

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PDM Training and Consultancy**

**06 July 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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## **PDM Training and Consultancy**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. PDM Training and Consultancy Limited (PDM) was formed in 1999 and is a registered company with limited liability. It provides training-related services to the public and private sectors. The company's business support centre and head office is in Andover, Hampshire. PDM offers government-funded training in security, road passenger transport and literacy and numeracy. The security apprenticeships were initially offered to the Army but now include qualifications for door supervisors, security guards, vehicle immobilisers and parking attendants. PDM delivers qualifications funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to a large number of learners and employers through the LSC's Train to Gain programme. The company has 70 permanent staff, of whom 66 are full-time and four are part-time employees.

2. Although PDM is based in Andover in Hampshire, it delivers training in locations across the country including Berkshire, Essex, Kent, North Yorkshire, Devon, Wiltshire and Swindon. The company has offices in Kent, Warminster and Brecon, South Wales. PDM works with approximately 150 employers including the British Army and national rail and transport operatives.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** PDM's leadership and management are outstanding, as are its arrangements for quality improvement. The arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Provision is good in health, public services and care, and in engineering and manufacturing technologies. Preparation for life and work provision is satisfactory.

4. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is inclusive of most staff, learners and employers. The self-assessment report focuses on the five key questions in the Common Inspection framework. Nearly all of the grades given by PDM in its self-assessment report are the same as those given by inspectors, although inspectors gave a lower grade for literacy and numeracy training. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified by PDM but did find additional weaknesses. The most recent self-assessment report has insufficient useful background information and detailed evidence to support judgements. It does not do justice to PDM's quality of provision. The previous year's report was a better indicator of the quality of provision.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** PDM has been particularly effective in dealing with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The company is in a strong position to make improvements.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR PDM TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY:

- maintain high success rates
- improve the quality and consistency of the literacy and numeracy skills provision

## PDM TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY

- improve the content and recording of the learners' progress reviews
- reinforce the promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>1</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		1

<b>Health, public services and care</b>			<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Security</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	620	2	
Train to Gain	53	2	

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>			<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Transportation</b>		<b>2</b>	
Train to Gain	331	2	

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b>		<b>3</b>	
Train to Gain	217	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. PDM offers training in health, public services and care, engineering and manufacturing technologies, and preparation for life and work. All areas were included in this inspection. Inspectors visited PDM twice in the six weeks leading up to the inspection to inspect aspects of the health, public services and care area.

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	34
Number of learners interviewed	57
Number of staff interviewed	48
Number of employers interviewed	13
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	19

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

7. **Success rates in all areas are very good or excellent.** In the road transport programmes there was a 100 per cent success rate in 2004-05, and in 2005-06 the success rate is currently 88 per cent. In the security programmes, success rates in 2003-04 and 2004-05 were excellent at 99 per cent and 96 per cent respectively. Overall success rates in the literacy and numeracy programmes were good in 2004-05 at 85 per cent. Success rates in adult literacy have continued to rise and are very good for 2005-06 so far, at 95 per cent for level 1 and 93 per cent for level 2 qualifications.

8. **Some learners in road passenger transport are making slow progress.** Many learners have exceeded the planned duration of their qualifications. Forty-eight per cent are late in meeting their individual learning plan end-date. In many cases, the slow progress has followed the large increase in learner numbers in 2005-06 and a shortage of assessors. PDM has now increased the number of assessors and learners' progress has significantly improved.

9. **In the literacy and numeracy programmes, insufficient time is available to develop the learners' wider skills.** The pressure of the learners' working environment restricts the breadth of their learning. While learners are successful in their national tests, they do not develop the wider skills of literacy and numeracy. However, the programme is successful in providing assessment and development for learners who work in environments from which it is difficult to be released for training.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Health, public services and care	0	4	2	0	6
Preparation for life and work	0	1	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>

10. **The practical assessment process is very effective on the road passenger transport programmes.** Assessment activity is well planned. Observations are recorded in detail and accompanied by oral questions. Learners get detailed feedback. There is good assessment by direct observation, on the buses, while in commercial use.

**11. The induction to road passenger transport programmes is good.** Learners attend an induction session delivered by PDM's assessors. The induction pack has recently been further developed and contains some good-quality material to improve learners' understanding in dealing with people with disabilities.

**12. Much teaching and learning on the security programmes is good.** Eighty per cent of sessions observed were graded good. Tutors use good strategies to aid learning, as well as good demonstrations and explanations. In most sessions learners are active, contributing to the session by writing on the board and testing each other with examples of questions.

**13. Resources to support learning are good on the security programmes.** A key skills qualification support pack is put in the context of the vocational area and is clearly understood by learners. Handouts and workbooks are clear and of good quality. Each learner receives copies of previous handouts. PDM provides every apprentice with a laptop computer to use during key skills sessions. All of the training materials are portable and are designed to be easily used to deliver key skills and technical certificate training when learners are stationed overseas.

**14. In all areas of learning there are good working relationships with employers and a very flexible response to the needs of employers and learners.** In the security programmes, PDM has invested in a fleet of four-wheel-drive vehicles that can be shipped out to sites overseas. This is backed up with a trailer that doubles up as a mobile classroom or office. PDM also carries tents that can be set up to deliver key skills sessions wherever the learners are based. Courses have been successfully delivered in Kenya, Cyprus, Northern Ireland and Bosnia. In the transport programmes, employers have a strong commitment to training, are supportive of the need for training their staff and are happy to provide training and assessment opportunities for the qualifications. Employers value the training provided by PDM. In the literacy and numeracy programmes, there is a particularly flexible approach to meeting employers' needs and very good emphasis is placed on improving company performance through training. PDM provides good reports to employers on the progress of their learners and there is good communication with, and involvement of, employers in the training programme. PDM provides a flexible service for employers and tries hard to accommodate different work patterns, enabling learners to complete their qualification.

