

INSPECTION REPORT

Juniper Training Ltd

28 April 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

Juniper Training Ltd

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Juniper Training Ltd, formerly known as Carver Training, was established in 1983 as a youth training centre for the delivery of warehouse training. In 2003, the organisation split from Carver (Wolverhampton) Ltd, changed its name to Juniper Training, and became a limited company. It now offers foundation training as its core business. Juniper Training Ltd has 345 learners. Of these, 239 are Jobcentre Plus participants, 96 on Gateway to Work programmes under the New Deal for Young People, 46 on Workstep, and 97 on short intensive basic skills (SIBS) courses. Ninety-five learners are on entry to employment (E2E) programmes and 11 are following a programme part funded through the European Social Funding (ESF).

2. Juniper Training Ltd employs 48 staff at Wolverhampton, Walsall and Brierley Hill in the West Midlands. The senior management team consists of the managing director and two senior managers. They are responsible for all aspects of the company's day-to-day management, and are supported by three centre managers. Thirty-two staff are involved in training and assessment and a further 10 provide administrative support.

3. Juniper Training Ltd funds its training through contracts with the Black Country Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus. In February 2005, the unemployment rate was 4.3 per cent in Wolverhampton and 3.4 per cent in Walsall compared with a Black Country average of 3.6 per cent and a national average of 2.3 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 22.2 per cent in Wolverhampton and 13.6 per cent in Walsall, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Juniper Training Ltd's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Its foundation provision is also good.

5. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is highly inclusive and is used well by Juniper Training Ltd to make appropriate judgements about job outcomes, completion rates and rates of retention, achievement, and completion. The resulting report is self-critical and accurate. Juniper Training Ltd uses the self-assessment process to help plan future activity. Some of the key weaknesses identified by the self-assessment process have been dealt with and are no longer weaknesses. The grades proposed in the self-assessment report matched those given at inspection.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Juniper Training Ltd has made significant improvements in its provision since it was inspected as Carver Training. Strategies to improve the provision are already having an effect on some funded programmes, and the company is continuing to implement them across all funding categories. Quality improvement policies and procedures have been

implemented and are followed by staff and managers. Retention and achievement rates are improving and are now at a satisfactory level.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR JUNIPER TRAINING LTD:

- continue to improve the rate of achievement and job outcomes
- continue to develop and implement quality improvement measures
- implement a strategy to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy
- further develop staff training

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

Foundation programmes			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Employability/employment training</i>			
New Deal for young people	96	2	
Workstep	46	3	
Other government-funded provision	11	3	
Entry to Employment	95	2	
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>			
Work-based learning for adults	97	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Following a pre-inspection analysis of Juniper Training Ltd, all areas of learning offered were reported on and graded. The inspection took place between April 25 and April 28 2005. There were no pre-inspection visits.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	44
Number of staff interviewed	38
Number of employers interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	3
Number of visits	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **Learners develop good motivation, confidence and employability skills.** Staff set high standards of behaviour which are adhered to by learners, helping them to raise their aspiration. There is a strong focus on standards of coursework, including the detailed and accurate preparation of curriculum vitae and application forms. The high standards of service from staff help to raise learners' self-esteem. Achievement is recognised and celebrated individually, and through a variety of awards events. Learners recognise that their confidence and motivation has improved as a result of training and that they are better equipped to seek and apply for jobs.

9. On Jobcentre Plus programmes, a satisfactory number of participants gain jobs and Juniper Training Ltd meets or exceeds its Jobcentre Plus contracted targets. However, targets for the proportion of Workstep participants gaining supported employment are not being met. The only learner to have left the ESF-funded programmes has found employment. In the E2E programme, learners' progress to either further training or a job with training is satisfactory. The numbers of additional qualifications achieved is good. A total of 301 individual certificates have been awarded so far this year, with most learners achieving three or four separate awards.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Foundation programmes	0	5	3	0	8
Total	0	5	3	0	8

10. **Learners on all programmes receive particularly effective individual support.** Staff are approachable, friendly and welcoming to learners, who feel valued and respected. Behaviour is effectively managed and clear rules are set which all learners agree to during

induction. Attendance and timekeeping are monitored closely. Staff have a good understanding of learners' individual circumstances and are skilled at raising their aspirations and self-esteem. Learners are given regular, positive and constructive feedback by tutors.

