

Nottinghamshire Training Network

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Health, public services and care
- Engineering and manufacturing technologies
- Construction planning and the built environment
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise
- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. Based in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) was established in March 2001 with the support of the Nottinghamshire LSC. The Network was formed to develop the capacity of the work-based learning sector through collaborative working and sharing best practice. It operates as a not for profit organisation under the strategic direction of a non-executive Board. Income is primarily generated through subscriptions and LSC contracts, the organisation also secure revenue funding through programmes such as the European Social Funding and Train to Gain that it manages on behalf of its members.
2. NTN has 15 staff including the general manager who is supported by a management team which includes a membership services manager, a learning and development manager, one employer engagement adviser and a financial controller. In addition there are five learning and development advisors, one literacy and numeracy tutor, one quality and contracts co-ordinator and one marketing co-ordinator. They are supported by two administrators.
3. At the time of the inspection there were a total of 695 learners on Train to Gain programmes. Of these, 91 were on health public services and care programmes, 94 were on engineering and manufacturing technologies programmes, 132 were on construction and the built environment programmes, 153 were on retail and commercial enterprise programmes, 79 were on preparation for life and work programmes and 146 were on business, administration and law programmes. Agriculture, horticulture and animal care and information and communication technology were not inspected due to low learner numbers. All programmes are funded by Nottinghamshire LSC.
4. A total of 19 subcontractors are involved in the NTN Train to Gain consortium of which 14 hold their own LSC contract. The table below identifies all subcontractors involved in the inspection and the five who do not hold an LSC contract are Central Education and Training (CET), Right Track Training, Educate, It2uition and Unoco. These providers were prioritised when planning the inspection visits and activities to be observed.
5. Nottinghamshire has a minority ethnic population of 4.5% compared with the national average of 11.3%. The rate of unemployment in Nottinghamshire is 5.2% which is in line with the national average. School pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grade C or above is 41.5% compared with the national average of 45.5%.

The table below shows the training providers who were involved in the inspection:

Consortium Members	Number of learners	Visited on inspection
Central Education & Training	69	*
Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency (NHTA)	3	
Strategic Training Solutions (STS)	27	*
Positive Outcomes	108	*
Right Track Training	15	
Prostart	35	*
Access Training	38	*
NETA	32	*
The Learning Zone	48	*
BTA	4	
It2ition	94	*
Charnwood	41	*
Educate	17	*
North Notts College	45	
Unoco	115	*
Platinum Training	3	
NE Group	1	

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Construction, planning and the built environment	Inadequate: Grade 4
Retail and commercial enterprise	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work	Inadequate: Grade 4
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. The provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is good. The provision in health, public services and care, retail and commercial enterprises and business, administration and law is satisfactory. The provision in construction, planning and the built environment and preparation for life and work is inadequate. Achievement and standards are satisfactory and the quality of provision is satisfactory. NTN's leadership and management are satisfactory as is equality of opportunity.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. NTN has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve. Identified gaps in the quality assurance of subcontractors work have started to be addressed with a recently introduced quality monitoring programme. The organisations quality improvement plan clearly identifies the organisations strengths and areas for improvement. Actions are well monitored. Slow progress of learners has been identified as a key area for improvement. NTN's quality improvement strategy is detailed and the organisation has recognised that more formal quality improvement arrangements are required to quality assure the learners' experience.
8. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is reasonably critical and the self-assessment process involves all NTN staff. Subcontractors and learners however, are not fully consulted. Most the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors were not proposed by the organisation. However, most grades proposed were judged to be accurate.

Key strengths

- Good reinforcement of workplace skills
- Good learner support
- Good involvement of staff in business planning
- Excellent communications with consortium members

Key areas for improvement

- The ineffective progress reviews
- The insufficient promotion and reinforcement of equal opportunities
- The insufficient monitoring of subcontractors

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Engineering and manufacturing technologies and retail and commercial enterprise courses have good success rates. Health, public services and care and business, administration and law courses have satisfactory success rates. Construction and the built environment and preparation for life and work courses have low success rates and learners are making slow progress. Some learners on retail and commercial enterprise courses are also making slow progress.
10. The tables shown for the 2007/08 period still have a further month for any additional qualifications to be entered. This could potentially increase the success rates for the 2007/08 years for all the sector subject area tables.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. The quality of the provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most training and learning occurs in the workplace with frequently planned assessor visits. Learners are developing good workplace skills and are well supported by both employers and assessors.
12. Assessment and internal verification arrangements are satisfactory overall. On-the-job assessment accounts for the majority of the learning experience. One-to-one coaching is effective and there is much effective direct observation of competencies being demonstrated at work. Assessors' visits are well planned in most areas.
13. Progress reviews are inadequate in most areas and lack detail. Reviews observed were brief and did not set meaningful and measurable targets. Reinforcement of key areas such as equality of opportunity and health and safety does not always take place.
14. Support for learners is good. They value the support they receive from their assessors and have very effective working relationships. Flexibility in arranging visits and being able to contact their assessors easily has enabled learners to complete their training programmes despite busy working schedules.
15. Induction and initial assessment are satisfactory with key areas such as equality of opportunity and health and safety being covered. Initial assessment is satisfactory with learners being placed on suitable and achievable training programmes. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in most areas. However, in some cases there is insufficient liaison with assessors to help learners complete their NVO when literacy and numeracy needs have been identified.