**15. In the transport programmes, literacy and numeracy have been effectively integrated with the national vocational qualification (NVQ).** Good mapping and cross-referencing of learners' NVQ evidence takes place. Most of the learners' literacy and numeracy work occurs in their production of evidence towards their road passenger transport NVQ. Employers are keen to improve drivers' literacy and numeracy skills.

**16. Reviews of learners' progress are weak in the road passenger transport programmes.** They are too brief and little information is recorded. Target-setting in reviews is weak. There is insufficient target-setting to bring about progress. In some areas, targets are set during assessment visits but these are not specific, measurable, attributable, and realistic or time bound. In other areas, targets are only verbally discussed and some learners are not clear about what they need to achieve. In some cases the targets agreed in learners' reviews are not shared with the employer.



**17. In the literacy and numeracy programmes, some inappropriate use is made of assessment to plan learners' programmes.** Results of initial assessments are recorded on each learner's individual learning plan, but a clear action plan is not always negotiated with the learner. Further diagnostic assessment is sometimes carried out but development needs are not always clearly recorded. The best individual learning plans have a satisfactory record of the initial skills of learners and of the development needed, together with actions required to meet this need. However, too many do not contain sufficient information adequately to identify future training needs. A small number of learners are working towards a qualification at the same level as their initial assessment result. Others work towards a level 2 qualification, irrespective of their level of initial assessment.

### **Leadership and management**

**18. The executive chairman, managing director and senior management team set a good, clear strategic direction for training and quality improvement** through the business planning process. Staff are involved in and understand the company's strategic direction. Senior managers and directors carry out business planning and development very effectively. A particularly clear organisational structure enables decisions and policies from senior management to be implemented, and for communication from staff to be shared with managers and directors. The business has grown tremendously over the past four years, with wide diversification of training activities. The decision to include qualifications in literacy and numeracy that sit alongside the vocational training adds value to the learners' experience.

**19. Communication is particularly good at PDM.** Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and how their role fits into the operational objectives and relates to the roles of their colleagues. Staff are kept informed of company objectives, targets, policies, procedures, standards required, and any proposed changes to strategic and operational activities. Staff discuss issues and plan activities through a wide range of meetings. In addition, PDM has established a very effective conference for all employees, where staff share ideas and good practice. Meetings are very well recorded with clear action points, timescales and responsibilities highlighted.

**20. Staff and physical resources are very well managed and deployed.** Staff are well qualified for their roles and responsibilities, and are used particularly flexibly. Training centres and workplaces offer appropriate facilities and equipment. PDM provides very good learning resources to meet learners' needs, including materials and equipment. Excellent resources are deployed to meet the assessment and training needs of learners. In the road passenger transport training, assessors are able to travel with learners on the buses and assess driver/passenger relations and learners' driving skills. Staff development and training is appropriately linked to staff appraisal. There is an annual cycle of meetings and opportunities for staff to develop personally and professionally at all levels. Good, clear targets are set for staff as part of the appraisal process and through a range of management meetings. Training and personal development opportunities are identified and agreed.

**21. PDM has forged excellent working relationships with employers.** These relationships maintain a flow of new learners, especially for literacy and numeracy, security and road passenger transport programmes. The company's links with military staff at a number of levels to aid the effective planning of training. Employers are committed to training, and managers, alongside union learning representatives, effectively support

learners in taking up appropriate qualifications to maintain a skilled workforce.

**22. PDM's customised management information system very effectively monitors learners' performance.** Trends and strategies to improve performance are explored and challenging targets for learners' retention and achievement rates are set. Staff are involved in this process and excellent management information is made available to help them do this. Timely action is taken where progress towards targets is slow or a cause for concern. These concerns are discussed at monthly management meetings, highlighting the profile of learners' progress, and any remedial action is identified with tasks allocated.

**23. PDM has a very strong commitment to equality of opportunity for its staff, learners and stakeholders.** Policies and related procedures for equality of opportunity are exemplary. The policies and procedures are well written, with good guidance and examples. For instance, the harassment and bullying policy contains examples of what could constitute harassment. Recruitment procedures for staff demonstrate best equal opportunities practice. All learners and employers receive information about the equal opportunities policy and senior staff are trained in the application of the policy. All staff receive comprehensive equal opportunities training at least once a year through the staff annual conference.

**24. PDM is particularly responsive to learners' and employers' needs.** It has invested extensively in resources, including staff resources, to enable it to deliver training to learners in the Army stationed abroad in areas such as Bosnia and Cyprus, thus ensuring equality of access to assessment. PDM is working with national bus operatives, training the drivers. Many of these learners have not been involved in learning for many years. The constraints of their jobs often mean that learners cannot attend planned training sessions or reviews due to working patterns and covering for absent colleagues. However, PDM's assessors are very flexible in their approach and deliver training to suit the needs of each learner.

**25. PDM has very effective, comprehensive and detailed quality improvement arrangements.** The quality improvement system is on the intranet and available to all staff. It covers all aspects of the company's business and particularly the learners' training journey. PDM has an excellent system, called 'tracker' for collecting and recording learners' data. All staff and managers, with the recent inclusion of staff who work remotely, clearly understand and effectively use the system. Analysis of the management information system relating to learners' rates of progression, retention and achievement, is completed monthly. Managers use this data to monitor progress and make decisions on expanding or contracting the provision.

