

INSPECTION REPORT

Chamber Training (Humber) Ltd

29 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
- **learn**direct 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*

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Chamber Training (Humber) Ltd (CTHL) is a wholly owned subsidiary company of the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping. The company was set up in 1997 to support nine apprentices in administration when it was known as Hull and East Riding Chamber Training Ltd. Learner numbers increased and in 2000 the company took over a Training and Enterprise Council-funded contract from another local provider. It changed its name in 2000 to reflect the expansion in its geographical area of operation and it now delivers training north and south of the Humber. CTHL is funded through a contract with the Humberside Learning and Skills Council.

2. CTHL employs 27 staff, 75 per cent of whom are full time. In 2004-05, CTHL restructured its senior management team when the chief executive left the company. The team now comprises the head of training, the manager responsible for quality assurance, equality of opportunity and human resources, the administration manager and the training manager.

3. Humberside is largely a rural area with centres of population and heavy industry in Kingston upon Hull, Immingham and Scunthorpe. Ten of Humberside's wards are among the most deprived in the country and Hull has five wards where very low literacy and numeracy skills are twice the national average. In 2005 only 44 per cent of 16 year olds achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above compared with 56 per cent nationally.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 4

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate.** Leadership and management are satisfactory, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Provision is satisfactory in business administration and law, but inadequate in health, public services and care which includes more than one third of the learners.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** CTHL has produced self-assessment reports since 1999. It has an inclusive self-assessment process to which staff contribute at every stage of its development. Feedback from learners and employers is used to help form judgements along with the findings from previous inspection reports. CTHL also uses a wide range of reliable data to make judgements about learners' progress and success rates. Some of the key strengths in the self-assessment report matched those identified by inspectors, although some were no more than normal practice. CTHL identified some, but not all, weaknesses and inspectors judged the grades in the self-assessment report to be too high.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** CTHL monitors performance and the achievement of contractual targets very effectively and success rates have improved in all areas of the provision. Staff are well supported and are offered good opportunities for training and development. CTHL works effectively with the local consortium of training providers to ensure that staff have access to good practice

and training on new initiatives. The previous inspection report noted a number of areas for improvement and CTHL has made progress in many areas. For example, the observation of key learning processes and internal verification are now more rigorous. However, target-setting is poor and it is difficult to monitor the progress of some plans.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CHAMBER TRAINING (HUMBER) LTD:

- continue to improve success rates
- improve target-setting
- further improve employer engagement in learning
- continue to develop the initial assessment of learners' needs
- improve the planning and review of learning to meet individual needs
- continue the effective monitoring of the provision
- further develop the observation of key learning processes

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

Health, public services and care			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Social care</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	38	4	
Train to Gain	12	4	

Business administration and law			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Administration</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	51	3	
<i>Customer service</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	12	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. The inspection reported on and graded health, public services and care, and business administration and law. CTHL also offers programmes in engineering and manufacturing

technologies, construction and the built environment, and in warehousing, but there are few learners and the training and assessment are subcontracted. Learners and employers from these areas of learning were interviewed and evidence was collected to support judgements in leadership and management. Those learners originally enrolled under the Employer Training Pilot scheme have been reported on under Train to Gain in line with the change to this programme.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	38
Number of staff interviewed	17
Number of employers interviewed	12
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	20

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- good opportunities for staff training and development
- good working relationships with local partners
- particularly effective monitoring of procedures to improve achievement

Weaknesses

- poor use of targets

Health, public services and care

Social care

Strengths

- no significant strengths

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory success rates
- some slow progress
- inadequate understanding of the apprenticeship frameworks by some employers
- insufficient use of learning resources

Business administration and law

Strengths

- high success rates for apprentices in 2005-06
- very supportive assessors responsive to learners' needs
- good links with employers

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and recording of learning
- ineffective programme reviews

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CHAMBER TRAINING (HUMBER) LTD:

- the supportive and friendly assessors - they 'make learning easy'
- being able to learn flexibly
- 'I enjoy the training sessions'
- the help with getting a job
- the ease with which I can contact my assessor
- help to improve my work skills
- being able to train and learn at the same time

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CHAMBER TRAINING (HUMBER) LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- having to travel to Hull from Scunthorpe
- the confusing NVQ language
- 'I wish I could get my work marked more quickly'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good opportunities for staff training and development
- good working relationships with local partners
- particularly effective monitoring of procedures to improve achievement