11. Work experience is used well to meet the needs of E2E learners and Workstep participants. Learners and participants are matched carefully and well to supportive local employers. Workstep participants are particularly well presented to employers who are strongly encouraged to offer quality work opportunities. In E2E, more than half the learners are currently on work placement.

12. Teaching is satisfactory. Tutors have a good rapport with learners and understand their learning and support needs. In the better sessions learning is well planned and a range of teaching methods enable learners to absorb information and practise new skills. However, in the weaker sessions the range of teaching methods is too narrow, for example there is too much use of worksheets. These sessions do not take sufficient account of individual learning styles nor do they provide opportunities for learners to progress at different rates.

13. Target-setting is weak for some learners on Jobcentre Plus and ESF programmes, though it is satisfactory for the development of E2E learners personal and social skills. Action plans do not always include specific targets for the development of personal and social skills and few include specific learning goals. Although a good range of information on learners' abilities and needs is established through initial assessment, this is not always used effectively to develop action plans.

14. Skills for life teaching is insufficiently developed. Though learners are taught skills in literacy and numeracy, those that are not in work placements have little opportunity to apply them in a practical context. However, some programmes have recently been redesigned and new lesson plans indicate a greater variety of teaching methods and more effective use of resources.

Leadership and management

15. Juniper Training has a strong, dynamic strategic management. Decisions based on extensive research have set a clear direction for developments, notably the focus on prevocational learning since 2001. All staff are clear about the company's vision of excellence and its drive to become a good-quality regional organisation. Strategic and business planning is good, and is backed up by prudent financial management.

16. Performance management is based on good analysis and use of management information. Managers analyse progress against set targets extensively, and feed back to all staff once a month. Individual staff performance against set targets is managed through a clear and well-understood review and appraisal system.

17. Communication with staff throughout the company is excellent and the staff appreciate the open and consultative management style. Good practice is shared effectively through the weekly 'Towards Excellence' meetings at each centre. Staff meetings are regular and purposeful, and there is an informative staff newsletter and staff committee. Communication and sharing of information and materials are being further improved by the installation of a computerised network.

18. **Learners' and staff successes are celebrated with a good variety of awards and displays.** Photographic displays at all the centres celebrate achievement of qualifications by learners and staff. There is a centre of the month, and each centre has a learner of the month. E2E learners produce a regular newspaper that records and promotes achievement at Juniper Training Ltd's centres and in local schools and colleges, the Connexions service and other training providers.

19. **External networking is good.** Juniper Training Ltd develops good practice by visiting other providers and having an active involvement in the Black Country Training Network. It has improving partnerships with employers that enable it to offer good work placements and employment opportunities for their learners. The managing director belongs to many key strategic partnerships, providing up-to-date information for developments. For the past four years the company has worked with local schools to offer a vocational programme for students aged 14 to 19.

20. The company uses a **good range of measures to raise awareness of equality of opportunity and diversity.** Teaching and learning strategies aim to be equitable and take into account the different needs of learners. Induction programmes include detailed discussion of equality and diversity, reinforced through further teaching sessions and jobsearch activities. Learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and distinguish between treating people equally and treating them fairly, though this is not always reinforced at progress reviews.

21. Juniper Training Ltd continues to demonstrate **strong commitment and action for continuous improvement** through the effective use of a quality management group. A recent successful re-structure of middle management resulted in the appointment of training centre managers, rather than programme team leaders working across centres. Staff are enthusiastic and motivated, and have a strong culture of self-evaluation, reflection and review before planning future improvements.

22. **Programmes are particularly well planned and well managed.** Programme planning is sensitive to the needs of individual learners, responding to their needs or circumstances. In some programmes, young people can choose the order in which they take part in elements of training, including personal and social development, and literacy and numeracy. Teaching staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are well deployed. Staff and physical resources are shared efficiently across all programmes, allowing learners access to a wider range of training sessions.

23. **Skills for life management has been slow to respond to external requirements.** Juniper Training Ltd has a skills for life strategy and development plan, which has been shared with staff but not yet consistently applied. Skills for life teaching in some programmes is insufficiently developed and the range of learning resources is narrow.