16. Programmes meet the needs of both learners and employers well with current workplace skills being reinforced and new skills developed. In most areas information, advice and guidance is satisfactory. However, not all learners are made aware of the progression opportunities available once they have completed their current qualification.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. NTN has fully involved staff in the business planning process. The board of directors provided a strategic plan in January 2008 for the company to work towards over the next three years. Staff have been involved in developing a business plan to support achievement of the strategic plan at a development day held away from the workplace. An external consultant facilitated the day with staff developing and agreeing the company development and business plan. The process has helped staff to gain individual ownership of the development and business plan and they are committed to achieving it.

18. NTN has a board of directors made up of prominent local business people. They work on a voluntary basis and play an important role in helping NTN to progress and grow the business. The board meet every two months to review the company and monitor its performance. Board members have taken the time to meet with each staff member at NTN and are each paired with a staff member to provide support and help if needed. Individual board members' different areas of business expertise has been used by NTN who use them to lead on various organisational projects. Effective and collaborative working partnerships between the board of directors and the staff at NTN are fully established. The board and managers have encouraged an open and friendly approach to working together. The NTN general manager has an annual review with each board member to discuss their contribution and update them on areas they could help to develop. Staff and directors have regular working lunches together to promote collaborative working and to encourage an open approach to improve the company.

19. NTN has developed excellent communications with consortium members. The members are sent regular bulletins by email informing them about LSC issues, contract changes and consortium members who are offering opportunities for training or partnership working. A members' website has been developed and contains a great deal of information including opportunities to share best practice, updates about performance and contractual issues. It also shares sector specific information and copies of the latest forms and procedures. The regular flow of information and opportunities is greatly appreciated by members who highly value the service.

20. Staff appraisals and staff development are satisfactory. All staff have an annual appraisal with their line manager. Individual's development needs are agreed and

these, together with performance targets are reviewed at three meetings per month with managers. Internal communications are satisfactory. Staff meetings are held monthly and staff receive information via e-mail and electronic bulletins.

21. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall. NTN has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which are updated regularly. An equality and diversity mapping exercise identifies the activity that takes place amongst consortium members and monitors their involvement. NTN maintains an equality and diversity activity log which identifies staff involvement and attendance at events. Equal opportunities and diversity training is part of induction for learners. There is no analysis and use of data to monitor progress of learners from minority groups or to inform management decisions for targeting of under-represented groups. Very little updating of subcontractor staff has taken place and although NTN staff are very aware of diversity issues, very little formal training has taken place. In some programme areas there is insufficient promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity and a lack of awareness of some subcontractor staff. Some learners have a very limited understanding of diversity issues. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.
22. Contractual arrangements with subcontractors are satisfactory. Suitable service level agreements are all signed, dated and regularly monitored for contract compliance. Consortium members' Train to Gain contracts have only recently started to have the quality of their provision monitored by NTN. The provision has been checked for compliance purposes in the past but the quality of any teaching, coaching and progress reviews has not been systematically monitored. The new NTN quality monitoring process is currently underdeveloped. It does not yet properly monitor teaching and learning or gather and analyse feedback from learners or employers. In addition, it has not yet been carried out with all subcontractors.
23. Data is not being sufficiently used to monitor and improve the provision. The management information system used by NTN stores information about learners ethnicity, age, gender and disabilities but the information is not being analysed by managers to monitor the representation of learner groups on programmes or on different contracts. Provider's performance is monitored against their agreed contracted profile, however, there is not yet a systematic process for accurately monitoring learner's progress to quickly identify if learners are progressing as expected. NTN identified the need to closely monitor this although they have not yet implemented suitable systems.
24. Awareness of NTN's role is not sufficiently understood by learners, employers and some subcontractor's staff. Many learners are not aware that NTN have overall responsibility for their programmes and would not know who to contact if they needed to complain. Most employers and some of the training provider's staff are not aware of NTN's role or the additional support that they can access through NTN for learners on programmes.

What learners like:

- Gaining a real sense of achievement
- 'It really helped having my assessor to support me'
- Gaining a qualification for the first time
- 'Learning new things even though I've been in my job for a long time'
- The one-to-one training
- Learning in the work environment
- 'I like the flexible learning and assessment of NVQs'
- Recognition of previous skills and knowledge
- The commitment of training staff
- Increased employability skills

What learners think could improve:

- 'Some questions on the NVQ are too repetitive'
- More assessor visits
- More time at work to get on with NVQ
- Better awareness of NTN
- Takes too long to obtain qualifications
- Increase variety of work required to meet NVQ standards
- More learning assignments to improve skills

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

25. There are 91 Train to Gain learners on health, public services and care programmes. Of these, 15 are undertaking NVQs in children's care, learning and development, 66 are on NVQ Level 2 and 10 are on NVQ Level 3 health and social care programmes. Currently NTN works with 10 subcontractors in this sector subject area. These include: Access Training, Bassetlaw Training Agency, Care Training, Central Education and Training, Educate, It2ition, JHP, The Learning Zone, Platinum Training and Right Track Training. A third of the learners on health care and early years programmes are registered with It2ition and numbers with the remaining subcontractors range from one to 17 learners. For the purpose of this inspection, the following subcontractors were visited; Access Training, Central Education and Training, Educate, It2ition and The Learning Zone.