**26. PDM makes excellent use of feedback to improve training.** Employers' and learners' feedback reports are particularly complimentary of PDM's service. Really useful course evaluations highlight the significance of issues for learners and employers. PDM analyses the results and prioritises actions for managers and their training staff. Significant improvements have been implemented. The Army apprentices' induction, for example, had been too brief and not memorable for learners. Trainers were not consistently covering all the information that learners needed to know. The issues were discussed by the training team and amendments made. The new induction was tested and further adjustments made. The results more effectively inducted learners into their programme.

27. PDM has a detailed equal opportunities policy and related procedures **but performs no systematic monitoring of the implementation of the policy and procedures.**

Although managers and teams meet on a regular basis and equality of opportunity is an agenda item under 'any other business', there is little evidence of discussion and monitoring of the policy and procedures. For example, in two observations of training, equal opportunities issues were picked up by the observers and action plans for the staff put in place. However, it isn't clear if the actions were implemented and whether practice has improved, as it hasn't been reported on in any of the meetings. PDM analyses its data on applicants to identify ethnicity, gender and disability but there is no record of what happens as a result of this analysis.

28. **In the road passenger transport and the security programmes, equality of opportunity is not sufficiently promoted or reinforced.** There is insufficient promotion and reinforcement of equal opportunities in the workplace and in learner reviews. There are no challenging questions asked or evidence that there is checking of knowledge.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- good strategic direction
- well-managed and deployed resources
- particularly good communication
- excellent working relationships with employers
- very effective management information system
- strong commitment to equality of opportunity
- particularly responsive delivery of training
- comprehensive and detailed quality arrangements leading to improvements
- excellent use of feedback to improve training

### Weaknesses

- insufficient systematic monitoring of equality of opportunity

## Health, public services and care

### Security

#### *Strengths*

- very high success rates on Train to Gain programme
- much good teaching and learning
- good resources to support learning
- highly flexible response to the needs of employers and learners
- very effective relationships with employers

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Transportation***

#### *Strengths*

- high success rates
- very effective practical assessment process
- good induction programme
- good working relationships with employers
- particularly effective integration of literacy and numeracy with the NVQ

#### *Weaknesses*

- slow progress for some learners
- weak progress review process
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity

## **Preparation for life and work**

### ***Literacy and numeracy***

#### *Strengths*

- very high success rates
- particularly flexible approach to meeting employers' needs

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient available time to develop wider skills
- inappropriate use of assessment to plan some learners' programmes

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT PDM TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY:**

- doing training in their own time
- doing coursework instead of exams
- 'made me sit down and think'
- improving their grammar and awareness of punctuation
- the good, helpful, supportive tutors
- 'doing my NVQ renewed my interest in the job'
- that it's a great way to get qualified while still at work
- 'after spending 20 years in the industry it's nice to get some recognition for something you do'
- 'it was a good experience, makes you aware of things you sometimes forget are important'
- the tutors - they are on the same wavelength, have Army experience and good background knowledge
- the very patient tutors
- that it's a good set up

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK PDM TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY COULD IMPROVE:**

- the technical certificate study booklet - it needs clearer print and more pictures
- better division of groups into levels of ability and/or language level
- the key skills part of the programme - it should be longer
- the amount of written work - there's too much
- release from work duties to do the training properly
- 'to be able to meet assessors somewhere other than at my normal work station'

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 1**

#### Strengths

- good strategic direction
- well-managed and deployed resources
- particularly good communication
- excellent working relationships with employers
- very effective management information system
- strong commitment to equality of opportunity
- particularly responsive delivery of training
- comprehensive and detailed quality arrangements leading to improvements
- excellent use of feedback to improve training

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient systematic monitoring of equality of opportunity

29. The executive chairman, managing director and senior management team set a good, clear strategic direction for training and quality improvement through the business planning process. Staff are involved in and understand the company's strategic direction. Business planning and development is very effectively carried out by the senior managers and directors. A particularly clear organisational structure enables decisions and policies from top management to be implemented, and for communication from staff to be shared with managers and directors. Policies, procedures and plans are shared with employers and key partners as part of the company's promotional work and through a wide range of presentations and marketing activity, including the distribution of leaflets and posters. There has been tremendous growth in the business over the past four years, with wide diversification of training activities. The decision to include qualifications in literacy and numeracy that sit alongside the vocational training enhances the learners' experience.

30. Communication is particularly good at PDM. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, and how their role fits into the operational objectives and relates to the roles of their colleagues. Staff are kept informed of company objectives, targets, policies, procedures, standards required, and any proposed changes to strategic and operational activities. Staff discuss issues and plan activities through a wide range of meetings. These include monthly board, senior management and operational management meetings, through to weekly staff meetings that concentrate on immediate concerns and current activities. All these meetings require managers to report against a set of key performance indicators related to the day-to-day work of PDM. In addition, PDM has established a very effective annual whole-staff conference where staff share ideas and good practice. Meetings are very well recorded with clear action points, timescales and responsibilities highlighted. An extensive range of policies and procedures successfully orientates staff and helps to steer the organisation. The employees' handbook details overall employment policies and procedures, forms and working practices.