24. Quality improvement arrangements for some key learner processes are incomplete. New quality improvement processes have been included in an annual cycle ready for implementation, but detailed arrangements have not yet been completed.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong, dynamic strategic management
- good performance management
- excellent staff communications throughout the organisation
- extensive and effective celebration of success for learners and staff
- good external networking benefiting learners
- very good integration of equal opportunities with day-to-day operations to improve learners' experience
- strong commitment and action for continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently focused management of the skills for life strategy
- incomplete quality improvement systems for some key learner processes

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence, motivation and employability skills
- particularly effective support
- good use of work experience in E2E and Workstep programmes
- particularly well-planned and well-managed programmes

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for some learners on Jobcentre Plus and ESF programmes
- insufficient development of skills for life teaching

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT JUNIPER TRAINING LTD:

- being treated with respect
- the level of help which is there when needed
- having their interview skills improved
- the location - in town centres and on bus routes
- the knowledgeable staff 'Staff are so much more clued up than they were'
- the help in getting a job
- 'They make me feel like I am someone an employer would want'
- the improved level of confidence
- 'I have become more aware of work requirements'
- learning key skills

WHAT LEARNERS THINK JUNIPER TRAINING LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- the rooms available - 'I would like a smoking room'
- the training rooms - a bigger room for group training
- the length of time it takes to receive certificates
- the length of the programme - more time for jobsearch
- the telephone access - somewhere private to make telephone calls to employers

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- strong, dynamic strategic management
- good performance management
- excellent staff communications throughout the organisation
- extensive and effective celebration of success for learners and staff
- good external networking benefiting learners
- very good integration of equal opportunities with day-to-day operations to improve learners' experience
- strong commitment and action for continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently focused management of the skills for life strategy
- incomplete quality improvement systems for some key learner processes

25. Juniper Training Ltd has strong, dynamic strategic managers, who make decisions based on extensive research. Since 2001, the company's significant growth and focus on prevocational learning has set a clear direction for developments. Senior staff have good and complementary skills. All staff are clear about the company's vision of excellence and its drive to become a quality regional organisation. Juniper Training Ltd has good strategic and business planning backed up by prudent financial management. Planning responds directly to external accountabilities and links to individual staff performance targets.

26. Performance management is based well on good analysis and use of management information. Within centres, targets are reinforced and learners' interim progress is recorded on whiteboards in staff offices. Managers analyse learners' progress against set targets to produce useful comparisons of intake groups. They use a simple spreadsheet attached to payslips to communicate a monthly analysis of all centres' programme success. This involves a traffic-light system that shows achievement against targets. There is a clear and well-understood review and appraisal structure for managing individual staff performance against set targets. In April 2005, a comprehensive benefits package was introduced to encourage staff retention and stability. Staff are deployed effectively to best use their skills and expertise. Areas for development are recorded on their personal development plans, and a record is kept of the training they receive.

27. There are excellent formal and informal communications between staff at all levels and across all centres. Staff appreciate the open and consultative management style. There is a range of good, regular and purposeful meetings throughout the company. The successful, short, weekly 'Towards Excellence' meetings at centres were introduced in 2004, to enable staff to share good practice and gain a deeper understanding of new developments and projects. There is a purposeful annual staff awayday and three effective full-staff meetings a year, as well as an informative staff newsletter and a staff committee. Communication and sharing of information and materials are being further improved across centres by the

installation of a computer network.

28. Learners' and staff's successes are celebrated with a good variety of awards and displays. The 'Towards Excellence' initiative acknowledges the most successful training centre of the month and there is a learner of the month in each centre. There is good visual celebration of learners' successes in the regular newspaper produced by E2E learners. Photographic displays at the centres celebrate achievement of qualifications by learners and staff. Staff receive annual financial rewards for specific successes in performance, such as low sickness rates.

29. The managing director belongs to many key strategic partnerships, providing up-to-date information for developments. Juniper Training Ltd develops good practice by taking part in LSC Excellence Raids to other providers and through an active involvement in the Black Country Training Network. For the past four years, the company has worked with local schools offering a vocational programme for 14-19 year olds. It has improving partnerships with employers to offer good work placements and employment opportunities for their learners. The local knowledge of the staff and their connections with other local providers encourages learners to stay involved in learning by helping them to arrange future vocational training.

30. The company's three training centres have been specifically sited in locations easily accessible by their target groups. The good-quality accommodation is very well maintained, providing pleasant learning environments that are appreciated and respected by the learners. Facilities and furniture are generally good. Learning materials and equipment are mostly satisfactory.

31. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. They are well supported in developing new skills and knowledge, mostly relating to their job roles. They attend a wide range of internal and external training courses, many leading to qualifications. In addition, staff meetings and other events provide opportunities for sharing good practice and raising awareness about new developments. In 2003, staff were given training to improve their lesson planning as a result of information from lesson observations. Managers analyse and monitor trends in the grades for lesson observations. Recently, more detailed analysis has provided better information to identify specific training needs in teaching and learning. This has enabled managers to plan staff training across the organisation. However, there has been insufficient staff training to improve some aspects of the provision. These include target-setting and action-planning.

32. The management of skills for life provision has been slow to respond to external requirements. Staff training in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and language skills is not fully effective. For example, staff do not always identify mistakes in learners' written work to help them improve their standards. Juniper Training Ltd has a skills for life strategy and development plan. These have been communicated to all staff but are not yet being applied effectively across all programmes. Some staff members have attended core curriculum training and one is now attending level 4 subject-specialist training. Information gathered as part of learners initial assessment is not always used effectively to plan learning. For those without work placements, teaching does not sufficiently enable learners to apply functional literacy and numeracy skills in a practical context.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

33. Juniper Training Ltd uses a good range of measures to raise awareness of equality of opportunity and diversity among its staff and learners. At the three training centres, awareness of equality of opportunity is reinforced through posters, case studies and celebrations of success that break down gender stereotypes. Each centre displays a calendar of cultural events discussed during lessons or celebrated by learners, for example at the time of inspection the reception area at the Wolverhampton centre contained a St. George's Day display created by learners. Teaching and learning strategies aim to be equitable and take into account the different needs of learners. Induction programmes include detailed discussion reinforced through further teaching sessions. Jobsearch activities make clear reference to equality of opportunity, for example discussing what the 'positive about discrimination' logo means, what information should be on an application form or curriculum vitae and what are legitimate issues for discussion at interview. Each centre employs an equal opportunities champion whose role includes reviewing documents and ensuring that centre staff are up to date with current issues and legislation. Learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and distinguish between treating people equally and treating them fairly. However, progress reviews are not always used effectively to reinforce this understanding. The complaints procedure is comprehensive and detailed and learners are encouraged to make full use of it. All complaints receive individual attention. Outcomes are monitored and centre managers provide feedback to learners.

34. Staff training is satisfactory. Every year, all staff attend internal training on equality and diversity. They also receive additional training on sign language, awareness of visual impairments and dyslexia. Current training activity is focusing on improving the way progress reviews are used to monitor equality of opportunity. Juniper Training Ltd has an up-to-date equal opportunities policy, though this concentrates mainly on employment issues, and makes insufficient reference to learners.

35. Juniper Training Ltd's promotional material, particularly for the E2E programme, is written in a simple format and makes good use of photographs of learners in the workplace. However, it does not challenge the traditional perception of workplace gender issues. The company has effective arrangements to monitor the promotion of equal opportunities by the employers it uses.

36. Juniper Training Ltd uses local information well to ensure its programmes are well balanced in terms of gender and ethnicity, and broadly reflect the composition of the local population. It uses management information systems to record this information and has carried out some analysis of the data. Juniper Training Ltd identifies learners' rates of retention, progression and achievement by both gender and ethnicity.

37. Access to premises is good. Two of the three training centres are adapted to give full access to learners with mobility difficulties. The third is a listed building, which restricts the changes that can be made. However, facilities are available on the ground floor and all learners have full access to these. Juniper Training Ltd ensures that, when required, training takes place on this floor. Each centre is centrally located to ensure that learners have easy access by public transport.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

38. Juniper Training Ltd continues to demonstrate strong commitment and action for

continuous improvement. This was recognised in the 2001 inspection of its predecessor organisation and is still very apparent. Staff are enthusiastic and motivated, continually striving to improve their standards for the benefit of their learners. Staff are encouraged to suggest improvements. In 2003, a successful re-structure of middle management resulted in the appointment of training centre managers rather than programme team leaders working across centres. There is a strong culture of self-evaluation, reflection and review before planning future improvements. Performance analysis and achievement of staff targets are taken into account when decisions are made. Managers help staff make improvements by understanding the reasons for missed targets and providing support. The quality action group is led by the quality manager and meets regularly to review progress and co-ordinate improvements. There were significant improvements to the E2E programme in 2004, including a re-structuring of job roles and responsibilities. However, these measures have yet to fully affect the programme.

