic groups and 89 per cent of the learners are women. Currently, 4 per cent of the learners on early years programmes are men and 16 per cent of learners on the care programmes are men. Programmes take place in the Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees districts. Learners can start the programme at any time throughout the year. They start the programme with an induction programme and then attend A & R training centres for off-the-job training.

Strengths

- good retention and achievement on NVQ programmes
- good knowledge and skills development by learners
- good teaching
- flexible approach to learners' and employers' needs
- well-managed training

Weaknesses

- some poor framework achievement

Achievement and standards

70. The retention rates are good on NVQ programmes in care and early years. In the past three years the retention rates have ranged from 81 per cent to 100 per cent in care for those on the NVQ at level 3. For the same period, achievement rates in care have ranged from 60 per cent to 100 per cent. On the early years NVQ at level 3 programme, the retention rate has ranged from 75 per cent to 100 per cent over the past three years, and for the same period, the achievement rate has ranged from 75 per cent to 100 per cent. For the ESF-funded programmes in care, retention rates have ranged from 82 per cent to 100 per cent over the past three years and the achievement rate has ranged from 80 per cent to 82 per cent for the same period.

71. Learners in care and early years develop good skills and knowledge. They demonstrate a good understanding of the skills needed for the workplace. Learners are confident

enough to deal with challenging and difficult circumstances in nursery and care home settings. The learners make good progress towards their qualifications in care and early years and there is a good standard of the work in portfolios. Learners are clearly able to articulate the knowledge they have gained and the new skills they have acquired. They increase their confidence and are well motivated. Many learners have progressed from foundation programmes to NVQ at level 2 and learners also progress from level 2 programmes to level 3. Many are aiming to continue their learning.

72. The completion rates for the framework are poor in care and early years. In 2002-03, it was 18 per cent and in 2003-04, it was 15 per cent for apprentices. In early years, the rate of achievement for advanced apprentices in 2001-02 was 5 per cent, increasing to 19 per cent for 2002-03. However, the trend is improving for care, and early years apprenticeships. For example for the advanced apprentices in care, achievement has increased from 11 per cent to 30 per cent over four years. The rates for apprentices in carework have ranged from 15 per cent to 41 per cent in a four-year period and for apprentices in early years, achievement rates ranged from 18 per cent to 26 per cent in a three-year period. Tables are not included for ESF and ETP as the programmes are new and data is not yet accurate.

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												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	44		45		64												
Retained*	31		34		56												
Successfully completed	0		1		28												
Still in learning	31		38		5												

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	275		105		125												
Retained*	237		41		73												
Successfully completed	0		3		28												
Still in learning	160		56		21												

*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

The quality of provision

73. The teaching in care and early years programmes is good. It starts with an effective induction which learners remember well. A good range of learning activities are used in training sessions to motivate and challenge learners. Good planning is carried out to meet individual needs in workshop sessions and trainers effectively check learners' understanding. Support staff are used well in lessons to support the less able learners.

Tutors demonstrate a confident and enthusiastic style and are knowledgeable on their specialist subjects. The sessions are delivered at a good pace and there is a good range of materials to support learning. Learners make confident contributions and are engaged with learning. There is clear evidence of learning taking place and learners' evaluations are positive. Training facilities for on- and off-the-job training are of a high standard. Learners have good access to appropriate books, journals, the internet and computers.

74. There is a flexible approach to learners' and employers' needs. Learners receive good pastoral support relating to personal and social issues. There is good access to trained counsellors who also provide support when dealing with sensitive topics, in classes such as abuse. The arrangements for on- and off-the-job training are flexible to allow for learners' shift patterns at work. Employers are particularly supportive of the learners' training requirements and ensure that learners can attend off-the-job training at the centres. The communication between employers and A & R's staff is effective. Reviews are frequent and learners receive additional reviews if necessary. Additional support arrangements are good, and learners receive ongoing support in literacy, numeracy and key skills as well as for aspects of their main qualification. Assessors are particularly responsive to learners who are able to fast track through the award and arrange additional assessment and observations to meet individual needs. Staff give good advice and guidance to learners on progression opportunities and also the types of employment that are available in their area of expertise. Learners speak highly of the support they receive from their assessors and tutors, and comment on how approachable and friendly they are. Employers support the learners in their training and provide mentors and supervisors in the workplace. Learners are provided with separate facilities to meet their religious and cultural beliefs, and timetables and schedules are suitably amended at specific times of the year.

75. Initial assessment identifies learners' needs successfully. Individual learning plans are not used consistently, but the records identify learners' needs and action plans include targets. The monitoring of learners' progress is good.

76. Programmes satisfactorily meet the needs of employers and the community. Learners are able to access work placements and employment within their communities.

77. The provider adequately meets learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. Learners receive individual support or group support from appropriately qualified staff.

Leadership and management

78. There is good communication between staff teams, and regular communication and sharing of good practice across centres. The training is well managed. The management of assessment is good and accreditation of prior learning is used effectively. Arrangements for off-the-job training are effective and all learners' needs are met through good planning. The flexible structure of the programme enables learners to develop their independent learning skills. Background knowledge is tailored to individual learners and is available at the training centres and on the job. There is an integrated approach to key skills and technical certificates.

79. Staff are appropriately qualified with good occupational experience and expertise. They receive good professional development.

80. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity which is regularly reviewed.

Learners demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of equality and diversity and recognise this practice within their work settings.