26. Subcontractors deliver training and assessment in the workplace. All learners are employed and are in work settings which include childcare centres, day nurseries, residential care homes and domiciliary care.

Strengths

- Good development of workplace skills
- Good employer support for most learners

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective progress reviews

Achievement and standards

27. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates for 2006/07 were 88%, and 72% in 2007/08. Some learners are making slow progress against targets set in individual learning plans but assessment is holistic and most learners are making steady progress. This was identified in the self-assessment report.

28. Learners gain good workplace skills, and those on Level 3 programmes further develop their vocational skills. They are better able to apply the requirements of legislation to their caring role, improve their practice to prevent spread of infection and develop their communication skills. All learners have gained confidence and self-esteem; they identify poor practice and challenge their colleagues. Most portfolios are well organised with a satisfactory standard of work.

Quality of provision

29. The quality of provision is satisfactory and teaching and learning are satisfactory. Off-the-job training on health and social care programmes takes place within the learners workplace, usually on a one-to-one basis. This is satisfactory with the content of the sessions being guided by the individual learners assessment needs. One provider offering early years programmes has a well planned series of group training sessions away from the workplace.
30. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Where there is a comprehensive practice, which includes assessment of literacy and numeracy, thorough checks of vocational skills and the identification of the aspirations of the learner, training needs are identified correctly. Some subcontractors are not using this thorough approach and others do not record the results fully on the individual learning plan.
31. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Most assessors use sufficient direct observation to gain evidence, a few rely too much on oral and written questioning. There are good examples of comprehensive assessment planning but there are examples where planning does not sufficiently help the learner understand what is required. Assessment documentation is not completed in a timely way for a few learners.
32. Progress reviews are ineffective. The timing of reviews varies. Some are too frequent and others do not take place on a regular basis. The better reviews include opportunities to reinforce learning and understanding of health and safety and equality and diversity. In most reviews, targets set relate to the immediate need for NVQ assessment and are extensions to the assessment plans. Very few have any medium or longer term targets and some lack any timescales. In too many reviews the employer is not actively involved in the process. Learners are not always aware of what has been completed and how much more is required. Written comments are general and not developmental. The quality of reviews is not consistently monitored either by the subcontractors or through quality audits. NTN did not identify this area for improvement in their self-assessment report.
33. Programmes and activities satisfactorily meet the needs and interests of the learners and employers. The level of programme suits the job role of the learner and optional NVQ units chosen. After appropriate discussion with the assessor and in some cases the manager, the identified training requirements of the learner are met.
34. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Employers provide good support for most learners. Some managers/training co-ordinators in the workplace work closely with the assessors and take great interest in the development of their staff. Frequent communication between managers and assessors ensures that the individual training needs and progress of the learners are regularly monitored. Managers are enabled to effectively plan and provide opportunities for learners to explore and develop their practitioner skills alongside the knowledge gained. A few workplaces have good up-to-date paper-based learning resources available for the learners and some learners are given time at work to complete written

evidence for their NVQ. The self-assessment report identifies the good engagement of employers in the learning programme.

35. Assessor support is satisfactory. Assessors are easy to contact by phone. Assessor visits vary in frequency from weekly to six weekly. Most learners' assessment takes place at a convenient time for them and the employer to match shift patterns and staffing requirements. Sometimes too little notice is given to ensure that any necessary changes in the workplace can take place. Most assessors give good one-to-one coaching to ensure the learner gains new information or is able to apply knowledge to practice.
36. Support for literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. Some subcontractors provide extra support with their own staff, one subcontractor is accessing support for one healthcare learner from NTN. The learner is enthusiastic about this support and reports that it is helping her NVQ work. Some learners receive satisfactory general help with their literacy needs from their assessor to enable them to complete their qualification.
37. Most learners are provided with satisfactory information and guidance at the beginning of their training but the amount and content provided on completion varies significantly. It does not explore the options in the wider range of opportunities and training available in allied health professions.

Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of the consortium appreciate the information that NTN provides on a variety of relevant topics. NTN provide prompt replies to requests for clarification of items. Internal verification is satisfactory although some sampling plans do not ensure all aspects of assessment are covered. Standardisation meetings take place but minutes sometimes lack detail. Most subcontractor staff are suitably qualified and have appropriate experience in a wide range of care and early years settings. Data is collected but relies on the efficiency of the subcontractor. NTN does not use the data to actively develop the sector provision.
39. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity and apply the knowledge to their work practice. They also understand their own rights and responsibilities. One subcontractor has identified a need to increase the number of learners from minority ethnic groups and proposed actions necessary to achieve this. This is included as an area for improvement in NTN's self-assessment report.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

40. There are 94 Train to Gain learners in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies. All are working towards Level 2 qualifications. A diverse range of qualifications at Level 2 are offered. These comprise mostly of engineering maintenance, manufacturing and transport. Currently there are 24 learners in transport, 28 learners in engineering programmes and 42 in the manufacturing programme. NTN works with two subcontractors in this subject area: Nottingham Engineering Training Association Ltd (NETA) and North Nottinghamshire College.
41. Learners are employed across a range of companies based in Nottinghamshire. These include large public companies, transport and warehouse companies and a mixture of general engineering and manufacturing companies. Consortium members receive a range of support services including quality improvement and help with management development, employer engagement advice and access to the learner support service.
42. Assessors visit learners in the workplace to provide training, assessment and to review progress. The quality of assessment is monitored by members' internal verifiers.