39. A quality manager was appointed after the 2001 inspection and has led to significant development of quality assurance policies, procedures and user guidelines. A useful quality improvement manual has been written, following careful research and consultation with staff. This includes clear document control. The inclusive self-assessment process established over the past four years is well understood by staff. There is extensive collection and use of learners' feedback, and staff responses are clearly displayed in training centres. For example, learners' feedback contributed to improvements in the structure and timetabling of the Gateway to Work programme. Managers use feedback from learners and staff in their self-assessment discussions and judgements. The 2005 self-assessment, and the inspection judgements and grades confirm that continuous improvement has taken place. Staff use detailed development plans to plan and support continuous improvement. In January 2005, a new staff member was appointed who has experience in the quality systems used in education and training.

40. Juniper Training Ltd recently identified quality assurance processes for key learning processes and is ready to implement them as part of an annual cycle. However, the detailed sampling arrangements have not yet been completed. The processes include observation and file auditing of key learning processes and checking of internal verification and assessment records. The company has begun to monitor its subcontractors systematically, and a pilot programme of observations of learners' progress reviews recently took place with the E2E key workers. Further staff training in effective target-setting and action-planning is planned for May 2005. Induction processes, including initial target-setting, are to be observed from September 2005.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Foundation programmes

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability/employment training</i>		
New Deal for young people	96	2
Workstep	46	3
Other government-funded provision	11	3
Entry to Employment	95	2
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		
Work-based learning for adults	97	3

41. Juniper Training Ltd provides a number of training programmes funded through Jobcentre Plus, the LSC and the ESF. The Jobcentre Plus programmes include Gateway to Work with 96 participants, Workstep with 46 participants and SIBS with 97 participants. Participants are referred by Jobcentre Plus for a short induction to their programme, which includes an initial assessment. Following this, they attend intensive training in literacy, numeracy, communication, interview skills, jobsearch and other employment-related topics. Juniper Training Ltd also has 95 learners on an LSC-funded E2E programme. Of these, seven are on a programme for young mums to be. Learners are referred to this programme by Connexions, other agencies or self-referral. In January 2005, the company introduced two new programmes which are jointly funded by Jobcentre Plus and the ESF. There are 11 learners on these programmes. The first programme is a voluntary 13-week programme available to unemployed learners with a disability. It aims to support learners who are claiming incapacity benefit into either mainstream training or employment through training sessions on confidence building, motivation, barriers to employment and training opportunities. Learners attend the centre for between eight and 16 hours a week, and are referred to the programme by either a disability employment adviser or an incapacity benefit personal adviser. The second is a six-week programme for people between 18 and 65 who have been unemployed for less than 19 weeks. This programme aims to help learners to re-enter the labour market. Learners are normally referred by Jobcentre Plus and can attend training in jobsearch, interview skills, curriculum vitae preparation, self-presentation, and literacy and numeracy. There are opportunities to take part in short work placements and to gain qualifications in health and safety, first aid and basic food hygiene.

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence, motivation and employability skills
- particularly effective support
- good use of work experience in E2E and Workstep programmes
- particularly well-planned and well-managed programmes

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for some learners on Jobcentre Plus and ESF programmes
- insufficient development of skills for life teaching

Achievement and standards

42. Juniper Training Ltd develops learners' confidence, motivation and employability skills well. The learning environment at all centres is positive and conducive to learning. Staff set high standards of behaviour for learners and monitor them strictly, encouraging them to change their self-perception and raise their aspirations. For example, mirrors are placed in common areas with the notice 'would you employ this person?' There is a strong focus on the quality of coursework, including project reports and accurately completed curriculum vitae and application forms. Projects and coursework are displayed on noticeboards throughout all the centres to help build the confidence of learners. Staff respond promptly to learners' requests, for example by arranging interviews with employers. They seek learners' views and keep them informed about progress towards meeting their needs. The high standards of service from staff help to raise learners' self-esteem. Many learners who have faced a number of difficult experiences now benefit from close individual attention. Achievement is recognised and celebrated both individually and through a variety of awards events. All programme areas provide a high level of training to improve employability skills. Juniper Training Ltd has developed good relationships with employers, arranging for them to visit centres to help explain and identify the skills that are needed for employment. Learners recognise that their confidence and motivation has improved as a result of training, and that they are better equipped to seek and apply for jobs.

