

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: GB Training (UK) Ltd  
Date of visit: 20 August 2008

### Context

GB Training (UK) Limited (GB Training) is a private training provider based in central Birmingham. The current core offering of the company is through the Train to Gain (employer-led) programme funded by the Department for Education and Skills through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). GB Training is the leading performance provider within the Black Country Training Group (BCTG) consortium, based in Oldbury, West Midlands.

Since the previous inspection, the number of learners on the Train to Gain funded programme has risen significantly to 1,024. Of the 1,024 learners currently on programme working towards an NVQ, 908 have completed their skills for life subsidiary qualification (Certificate in Adult Literacy Level 1 & 2).

All of the above learners are subcontracted through the BCTG consortium. A further 67 learners are on a programme funded by the European Social Fund. GB Training also successfully tendered in July 2007 to deliver an information, advice and guidance pre-employment contract through its subcontract agreement with Birmingham and Solihull Nextstep. GB Training has engaged with 630 clients through this LSC funded service.

The organisation was previously inspected in September 2006, at which time its overall effectiveness grade was satisfactory; leadership and management were satisfactory with contributory grades of good for equality of opportunity and inadequate for quality improvement. Provision in transportation was good and in literacy satisfactory.

### Achievement and standards

To what extent have the strengths in achievement and standards been maintained?	Strengths maintained
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At the previous inspection, there were two strengths in this area. In engineering and manufacturing technologies success rates were good and in preparation for life and work there was good development of learners' skills for employment. These

strengths have been maintained. The numbers of learners on programmes has grown considerably in the last two years, but overall success rates in transportation remain very high (99% for Driver Goods Vehicles and 96% for Passenger Carrying Vehicles in 2007/08). Success rates at Levels 1 and 2 in literacy are also high at over 90%, with timely success rates over 80%. The numbers in health and social care, which were not reported on at inspection, have increased, but the overall success rate fell slightly in 2007/08 to 78%; timely success rates fell to 56%. There are now significant numbers of learners in distribution and warehousing, customer services, team leading and management Level 3 with overall success rates of 85%, 58%, 78% and 91% respectively and timely success rates of 36%, 50%, 58% and 57% respectively. The provider recognises the need to improve success rates and, in particular, timely success in these areas and has introduced a number of changes to its procedures and staff training to drive these improvements.

### Quality of provision

How much has the monitoring and recording of individual learners' progress improved?	Insufficient progress
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There has been insufficient progress in monitoring and recording of individual learners' progress. Although a new process and documentation have been introduced since the previous inspection, the organisation is not sufficiently aware of learners' progress across the provision. A 'client visit record' process has been introduced, but these records are being completed to differing standards and even the better ones do not give relevant accurate information on learners' progress. Curriculum managers are not aware of progress of discrete cohort groups of learners. Although information is available, relevant reports are not being generated and circulated. Not all learners are being visited or contacted within the required three week period; some learners have not been visited since June.

### Leadership and management

How much has the management of the skills for life provision improved?	Significant progress
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Significant progress has been made to improve the skills for life provision. Much work has been undertaken to address the weaknesses identified by inspectors at the last inspection in September 2006. New vocational materials have been developed with literacy content for use in transportation. These have been produced to a very high standard. Delivery models have been changed. There is now more discrete provision, smaller group size and more individual coaching. Success rates have improved and are currently over 90%. The provider has increased the numeracy provision. The numeracy content is being integrated into the vocational context, especially in transport where there is a specific need for good numeracy skills. There is now more recording of distance travelled, and all learners' progress by level of attainment. Staff

development is good. All skills for life staff have achieved qualification to Further Education National Training Organisation Level 4.

How much progress has been made in the completion and implementation of quality improvement arrangements?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection quality improvement was inadequate. The provider has made reasonable progress to address this. The organisation has employed a consultant to advise particularly on this aspect and in the last 12 months has appointed a new quality assurance manager, reviewed all job roles and descriptions and identified new key roles and responsibilities. It has introduced a new proprietary software package to assist in the monitoring of its quality assurance and administrative processes and given appropriate training to staff on its use. Staff have been retrained in all internal procedures and processes. Many core policies and procedures have been reviewed, including the quality manual. A thorough quality improvement plan was produced in April 2008 and further areas for improvement identified at self-assessment in July 2008. The observation of teaching and learning has been reviewed and there is input from other providers in the Train to Gain consortium and from the college, which has been training the providers' skills for life tutors to Level 4. However, moderation processes are still under development. A number of the changes to quality improvement arrangements are still very recent and it is too early to judge the full impact of their implementation. This is recognised by the provider.

How much improvement has been made in the accuracy of data and in its use?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, the provider was unable to provide accurate learner data and was unable to plan for quality improvement based on the use of data. GB Training has made reasonable progress in this area. Subsequent to the inspection, the provider obtained the new management information system. Administrative staff have been trained to check the accuracy of data before inputting it into the system. The data itself is now thorough and managers use standard and bespoke reports to monitor performance and intervene where necessary to improve performance or the quality of the provision. Both senior managers and staff have received training on the importance and use of data as both a management and quality improvement tool. Data is used extensively to monitor learner and staff performance both at team and individual levels. However, some of the source data is still inconsistent, particularly with regard to the monitoring of learner progress.

## Self-assessment and improvement planning

To what extent have the self-assessment process and associated plans improved?	Reasonable progress
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The provider has made reasonable progress to improve the self-assessment process and associated plans. A curriculum area review has been introduced, and staff are involved in providing information that contributes to the self-assessment report. The current report is detailed and mainly accurate. However, some judgements are not supported by evidence. Staff are made aware of the strengths and weaknesses and are able to challenge the judgements. Feedback from learners and other stakeholders has been sought verbally, but this is still being developed and information gained has not contributed to self-assessment. There are weaknesses in the self-assessment report that are not included in the Quality Improvement Plan. The plan produced in April 2008 has not been updated to include the identified strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report produced in July 2008; for example, the need for greater use of information and communication technology in teaching. However, inspectors recognise that the self-assessment report had been prepared ahead of schedule, primarily for this monitoring visit, and had not been yet been submitted to the LSC.