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Estyn

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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Training for the social care sector
in work-based learning
and further education

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The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local education authorities (LEAs);
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ LEAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk

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Introduction

- 1 The 2004-2005 annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales had highlighted the relatively poor standards achieved by learners on training programmes in Health, Public Services and Care delivered by work-based learning providers.
- 2 Discussion of the report took place in the meeting of the Education and Lifelong Committee of the National Assembly for Wales in January 2006. As a result, committee members requested that Estyn undertake further work in this area to identify the issues surrounding the poor performance of this sector.
- 3 As a result and as a part of its 2006-2007 remit work for the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), Estyn undertook a survey of the quality of training for the care sector delivered by publicly funded work-based learning providers. The survey also included care sector training delivered by further education colleges in Wales.
- 4 In undertaking this survey Estyn was concerned not to duplicate other research work, exercises, activities and reporting either currently underway or recently completed.

These include:

- Department of Education Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) Consultation on Social Care Sector (Staff in Direct Care Settings) Skills Review 2006 (www.wales.gov.uk).
- Care Council for Wales and ELWa (now DELLS) report in conjunction with Miller Research 2006, as part of the Sector Skills Review of Social Care.
- ELWa (now DELLS)/Care Council for Wales Social Care Sector Case Studies Research 2005 (www.miller-research.co.uk).
- Care Council for Wales Skills Foresight Plan for the Social Care Sector in Wales 2003 (www.ccwales.org.uk).
- Future Skills Wales, Future Skills Issues affecting Industry Sectors (Social Care Sector) in Wales 2000.
- ELWa (now DELLS) and Care Council for Wales Social Care Sector Case Studies Research prepared by Beaufort Research/Golley Slater 2005 (www.beaufortresearch.co.uk).
- The Qualification Framework for the Social Sector in Wales 2003 (www.ccwales.org.uk).

Context

- 5 The 'care sector' is complex and diverse. It covers a wide range of specialist occupational areas. For example, people may be contact workers for families and children, support workers helping adults with learning difficulties to lead independent lives in a supported environment, or domiciliary workers providing home support to elderly people living in their own homes. However, the majority of 'care' workers work in social care, in direct care settings, working with adults.
- 6 This report focuses on the achievement of learners who have embarked on a programme of publicly funded social care (direct care) training. Some of these learners do not currently work in the sector.
- 7 Health, Public Services and Care training comprises of a range of vocational and vocationally related qualifications. It also includes courses and subjects in different specialist areas including social care, health care, child care and education, play work, counselling, welfare studies, dental nursing, public services and housing.
- 8 There are many training routes and qualifications available for social care workers. Awards include National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Vocationally Related Qualifications. Appendix 1 includes an explanation of these awards.
- 9 The Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS), part of the Welsh Assembly Government, funds public education and training for NVQ and Vocationally Related Qualification 'care' courses in work-based learning providers and further education colleges.
- 10 Work-based learning providers generally deliver care-related NVQs. These form part of the 'framework' that learners are expected to attain in order to obtain their 'apprenticeship' qualification. As part of the apprenticeship framework learners must also attain key skill qualifications and a technical certificate.
- 11 Generally further education colleges deliver a wide range of care-related Vocationally Related Qualifications, such as National Diplomas and Certificates. They also deliver a wide range of care-related NVQs.

Background

- 12 A desk review of existing Estyn inspection reports forms the basis of the evidence for this report. It includes an overview of Estyn's inspection findings and contains an analyses of the grades awarded for the inspection of Health, Public Services and Care in work-based learning providers and further education colleges; highlights Health, Public Services and Care; issues identified in the reports; and the recommendations for future action. With the introduction of Estyn's Common Inspection Framework (CIF) (See Appendix 2 for detail) in the inspection of Further Education Colleges (2002) and in Work-Based Learning providers (2004) the review covered inspection reports from the CIF introduction date for each sector through to the end of 2006.
- 13 During this period Estyn inspected seven work-based learning providers (14% of all work-based learning providers) and seven further education colleges (under a quarter of further education colleges).

Main findings

- 14 Numbers of learners undertaking Health, Public Services and Care programmes varies greatly between providers, both in work-based learning and further education. For example in the period to which this paper refers, the number of learners currently on programme in WBL varies between about 20 and 400. There does not appear to be a correlation between the number of Health, Public Services and Care learners training with a provider and the grade awarded for learners' standards. There is no evidence to show that learners are more or less successful in small or large providers.

Health, Public Services and Care training – work-based learning providers

- 15 Apprentices training with work-based learning providers need to attain the apprenticeship framework, including a technical certificate and key skills qualifications, to be successful.
- 16 Although learners' achievement of skills and knowledge are satisfactory or better, a large number of learners undertaking training with WBL providers are not attaining the full qualification requirements in their apprenticeship frameworks.
- 17 Occasionally, in some work-based learning providers, a higher percentage of learners attain a NVQ than the framework qualification. This could indicate a problem with learners attaining the technical certificate and key skills qualifications. However, this pattern was not consistent in all WBL providers. Overall, too many learners are not attaining the key skill or technical certificate elements of their apprenticeship framework.
- 18 Learners who have a good knowledge base, gained from previously studying Vocationally Related Qualifications, often attain their apprenticeship framework more quickly, and are more successful in their programme than other learners. They may already have the underpinning knowledge gained from their Vocationally Related Qualification, and previous key skills study. However, the speed and quality of their progress is still highly dependant on the quality, frequency and appropriateness of assessment.
- 19 Generally, work-based learning providers and employers do not give enough recognition to learners' prior knowledge, experience and achievement of recently attained Vocationally Related Qualifications linked to social care, during their apprenticeship programme. They do not take enough advantage of, and build on, learners' existing qualifications, knowledge, understanding and skills.
- 20 Two of the three WBL providers re-inspected because they were awarded grades below Estyn's quality threshold (grade 3), have improved their grades to above the quality threshold.

- 21 Where re-inspections showed an improved grade this was in the main due to improved attainment rates of learners through providers changing their methods of delivery and assessment. Such methods include making sure that key skills and technical certificates are integrated as part of the apprenticeship.
- 22 Learners following apprenticeship programmes with WBL providers were more likely to attain their frameworks when they had appropriate, structured training and learning experiences and opportunities that extended their knowledge and understanding. These experiences were equally successful whether they took place in their workplace or on the premises of the WBL provider.

Health, Public Services and Care training – further education colleges

- 23 All further education colleges performed better than the work-based learning providers with grades awarded above the quality threshold. Learners' performance in attaining their learning goals in further education colleges is more consistent than in WBL providers.
- 24 Learners following NVQ college programmes are normally more successful in achieving their learning aims than those following NVQ-based apprenticeship programmes in work-based learning. Generally, learners need only attain their main qualification, either a Vocationally Related Qualification or a NVQ to be successful¹.

Health, Public Services and Care training – general issues

- 25 Where Health, Public Services and Care is graded 3 or below, the overarching reason is that the attainment of learners who left their programmes in the previous one-year period was not good enough.
- 26 Current learners' achievement, progress and development of skills were at least satisfactory in all of the providers inspected. They were often very good, and sometimes outstanding.
- 27 Learners develop satisfactory, and often very good, skills and high levels of occupational competence and practical skills during their training.
- 28 Learners' attainment rates are generally better where assessors dedicated to a learner regularly carry out assessments. Their attainment was also better where assessors used the assessment visit to support training and learning as well as assessing competence.
- 29 The lower level of written information and lack of research skills, particularly of level three learners, was often due to the 'competency' requirement of NVQs. Learners are required to prove their competence to attain their NVQ. Teachers encourage them to attain their NVQ, but not always to develop and broaden their knowledge and understanding further.

¹ Many learners in further education may be studying additional qualifications, such as key skills. However, these are accredited separately from their main qualification.

