

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Community Training Services Ltd**

**14 December 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## **Adult Learning Inspectorate**

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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

## **Pre-inspection analysis**

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

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

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

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

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

## Overall effectiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Grading

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

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

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Community Training Services Ltd

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Community Training Services Ltd (CTS) is based in premises in the centre of Sheffield within easy reach of the main public transport routes. It was established as a private limited company and commenced trading in 1999. It has since developed to become a specialist training organisation, concentrating on learners who have significant barriers to employment. CTS has a contract with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to offer Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes for young people. About 10 per cent of this is subcontracted to HB Training Limited, another provider in the area, for training in construction. During the inspection week, CTS had 107 E2E learners. Another company, A4e, contracts with CTS for the delivery of a Jobcentre Plus contract for literacy, numeracy and language training for adults. During the inspection week there were 62 learners following these programmes.

2. CTS is the lead partner in a large European Social Fund (ESF) objective 1 project, working with 16 to 18 year olds to support employment programmes or apprenticeships, through the development of employability, literacy, numeracy and language skills. During the inspection week, 101 learners were following these programmes. Ninety-five per cent of this provision is subcontracted to 11 other providers. CTS also provides training to local employers on a full-cost basis, although this is a very small part of its work, and it provides additional support for learners on apprenticeship programmes with other providers.

3. The company's senior management team meets formally every month and comprises the managing director, the senior operations manager, the finance manager and the quality manager. Five members of staff teach the E2E programmes and five the programmes for adults. These two teams are each led by a manager who reports to the senior operations manager. A contract officer is responsible for monitoring the contracts with the subcontractors. The company is supported by a number of administrative staff.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** More specifically, CTS's leadership and management and quality improvement are good and equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The training provision in preparation for life and work is satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is consultative and sufficiently self-critical.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** CTS is committed to continuous improvement, demonstrated through its strong leadership and management, effective quality improvement processes and effective support for staff.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY TRAINING SERVICES LTD:

- improve teaching and learning in E2E
- improve the reviewing and recording of learners' progress
- improve the promotion of equality of opportunity with learners
- extend the effectiveness of the observation of teaching and learning process
- maintain the good support for learners

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		2

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Employability training</b>		<b>3</b>	
New Deal for young people	21	3	
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	41	2	
Entry to Employment	107	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. The inspection consisted of a single visit. Two inspectors attended for four days and one inspector for two days. They inspected preparation for life and work, both E2E and Jobcentre Plus New Deal provision, as well as leadership and management.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	10
Number of learners interviewed	34
Number of staff interviewed	16
Number of employers interviewed	5
Number of subcontractors interviewed	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	5

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- very effective partnership working to benefit learners
- good strategic planning to meet the needs of the local community
- good management of change
- very effective targeting of disadvantaged groups
- good range of effective quality improvement processes

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective actions to raise learners' awareness of equality of opportunity
- some ineffective monitoring of teaching and learning

## **Preparation for life and work**

### ***Employability training***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills and confidence on work placements
- good job outcomes for New Deal 25+ participants
- good training and learning on New Deal programmes
- particularly good support for learners on E2E programmes
- highly effective partnership arrangements

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficiently planned jobsearch activities for New Deal participants
- insufficient attention to meeting individual learners' needs in E2E training
- overuse of paper-based learning resources in E2E training
- insufficient identification of barriers to employment for New Deal participants
- insufficient reviewing and recording of individual learners' progress in E2E

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT COMMUNITY TRAINING SERVICES LTD:**

- the real work placements
- feeling respected by the staff at CTS
- getting free buses
- 'I felt very down and unmotivated before I came here, but now I'm managing to get to my placement and on time'
- 'I really enjoy working out on site'
- 'the supervisors are really helpful. They're sound'
- 'I really want to get some qualifications which I did not manage at school'
- 'the online English and mathematics tests are good'
- 'I've passed English, now I'm going to pass maths'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK COMMUNITY TRAINING SERVICES LTD COULD IMPROVE:**