Weaknesses

- poor use of targets

8. CTHL gives staff good opportunities for training and development. All members of staff have an annual appraisal and a six-monthly review at which they discuss their performance and their development needs. Staff can also discuss training needs at any time with their manager. CTHL funds training which is relevant to a member of staff's job role. Staff are encouraged to develop professional qualifications and to attend short training courses and workshops. Many staff at CTHL have attended seminars and workshops provided by a local consortium of work-based learning providers. New staff have a well-planned induction which includes the opportunity to shadow experienced staff in similar roles. All staff keep a careful record of their professional development which includes a helpful personal reflection on their training and experience.

9. CTHL has good relationships with many local partners. It works closely with local schools providing work placements and contributing to careers guidance programmes. CTHL also works closely with a local consortium of training providers to share good practice and improve provision. CTHL is actively involved in a number of projects including a successful consortium bid to deliver Train to Gain. Staff belong to a number of development groups within the consortium and the manager with responsibility for quality improvement and equality of opportunity chairs the equality and diversity group. Until recently, Connexions shared premises with the Chamber and CTHL worked closely with them. CTHL continues to use this relationship effectively both to receive learners and to refer them for particular help when necessary. Many receive appropriate and helpful guidance and support.

10. Employers appreciate the good support many assessors give to learners. Many understand the requirements of the apprenticeship frameworks and work closely with assessors to deliver these and to review learners' progress. CTHL communicates very effectively with many employers and responds rapidly to their requests for information and guidance. Most employers have a simple contract with CTHL which describes their responsibilities and defines expectations. Some, however, do not. CTHL has identified the need to improve the provision for learners in health and social care. Some employers do not have a good understanding of the apprenticeship frameworks, and CTHL has worked hard to remedy this and to ensure that learners complete the whole programme in a more timely manner. CTHL is aware that it needs to continue this development particularly with employers who are new to the programme. Success rates have improved significantly in 2005-06. Inspectors found examples of employers who have developed

systems to improve the management of assessment visits by CTLH but this good practice is not always disseminated by the company.

11. CTHL has recently improved data collection and management. Past data errors have been removed and returns to the funding provider are now accurate. This enabled CTHL to establish significantly improved financial controls. CTHL also has a simple data management system which staff can access and use to create useful reports. The data manager produces full monthly reports of enrolments, achievements and leavers for different groups of learners, and these are discussed at management meetings. The manager responsible for quality improvement and equality of opportunity reviews the data monthly and maintains clear and comprehensive records.

12. Managers at CTLH support staff effectively, and internal communications are satisfactory. Managers normally meet monthly and these meetings have agendas which include appropriate standard items. Not all standard items are always discussed however. The meetings are minuted but actions are not always recorded or progress and completion followed through. Some staff work from home and CTHL has an intranet which staff can access remotely. The intranet comprises a wide range of information including company policies and procedures and minutes of meetings. Staff use e-mail extensively to contact their managers, other staff and learners. Managers monitor the use of the intranet to ensure that staff maintain contact with the central office.

13. CTHL has a marketing strategy but no clear marketing plan. The senior marketing officer maintains a comprehensive database of learners' work placements and uses the links with members of the Chamber well to find appropriate placements for learners. Marketing for South Humberside is separately co-ordinated and the staff for both areas work well together. Marketing materials are dull and include very few illustrations. The marketing officers have no marketing qualifications although they have recently attended relevant training.

14. CTHL has a key and basic skills strategy but no action plan to develop the provision.

15. CTHL makes poor use of targets to plan developments. The company has strategic and development plans that follow from the self-assessment process. The development plan includes action points but does not include clear targets that can be used to plan actions and measure progress. Identical action points appear in the plans for 2004-05 and 2005-06 and it is not possible to understand what has been achieved or what needs to be done next. The action points from these plans are not used to set individual targets for staff during appraisal and review. Staff are not able to identify their own targets or describe how they should prioritise their work to achieve CTHL's objectives. Learners are not given clear targets in their individual learning plans and reviews to help them to progress their work effectively.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

16. CTHL has an appropriate equal opportunities policy for staff and learners which has been reviewed to reflect changes in legislation. CTHL's recruitment and selection procedures are satisfactory, as are the procedures for appeals and complaints. All staff and learners are given information on equality of opportunity and copies of relevant policies during induction. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities topics. Many learners remember the equality and diversity training they

received during their induction and are generally aware of their rights and responsibilities. The procedure for formal progress reviews has been reviewed and a series of questions is now used to test the learners' understanding of equal opportunities topics. However, the effectiveness of this procedure varies.

17. Checks are carried out on workplaces to ensure the employer's policies are suitable. If an employer does not have an appropriate policy CTHL staff work with the employer to produce one. All employers agree to the provider's policy conditions before training programmes begin.

18. All staff have attended appropriate training in equal opportunities and diversity in the past two years. Information about changes to legislation is also shared with staff during meetings. Some staff have received training in how to recognise and support specific learning needs and they do this effectively.

19. The promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is generally satisfactory. CTHL staff attend meetings with local networks and equality and diversity working groups. Staff regularly visit schools and careers conventions to promote work based learning. However, promotional materials contain too few images which challenge stereotypical job roles. Some marketing materials do not include an equal opportunities statement regarding the provider's commitment to diversity.

20. Data is accurately collected and effectively analysed to identify trends in recruitment and achievement by different groups of learners. The provider has some targets to raise achievement for different groups, for example, to increase the participation of under-represented groups and improve success rates for learners with additional learning support needs. However, there are no specific targets for increasing the participation by men in care and business administration programmes. Male learners are under-represented on some courses.

21. The provider has introduced a useful strategy to overcome one barrier to participation in training. Attendance at off-the-job training and external examinations was difficult for learners who live in rural areas. Staff now provide transport to give all learners equal access to training opportunities and support.

22. CTHL has an adequate strategy to provide literacy, numeracy, or additional learning support. The provider gives sufficient support to learners with additional needs, including literacy and numeracy needs. Individual learners' needs are identified through an initial assessment and the results are recorded on the individual learning plan. Individual support is provided by assessors.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

23. CTHL has a comprehensive quality improvement system and monitors some procedures particularly effectively in order to improve learners' achievements. The manager for quality improvement and equality of opportunity reviews each learner's performance monthly and works closely with assessors to follow up issues and ensure learners' progress. CTHL collects learners' feedback regularly. All feedback is collated and analysed and the results are given to the relevant member of staff along with identified action points. Staff are required to respond to the feedback and confirm the action they will take. CTHL has used feedback to improve learners' experience, for

example, some provision was moved to new accommodation in response to learners' concerns and complaints. Success rates have improved in all areas of learning.

24. CTHL has a monitoring and auditing plan for all policies and procedures. This is generally effective and most are updated annually. However, some documents do not have dates or version numbers and some are incomplete. Policies and procedures are available to staff on the intranet, and staff are aware of them and what they include. CTHL does not have a published quality improvement calendar to identify when activities will take place or to help staff to understand how they relate one to another, although this is effectively managed.

25. CTHL has a comprehensive observation system which includes training, tutorials, initial assessment and induction and the invigilation of examinations. CTHL has a form for each observation process and a schedule to ensure that all staff are regularly observed. However, during the inspection, inspectors saw inconsistent use of the observation system. The forms are useful documents, but many completed observations include few comments, and they are mostly descriptive rather than evaluative. Many observations are not done by specialists in the areas of learning. Grading is high, very few observations are graded less than good. CTHL does not have a process to moderate the grades. Most observations include action points for staff, but these are not used to support the appraisal process.

26. Internal verification is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Procedures are appropriate and monitoring systems meet awarding body requirements.

27. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. All staff complete a questionnaire about their area of work and the responses are used to write the report. Staff have an opportunity to respond to a draft report and are aware of the content and how it relates to their area of learning. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report although they identified fewer strengths and the grades they gave were lower than those in the report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Social care</i>		
Apprenticeships for young people	38	4
Train to Gain	12	4

28. CTHL has 50 learners on health, social care and public services programmes. Of these, 11 are advanced apprentices and 27 are apprentices in health and social care. In addition, 12 learners are working towards an NVQ in care at level 2 through the Train 2 Gain programme. All learners are employed in local nursing homes and residential care homes. Learners may join the programme at any time. Two learners have additional support needs and there is one male learner.

29. CTHL recruits learners through employers and recommendations from previous learners. Induction takes place at the workplace. All learners have an induction that includes information on health and safety, equality of opportunity, the awarding body appeals procedure and of the provider's complaints procedure. All learners are offered an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Informal support for learners who have additional literacy and numeracy needs is provided by their assessors.

30. CTHL has 10 staff who train, assess and carry out progress reviews. Four of the trainers and assessors are also internal verifiers. There is one training centre in the city of Hull. Assessors visit the learners in the workplace every three to six weeks to provide assessment and to review their progress. Apprentices attend off-the-job training at CTHL's training centre for the technical certificate and key skills test. NVQ learners receive all training and assessment in the workplace.

Social care

Strengths

- no significant strengths

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory success rates
- some slow progress
- inadequate understanding of the apprenticeship frameworks by some employers
- insufficient use of learning resources

Achievement and standards

31. Success rates are unsatisfactory. Success rates for apprentices have improved from 18 per cent in 2004-05 to 42 per cent in 2005-06, but remain unsatisfactory. Success rates for advanced apprentices have also improved. None of the learners who left in

2004-05 completed all parts of their framework, but 15 per cent of those who left in 2005-06 completed the framework. According to the provider's own data, 50 per cent of the learners on the Train 2 Gain NVQ-only programmes achieved their qualification.

32. Some learners are making slow progress. Almost 25 per cent of the learners currently on apprenticeship programmes have already exceeded their planned duration. A minority of other learners are not making the progress which would reasonably be expected of them. For example, some learners have been in training for up to seven months and have not completed any of the units. Others have not started the technical certificate as training is not planned during the first four months of the programme.

33. The standard of work in portfolios is generally satisfactory. There is an appropriate variety of evidence.

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	6	100	47	67	26
		timely	3	100	31	100	17
	2004-05	overall	7	57	43	0	19
		timely	7	43	31	0	13
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	67	34	39	13	15
		timely	67	9	16	4	5
	2004-05	overall	82	20	38	15	19
		timely	85	9	18	8	9
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	5	40	49	0	0
		timely	3	33	32	0	0
	2004-05	overall	4	25	53	0	0
		timely	2	0	33	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).

The quality of provision

34. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners complete a formal assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, and the results are recorded on the individual learning plan.

35. Support for literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. Learners receive individual support from their assessor and more frequent assessment visits to help with individual learning needs. However, CTHL has not given assessors sufficient training to recognise and support individual learning needs. Specialised support is provided by the additional learning needs co-ordinator. However, individual learning plans are not routinely completed to identify strategies for support and to measure success. Assessors do not routinely correct spelling errors.

36. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessment is thorough and there are detailed

records of observations and careful cross-referencing to the evidence requirements. Action plans are agreed at each visit and assessors give clear, short-term targets so that learners know exactly what is required at the next visit. However, learners are not routinely involved in the planning of assessments.

37. The programme has been adequately designed to meet the needs of learners and employers. In some cases learners attend all sessions at the provider's training centre, while some learners receive all training on an individual basis at work. When learners are unable to attend a planned session at the training centre they are given copies of the handouts at the next assessor visit.

38. Assessors see each learner at least every six weeks and often more frequently. Assessors, through discussion with employers, quickly identify and effectively resolve problems that affect the learners' progress. Learners are given the mobile telephone numbers of their assessors and are encouraged to contact them for assistance between workplace visits. Assessors provide effective support for learners through regular, individual coaching and assessment in the workplace. They are sensitive and sympathetic to learners' needs and give them pastoral support to improve their motivation and confidence. Assessors provide clear explanations of the NVQ requirements, assessment methods and support arrangements. Some workplace supervisors are very supportive and some learners are paid to attend off-the-job training. Some supervisors are aware of their learners' progress towards the qualifications and are given information on what the learner needs to do to progress. However, some learners have not received sufficient support to enable them to progress.

39. Assessors make insufficient use of learning resources. Learners are not provided with textbooks or a recommended reading list to support the background knowledge for the programmes. They are not provided with a glossary of common health-related terms to help them build their vocabulary in care. Care homes have been provided with copies of appropriate textbooks, but, some of these have now been lost. Assessors carry textbooks with them which learners use during their coaching sessions. Some learners have purchased their own books. A range of relevant resources are available in the training centre but learners who do not attend the training centre for off-the-job training do not have access to a sufficient range of learning resources to support research. Many learners have access to the internet, either at home, or in the workplace, but assessors give them little guidance about research techniques and there are few academic references to internet sources. Staff are appropriately qualified and complete regular occupational updates.

Leadership and management

40. Social care staff have an appraisal of their performance every six months. Staff development needs are accurately identified and targets for improved success rates are agreed.

41. Internal verification is satisfactory. The internal verification sampling plan is well established and has recently been revised. Standardisation meetings take place twice a year. Actions required after internal verification are monitored and reported on by the assessor and internal verifier.

42. Communication is satisfactory. Staff regularly attend meetings and receive minutes of

relevant meetings. However, minutes of meetings are brief in some cases, and agreed actions are not always reviewed at subsequent meetings. Employers and supervisors enjoy good working relationships with the assessors who they meet during regular visits to the workplaces. Employers and assessors frequently share and discuss informal feedback about learners' progress.

43. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities varies, but is satisfactory overall. The background knowledge for the NVQ and technical certificate have significant relevant content. All learners are aware of their responsibilities towards the vulnerable people in their care. Most learners are aware of the appeals procedure.

44. The self-assessment report has not identified all of the weaknesses which were identified at inspection and the inspection grade differs from that in the self-assessment report. The report contains some inconsistencies, for example, internal verification is described as satisfactory and as a key strength. Most staff have a good understanding of the self-assessment process, but have little understanding of their role in improving provision.

45. Some employers have an inadequate understanding of the apprenticeship frameworks. The employer contract does not sufficiently reinforce the responsibilities of the employer. Employers have little understanding of the three parts of the framework and their relevance to the learners' job role. CTHL does not always ensure that employers are fully engaged with the learners' programme. Not all employers are involved in the progress review and arrangements to feed back on progress are mostly informal. Many employers focus on the achievement of the NVQ to enable them to meet legislative requirements. Many learners are expected to attend training in their own time. Some of the learners' working patterns make it difficult for them to attend key skills tests.

Business administration and law**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration Apprenticeships for young people	51	3
Customer service Apprenticeships for young people	12	3

46. CTHL has 63 learners in business administration and customer service. In business administration CTHL has 35 apprentices and 16 advanced apprentices. There are 11 customer service apprentices and one advanced apprentice. Provision is delivered in north and south Humberside. The provider has an office in Hull where mainly non-employed learners from the north side of the city attend interviews. Non-employed learners also attend their induction at the centre over a two-week period. Learners who are recruited directly from the workplace attend induction at work for approximately two hours. Two-thirds of learners are recruited from the workplace. CTHL has three staff who are based south of the Humber. Two are responsible for assessment and training and the third for recruitment and marketing. North of the Humber there are four staff who are responsible for assessment and training. The two internal verifiers are also based at the Hull centre.

Strengths

- high success rates for apprentices in 2005-06
- very supportive assessors responsive to learners' needs
- good links with employers

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and recording of learning
- ineffective programme reviews

Achievement and standards

47. Success rates for apprentices were good in 2005-06 at 80 per cent. All learners on the apprenticeship programme achieved their NVQ. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, success rates were satisfactory at 60 per cent and 56 per cent respectively. Success rates are also satisfactory for advanced apprentices, although they have declined from 57 per cent in 2004-05 to 50 per cent in 2005-06. Most learners are making satisfactory progress and develop a good range of work-related skills. Many learners have key skills exemptions. For example, in 2005-06, of the 67 learners who started the programme, 57 had key skills exemptions, 19 of whom were fully exempt from key skills at the level required for the framework. However, some learners still take 12 to 14 months to complete the apprenticeship and 12 to 18 months to complete the advanced apprenticeship. However, some learners achieve earlier. Learners who are working towards key skills are making slow progress. Many learners do not start them until late in the programme. For example, some learners who have been on the programme for nine months have not completed any work towards their key skills. For example, in 2005-06, the achievement of the NVQ

in business administration and customer service was 100 per cent, but framework achievement was 80 per cent. The standard of learners' portfolios is satisfactory and they include an appropriate range of work. However, some learners do not have a sufficient understanding of the programme and do not gather specific evidence independent of their assessors' visits.