Strengths

- Very good success rates
- Very effective development of workplace practical skills
- Very good quality portfolios
- Particularly effective working relationships with employers

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective recording and target-setting in the review process
- Insufficient promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates were very good at 100% in 2006/07. Of the 30 learners who started in engineering and manufacturing technologies and transport Train to Gain programme in the year 2006/07, all achieved their qualification and 29 of these were within the planned time for the qualification. The overall success rates, although very good at 98%, declined slightly in 2007/08 and there is evidence of some slow progress.
44. There is very effective development of workplace practical skills and Train to Gain learners develop a good understanding of health and safety issues. The Train to Gain programme helps them to understand the business operations of their employers. The programme effectively improves learners' confidence and self-

esteem and improves their communication skills. Most Train to Gain learners have few prior achievements, but make good progress towards improving career goals. Learners often progress to higher level qualifications after Level 2 as they understand the importance of broadening their knowledge and skills.

45. The quality of portfolios is very good. The evidence presented in learners' portfolios is to a very high standard. It is diverse and demonstrates increased literacy and numeracy skills. Learners take pride in their portfolios, adding photographs, engineering drawings and sketches for clarity. Assessors encourage learners to use them to demonstrate the high standard of their work. Many learners have not assembled written evidence of work completed since their school days and producing good quality work increases their confidence.

Quality of provision

46. The quality of provision is good. The teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, most of the teaching and learning is not formal and consists of one-to-one coaching and practical use of experience by the assessors. Assessment and coaching takes place on employer's premises. Training areas are mostly clean, spacious and well laid out. The quality of coaching and training is satisfactory. Assessors are well qualified and experienced. They give clear instructions and advice. The support increases opportunities to learn and offers an extended range of experiences to the learning programmes. Learning is reinforced through demonstration. Interests of learners are engaged and sustained as they participate. Arrangements to meet the interest of learners are satisfactory. Employers comment on the long-term value for their companies of developing the skills of the learners.
47. Employers have a strong commitment to training. They are supportive of the need for training for their staff and are happy to provide training and assessment opportunities for qualifications. Employers value the training provided. Good communication links exist between employers and assessors. Assessors manage the employer relationships effectively, for example, working around production timetables, to provide time for assessment and portfolio building. Normal working conditions provide practice and a wide range of diverse evidence for the NVQ.
48. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners are encouraged to contact assessors at any time. Learners are confident to talk to assessors about problems. Any issues are dealt with sympathetically and efficiently. Learners have high regard for assessors and the support they receive. All learners have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed as part of a comprehensive initial assessment. Satisfactory support for literacy and numeracy is given and this support is clearly related to learners' work.
49. There is ineffective recording and target-setting in the review process and reviews are often too brief. Insufficient information is recorded and often there is insufficient employer involvement. Assessors have no common procedure for completing the review. There is little focus on setting vocational targets. Completed progress review documents are not used to update learners individual learning plans. Target-setting is too broad and not sufficiently focused. Targets

are not sufficiently specified or time-bound and do not encourage learners to progress in a timely manner. Assessors do not set specific occupational targets during assessment planning.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are well motivated and work effectively as a team. Internal communications are satisfactory although member's assessor staff have little contact with NTN. Assessors are experienced engineers and trainers understanding the needs of their learners and employers. Assessors and supervisors work closely with learners every day to schedule work and manage the opportunities for assessment. Staff have good access to training and development activities.
51. Internal verification is satisfactory. An appropriate plan is produced to ensure that the assessment processes are monitored. The assessment processes are recorded well.
52. There is insufficient promotion, monitoring and reinforcement of equality and diversity. All learners receive specific sessions on equality of opportunity and health and safety during induction. Learners receive some equality and diversity discussion in the workplace and there is a formatted section in the review document. However, this section often holds insufficient recorded information. Learners have insufficient knowledge of equality and diversity and there is insufficient staff training in equality and diversity. There are few handouts and little written promotion.
53. The self-assessment report recognises some of the strengths and areas for improvement. However, the inspectors did identify a number of additional strengths and areas for improvement. Most members' staff do not contribute to the self-assessment report and are unaware of the content.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

54. Currently 132 learners are working towards an NVQ at Level 2 in a range of construction qualifications. The main subcontractor is Unoco which has 105 learners working towards NVQ Level 2 in roof sheeting and cladding, roofing occupations, plastering, trowel occupations, decorative finishing and industrial, applied waterproof membranes and construction operations. The remaining subcontractors are North Nottinghamshire College and SPS providing NVQs in plant operations at Level 2. These subcontractors were not visited by inspectors due the low number of learners engaged on these programmes.

55. Subcontractors provide all training, assessment and verification. On completion of their qualifications, construction learners are also able to apply for the industry recognised construction skills certification scheme card.

