

ALI Employer Training Pilot Survey

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The Adult Learning Inspectorate



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KEY FINDINGS

1. Almost all learners now have an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills. This aspect of ETP has improved greatly over the period of the survey. The quality of the assessment, however, varies. **In a few places, initial assessment is still not routinely carried out.** In some areas there is poor follow-up of identified needs, and the take-up of additional support is very low.

2. **Many learners make relatively slow progress through their qualification.** A weak initial assessment of their existing vocational skills and knowledge contributes to this. Accreditation of prior learning is not used particularly well. Useful individual learning plans are rare. **Many of the training programmes involve the accreditation of existing skills in experienced workers, rather than building on these skills and gaining new ones.** Although trainers meet learners regularly, reviews and action plans are not always completed to an appropriate standard and target-setting for learners is weak.

3. The use of national vocational qualification (NVQ) standards to match job roles to the qualification is working well. **The brokerage system also works well in matching job requirements and NVQ programmes.** The planned training includes a good range of NVQs to meet the demands of employers and learners.

4. **The quality of training seen by inspectors was generally satisfactory or good;** there were few examples of poor training. The best training providers successfully adapted to workplace practice. For example, they met learners at times which fitted shift patterns and work demands and made the most of workplace activities for assessment. They also chose teaching methods and materials suitable for the specific work context.

5. **The overall process for training and assessment is developing well.** It clearly enhances employees' existing knowledge and encourages good practice at work. Some innovation was seen, such as piloting e-learning as a means of delivering and assessing NVQs.

6. There is close liaison between trainers and employers. Some very effective training has taken place entirely on employers' premises. **Training providers have adapted well to the need for on-the-job training and assessment.** In a few cases, however, insufficient learning resources hamper progress.

7. **Assessment and internal verification procedures are sound.** They are often drawn directly from providers' established practices in other areas of their work. All the assessment activity observed was satisfactory and met awarding body standards. Trainers and assessors have good occupational skills, experience and knowledge of their subject area.

8. Most local LSCs and managing agents are confident that they have sufficient capacity to meet recruitment and achievement targets. There are, however, **capacity shortages in some popular areas of learning and in basic skills.**

9. **Management of the programme by different LSCs varies widely.** Areas where timely action has been taken to set up the programme and to involve partner agencies at an early stage have experienced good early recruitment. In other areas, the launch of the pilot programme has been slow.

10. **Arrangements for quality assurance are underdeveloped.** Quality was not always seen as a priority in the early stages, when the main emphasis was on recruitment. It is too early to see evidence of robust monitoring of the quality of training, although arrangements for quality assuring the providers are good in most areas.

11. **Employers and employees are enthusiastic about the programme.** Learners find it particularly relevant to their work. They value the flexibility of the programme, and the convenience of being able use evidence from daily tasks. They believe they will have better career opportunities, a better understanding of their job role, more job satisfaction and generally be more valued by their organisation as a result of their training. As identified in interim reports, however, **employees are not getting satisfactory support from the information, advice and guidance (IAG) services.**

12. **Many potential beneficiaries are unable to access the programme.** In particular, there are many workers who require a greater challenge than the NVQ at level 2 offers and for whom a level 3 would be more appropriate. **There is also a lack of clarity surrounding eligibility, and some potential learners who already hold an NVQ based on a previous career are denied access to the training, and are unable to be accredited for gaining skills in a new vocational area.**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

13. Learners clearly enjoy, and benefit from, participating in ETP. They recognise the benefits of training and having their skills accredited. In particular, they feel valued. Their personal skills grow. They show greater self-confidence, pride and ambition. Many see their employability prospects as much better, whether with their current or a future employer, and feel that achieving a qualification has markedly increased their value in the internal or external job market. Many learners, however, are still achieving a national vocational qualification (NVQ) by having their existing skills accredited rather than being given the chance to build on the skills they have or to gain new ones.

14. Employers are also satisfied with what they are getting. They see the benefits of ETP and of developing their workforce. The greater the involvement of employers and employees in ETP, the better the experience for all concerned, particularly where the training is fully integrated with the business and linked to business objectives. In such cases we have seen direct links between good training and increased productivity.

15. Initial assessment is weak, although over the course of the survey the process has improved considerably. By the end of the survey, most learners on ETP were having their literacy, numeracy and language skills assessed as they joined the programme. The way that identified problems are followed up, however, and the provision of support to tackle these problems, remain poor. This results in a peculiar, and unacceptable, situation where a learner with weak basic skills on entry is likely to leave without improving these skills yet still achieve an NVQ or other qualification. In a perverse way this situation has benefited ETP, while failing to contribute to the basic skills agenda. As basic skills support is inadequate, there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs of learners with identified weaknesses, let alone those whose needs remain unidentified.

16. The training on offer covers a wide range of vocational areas, although sectors such as care, where there is a legislative requirement for training, feature strongly. LSCs generally identified priority sectors to meet local labour market demand, such as retailing; business administration; ICT; customer service; health and social care; construction; transport; the voluntary sector; and manufacturing. We also saw training in food hygiene, warehousing and distribution, and in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). There is also some more unusual provision in areas such as team leadership, funeral services, and pub door-keeping. Employers of all sizes are involved in training, covering public and private sector and different industry sectors. It is clear that there is an untapped demand for this type of training among experienced but unqualified employees. Access to ETP

has allowed a greater proportion of employees to take part in training.

17. There is little in the way of training, although what does take place is planned well and is generally good. None of the training sessions observed was less than satisfactory and the majority were better. Good training tended to happen where the working relationship between trainers and employers was good. Training should be more tailored to individuals, especially where large groups of learners from the same employer are enrolled. Clearly, there are logistical benefits in adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, but by doing so individual learning needs are not necessarily being identified or met.

18. An effective assessment process requires good planning that take account of course requirements, the characteristics of the learners and the opportunities for assessment that occur at work. Planning based on an assess-train-assess model, in which learners' abilities are assessed, training is provided to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills, and then they are assessed again, results in efficient training and assessment geared to the needs of individuals. It may not, however, always fulfil wider workforce development needs. On the whole, this model is not thoroughly implemented by most providers. Initial assessment is not sufficiently thorough to provide a basis for individualised learning and assessment plans. Insufficient attention is paid to the accreditation of prior learning and experience.

19. In most cases where it is used, the assess-train-assess model working well. Unfortunately, too much emphasis is being placed on an assess-assess-assess approach, accrediting learners' existing skills as a means of gaining an NVQ. In these cases, learners are not sufficiently challenged, and are being denied the opportunity to enhance their existing skills and to learn new ones.

20. ETP training needs to be delivered flexibly to fit with the demands of businesses. Training providers have generally responded well to this challenge. Many trainers work the same shift patterns as learners to provide support and to gather evidence of achievement. Employers are very happy with the adaptability of the training and its close alignment with their business needs. They particularly welcome the fact that it takes place on their own premises. They respect the skills of the trainers.

21. Quality assurance arrangements remain poorly developed and are implemented inconsistently. In particular, measures to assure the quality of learning, including initial assessment and the teaching of basic and vocational skills, are still underdeveloped.

22. The range of programmes offered under ETP is meant to be sufficient to meet the needs of employers and employees. In general, this is being achieved. A wide range of vocational skills are being delivered. Most delivery is aimed at achieving NVQs at level 2, although there is a substantial minority of programmes targeting other vocational qualifications, such as team leadership, machine operation (such as lift truck operations) and security (door-keeping). Local LSCs have made considerable efforts to source training requested by employers, bringing in providers from elsewhere in the country if there is no local provider.

23. It is clear that, despite the presence of some significant areas for development, ETP has gone a long way towards successfully meeting the objectives of the skills strategy. In particular, it has succeeded in widening participation in accredited work-based learning, giving learners (employees) access to training at NVQ level 2. In doing so, it plays a part in raising the skills of the workforce. Furthermore, it has helped to generate a significant increase in employer engagement in government-funded training.

24. The most serious concern is that the basic skills agenda is not being met. Where learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are not being assessed on entry, or where they are being assessed and there is no follow up or provision of support, ETP is failing learners and employers alike. Unless this situation is rectified, the true potential of ETP, and especially its potential to make a lasting impact on the implementation of the national skills strategy, will not be fully realised.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This survey and report were commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills in April 2004, following the completion in March 2004 of a preliminary survey covering the six local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) originally involved in Employer Training Pilots (ETP).

1.2 The survey was carried out in three phases between April 2004 and March 2005. Fieldwork at each stage of the survey concentrated on specific aspects of ETP and on local LSCs at different stages of the pilot.

1.3 Two interim reports were produced, in October 2004 and January 2005. A team of full-time Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspectors carried out the survey, led by an inspection manager. During the course of the survey they visited all 20 local LSC areas involved in the pilot. The first phase concentrated on the local LSCs from the second group to participate in the pilot. The second phase focused on those in the third and final group embarking upon ETP, looking mainly at 'front-end' activities such as initial assessment. In the third phase, the team revisited most local LSC areas, including those covered during the preliminary survey in March 2004, to assess the level of improvement in areas previously identified as in need of development.

1.4 The team carried out extensive interviews with employers and learners, as well as staff from training providers and local LSCs. We would like to thank everyone who gave us their time. Lists of the training providers and employers we visited are in the appendices to this report. A range of training and assessment activities were observed. Local LSC staff assisted in setting up employer and provider visits and observations of teaching and assessment.

Learners interviewed	193
Employers interviewed	64
Training provider staff interviewed	143
Lesson observations	35
Assessments observed	8

2. THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE EMPLOYER TRAINING PILOT IS SET

2.1 ETP's were introduced in September 2002 to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly through support for workers with low skill levels. They are testing new and innovative ways to improve access to training.

2.2 When considering the findings of this survey, it is useful to consider the context in which the Employer Training Pilot has been operating as part of the government's national Skills Strategy.

2.3 The aim of the Skills Strategy is to:

- improve the UK's productivity and standard of living;
- build a better society by helping people gain the skills to work productively in the private, public and voluntary sectors, supplying the goods and services people want; and to
- help individuals to acquire and keep developing skills that will support sustained employability, more rewarding lives, and a greater contribution to their communities.

2.4 Particular challenges to the successful implementation of the strategy have been identified. These include:

- Employers feel they are not getting new staff with the right skills.
- The UK's workforce has skills gaps in:
 - basic skills (including literacy, language, numeracy and computer skills) which provide the foundation for further learning;
 - intermediate skills (associate professional, apprenticeships, technician or skilled craft or trade level);
 - mathematics; and
 - leadership and management skills.
- A frequent mismatch between what employers and individuals want, and the courses and qualifications available through publicly funded colleges and training providers.
- Many businesses undervalue how much a better skilled, trained and qualified workforce can improve their 'bottom line' performance. Such organisations can experience a 'low skills equilibrium' producing low-value added products and services, making it harder for the UK to compete internationally.
- Many individuals do not see how better skills, training and qualifications can help them achieve their personal goals.
- A general belief that the government and its agencies do not approach skills and productivity issues coherently, making it difficult for learners and employers to understand what support is available and how to access it.

- The respective roles and responsibilities of government, employers and individuals in terms of paying for and organising training and qualifications remain unclear.

2.5 The 'Skills for Success - What the Skills Strategy Means for Business' paper goes further and aims to:

- Offer a new guarantee of free tuition to help adults get a good skills foundation for employability (at level 2).
- Expand training opportunities for apprenticeships, technicians, higher crafts and trades, and associate professionals, to meet skills gaps identified by sectors and regions (at level 3).
- Rapidly expand the network of Sector Skills Councils which will be a new voice for business, map the skill needs and priorities of businesses in their sector, and set the standards for training to meet them.
- Once the lessons of the Employer Training Pilot have been learnt, develop a national programme to support employers, focusing help on people with low skills and delivering the training that businesses want, in the way they want it.

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- significant improvements in initial assessment
- continued poor practice in implementing effective initial assessment
- little follow-up, or take-up, of additional support
- poor use of accreditation of prior learning
- poor individual learning plans

3.1 Initial assessment has improved significantly during the course of the pilot. There is, however, still much room for improvement in the way it is conducted, its scope, and the effectiveness with which it is used. At the start of the ETP pilots there was often no initial assessment whatsoever. More recently, local LSCs have required that it be carried out, but have not specified how, or what use should be made of the results. Some providers assess learners' literacy and numeracy competence but fail to assess their skills and experience in their occupational area. As a result, prior learning and experience is seldom accredited and a programme that accurately takes account of the areas where they most need new learning is rarely designed.

3.2 The aim of initial assessment is to ensure that learners' needs are accurately determined and that they are placed on the correct training programme. The best providers carry out assessments early in the programme. They allow for learners' prior experience and evident existing skills, rather than putting everyone through the same tests. It is generally not appropriate for all candidates to complete Basic Skills Agency tests. Some providers cannot interpret the results of these tests. In one example of poor practice learners were given the assessment papers and allowed to discuss the questions among themselves, invalidating the results. Many learners who are literate and numerate may have their view of the training programme prejudiced by having to take tests they see as patronising. Learners who are less confident may be intimidated by the need to take a test, particularly in a group setting.

3.3 The effectiveness of initial assessment is reduced by poor follow-up. The take-up of additional support is very low, even where initial assessment is satisfactory. In too many areas, large numbers of learners who have diagnosed literacy and numeracy problems do not get help because of communication difficulties and over-complex arrangements for referral. In one LSC area, almost 1,000 learners have been identified as needing some support by the brokerage agency, but only one learner is signed up for additional training with the learning partnership that is supposed to provide it.

3.4 In most areas there is insufficient appropriate support for learners who speak English as an additional language,

although there are exceptions. Kent LSC has good ESOL provision.

3.5 The results of initial assessment should be recorded and shared with the learner and a plan of action should be drawn up. **Individual learning plans are often poor. Many providers prepare individual learning plans that do not adequately address the wider learning needs of each learner.** The learning plans are not updated frequently enough or in sufficient detail.

3.6 Accreditation of prior learning (APL) is often poorly managed. Trainers do not understand how to use it effectively. Initial assessments rarely relate to the programme being delivered in order to allow learners to reveal their existing expertise. The effectiveness and opportunities for this are limited as few learners have much previous experience of NVQs, training and of APL.

3.7 Literacy, numeracy and language support appears to work best when it is combined with the vocational programme, but this is very much a minority approach. Vocational training providers that have the skills to do this are more likely to be successful than those that refer to partners for this element of the programme. If partners are used, procedures for referral need to be swift and clear. Alternatively, support can be delivered separately but given a specific place in the programme. A provider working with Durham Council employees arranges a special eight-week literacy and/or numeracy course (two hours a week) for learners who need support. The course runs as a precursor to the main NVQ training and effectively prepares the way for evidence-gathering and portfolio-building. The best providers focus on resolving problems revealed by initial assessment, whereas many avoid the issue by delivering the NVQ or other qualification by methods which do not call for well-developed literacy or numeracy skills on the part of the learner.

3.8 There are examples of good practice in initial assessment. A Devon-based provider has a system for assessing literacy skills which leads to weekly or fortnightly support visits by a specialist tutor for those who require it. Learners develop skills and confidence in punctuation, sentence construction, spelling and letter writing and go on to take an online assessment. In Leicester, some providers are positioning the test and other recruitment administration at the second or third contact with learners so that some trust is established before they are asked to do the assessment. One care provider successfully weaves recruitment paperwork, initial assessment and training on the first unit of NVQ into two off-the-job training sessions in the first fortnight. Learners feel much less intimidated by the test when this approach is used rather than by being presented with the test at the very start of the programme by a stranger.

3.9 There are some good initiatives that aim to improve the effectiveness of initial assessment. In Lancashire, Business Link managers visit all providers to monitor their systems of initial assessment and provide guidance. Some specialist providers have developed diagnostic tests that are relevant to their occupational area. This can make the assessment of literacy and language more acceptable to the client, and also yield valuable information about vocational skills development. One ICT provider produced a questionnaire which tested the literacy and numeracy of learners at the same time as their knowledge of basic computer operations. Some providers gather information about the way that people prefer to learn, but this is rarely used in the planning of training.

3.10 Some providers, particularly those without experience of apprenticeships and work-based learning, do not have the capacity to offer initial assessment. Some worry that initial assessment tests will reduce participation. They believe that learners are intimidated by the idea of a test, and stress that employers are not always supportive of initial assessment or subsequent additional teaching. Many adopt strategies to help learners to cope with poor literacy and numeracy while they follow their qualification, rather than dealing with long-term problems. The fact that funding is based on NVQ achievement encourages this approach. Few use the motivation provided by the vocational qualification to help learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Some are still using out-of-date assessment instruments which have been superseded.

3.11 A few providers continue to avoid initial assessment or to rely on self-assessment, particularly for shorter vocational programmes. One college in Yorkshire did not assess learners on a team leaders' course, some of whom went on to struggle with the course work. One learner who is dyslexic failed an external exam. It was at this point that the provider offered an alternative approach (having a scribe) for a re-sit exam. The learner never returned. Others rely on interviews or self-disclosure by learners or their employer to identify literacy and numeracy weaknesses. This is not effective. Learners have a greater tendency to opt out of programmes at the self-referral stage, or later when they encounter difficulties with the work. These factors contribute to the poor take up of literacy and numeracy training within ETP.

3.12 In most areas, there has been little training of providers' staff to raise awareness of good practice in initial assessment. In the Northeast, the 'Pathways' adult careers service has produced guidance and advice for providers in using literacy and numeracy assessments. Regional training events have been held to share good practice and information. In other areas, however, there is confusion. One learning partnership took a lead in providing a diagnostic test for training providers that were inexperienced in initial

assessment, only to find that the local LSC specified a different test instrument a few months later. Some local LSCs have encouraged providers to subcontract initial assessment, but providers are reluctant to do this for fear of losing learners. Such an arrangement is unlikely, in any case, to result in good use of the assessment findings. The ability of providers to cope with learning disabilities such as dyslexia is very patchy. Few attempt diagnosis, and even fewer can provide specialist support for learners with dyslexia.

DEVON - Ethos Training, Newton Abbot works mainly with learners in care homes. This provider has developed successful procedures for initial assessment and additional support. First, a member of Ethos' 'sales' team conducts an initial assessment of the literacy skills of all candidates. Where concerns are raised, further diagnostic tools can be used. The results are recorded on a Skills for Life individual learning plan. The benefits of literacy support are carefully explained to learners and employers from the outset. The provider's literacy support tutors are familiar with the content of the care NVQ and set learning materials in the vocational context. All learners work towards an appropriate level of literacy certificate. After achieving the certificate, learners move on to their level 2 NVQ in care with increased levels of confidence in their portfolio work. Almost half the learners also have their number skills tested and go on to work towards certification in numeracy.

DERBYSHIRE - Omnia Driving Ltd has developed an effective initial assessment tool that is relevant to its transport and logistics industry learners as it relates to examples they will see in their working day. Omnia Driving Ltd uses an LSC learning bus and initially assesses all learners on the employer's site. One learner interviewed said he found the process a little daunting, but understood the relevance to helping him successfully complete his training. All results are shared with the learner and individual support is provided.

Literacy and numeracy support by colleges

A number of colleges in Greater Manchester and Lancashire carry out a thorough initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. Some learners' needs are more appropriately met by provision which is not available through ETP, particularly where needs are acute. These learners may be enrolled on other more appropriate classes provided by the college. The essential skills programme is often used as a taster and an extended initial assessment - many learners progress to an NVQ.

Preston College provides on-site literacy and numeracy support for 18 learners at BOSAL, an engineering manufacturing company in Lancashire. Teaching takes place in a designated training room. Learners make significant progress and speak highly of the training. The teacher planned the session to meet the individual needs of each learner. A good range of resources and learning activities were employed. One learner had brought examples of written communication for discussion, including memos he had used in his job.

4. GUIDANCE FOR LEARNERS AND EMPLOYERS

- **successful use of brokerage model to widen participation**
- **good levels of employer satisfaction**
- **good matching of NVQ standards to job roles**
- **well-handled induction**
- **poor guidance given to learners**
- **insufficient eligibility guidance given to employers**
- **poor involvement and use of IAG service**

4.1 The brokerage model is largely successful, although there are variations across the country. The advice that brokers provide to employers is generally well received. Employers are satisfied with the service they get. They particularly welcome the brokers' clear focus on business needs, and their knowledge of the training providers available. This knowledge has improved as experience has been gained during the pilots. Employers also appreciate the expertise of brokers, who conduct a training needs analysis and match this to the capabilities of approved providers. One employer from a very small firm made particular reference to the friendliness and down-to-earth approach of the broker, which made them more willing to discuss problems. TUC brokerage has also been effective in engaging with employers through union structures. **NVQ standards are usually successfully matched to job roles.**

4.2 Some providers, however, found that the learning brokers were slow to get started and were unhappy that the local LSC prevented them from doing their own marketing during the early stages of the pilot. Providers that offer NVQs which take 12-15 months to deliver are particularly concerned about the late start in signing up learners. Now that the learning brokers are operating they are adopting a sector-based approach to local industries, which has been well thought-through. Relationships with providers are improving. In several areas, most of the brokerage activity, including training needs analysis and initial assessment, is left to providers. Some cannot offer a sufficiently wide range of courses and employers may not be getting the most suitable training. Providers such as colleges of further education offer a wider range of programmes, but cannot always provide the flexibility of delivery required by employers. Some providers and colleges employ their own business developers who recruit employers to the pilot. This process usually involves a training needs analysis, but in some cases an existing commercial short course, such as lift truck operation, is offered without any of the initial assessment or guidance components of the programme.

4.3 Employers are given insufficient information and guidance to enable them to identify eligible learners. They often have to adopt a blanket approach to recruitment and to deal with resentment and complaints when learners find out they do not

qualify for ETP. While some good practice is in place, where groups of learners attend using different funding streams in the same group (including employer-funded), this is the exception. **Employers are not given adequate guidance on how to achieve a good mix of learning initiatives.** Other options, such as foundation apprenticeships, are rarely discussed with potential learners.

4.4 Employees are offered insufficient helpful pre-course information. The choice of programme offered to learners depends much more on the employers' views and requirements than those of the employee. Many employers prefer all employees to do the same course, no matter what their past experience or level of skill. A group of employees will usually be offered a course that their employer has selected for them. On the whole, learners are content with this approach, but in a few cases the training they receive differs significantly from their expectations. Some of the pre-course information leaves learners not knowing what they are attending, how long it will last or what they will achieve.

4.5 Induction is handled well. A structured induction gives learners a clear overview of the NVQ system and encourages them to identify opportunities for evidence-gathering within their everyday work. Learners enjoy this type of induction and speak highly of its motivational effect. There is, however, some poor induction, in which the work likely to be involved is not sufficiently explained and learners do not understand the realities of their commitment until late in their programme. In one case, learners were given unrealistically short deadlines for completion based on the provider's contractual obligations rather than their needs or those of their employer.

4.6 Few participants in ETP understand the role of the IAG service and are confused about its functions. It is clear that while time and money have been invested in IAG, little tangible return can be seen in terms of its effect on learners or employers. In one LSC, although £70,000 went into funding two-and-a-half guidance posts, face-to-face contact by guidance workers was minimal, leaving learners and employers unaware that guidance materials were available. Inspectors came across many learners who would benefit from guidance but have not received it, such as the potential owner-manager of a small enterprise who attends a food hygiene course with the current owner-manager. She is very keen to extend her knowledge about further courses or training which would help her better to run the business, but has been given no information and has not been visited by a guidance worker. In another example, learners on a teaching assistant course, whose jobs are potentially at risk, talked enthusiastically about how the training will benefit their employment prospects. None of them, however, had been offered further guidance even though they were overwhelmingly positive about wanting it.

4.7 Most training providers are unsure of the role of IAG.

Some believe that the IAG provider is acting in a quality assurance or 'policing' role on behalf of the LSC. Much unnecessary paperwork is completed. In one case, where an employer and employees had questions about the wage compensation element, the training provider gave the IAG contact as the appropriate person to deal with them. Some LSCs report that an initial contact between a training provider and an employer is always followed up by a telephone call or a visit from an independent IAG worker, to advise the employer about ETP in depth. Remarkably few employer staff spoken to by inspectors could remember such a contact.

4.8 There is some good practice in initial guidance. In Leicester, one group of companies provide open days, held in the factory, where employees can talk to staff from the college and to other staff in the factory who have already completed the training on offer. College staff have a long-term relationship with this particular employer, and have a permanent base in the factory. Learners are assessed for their ability to undertake the training and offered places on more basic level courses where they can develop essential skills and ESOL skills, or given the opportunity to go straight onto NVQ. All learners are enthusiastic and value the whole experience.

4.9 In Berkshire, ETP learners who are nearing completion of their qualification are given a comprehensive signposting CD-ROM to encourage them to continue their learning. In South Yorkshire, the programme of IAG sessions for learners who have completed their programme is well established. The managing agent has worked to reassure some reluctant employers that these sessions provide a valuable ending to the ETP programme and lead to continued benefits in the workplace. In another example the IAG service concentrates on three main areas: learners at risk of leaving early, exit and progression interviews for completers; and evaluation of learners' views. The last two activities are often combined into a single interview. There is some evidence that the intervention with potential early leavers is working well. Training providers that have experienced this aspect of the IAG service speak highly of its effectiveness and the IAG service state that, of the 50 such interviews conducted, approximately 60 per cent have stayed on programme and a further 20 per cent may still return.

South Yorkshire - Over recent months the advice and guidance element has been developed. Two providers of IAG are used. They work actively with training providers to give specialist advice at key points in the learning process and are starting to visit groups at the beginning as well as the end of courses, where practical. This is not a systematic process yet but is beginning to show returns. In one company, the IAG worker attended a presentation evening and used the opportunity to talk to learners again about career progression. One learner is considering some kind of management pathway as a

result. IAG workers have given good support to learners under threat of redundancy, including helpful information packs that include contact details for an IAG worker. There are plans for the IAG worker to go into the company once the scale of the redundancies is known.

5. TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- good and flexible training
- positive impact of training meets employers needs
- insufficient use of assess-train-assess model
- little formal training
- some poor resources and accommodation
- insufficient take up of literacy and numeracy training

5.1 Close liaison between trainers and employers often results in very effective training. A number of employers make training rooms available on their premises. Some of the best provision is found where assessors are based in organisations for several days each week, giving them multiple opportunities to assess candidates. Much of the best practice was seen in large manufacturing companies. Here, training providers took time to become familiar with operating procedures, and so could encourage learners to use their training to work on improvements to production methods. These companies recognised the benefit of production workers' training to their overall business strategy and often supplied good training resources

5.2 Employers and learners like the fact that training takes place at work, without the need for learners to attend separate training facilities. Typically, NVQs are delivered by assessors visiting the workplace once or twice a month to see individual learners. The interaction between learners and the assessor/trainers is usually good. There are good examples of appropriately challenging training for learners, which allows them to use their working activities as a base for developing greater skills and knowledge. Generally, the more often learners are visited, the better their progress. In some areas, a shortage of assessors means that scheduled meetings are missed. This has a very detrimental effect on learners' motivation and achievement.

5.3 The assess-train-assess model of training is not used enough. Where it is used well, there can be significant gains in employees' underpinning knowledge and their acquisition of new skills, as well as certification of their existing skills. For example, in one employer, tutors and workplace supervisors work alongside one other. The tutor provides intensive and highly effective coaching on new machining techniques and the supervisor makes sure that learners get the chance to practise their new skills. Assessment takes place on a subsequent visit. The employer has gained significantly from this approach as it is better able to respond to fluctuations in demand for different products. Another provider has adapted material from technical certificates to give good underpinning knowledge to learners at the start of their programmes so that assessment in the workplace can take place more rapidly.

5.4 There are too many cases where NVQ accreditation is gained without significant development of job-related skills. In some cases, this leads to dissatisfaction with the training. Some learners feel that they gain little by compiling portfolios that set out what they already know. Others, however, value the opportunity to reflect on working practices and gain confidence from the achievement of a qualification. In one example, no additional training is given by the provider. The assessor is clear that her job is only to assess and refers any skills deficit to the employer for action. In another instance, a training programme for a large retail company was successful in terms of accredited achievements but did not meet the expectations of the company or its employees. Assessment was virtually all by direct observation, in which the assessor wrote statements on learners' competence and took digital photographs. Each NVQ learner was presented with a CD portfolio at the end of the programme. Learners were disappointed. One said 'It is good to have the formal qualification, but this is not training'. The manager commented that there was 'too much emphasis on meeting criteria for funding rather than addressing learners' needs'.

5.5 Even where the emphasis is on accreditation rather than learning, some programmes successfully enhance employees' existing knowledge. Meetings with assessors can develop learners' understanding of how to identify evidence from the workplace, and to cross-reference their evidence to the NVQ standards. They also often involve some training on background knowledge. Several learners in care homes commented that their previous experience had shown that there are a variety of ways to perform a task and that working with their NVQ assessor has provided guidance on preferred methods. Some care learners are developing their understanding further by reading textbooks recommended by their assessor. Discussions with the assessor can foster a greater awareness of the individual rights of patients. In other areas, learners become much more aware of the detail of their jobs and there are clear improvements to procedures and practices in many workplaces.

5.6 Inflexibility in working towards higher-level NVQs restricts progress. Only provision up to level 2 is fundable, although many learners are capable of achieving at higher levels, even though they may not have a level 2 qualification.

5.7 In some small and medium-sized enterprises, the effectiveness of training is seriously reduced by a scarcity of resources and poor accommodation. In one case, an 18-hour training course in food hygiene is given in the back room of a shop. The enthusiasm and ability of the trainer is appreciated, as is his flexibility in fitting in with the needs of the business. The shop, however, has to remain open while training goes on. Customers and telephone calls interrupt training. The learners sit on makeshift seats,

including a step-ladder, and have nowhere to rest their work. The trainer cannot use any training resources except handouts.

5.8 Too few learners take up literacy and numeracy training.

Numbers on skills for life provision are far lower than those who have been identified as needing help. Many adult learners are reluctant to acknowledge weaknesses in this area and few providers have found effective ways around this problem. Learners are often referred to partner agencies or to college courses, which they rarely attend. Few providers have the expertise to teach literacy as part of the vocational provision, despite the fact that many NVQs have been 'mapped' across the literacy and numeracy curricula. .

5.9 Where discrete literacy, numeracy or language provision is available, it is mostly satisfactory or good. It usually fails, however, to make use of the working context to sustain interest and motivation. For example, one literacy programme for care workers was driven completely by the national test requirements. The learners achieved the level 1 certificate but are still unable to write a good-quality care plan because they are not familiar with the spelling of certain terms used.

Essential skills training: A partnership between Kerry Foods, Tameside College and the Learning and Skills Council

Kerry Foods is a successful food manufacturer and one of Tameside's biggest employers. Many of their 800 staff work on production lines. The company has always provided on-the-job training, including NVQs, but was keen to develop the workforce further and encourage a culture of learning in the business.

Having assessed the needs of the company and its staff, Tameside College proposed a programme of Essential Skills Training. The food manufacturing industry is heavily audited, with many systems and processes to be followed, and Kerry Foods felt that essential skills such as literacy, numeracy and communication could be improved across the workforce. Assessing paperwork errors before and at the end of the training would provide a measure of its success.

They chose to launch the pilot in the bacon department, where production demands are quite stable. Tameside College worked with the company to create bespoke training based on specific needs of production staff. This meant that the trainer had to be very flexible in terms of when training could be given.

There was initial uncertainty about the response of the workforce, and particularly the willingness of individuals to admit the need for training in literacy and numeracy in front of colleagues. After a great deal of preparation, open dialogue and support, 62 per cent of staff in the bacon department signed up for the training in November 2003. Securing the full backing of the TUC was critical to the success of the training. The trade union was quick to see the benefits for staff and keen to ensure the workforce were fully aware of the learning opportunity. Two union representatives took on the role of 'Learner Rep', acting as a sounding board for employees who had concerns, or wanted to learn more.

The training gives a wide variety of learning experiences that develop employees' confidence, skills and knowledge. Each participant took an initial on-line assessment to determine their learning level, and was given clear objectives and goals. Although training happens off the job, the focus is firmly on improving efficiency and productivity. The training blends paper-based activities, such as quizzes and fact sheets, with computer-based sessions. The Learning and Skills Council supplied incentives to keep up employees' motivation during the training - a novelty radio was given to everyone who took the on-line skills assessment, and a calculator and gift voucher went to those who passed their end test. On final assessment, participants were also awarded a certificate of achievement.

60 people have completed the training, passed the final assessment, obtained a nationally recognised qualification, and advanced to the next level. Most notably, one person who moved to a new employer was so eager to carry on the training that they enrolled independently on a course with Tameside College.

The results have far outstripped the company's expectations. Managers report measurable benefits across the business, including fewer errors in paperwork. The biggest change has been in staff morale. By switching people on to learning, the company has seen motivation and confidence soar amongst the workforce and hopes that this will lead to better retention rates. Staff are now much more

likely to come forward with suggestions on the factory floor and take on added responsibility. Most importantly, everyone has enjoyed being part of the training. Plans are being developed to offer essential skills training to other departments. Kerry Foods is confident of achieving good results here, too.

Foxes Biscuits/ Huddersfield Technical College

The training and development manager at Foxes Biscuits identified team leader training as a key element in the company's leadership programme. The business unit at Huddersfield College approached the company to offer this training, which it was able to plan and deliver within a short time. A detailed training needs analysis was carried out, the results of which were used to tailor the course to the needs of the employer. The college delivered the programme in a way that accommodated the company's shift patterns. Initial assessment identified many learners who required literacy and numeracy support. This was given through classes in report-writing and coaching, which are integrated with the team leader course. This very successful initiative has led to large numbers of learners accessing basic skills training through their programme of study. The college drew on non-ETP funds to enable learners who did not meet the ETP criteria to be trained with their colleagues. The training manager sees this as a really important initiative and plans to continue it, as well as extending training to other companies in the group.

6. THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING AND TRAINING

- good on and off-the-job training
- satisfactory training in literacy and numeracy
- employees' response to training is good
- under-developed recording of progress and target setting
- poor use of individual learning plans
- some innovative approaches to training

6.1 **Teaching is generally satisfactory or good**, although teaching to groups of learners is not a main component of most training programmes. The good teaching observed was particularly well-matched to the needs and aims of the learners. It encouraged them to question and to develop independent thinking. Tutors have up-to-date knowledge of their subject and industrial sector. They adopt a non-patronising, down-to-earth style which engages learners and recognises their experience. They use a wide variety of materials and activities. The most successful providers recognise employers' business goals in their work and enlist employers' support for their learning goals. This support can take the form of allowing employees time for study or to complete written assignments. Most training happens in individual meetings with learners, but some providers use group sessions effectively to produce gains in learning, confidence, motivation, and the sharing of good practice. The best provision places appropriate emphasis on gaining new skills, which motivates learners far better than programmes which emphasise assessment above learning.

6.2 **Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.** Some effective group sessions were seen, and there were many good individual sessions where specific problems could be tackled. Too often, however, literacy and numeracy training failed to take account of the industry context, and very rarely was it linked closely enough to the achievement of a vocational qualification.

6.3 **Employees respond well to training.** In one very good session, the provider gathered a group of learners from different employers for training towards the team leader certificate. The use of a hotel as the venue took them away from their routine and helped to motivate them. They were encouraged to share experiences to bring the teaching to life. Advice and guidance on progression opportunities was offered subtly throughout the session. Another session in care was for domiciliary workers who seldom had a chance to get together. The teacher encouraged learners to talk about their own experiences in discussions about equality of opportunity at work. Learners responded enthusiastically and shared many examples of good practice, gaining confidence as well as new knowledge from the session. One provider offers useful weekly drop-in workshops for all learners who study at level 2 in elder care, which can include ETP learners as well NVQ

learners or apprentices funded through work-based learning, or those on European Social Fund programmes. Learners' needs are reviewed at the beginning of the session. They are then grouped together according to the unit or element they are working on and allocated a trainer. Some groups may have only one or two learners where others are larger with up to 10. Lesson plans are linked to each NVQ unit and clearly identify required learning resources. These resources are available in the workshop. This flexible approach permits trainers to respond efficiently to individual needs and also allows learners to mix with others from different organisations and share experiences.

6.4 The pace of teaching was too slow in some of the less effective learning sessions and some learners did not find the sessions challenging enough. Inadequate use was made of varied resources and/or teaching methods. These weaknesses were sometimes exacerbated by the limitations of the working environment. Some sessions were held in areas that were not appropriate for learning, for example where learners were subjected to interruptions from customers. Sometimes the range of abilities was wide and this was inadequately dealt with by the tutor. This particularly applied to literacy and numeracy sessions.

6.5 Interaction between learners and trainers is generally good. The recording of progress and setting of targets are much less developed. Action-planning is not as effective as it should be. Planning of learning is generally done at each visit. Actions or specific targets for learners, even on this short-term basis, are not always adequately recorded or given in enough detail to the learners to allow them to take an active role in the learning process. While the end aim is the achievement of the qualification, there are few short- or medium-term targets set in any form. This can stifle learners' motivation and hold back their progress. One provider was unaware of how individual learning plans and review processes are used. All end targets (i.e. achievement of the qualification) are based on contractual agreements, not on the abilities or job roles of the individuals involved. Learners' progress is usually reviewed every 12 weeks, following the review pattern used in apprenticeship programmes.

6.6 Poor use is made of individual learning plans to guide or record progress. In some cases they are not used at all and often they are incomplete. Most individual learning plans are drawn up at an early stage of the programme but many learners remain unaware of their existence or purpose. Many plans do not reflect the overall learning needs of individuals. There is sometimes a separation between the NVQ work and other skills development, such as underpinning knowledge or literacy and numeracy. Opportunities are lost for one to complement or reinforce the other.

6.7 Inspectors observed other activities such as discussions between providers and potential learners and employers. These were carried out thoroughly and professionally. The NVQ process was fully explained. However, here again the emphasis was on accreditation of prior knowledge and skills, rather than on developing existing skills and acquiring new ones. Almost all the provision discussed was for individual delivery in the workplace. This is not necessarily what employers want. One employer was keen to have formal training or skills development and was willing to facilitate group training to achieve this. Another employer had arranged for generic training sessions to be part of an overall programme, with input on communications, team-building, problem-solving and health and safety. This allowed learners to do individual work between sessions and come together for group activities at planned intervals. The employer thought that this approach was making a difference in how the company was running, in terms of changing work practices for the better and making savings. **They contrasted this quite strongly with the assess-assess-assess model, where learners got the NVQ but the company saw significantly less gains in productivity, initiative and team-building.**

Hygrade Foods, Chippenham with New College, Swindon

Good practice in ESOL training with employees (migrant workers from countries such as Poland, Brazil and Slovakia)

Thorough initial assessment identified that approximately 80 per cent of learners were at pre-entry level. Learners are now working towards speaking and listening modules of ESOL skills for life qualifications, as well as literacy qualifications. They also work on employability skills, an additional learning objective which was discussed and agreed with the employer. The college has developed learning materials contextualised for the language of work and in particular health and safety. ESOL specialists teach small groups of employees at work, either before or after their shift. The experienced and enthusiastic tutor has developed an excellent working relationship with the learners. Training sessions draw on a good variety of learning materials and all the learners participate fully. They enjoy their training, the pace of which is varied to match their abilities. So far, 58 learners have taken up the training, some of whom have progressed from entry level 1 to entry level 3 in three months. Workplace supervisors have noticed a significant increase in learners' self-confidence and retention rates for employees have improved.

Accrington and Rossendale College

Accrington and Rossendale College has many years' experience of offering Road Passenger Transport NVQs to the public transport sector. The college teaches bus drivers and other transport workers, not only in Lancashire but throughout the country. In Lancashire, the college is working with several bus companies. Its NVQ programme at level 2 is well planned and carefully structured to meet the needs of the learners. All training takes place on employers' premises. Induction is well structured and there are good learning resources. Case studies are presented on DVD to stimulate discussion among learners. Some of this discussion can be used as NVQ evidence. Portfolios of evidence are well structured and learners are given helpful guidance about what can be used as evidence. This builds learners' confidence and encourages their steady progress. Extensive observation takes place 'on the buses' at work. Many learners achieve their NVQ in less than 6 months.

7. ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION

- **assessment and internal verification procedures meet awarding body requirements**
- **extensive use of direct observation in the workplace**
- **weak recording of underpinning knowledge**
- **too much assessor-led portfolio building**

7.1 **Assessment and internal verification procedures are mostly sound.** They are often based on a training provider's experience in other areas of work, such as LSC-funded apprenticeships. Direct observation, witness testimonies and product evidence are all used appropriately and meet the requirements of awarding bodies. Verification procedures and practices are broadly adequate. The monitoring of assessors by verifiers is effective. Verifiers give feedback and develop action plans to improve the assessors' performance where required. **In some sectors, such as care, there are insufficient verifiers to maintain adequate monitoring regimes.** Most learners do not fully understand the assessment appeals process and the role of their internal verifier. The arrangements for an appeal are not adequately explained during assessment sessions.

7.2 **Direct observation of learners' performance at work is often the main assessment method.** Learners enjoy receiving confirmation of their competence this way. They value the guidance that assessors provide in identifying the type of evidence required for assessment and in cross-referencing evidence against NVQ standards. Many assessments are well planned and result in a written report from assessor to learner. This helps learners to identify areas that they need to develop. Some providers reduce the burden of assessment for learners by using product evidence or photographs, and by simplifying the standards so that learners can more easily understand what is required to demonstrate their knowledge. Employers can play an important part in the assessment process by providing witness testimony and other written evaluations of learners' performance at work. **There were, however, examples of assessment being driven totally by assessors and not involving employers, or, importantly, learners, in the planning and review processes.**

7.3 Workplace assessment should involve the employer or supervisor, both as a source of evidence, and as a supporter of the process. **This was generally done well by providers on the ETP programme.** In many cases the support of supervisors was enlisted to allow learners to move between job roles so that they could fulfil the requirements for performance evidence more easily. A few training providers attempted to deliver the whole NVQ process with minimal involvement of employers.

7.4 Only a few companies train workplace supervisors to act as assessors. Where this is done, opportunities for assessment

are much more frequent. Assessors usually involve supervisors in reviews of learners' progress, although the recording of these reviews is sometimes inadequate. In one example of poor practice, work-based assessors in an organisation were not permitted to be involved in the assessment of their own learners because of arrangements made with a local college with whom the learners had been enrolled. In some companies, the frequency of reviews is insufficient to maintain progress, and assessment plan do not provide clear guidance for learners or employers on the actions needed to achieve the qualification. A surprisingly high proportion of learners were not able to say how close they were to completing their course.

7.5 There are effective working relationships between assessors and learners at work. Good assessments are characterised by knowledgeable assessors who use open questioning well, make sure they observe in detail all aspects of the process and cross reference as well as possible across assessment criteria. If learners do not quite get the point of the open questioning, skilful assessors use directed questions carefully to get learners back on track.

7.6 Some assessments are inadequately planned and do not involve workplace supervisors sufficiently. Some workplace supervisors expressed concern that they were not informed of plans for assessments or the results. Learners and workplace supervisors do not always receive adequate and clear information on the progress made towards completion of the NVQ. Some cases workplace supervisors are not called upon enough to provide supporting judgements on the evidence provided by learners.

7.7 Recording of underpinning knowledge is weak. One common assessment method is the setting of questions as a 'homework' task, after which the assessor discusses the answers with the learner. Many learners think that answering such questions and the subsequent discussion provides valuable clarification on their job skills. However this assessment by verbal questioning can lack focus, particularly when assessors try to include some training during the assessment process. In one company, some learners need ESOL and literacy support but this has not been provided. The verbal responses to knowledge questions from these learners are recorded by the assessor. This process raises concerns regarding authenticity of evidence.

7.8 Portfolio building is too assessor-led. In too many cases, assessors take this on themselves rather than giving the task to the learner. Some cross-referencing of files is done almost exclusively by the assessor rather than the learner. These portfolios are more than adequate to meet the requirements of awarding bodies, since they often include observation records, witness statements, digital photographs and product evidence. Learners, however, are unsure how their

work had enabled them to meet the standard required, and they feel neither a sense of achievement nor that new learning had taken place.

Case study: Tameside College

Tameside College is committed to taking the college to the workplace and reaching out to learners at work. It offers a wide range of NVQs, and essential skills training including IT courses and the European Computer Driving Licence, to employers in Greater Manchester through the ETP. The college carries out training and assessment in the workplace, if possible. Experience has shown that learners find this much easier to fit in with their working patterns and many learners are more confident than they would be in a college environment. Many smaller employers do not have sufficient computers to support the work. The college has set up a bank of laptop computers to use on employers' premises. This bank of laptops has been registered as a test centre with the awarding body. Learners can now take their end tests at work, where they are most confident.

8. CAPACITY OF THE PROVIDER NETWORK

- generally adequate capacity to deliver programme
- strong provider base
- some significant skills shortage areas
- slow implementation of ETP in some areas

8.1 Success in meeting employers' expectations requires that there are enough providers to deliver a good-quality training experience, within relatively tight timescales, in a flexible manner, and in a sufficient range of areas of learning to meet the needs of all employees. **There is sufficient capacity to meet most recruitment and achievement targets.** This is particularly true in areas where there is a strong provider base with an established track record of successful work-based learning. These providers run the ETP programme along the same lines as apprenticeships, but without the key skills and technical certificate elements. As would be expected, their tutors and assessors have the skills, qualifications and experience to carry out their roles effectively.

8.2 **In some parts of the country, however, there are capacity shortages in popular areas of learning.** For example, in Kent and Cambridgeshire, employers and training providers are concerned about the number of assessors available for programmes such as classroom assistant training and essential skills. Capacity tends to be limited in areas where there is a national shortage of trainers, such as care. There is a particular problem in providing training for the National Health Service in some areas. **Few training providers have adequate resources to meet the specialist needs of learners in language, literacy and numeracy. If every learner who needed support with basic skills was accurately identified, there would be insufficient capacity for them all to receive this support.**

8.3 Employers that have approached local LSCs with specific requirements have had a good response. Local LSCs have made great efforts to secure suitable provision, even if it involved contracting with training providers outside their region. Sometimes lack of capacity affects the quality of programmes and the rate of learners' progress. Managers in a care agency in Wiltshire have become so dissatisfied at the slow progress and low success rate of their employees who are following a level 2 NVQ with a local training provider that they are setting up their own accredited centre for care and administration awards.

8.4 Some providers indicate that funding levels make it uneconomic to work with an employer that has only one or two learners: this clearly restricts participation by small and medium-sized enterprises. There are, however, examples where this is done successfully, without compromising the quality of service to learners.

8.5 ETP has been implemented slowly in some areas. Capacity has been affected by the considerable variation in the speed with which local LSCs acted. Most LSCs contract only with approved providers, and in some cases this is taking some time to accomplish. In some areas, providers were thoroughly briefed and recruited to the pilot well before it started, while other regions were still struggling to find providers three months after the programme had begun. Uncertainty about the future of ETP has deterred some providers from building capacity to meet demand. Many have recruited new staff to deal with the increase in learner numbers, but this process has delayed recruitment in some sectors. Similarly, training providers have restricted the course options they offer because of time constraints caused by the August deadlines for completion and late start dates. There is uncertainty as to whether extensions will be available and providers have generally erred on the side of caution, offering only shorter courses.

9. SUCCESS RATES AND ACHIEVEMENT

- very high success rates on short courses
- good enhancement of personal skills
- poor retention in some occupational areas
- slow progress on some NVQ programmes

9.1 Overall success rates were not directly measured in this project. In the various pilot phases, the emphasis in many areas has been on recruitment to meet targets, with less emphasis on successful outcomes. This may explain why achievement is patchy, and progress is generally slower than might be expected from a work-based programme. It must be recognised, however, that for many learners and employers, there are very significant gains in confidence, productivity and self-esteem that cannot be measured in qualification outcomes.

9.2 **In many areas, success rates are high, particularly on shorter programmes** such as the Team Leader Award. A number of programmes have recorded 100 per cent achievement. There are successes in NVQs as well, for example, a number of learners in Lancashire took only three months to achieve an NVQ in road passenger transport at level 2 and, elsewhere, another group of learners achieved a performing manufacturing operations NVQ in four months. In Derbyshire, success rates are excellent in the NVQ at level 2 in driving goods vehicles. It is difficult to assess progress in some local LSC areas, as most provision is in its very early stages, although Lancashire LSC, one of the final group to become involved in ETP, shows what can be done in a short period of time. After the post-induction drop-out, retention is generally good, and further leavers are mainly a result of job change.

9.3 **Learners gain significantly from participating in ETP and enhance their personal skills.** They show greater self-confidence, pride and ambition. Many see their employability prospects as much better, whether with their current or a future employer, and feel that achieving a qualification has markedly increased their value in the job market. This is especially important for learners in one company who are under threat of redundancy. Their provider has re-arranged training to prioritise these learners so that they have a qualification to take with them to another company. Many learners and their immediate supervisors identify improved communication skills and more awareness of health and safety as major gains. The head of one haulage firm was keen to point out the direct benefits to his firm of his employees gaining better driving skills: less wear and tear on tyres and better working practices generally. When qualifications are obtained they give a real sense of achievement and a desire for more learning. Many learners who have completed a qualification are extremely keen to take higher-level courses.

9.4 The retention rates on ETP programmes are mainly satisfactory or good, as might be expected in an employer-led programme. **Retention is poor in areas such as care and retailing.** This is partly attributable to the traditionally high turnover of staff in these industries. In care, many new recruits leave the industry when they find they are not suited to the demands of the job. In the past, these employees would not have had time to enrol for training. They are now being enrolled on an ETP programme as part of their induction, because it is free and employers are anxious to get them trained as soon as possible. This skews the dropout rates on some programmes. In the longer-established pilot areas, results are very varied, but there are pockets of poor retention, often caused by learners being poorly briefed on the likely demands of their programme, or being poorly supported by trainers. The extent of support from employers is also an important factor.

9.5 **There is some slow progress on NVQ programmes.** Some learners leave early or make slow progress on their level 2 NVQ because they find the demands of the qualification are greater than they had been led to expect. Another cause of slow progress is **insufficient visits by assessors to learners at work.** Regular contact is essential if a positive relationship is to be developed and progress sustained. In some cases, capacity constraints prevent providers from meeting their targets for frequency of visits: this always leads to delays and may contribute to drop-out.

9.6 Although inductions are generally carried out well, they do not give some learners a thorough understanding of the NVQ standards. In some inductions, trainers put too much emphasis on reassuring learners rather than being realistic about the challenges the programme might bring. Some learners find they have too much study to do in their own time, particularly if their employers do not set aside work time in which learners can complete assignments and meet with their assessors. They are insufficiently involved in directing their own learning, and, in some cases, in assembling the evidence for achievement. If the assessor's effort flags for any reason, such learners are unlikely to sustain progress with their qualification.

9.7 **In many training programmes, recording of learners' progress and achievement is poor. Assessors fail to agree clear, measurable targets for learners to achieve between meetings.** Learners make much better progress when they are fully aware of what they have to do, how it fits into the qualification requirements, and when it has to be done by. Progress is slow in those providers that do not have adequate systems to ensure that this happens..

9.8 **Some learners follow the wrong level of NVQ.** They are insufficiently challenged by the requirements of a level 2 programme and have higher technical skills and knowledge than

that required by the qualification. They find the portfolio-building process tedious and devoid of interest. Some become disillusioned and drop out. On the other hand, rapid progress is made by some learners who are more skilled than the programme requires, but are keen to gain the qualification.

10. MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

- well-established partnership arrangements
- arrangements for the quality assurance of training are not well developed
- some very good promotion of ETP
- widening participation of employers and training providers
- some inflexibility by local LSCs in approving providers
- inconsistent management of ETP
- poor target-setting and little emphasis on achievement
- some inadequate monitoring of health and safety and equality of opportunity in the workplace

10.1 Partnership arrangements are generally working well.

Local LSCs have faced considerable challenges in getting ETP pilot programmes to operate effectively. They had to develop new methods for marketing training to employers, which they found difficult at first, but which are now widely successful. By developing the provider base they have been able to use existing providers of work-based learning, and bring in new providers. The ability of providers to respond to the opportunity presented by the pilot has depended on the clarity of signals from the LSC. The most effective LSCs moved quickly to involve providers, and established confidence through a consistent management approach. They set clear targets for recruitment and achievement that allow providers to plan effectively and recruit additional staff if required. The pilots in these areas have achieved good recruitment to the programmes. Continuity of provision is threatened by the current perception of a 'funding gap' after August 2005.

10.2 Arrangements for the quality assurance of training are not well developed. Quality is not yet a priority: the main emphasis is still on recruitment. Most providers base their quality assurance on internal verification and awarding body requirements, and on the monitoring of learners' performance. Providers that hold mainstream LSC contracts are generally more advanced in terms of quality assurance and have a greater understanding of initial assessment and training to support vocational qualifications, but beyond this, providers have made few arrangements to quality assure their own provision. For example, feedback is seldom collected from learners and employers. Most providers' staff do not know how the LSC is intending to quality assure the ETP programmes. They assume that ETP will be included in the quality assurance procedures for their mainstream programmes, but as yet there is little evidence of any quality monitoring of key learning processes by the LSC.

10.3 There are clear criteria for the approval of providers.

Typically, most are from the existing LSC register, but they still need to submit an expression of interest and application to take part in the programme. The application generally requires providers to submit copies of policies and procedures

such as those that cover quality assurance and health and safety. Applications are considered against set criteria drawn up by the LSC's quality personnel. In Cambridgeshire, the validation procedure imposed by the subcontracted managing agent is rigorous and should ensure that all training companies delivering ETP will have thorough procedures for quality assurance. The process does, however, involve a very long and detailed form that providers find difficult to complete. This has contributed to the slow start to the programme. In other areas, selection procedures are less rigorous. For example, applications without adequate quality assurance policies have been approved.

10.4 The administration of contracts and the 'sign-up' process are now running smoothly in most LSCs but systems for tracking wage subsidies are weak. There is inconsistent application of the rules on eligibility. Providers need more support to manage a new type of funding and accountability. There is too much paperwork for everyone, especially learners. Problems with the XANSA database have led to wasted staff time and reduced management effectiveness.

10.5 The effectiveness with which local LSCs set about managing the ETP pilot varied widely. In the better cases, timely action was taken to set up the programme and involve partner agencies at an early stage. This led to good early recruitment, meeting or in some cases exceeding the targets set. Strong central management of the programme appears to be the most successful approach. In Lancashire, the LSC entered into discussions and informal arrangements with Business Link in the summer before the launch of ETP in September. Business Link recruited staff to administer, manage and run the programme in June. This team received well-planned and thorough induction and training, ensuring an effective start and good recruitment. Other LSCs were very late in implementing the programme and are unlikely to reach recruitment targets in the current year. In one area, at two months into the pilot, no contracts had been issued to providers, and collaboration between the managing agent and the scheme partners was not yet established. In another area, training was slow to start because of a hold up with contracts at a crucial stage. The process by which providers are vetted contributed to the delay. Uncertainty on the part of providers about the long-term future of the pilot led to reluctance on their part to hire staff, delaying recruitment of learners to the programme.

10.6 Many providers in areas which entered the pilot in late 2004 were concerned that they would not meet their recruitment targets by the end date set, August 2005. This deadline has now been extended, but it was not clear how the period from August 2005 to March 2006 will be funded. Those local LSCs that have generated a demand among a widening employer base are concerned about what happens if they have to close entry to the training later this year. This frustrates employers

who have identified employees who would benefit from training, and providers who have learners waiting to be signed up. The local LSCs' caution about the continuity of funding has inhibited the recruitment of employers and learners.

10.7 Since the beginning of the pilots, the LSC national office has collected monthly and quarterly figures on completion rates against targets. **However, local LSCs rarely communicate achievement targets well across the provider network.** Providers are also confused about the local LSCs' expectations in terms of achievement. In a single LSC area, different providers quoted the LSC requirement as 60 per cent, 70 per cent, 80 per cent and 97 per cent achievement. In another area the local LSC is reportedly content to ask everyone to achieve 80 per cent pass rates on everything by August 2005, with no differentiation by sector, qualification or the initial skills of the learners.

10.8 **LSCs and managing agents place too little emphasis on achievement and retention rates.** Providers see the number of starters as the only important performance target they have to achieve. There is little analysis of success rates by provider, area of learning or start group. Some learners make very rapid progress and some progress much more slowly, but the reasons for this disparity are not sufficiently well analysed or used for future planning.

10.9 Few learners have progressed beyond an NVQ at level 2. In some areas, learners have been funded by ETP to achieve level 2, but have been able to upgrade their qualification to level 3 at relatively little cost to the employer. Some providers in Wiltshire have accessed other funding to support a few learners on level 3 programmes. In one private training provider, 275 learners completed the level 2 NVQ, of whom 34 (12 per cent) progressed to level 3. Several of them were promoted once they had achieved the level 2 and could obtain the required supervisory evidence for the level 3 qualification. For most ETP learners, however, their job roles do not easily provide evidence for an NVQ at level 3, there is no funding available, and they have not received guidance which might encourage them to progress.

10.9 **There is some inflexibility by local LSCs in approving providers.** National employers that want to extend training across their entire workforce have found that some local LSCs will not contract with their preferred training provider even if this provider has delivered training in another region, has a good track record, and has effective links with the employer. **There appears to be inconsistency among regional LSCs and a failure to adopt good practice models nationally.**

10.10 The coherence of management arrangements for the pilot is an important factor in their success. In areas such as Leicestershire, all activity from recruitment through to completion is managed in-house by the LSC. The ETP team

consists of a mixture of permanent staff and secondees from partner organisation such as the IAG service, Business Link and the TUC. They are managed as a single team by an ETP project manager. Management of the programmes is strong. Partnerships have taken time to become established in some areas, although in many areas they now work well. Where links between the partners are fragile the service to employers quickly suffers.

10.11 ETP is promoted very effectively in some areas.

Individual colleges and training providers have been among the best at this, often by using their existing employer base to reach new learners. It should be recognised that, while this approach may pull in large numbers of learners, it is sometimes from sectors such as care, which are already well represented and where employers have a legal obligation to provide training. Employers generally praise the advice and guidance given by training providers. New employers that come to the programme are, in most cases, visited by an independent broker, but they tend to be less aware of the full range of training opportunities available through ETP. The more general marketing effort by LSCs and their partners may result in a wider range of industry sectors taking up the offer, including some which are new to government-funded training.

10.12 The marketing of the programme to employers and learners is, however, not always effective.

In the poorer areas, marketing strategies have made insufficient impact on local businesses that are not already engaged in training. Some LSCs have not yet dealt with this problem despite it being a core objective of the programme. In one area, a telephone hotline had only received 40 enquiries some months into the programme. In other areas, awareness of the programme has grown over a year or more and there is now a good response to the marketing effort. The local LSC in Lancashire acted positively to ensure that learners in all parts of the county have access to ETP. It targeted promotional activities in areas where recruitment was poor and has seen significant improvements. Agencies charged with responding to enquiries generally do so quickly and efficiently, although in a small number of cases their follow-up to this initial discussion has been poor. In one area a large number of employers received a brokerage visit and were promised that an approved training provider would contact them shortly to discuss training. Due to a breakdown in communication between the partners involved in the pilot, this has not happened and employers feel let down.

10.13 There are good examples of ETP widening participation and engaging new employers. Some providers have used the ETP initiative to approach new employers in their specialist occupational areas. For example, Huddersfield Technical College has been particularly active in targeting new businesses. They reviewed their existing employer database and carried out a telemarketing exercise to identify

businesses not currently engaged in training. This work proved effective. Early indications show that a number of new companies will participate in ETP, and have also expressed interest in level 3 and 4 provision for their more senior staff.

10.14 There are some examples of good practice in the local LSCs' management of providers. In Kent, providers report that the LSC has worked hard to reduce bureaucracy and improve communication. In Northumberland, formal partnership meetings have been established involving providers, Pathways Business Link and the LSC. In West Yorkshire, two consortia - one of colleges and one of work-based learning providers - are managing effectively referrals for the ETP. Business Link operates a call centre and refers enquires to both networks. A provider is selected from each network that is most appropriately placed geographically and has the experience and knowledge of training in a particular area of learning. The employer selects which provider they wish to work with. This method of selection is successful and prevents employers being inundated by providers pitching for work. The providers think the process is fair. In Leicester, the local LSC has used the ETP programme to strengthen the understanding of providers, particularly colleges, about what goes on in the workplace and to encourage them to be more flexible in meeting employers' needs. This approach is working well. It is developing an ethos of customer service across the provider network alongside a pragmatic approach to offering only what can be delivered.

10.15 Although the brokerage system generally works well, it does have some weaknesses. Some providers feel that the Business Link brokerage system is unsatisfactory because the interviewers do not have sufficient subject knowledge to give consistent messages to employers and learners. In most areas it is working well. In Lancashire, employers and providers speak highly of the support they have received from Business Link in setting up the ETP. Applications have been processed quickly and supportively through a sensible application of the guidelines. This has resulted in good recruitment against headline targets and across a range of sectors.

10.16 There is some inadequate monitoring of health and safety and equality of opportunity at work. Most training providers are working with new employers on the ETP programmes, some of which are unaware of the provider's responsibility to monitor arrangements for workplace health and safety and equality for the enrolled learners. Several providers have not carried out systematic and formal checks in these areas.

Good practices - Innovative and flexible use of different funding streams

In Lancashire, Business Link has developed partnerships and sought funding to add value to ETP. For example, it successfully bid for ESF funding for a project to support learners who are progressing

from a level 2 NVQ to a level 3 in the same area of learning. A partnership with Jobcentre Plus will enable learners who begin an NVQ at level 2 while unemployed to transfer to ETP when they get a job. Similar integration is also being carried out in Essex. In one example, ESF funding is used to develop ICT skills, then ETP funds progression to an NVQ delivered at work.

11. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

- high degree of satisfaction among employers and employees
- good integration of ETP-funded training into in-house programmes
- inflexibility of funding rules inhibits some learners
- highly enthusiastic employers
- over-burdensome bureaucratic procedures inhibits some employers
- highly appreciative and enthusiastic learners
- good learner support

11.1 Training very much meets employers' needs. Many SMEs can point to its direct effect on their business effectiveness, such as improved customer service or better production rates. One employer in Lancashire, whose employees are working towards business improvement techniques, reports that this qualification has contributed to a 95 per cent improvement in productivity over recent months. Employers value ETP in terms of the skills development of their staff. The fact that nearly all training is given flexibly, often on employers' premises, is much appreciated, as are the skills of the trainers. Their ability to see the business needs of the employers is crucial. The fact that the training is free is very significant, especially to SMEs that could not afford the training otherwise.

11.2 Most learners are more than satisfied with the training provision. Almost all are enthusiastic about the responsiveness of providers and the convenience of having training at work. Learners find it easy to relate the training to their role in the workplace and the fact that they can apply knowledge immediately. This indicates the success of work done by assessors at the outset to identify the range of tasks performed by each learner. Learners particularly value the flexibility of the programme, and the ability to use evidence from their daily tasks. Many learners report improved self-esteem, confidence and understanding of their work. They also consider that they have better career opportunities, more job satisfaction and generally feel more valued by their organisation. Gaining an award is important to them.

11.3 Employers very much welcome the training opportunity. They particularly like working with providers who take time to understand their needs and modify the style of delivery accordingly. Some, for example, are keen for training to take place on their own premises, using their own equipment, so that new skills are developed in house and all staff are aware of the training on offer; others prefer training to take place away from work to minimise disruption and, in some cases, to make learners feel more 'special'. Employer satisfaction is highest where the training provider has worked to fully

understand an employer's business objectives. In one case of good practice, an employer was anxious to rectify a weakness in its Investors in People report about the scarcity of development opportunities for staff in certain departments. The training provider took this into account and offered an appropriate range of courses to meet this need. Another employer was looking for greater flexibility among its shop-floor workforce and the training provider offered a selection of appropriate technical qualifications to broaden their skills.

11.4 Training providers' staff generally give good advice to employers. Employers are particularly pleased with the information and guidance they get at the initial stage. Assessors develop good working relationships with learners and employers. They are prepared to visit at convenient times and carry out observations and assessments with minimum disruption. Many employers state that the availability of funding is enabling them to raise the skills of their workforce more rapidly. It is having a clear impact in helping industry to meet legislative training requirements, such as those in care work. Where training providers include short-course qualifications in the programme, such as those in first aid, lifting and handling, training for trainers, food hygiene and personal skills, this is of real benefit. Many of these skills are needed for a job but they are not included in the NVQ. An improved understanding by employees of health and safety at work is also a major gain for many businesses. Most employers report a significant improvement in their employees' confidence and motivation when they gain nationally accredited qualifications, and that this often has an impact on productivity. There are many examples of improvement, including a public house owner who is working towards the team leadership NVQ at level 2 who held team meetings for the first time and generated many good ideas for the business; care workers who now give elderly residents choices about their care; and production workers who feel empowered to question the processes they use and make suggestions for improvement. Providers feel positive about ETP as it has raised the general profile of training for the workforce and often results in a 'spin-off' demand for other forms of training to cover the entire workforce.

11.5 As the ETP programme becomes established, some employers are making it an integral part of their staff development strategy. A call centre in East London has incorporated its training provider's 'introduction to the NVQ' session into their induction for all new employees. Managers of a manufacturing company in Wiltshire are planning staff training related to implementation of a new production line. Some of the existing production line staff, who have completed the level 2 NVQ, have been selected to do a 'train the trainer' course. These staff will become part of the team that trains staff on the new production line.

11.6 Employees are not receiving sufficient benefit from IAG services. Most providers have done their own marketing and sales work to recruit learners to ETP. In some cases, this results in employers being aware of only a narrow range of programmes. Several areas started the pilot without IAG provision being in place, and in no case was IAG available to learners at the start of their programme. In a few cases, younger learners are taking NVQ programmes through the ETP route even though they meet the criteria for an apprenticeship. The ETP route enables them to avoid taking key skills tests, and to obtain the NVQ more quickly, but may not be in their best interest in the long term.

11.7 Some learners' needs are not being met. For some, the level 2 NVQ does little to raise their technical understanding or expertise. A more specialised vocational qualification would be more appropriate, but there are doubts about eligibility for funding. Many workers in the health service do not qualify for the scheme because they have been recruited from non-European Union (EU) countries. Some ESOL learners who are EU citizens are too highly qualified, for example nurses and other professionals, although they do have language needs. Many learners are aware of progression opportunities to a level 3 NVQ but there is no funding for them to move on. They are unsure whether their existing job role will provide relevant training and assessment opportunities. Furthermore, eligibility rules for ETP also deny many potential learners the opportunity to gain a qualification in a new profession. (see Ford case study)

11.8 Employers generally see ETP as a major improvement to the provision of government-funded training. Nevertheless, attitudes to the wage subsidy vary widely. For some employers it is vital, for others it is almost irrelevant. For many, its critical effect is in enabling the widening of participation. A large employer with an established history of workforce training was emphatic that the effect of the wage compensation is not on the nature of training, since this would be done anyway, but on its scale. Without substantial wage support the company could only afford to support small numbers of learners each year. On the other hand, local LSC staff and trainers report that, once training has begun, employers' focus moves to quality and flexibility rather than the wage compensation. The structure of payments means that smaller companies are the chief winners. Many of them feel that the wage subsidy, combined with the free training, is a major factor in allowing them to continue with training. Very small enterprises find it difficult to release staff even with compensation. In one that employs three specialist printing staff, for example, arranging cover for the trainee screen printer is especially hard.

11.9 Inspectors found that employers are using the scheme to increase the amount of training delivered, and to extend it to groups of workers who would not have received accredited

training before. One result has been a reported improvement in team building, morale, and normal operational practice. For example, an employer in the security industry was convinced that the standard of service provided by security guards had improved as a result of the additional training they received. Many companies supported the aims of the pilot through extra activities, such as award ceremonies to celebrate the success of those completing the programme, or, in some cases, cash bonuses for achievement. Employers are very pleased with the ETP and comment on how the government and the LSC have listened to what is going on in the workplace. Even where the training would have been offered in any case, ETP funding has enabled more learners to benefit.

11.10 Most employers support their learners well. They allow their employees time to work directly with assessors in the workplace and are clear about their responsibilities to allow learners time to study during working hours. One employer, as well as giving learners time during the working week to train and be assessed, paid learners if they wanted to attend off-the-job training in their own time. There are, however, employers that do not allow learners any time to study or to prepare portfolio evidence at work. These learners do most of their NVQ work at home. They are given too few managed opportunities to discuss and develop their NVQ work with colleagues. A very few learners felt that employers had pressured them to take part in ETP and this did not motivate them initially, although some came to enjoy the experience.

11.12 In some areas, LSC staff feel that wage compensation is a good sales tool in theory, but disappointing in practice. A number of factors contribute to this: employers rarely get more than 50 per cent of the agreed cost, payment is slow and there is confusion over the rules. The information required by the LSC in order to claim the wage subsidy is seen by some employers to be unnecessarily intrusive. There were examples of this information being accessed by employees, which has caused some friction. It is not sufficiently clear who has to provide an audit record for the employer to claim the wage subsidy. The learner eligibility rules are also sometimes a problem, with many ineligible learners not identified until quite late in the process. This can be particularly irksome to employers who want whole teams to receive training. Some providers have proved adept at accessing funding from different sources or combining commercial and government-funded learners from the same employer into one group to circumvent some of these problems. Others use the wage subsidy to fund training for ineligible employees alongside the funded learners so that they can offer the same development opportunities to the whole workforce. In Kent, where there is no wage compensation, employers report that this is a barrier to participation although they are very supportive of the learning. Even in very supportive workplaces it is sometimes not possible to give learners time off to study and they complete their work in their own time.

In some workplaces the learning sessions are cancelled due to staff shortages or sickness.

11.13 The funding methodology also causes concern to providers. They say that the requirement to count learners' hours penalises them for being learner-centred and flexible. For instance, a fast learner will not necessarily need the number of guided hours to succeed, whereas a learner with literacy problems may need far more. Some providers feel that making 50 per cent of the funding dependent on successful completion by the learner within the specified timeframe represents a high risk factor for their business. Their response is to recruit only those learners whom they feel have a very good chance of achievement. It is also influencing the type of award offered. The team leadership award is very popular as it can be achieved in 12 weeks, but other qualifications which take longer may not be offered.

Ford Motors, Dagenham/ Metcom Training

Metcom Training started their programme with Ford in April 2004. Ford had previously had a poor experience with NVQ programmes, which they believed had added little to learners' existing skills. However, the fact that ETP was fully funded persuaded them to talk to Metcom about a customised scheme for their workers. They selected an area of the factory with significant production problems to pilot the scheme. Metcom went into the factory to observe and analyse the need. They identified a lack of consistency in practice on the production line. One shift would make adjustments which another would reverse. Whereas other parts of the factory were equipped with data recording equipment, in this area machinery was older so little monitoring data was collected for analysis. Metcom recommended that sustainable improvements would only come from an understanding of the reasons behind the working practices, and that the Business Improvement Techniques qualification was the most appropriate for the workers in this area.

The company asked for 20 volunteers from the team. They did not select on the grounds of ability or previous experience of training. The project began by looking at the physical environment. The floor was slippery and dirty. The skylights were covered in soot. During the shutdown, these were both replaced. Learners measured an improvement of 161% in the light levels in the factory, and the repainted floor was safer and also lighter. Morale in the team immediately improved and they began to investigate why productivity was so uneven. Data collection was vital to this, and they devised a series of spreadsheets. By recording a range of factors weekly they began to plot trends and identify production bottlenecks. Then they looked at causes. Lapses in procedure could be spotted quickly and dealt with before they became a problem. Some of the problems did not originate in this team at all, and could now be explained. The whole working pattern has been structured and streamlined. Learners learned to build on their experiences. After isolating the wrong machine, one person identified a hazard: nobody else would have realised it as there was no external sign on an isolated machine. This has now been rectified. One learner has saved time and frustration for all by devising a 'shadow box' for a set of tools attached to a working area. Previously when workers needed a tool they had to get it from their own toolbox in a cupboard well away from the place where it was needed. Another learner has devised large warning signs to alert others to slip hazards.

One year from the start, none of the learners have dropped out. 75% have already achieved and the rest are due to complete soon. Productivity has risen significantly and the staff absence rate has almost halved. Team members now set their own targets and agree them with management. This is a very empowering experience for them because they have complete ownership of their work. People take responsibility without being told to do things. They are proud to act as a team and consider the effects of their actions on others. The production area has been transformed and has become an example of good practice which all the other areas are trying to emulate.

These results have been achieved by skilled assessors working on site in close and trusted partnership with the company. Supervisors are impressed by the rigour and thoroughness of assessment. Learners have developed confidence from knowing that they are doing the job correctly, and the reasons why they do it that way. They take pride

in their work. They ask questions instead of avoiding blame and identify and solve problems as they arise.

As a result of the success of the training, Ford and Metcom have just begun a comprehensive upskilling programme for 2,500 people in the factory over a 3 year period with support from the LSC. They are training 70 work based assessors to support level 2 and 3 business improvement techniques. This is a very successful partnership that has engaged closely with the employer in a holistic way.

APPENDIX I

Training providers visited:

A & R, Huddersfield
A4E Consult
Academy Day Nurseries and
Childcare Ltd
Access Training centres
Accrington and Rossendale College
at Reading Buses (RPT)
Achievement Training
Age Concern Training, Leicester
All Care Training, Rossendale
Anne Clark Ltd, Ely
Avenue Training, Leicester
Avon Vale Training, Chippenham
Beneast., Lancashire
BEST Wakefield
Blackburn College
Bluewater
CATS, St Ives, Cambridgeshire
CDC Training Limited, London
CKW Training Associates Ltd
Cannon Hygiene, Lancaster
Care Academy, Lancaster
Care Sector Trust, Blackburn
Catten College, Essex
City of Wolverhampton College
Crown College, Essex
DC Training, Yorkshire
Dartington Tech
Derwentside Training
Durham County Council
East Durham and Houghall College
EMS Training, Yorkshire
Equity Shoes Ltd, Leicester
Ethos Training
Focus Training
Fosse Healthcare Ltd, Leicester
Genitt IT Training, Bracknell
Glenfields Training
Hargreaves Training Services,
Yorkshire
Hartlepool College
Hillside Contracts Ltd ,
Leicestershire
Huddersfield College
IPS International, Rochester
In-Comm Business Services,
W.Midlands
Isle College
JHP Leeds
Jigsaw
Keighley College
Kent Adult Education Service,
Sittingbourne
Kent Qualified (business
administration)
Key Training, London EC2
Lancaster Adult College
Lancaster and Morecambe College
Learning for Business Ltd,
Derbyshire
Learn to Care, Canterbury
Leicester College.
Leicester Engineering Training
Group Ltd.
Leicester Footwear Ltd.
Life Force Training
MDS Training, Leicester
Mars Knitwear Ltd , Leicester
Manchester Adult Education
Services
Medway Nursing, Kent
Metcom training Essex
NFT (storage and distribution)
Derbyshire
New College, Swindon
North Trees NHS Trust
Northern Training, Great Harwood
Oldham College
Olympic Training, Chippenham
Omnia Driving Ltd, Derbyshire
PACT (childcare charity)
Pendle Training, Nelson
Performance through People,
W.Midlands
Preston College, Preston
Profile Partnership
Protech Training, W.Midlands
Protocol Skills, Maidstone
PTS Ltd
Skillfast, Leicester
Star consultancy
Start Training, Manchester
Tameside College
TADS Training Ltd, Melksham
TNG Options, Leicester
TRACKSS
Training for Today, Bolton
Training 2000 Ltd, Blackburn
Training Dynamix
Training West Lancashire (
Skelmersdale College)
V T Plus Training, Chorley
Wakefield College
West Kent College, Tonbridge
(Care)
Witham Training, Essex

APPENDIX II

Employers visited:

9 Grace Road Ltd.
Akzo Nobel, Darwen
Aldbourn Nursing Home,
Marlborough
Alnwick School
Alston Pre-applied Fastener
Services Ltd, Preston
Ambirad Ltd., Dudley
Ash Cottage Rest Home
Autoguide Equipment Ltd, Calne
BIJU Ltd, (The Home Help Agency),
Lancaster
Blackpool Transport Services
Bosal UK Ltd, Preston
Bowland Foods Preston
Bondcare Spinney, Lancashire
Brownhills Nursing home
Carewatch Forest, Essex
Chantry Residential Home,
Credton, Devon
Clitheroe Residential Home
Crudden Property Services,
Salford
Conifer Lodge, Wisbech
William Cook, Yorkshire
DE Pharmaceuticals
Deceuninck Ltd, Swindon
Durham County Council
Equity Shoes Ltd.
Fletchers Timber, Yorkshire
Focus Training, Plymouth
Fosse Healthcare Ltd.
Foxes Biscuits, Yorkshire
Great Western Hospital, Swindon
Harris Dental Practice
Hackney Social Services
Hazelwood Home Care, Bacup
Health Protection Agency
Hexcel Composites, Duxford
Homebase Distribution, Swinton
Hygrade Foods, Chippenham, Wilts
Hyde Lea, Bolton
Hill House
Hillside Contracts Ltd.
IMI Cornelius, Yorkshire
JWB Ltd, Wolverhampton
Lancashire Care NHS Trust,
Blackpool
Lawood Care Home, Burnley
LCC Engineering Services
Lifeline Project, Manchester
Little Sisters of the Poor
London Borough of Redbridge
] Maintrain Leeds
Kerry Foods, Cheshire
Mars Knitwear
Middletons Catering Equipment,
Willenhall
Mobile Care, Melksham
Moorleigh Retirement Home
Morpeth Caterers
North Tees NHS Trust
Oaklands Nursing Home, Oldham
Officer's Club
Open Door Marketing
Park Cakes, Oldham
Plymouth Care Services
QC Supplies
QLM retail store
RMC Concrete Products Ltd
Derbyshire
Ropmford Tenpin Bowling
WC Rowe, Cornwall
Roselands, Royton
Royal Castle Hotel
Senior Aluminium systems,
Yorkshire
Specsavers Opticians, Wisbech
Staples, Huntingdon
Sunterra Europe, Lancaster
TS Tech UK Ltd, Swindon
Travis Perkins
Tregowan Lodge
UBU Ltd. Manchester
Underhill Residential Home
Victoria Residential Home,
Burnley
Viridor LTD, Yorkshire
Woodfield Grange Nursing Home
Halifax
XR Training, Cambridgeshire

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