

INSPECTION REPORT

Associated Neighbour Training

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
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grading

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

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

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Associated Neighbour Training (ANT) is a privately owned training company which was formed in 1982 and is run from a home-based office in the Reigate area of Surrey. It provides work-based learning apprenticeship and national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes for 70 learners in the Surrey and surrounding area. Courses are funded by the Surrey Learning and Skills Council (LSC).
2. The occupational areas offered by ANT include business administration, accountancy, management, estate agency, customer service, veterinary nursing and, for the moment, dental nursing. Most of the training takes place in the learners' workplace. The veterinary nurses attend a subcontractor, MYF Training in Aldershot, for the background knowledge elements of their course. Accountancy learners complete a distance-learning course with the Financial Training Company which is based in York.
3. There are just two directly employed members of staff, one of which is the owner, who works full time as the director of training, and a part-time centre manager. Nine other staff support the business, working on a self-employed basis. One of these works from the office as the company's recruitment manager. Seven more work part time from other locations as assessors and verifiers, visiting learners in the workplace to provide support and training and to carry out assessment and reviews. One specialist acts as a monitor for the structured programme that veterinary nurses carry out in their workplace. Most of the staff have been working with the company for three years or more.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Leadership and management, particularly the day-to-day management of learning, is good overall. Quality improvement and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The business administration and law area of learning and agriculture, horticulture and animal care provision are both good.
5. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is regular, and fully involves all staff. There is appropriate use of data in the report, including feedback from the employers and learners, but the company does not use the data effectively to help initial staff discussions. The report identified nearly all the judgements that the inspectors made, although the key points are hidden by too many strengths that reflect either satisfactory provision or improving aspects of ANT's work. Action plans are well structured, although some targets are vague. Actions take place, but the monitoring is too informal.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Overall success rates for the business administration apprentices have improved in each of the past three years. The results for the veterinary nurses have remained consistently high and well above national averages. The provision improved significantly after an inspection in 2002 judged that most aspects of ANT's work were unsatisfactory or no more than satisfactory. By the time of the reinspection in 2004, the areas of learning had improved to

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good. Since then there have been further specific improvements, such as the better monitoring of assessors' performance. The regularity of visits to learners has improved, and there is very effective use of time in those visits to help learners improve their performance. Formal systems for ensuring performance improvements and for monitoring some of the detail are only satisfactory. At present this has little effect on the relatively small number of learners, as they are checked on an individual basis.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR ASSOCIATED NEIGHBOUR TRAINING:

- maintain the good-quality and improving training
- fully implement regular and thorough quality assurance systems
- improve the standard of reviews and monitoring in veterinary nursing programmes
- improve equality of opportunity action-planning and learners' understanding

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Veterinary services			
Apprenticeships for young people	20	2	
NVQ training for young people	3	2	

Business administration and law			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Accounting and finance			
Apprenticeships for young people	3	2	
Administration			
Apprenticeships for young people	21	2	
NVQ training for young people	2	2	
Business management			
Apprenticeships for young people	1	2	
Marketing and sales			
Apprenticeships for young people	6	2	
Customer service			
Apprenticeships for young people	3	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. The inspection reported on and graded the veterinary nurses' programmes in the agriculture, horticulture and animal care area of learning. The provision for learners on business administration, management, accountancy and estate agent courses were all considered as part of the business administration and law area of learning. There were too few learners following information and communications technology (ICT) programmes for them to be reported and graded separately. Evidence was collected from the ICT area to support judgements in leadership and management. ANT was to cease its provision for dental nurses as soon as the three current learners completed and this aspect was not reviewed.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	28
Number of staff interviewed	19
Number of employers interviewed	13
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	1

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- particularly good and effective communication with learners, staff, employers and partner organisations
- a good focus on providing good-quality training
- good initial equality of opportunity of training for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently effective action-planning for equality of opportunity improvement
- insufficiently thorough application of some quality assurance procedures

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Veterinary services

Strengths

- very good overall success rates
- good induction
- good off-the-job training
- good training staff in veterinary practices