43. Job outcomes are satisfactory on Jobcentre Plus programmes. On Gateway to Work programmes, 43 per cent of participants gained employment in 2003-04, and 26 per cent in 2004-05. Thirty-two per cent of the 2004-05 intake are still on the programme. Juniper Training Ltd meets or exceeds the targets set by Jobcentre Plus for job outcomes on this programme. Currently, 33 per cent of the Workstep participants are in supported employment against a Jobcentre Plus target of 50 per cent. The only learner to have left the ESF-funded programmes so far has found employment. In the E2E programme, learners progress to further training or to jobs with training is satisfactory. In 2003-04, 34 per cent of young people progressed in this way, and in 2004-05, 16 per cent did so and 66 per cent are still in learning. In work-based learning for adults, retention rates are good. Over the past four years, the average rate of retention has been approximately 80 per cent. Fifty per cent of learners have achieved a level 1 qualification in either literacy or numeracy, and 30 per cent have achieved both. The number of additional qualifications achieved is good. A total of 301 individual certificates have been awarded so far this year, with most learners achieving three or four separate awards.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Entry to Employment	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	123		319														
Progression ¹	20		110														
Achieved objectives ²	11		45														
Still in learning	81		14														

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
New Deal for Young People	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	298		490	100	442	100	207	100									
Retained*	181		370	76	340	77	193	93									
Planned learning completed	76		212	43	178	40	83	40									
Gained job	76		212	43	178	40	83	40									
Still in training	96		0	0	0	0	0	0									

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Other government funded																	
Other government-funded provision	2004-05		2003-04														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	12	100	0														
Retained*	1	8	0														
Successfully completed	1	8	0														
Still in training	11	92	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

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																	
Work-based learning for adults	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	375		200	100	54	100	20	100									
Retained*	191		143	72	43	80	19	95									
Planned learning completed	144		107	54	21	39	10	50									
Gained job	0		0	0	0	0	0	0									
Still in training	97		0	0	0	0	0	0									

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

The quality of provision

44. Learners receive particularly effective individual support on all programmes, and they feel valued and respected. Staff are approachable, friendly and welcoming to learners. Tutors use firm but fair discipline in a non-judgemental way that learners respect. Behaviour is effectively managed and clear rules are set that all learners agree to during induction. Attendance and timekeeping are closely monitored. Staff have a good understanding of learners and are able to empathise with their individual circumstances. Learners are given practical and personal support, for example, Juniper Training Ltd provides them with interview clothes or freshen-up kits for personal hygiene before interviews. E2E learners are assigned to a key worker from their first day of training. They have regular individual

support, and progress reviews that focus on progression. Learners are given regular, positive and constructive feedback by tutors. There is good celebration of success, and even the smallest achievements are praised and celebrated. Learners' work and copies of certificates are prominently displayed in classrooms and on noticeboards throughout the training centres. Learners produce an E2E magazine 'The Streets' that is full of success stories featuring not only achievers from Juniper Training Ltd, but also learners from other local providers. This is circulated to Connexions, other providers, colleges and schools.

45. There is a strong focus on employment experience to meet the needs of E2E learners and Workstep participants. Learners and participants are carefully and well matched to supportive employers who are empathetic to their needs. The disabilities of Workstep participants are dealt with sensitively, and discussed alongside their educational and employment needs. Individual measures are taken when necessary, for example some participants are collected from home and taken to work. There are work-experience placements in a broad range of local businesses including mechanics, removals, catering, childcare, care, sports coaching, administration, butchers, retailing and local community services. Workstep participants are presented in a particularly positive light to employers, who are strongly encouraged to offer good-quality work opportunities. In E2E, more than half the learners are currently on work placements. There is a clear phased approach to the development of employability skills and applying for jobs. E2E learners take part in a wide range of activities to involve them in learning, working towards employment, and putting something back into the local community. For example they have raised money by doing sponsored hikes for cancer research and by recycling printer cartridges for a local hospice. There is good use of access to work funding to support Workstep participants into employment.

46. Teaching is satisfactory. Tutors have a good rapport with learners and understand their learning and support needs. In the better sessions learning is well planned, and different teaching methods are used effectively to involve learners and enable them to absorb information and practise new skills. For example, in all observed E2E sessions there were very detailed schemes of work and session plans. Sessions are evaluated by tutors and learners. Tutors engage learners in a variety of stimulating and enjoyable activities, including group and pair work, to keep them interested and promote learning. In one session, learners worked in pairs to plan a two-course meal around a healthy balanced diet. They budgeted for the ingredients, went out with tutors to buy them, and came back to the centre and prepared and cooked the meal. They tasted and evaluated the final results and all thoroughly enjoyed the activity. Activities are photographed or videoed using digital cameras and used as evidence for key skills. However, in the weaker sessions the range of teaching methods used is narrow, and there is too much reliance on group discussion or worksheets. These sessions do not take sufficient account of individual learning styles or do they provide opportunities for learners to progress at different rates. Induction is satisfactory on all programmes and covers health and safety, equality and diversity, rules and regulations, and roles and responsibilities. Learners are given clear information about the organisation and the structure of their learning programmes though they are not always stimulated by some parts of the induction. Initial assessment for E2E learners is thorough and, over a four-week period, covers literacy and numeracy levels, learning styles, skills checks, teamwork activities and career aspirations. The planning of individual learning for E2E learners is satisfactory.

47. Target-setting is weak for some learners on Jobcentre Plus and ESF programmes.

However, it is satisfactory for the personal and social skills development of E2E learners. There are substantial variations in the quality of targets within programmes and between centres. Jobsearch targets for Gateway to Work and the ESF programme are usually clear, specific and timebound. However, many action plans do not include specific targets for the development of personal and social skills, and few include specific learning objectives. For example, many contain a target to attend the two-week Gateway to Work intensive training but do not specify any further learning objectives within these sessions to meet individual needs. Learning objectives on SIBS courses are not sufficiently clear. For example, targets mention fractions but not how they can be applied in everyday life or work situations. Relevant vocational or occupational training opportunities are not always identified. Some learners are not aware of their targets and rely on tutors to direct their activities. Although staff collect a good range of information on learners' abilities and needs through initial assessment, this information is not always used effectively to develop action plans.

48. Skills for life teaching is insufficiently developed. A diagnostic assessment is used to identify gaps in learners' literacy and numeracy skills, but information from the assessment is not always used effectively to plan learning. Learners are taught literacy and numeracy skills, though learners following SIBS programmes have little opportunity to apply these skills in a practical context. The range of resources and materials used is narrow and there is too much reliance on paper-based resources and worksheets. However, the SIBS programme has recently been redesigned. The new timetables and lesson plans indicate a greater variety of teaching methods and more effective use of resources.

Leadership and management

49. Programmes are planned and managed well. On Gateway to Work, participants are enrolled quickly and efficiently after they have been referred by Jobcentre Plus. Where appropriate, they are promptly transferred to more suitable programmes. There are clear structures and weekly timetables of training sessions on Gateway to Work, the ESF programmes, Workstep and E2E. Planning of programmes is very sensitive to the needs of individuals. It is flexible in responding to their needs or circumstances and in encouraging them to make choices. For example, in E2E, young people are offered different options for vocational elements, personal and social development and literacy and numeracy. In consultation with staff, they can choose the order in which they carry out these elements of training to suit their individual circumstances. Work experience in E2E programmes is well managed and carefully planned to occur at the most appropriate point in the programme. On Gateway to Work, a drop-in facility for jobsearch and the development of job-seeking skills is available both before and after attending the mandatory two-week element of the programme. Learners value this flexibility and the opportunity to seek help when they need it and to use Juniper Training Ltd's resources.

50. Teaching staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are deployed well. Both they and the physical resources are efficiently shared across all programmes. This allows learners from different programmes access to a wider range of training sessions. Internal communication between staff is good. Staff meetings at programme, centre and company level ensure that business objectives, new developments and practices are effectively shared. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement, particularly through Juniper Training Ltd's Towards Excellence meetings. There is a range of methods to collect feedback from learners, and the action taken as a result is clearly displayed on wall charts.

51. Performance data is used well to monitor performance against targets. Performance management has led to improvements including the introduction of procedures to manage absence. Attendance is now good. The E2E programme has been re-structured as a result of learners' feedback. The SIBS programme is less developed and co-ordinated than other programmes, but has recently been re-designed to remedy this. Equality and diversity are clearly promoted and learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