Strengths

- Very good support for learners from assessors

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates
- Slow progress of learners
- Weak progress reviews
- Some poor management of NVQ programmes
- Under-developed internal verification process

Achievement and standards

56. Achievement and standards are inadequate. The standard of learners work and development of workplace skills are satisfactory. Learners have a good awareness of environmental and health and safety requirements applying their practical skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. The standards produced by learners meet the needs of employers and satisfy the requirements of the NVQs being followed. The standard of learner's work contained within their portfolios is satisfactory. Portfolios are of a good standard and well managed. However, learners have little involvement in the portfolio-building process other than providing the required forms of evidence and completing the task books provided at the start of their programme.

57. Overall, success rates are low. Of the 64 learners who left the programme in 2007/08, 40 learners achieved their qualifications, a success rate of 63%. Most learners have made slow progress towards achievement of their qualification in 2007/08. In this year, the timely success rate is 3%. Of the 64 learners who left the programme in 2007/08, only 5 learners achieved their qualifications by their planned end date. Learners are allocated between six and nine months duration

on programme to allow them to achieve the competencies required for the range of work activities required by the NVQ. However, many learners have taken over 12 months to achieve. This area for improvement is recognised in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

58. The quality of provision is inadequate. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most training is delivered on-the-job by employers. This training is tailored to meet the needs of the learner and employer ensuring learners develop the level of skills required to carry out their work activities effectively. Learners are encouraged to complete self-study materials provided by the subcontractor. One-to-one support sessions are provided by assessors to further develop learners' job knowledge and understanding following completion of the self-study materials. Resources are sufficient to enable learners to achieve their qualifications. Assessors are suitably qualified and have appropriate industrial experience.
59. Assessment of learners' competence is satisfactory. A wide range of assessment methods are used by assessors which includes effective use of observations of learners' performance. Learners are encouraged to gather a range of diverse evidence and are well supported by assessors in this process. Assessment records are detailed and clearly cross-referenced to the NVQ criteria. Portfolios are well structured and contain a good range of evidence.
60. Learner progress reviews are ineffective. Learners are unclear about the progress they are making and when they are likely to achieve their qualifications. Progress reviews are carried out and recorded as part of the observation of learner performance in the workplace. For most learners, the formal progress review process does not begin until they receive the first visit from their assessor which can be some 12 months into their programme. Employers and workplace supervisors are not actively involved in the review process. Reviews are not used to reinforce important information and identify additional support needs of learners. There is insufficient awareness raising and reinforcement of equality and diversity during reviews. This area for improvement is not recognised in the self-assessment report.
61. Learners are provided with the opportunity to follow an appropriate range of qualifications related to the requirements of their work activities and employer expectations. Learners value the opportunity they have been given to gain recognition for the skills and knowledge acquired through their employment and industrial experience. Programmes offered by the provider meet the needs of the employers in relation to their operational demands.
62. There is very good support for learners from assessors once they start workplace visits. Learners appreciate and value the support they receive from assessors in assisting in the achievement of their qualifications. Learners are complimentary of the motivational skills of assessors and the time taken by assessors to ensure learners have a thorough understanding of what is expected of them. Some learners who have disclosed their own literacy and numeracy needs have been well supported in overcoming the barriers to providing evidence and interpreting

written questioning. Learner induction is satisfactory. Induction positively promotes the NVQ to learners and informs them of their responsibilities relating to health and safety. All learners complete an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy support needs. The results of initial assessment are not used effectively to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of learners.

Leadership and management

63. There are sufficient staff and adequate resources to deliver the programme. Staff development is satisfactory and new assessors are well supported and receive appropriate training and mentoring.
64. Operational management of the Train to Gain programme is inadequate. There is some poor management of NVQ programmes. Many learners are not visited in the workplace for up to 12 to 14 months from the time they are inducted onto the programme. Learners have little or no contact with provider staff during the period ranging from initial induction to the first site visit. Opportunities to influence learner progress and observe a range of work activities being carried out by learners are missed. Assessors are rarely provided with appropriate information relating to learners planned end dates, identified support needs and previous industrial experience before initial visits. Some assessors are carrying out skill profiling with learners when this has previously been carried out at the time of the initial induction. Individual learning plans are not being used to influence assessment planning. Most assessors are not involved in the initial induction of learners. Assessors are unaware of the actual start dates until they are given their allocation of learners. This can be up to 12 months from the learners start date.
65. The internal verification process is underdeveloped. There is insufficient observation of assessor performance. Most internal verification activity is carried out on completed learner assessment portfolios with little interim sampling taking place. Unoco management have recognised this as an area for improvement and have recently appointed a lead internal verifier. New documentation and verification guidelines have been introduced. However, there has been insufficient time for these to have significant impact on this area for improvement. Regular standardisation meetings are now taking place to further improve the learner experience and ensure effective assessment practices. The self-assessment report failed to identify strengths and most of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors.

Retail and commercial enterprise

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

66. There are currently 153 Train to Gain learners on retail and commercial enterprise programmes. Of these, 64 are working towards hospitality NVQs including 13 at Level 3. A further 55 are working towards the NVQ Level 2 in retailing skills and 31 are working towards NVQs in warehousing. There are three learners working towards NVQ Level 2 in Hairdressing.

67. There are nine subcontractors across this sector subject area: Central Education and Training, Right Monitor Training, Charnwood Training Consultants, It2ition, Prostart, Positive Outcomes, Strategic Training Solutions, The Learning Zone and Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency. Numbers of learners with the training providers range from three to 39 learners. For the purpose of this inspection the following subcontractors were visited: Central Education and Training, Charnwood Training Consultants, Prostart, It2ition.