31. Staff and physical resources are very well managed and deployed. Staff are well qualified for their roles and responsibilities and are used particularly flexibly. Training centres and workplaces offer appropriate facilities and equipment. There are very good learning resources to meet learners' needs, including materials and equipment. Excellent resources are deployed to meet the assessment and training needs of learners. For example, a mobile office and a four-wheel-drive vehicle are used to enable assessment to take place while Army learners are on tours of duty in places such as Bosnia, Kenya or Northern Ireland. In the road passenger transport training, assessors are able to travel with learners on the buses and assess driver/passenger relations and learners' driving skills. Staff development and training is appropriately linked to staff appraisal. There is an annual cycle of meetings and opportunities for staff to develop personally and professionally at all levels. Good, clear targets are set for staff as part of the appraisal process and through a range of management meetings. Training and personal development opportunities are identified and agreed.

32. PDM has forged excellent working relationships with employers. These relationships maintain a flow of new learners, especially for literacy and numeracy, security and road passenger transport programmes. PDM's links with military staff at a number of levels aid the effective planning of training. Employers are committed to training, and managers, alongside union learning representatives, effectively support learners in taking up appropriate qualifications to maintain a skilled workforce. Assessors and trainers working with the Army have been soldiers themselves and are able to maintain credibility with the military staff and learners, gaining respect and trust in the service they offer.

33. PDM's customised management information system very effectively monitors learners' performance. Trends and strategies to improve performance are explored and challenging targets for learners' retention and achievement are set. Staff are involved in this process and excellent management information is made available to help them do this. Timely action is taken where learners' progress towards targets is slow or a cause for concern. These concerns are discussed at monthly management meetings, highlighting the profile of learners' progress, and any remedial action is identified with tasks allocated. For example, the slow progress of road passenger transport learners was identified and additional assessors recruited to speed up assessment processes. The progress monitoring system plots learners' progress unit by unit, is a record of each learners' gender, ethnicity, disability, start and end dates, and provides additional information relevant to the learner. Having identified issues for remote workers in updating learners' progress records, PDM is developing the opportunity for these staff to use the learner monitoring system and input data directly rather than sending paperwork into the Andover office for data staff to process. This development is designed to increase the timeliness of updates to the system so that reports will more accurately reflect the learners' journey.

34. Support arrangements for learners are satisfactory. Staff are knowledgeable about the process and appropriately apply PDM's arrangements for learners' support. These include the strategies to ensure support needs are accurately identified through initial assessment of literacy, language, numeracy and vocational skills. Learners' support is monitored through the management information system, assessment contact, and literacy and numeracy training. In road passenger transport training, literacy and numeracy training is integrated well with the NVQ programme. The union learning representatives based in the transport depots are a very effective resource for learners at work and demonstrate



great commitment to supporting and developing learners in their vocational settings.

35. PDM is developing a skills for life strategy to make clear the business argument for providing literacy and numeracy training. Skills for Life is the government's initiative on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. A useful process map for initially assessing literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners, the training of essential skills and the online testing for skills for life are part of the quality management system. A detailed report was produced in 2002 to explore the opportunities and value of developing skills for life and key skills training. This clearly sets out the learners' context, including workforce development issues, funding opportunities and delivery methodologies. PDM used the report as a starting point in providing specific literacy and numeracy qualifications at work.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

36. PDM has a very strong commitment to equality of opportunity for its staff, learners and stakeholders. Equal opportunities policies and related procedures are exemplary. Procedures cover staff and learners' recruitment, discrimination, harassment and bullying, gender, sexual orientation and Criminal Records Bureau checks. The policies and procedures are well written with good guidance and examples. For instance, the harassment and bullying policy contains examples of what could constitute harassment. Recruitment procedures for staff enshrine best equal opportunities practice. All learners and employers receive information about the equal opportunities policy and senior staff are trained in the application of the policy. All staff receive comprehensive equal opportunities training at least once a year through the staff annual conference. The most recent training took place in March this year and covered a wide range of issues including legislation, equal opportunities in lesson planning and in the workplace, and diversity awareness. The human resources manager sends out periodic reminders every three months which cover updates in issues of equality of opportunity. The most recent reminder covered personal harassment, the equal opportunities policy generally and communications through information technology systems. All staff have a very good awareness of equality of opportunity and diversity issues. The complaints procedure is satisfactory and all complaints are dealt with thoroughly and in a timely manner. Specific complaints related to equality of opportunity issues are taken very seriously and are dealt with at the highest level.

37. PDM is particularly responsive to learners' and employers' needs. It has invested extensively in resources, including staff resources, to enable it to deliver training to learners in the Army stationed in several areas of the world, such as Bosnia and Cyprus, thus ensuring equality of access to assessment. PDM's staff take out portable resources and spend up to two weeks in the field with the learners delivering key skills and technical certificate training. PDM also successfully delivers contracts and training which other providers have not delivered. It is working with national bus operatives, training the drivers. Many of these learners have not been involved in learning for many years. The constraints of the job often mean that learners cannot attend planned training sessions or reviews due to working patterns and covering for absent colleagues. However, PDM's assessors are very flexible in their approach and deliver training to suit the needs of each learner.

38. PDM has a detailed equal opportunities policy and related procedures but does not systematically monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures. Although



managers and teams meet on a regular basis and equality of opportunity is an agenda item under 'any other business', there is little evidence of discussion and monitoring of the policy and procedures. For example, in two observations of training, equality issues were picked up by the observers and action plans for the staff were put in place. However, it isn't clear if the actions were implemented and whether practice has improved as it hasn't been reported on in any of the meetings. PDM analyses its data on applicants to identify their ethnicity, gender and disability but there is no record of what happens as a result of this analysis.

### Quality improvement

### Contributory grade 1

39. PDM has very effective, comprehensive and detailed quality arrangements leading to improvements. The quality improvement system is available on the intranet and available to all staff. It covers all aspects of the organisation's business and particularly the learners' training journey. All forms are controlled and version dates are clearly stated. Regular audits are completed and compliance checks are made. Requests to change procedures are very effectively used. The system to oversee this process is effective, and checks and balances are in place to enable monitoring and viability to be explored. PDM has an excellent system, called 'tracker', for collecting and recording learners' data. All staff and managers use 'tracker' including, more recently, staff who work remotely. All staff clearly understand and effectively use the system. Analysis of the management information system relating to learners' rates of progression, retention and achievement is completed monthly. Managers use this data to monitor progress and make decisions on expanding or contracting the provision. Appropriate agreements for subcontracted provision are established and used where necessary. Subcontractors are required to comply with PDM's systems, principles and values. Currently there is no subcontracted provision.

40. Priorities for improvement are established through self-assessment and development planning. An excellent and effective system for observing training has been developed which focuses on the Common Inspection Framework and includes appropriate feedback arrangements and action-planning for staff. Improvements are made and monitored and the outcomes are linked to staff appraisal. An initial group of staff piloted the observation scheme and received training in its use from a consultant. This is now being shared with other managers of training staff.

41. Excellent use is made of feedback to improve training. Employers' and learners' feedback reports are particularly complementary of PDM's service. Really useful course evaluations highlight the significance of issues for learners and employers. PDM analyses the results and prioritises actions for managers and their training staff. Significant improvements have been implemented. For example, the Army apprentices' induction had been too brief and not memorable for learners. Trainers were not consistently covering all the information that learners needed to know. The issues were discussed by the training team and amendments made. The new induction was tested and further adjustments made. The results more effectively inducted learners into their programme. Road passenger transport training has improved, adding equality and diversity components along with health and safety. The progress review dates for adult programmes were revised to reflect the shorter programmes.

42. Internal verification is satisfactory. It is appropriately planned and takes place throughout the training programme. There are effective arrangements for sampling assessment practice. This includes the observation of assessments as well as the

## PDM TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY

examination of learners' portfolios. Appropriate records are kept and internal verifiers provide oral and written feedback to assessors. PDM operates a quality assurance co-ordinator process. Quality assurance co-ordinators are responsible for monitoring and co-ordinating the activities of internal verifiers, and taking responsibility for the overall quality assurance of the qualification. Regular standardisation and assessment meetings are held and must be attended at least twice a year by assessors and trainers. Four times a year an overall meeting of all quality assurance co-ordinators is held. Reports are considered highlighting issues identified by the co-ordinators and other verifiers. Learners' progress is reviewed, and any significant issues are discussed and action planned. Assessors share good practice and all actions identified by the external verifier are acted upon. Senior managers set targets for assessors to ensure that external verifiers continue to give high-graded and low-risk assessments of the provision.

43. The self-assessment process is inclusive and focuses on the five key questions in the Common Inspection Framework. The compilation of the most recent report involved a pre-inspection working group which was set up in November 2005. This group carried out fact-finding and auditing activity to provide further information about continuous improvements. The group concentrated on the learners' journey and effectively used the ALI's Excalibur good practice database. Specific self-assessment workshops were held and information was gathered from a wide range of sources. These included staff involved in delivery of programmes, managers and administrators, feedback from learners, employers and awarding bodies, and internal and external quality audits. The most recent self-assessment report does not include enough useful background information or strong or detailed evidence to support judgements. It does not do justice to the breadth and strength of PDM's provision. The previous year's report was a better indicator of the quality of provision and offered more information, contextualising the training and evidencing the judgements in leadership and management. The grades given at inspection reflect PDM's self-assessment with the exception of literacy and numeracy provision, where more recent contracts have been made.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Health, public services and care

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Security</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	620	2
Train to Gain	53	2

44. PDM offers security training through work-based learning for apprentices in the infantry of the British Army and through the Train to Gain programme in a range of qualifications for employees in the security industry. At the time of the inspection there were 620 learners taking the apprenticeship in security, of whom 154 were between 16 and 18 years old. A further 53 learners were working towards security qualifications, including 29 working toward a level 2 NVQ in providing security services. The remainder were on programmes leading to other professionally recognised vocational qualifications in security. All learners are employed and are recommended for training by their employers. Induction covering the key elements of each programme is carried out in the learners' workplace.

### **Security**

#### *Strengths*

- very high success rates on Train to Gain programme
- much good teaching and learning
- good resources to support learning
- highly flexible response to the needs of employers and learners
- very effective relationships with employers

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity

### **Achievement and standards**

45. Success rates on the Train to Gain programme are very high. The overall achievement rate in 2003-04 was 99 per cent and in 2004-05 it was 96 per cent. All learners who remain on the programme have achieved the qualification. Those who have not remained on the programme have also left their employment. Since the beginning of the 18-month apprenticeship programme, 14 per cent of the 725 starters have already completed the framework and the most of the remainder are making satisfactory progress within the constraints of military service. All those who have taken the technical certificate for professional security officers have passed. Before the apprenticeship programme, PDM ran a successful NVQ programme for the Army with achievement rates in excess of 86 per cent in 2003-04 and 2004-05.

46. The standard of work in learners' key skills portfolios is good. Work is neatly presented and laid out well. Learners produce clear written explanations of the work. Projects demonstrate the learners' ability to do research and to compare and contrast different security scenarios. Key skills projects are vocationally focused to reflect Army and civilian security contexts. However, apprentices' NVQ portfolios do not have any individuality. All learners use the same type of evidence from Army training and instruction that is mapped across to meet the criteria for the NVQ. Practical assessments are done in real work environments but there is very little evidence provided by the learner to show ownership of the qualification. On the Train to Gain programme, portfolios reflect the variety of work context and experience of the learners, and contain a wealth of evidence.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	349	0	0	99	0
		timely	339	0	0	95	0
	2004-05	overall	305	0	0	96	0
		timely	281	0	0	84	0
NVQ training for young	2003-04	overall	2443	86	62	0	0
		timely	2392	82	44	0	0
	2004-05	overall	938	88	59	0	0
		timely	938	85	40	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

47. Much teaching and learning is good. Eighty per cent of sessions observed were graded good and there were no unsatisfactory sessions. Tutors use good strategies to aid learning, good demonstrations and explanations. In most sessions learners are active, contributing to the session by writing on the board and testing each other with examples of questions. In one session the learners were quickly able to understand and demonstrate how to convert fractions to decimals, and decimals to percentages. In key skills sessions the learning is linked to the results of learners' diagnostic assessments. Learners are refreshing their skills and also improving spelling, punctuation, grammar, and communication skills in general. Ghurkha learners are developing their spoken English during key skills sessions. The employer recognises the enhanced skills of soldiers who have done the apprenticeship in that they demonstrate a greater working knowledge of why they apply security principles in different contexts during active service or in barracks. Employers recognise an improvement in the quality of reports written by security personnel who have completed Train to Gain programmes.

48. Resources to support learning are good. A key skills support pack is contextualised to the vocational area and is clearly understood by learners. Handouts and workbooks are clear and of good quality. Each learner receives copies of previous handouts. PDM

provides every apprentice with a laptop computer to use during key skills sessions. All of the training materials are portable and are designed to be easily used to deliver key skills and technical certificate training when learners are stationed overseas. All of PDM's tutors and assessors on apprenticeship programmes are well qualified and experienced. Those involved in the apprenticeship programme all have a military background and understand the protocols and conditions of service. On all programmes, staff quickly adapt courses and programme delivery at short notice. Assessors on Train to Gain programmes schedule visits to coincide with varied shift patterns, including nights and weekends, and accompany learners on mobile patrols. They set appropriate tasks for learners to complete between visits to generate relevant evidence for their qualification, based on the context of their security role.

49. The provider is highly flexible in its response to the needs of the employer and learners on the apprenticeship programme. PDM has invested in a fleet of four-wheel-drive vehicles that can be shipped out to sites overseas and reach learners' locations across rough terrain and un-metalled roads. This is backed up with a trailer that doubles up as a mobile classroom or office. PDM also carries tents that can be set up to deliver key skills sessions wherever the learners are based. All of the laptop computers, computer projectors, printers and screens are packed into rigid travel boxes for flights overseas at 24 hours' notice. Courses have been successfully delivered in Kenya, Cyprus, Northern Island and Bosnia. Tutors are flexible and adaptable to any circumstances and can cope with the same extreme operational conditions as the Army learners.

50. Learning support on the apprenticeship programme is satisfactory overall. Tutors give some good in-class support for learners with low literacy and/or numeracy levels. Additional literacy and numeracy sessions with a specialist teacher are provided by the Army for learners with skill levels at entry level 3 or below. Ghurkha learners also receive support in English for speakers of other languages from a specialist at a local Army education centre. Train to Gain learners who need specialist support receive this satisfactorily at the start of their programmes, either from their employer's training department or PDM's tutors.

51. Induction and initial assessment are satisfactory. For the apprenticeship programme, they are conducted in groups in the learners' unit. For the Train to Gain programme they are conducted for individuals in their workplace. The programmes are clearly explained and learners' understanding is checked at each stage. The learners complete a literacy and numeracy skills test before the induction and this is used in developing each learner's individual action plan.

52. Attendance on some apprenticeship courses is poor. Learners are called away at short notice for other Army duties. For example, at Folkestone only four of 14 learners who were booked to attend were present on day one of a two-week programme. However, attendance at individual sessions is then very good and generally remains at 100 per cent throughout the course.

53. Learners have a poor understanding of the whole apprenticeship programme. They see it as it is delivered, as separate chunks of learning, and do not recognise how the different elements support each other. Apprentices' individual learning plans are not individualised and the recording of progress at reviews is insufficiently informative. Reviews are done at the end of each block of learning. They do not record the

development of any skills, but record completed modules of the qualification such as 'NVQ completed'.

### **Leadership and management**

54. PDM has very effective relationships with employers. The provider and the employers conduct joint training needs analysis and collaborate effectively to plan training programmes that complement any vocational training carried out by the employer. Employers value PDM's flexibility and rapid response to short-notice changes. Staff understand a range of security working conditions and are able to communicate well through the varied management structures to effectively co-ordinate the learning programmes. Employers are supportive of training.

55. Management of the curriculum area is good. Each programme has a quality assurance co-ordinator. The development and training of staff is good. Staff on the apprenticeship programme receive training in the delivery and course content of key skills. All new staff shadow peers before delivering courses themselves. They also attend workshops in health and safety and learning styles. All staff hold a minimum of two relevant security qualifications, and have or are working towards assessor/verifier qualifications and learning and development awards at level 3 or 4. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. Verifiers are appropriately qualified and experienced. There is sufficient sampling of assessment decisions including observations of assessors' practice throughout the programmes. Assessors receive appropriate feedback. Each group has regular standardisation meetings and one internal verifier for each programme acts as a quality assurance co-ordinator.

56. Staff involvement in the self-assessment process is satisfactory. Employers' and learners' input is obtained through satisfaction questionnaires. The self-assessment report is accurate and identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found at inspection. However, there is insufficient supporting evidence in the text to justify the judgements.

57. Equality of opportunity is not sufficiently reinforced in learners' reviews. A small box on the form records comments such as 'no problems' or is frequently left blank. There are no challenging questions asked or evidence that there is checking of knowledge.

**Engineering and manufacturing technologies****Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Transportation</b>		<b>2</b>
Train to Gain	331	2

58. Transportation is an interim Train to Gain programme. Three-hundred and thirty-one learners are working towards a road passenger transport NVQ at level 2. The planned length of programme is 12 weeks on average. All learners are employed in local or regional passenger transport-related businesses. On-the-job training is provided by learners' employers and is supported with individual coaching by assessors. Some off-the-job training is delivered by PDM, mainly during the induction programme. All assessment is carried out in the learners' workplaces by PDM's assessors. The company operates in Kent, Essex, Wiltshire, Devon and Cornwall. Currently there are nine assessors.

**Transportation***Strengths*

- high success rates
- very effective practical assessment process
- good induction programme
- good working relationships with employers
- particularly effective integration of literacy and numeracy with the NVQ

*Weaknesses*

- slow progress for some learners
- weak progress review process
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity

**Achievement and standards**

59. Retention and overall success rates are high. In 2004-05, 14 learners joined the programme and all successfully completed. In 2005-06, 384 learners started and only one learner left the programme early. Currently there are 331 in learning. The overall success rate is high at 88 per cent.

60. Learners' portfolios are neat, tidy and well presented. Evidence collected is appropriate and assessment records are well documented. All assessors are well qualified and most are experienced in the assessment of road passenger transport and related transport training qualifications. PDM and its learners display a strong awareness of health and safety.

61. Some learners are making slow progress. Many learners have exceeded the planned completion time for their qualifications. Forty-eight per cent of learners are late in meeting



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their individual learning plan's end date. Learners' numbers have increased significantly in 2005-06, and in many cases the slow progress was influenced by there being insufficient assessors. Those assessors that were in place found difficulty providing the required number of assessments each learner had to receive. PDM identified this problem and increased the number of assessors to meet the large numbers of learners. Recently, there has been significant improvement in progress. A few learners are making slow progress. Their employers give a higher priority to job-related issues rather than the training programme.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Adult training (long courses)	2004-05	overall	14	100		0	
		timely	2	14		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

62. The practical assessment process is very effective. Assessment activity is well planned. Observations are recorded in detail and accompanied by oral questions. Learners get detailed feedback. Learners are assessed well by direct observation while driving the buses. Assessors have good understanding of occupational competence, and most have many years experience driving buses. Witness testimonies are used effectively and in many cases witnesses are questioned on their judgements. The assessments that take place on the buses while the drivers are working provide an excellent opportunity to generate evidence for learners' driving and customer relations skills.

63. The induction programme is good. Learners attend an induction session delivered by PDM's assessors. The induction pack has recently been further developed and contains some good-quality material to help understanding in dealing with people with disabilities. Some companies have an additional induction in the workplace. Learners have good recall of the content of the induction.

64. PDM has good working relationships with employers. Employers have a strong commitment to training. They are supportive of the need for training their staff and are happy to provide training and assessment opportunities for the qualifications. Employers value the training provided by PDM. Good and effective communication links exist between employers and assessors. Assessors manage the relationships with employers effectively. Many bus companies have their own induction programmes and use material from PDM in the delivery of these programmes.

65. Literacy and numeracy training is integrated particularly effectively with the NVQ. Good mapping and cross-referencing of learners' NVQ evidence takes place. Learners are comfortable with training for improving their literacy and numeracy skills, and qualifications. Most of the literacy and numeracy work occurs in their production of evidence towards their road passenger transport NVQ. Employers are keen to improve



drivers' literacy and numeracy skills.

66. Provision meets the needs of learners, employers, local councils and the community satisfactorily. Most learners and employers enjoy the programmes and value the qualification. Passenger transport companies encourage their drivers to complete the qualification with the aim of providing an efficient and safe service for people in the community.

67. Support for learners is satisfactory. Visits by assessors are in line with the contracted terms and visits are scheduled in a flexible way, which helps the employer. Assessors are readily contactable and respond promptly to learners' queries or requests for assistance. Learners value the supportive approach of PDM's staff.

68. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners undergo an initial interview, as well as assessment tests of their literacy and numeracy, and key skills abilities. The literacy and numeracy assessment results are analysed and PDM supplies support and additional training if appropriate.

69. The training resources are satisfactory. Induction and training materials are of good quality. In many bus depots, PDM has offices and training rooms with resources appropriate to the needs of the learners and their training programme.

70. Reviews of learners' progress are weak. Reviews are too brief and little information is recorded. Target-setting in reviews is weak. There is insufficient target-setting to bring about progress. In some areas, targets are set during assessment visits but these are not specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic or timebound. In other areas, targets are only verbally discussed and some learners are not clear about what they need to achieve. In some cases the targets agreed in the learners' reviews are not shared with the employer. The individual learning plans are not used, updated or referred to in the review. For example, some are not signed and do not have details of initial assessment and support requirements. However, a large part of the individual learning plan is discussed and reviewed in the assessment process.

### **Leadership and management**

71. Staff work effectively as a team. Internal communications are good. Staff share progress and problems relating to learners, both formally and informally. Staff are occupationally trained and experienced. They are encouraged to develop their skills both occupationally and as tutors.

72. Internal verification is satisfactory. Clear sampling and assessors' observation plans are in place. Records of individual and overall sampling and observation activity are accurate. There is a clear audit trail of internal verification activity. A thorough checking system is in place to ensure that actions set by the internal verifier are completed to agreed timescales. However, there is insufficient coverage of verification of all aspects of learner's evidence.

