

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**CableCom Training  
Limited**

**24 August 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 over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

### Pre-inspection analysis

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

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

If satisfactory grades are given 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 have a full inspection.

## Overall judgement

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 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 satisfactory or better grades in leadership and management and at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. A satisfactory 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 improvement. The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

# INSPECTION REPORT

## CableCom Training Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. CableCom Training Limited (CableCom) is a private training provider, based in Thornaby in Teesside, that provides engineering training in telecoms, ports and logistics, and the rail sector. CableCom has been involved in the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Employer Training Pilot (ETP) since early 2005. About one-third of CableCom's training activity over the past 18 months has been LSC funded.
2. There are 15 learners from six small to medium enterprises, who are all following a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in communications technologies for professionals. This programme is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF).
3. One hundred and ninety-six learners completed a vocationally relevant qualification at level 2 in health and safety in the workplace in 2005. Eighty learners completed an NVQ at level 2 in stevedoring in 2006. A Train to Gain programme is due to start in September 2006.
4. CableCom works with Stockton Riverside College, Middlesbrough College, Gateshead College, and Harrogate College, and provides training in telecommunications for ITEC North East apprentices.
5. CableCom has seven staff, including five trainers, two of whom are company directors. It also employs other trainers when required. Trainers visit learners at work to carry out training and assessment. Off-the-job training takes place at CableCom's training centre and at other locations.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

6. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** Leadership and management, quality improvement, and the foundation programme in engineering are good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.
7. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** CableCom completed its first self-assessment report in April 2006. The process of self-assessment is suitably self-critical, responds clearly to the Common Inspection Framework, and uses data and other evidence well to support decisions and judgements. The staff team are very much involved in the self-assessment process. The report identifies the same strengths and weaknesses as were found by the inspection team.
8. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** CableCom has an effective quality improvement plan which is set out well and reviewed regularly. Good progress has been made towards resolving areas of weakness previously identified, and developing areas which are satisfactory. CableCom's staff have a very positive attitude and a strong commitment to quality improvement.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR CABLECOM TRAINING LIMITED:

- sustain the high success rates
- continue to develop the management of training
- maintain and further develop good partnership working
- continue to manage quality improvement
- continue to improve the learners' experience

## GRADES

grade1= outstanding, grade 2= good, grade 3= satisfactory, grade 4= inadequate

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies		Grade 2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Engineering</b>		<b>2</b>
Other government funded provision	15	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

9. The inspection covered the 15 learners who commenced training in April 2006 and are due to complete in April 2007. Inspectors also considered the performance and success rates of the programmes provided by CableCom during 2005 to 2006.

10. CableCom also provides training for partners in the area including Stockton Riverside College, Middlesbrough College, Gateshead College, Harrogate College, ITEC Northeast and the Armed Forces Recruitment Programme. This was not within the scope of the inspection.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learner interviewed	7
Number of staff interviewed	6
Number of employer interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	7
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits to the provider	1

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

11. CableCom achieved very good success rates for ETP programmes in 2005-06. Ninety-seven per cent of the 284 learners successfully completed their programme, all within the planned completion period. Eighty-four worked towards an NVQ at level 2 in stevedoring, 80 of whom achieved the qualification. All the ETP learners also achieved a safety passport as an additional qualification. In the current year, 15 employed adult learners started an ESF-funded NVQ at level 3 for communication technology professionals and all are still on the programme.

12. Learners develop good technical and customer skills in the workplace. They make good progress, learning quickly from highly experienced CableCom trainers and from colleagues at work. The CableCom training centre is well equipped to provide learners with good-quality industry-standard tools and equipment. Learners demonstrate the ability to properly install and connect computer cabling and to test complex installations. They develop good team-working skills and the ability to communicate effectively with customers and other contractors. Employers speak highly of learners' skills, particularly their ability to act as effective ambassadors for their company.

### The quality of provision

13. Good use is made of training leading to **additional qualifications to enhance learners' employability**. In addition to the safety passport for ETP learners, for those following the communication technology NVQ, there is a related vocational qualification in communication cabling. Background knowledge and practical sessions are provided at CableCom's training centre, which is well resourced for this type of training. The sessions are well planned and each is offered on three different dates to allow maximum flexibility for employers to support learners' attendance. Sessions provide learners with knowledge that enriches their NVQ programme and enables them to gain an award that provides further national recognition of their skills.