68. Learners on hospitality work towards NVQs in housekeeping, food and drink service, multi-skilled hospitality services, food processing and cooking, professional cookery at Level 2 and hospitality supervision at Level 3. Those on a warehousing work towards NVQs in distribution, warehousing and storage operations and storage and warehousing at Level 2.

Strengths

- Good success rates
- Very flexible and responsive approach to meeting learners' and employers' needs

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress by some learners
- Insufficient monitoring of some aspects of learners' programmes

Achievement and standards

69. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are good. This was not identified in the provider's self-assessment report. In 2007/08, 95% of learners in retail, 89% in warehousing and 80% in hospitality completed their qualification. For some of the learners this is their first achievement of a nationally recognised qualification. Many learners are re-engaged in learning after a long break and are keen to progress to other qualifications. Learners are confident and well motivated. They demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for their programme. They enjoy gaining knowledge and understanding, building on the skills and knowledge gained from their careers to date. They are able to use these to be more effective in their job role. Portfolios are well organised and contain a satisfactory, in some cases good, standard of work.

70. There is slow progress towards achievement for some learners. In warehousing significant numbers of learners' success occurs beyond the planned end date of programmes. One subcontractor in warehousing has introduced electronic NVQs (ENVQs) which are significantly improving learners' progress. In retailing, most learners' success is not timely. In hospitality, some learners are not set sufficiently challenging targets during their programme. In particular, some learners are not challenged to achieve in the early stages of their programme. Progress for some learners is insufficiently matched to prior attainment, experience and their current job role. Within the self-assessment report, timely success was identified as an area for improvement in retail.

Quality of provision

71. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most learning is delivered in the workplace by assessors as part of planned visits. Learning materials are generally satisfactory and sometimes of a good standard. Assessors have a good level of occupational competency and the one-to-one coaching is effective in supporting the development of learners' knowledge. The initial assessment of learners' language, numeracy and occupational skills is satisfactory. For one subcontractor in hospitality, good consideration is given to learners' prior achievements when compiling their learning plan. For one subcontractor, the initial assessment of learners' occupational skills is ineffective. The assessment is not used to adequately identify development needs or influence assessment plans. Learners' induction to their programme is satisfactory. Assessors ensure that the relevant information is given to learners. Learners have a satisfactory, in some cases good, understanding of their rights and responsibilities and equality of opportunity. Health and safety is sufficiently covered.

72. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessors approach assessment supportively. They use an appropriate variety of methods to meet the diverse needs of learners. Some assessment planning is insufficiently detailed. Hospitality learners, particularly at Level 3, do not manage their own portfolios well. The organising of these is done mostly by the assessor.

73. There is a very flexible and responsive approach to meeting learners' and employers' needs. There are frequent, regular and effective assessor visits to support learners through their programme. This can be weekly should a learner require this. Visits are timed to enable the gathering of good performance evidence and to match learners' work rotas and business patterns. These visits are used well for a variety of activities depending on the need of the learner. They include observation, assessment and giving feedback on background knowledge questions as well as one-to-one coaching. Visits result in work being set for learners for the next visit. Assessors are easily contactable at other times. Learners value this support which is readily offered by assessors. Subcontractors have good working relationships with employers, as correctly identified in the self-assessment report. They use these effectively to increase access to the wide range of NVQs offered.

74. Reviews of learners' progress are satisfactory. For one subcontractor good short-term targets are being set. For another subcontractor reviews are ineffective. Some are late and insufficient time is taken to carry out each review. There is insufficient focus on identifying learning that has been planned or achieved. NVQ progress is not effectively documented. In some cases, there is little reinforcement of health and safety and equality and diversity. Some contain few actions and some actions are insufficiently specific and measurable.
75. The provision for information, advice and guidance for learners is satisfactory. In some cases there is insufficient recording of this. Employers take a close interest in their employees' progress and most are supportive.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are good links with the subcontractors. Communication is effective with regular emails and quick response to subcontractor requests for information. The smaller subcontractors, in particular, value the information provided by NTN in a variety of areas, especially training and development opportunities for their staff.
77. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. For subcontractors have appropriate equality and diversity policies and procedures. For one large hospitality subcontractor, there is good promotion of equality of opportunity. This is given strong emphasis at induction and reinforced well at reviews. For other subcontractors there is little effective or memorable coverage of this at induction and very few attempts to reinforce equality and diversity during learners' programmes. There is insufficient staff training and development in equality of opportunity issues for a number of subcontractors.
78. There is insufficient quality monitoring of some aspects of learners' programmes. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Quality assurance frameworks are in place but these do not cover all aspects of training. Action to quality assure aspects of the provision, for example, learner induction and reviews are ineffective. Within most providers the emphasis is on compliance rather than informing quality improvement. Insufficient use is made of learner and employer feedback, which was identified in the self-assessment report. There is insufficient monitoring of quality by NTN within the subcontractors. Work undertaken by NTN also focuses on compliance. NTN's self-assessment report was adequately informed by subcontractor reports. However, it did not identify most of the areas for improvement found during inspection.