- the provision of work-placement taster sessions
- the computers, which are a bit slow at times
- 'my mates make the sessions interesting, not the session itself'
- 'we don't go out of the centre enough'



## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- very effective partnership working to benefit learners
- good strategic planning to meet the needs of the local community
- good management of change
- very effective targeting of disadvantaged groups
- good range of effective quality improvement processes

#### Weaknesses

- ineffective actions to raise learners' awareness of equality of opportunity
- some ineffective monitoring of teaching and learning

8. Leadership and management at CTS are good. The company's very clearly defined purpose is to work with those people in Sheffield who are at most disadvantage in the labour market. It works effectively to create partnerships with a wide range of organisations that can help it achieve this aim. The managing director and the senior operations manager are both active members of the board of the Yorkshire Training Partnership Ltd, a group of training providers in the area. CTS leads an ESF programme, supported by 11 other partner organisations, to meet the needs of a range of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The very effective partnership for the Sheffield City Stewardship programme with Kier Sheffield LLP and Sheffield Homes provides valuable opportunities to E2E learners to develop employment-related skills. The company has very good links with external agencies, such as those working with substance misusers, and CTS refers learners to them when appropriate. Relationships with Connexions are also very good and the two organisations work together closely to target those at a disadvantage in the labour market. CTS also works closely with Jobcentre Plus in a similar way to engage adults.

9. CTS's strategic planning to meet the needs of learners and the local community is good. The company has a clear and well-written business plan identifying its broad strategic goals over the next year. The plan clearly emphasises what CTS will do to help young people in the local community. All staff have some involvement in the business planning process and feel that their views are considered. They all receive a summary version of the plan and understand and support the broad direction of the company. Action is being taken to support the key objectives of the plan, such as gaining approval for the delivery of national vocational qualifications in administration, retailing, customer service and warehousing.

10. CTS has managed significant change well. Early in 2006 the LSC changed the arrangements for the delivery of E2E in Sheffield, so that providers hold direct contracts with the LSC. Before that, CTS was the prime contractor for E2E and used a range of subcontractors to deliver all the provision. The management team responded well to this event, restructuring the company and its staffing. CTS was very effective in managing the

disruption caused by significant staff turnover, and supporting new staff during a period of significant change, with minimum effect on learners.

11. Management of the ESF project is satisfactory. Every subcontractor has an appropriate contract setting out targets and the requirements of the programme. CTS regularly monitors the performance of every subcontractor against this contract, checking that each is meeting its target for starts and positive outcomes. Audits take place to ensure that all learners meet the criteria set out in the project and that appropriate records are being kept. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of the training that learners receive. The rate of successful outcomes on the programme is high, at around 60 per cent, exceeding the target in CTS's contract with the LSC.

12. The CTS senior management team sets targets for each of the company's teams. These are largely based on the targets in the LSC and Jobcentre Plus contracts. All team members are aware of the targets and seek to meet or exceed them. CTS uses an appropriate system of appraisal to monitor the performance of its staff. Staff agree personal targets and a development plan. They can request training, and say that such requests are seldom refused.

13. Communications within CTS are good, and these are regular and effective meetings. The meetings are recorded well with clear action points which are monitored at subsequent meetings. As well as the regular formal meetings, informal routes of communication are effective. All staff members feel that they are well informed about developments in the company. They also comment on how senior managers encourage and welcome their ideas.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

14. CTS has been set up to help people with the greatest barriers to gaining employment. It uses its links with local organisations very effectively to target disadvantaged groups. Most of the learners are from the most deprived areas in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. There is an ethos of respect within the organisation and learners speak about feeling valued and respected by staff. Many of the learners have other significant difficulties, such as a parent who is in prison or a drug user, or a violent family background. Learners feel able to speak to members of staff about their problems, and CTS provides effective support as required. The company has good links with a wide range of external agencies, such as those that help with substance misuse, and will refer young people to them if appropriate.