14. **Individual training plans are not specified well enough**. There is too little attention to learners' individual training needs and the tasks covered in their job context. CableCom helps employers and learners to select the combination of NVQ units best suited to their needs. The way each learner might best learn and prove their competence in each unit is not specified in enough detail. Assessment planning is not sufficiently formalised.

15. The **progress review process is weak**. Employers are not sufficiently involved in learners' progress reviews. Records of reviews do not detail learners' progress towards their NVQ or provide an estimate of the proportion of the qualification completed. The targets set in reviews are insufficiently specific to promote timely progress. Too little attention is paid to learners' progress towards the targets set at previous reviews. However, learners do receive frequent visits from their assessor, and they undergo monthly progress reviews which are recorded.

16. CableCom has satisfactory arrangements for the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. Initial assessment is carried out satisfactorily and additional support is offered and provided where necessary by CableCom or other relevant providers.

## Leadership and management

17. **Good operational management** has supported the successful implementation of innovative ETP and ESF programmes over the past 18 months. Employers' and learners' feedback for the completed ETP programmes is very positive. CableCom has invested in good training resources which are used very effectively to support learning. Internal communications and teamwork are good. Management information and other systems are effective and appropriate for the size of the company. Team meetings take place regularly. Staff are clear about their priorities, roles and responsibilities, and feel suitably involved in the direction the company is taking. Management planning and review systems are effective. Internal verification is satisfactory.

18. CableCom works **successfully in partnership with employers** to provide good-quality, flexible training which meets learners' and employers' needs effectively. The ETP programmes are planned and designed in close collaboration with employers. Some of the ETP training is carried out at employers' premises and effectively involves employers' representatives in the training. Learning materials and resources are customised to reflect the employers' context. Effective evaluation of the training with the employers has led to further programme development and improvement. CableCom contributes effectively to the development of training with individual employers. In the case of one large employer, CableCom is highly valued as a key partner in the strategic development of training for the company.

19. Managers and staff at CableCom demonstrate **a strong commitment to quality improvement**. CableCom has introduced an effective self-assessment process which has led to the production of a good self-assessment report and quality improvement plan. The quality improvement plan clearly identifies the areas for improvement, the specific actions to be taken, the timescale and the responsibility. Some of the areas of weakness identified in the self-assessment report had been resolved by the time of the inspection.

20. Although CableCom has introduced a number of new policies and procedures over the past 18 months, **some aspects of the training arrangements still have shortcomings**. These were identified in the self-assessment report and feature in the improvement plan. For example, in the current programme the use of individual learning plans, the quality of progress reviews and the way assessment planning is carried out do not yet provide learners with sufficient information to manage their learning effectively. The good and flexible support from trainers provides some compensation for this. CableCom has arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning, but these have not yet led to any identifiable improvements. There are no observations of assessors in order to improve assessment practices. Recently CableCom has introduced appropriate standard operating procedures for training, and a quality improvement cycle, however it is too early to identify the effects of these changes.

21. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. CableCom has suitable policies and practices in place to support and promote equality of opportunity. Employers' policies are considered and, in the case of some small business, CableCom supplies advice and guidance to improve employers' practices. Learners' induction and progress reviews include information and guidance about equal opportunities, although in some cases discussion is limited by closed questioning.

22. CableCom monitors recruitment, progress and achievement and discusses widening participation with employers, although this has had little effect on participation rates as yet. CableCom works closely with voluntary organisations and includes on its courses unemployed learners, ex-offenders and other learners who might not typically gain access to



the type of programme CableCom offers. The success rates for these learners are as good as for the mainstream learners. CableCom's staff work with schools as science and technology mentors, and also provide short taster courses for students.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### **Leadership and management**

#### ***Strengths***

- good operational management
- successful partnerships with employers
- strong commitment to quality improvement

#### ***Weaknesses***

- some incomplete arrangements for training

### **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

#### ***Engineering***

#### ***Strengths***

- very good success rates for ETP programmes in 2005-2006
- good development of learners' technical and customer care skills
- good use of additional qualifications to enhance learners' employability

#### ***Weaknesses***

- weak progress reviews
- insufficient planning of individual training