Preparation for life and work

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

79. Currently 79 learners are on Train to Gain literacy or numeracy learning programmes. Teaching is delivered by two subcontractors through their learndirect centres and by NTN's in-house learner support services. The subcontractors The Learning Zone has 44 learners and IT2uition has eight learners. NTN's learner support specialist adviser provides one-to-one tuition for 20 learners in the workplace. Seven learners are completing learning programmes with a provider who is no longer a subcontractor for NTN. The length of literacy and numeracy programmes is flexible to meet learners' needs but is generally 20 weeks. Learners work towards national certificates in literacy or numeracy at Levels 1 and 2.

Strengths

- High recent success rates in one subcontractor

Areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates
- Poor planning and reviewing of learning
- Insufficiently developed skills for life strategy

Achievement and standards

80. Achievement and standards on literacy and numeracy programmes are inadequate overall. One subcontractor, It2uition, improved their success rates towards the end of the 2007/08 contract year and all learners who left programmes achieved their planned qualification. These achievements contribute to an improved overall success rate across the whole provision of 82%. However, this subcontractor accounts for only eight of the 79 learners currently on literacy and numeracy programmes.

81. Timely success rates are low across the whole skills for life provision. In 2006/07, only 10% of learners achieved their planned qualification within the set time period. In 2007/08, timely success rates rose to 24%. Learners make inadequate progress in literacy and numeracy programmes with the main subcontractor. Forty of the 42 learners with this subcontractor enrolled on a literacy or numeracy programme between five and nine months ago but have not yet been assessed and have had no tuition. Two learners have been assessed but have not had a learning session. Learners develop satisfactory skills and knowledge during one-to-one tuition and through information and communication (ICT) based learning packages.

Quality of provision

82. The quality of provision is satisfactory. All learners are appropriately assessed to identify current skills levels and areas for development. Subsequent diagnostic assessment in subcontracted provision is satisfactory. Diagnostic assessment carried out by NTN's dedicated learner support adviser is more thorough and provides detailed information on specific needs and additional support requirements.
83. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In one-to-one sessions with NTN's learning support adviser, learners use an appropriate range of learning materials including worksheets and information technology based resources. Sessions are well planned and the tutor is appropriately experienced in delivering literacy and numeracy. Learners in the subcontracted provision follow appropriate ICT-based learndirect programmes. Across the whole provision there are insufficient learning materials which develop literacy and numeracy within the context of the learners' occupational areas. Liaison with occupational assessors to plan the development of literacy and numeracy to support learners' NVOs is not sufficiently developed.
84. Learning plans and reviews of progress towards targets are generally poor. At the main subcontractor, 40 of the 42 learners do not have a learning plan and there are no review documents. At the smaller subcontractor, learning plans are inadequate. Only two learning plans were available during the inspection. Neither plans are signed or dated by the learners or the tutor. Learning targets are not sufficiently specific and there are no timescales for skill development. These plans do not cross-reference to the core curricula for literacy and numeracy. All the learners at this subcontractor are unemployed and have the status of volunteer within the learndirect centre. This arrangement aims to give learners work experience within the centre, however, there is insufficient information on how their volunteering duties are planned, managed and linked to literacy, numeracy or occupational skills development. Mid-programme reviews at this subcontractor are poor. Comments on progress are limited to those of the assessor and do not relate to any learning that has occurred towards learning goals. The reviews available state only that the learners will become volunteers for half a day each week. For learners on NTN directly supported literacy and numeracy, learning plans are satisfactory. The plans are appropriately individual and give an acceptable level of detail on learners' specific needs. However, reviews of progress do not sufficiently explore how well learning has been developed and consolidated.
85. For those currently receiving tuition, the content and style of delivery is adequate to meet learners' needs and expectations. Learning sessions are arranged well to fit in with the demands of the workplace and shift patterns.
86. Support for learning is satisfactory. Tutors build productive relationships with their learners and give good encouragement. Employers provide sufficient time away from the job for learners to attend their literacy or numeracy sessions. Induction to learning programmes is satisfactory and all learners understand the purpose of

their learning. Information, advice and guidance on further learning are not well developed.

Leadership and management

87. Leadership and management are inadequate. NTN's strategy for the delivery of skills for life is under-developed. A pilot project to improve promotion and take up of literacy and numeracy learning was introduced in August 2008. As a result an additional member of the learner support team is now improving access to literacy and numeracy support by working with three subcontractors. The processes for referral, support, administration in this pilot project are now clearly established. No strategy or plan exists for the skills for life delivery across the wider network. NTN have not analysed the needs across the whole consortium and there is no indication of priority groups for support. The pilot improvement project fails to consider those learners in subcontracted providers who are not part of the pilot project and who may not have staff with literacy or numeracy teaching expertise. There is no consideration of the potential to train assessors to support learners with literacy or numeracy needs. NTN's skills for life improvement plan gives inadequate attention to the development of occupationally-related resources to support literacy and numeracy skills.

88. Learners' recall and understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. They are aware of complaint procedures and generally understand their rights and responsibilities. NTN's learner support provision is sufficiently flexible to meet the demands of shift work and the tutor is responsive when there is a need to deliver training at alternative locations or during evening shifts.

89. NTN's quality monitoring of subcontracted literacy and numeracy provision is inadequate. Monitoring processes and data analysis failed to identify the significant lack of progress of learners at The Learning Zone. Compliance audits failed to identify poor planning and reviewing of learning. The quality of learning sessions in subcontractors is not monitored through observations by NTN. The self-assessment report is not sufficiently judgemental on the quality of its subcontractors and lacked key information.