15. CTS regularly monitors, for example, the ethnic profile of its learners and compares this with the ethnic profile of the local population, taking appropriate action to deal with any under-representation. At the time of the inspection, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds was higher than in the local population. Similarly the company monitors the gender balance in the provision. At the time of the inspection there were more male than female learners and CTS is taking action to increase the number of female learners.

16. CTS ensures that all subcontractors and work-placement providers have an appropriate equal opportunities policy and that it is implemented by their staff. The CTS training centre is accessible to learners with restricted mobility and there is an appropriate range of specialist equipment to assist those with a disability. Staff check the accessibility

of subcontractors' and employers' premises, but the nature of the work carried out by some learners means that work placements are not all accessible. Appropriate arrangements are made should this cause a problem for a learner.

17. Staff receive enough training in equality of opportunity to raise their awareness, but the training is insufficiently detailed for tutors who are delivering in-house equal opportunities training to learners.

18. CTS's actions to raise learners' awareness of equality of opportunity are ineffective. During their induction, all learners receive training in equality of opportunity. They are told about their rights and responsibilities as both learners and employees, and most know who to speak to if they feel that they are being harassed, bullied or otherwise treated unfairly. However, the induction programme places too much emphasis on the legislative framework for equality of opportunity and does not sufficiently help to develop learners' understanding of the subject. In-house training sessions do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to discuss wider equality of opportunity issues or to identify and challenge their own attitudes. Progress reviews do not effectively reinforce or extend learners' knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

19. CTS has a good range of processes to assure and improve the quality of the provision. The company has a detailed quality assurance cycle. Managers regularly discuss key quality improvement activities with the relevant teams. The monitoring of these actions to completion is very effective. The quality improvement plan is well written and detailed, with clear target dates for improvements to identified weaknesses. The plan is regularly updated and the senior management team reviews progress at its monthly meetings. There is significant evidence of the effectiveness of this process. For example, positive outcome rates in the E2E provision have improved during the past year, as have those for the Jobcentre Plus provision. The successful outcome rate for the ESF-funded provision is high at 60 per cent and exceeds the target for the contract.

20. The quality assurance procedures are accessible to all of CTS's staff through the company's internal computer network. They are clearly written, and designed to ensure that all learners have an equally good experience. Compliance with the procedures is audited regularly by the quality manager. The self-assessment process is consultative and appropriately self-critical. The self-assessment report identifies many of the same weaknesses as the inspectors, but some of the strengths it claims are no more than normal practice.

21. CTS has a clear process for the observation of teaching and learning. All tutors are observed at least four times each year and all new tutors are observed within 12 weeks of joining the company. There is a clear process for working with tutors whose lesson is graded as inadequate. Records of observations are detailed, with an appropriate emphasis on learning, and include an action plan for the tutor to deal with identified areas for improvement. CTS uses the services of an experienced consultant to ensure that grades awarded by its observers are accurate.

22. Some of the monitoring of the quality of the teaching and learning is ineffective. The observation process is not used with the subcontracted ESF provision. CTS ensures that all relevant paperwork is completed and that beneficiaries meet the necessary criteria, but

## COMMUNITY TRAINING SERVICES LTD

it does not monitor the teaching and learning in order to check on the quality of the learners' experience. Despite the effectiveness of the observation process, there is some evidence that a small number of observations of the E2E provision have been over graded. The self-assessment report describes the in-house training as 'stimulating and effective', but inspectors found significant weaknesses in E2E teaching and learning.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Preparation for life and work

### Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Employability training</b>		<b>3</b>
New Deal for young people	21	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	41	2
Entry to Employment	107	3

23. CTS holds an E2E contract with South Yorkshire LSC, and has 107 learners on its E2E programme. CTS has a subcontracting arrangement with HB Training Limited to provide training opportunities in construction. It also has a three-way partnership arrangement with Kier Sheffield LLP and Sheffield Homes, known as the Sheffield City Stewardship, to provide training and work-experience placements for E2E learners, with opportunities in painting and decorating, gardening, environmental enhancement and housing crime prevention. CTS also works with a range of other organisations to secure work-placement opportunities in areas such as retailing.

24. CTS is also a subcontractor for A4E's South Yorkshire prime contract with Jobcentre Plus, offering New Deal for young people and New Deal 25+. There are currently 21 participants on the New Deal for young people full-time education and training, basic skills and English for speakers of other languages option, and 41 participants on education and training intensive activity period programmes for participants aged 25 and above. The prime contractor, A4E, refers participants to CTS. All participants have an interview with CTS's staff before they start. During their first week, participants work with staff to complete a diagnostic assessment of their employment-related literacy, numeracy and language needs, and an individual learning plan. Participants' progress is reviewed monthly.

### **Employability training**

#### *Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills and confidence on work placements
- good job outcomes for New Deal 25+ participants
- good training and learning on New Deal programmes
- particularly good support for learners on E2E programmes
- highly effective partnership arrangements

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficiently planned jobsearch activities for New Deal participants
- insufficient attention to meeting individual learners' needs in E2E training
- overuse of paper-based learning resources in E2E training
- insufficient identification of barriers to employment for New Deal participants

- insufficient reviewing and recording of individual learners' progress in E2E

### **Achievement and standards**

25. E2E learners develop good skills and confidence while on work placements. Around 50 per cent of E2E learners are on placements organised through Sheffield City Stewardship. One of the key partners, Kier Sheffield LLP, employs 40 trained supervisors who provide effective work-related training, and work alongside CTS learners in small groups of no more than five learners. Sheffield Homes provides a good range of work-related opportunities for learners. Learners develop good vocational skills in painting and decorating, gardening, environmental enhancement and housing crime prevention. Many learners learn to use power tools and machinery with confidence, and gain additional knowledge of key health and safety matters. Learners greatly value and respect their supervisors. Another 10 per cent of learners develop their skills in a wide variety of other placements, including retailing, hairdressing and in the voluntary sector. All learners on work placements develop significant work-related skills, including good attendance, timekeeping and teamworking skills. In addition, they significantly increase in confidence and motivation.

26. Participants on New Deal programmes find their work placements challenging, they enjoy developing new skills and working in teams. Participants are well motivated and develop useful timekeeping, teamworking and communication skills. Participants on land-based work placements develop good strimming, hedge-cutting and turf-laying skills and know how to use basic machinery well.

27. The job outcomes on New Deal 25+ are good. Since the start of the contract in July 2006, 48 per cent of the leavers have progressed into jobs. This compares well with Jobcentre Plus targets and is 13 per cent above the prime contractor's targets. Progression into employment for most participants aged between 18 to 24 is satisfactory. Since the start of the contract in July 2006, 36 per cent of the leavers have gained jobs. Participants are making adequate progress towards achieving qualifications.

28. Positive outcomes for learners on the E2E programme are satisfactory at 49 per cent, just above the national average for E2E. Only 59 learners achieved national literacy and numeracy qualifications in 2005-06, a proportion of 13 per cent. In the first four months of the 2006-07 E2E contract, 50 learners have already achieved literacy and numeracy qualifications. A satisfactory range of additional qualifications is available for learners, for example health and safety awards. Construction learners with HB Training Limited and learners on City Stewardship work placements have good opportunities to progress onto apprenticeship programmes. Attendance at in-house training sessions is low.

### **The quality of provision**

29. Training and learning are good on New Deal programmes. Employment-related literacy and numeracy training is well planned, and tutors provide participants with good individual coaching. Participants enjoy the range of practical activities and find these motivating. Literacy lessons are lively and interesting. Participants use the training resources well and develop modest but useful employment-related literacy skills.

30. Support for learners on E2E programmes is particularly good. CTS's staff regularly visit learners at their work placements and provide very effective individual support to meet

their needs. Many of the learners have a range of significant barriers to their learning. The Kier Sheffield supervisors also provide effective personal and social support for learners. Learners all receive a good range of personal, protective equipment. At its main centre, CTS employs a member of staff in a support role, to provide more specific and intensive support, for example with housing issues, welfare issues and additional information, and advice and guidance. Learners are suitably referred to other agencies as required. All of CTS's staff place a strong emphasis on providing whatever appropriate support they can offer learners. The good accommodation at the main centre provides a very supportive environment for learners to work in, with well-equipped and spacious teaching rooms and useful additional rooms for individual discussions and reviews.

31. New Deal jobsearch activities are insufficiently planned and not effective in developing the confidence and practical knowledge that participants need when applying for jobs. Jobsearch activities include regular visits to the local Jobcentre Plus and key local employers, but there is insufficient well-planned, and ongoing development of participants' interviewing, application writing and communication skills.

32. E2E tutors pay insufficient attention to meeting individual learners' needs in training sessions. They do not sufficiently plan the induction or in-house training sessions to meet the mixed-ability levels of learners. More able learners are not always sufficiently challenged and their learning needs are not always met. Most learners in group sessions work at the same level, on the same task, using the same resources. Individual learners are not always fully occupied during class sessions.

33. There is too much use of paper-based learning resources in induction and group training sessions for E2E learners. During induction, the handouts do not sufficiently help learners increase their knowledge and understanding of their role on the E2E programme. In teaching sessions, some of the paper-based resources are dull and uninspiring. CTS has a range of teaching and learning materials, but tutors are not making sufficient use of them.

34. The planning for and recording of New Deal participants' individual barriers to employment is ineffective. The individual learning plan, individual training plan and progress review documents are not being used effectively. Discussions of participants' objectives during progress reviews are often vague and unspecific.

35. There is insufficient reviewing and recording of individual learners' progress in E2E. The targets set in individual learning plans are not sufficiently individualised, and many learners have the same key targets. Monthly progress reviews do not always involve discussion of all the targets or aspects of the learners' E2E programme, for example development in vocational skills, personal and social education, and literacy and numeracy. Often, the record of learners' progress is not sufficiently detailed or the comments are far too general. At times, tutors tend to dominate the reviews and learners are not sufficiently active in determining and recording their own targets and progress.

### **Leadership and management**

36. Partnership arrangements are highly effective. CTS has a clear commitment to working with partners, and learners benefit greatly from the effective and well-established partnership arrangements. In particular, the clearly thought out and well-managed Sheffield City Stewardship partnership, with Kier Sheffield LLP and Sheffield Homes,

provides a good range of effective work placements for E2E learners, and good progression opportunities. This partnership places a very strong emphasis on meeting the needs of learners, particularly those among Sheffield's most disadvantaged inhabitants. CTS's partnership with HB Training Limited helps to secure training opportunities for E2E learners in construction, with good opportunities for progression into apprenticeships. CTS has regular and effective contact with the prime contractor for New Deal programmes. CTS's staff and the prime contractor's contract manager work closely and meet frequently to discuss participants' progress.

37. Senior managers have managed organisational change well and supported staff effectively. Staffing levels are good. Staff work well together, their roles and responsibilities are clear, and internal communication and team working are effective. Many E2E staff are still fairly new in post and receive appropriate support. Several are working towards external qualifications in teaching and skills for life. The arrangements for staff appraisal are satisfactory.

38. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. E2E learners and New Deal participants are aware of their rights and responsibilities and know who to contact if they have any problems either at the main centre or while out on placement. Staff pay close attention to ensuring that work-placement providers work to clear equality of opportunity policies and procedures. However the induction process and in-house training sessions do not sufficiently promote and develop learners' understanding of equal opportunities.

39. Quality improvement arrangements are effective. There are appropriate systems and processes to monitor all aspects of the provision. Learners have useful opportunities to provide feedback to staff. Observations of teaching and learning are well established and regular and all tutors receive comprehensive feedback. However the grades awarded to E2E tutors do not always sufficiently reflect the written feedback, and there is evidence of some over grading. There is too little action-planning to improve teaching and learning in E2E.

40. The self-assessment process is consultative and sufficiently self-critical. However, the self-assessment report fails to identify key weaknesses in teaching and learning in the E2E provision and does not give a full account of the Jobcentre Plus New Deal provision.