73. Insufficient monitoring, promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity takes place in the workplace and during the progress review process.

74. The self-assessment report does not accurately identify some of the strengths and

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weaknesses in the occupational area. It contains insufficient information to support the strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors did identify a number of additional strengths and weaknesses. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process.

**Preparation for life and work****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Literacy and numeracy</i></b> Train to Gain	217	<b>3</b> 3

75. PDM has 217 learners working towards qualifications in literacy or numeracy as part of the Train to Gain programme. All learners are adults working in a range of companies across Kent and Wiltshire, and approximately 70 per cent of the learners are men. Seven learners have been identified as having a disability, with six of these having dyslexia. The learners are also working towards vocational qualifications. Initial assessments are completed in literacy and numeracy and a further diagnostic assessment is normally taken to identify specific areas for development. There are 101 learners working towards programmes at level 1, 113 working towards programmes at level 2 and three learners on entry level 3 programmes. Fifty-one of the learners are working towards qualifications in numeracy and 166 towards qualifications in literacy. All learners work towards relevant national tests which they take on the employers' premises. The programme lasts between three and eight months. Each learner is visited weekly and has a progress review approximately once a month.

***Literacy and numeracy******Strengths***

- very high success rates
- particularly flexible approach to meeting employers' needs

***Weaknesses***

- insufficient available time to develop wider skills
- inappropriate use of assessment to plan some learners' programmes

**Achievement and standards**

76. Overall success rates are high at 87 per cent in 2004-05. Success rates in adult literacy have continued to rise in 2005-06 and are very high at 95 per cent for level 1 and 93 per cent for level 2 qualifications. While success rates for numeracy in 2005-06 have declined, this is because of a cancelled contract outside the control of the company, and performance in achieving national qualifications in other parts of the provision continues to be good. In spite of this cancelled contract, PDM has made good provision for the continuation of this service to the company involved, using an alternative funding stream.

77. Insufficient time is available to develop the wider skills of learners. The pressure of learners' working environment hampers the breadth of their learning. In one company, tutors attend the workplace frequently but are seldom able to train, assess, or support learners away from their workstations. In another company, learners miss appointments as they are required to cover for absent colleagues. While most learners are successful in their national tests and some learners do make progress in developing their literacy and

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numeracy skills, the programme for a small number of learners consists mainly of accreditation of their existing skills. Many learners achieve level 1 or above in their initial assessment, and development relates to limited areas such as improving punctuation instead of wider or further development of literacy and numeracy skills. However, the programme is successful in providing assessment and development to learners who work in environments from which it is very difficult to be released for training.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Adult training (long courses)	2003-04	overall	28	68		0	
		timely	19	68		0	
	2004-05	overall	100	87		0	
		timely	80	70		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. PDM has a particularly flexible approach to meeting employers' needs, and very good emphasis is placed on improving company performance through training. Employers receive a good report on the progress of their learners and there is good communication with, and involvement of, employers in the training programme. PDM provides a flexible service for employers and tries hard to accommodate different work patterns, enabling learners to complete their qualification. Assessors are particularly sensitive to the pressures on learners and make great effort to accommodate conflicting concurrent demands of work and training on learners. Employers show a good commitment to train and further develop the skills of their staff. One employer has only been able to secure funding for just over half of the learners it wished to train towards level 2 NVQ and literacy qualifications, so it is paying PDM to train these additional learners at its own expense.

79. Pre-course information and guidance provided to learners and employers is satisfactory. All programmes in literacy and numeracy are supporting existing learners working towards NVQs in road passenger transport and security operations. Learners take an induction at the beginning of the programme, which provides details of the programme structure and evidence requirements. Training sessions, where they take place, are satisfactory overall. In the best training sessions, objectives are clearly explained and set in the context of the needs of the workplace. In less good sessions, little attention is paid to the needs of the individual and there is insufficient checking of learners' understanding and progress. PDM's staff visit learners regularly to conduct reviews of progress and encourage them to work towards completion.

80. The use of assessment to plan learners' programmes is inappropriate for some learners. Results of initial assessments are recorded on the learner's individual learning plan, but a clear action plan is not always negotiated with the learner. Further diagnostic assessment is sometimes carried out but learners' development needs are not always

clearly recorded. The best individual learning plans have a satisfactory record of initial skills of learners and of development needed, together with actions required to meet this need. However, a small number do not contain sufficient information adequately to identify future training needs. Results of the initial and diagnostic assessments are not always clearly explained to learners, who do not always understand their weaknesses or actions they need to take to rectify these weaknesses in the context of the workplace. A small number of learners are working towards a qualification at the same level as their initial assessment result. However, this was a strategy developed by PDM to encourage nervous learners back into training. Others work towards a level 2 qualification, irrespective of their level of initial assessment.

### **Leadership and management**

81. Most staff have relevant experience and qualifications in training. Some have initial qualifications in meeting literacy and numeracy support needs and an event has been held for all training staff to raise their awareness of support issues. Some staff training has taken place to raise awareness in identifying and meeting additional support needs such as dyslexia. Health and safety checks are carried out at the beginning of each contract with an employer and action is identified if required.

82. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Equality issues are discussed during the induction process and during learners' progress reviews. However, PDM does not further develop learners' wider understanding of equality issues as they relate to the workplace to promote ongoing best practice.

83. PDM's staff have been involved in self-assessment through a meeting held for all staff where they identified strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Inspectors agreed with many of the issues identified in the self-assessment report.