Business, administration and law

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

90. Currently there are 146 learners on business, administration and law programmes. Of these 113 learners are following a programme leading to a qualification at NVQ Level 2 and 33 at NVQ Level 3. The vocational qualifications offered are business administration, customer service and management. Training is subcontracted to 10 organisations across the region: Bassetlaw Training Agency, Central Education and Training (CET), Charnwood Training Group, IT2ition, JHP, Positive Outcomes, Prostart, Strategic Training Solutions, TBG and The Learning Zone. Thirty per cent of the learners are at IT2ition, 28% at CET, 16% at Prostart and 12% at Positive Outcomes. The remaining subcontractors have between one and nine learners. For the purpose of this inspection the five subcontractors included in inspection activity were Positive Outcomes, Prostart, IT2ition, CET and Charnwood Training Group. For the remainder evidence was obtained from recent inspection reports and monitoring visit reports. Learners are employed in a range of workplaces from care homes and offices to digital print companies and marketing organisations.

Strengths

- Good development of workplace skills
- Good assessment practice
- Very supportive assessors

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective reviews
- Weak reinforcement of equality of opportunity

Achievement and standards

91. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are satisfactory at 78% for 2007/08. Timely success rates are also satisfactory at 61% in 2007/08. Learners are developing good workplace skills. They can deal effectively with requests from colleagues and customers and have an increased confidence in the workplace. Learners can also apply personal skills very effectively as team members. Many confirm that they have developed confidence and are more motivated in their jobs. Learners have a better understanding of their customers' needs and have a better telephone manner and attitude when answering calls and dealing with problems. At one employer, three learners who completed their NVQ in 2006/07 have since been promoted. The standard of learners' work in portfolios is satisfactory. They contain an appropriate range of work-based evidence which are well presented and laid out.

Quality of provision

92. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Assessment practice is good in most subcontractors. Assessors make good use of workplace observations to demonstrate competent performance and there is particularly good short term action planning. Assessments are effectively planned and most learners are well prepared for assessment. Assessors use a wide range of assessment methods including videos and digital recordings. At three of the subcontractors, learners are offered the choice of following an ENVQ, whereby most communication and recording of assessment activity are done electronically, using the internet. Learners can easily keep monitor of their own progress at any time from their own home computers. Learners appreciate the flexibility of this assessment method and are making very good progress. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Assessors also give prompt and constructive feedback to learners.
93. Assessors are very supportive to their learners, with a flexible approach to learning and development. They arrange their visits to meet the needs of learners and employers, often accommodating shift patterns and unsociable hours to carry out assessments. Assessors make frequent and productive visits to the workplace, in some cases weekly. Many learners can arrange assessment on demand. Learners find this approach motivational. Assessors successfully build confidence with learners, some of whom have had no recent experience of learning and development.
94. Learners receive a satisfactory induction to their programme and an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy need. No current learners are identified as needing additional literacy, language or numeracy support. Arrangements for additional support are currently the responsibility of each individual subcontractor.
95. Progress reviews are ineffective. They are often brief and there is minimal recording of comments and sections are frequently left blank. Most reviews show no reference to targets or learning plans. With one subcontractor the review forms part of the assessment visit and has no real significance. In many cases there is insufficient employer involvement in the review process. In some cases they merely sign the form after it has been completed by the assessor.
96. Employer involvement in their employees learning programmes varies from subcontractor to subcontractor. In the better cases employers are well informed by the subcontractor's staff. They are fully informed of learners' progress through their involvement in planning, individual coaching in the workplace and reviews. Some other employers do not fully understand their roles or of the existence of NTN. Several of the subcontractors have recently started initiatives to help build closer relationships with employers and to improve employer engagement. One subcontractor has begun to run breakfast meetings with employers to promote Train to Gain and learning in general.

Leadership and management

97. The management of programmes by subcontractors is satisfactory and communication with NTN is satisfactory. Monitoring of subcontractors by NTN for quality assurance purposes is insufficient and checks only compliance issues. Internal verification of NVOs is satisfactory and assessors receive constructive and developmental feedback.
98. The learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues and their rights and responsibilities is satisfactory. However, the reinforcement of equality and diversity issues, particularly at reviews with some subcontractors is weak. cursory questions are asked and sometimes answers are too brief or not effectively recorded.
99. The self-assessment report was very brief and failed to evaluate or make judgements on many of the key stages of the learning programmes. The grade proposed was accurate.

Learners' achievements

Success rates on Health, public services and care work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	43	88%
		timely	27	55%
	2007/08	overall	81	72%
		timely	54	48%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

Success rates on Engineering and manufacturing technologies work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	30	100%
		timely	29	97%
	2007/08	overall	163	98%
		timely	123	74%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

Success rates on Construction, planning and the built environment work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2007/08	overall	64	63%
		timely	5	8%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

Success rates on Retail and commercial enterprise work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	12	100%
		timely	11	92%
	2007/08	overall	80	80%
		timely	55	55%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

Success rates on Preparation for life and work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	4	40%
		timely	1	10%
	2007/08	overall	27	56%
		timely	9	33%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

Success rates on Business, administration and law work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	6	100%
		timely	5	83%
	2007/08	overall	89	78%
		timely	70	61%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection