

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **North Lancs Training Group**

**22 September 2006**



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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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

## North Lancs Training Group

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. North Lancs Training Group (NLTG) is a group training association with its headquarters in Accrington in Lancashire. It is a private company limited by guarantee. It was established in 1969 as part of the Furniture and Timber Industry Training Board and was a founder member of the Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors National Training Organisation. NLTG became a limited company in 1986. All profits are reinvested into the business for training and resources. NLTG provides work-based learning for young people and adults.
2. NLTG currently has 2,185 learners with 69 in glass occupations, 87 in carpentry and joinery, 329 in furniture, 205 in performing manufacturing operations, 120 in food and drink manufacturing, 26 in glass production, 333 in business administration, 110 in team leading, 203 in customer service, 38 learners in information and communications technology (ICT), 157 in warehousing and distribution and 438 in hospitality and catering. It also has 70 learners on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes. In addition, NLTG has a few learners on learning programmes in lift truck operations and telesales, but these have not been included.
3. Training and assessment takes place on the job in most programmes. In construction and foundation programmes, off-the-job training is subcontracted to local colleges of further education and other training providers including Preston College and Accrington and Rossendale College for the carpentry and joinery national vocational qualification (NVQ) at levels 2 and 3.
4. NLTG now represents approximately 82 member companies, primarily throughout the Northwest of England, but has links with 1,000 employers that provide employment or placements. With the exception of E2E learners, all learners are employed or placed with a company from the beginning of their programme.
5. NLTG employs 173 staff and operates from seven sites, including one in Preston and one in Oldham. In excess of 45 staff used to be NLTG apprentices, five of whom are part of the management team.
6. NLTG has contracts for government-funded programmes with five Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). There are E2E contracts with two of the LSCs and Train to Gain contracts with six LSCs. Lancashire LSC takes the lead and accounts for 56 per cent of the training provision. Manchester LSC has 24 per cent, West Yorkshire LSC has 10 per cent, Cumbria LSC has 6 per cent and Cheshire and Warrington LSC has 4 per cent.
7. NLTG is also a subcontractor for Pendle Training for a European Social fund project.
8. The head office of NLTG is in Accrington, Lancashire. Almost all training is delivered on employers' premises, with the exception of the E2E programme and carpentry and joinery which is delivered off the job in Accrington, Preston and Oldham.
9. Government funding makes up 95 per cent of NLTG's annual budget.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

10. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** More specifically, leadership and management are good, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. The work-based learning provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies, business administration and law, retail and commercial enterprise and preparation for life and work are also good.

11. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment is well established. Staff are fully involved in the process. Each team produces a report on its area and team managers monitor and moderate the process.

12. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** NLTG's quality improvement arrangements are particularly effective. The provider has recorded nearly 100 improvements since the previous inspection. Many of the weaknesses identified have been overcome and are now strengths.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORTH LANCS TRAINING GROUP:

- continue to improve success rates
- increase participation at level 3
- maintain good levels of support
- complete the implementation of observation of teaching and learning
- improve analysis and use of equal opportunities data
- improve staff knowledge of new measures of success

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		2

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Manufacturing technologies</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	585	2	
Train to Gain	129	2	

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Warehousing and distribution</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	138	2	
NVQ training for young people	10	2	
Train to Gain	51	2	
<b>Hospitality and catering</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	358	2	
NVQ training for young people	13	2	
Train to Gain	25	2	

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b>			
Entry to Employment	70	2	

<b>Business administration and law</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Administration</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	319	2
Train to Gain	14	2
<b>Business management</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	42	2
Train to Gain	68	2
<b>Customer service</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	181	2
Train to Gain	22	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

13. The inspection covered the provider's leadership and management and provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies, business administration and law, retailing and commercial enterprise, and preparation for life and work.

14. The provision in ICT and in construction and the built environment was not inspected during this inspection. There were also too few learners in lift truck operations and telesales for these areas to be inspected separately. Judgements on these programmes are included in the leadership and management section.

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	59
Number of learners interviewed	185
Number of staff interviewed	103
Number of employers interviewed	93
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	97
Number of visits	1

## Leadership and Management

### Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- very effective strategy for literacy and numeracy support
- good staff development
- productive partnership working
- particularly effective arrangements for quality improvement
- good promotion of equality of opportunity



- good reinforcement of equality of opportunity

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective analysis and use of equal opportunities data
- incomplete implementation of observation of teaching and learning

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Manufacturing technologies***

#### *Strengths*

- high standard of work by learners in the workplace
- very good approach to working with employers
- good understanding of programme requirements
- very good support for learners
- good resources to support learning

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient challenge for some learners

## **Retail and commercial enterprise**

#### *Strengths*

- good occupational skills
- good success rates for NVQ-only programmes
- good training and learning
- very effective links with employers and local schools
- particularly good support for literacy and numeracy

#### *Weaknesses*

- ineffective actions to stop declining advanced apprenticeship success rates in hospitality

## **Preparation for life and work**

#### *Strengths*

- good positive outcomes
- particularly good numeracy teaching
- broad curriculum
- very good support
- particularly effective management

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient learner-focused teaching
- weak aspects of target-setting and reviews

## **Business administration and law**

### *Strengths*

- good success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- particularly good workplaces
- good support for learners
- very effective use of resources
- good development of personal and occupational skills in the workplace
- well-managed programmes

### *Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses identified

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORTH LANCS TRAINING GROUP:**

- good individual support from training advisers
- 'they helped me get qualifications after I failed at school'
- friendly, helpful staff
- help with spelling and maths
- regular assessor visits
- learning while at work and developing new skills
- 'this course has made me more effective in my job'
- 'North Lancs Training has helped me gain confidence'
- 'good clear explanations by the training officer helped me understand things better'
- learning more about the factory, the processes and health and safety
- 'North Lancs Training are like a second family'
- 'I love North Lancs Training'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORTH LANCS TRAINING GROUP COULD IMPROVE:**

- less time between visits
- better networking between learners to bounce ideas
- more challenge
- more training
- fewer repetitive questions
- better timetabling
- more outdoor activities
- learn about other trades such as sewing and frame making
- 'sometimes find the training officers' accents difficult to understand'

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

#### Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- very effective strategy for literacy and numeracy support
- good staff development
- productive partnership working
- particularly effective arrangements for quality improvement
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good reinforcement of equality of opportunity

#### Weaknesses

- ineffective analysis and use of equal opportunities data
- incomplete implementation of observation of teaching and learning

15. The board and senior management team at NLTG provide clear strategic direction for the organisation. The three-year strategic plan for 2006-09 satisfactorily sets out the organisation's vision and mission statement as well as targets for year-on-year improvement. It is supported by a more detailed annual business plan for each sector of the provision. Since the previous inspection the provider has invested heavily in new premises and good resources including the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for furniture and the employment and training of new and existing staff. The group interacts with industry through contact with its member companies and its training provision reflects their needs. Member companies value NLTG as their main source of information about legislative and other developments.

16. NLTG's strategy for the literacy and numeracy support is very effective. Through its initial assessment, the provider satisfactorily identifies learners who have additional needs. These learners then receive individual support from tutors from the skills for life team, all of whom have, or are working towards, level 4 qualifications in either literacy or numeracy and level 3 in the other. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. In addition, all learners take a diagnostic test in literacy and numeracy. The strategy for language support is satisfactory. Potential learners who have additional language needs are referred to local colleges for specialist support until such time as they are able to enter the NLTG programme.

17. The staff development is good. Many of the staff are former NLTG apprentices, including five senior managers. New staff are allocated a 'buddy' as their mentor. Staff's training needs are identified when they join the company and subsequently each year through an effective appraisal system. Individual development needs are linked to the business needs of the organisation and also to staff aims. The development of literacy and numeracy for staff is a priority. In addition to the training officers working towards qualifications, all staff have this year taken a diagnostic test and have been offered

developmental support if required. The provider plans to test all staff annually.

18. The provider works productively with a wide range of other providers and organisations. Collaborative working is a particular feature of the organisation. Working relationships with another provider, Training 2000, are particularly good. The two organisations offer largely complementary provision and they mutually refer learners as part of their membership of the local information advice and guidance network. The two organisations were the prime instigators of a Lancashire-wide work-based learning provider network, which is formalised through the establishment of a company called the Lancashire work-based learning executive forum. The forum identifies and publicises good practice among its members. The forum has a number of subgroups including one to respond to the 14-19 strategy and another working on the implications to members of the new measures of success. Staff from NLTG are active in all the subgroups

19. Management of subcontractors is satisfactory. The main subcontractor is Accrington and Rossendale College. The service level agreement allows the provider to observe teaching and learning in the college. Trained observers from NLTG regularly observe teaching sessions to monitor the quality of provision. These observations are not, however, graded. The provider has previously withdrawn training from other colleges with which it was not satisfied.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

20. NLTG has suitable policies for equality and diversity and maintains an effective equality and diversity business plan. The plan contains clear objectives on increasing staff and learner' understanding equality and diversity, and to increase participation rates of women, minority ethnic groups and those with a disability. However, progress against targets is not always adequately recorded. The company's three-year strategic plan recognises declining participation rates from minority ethnic learners, and identifies strategies to improve the promotion of programmes through the recruitment of an additional outreach worker to raise awareness among the local communities.

21. Promotion of the provision and equality of opportunity is good. NLTG works well with four local schools as part of the schools partnership initiative and regularly attends careers fairs, school events, community festivals, roadshows and youth organisations to promote work-based learning to pupils. Further visits are made frequently to schools, community centres and home visits to applicants or leavers. Female tutors in the furniture section and staff from minority ethnic groups work effectively as role models at promotional events. NLTG has developed close links with the Asian Business Federation and has attended functions to promote programmes to Asian youngsters and to raise awareness of equality and diversity. NLTG sponsored an Asian organised boxing tournament to further develop links with the Asian community. NLTG's telesales department has carried out campaigns which specifically target employers from minority ethnic groups. A furniture company that only employs people from minority ethnic groups is now using NLTG as a training provider for its apprentices. At the time of the previous inspection the use of stereotypical images in promotional and marketing materials was a weakness, but this is no longer the case. Promotional leaflets and parts of the website relating to specific programmes include prominent images of non-stereotypical learners such as young men working in catering and upholstery, women in woodworking, and several learners from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of women on NLTG programmes has increased from 33 per cent at the time of the previous

inspection to 37 per cent currently. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups has increased from 2.4 per cent to 3.2 per cent currently. The proportion of learners with a disability has increased from less than 1 per cent to 5.4 per cent currently. NLTG had the first woman in the country to achieve a furniture modern apprenticeship and she is now employed as a tutor in the CoVE. NLTG also had the first female foundation modern apprentice in the country to achieve fenestration, installation and surveying at level 2.

22. Reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity is good throughout their apprenticeship. All staff and learners are given relevant and detailed information on equality of opportunity during induction. The learner handbook is supplied to all apprentices at the start of their programme. It provides a useful reference to NLTG's policies relating to equality and diversity, but does not provide direct contact details for equality and diversity matters. Learners are also provided with an informative handbook on equality and diversity which includes legislation, religions and useful contact addresses and websites for further information. Learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity is reinforced at every review by training officers who ask a series of questions related to equality and diversity and discuss learners' responses. Discussions effectively check learners' understanding and raise awareness. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities and have a good awareness of the complaints and appeals procedures. The effectiveness of reviews is monitored through observations by training managers and by quality assurance staff.

23. At the time of the previous inspection, employers' arrangements for equality of opportunity were not regularly monitored. This has now been dealt with and is satisfactory. Staff check if employers have an equal opportunities policy and all employers are given an employer handbook which contains details of their equal opportunities responsibilities as well as a CD-ROM with typical policies that can be easily adapted for their own use. Employers' arrangements are monitored before learners start their programmes and then are monitored at every review. Progress reviews focus on equality in the workplace and on equality, welfare and diversity issues. NLTG maintains a list of local companies with which they will not engage for a variety of reasons including poor equality and diversity practices.

24. NLTG do not use data on equality and diversity sufficiently. NLTG collects appropriate data, on ethnicity, gender and any disability, for all applicants. However, there is no detailed analysis of this information and it is not systematically discussed in any forum. There is insufficient collection of information related to conversion rates from initial contact or expression of interest to subsequent recruitment, or the comparative retention and achievement rates of each group. Discrepancies in performance between different groups are not sufficiently discussed.

25. The training facilities at NLTG do not have good access for people with restricted mobility. NLTG has carried out fully costed access audits, but no action has yet been taken to improve access to the upper floors of the building. However, NLTG will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate learners who have restricted mobility.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

26. NLTG's quality improvement arrangements are particularly effective. The provider has recorded nearly 100 improvements since the previous inspection. Many of the

weaknesses identified have been overcome and are now strengths. For example, at the previous inspection there was little formal quality assurance of on-the-job training, but now the provider's training officers regularly carry out observation of employers' training. The provider is also investigating other methods to further quality assure the training which learners receive in the workplace.

27. Quality improvement documents are comprehensive and very clear. An overview of each of the procedures in the learners' journey are shown in flowchart form, supported by detailed work instructions. There are good processes to monitor and quality assure the conduct of each procedure. Regular internal audits are effective and staff take prompt action to rectify identified non-conformance. External auditors further quality assure the procedures every six months. The provider responds appropriately to any observations made. NLTG uses external consultants to assist in quality improvement and the quality manager is working towards NVQ at level 4 in quality management and the ALL quality champion award.

28. The self-assessment is well established and staff are fully involved in the process. Each team produces a report on its area using a pack which contains guidance on self-assessment and relevant internal and external data. Team managers monitor and moderate the process for their group of teams. The various sections are then incorporated into the overall report, which is distributed to staff for comment and amendment. The teams then produce an action plan. The latest revision to the self-assessment report was in August 2006. At the time of the inspection the action plans were still being updated to reflect the latest revised strengths and weaknesses.

29. NLTG's management information system is robust. Staff can access the web-based system at six sites. Teams and senior managers make extensive use of statistical data to manage the provision, identify and monitor trends and evaluate the effect of changes. Reports are produced at individual learner, training officer, team and organisational level.

30. Quality assurance staff visit employers regularly. They observe and grade reviews and other meetings with learners using a scoring system to evaluate each aspect of the meeting. The results of these observations are used in the quality improvement process and help team leaders with their line management of the training officers at the employers' premises, they also collect learner and employer feedback using a standard questionnaire. Matters arising from the feedback are fed into team and management meetings. Each year the provider invites groups of learners to a learner forum. A member of staff chairs the meeting and elicits learners' views on the various aspects of the provision. Following each forum the provider produces an action plan. Currently, the provider is seeking to improve ways of giving feedback to the learners on the actions taken.

31. Internal verification is robust. In addition to the normal satisfactory internal verification practices, the provider's NVQ co-ordinators observe a planned sample of each internal verifier's site visits to further quality assure the process. They quality assure the internal verifiers' observation of assessments and further internally verify assessments in the learners' portfolios. This was identified as good practice at the previous inspection and has been continued and enhanced.

32. The provider's arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning have not

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been completely implemented. Training officers observe on-the-job training when possible and staff observe teaching in the subcontracted college. They produce written records and give oral feedback, but in neither case are the observed sessions graded. The skills for life team has successfully piloted a system of observation for their department, which is in the process of being applied to the rest of NLTG's training staff. Written and oral feedback is appropriate and the provider claims that the standard of teaching and learning has improved since the implementation of the scheme. However, this is difficult to quantify without a grading system. The skills for life department is now piloting the next stage of the scheme which includes grading, but at the time of inspection only two graded observations had taken place and it was too early to judge the effect.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Manufacturing technologies</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	585	2
Train to Gain	129	2

33. NLTG delivers programmes in performing manufacturing operations, furniture occupations, food and drink manufacturing, glass processing and textiles. It currently operates the only CoVE in furniture manufacture in the country. Workplaces for all occupational areas are diverse, with performing manufacturing operations covering a wide range of manufacturing industries and processes within small and medium-sized companies. Furniture occupations include small employers producing hand-crafted furniture through to large multi-site manufacturing operations throughout England. Food and drink organisations include bakeries and pizza manufacturers, while glass processing and textile and sewing take place in a smaller number of companies.

34. At the time of inspection there are 714 learners. There are 103 female learners, 303 aged 16-18 and 20 learners from minority ethnic groups.

35. All learners are employed. Training officers visit learners every four to six weeks for training and assessments with reviews of progress on alternate visits. Key skills delivery and assessment is also on employers' premises, the exception being key skill tests which are taken at NLTG by learners who can attend the centre. Over half the learners receive additional learning support in the workplace.

### **Manufacturing technologies**

#### *Strengths*

- high standard of work by learners in the workplace
- very good approach to working with employers
- good understanding of programme requirements
- very good support for learners
- good resources to support learning

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient challenge for some learners

### **Achievement and standards**

36. The overall framework success rate for advanced apprentices is satisfactory and has improved from 33 per cent in 2003-04 to 55 per cent at period 12 in 2005-06. The number of advanced apprentices remains low and is currently only offered in making and

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installing furniture, wood machining and glass processing.

37. The overall framework success rate for apprentices is satisfactory. It declined slightly in 2004-05, but it has improved to 61 per cent at period 12 in 2005-06. The overall success rates for apprentices in glass processing, and food and drink manufacturing have been above the national averages for the past two years. Performing manufacturing operations apprenticeships only started in 2005-06 and it is too early to make judgements about the success rates. The success rates for performing manufacturing operations at level 2 was high at 78 per cent in 2003-04 and 70 per cent in 2004-05. A few learners complete their key skills and employment rights and responsibilities late in the programme. Timely success rates remain low at 33 per cent for 2005-06. Most learners are making satisfactory progress and fewer are now exceeding their expected end dates.

38. The overall achievement rate for Train to Gain learners is satisfactory. The achievement rate declined from 86 per cent in 2004-05 to 80 per cent in 2005-06. In food and drink manufacturing and in furniture installation the achievement rates are high at 90 per cent for 2004-05 and 2005-06. The achievement rate for Train to Gain learners on performing manufacturing operations declined and was low at 52 per cent for 2005-06.

39. Learners work in very good workplaces and achieve a high standard of work. They take pride in the work they produce and are motivated to maintain the high standards that employers require. Employers speak highly of the vocational and personal skills learners have developed and are confident enough to allow them to carry out most work activities with minimal supervision. Learners develop a very good understanding of how their work affects other operations in the manufacturing process. Key skills projects build learners' skills which are relevant to the workplace and their personal lives. Many have progressed to more complex operations and tasks within their workplace and several learners have been promoted to team leaders. In furniture manufacturing, learners sometimes display their work at exhibitions and successfully take part in skills competitions. One learner achieved a medal of excellence in 2005.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	15	33	57	33	46
		timely	10	10	34	10	27
	2004-05	overall	21	38	57	33	45
		timely	25	16	33	12	25
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	243	66	48	58	32
		timely	185	43	22	38	13
	2004-05	overall	321	58	52	55	41
		timely	381	30	27	27	19
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	436	77	46	0	0
		timely	438	67	33	0	0
	2004-05	overall	343	69	56	0	0
		timely	341	57	38	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### **The quality of provision**

40. NLTG has a very good approach to working with employers. It offers occupationally specific qualifications across all types of manufacturing environments. Employers value the occupational knowledge and expertise that the training officers provide. The qualifications and optional units are carefully selected to meet the needs of learners and employers. Training officers adopt a very professional approach to their work. They are conscious of the production pressures facing manufacturers and where possible arrange visits to fit in with employers' changing priorities. They are well prepared for each visit and keep to agreed times and dates wherever possible. Employers are based long distances from the main training centre are visited on the same regular basis as those located nearby. Training officers have established very good working relationships with employers' managers, supervisors and production staff. Employers are kept well informed about learners' progress and are fully involved in the review process. NLTG effectively supports employers in the recruitment and selection of suitable young people. Employers are group members value the good technical advice, the legislative updates and the wide range of training courses available to them. Many employers contribute and share their facilities and resources, either by allowing other learners opportunities to fill gaps in their experience or by allowing their learners access and time to attend the well-resourced CoVE centre.

41. Learners and employers have a good understanding of the requirements of their programmes. Advanced apprentices and apprentices clearly appreciate the different parts of their frameworks and how these will develop relevant work-related skills. During their programme, learners are fully aware of what they have completed and what they still need to do to complete the programme. They gain a great sense of achievement when they receive certificates for the units they have completed. Most learners make very effective use of the same pieces of evidence to achieve the requirements of the NVQ and the key skills. Learners are well prepared for their key skills tests and value the option of doing them either as a paper-based test or online. Most learners appreciate being able to take these tests in the workplace.

42. The support for learners is very good. The support and development of literacy and numeracy skills is particularly effective. Over half of all learners have been identified as needing additional support. Employers, as well as learners, value the appropriate methods used by NLTG to identify additional learning needs and the type of support needed. Many learners are supported by specialist tutors in very effective individual sessions in the workplace. Others are well supported by the occupational training officers. Learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills and successfully achieve key skills at an appropriate level. Some Train to Gain learners achieve key skills at level 1 or 2 as well as a level 2 NVQ. Employers allow learners sufficient time away from the production areas to work on their qualifications. When they successfully complete their programme, they are presented with a framed certificate which is often displayed in the workplace so that everyone can recognise their achievement. Training officers spend significant periods of time with individual learners mentoring and encouraging them throughout the programme. Frequent contact is maintained between learners and training officers and,

when appropriate, visits are arranged for night shifts and out of normal working hours.

43. There is a good range of quality resources to support learning. The training officers are well qualified and have good industry knowledge and expertise. The food and drink manufacturing team has developed a good range of industry specific worksheets and materials to test learners' knowledge. They loan employers laptop computers and use an effective specialised interactive CD-ROM to test learners' knowledge of food hygiene. This allows learners to work through relevant modules in a well-structured and carefully managed process. Some learners are given access to specialist machinery in high technology industries as part of their training. NLTG has a good range of resources and training facilities which are effectively used to promote the industry and develop a high standard of skills. However, some of the materials used are not of the same high standard.

44. There are insufficient challenges for some learners. The action plans and targets set for learners after each visit are sometimes vague and not always suitably challenging. Some learners feel they are not sufficiently encouraged to progress quickly. There are insufficient progression routes for some learners. NLTG does not offer occupationally specific advanced apprenticeships programmes in general manufacturing operations or food and drink manufacturing. There is inconsistency between assessors as to when they start and complete the key skills. In some areas, learners are only expected to achieve the minimum requirements for the apprenticeship framework and are not encouraged to achieve additional units, additional key skills or higher-level key skills. Learners on glass processing or food and drink manufacturing programmes, who use computers to produce evidence for their communications and applications of number key skills, routinely complete information technology (IT) key skills, which is not a requirement of the framework. This good practice has not been implemented by other occupational teams.

### **Leadership and management**

45. The provision is well managed with clear strategies and shared strategic direction in place. Target-setting is well established and regularly reviewed and recorded at the fortnightly sector team meetings.

46. Training officers are very enthusiastic and caring of their caseload of learners that allows for the extensive geographical circumstances. Many members of the training team are qualified ex-apprentices who have trained through NLTG before gaining assessor and teaching awards. Rigorous internal verification procedures are in place. The feedback through external verifier reports is very positive.

47. Extensive staff development opportunities are available, particularly through the CoVE for the furniture sector. Most staff regularly attend professional development, and good networking with other providers and employers has been established through the appointment of subject-learning coaches. The sharing of innovative teaching and learning has brought benefits to the provision through trainers adding increased variety to the learners' experience during their lessons. Development and editing of learning resources takes place regularly following identification at the fortnightly sector team meetings. Staff often contribute to events where learning resources are reviewed and amended.

48. Inspectors found the judgements contained in the self-assessment report to be a fair reflection of their findings with the exception of the single identified weakness that they felt was outside the provider's control. Learners are clear about the implications of equal

opportunities issues and training officers regularly reinforce their understanding during reviews and assessments.

**Retail and commercial enterprise****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Warehousing and distribution</i></b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	138	2
NVQ training for young people	10	2
Train to Gain	51	2
<b><i>Hospitality and catering</i></b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	358	2
NVQ training for young people	13	2
Train to Gain	25	2

49. NLTG provides training in a range of warehousing and hospitality occupations. There are 595 learners, of whom, 81 are advanced apprentices, 415 are apprentices, 23 are taking the NVQ only and 76 are Train to Gain learners. Apprentices, NVQ-only and Train to Gain learners work towards NVQs in distribution and warehousing, food, bar and drink service, food preparation and cooking, professional cookery and front office and reception. Advanced apprentices work towards NVQs in food preparation and cooking, professional cookery and hospitality supervision. All learners are employed. Learners have an induction to the programme, which includes employment rights and responsibilities and a briefing on the NVQ and the framework. Learners receive an initial assessment to identify additional needs in literacy, numeracy and language. Training officers visit learners every three to six weeks in the workplace for on- and off-the-job training, assessment and progress reviews.

*Strengths*

- good occupational skills
- good success rates for NVQ-only programmes
- good training and learning
- very effective links with employers and local schools
- particularly good support for literacy and numeracy

*Weaknesses*

- ineffective actions to stop declining advanced apprenticeship success rates in hospitality

**Achievement and standards**

50. The overall success rate for NVQ-only learners is good. Although the rate declined between 2004-05 and 2005-06, for the past three years the success rates have been high and well above the national average. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory. They declined between 2003-04 and 2004-05, but in 2005-06 increased by 6 per cent on the previous year and were above the national average. Success rates for advanced apprentices in 2005-06, although above the national average, have declined by 33 per cent in the past three years.

51. Learners' occupational skills are good. Level 3 hospitality supervisory learners have

good organisational skills. They are particularly effective at planning staff rotas to take account of the volume of business, rest days, the need to use full- and part-time staff effectively and to ensure cost efficiency. Level 2 bar service learners have a good knowledge of the licensed trade. Their understanding of cellaring and the characteristics of different beers is very good. One of the bar service learners was highly commended in the Skills for Business 2006 apprenticeship awards for micro businesses. Food preparation and cookery learners have good culinary skills. When preparing salads and hors d'oeuvres they have a thorough understanding of the importance of taste, texture and colour in their presentation. Warehousing and distribution learners have strong team working skills, develop good understanding of safety and are particularly effective in the use of ICT for ordering and loading goods. Learners' knowledge of the different core skills of hospitality including hygiene and food safety is good. Portfolios of evidence are effectively organised and answers to theory questions are of a good standard. Learners are very well motivated and enthusiastic.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	21	71	31	71	21
		timely	12	42	19	42	13
	2004-05	overall	30	43	31	40	22
		timely	33	27	22	24	15
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	321	69	45	65	32
		timely	269	46	24	44	18
	2004-05	overall	307	55	45	51	35
		timely	325	42	30	39	23
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	69	64	39	0	0
		timely	67	61	28	0	0
	2004-05	overall	46	72	50	0	0
		timely	46	67	34	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### The quality of provision

52. Training and learning are good. Training officers thoroughly check the range of training the employer can provide to develop occupational skills and understanding of background knowledge. Training officers have a good understanding of learners' prior knowledge and skills. They take particularly effective account of learners' specific learning needs when planning training, as well as the requirements of the framework, the NVQ, the employer and if appropriate the technical certificate. In the workplace, employers provide learners with a wide range of good training opportunities. Training officers have a strong understanding of how each learner prefers to learn. They work well with learners to ensure they have a good understanding of this work and with employers to develop occupational skills.

## NORTH LANCS TRAINING GROUP

53. Off-the-job training is of a high standard. Training officers plan learning sessions well, for individuals or groups. They make group sessions lively and interesting and are especially effective at motivating learners to contribute in discussion. They make good use of examples from industry to make learning relevant. Training officers in warehousing and distribution make good use of unit certification to motivate learners. However, the quality of written learning targets varies. They are mostly good in hospitality, but in warehousing, training officers do not provide some learners with sufficiently challenging targets. Assessment is fair and accurate.

54. Literacy and numeracy support is particularly good. At the start of the programme, staff check learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills thoroughly. Learners receive further assessments if their literacy and numeracy needs are more complex. All learners who need additional help receive a programme which is designed to meet their individual needs. NLTG provides general assistance for literacy and numeracy for completing portfolios and key skills, gives additional help in the workplace for those with basic support needs and specialist individual support from dedicated numeracy and literacy tutors for those with complex support needs. The quality of tuition for learning support sessions is very good. Tutors and training officers use a range of good methods which relate literacy and numeracy to the hospitality and warehousing industries. Records of literacy and numeracy activities and progress reviews are particularly thorough and informative. Inspectors identified that learners who were receiving additional support for literacy and numeracy improved their confidence in communicating with others and were able to deal more effectively with their job role.

55. Links with employers and local schools are very effective. Employers are strongly involved in discussions about the development of training programmes and regularly attend team meetings. Training officers work well with employers and are particularly good at developing strong partnerships. NLTG often runs short courses at employers' premises and offers additional places to employees who are not their learners. Staff have significant knowledge and understanding of warehousing and hospitality employers. NLTG's staff have worked with, or continue to work part-time with, a broad range of employers. This helps them establish better working relationships with the employer and their learners as well as assisting them to maintain and improve their own occupational skills. Links with local schools are good. Staff from NLTG have established effective working relationships with schools and provide cookery demonstrations to final-year pupils to encourage them into the hospitality industry.

56. Resources are satisfactory. Learners have access to a wide range of learning materials and aids including books and IT. Training rooms used by the provider are well resourced in hospitality. The range of accommodation, facilities and equipment in the workplace varies. Some are outstanding, but in others the standards are low and in some instances do not provide privacy for learners' literacy and numeracy sessions. Staff are well qualified.

57. NLTG provides an appropriate range of provision which meets the needs of learners and employers in the warehousing, distribution and hospitality industries. NLTG also offers a range of commercial courses for industry. These are also available to learners and include courses on the licensed trade, food hygiene, and health and safety.

58. The provider has effective arrangements for initial advice, guidance and support. All



learners receive a preliminary interview to decide the most suitable programme of learning. Induction arrangements cover equality, the framework, learner support and the most suitable NVQ optional units. Training officers regularly check learners' well being and where appropriate provide comprehensive personal support to help them complete their studies. NLTG provides contact details for external agencies if learners need specialist personal support, including problems with housing, drink and drugs and finance. At the end of the learning programme, training officers provide careers and progression guidance. Many learners are promoted and some move into further training or higher education.

### **Leadership and management**

59. Good management of hospitality and warehousing ensures that learners receive good training, develop high standards of occupational skills and knowledge, and maintain success rates. Communications between managers and staff are good. Regular team meetings between managers and training officers focus clearly on learners' performance and needs. If there are problems, managers and training officers take action to resolve them. Self-assessment is thorough. The self-assessment report gives an accurate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. However, some strengths were no more than normal practice. Internal verification ensures assessment is accurate.

60. Training officers thoroughly cover equality of opportunity at induction. They discuss the promotion of equality during visits to learners. Training officers regularly check that learners are not discriminated against and that they are safe and do not face harassment and bullying.

61. NLTG's managers and training officers have been unable to stop the significant decline in success rates for advanced apprentices in hospitality. Managers and training officers are very conscious of this problem and have worked hard to develop strategies to resolve it. However, the success rate for advanced apprentices has declined by 33 per cent in the past three years.

**Preparation for life and work****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Literacy and numeracy</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Entry to Employment	70	2

62. NLTG provides E2E programmes for 70 learners from three centres located in Accrington, Preston and Oldham. Learners enrol on the programme either directly or through referral from Connexions. They face a range of problems including homelessness. The programme has four phases. The first covers induction and initial assessment over a four-week period, and the second and third cover a combination of core and optional modules. These phases cover the three core modules of literacy and numeracy, employability skills and personal development according to the needs of the individual learner. Learners work towards a range of different qualifications or awards and attend work experience. During the final stage, the learners spend a considerable proportion of their time on work placement as they prepare to move on from E2E. The learners attend the centres for between 16 and 30 hours a week. The average length of stay during the 2005-06 contract year was 20.5 weeks.

63. An E2E manager is supported by three centre co-ordinators, nine key workers and a placement officer. Eleven part-time tutors and 10 literacy and numeracy tutors teach on the programme. In addition, NLTG has hired the services of an E2E adviser. A wide range of agencies also provides specialist teaching.

*Strengths*

- good positive outcomes
- particularly good numeracy teaching
- broad curriculum
- very good support
- particularly effective management

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient learner-focused teaching
- weak aspects of target-setting and reviews

**Achievement and standards**

64. The positive outcomes and progressions are good. Many learners make good progress on the programme. They get jobs, or move into further education or work-based learning. The positive outcomes are 38 per cent, 50 per cent and 66 per cent for 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. This is good in comparison with the local economy and the broad range of disadvantages the learners face. In addition to this, the provider is still monitoring the progress of 161 learners who left training in the past academic year.

65. The standard of learners' work in literacy, numeracy, work placements, IT and wood

trades is good. Learners take pride in their well-structured portfolios which contain a good range of evidence. Learners are developing good skills in most areas of learning including practical training. Employers speak very highly of the professionalism of the learners' attitude and standard of their work. Learners develop short but effective curriculum vitae.

66. Achievement of short accredited qualifications is also good. These include food hygiene, first aid, manual handling and the Prince's Trust award. The figures have improved in the past three years from 23 awards in 2003-04 to 70 in 2004-05 and 249 in the past academic year. In the past academic year 43, 15 and 20 learners have achieved a qualification in numeracy, NVQ 1 in wood occupations and wider key skills at level 2 respectively. The provider has also delivered internal training in telephone techniques to many learners. These qualifications increase the learners' confidence and give them the chance to progress.

67. Learners achieve their key personal objectives which are outlined in their individual learning plans. This is improving every year. For example, full and partial achievements have improved from 50 per cent in 2003-04 to 64 per cent in 2004-05 and 71 per cent in the past academic year. Learners increase their self-confidence significantly and learn to relate well to other learners. Many of them make friends very quickly. They develop satisfactory levels of attendance and the discipline of getting to work on a regular basis punctually. Most of the learners have gained a satisfactory degree of motivation. The provider accepts all the learners regardless of the range or level of difficulties, helps them to progress and does not refer them back to Connexions.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Entry to Employment	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	192		137	100	221	100	94	100									
Progression <sup>1</sup>	103		50	36	85	38	6	6									
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	133		88	64	105	48	26	28									
Still in learning	36		2	1	0	0	0	0									

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

## The quality of provision

68. The teaching of numeracy is good. Of the 14 observed sessions, one was outstanding, three were good, eight were satisfactory and two were unsatisfactory. In the better sessions, tutors use real examples such as shopping bills and renting a flat to make learning relevant for the learners. Tutors very carefully identify learners' needs through assessment tools such as screening, diagnostic assessment, skills map and learning styles. They use this information effectively to plan sessions. The learners produce a good standard of work in individual and small group sessions. Some examples of good skills development include improved financial understanding of budgeting and renting a house or flat. In one of the good sessions, the tutor checked the learners' understanding in a very sympathetic way and introduced the topic of careful budgeting and estimating. Many learners have very poor experiences of learning. In another good session, the tutor

offered very useful guidance on how the learner could remember their nine times tables, for example. Some other learners develop skills such as mental arithmetic, working out value added tax, averages, decimals and percentages. Learners make satisfactory improvements in spellings as well as reading and writing. Many of the learners have made better progress than they did at school. All tutors are fully aware of literacy and numeracy levels and the needs of all the learners. Current learners do not have language needs.

69. The programme offers a broad range of flexible activities and projects to meet learners' needs well. The programme hours are flexible and each learner has an individual timetable. The depth and intensity of the programme changes as learners move through phases such as explore, vision, focus and winner. For example, learners spend their first few weeks clarifying their needs and vision. They swiftly move through the programme to develop their employability and vocational skills. The provider buys in expertise from a range of other specialist agencies in areas such as first aid, team building, outdoor activities and job-seeking skills. This helps them to develop their learning, skills and attitude. Teaching groups are small with no more than eight learners. Learners look forward to the outdoor activities and exceed their expectations of personal growth, interpersonal skills and team building. For many of them, this is their first such experience in pleasant settings. However, the number of such activities is limited. Learners enjoy input from visiting speakers on interesting and very relevant topics such as drugs and their effect on people. The centres are located in very deprived wards of the towns and cities and are easily accessible to most learners. Jobsearch is good. A placement officer works very closely with all concerned to place learners with a broad range of employers including the timber trade.

70. Pastoral support is very good. Key workers work very closely with the learners as well as their Connexions personal advisers to support them with the huge range of problems they face. All learners have a card that reminds them of their objectives, as well as mobile telephones numbers for the E2E teams. Learners can make contact with the team in cases of emergency and text their non-attendance. This service is available 24 hours a day throughout the week. The provider has established a strong dedicated team in all centres. Several of the learners live independently and the staff support them on many issues. For example, one learner who faced eviction from her youth hostel was helped to find accommodation immediately. The provider has a very strong link with a local charity that helps people of all ages and backgrounds 24 hours a day. This charity is often the only source of help when no one else can help the learners. In addition, the provider has good links with a broad range of agencies to support the learners if they need it. Support for information, advice and guidance is satisfactory. Connexions personal advisers work very closely with the team, often from the provider's premises to signpost the learners to appropriate provision.

71. Teaching overall is satisfactory, but it is insufficiently focused on learners' needs. Tutors plan for outcomes which are focused on task completion, not on learning. Tutors dominate the sessions and talk for most of the time. Learners do not fully contribute to the discussions. The tutors cut the very useful and necessary discussions short and curtail the natural flow of the lessons. For example, in a session on equality, the tutors did not explore racial abuse when a white learner cited an example. They swiftly moved on to the next scenario. Many tutors do not effectively reinforce the learning. They do not routinely use examples which are directly relevant to the learners' lives. Several of them do not check the learners' understanding and do not ask questions to identify how the

learners will use the information. Most classes include learners with diverse needs and abilities, but there are few assessment methods. Most learners are asked to complete their assignments in writing, and alternative methods such as mobile telephone and video technology are not fully used. The provider has a broad range of good learning resources including interactive white boards, but their use varies. Tutors give satisfactory feedback to learners on their progress and satisfactory guidance on how they can improve. Initial assessment is good and ongoing verbal assessment is satisfactory.

72. Some aspects of progress reviews are weak. The tutors do not sufficiently involve learners in their progress reviews and do not encourage them to take full control of their progress. They do not discuss the purpose of the reviews with the learners or the overall progress learners have made. Learners do not fully prepare for the reviews. The staff concentrate on checking whether learners have met the short-term targets for each element of the programme when the tutors have already given the learners feedback. Reviewers repeat this action unnecessarily. Some of the target-setting is not specific, time bound, achievable and measurable. Staff review all targets at the next review, which could be three or four weeks away. Learners are capable of making greater progress and of achieving positive outcomes sooner.

### **Leadership and management**

73. NLTG has worked hard to improve the progression rates of the learners. The provider has made several new appointments such as a placement officer, literacy and numeracy team staff and a curriculum developer. The cumulative effect has been very positive. The staff are appropriately qualified and have clear job roles. The E2E manager has worked hard to place the learners at the heart of all the activities. Partnerships are very strong. For example, NLTG has secured some brownfield land from the local council to run outdoor projects for the learners. Links with the employers are good. The staff work well as a team and are able to cover for each other very effectively. NLTG promotes a culture of welcome and respect for everyone. The provider accepts all learners regardless of their difficulties and learners feel safe in the learning environment. Managers take prompt actions to protect learners from harassment. For example, the managers have refused to work with a large number of employers that in their opinion do not respect and support learners fully. Health and safety is managed well. All learners have a good awareness of health and safety issues. The management of performance is satisfactory. However, the findings from the observations of teaching and learning are not fully used to improve the classroom practice. Managers observe teaching but do not give the tutors sufficient guidance as to how they could improve on an ongoing basis. They do not give grades for teaching sessions. The staff do not sufficiently share good practice. Tutors have attended staff training to enhance their skills and to improve the learners' experience. Managers use data effectively to monitor participation and achievement. They meet with other local E2E providers to share good practice and improve learners' experiences. Quality improvement is effective and the standards have improved. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and involved all staff, learners' views and data. Most of the strengths in the report matched those identified by inspectors, but the report did not identify the weaknesses in reviews and target-setting. The provider manages the support for learners very well and celebrates their success comprehensively.

**Business administration and law****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Administration</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	319	2
Train to Gain	14	2
<b>Business management</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	42	2
Train to Gain	68	2
<b>Customer service</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	181	2
Train to Gain	22	2

74. There are 646 learners in business administration and law. Of these, 333 are in business administration including 72 advanced apprentices, 247 apprentices and 14 are Train to Gain adult learners. There are 31 customer service advanced apprentices and 150 apprentices. There are 22 learners working towards customer service at level 2 on Train to Gain. On team leading there are 42 apprentices and 68 learners on level 2 Train to Gain. There are no advanced apprentices in team leading. All learners are employed in a wide range of employers from small offices to large organisations in industry and commerce. There are 20 assessors and 11 internal verifiers. There are 204 learners who have been identified as needing additional learning support.

*Strengths*

- good success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- particularly good workplaces
- good support for learners
- very effective use of resources
- good development of personal and occupational skills in the workplace
- well-managed programmes

*Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses identified

**Achievement and standards**

75. Success rates for apprentices are good. There has been an improvement in overall success rates in every area between 2003-04 and 2005-06, despite a fall of 8 per cent in 2004-05. For each year they have been above the national rates. Overall success rates for apprentices have improved from 63 per cent in 2003-04 to 65 per cent in 2004-05. Success rates for advanced apprentices are satisfactory and have improved from 57 per cent to 61 per cent. These trends are identified in business administration, customer service and team leading. On Train to Gain programmes, overall success rates are satisfactory at 72 per cent for 2005-06. However, they were only 59 per cent in team leading. In business administration and customer service the rates were good at 100 per cent on each programme. Most of the learners on the Train to Gain programme are in

team leading. The achievement of technical certificates and key skills is good.

76. Learners are making good progress. There has been a reduction in the number of learners working beyond their expected completion date and many learners now complete their qualification earlier than expected. Portfolios are impressive and contain a good standard of work. Learners are making progress in their job roles and this is raising their aims. Many are progressing to other qualifications or higher levels of the same qualification.

77. The development of learners' personal and occupational skills in the workplace is good. Learners are particularly well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Learners have increased their confidence and self-esteem and many have responsible jobs. Many learners are developing a wide range of job-specific skills in the workplace. For example, one employer supported a learner by frequently moving her into different customer service roles to ensure that she gained experience across a range of skills quickly. Adult learners have improved awareness and better understanding of workplace practices and legislation. Employers speak very positively about the improved skill levels of their learners and their improved effectiveness in their job role. The apprentice of the year for NLTG was achieved by a learner in team leading.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	42	67	46	57	28
		timely	38	45	30	42	18
	2004-05	overall	45	64	47	53	31
		timely	49	35	35	29	23
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	42	67	46	57	28
		timely	282	38	25	35	18
	2004-05	overall	45	64	47	53	31
		timely	418	33	34	28	27
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	104	63	48	0	0
		timely	122	45	35	0	0
	2004-05	overall	130	69	57	0	0
		timely	115	45	43	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).

### The quality of provision

78. The training and learning are good. A range of approaches is used to ensure that effective learning takes place. In a small number of employers that have several learners, NLTG runs monthly workshop sessions to provide background knowledge and these are well attended and valued by learners. Some off-the-job sessions are also held at NLTG's training centre. A range of strategies is used to deliver these sessions, which engage learners and stimulate their interest. NLTG has a subject learning coach in this

occupational area who helps to ensure good teaching and training practice is shared. Learners and employers have a good understanding of the assessment process. Assessments are well planned and feedback is prompt. However, NLTG has been slow to adopt electronic methods of collecting evidence for assessment, despite many learners carrying out most of their work on computers. There is good dialogue between the training officers, learners and the employers relating to the training received by the learners. Progress reviews and action-planning are good. Short-term targets are set at the reviews and are agreed with employers. However, there are few long-term targets and they are not always monitored in the same way at reviews. There is good participation by employers in progress reviews, and workplace supervisors are very supportive by giving learners the time at work to complete their portfolios. At each progress review the learner and the employer separately grade the learners' performance against a predetermined set of job-related criteria. Discrepancies identified in this way are used to plan the learners' training needs after discussion with the training officer.

79. Initial assessment is good. There is a range of initial assessment tools to identify the learners' needs at the start of the programme. Individual learning plans record the outcomes of the initial assessment. Learning styles are identified and a training needs analysis is completed with the employer. Some learners, after completion of their full award, are encouraged to go on to complete additional units. For example, a learner on Train to Gain completed the administration NVQ at level 2 early and then completed a further three units of the qualification to improve her IT skills. An apprentice in business administration completed additional key skills units, as her job role required competence in these areas. Learners are encouraged to use any concessions or proxy qualifications towards the key skill requirements of their frameworks. However, many learners complete key skills at a higher level or the wider key skills which are not a requirement of their frameworks. Many learners are promoted during or at the end of their programmes. One apprentice was promoted from administration trainee to stock controller during his learning programme.

80. There are particularly good workplaces for learners. Work places are carefully assessed by NLTG for their suitability to provide relevant experience and training for learners. A wide range of employers is involved in NLTG programmes and they offer a diverse range of experiences and roles to learners. This helps learners gain competence and supporting evidence. One employer has hosted a moderation meeting where assessors and employers have contributed to the moderation of learners' work. Where employers offer in-house training then this is linked to the NVQ. One employer sent learners on several one-day training courses to give a deeper understanding of the background knowledge.

81. Support for learners is good. Training officers provide excellent support for all learners. Training advisers take the results of the learning styles questionnaire and use this when selecting the most appropriate method of training and assessment. Training officers visit the learners every four to six weeks with additional visits from the skills for life team, where needs are identified. There are also learner support officers and a retention officer who focus on the learners who are at risk of leaving early. Learners have access to training officers through their mobile telephones and many have found this to be very helpful between visits. There is good support for learners who have literacy and numeracy needs. There are flexible assessment arrangements to meet learners' work patterns. Learning support officers record their visits and forward a copy to the training



officers to keep them informed of the learners' progress. Learners who are making slow progress are offered additional visits to encourage them to meet their targets. Support officers give specialised focused support to these learners. There is good pastoral support for learners who experience personal problems, and frequent visits and advice and guidance are made available to all learners.

82. Resources are used very effectively to support learning. Learners benefit from a wide range of resources which are adapted to meet their learning styles. All training officers have their own laptop computer and have access to the internet for additional resources for learners to download. NLTG has developed its own interactive CD-ROM where learners can complete crosswords and other interactive exercises. It can be used as a visual or audio programme and is regularly updated to reflect new material. Training officers have access to cameras, video recorders and digital voice recorders to support the training and assessment. Learners state that they have improved their occupational skills through this style of training, assessment and feedback.

83. Initial advice and guidance is good for all learners. Learners are matched to the work places and complete a training needs analysis to identify their training needs. At the end of the programme, learners are given an exit review where appropriate options are discussed.

84. Induction is satisfactory. NLTG's staff carry out induction mostly in the workplace and learners have a good recollection of what it covered. Health and safety, equality of opportunity, and rights and responsibilities are covered adequately.

### **Leadership and management**

85. NLTG's staff are well informed and attend fortnightly team meetings. Managers have responded to falling success rates in 2004-05 and improvements have been made. There is good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

86. Data is used effectively to monitor learners' progress. Managers use data effectively and improvement targets are set and monitored every two weeks. Training officers' workloads are reviewed at the fortnightly meetings. Progress reviews are carefully planned and closely monitored to ensure that learners make good progress. Training officers are well supported by learner support officers, a subject learning coach, scheme co-ordinators and team leaders.

87. The internal verification system is robust and includes all aspects of verification including standardisation, assessor monitoring and learner interviews. There is a database for each qualification area which is updated by the scheme co-ordinator. Internal verification is planned monthly on a six-monthly basis. Sample sizes are determined in accordance with the internal verification policy. Clear records are kept of actions taken in line with feedback from the internal verifiers. Internal verifiers observe all aspects of the learning programmes and give good feedback and support to the training officers. Standardisation is planned and occurs regularly to reinforce the sharing of good practice in assessment. Staff are suitably qualified and occupationally competent in their area of learning. Staff have good access to professional development and regularly attend training.

88. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is good and problems are dealt with

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promptly. Staff have all received training on equality. The self-assessment report is robust and inclusive and mostly reflects inspectors' findings.