- 30 Some NVQ teachers in both WBL and further education situations saw themselves as 'assessors'. They did not perceive themselves to be deliverers of education and training, with a role that included challenging learners and encouraging them to improve and progress.
- 31 Almost without exception, learners were performing well in the workplace. This included those full-time further education learners who undertook work experience as an integral part of their programme.

Recommendations

Those stakeholders involved with ensuring the quality and funding of learning provision and training for the social care (direct care) sector in Wales need to:

- R1 undertake a further review of learners' standards in, and the quality and management of, social care (direct care) provision;
- R2 further develop strategies to raise learners' retention and attainment rates, particularly in work-based learning;
- R3 improve strategies for NVQ assessment, to make sure that assessment activities are regular and supported by wider learning experiences;
- R4 improve strategies to make sure that apprentices and other NVQ learners have appropriate, structured training and learning experiences that fully support the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding, and that learning experiences link practice with theory;
- R5 increase ease of entry into social care employment as a (part) qualified worker by enabling potential employees with an appropriate Vocationally Related Qualification to have recognition and accreditation for their existing skills, knowledge and understanding; and
- R6 improve providers' and employers' understanding of Vocationally Related Qualifications, and their recognition of learners' prior social care experience and knowledge when they enter social care employment.

Review of inspections of work-based learning and further education colleges delivering social care courses

Work-based learning providers

- 32 Between September 2004 and August 2006, Estyn inspected Health, Public Services and Care in seven work-based learning providers with the following profile of grades awarded for Key Question 1 of CIF.

Profile of inspection grades for Key Question 1 in the learning area Health, Public Services and Care in work-based learning

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Number of providers	0	0	3	2	2
Percentage of providers	0%	0%	42%	29%	29%

- 33 The unsatisfactory provision in three of the four providers has since been re-inspected. The remaining grade 5 provision has not yet been re-inspected.

Profile of inspection grades, including re-inspection grades, for Key Question 1 for the learning area Health, Public Services and Care in work-based learning providers between September 2004 and August 2006.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Number of providers	0	1	4	1	1
Percentage of providers	0%	14%	58%	14%	14%

- 34 Over 90%, of the learners in all of the WBL providers were modern apprentices (MA) or foundation modern apprentices (FMA) undertaking NVQ level 2 or 3 in Care, or NVQ level 3 Promoting Independence. Approximately 7% of the learners were undertaking NVQ level 4 in Care. The remaining 3% of learners were following other programmes, usually preparatory programmes, to help prepare them to undertake an apprenticeship programme.

Percentage of Health, Public Services and Care learners on work-based learning programmes

	Learners following a modern apprenticeship or foundation modern apprenticeship programme that includes a care related NVQ at level 2 or 3	Learners following a care related NVQ at level 4	Learners following other Health, Public Services and Care programmes
Percentage of learners	90%	7%	3%

- 35 Of the learners on apprenticeship programmes, approximately 61% were following a MA programme, with 39% of learners following a FMA programme. Generally MAs follow a level 3 programme and FMAs follow a level 2 programme.

Percentage of learners following MA and FMA programmes

	Modern apprentices	Foundation modern apprentices
Percentage of learners following MA and FMA programmes	61%	39%

- 36 Nearly all learners had employment in settings related to social care. A small number of unemployed learners had work placements in social care settings that allowed them to work towards achieving a NVQ at level 2.
- 37 The number of learners on programme in the different providers at the time of the inspections ranged from 19 to almost 400.

The achievement of learners

- 38 In most providers, learners who were on programme at the time of the inspections were on target to achieve their qualifications within an appropriate length of time. The level of achievement, progress and skills development of current learners frequently gave a far more positive picture than the attainment of the previous cohort of learners, even in the low performing providers. Learners enter training at different levels and some may have the potential to be more successful than others. Nevertheless, it is concerning that a high percentage of learners fail to achieve either their qualification framework or the NVQ, even though evidence suggests that their work is at least satisfactory, and often good.
- 39 Current learners were reaching reasonable to good and sometimes very good, standards in their vocational knowledge, understanding and skills. They had good standards of written work and good practical skills. Learners in the grade four and five provision were also achieving a good range of occupational skills and applying good standards of conduct in their workplace activities. Providers received grade 4 or 5 if the framework attainment of the previous cohort of learners was poor, even if the current cohort of learners was achieving well.
- 40 Learners made the best progress in all elements of their programme, including the key skills qualifications and the technical certificate, when teachers introduced them to key skills and the technical certificate as an integral part of their qualification framework early on in their programme.
- 41 Learners gained more knowledge and a better understanding of principles of conduct and good practice when teachers introduced them to the technical certificate early in their programme. This helped them to progress better with the NVQ.
- 42 Most learners had opportunities to gain additional relevant qualifications, although these were often through their employer, rather than the work-based learning provider. Learners who completed their programmes and attained their qualifications were generally more successful because of the support that they received when both the employer and provider were involved in the learners' training, and when they worked in partnership to improve the learning experience. Learners who had regular visits and assessments by their teachers were more successful.

- 43 As a result of their training all learners benefited from an increased self-awareness and more work satisfaction. Mature workers, in particular, confirmed that undertaking a formal qualification helped them to gain confidence, both in their workplace and personally.
- 44 If teachers assessed learners' level of competence regularly, learners with an occupationally relevant Vocationally Related Qualification generally progressed more quickly through their apprenticeship programme
- 45 However, very few WBL providers took enough account of learners' previous knowledge and experience when they started their apprenticeship programme. Most learners accepted this situation because they understood that they needed to improve their practical job-related skills and prove their competence to be able to work well in the field. However, many felt they were repeating work, often at a lower level than they had previously studied.
- 46 Providers, employers and stakeholders appear to give little consideration to, or have a lack of understanding regarding, the appropriateness or relevance of Vocationally Related Qualifications, and their potential usefulness as a valuable 'stepping-stone' and introduction to social care NVQ programmes and social care employment.
- 47 Systems for 'mixing and matching' elements of vocational and vocationally related social care qualifications appear to be underdeveloped. Groups and individuals involved with social care qualifications and training seem to give little consideration to the potential for different types of qualifications to support each other. There appears to be little consideration given to the possibility of aligning qualifications where appropriate.
- 48 The number of learners who completed their programme within an appropriate length of time, and attained their full qualification framework, that is the NVQ, the technical certificate and the key skills qualifications, is poor in one quarter of the providers inspected (grade 4 and 5 provision). Only one quarter of the provision inspected was either good or very good.
- 49 In a number of the providers inspected, Health, Public Services and Care learners left their programme early. Nearly half of the learners who had left in the twelve month period prior to the inspection left with no formal qualification. However, at the time of the providers' re-inspections learners' attainment rates of the apprenticeship framework, the full NVQ and units of the NVQ had improved significantly. One of the providers has yet to be re-inspected.
- 50 At another provider with over 250 learners on programme at the time of their first inspection, over two-thirds of the learners had left in the twelve month period prior to the inspection without a part or full qualification. At the re-inspection, inspectors found that the number of learners on programme had increased to over 400 because of an increase in the provider's contract. Yet less than a fifth of the learners who had left their programme had attained their full framework and less than a third had attained their NVQ. Over half of the leavers achieved only units of the NVQ. Learners' rates of completion and attainment had shown very little improvement.

- 51 A number of learners who left their programmes early without gaining a full or part qualification were categorised as being in 'related employment'. It is not possible to ascertain whether they remained with the same employer or entered new employment in social care. This raises several questions. If learners remained in the same employment why did they not gain any part or full qualification? If they chose to discontinue their training, what were the reasons? If learners entered new employment why were they not able to complete their qualifications? Was this from choice or because training was unavailable?
- 52 The portfolios and written work of some level three and four learners are limited. They have basic in-depth study and research skills. These learners usually have sufficient evidence to meet assessment criteria as required by NVQs, but their work shows little depth of understanding and independent study.
- 53 Some assessors concentrate on assessing learners only. They do not take sufficient advantage of training opportunities and do not discuss learners' answers fully enough to extend their knowledge and understanding. Many assessors fail to link fully assessment with teaching, training and learning.
- 54 In some instances learners progress slowly, or fail to complete their qualification because teachers do not assess them often enough, their assessors are changed, their employers show little interest in the learning process, or their work patterns make it difficult to complete their qualification.
- 55 Sometimes learners leave their programmes early because providers have inadequate recruitment and selection procedures. Learners may be on inappropriate programme levels. Sometimes learners' poor attainment is because they are required to transfer between providers.

Further education colleges

- 56 Between September 2002 and August 2006 Estyn inspected Health, Public Services and Care in seven further education colleges. All grades awarded by Estyn inspectors for Key Question 1 were above the quality threshold of grade three.

Profile of inspection grades for Key Question 1 in the learning area Health, Public Services and Care in further education colleges between September 2002 and December 2006

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Number of colleges	1	4	2	0	0
Percentage of colleges	14%	57%	29%	0%	0%

Note: The learning area included the full range of programmes.

- 57 Currently, all 22 Further Education colleges in Wales offer programmes in Health, Public Services and Care. Estyn has inspected the learning area in just under one third of the further education colleges.

- 58 Two colleges delivered only NVQs. The NVQs related to social care qualifications included NVQs in Care at levels 2, 3 and 4, and NVQ level 3 Promoting Independence. All of the learners were studying part-time and were in related employment, such as residential homes for elderly people².
- 59 Three colleges delivered a wide range of social care Vocationally Related Qualifications to full-time and part-time learners. Vocationally Related Qualifications offered by the colleges included National Diplomas and Certificates, Advanced Certificates in Education (AVCE), General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) at Intermediate level, welfare studies and counselling courses. All full-time learners undertook work experience as an integral part of their course.
- 60 Two of these three colleges also had substantial NVQ provision in Care at levels 2, 3 and 4, and Promoting Independence at level 3. The third college had a small amount of NVQ provision³. Most, but not all of the learners on these programmes were employed in the social care sector.
- 61 Those learners who were not currently working in social care were studying mainly Vocationally Related Qualifications. Some were following NVQ programmes. Some part-time learners studying Vocationally Related Qualifications had employment in the social care sector.
- 62 The remaining two colleges offered only Vocationally Related Qualifications, either full-time or part-time. These included National Diplomas and Certificates, AVCE and GNVQ Intermediate.

The achievement of learners

- 63 Generally, learners achieved well. In all seven colleges most learners completed their vocational courses and attained their qualifications. They achieved good, and sometimes very good, standards in their written and oral work.
- 64 Most learners were achieving and progressing well and developing a good range of care-related skills. They displayed high standards of practical skills in their workplaces or work placements and had high levels of occupational competence.
- 65 In six of the seven colleges learners gained key skills qualifications in addition to their vocational programme. In five of the colleges learners used information communication technology well in their work.
- 66 In six of the colleges all learners gained additional qualifications or recognised certificates related to social care.
- 67 In two of the colleges learners whose first language was Welsh had good opportunities to develop bilingual skills. They also undertook work experience in bilingual settings.

² Numbers of learners are not available.

³ This college, however, had substantial NVQ provision in Care funded through WBL. This was not inspected at this time.

- 68 All learners developed a good knowledge and understanding of important professional principles and important care concepts. They could relate practical experiences well to their classroom studies and to their assignments. They used these experiences well to support their studies. They also used their theoretical studies well to improve their workplace practice and to further develop their workplace skills.
- 69 Learners reflected well on their professional practice and on how they could improve their practical and occupational skills. They also developed important skills that would help prepare them for future employment. They discussed professional issues confidently with work colleagues and fellow learners.
- 70 Many learners progressed to higher level qualifications and professional training, both within their existing college and in other institutions. Those in social care employment developed new skills and often moved to positions of responsibility where they were responsible for supervising other staff.
- 71 Learners gained a wide range of skills through their college courses and workplace activities. They were well motivated and participated fully in learning activities. Those in employment were often motivated to continue learning after they attained their qualification, which was very often their first recognised national qualification. Full-time learners developed good vocational skills during their periods of work experience.
- 72 Most learners developed confidence, both in undertaking their studies and in carrying out their practical work. They were highly motivated and planned their work well. They developed the ability to research topics themselves and to work well independently. They often became more confident in their ability. They also shared knowledge and experiences well with work colleagues and classmates.
- 73 Generally, there were very few issues of concern. Where concerns did arise they were mainly with regard to learners' attainment of their qualifications. Generally, if inspectors awarded grade 3 if not enough of the previous cohort of learners who started their course actually attained their social care qualification. This was generally, but not always, because they left their programme early.
- 74 In one college teachers did not formally assess learners' attainment in key skills. However, learners were developing these skills well through their vocational programme. In another college learners were not able to gain additional qualifications or certificates for short courses related to social care.
- 75 In a very few instances, mainly in one college, a few learners were not sufficiently engaged in their learning and were missing sessions. In the same college, and in one other college, teachers did not always link lessons to a professional context. Learners did not have enough opportunity to explore links between their theoretical work and practical experiences. They did not benefit enough from the professional experiences of teachers. Teachers did not focus enough on vocational aspects of the programmes. As a result, these learners did not develop their understanding of professional issues well enough.

- 76 In one college a few learners on level 1 and level 2 courses had difficulty understanding some difficult concepts related to social care issues. This was partly because of the limited professional experience of the teacher. In another college sometimes learners on level 3 courses were not challenged enough to further improve their standard of work. Some of these learners were not developing their research skills well enough.

Appendix 1

NVQs and Vocationally Related Qualifications

NVQs provide competence-based qualifications with an emphasis on assessment in the workplace. Built on national occupational standards and criteria NVQs have been formulated by regulatory authorities such as the Care Council for Wales, the Welsh arm of the Sector Skills Council for the social care sector.

Vocationally Related Qualifications are vocational qualifications. They provide learners with the relevant skills and knowledge needed for their chosen vocational area. They relate to employment and give learners the option to either train for a different career or to advance within their chosen occupation.

Vocationally Related Qualifications relate to national occupational standards. They focus more on the knowledge needed to progress within a particular vocational area than NVQs. Vocationally Related Qualifications may include periods of work experience which may be assessed.

The Care Council for Wales, as a Sector Skills Council, is responsible for regulating the social care workforce in Wales. It also determines what qualifications will be a requirement for the registration of social care workers. Generally, the Care Council for Wales recommends that the required qualifications for those working in social care (direct care) are appropriate care related NVQs.

Appendix 2

Estyn's Common Inspection Framework

Estyn's Common Inspection Framework and seven key questions focus on:

The achievements of learners

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

The quality of education and training provided

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Key Question 3: How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

The effectiveness and efficiency of leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Estyn awards grades for inspection learning areas for Key Question 1 (standards) only. Key Questions 2 to 7 are graded across the organisation as a whole. These grades do not refer to a specific learning area.

Key Question 1 focuses on how well learners achieve in the learning area being inspected. It sets out criteria for measuring how well learners achieve. This includes:

- learners' success in attaining their agreed learning goals: their achievement of knowledge, understanding and skills and their attainment of their qualifications;
- learners' progress in learning; and
- learners' development of personal, social and learning skills.

Appendix 3

Profile of FE and WBL inspection grades

Profile of inspection grades for Key Question 1, for the learning area Health, Public Services and Care, awarded to further education and work-based learning providers between September 2002 and August 2006, including re-inspection grades.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Number of providers	1	5	6	1	1
Percentage of providers	7%	36%	43%	7%	7%