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Weaknesses

- some slow progress in completing of the learners' portfolios of evidence
- insufficiently thorough progress reviews of learners' progress

Business administration and law

Strengths

- good overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- continuing improvements in framework success rates
- very effective induction programme
- good assessment planning
- good links with employers

Weaknesses

- slow progress by some estate agency learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ASSOCIATED NEIGHBOUR TRAINING:

- 'the way training is provided'
- 'it's really easy to contact my assessor'
- 'the reviews are really helpful - it's time to talk and listen, particularly with your boss'
- 'those action plans are really useful'
- 'they are helping me get on in my course - I'm on time, getting on well, it's unbelievable'
- 'they, and the course, have helped me improve as a person and in my work'
- 'everything is explained; the sign up procedures are really clear'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK ASSOCIATED NEIGHBOUR TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of the paperwork
- 'getting the accountancy distance-learning people to send my work back more promptly'
- 'more discussion in my review on the NVQ, not how I'm getting on at work'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- particularly good and effective communication with learners, staff, employers and partner organisations
- a good focus on providing good-quality training
- good initial equality of opportunity of training for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently effective action-planning for equality of opportunity improvement
- insufficiently thorough application of some quality assurance procedures

8. Communication with learners, staff, employers and partner organisations is particularly good and effective. On the business administration side, assessors visit most learners at least every four weeks. The visits generally last for a couple of hours and learners value the chance to discuss a range of matters. In addition, increasingly effective use of e-mail for routine matters, support, and in some cases the exchange of work, ensures that learners stay in contact with ANT and remain focused on their programme. There is routine and effective use of the telephone between learners, their assessors and ANT's office. A short but nicely presented quarterly newsletter makes learners feel appreciated and involved. The initial information pack is also well presented and helpful. Veterinary nurses have regular contact with their monitor, and see each other and teaching staff during their weekly training sessions. Staff communication is very effective. Among staff there is good routine informal contact and effective use of e-mail, regular telephone calls, fax messages and productive visits to the main office. All relevant staff attend monthly meetings, which are properly focused on the learners and on improvements to training, assessment and verification. Meetings are appropriately minuted, with satisfactory identification and follow up of actions. Staff believe they are very well informed on ANT's activities and feel fully involved in the company. This is particularly good given the dispersed, part-time and self-employed status of most staff. Communication with employers is also good. This starts with the very thorough induction activities for new learners and companies. It is then consolidated by good involvement during the monthly visits by assessors and the employers taking a leading role in the quarterly reviews. Another short quarterly newsletter, specifically for employers, contains some bits of useful news, but more importantly reminds employers about ANT and the learning programmes. There is appropriate contact and communication with funding and awarding bodies, although this is sometimes reactive rather than a part of formal planning. There are good links with a local association of learning providers.

9. Ensuring good-quality training for learners is a notable focus of ANT's routine work. All the staff, fully encouraged by the director, show a strong desire to provide learners with a good and improving learning experience. This approach is reflected by staff that are self-employed, who work for the subcontractor, or are in veterinary practices. The frequency of ANT staff's visits to all business administration and ICT learners is very good.

The learners appreciate the very regular help and encouragement they receive and believe that ANT is playing an important part in their professional and personal development. Assessors adapt their approach well to support the individual and the differing workplaces. The increasing use of e-mail by learners to send work for comment and assessment is seen by many learners as a good aid to their progress. Veterinary nurses have visits by ANT's monitor at quarterly intervals. These can be a little perfunctory but are used to encourage learners to improve their work. Staff activity is well monitored by the centre manager. On the business administration side there are new monitoring systems for such things as staff visits to learners. The timeliness of routine visits to learners has improved, although some quarterly reviews are still a little behind schedule. The monitoring of learners' progress by staff at the main office has improved. Assessors are now more closely monitored and routinely encouraged to deal with slow progress. The regular team meetings look at ideas for change, and these lead to prompt actions. Recent examples include changes to the NVQ portfolio structure to make the structure easier for learners and to improve the validation system. Informal discussions also lead to changes, such as increasing the use of tape recorders in learners' discussions and ways of reducing the amount of evidence required in their portfolios.