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	19	53	46	21	28
		timely	16	38	30	19	18
	2004-05	overall	7	57	47	57	31
		timely	7	57	35	57	23
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	47	70	51	60	37
		timely	39	59	25	46	18
	2004-05	overall	75	60	56	56	45
		timely	75	55	35	51	28

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).

The quality of provision

48. Assessors provide good support for learners. Communication is good and learners have mobile telephone numbers and e-mail addresses which they can use to contact assessors at any time. Some assessors visit learners in the evenings to cover different shift patterns. Assessors explain the requirements of the programme well at induction. The training in the workplace meets employers' and learners' needs, although it is not always planned at the beginning of the training programmes. Learners can attend a range of seminars to meet their work needs which include telesales, telephonist and reception duties and call handling. Learners also have the opportunity to work towards additional awards. For example, all learners work towards a short health and safety qualification and an examination-based computer course.

49. CTHL has good links with employers, and learners are carefully matched to jobs and employment. In 2005-06, of the 53 learners unemployed at the start of the programme, 30 progressed into employment. In 2006-07 of the 16 learners who were unemployed, 15 similarly progressed. Employers give learners appropriate time off to work on their qualification. Where several learners are based with one employer they are able to support one another well and some assessors offer group training. Some supervisors have taken NVQs themselves to help them support the learners in their departments. One employer helped a learner effectively to develop good skills through working on a complex database package.

50. Learning sessions are satisfactory. CTHL has a comprehensive programme to deliver the technical certificate at the Hull centre and in the workplace.

51. Assessment planning and practice are satisfactory. Generally assessors have a satisfactory understanding of awarding body requirements and apply them effectively at assessment visits. Inspectors did find some poor past practice which was also identified through external verification. However, CTHL now has a new internal verifier who has started to rectify many of these problems. Most assessors are occupationally competent and meet the minimum skills requirements. However, many do not have an NVQ at, or above, the level they assess. Some staff have teaching qualifications.

52. Resources are satisfactory. CTHL has a well-equipped information technology room for sessions that are held at Hull. Staff use an appropriate range of handouts for key skills and for some administration units. However, some resources have spelling and grammatical errors. Resources to support learners in the workplace, especially in customer service, are limited mainly to a handbook loan system or the internet.

53. The planning and recording of learning is insufficiently thorough. Initial assessment is not used effectively. Learners have an initial screening of their literacy and numeracy skills and non-employed learners also complete a diagnostic test of their needs. The results of the initial screening are shared with assessors, but they are not given sufficient information to plan learning. For example, the learner may need help with punctuation and the recommendation is to 'monitor' their progress. Assessors identify appropriate units for learners to complete but they do not always plan appropriate learning opportunities effectively. Assessors respond to learners' requests for help, but they do not identify some learning needs. For example, one learner failed to meet the required standard at assessment on two occasions. The learner was not able to touch type and could not achieve 60 words per minute typing from notes, but the need for this training had not been identified. Targets on individual learning plans are not broken down into stages for learners and the date set for their achievement is often the end of their programme. Training which is offered by the employer is not recorded on the learning plan.

54. Progress reviews are ineffective. They are brief, generally descriptive and include few judgements. They concentrate only on the last month's assessment plan and not the whole review period of 10 to 12 weeks. They do not cover all of the learning programme. Reviewers sometimes set inadequate targets, for example, 'continue working on unit 2'. Reviews do not effectively identify and rectify the very slow progress for learners who are working towards key skills. Some of the learners who have passed the date for completion of the key skills have no relevant targets. Many reviews are descriptive and only list job activities, technical certificates taken and training carried out with the employer. They do not make clear judgements on learners' individual progress.

Leadership and management

55. Communications are effective. Staff who work remotely use e-mail to communicate with the central office and use the intranet to download appropriate resources for learners from home. Internal verification arrangements are now satisfactory and the internal verifier is using the system effectively to rectify past problems. Staff contribute to the self-assessment process through a questionnaire, although some staff are not clear how their contributions are included in the report. Managers support staff well in their job roles through training and informal discussions. Appraisals are held annually with a six-monthly review. Staff training is identified at appraisal. However, CTHL has no plans at present to develop assessors and internal verifiers beyond the minimum requirements for administration assessors. Staff are not aware of targets set by the provider for success

rates. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths identified by inspectors, but some of the strengths were no more than normal practice. The report is insufficiently critical and does not identify important weaknesses.