10. Overall staff training is satisfactory. The director identifies potential training events of interest, and encourages staff to attend. Other requests for training are generally supported and funded. Experienced staff are used effectively to provide training and advice for colleagues, and there is appropriate feedback from staff who attend training courses. Recent events have included improving learner retention, disability discrimination, updates on apprenticeship frameworks, raising quality in learning, key skills update, improving achievement and retention, and how to motivate and inspire young people. The training needs are not closely linked with the appraisal system, and planning is largely reactive to requests or advertisements. No staff are working towards long-term teacher-training qualifications. Only two staff members have the most recent verification or assessor qualification. The veterinary monitor lacks expertise in some aspects of her work and is not in training to overcome this.

11. The strategy for identifying and supporting those with literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. All learners receive key skills tests on induction, and this is rightly used to highlight learners who may need additional support. These learners have further assessments. Help, if needed, is initially given by assessors, although one member of staff with more expertise in these topics may give additional support. In extreme cases ANT uses outside providers. For the few learners who need specific help, this system is satisfactory. However a number of learners, particularly veterinary nurses, will not take the key skills assessment as they are considered to be exempt from the test. Some of these have minor needs and it is left to assessors to recognise this requirement and do something about it. This generally happens, but may be late. Some employers, notably veterinary practices, are not informed of literacy or numeracy needs that could be partly developed within the workplace.

12. The monitoring of workplaces is particularly thorough. This includes aspects of health and safety, legal requirements, equality of opportunity, and personnel policies. The monitoring starts with the comprehensive initial induction activities and it is then reinforced through formal annual reviews. It is checked as part of the regular assessor or monitor visits. There are helpful information packs for employers, clearly stating their responsibilities, along with a good explanation of the learning programmes.

13. Resources are satisfactory. For business administration learners, the use of part-time self-employed staff means that ANT can flexibly adapt to changing numbers of learners. These staff are experienced, and reasonably well qualified. There is a low turnover of staff. Learners welcome the continuity this provides. Veterinary nurses have support from well-qualified assessors in their practices. The main ANT office is appropriately resourced. There is satisfactory use of hired premises for such things as initial learner interviews in a learners' home town. Staff have reasonable access to training aids such as cameras, voice recorders and laptop computers. These aids are mainly used effectively.

14. The director and centre manager use data reasonably well to monitor ANT's and learners' performance. Elements of data, particularly learner numbers and success, are discussed at some staff meetings and are used to generate improvement actions. The data is not used as effectively as it might be. It is not used for precise targets and is presented in a variety of formats. Until very recently there has been a lack of understanding of the new measures of success data systems, and their potential effect on the business. There is little planning on how to adapt the current systems to deal with and effectively use this new data. Although this is a relatively small provider, there is a little too much emphasis on monitoring individuals, rather than examining formal data.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

15. Learners have well-organised and executed equality of opportunity training in the early stages of their programmes. They often have a good awareness of key aspects of equality and diversity and recall the significant emphasis placed on this during their induction. As part of this, ANT has produced a very useful equal opportunities workbook, which requires independent research to answer a number of questions posed. It also demands thought and reflection by learners as to what they understand by 'equality of opportunity'. Assessors use learners' answers and comments to develop learners' understanding. Assessors have pre-prepared prompt sheets to help them with this. The learner handbook contains summary leaflets on aspects of equality of opportunity and a copy of ANT's equal opportunity and disability policy, together with guidance on company policies and a summary of key legislation. In some cases, learners' initial training on equality and diversity is complemented by induction training by their employers.

16. ANT attaches an appropriately high status to equality of opportunity. Clear leadership has encouraged a sense of common purpose among staff to serve the best interests of learners and to respect their voice and role within training. Staff understand the importance of promoting equality of opportunity. Team meetings have a regular agenda item for equality of opportunity and matters of substance are often discussed. ANT meets its statutory requirements under the relevant race relations and disability legislation. The up-to-date and detailed equal opportunities and disability policy is a summary of its expectations for learners, staff and subcontractors. There is no separate policy for harassment and bullying, although learners are issued with summary booklets on these aspects. There is a complaints procedure for learners. ANT checks that employers have appropriate equality policies and provides them with a summary of their obligations. There is no systematic ongoing checking that employers are applying their policies.

17. The collection, analysis and use of equality of opportunity-related data is satisfactory overall. Staff have a good awareness of the mix and breakdown of learners and of any trends in recruitment and achievement. Summary annual reports on learner numbers by

ethnicity and gender are produced, together with ongoing reports of learner numbers for gender, including interviews and programme completion. These are regularly reviewed by the director of training and the recruitment manager, but they are not formally and systematically considered at team meetings. At the previous inspection, ANT had not promoted its programmes to under-represented groups. This is no longer the case. Most notably it has sought to rectify the gender imbalance on veterinary nursing programmes. The recruitment manager works increasingly closely with local schools and with Connexions to try and increase the number of male learners. She also attends careers and recruitment events. Publicity literature is improved since the previous inspection, with more obvious pictorial representation of male learners.

18. The reinforcement and review of learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. However, there is no overall scheme or strategy to help maintain, and to build upon, the good work of induction. There is relevant assignment work and learners' reviews touch upon equality from the perspective of the learner in the workplace and whether they have any issues. Resources to support training and learning are satisfactory. There is some good training to help staff understand equality and diversity. Of particular note is that all staff have completed a level 2 distance-learning certificate in equality and diversity.

19. Action-planning to drive forward progress with equality of opportunity is insufficiently effective. The recruitment manager has produced annual equality of opportunity action plans for the past three years. They do not sit within any overall strategy for improvement and do not seem to relate to the cycle of self-assessment. The plans are not helpfully expressed. Actions are often very broadly stated, making it difficult to quantify progress, and how they will be progressed is equally unhelpful. Outcomes are often aspirational rather than specific. Some actions appear to move through the years with little indication of progress. The action plans are not at the centre of any activities to monitor progress with improving the promotion and incorporating of equality and diversity. ANT does not have a sufficiently clear and evidenced view of where it stands with improving equality of opportunity. The self-assessment report for equality of opportunity identifies too many areas as strengths when they are no better than satisfactory.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

20. There are several satisfactory aspects to the day-to-day informal improvement of the quality of training, although formal structures are weakly implemented. On the whole, the approach has a positive effect on learning. For instance, overall success rates are improving in business administration and law, and are remaining at very high levels in veterinary nursing. Local LSC corrected figures show that between 2003-04 and the end of 2005-06, business administration and law apprenticeship rates went up by nearly 50 percentage points, while advanced rates increased by 17 percentage points. Veterinary nursing results stayed at around 90 per cent, well above national averages. An apparent decline in success rate figures for the whole of ANT's provision is mainly due to the loss of some contracts for very successful programmes and a change in the system of accrediting success. At the ALI inspection in December 2002, all aspects of leadership and management were judged to be unsatisfactory, while the business administration and land-based provision were considered to be satisfactory. At the reinspection in May 2004, all aspects of leadership and management had improved to satisfactory, and the areas of learning were judged to be good. This inspection has seen a further rise in standards, with the leadership and management now judged to be good, although quality improvement

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and equality of opportunity remain satisfactory.

21. Aspects of internal verification were criticised at the previous inspection. There have been significant improvements in this area and internal verification is now well structured, properly co-ordinated and effective. Sampling is appropriate, feedback to assessors is good and records are well maintained. There is some good external and internal professional development on elements of internal verification.

22. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process. The process itself carries on for some time with full discussions at staff meetings, and then reviews of various draft reports. This part of the process generates informal ideas for improvements, which are quickly implemented. The more formal part of clearly recognising weaknesses and identifying the required actions is not so effective. There is a good system for collecting a broad range of employers' and learners' feedback, including the use of bonuses to encourage returns. ANT analyses the results and takes some immediate actions. There is insufficient use of this final analysis to support the full self-assessment process and help with target-setting. There is satisfactory use of other data in the final report, although this is introduced late in the process and does not support initial staff discussion. The self-assessment report includes most of the strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors identified. However, the key points are hidden by an overly positive report that includes strengths that are no more than satisfactory, or are improvements from an unsatisfactory position.

23. ANT has produced annual quality improvement plans since the previous inspection. The first was appropriately based on the reinspection findings, the second properly linked with the self-assessment report. The structure of the plans is good, and the focus is rightly on improving the learners' performance. Many of the individual actions in the plans are not stated in clear, objective and measurable terms. However, the actions do serve as a useful catalyst for change and in one way or another do lead to improvements, which the director monitors. The business-planning process is satisfactory. The long-term planning process aims to increase business, but within sensible limits that will allow ANT to build on its strengths.

24. The monitoring of the subcontractor for veterinary nursing is satisfactory. The procedures are appropriate and they are, on the whole, properly completed by ANT's monitor. External validation reports are checked, meetings are timely and relevant, observations of learning are appropriately carried out, and risk assessments are properly completed. Some action points from meetings and external validation reports are not adequately followed up, and the teaching observations tend to concentrate on the mechanics of delivery rather than improvements to the learning process.

25. Sharing of good practice in the main business administration and ICT areas is done satisfactorily through informal discussion, and at the regular meetings. The small number of assessors, many of whom observe each other in an internal verification role, routinely discuss possible improvements in their working practices. This discussion does not extend so well across to the programmes supported by other staff and providers, including veterinary nursing and accountancy.

26. Quality assurance procedures are not applied in a consistently thorough way. ANT has developed a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. These are appropriately and helpfully divided into those linked directly with the learners, and those

allied to management actions. The procedures include good checks to assure quality, but not all these are applied routinely and thoroughly. However, not all the checks are applied routinely and thoroughly. For instance, most of the procedures are reviewed and revised, mostly on an annual basis, but the review system is not systematic. Some procedures are checked at irregular intervals and some only when a problem is identified. Staff maintain their own working copies of documents at their homes. There has been one issue of standard documents on a CD-ROM, and changes are discussed at team meetings and new documents are sent out by e-mail. There is no clear listing of which document version staff should be working with, and some have made minor local amendments. There is an adequate system of formal appraisal and feedback to staff on performance, but this is done at irregular intervals. Copies of assessors' and learners' records are returned to the main office, where they are reviewed for quality purposes. This is generally done satisfactorily, but some documents are not returned and this is not noted or followed up. In some instances, staff have adopted slightly different approaches to minor aspects of their work, such as whether learners' feedback during action-planning is feedback from learners, or a summary feedback to learners. This has been noted and discussed, but ANT does not have a standard policy. Some staff have decided to send in summaries of learners' progress, which managers welcome, but it is not a requirement for all staff. The assessor working with accountancy learners helps them when they have problems with their distance learning course, but does not routinely check their progress and quality of work in that training. There is some appropriate monitoring of the veterinary nursing programme, but this does not extend to ensuring that practices properly carry out their required three hours of tutorial each week.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Veterinary services		
Apprenticeships for young people	20	2
NVQ training for young people	3	2

27. Twenty-three learners are following veterinary nursing programmes. This includes 11 apprentices, nine advanced apprentices, and three learners on NVQ programmes. Before 2005-06, learners only took the NVQ qualification, since the framework has been introduced only recently. All learners are employed in veterinary training practices which are linked to an approved veterinary nursing assessment centre. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to a specialist veterinary nursing training provider, MYF Training in Aldershot. Learners attend off-the-job training with MYF Training for one day each week and this helps to prepare them for external examinations. The external awarding body requires veterinary practices to allocate three hours each week to formal on-the-job training. All assessment of on-the-job training is carried out in the workplace. This training and assessment is carried out by staff at the veterinary practices. ANT's main role is in the learners' induction to the scheme, and then in monitoring learners' progress and the quality of the provision.

Veterinary services

Strengths

- very good overall success rates
- good induction
- good off-the-job training
- good training staff in veterinary practices

Weaknesses

- some slow progress in completing of the learners' portfolios of evidence
- insufficiently thorough progress reviews of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

28. Overall success rates for the NVQs in veterinary nursing are very good. The 92 per cent success rate in 2003-04 was more than double the national average. There was a very slight drop to 86 per cent in 2004-05, but provisional figures for 2005-06 have the rate back at 92 per cent, nearly 30 percentage points above the most recent national average.

29. Progress towards framework achievement is satisfactory. Most of the current learners started their framework having previously achieved the relevant key skills, although some

learners are slow in providing copies of the necessary certificates to gain exemption from the tests. For the remainder, 60 per cent had achieved a pass in communication skills within their planned period of learning. Most had also passed the test in application of number and completed some of their portfolios of evidence.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	12	92	43	0	0
		timely	11	45	45	0	0
	2004-05	overall	14	86	64	0	0
		timely	11	55	51	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).

* indicates unreliable data.

The quality of provision

30. ANT provides the learners with a good induction programme, which they clearly remember. They carry out written work on employment information, health and safety, and complete an equality of opportunity workbook. These aspects are normally reinforced at the quarterly review visits. Learners are knowledgeable about how their training will be managed and where to obtain advice and guidance.

31. Off-the-job training is good. Learners find lessons clear and easy to understand. They appreciate the experience of the teaching staff, and get useful advice over and above the formal requirements of the course. There are frequent progress tests. Learners retake the tests where necessary to ensure suitable preparation for their examinations. Progress results are reported to employers so that they can provide the learners with additional help at work.

32. Training staff in the veterinary practices are good, and promote learning effectively. Employers and their staff are well informed about the content and structure of the qualification. They introduce learners to new procedures frequently and question them on what they understand about their work. Extra time is often spent giving learners help on topics which they find difficult. Learners are complimentary about the help and support they receive at work.

33. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. There is good initial screening and analysis of preferred learning styles. The results are well documented, although they are not routinely shared with employers and assessors or discussed during the quarterly reviews. Help is provided for learners taking key skills at the off-the-job training centre. Some learners who do not have to take key skills tests have some literacy and numeracy needs. These learners receive help, but it is not always planned or monitored appropriately.

34. Some of the progress towards completing portfolios is slow. Learners are not always clear about how much they have achieved. Accurate monitoring against the occupational

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standards is not carried out systematically. Assessment is not always planned effectively. The range of evidence collected is often limited and sometimes duplicated unnecessarily. It relies too heavily on writing essays or case logs. Learners and assessors do not make quicker progress by using other available evidence. For example, the health and safety homework given at induction and key skills project work are not always linked to the NVQ. Learners are required to cover 60 per cent of the occupational standards before entering their examinations. Most learners cover just this minimum, and few are encouraged to fully complete them before the examinations. For many learners there is a prolonged break for examination revision, which delays portfolio completion.

35. Quarterly reviews are insufficiently thorough. ANT does not set appropriate short- and long-term targets. The company does not record unit achievement routinely and it does not keep up-to-date individual learning plans. Some learners do not receive the required amount of weekly time with their assessor. This is not identified at reviews and these learners frequently lose motivation and make slow progress. The off-the-job tutor provides information about the learners and their training for the review process. However, this is insufficiently detailed. Those carrying out the reviews do not fully understand the training requirements and structure of the NVQ.

Leadership and management

36. The main element of ANT's management in this area is the monitoring of the subcontractors' provision. This is satisfactory. The company has an appropriate written contract setting out roles and responsibilities, and it reviews this annually. Copies of the off-the-job training risk assessments are kept and checked as required. There are regular meetings between ANT and MYF Training, and brief minutes are produced. Actions required are recorded but they are not always reviewed effectively. There is good sharing of external verification and self-assessment reports for the subcontractor. However, actions needed are not always monitored. ANT carries out lesson observations once a term and detailed reports are produced. There is good information on the planning and structure of lessons but they contain insufficient information on whether learning has taken place and whether this is checked periodically throughout the lessons.

Business administration and law**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Accounting and finance Apprenticeships for young people	3	2
Administration Apprenticeships for young people NVQ training for young people	21 2	2 2
Business management Apprenticeships for young people	1	2
Marketing and sales Apprenticeships for young people	6	2
Customer service Apprenticeships for young people	3	2

37. ANT has 36 learners in the business administration and law area, most of whom are on a variety of apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. There are five apprentices and 16 advanced apprentices in administration, three apprentices in accounting and three in estate agency. In addition, three learners are on advanced apprenticeships in customer service, three in estate agency, and one in management. Two learners are taking an NVQ at level 4 in administration. All learners are employed when they start their programmes. Nearly all work in small or medium-sized businesses in Surrey, covering such things as financial advice, law and information technology (IT) support. The recruitment process includes an interview, initial assessment for key skills, and an assessment to identify preferred learning styles. Learners receive an individual induction in their workplace. Off-the-job training, coaching and assessment are carried out in the workplace on most frameworks. Assessors normally visit learners at work monthly, or more frequently. Progress review appraisals usually take place every three months.

Strengths

- good overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- continuing improvements in framework success rates
- very effective induction programme
- good assessment planning
- good links with employers

Weaknesses

- slow progress by some estate agency learners

Achievement and standards

38. Overall success rates are good on apprenticeship programmes. The local LSC confirmed that the previously published data was unreliable. However, corrected data provided by the LSC indicated that overall success rates for apprentices were 64 per cent in 2004-05 and 71 per cent at the end of 2005-06. This compares very favourably with a

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national average of 45 per cent in 2004-05.

39. Success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices have continually improved since 2003-04. The revised LSC data shows the combined success rate for both levels has increased from 31 per cent in 2003-04 to 43 per cent in 2004-05. It then rose further to 58 per cent in 2005-06. The rise in the overall success rate reflects improved performances in key skills and technical certificates. A high proportion of learners recruited in 2005 and 2006 remain in learning.

40. Overall success rates on advanced apprenticeships are satisfactory. Revised LSC data indicates a 56 per cent success rate in 2005-06. This is well above the low national average of 31 per cent in 2004-05.

41. Standards of learners' work are broadly satisfactory. Their portfolios are suitably compiled with increasing cross-referencing of evidence. Most learners demonstrate good understanding of their apprenticeship scheme and how it benefits their job role. A small number of learners are unclear about the work that will be needed to pass the technical certificate. Learners develop skills while working on their NVQ that improve their job performance, such as enhancing their word processing and learning mail merge skills. One learner now has a clear picture of the context in which specialist IT support software is used by her company, as a result of work done on an optional unit on her NVQ in administration. Employers generally identify improvements in confidence and job performance as learners progress through their framework.

42. Learners' progress is generally satisfactory. Most current learners are making suitable progress towards completing their framework in a timely fashion. Many have relatively high general certificates of secondary education grades on entry and some have previously worked towards other business qualifications. Many are exempt from one or both key skills qualifications in their framework. Generally they are in supportive work placements. Timely achievement would normally be expected in these circumstances. Some learners progress to higher levels. For example, five learners working towards the advanced apprenticeship in administration had previously gained their apprenticeship with ANT. Most are making speedy progress on the advanced apprenticeship. A successful advanced apprentice is now taking an NVQ at level 4 in administration.

43. However, some estate agency learners make slow progress. Four of the five learners who started the framework in 2004 or 2005 have yet to complete their qualification and have exceeded their planned end date. They have been unsuccessful in an element of the technical certificate and have had to wait some time for an opportunity to retake the test. However, learners who have started their estate agency framework more recently are making better progress.

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	*	*	*	*	*
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
	2004-05	overall	*	*	*	*	*
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	*	*	*	*	*
		timely	*	*	*	*	*
	2004-05	overall	*	*	*	*	*
		timely	*	*	*	*	*

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).

* indicates unreliable data.

The quality of provision

44. The induction programme is very effective. It is well structured and sets out clearly the requirements of the programme and the approaches to training, evidence gathering and assessment. Assessors subsequently reinforce key elements of induction. Learners are informed of the outcomes of key skills and learning styles initial assessment, and ANT deals with any of their support needs. Learners recall significant features of induction well. They complete an equal opportunities workbook which provides a sound basis for appreciation of this topic. They also complete a report on their company. Learners new to the company find this a valuable supplement to workplace induction. This report is also a useful source of evidence for other areas of the programme. For example, calculations of average wage levels and analysis of data on length of service of staff are usefully linked to application of number.

45. Assessment planning is good. Assessors usually visit learners monthly, and sometimes more frequently. These visits are productive in providing valuable training and coaching to complement on-the-job training, or for assessment. Assessors complete a simple but highly effective monitoring and action-planning sheet at each visit. This identifies NVQ units and other components of the framework started by the learner or successfully completed. Assessors record a summary of learners' progress since the previous visit and the work done at the current visit. This leads to a simple but clear action plan for the learner, with specific work to be done or evidence to gather by the subsequent visit. Learners are very clear on their next steps. They also value the easy routine contact with assessors by telephone or e-mail if they need to check an issue. Assessors respond speedily. Learners feel well supported. However, feedback by the learner on his or her progress is seldom recorded on the action plan form. An accounting learner was frustrated by the very slow return of assessed work from the distance learning organisation used to provide training and assessment for her NVQ. ANT's records for accounting learners do not contain copies of documents showing progress on the NVQ, even though the learners themselves have formal records from the distance-learning provider showing unit achievement.

46. The quarterly reviews are satisfactory overall. A performance appraisal is carried out

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as the basis for the three-monthly review, although on occasions these reviews are late. Employers are strongly involved in these review appraisals, and some learners welcome this opportunity to discuss their routine work. However, the focus is too heavily on job performance and does not give sufficient attention to the previous progress and action required for the framework. The learners are not involved enough in reflecting on their progress, with the picture of performance painted mostly by the employer and the assessor.

47. Resources are satisfactory. Learning resources and those available in the workplace are appropriate. Staff are suitably qualified as assessors and verifiers, and they provide a good range of employment backgrounds across the team. However, few have teaching or training qualifications.

48. Identification of those with literacy and numeracy needs, and support for them, are satisfactory. There is an effective initial assessment system, and where support is needed ANT provides it.

Leadership and management

49. There is suitable and increasingly effective focus on quality improvement by the director of training and the assessor team. Overall success rates are improving.

50. ANT's links with employers are good. They are founded on its strong liaison and effective communications with employers. Employers show a good understanding of framework requirements. ANT briefs them well. Where necessary, employers adapt the learners' work to facilitate the gathering of evidence if it is not naturally generated from the main job role. Many employers allocate time within the working week for the learner to work on the qualifications they are pursuing. Employers often show good awareness of the progress of their learner, and the current focus of their studies. They are generally aware of the monthly assessment action plans. Many employers have longstanding links with ANT through previous learners, and praise the reliability of ANT. Employers receive the quarterly employers' newsletter that ANT produces, and they find it interesting.

51. ANT's promotion of equal opportunities and the learners' understanding of it is satisfactory. The induction workbook provides a good basis, but equal opportunities issues are treated too cursorily in learners' appraisal reviews later in the programme.

52. Internal verification is satisfactory. There is suitable coverage in sampling plans and appropriate feedback to assessors. An internal verification co-ordinator has been appointed in recent months. There are early indications of more productive assessor and verifier team meetings, with useful updating items willingly contributed by team members to promote professional development. The company's most recent self-assessment report recognised most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the inspection, and the area of learning was graded appropriately.

