

INSPECTION REPORT

Lofthall Training Services Ltd

23 July 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

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

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Lofthall Training Service Ltd is a private company founded in 1994 as a partnership which changed to a limited company in 1998. It has two directors. The company provides work-based training for young people for the care sector leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQ). Currently, it is providing training for 27 trainees employed in nursing and residential homes in Lincolnshire.

Overall judgement

The quality of the work-based training and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The overall quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

Work-based learning for young people

Work-based learning for young people on NVQ training programmes is unsatisfactory. Most trainees do not achieve their target NVQ. Many trainees leave their training programme early. The assessment of trainees is effective. Many trainees ready for assessment have not been assessed. On-the-job training is good. Training meets the needs of the trainees and the nursing and residential homes. Induction is effective. Resources and facilities in the nursing and residential homes, including learning resources, are good.

New Deal

There are no New Deal clients.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Action plans are ineffective. Target-setting is poor. Ineffective quality assurance arrangements have not improved the low achievement and retention rates. The monitoring of quality assurance arrangements is poor. Feedback from employers is not collected by the company. Internal verification is weak. The company has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. Though the company provides effective staff training, there is little training in equal opportunities. Data on trainees is collected but it is not taken into account when planning training.

GRADES

Health, social care & public services	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- good training in the workplace
- good resources
- good promotion of equal opportunities
- effective arrangements for gathering and analysing trainees' views

KEY WEAKNESSES

- low achievement rates
- unsatisfactory retention rates
- ineffective assessment procedures
- inadequate action-planning
- poor target-setting
- no training for staff on equal opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance procedures
- poor monitoring of quality assurance procedures

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed minutes of meetings

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Lofthall Training Services Ltd provides training for the care sector and in business administration. The major part of its work is the provision of care training through partnership arrangements with further education colleges. Training, funded by the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), represents a small percentage of its activities, just over 3 per cent. The training is the responsibility of the company's two directors, the training co-ordinator, the head verifier and the head tutor. A team of eight tutors provides training for 27 work-based trainees on NVQ training programmes. They and staff from the care homes carry out the workplace training. The tutors also provide the off-the-job training and carry out the assessment and internal verification. There are also two administrative staff.

2. Lofthall Training Services Ltd recruits most of its trainees from north and northeast Lincolnshire. The proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 43.8 per cent and 35.8 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent, in 2000. The average for the whole of Lincolnshire, however, was 52.6 per cent. The unemployment rate for north Lincolnshire was 3.7 per cent and for northeast Lincolnshire 5.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.1 per cent. The average rate for the whole of Lincolnshire was 2.6 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Lincolnshire at the 1991 census was 0.8 per cent. In north Lincolnshire it was 1.6 per cent and in northeast Lincolnshire, 0.9 per cent.

THE INSPECTION

3. Three inspectors spent 12 days at Lofthall Training Services Ltd between 23-26 July 2001. They conducted 14 interviews with company managers, tutors, employers and staff from residential and nursing homes. They also interviewed nine trainees at the company's offices in Lincoln and at six nursing and residential homes in Lincolnshire. Inspectors examined a range of documents including, 10 trainees' portfolios, individual training plans and schedules of learning, learning materials, trainees' records, company documents, plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature and awarding body reports. They studied the self-assessment report which was produced in April 2001.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Health, social care & public services

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	27	4

4. Lofthall Training Services Ltd provides work-based care training for young people leading to an NVQ in care at levels 2 and 3. All trainees are employed in nursing and residential homes in Lincolnshire for adults with learning difficulties and older adults with disabilities. All trainees are employed. Tuition takes place in the homes and at monthly training workshops. The company's eight tutors visit the trainees in their workplace to carry out assessments and review their progress. Nineteen per cent of trainees were men. No trainees are from minority groups or have a disability.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started	28		31		38		25		0
Still in training	0	0	1	3	12	32	14	56	0	0
Individual learning plan completed	14	50	10	32	12	32	2	8	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan	14	50	20	65	14	37	9	36	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	13	46	10	32	10	26	2	8	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed	1	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 4 completed	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0

STRENGTHS

- good training in the workplace
- comprehensive and effective induction
- good resources

WEAKNESSES

- low achievement rates
- unsatisfactory retention rates
- ineffective assessment procedures

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed action plans for trainees

5. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that the trainees' achievement rates are low. In 1997-98, 46 per cent of trainees achieved their NVQ at level 2. In 1998-99, this achievement rate had dropped to 32 per cent. Of those trainees recruited in 1999-2000 and in 2000-01, 26 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, have achieved an NVQ at level 2. Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report that the retention rates are unsatisfactory. In 1997-98, 50 per cent of trainees left without completing their individual training programmes. This increased to 65 per cent in 1998-99. Between 1999-2000, 36 per cent of trainees left their training programme early.

6. Trainees are well taught in the workplace. All trainees have a senior carer responsible for their practical training. Both the carer and the trainee work the same shift. The training is designed to meet the needs of both the trainee and the nursing and residential homes. The trainers provide practical demonstrations of skills and techniques which trainees must acquire. They question the trainees to effectively make sure they understand what is being taught. There are good workshops on theory. Trainees attend presentations by external health care professionals on subjects including dealing with disruptive behaviour and aggressive clients, incontinence and Alzheimer's disease. Trainees collect evidence for their portfolios from these events. Portfolios are well presented and contain a wide range of evidence. Trainees carry out practical activities and work with clients with confidence. Trainees' progress reviews are thorough. Action plans drawn up during the reviews are not detailed enough and do not state what the trainees need to do to develop their performance.

7. Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report that all trainees receive thorough induction to their training programmes. Trainees receive an initial basic skills assessment which enables tutors to identify any need for additional learning support. Trainees answer a comprehensive questionnaire at the end of induction to find out if it was useful to them. Trainees fully understand their rights to equality of opportunity, their responsibilities at work, health and safety and the requirements of the NVQ. Trainees receive a company handbook which covers the mandatory NVQ units relating to health and safety and equality of opportunity, and they complete these in their first month of training. During induction, trainees are given help in choosing their optional NVQ units. Trainees are in regular contact with their tutors. The detail of this contact is not recorded where appropriate.

8. Workplaces are equipped with modern equipment. Trainees are shown how to use the equipment under supervision from qualified staff. As the self-assessment report recognised, learning materials are good. These are well presented and their content is relevant to the NVQ units. The learning materials cover the different types of residential

and nursing homes where training takes place, and the needs of specific clients. For example, there are useful training materials on the operation of electronic equipment for tube feeding of clients with eating difficulties. The company makes care journals, video and information packs available to trainees in all workplaces. All tutors are suitably experienced and hold assessor, internal verifier, and teaching qualifications. Trainers in the workplace are vocationally qualified and hold or are working towards obtaining assessor qualifications.

9. A weakness not acknowledged in the self-assessment report is that trainees' progress is affected by poor assessment practice and delayed workplace assessment. For example, one trainee has completed only one NVQ unit in 18 months and a number of others have completed only one unit after ten months in training. Trainees completed the necessary written work but were not assessed at work. In some instances, tutors visit the trainees in the workplace but do not record any observations. The company no longer employs these tutors. It has now recruited new tutors who visit the trainees frequently to carry out assessment. At the time of inspection it was too early to judge whether this is effective. In some instances, the tutors do not indicate the date and time when they carry out observations of trainees in the workplace.

Poor Practice

An assessor spent over five hours observing a trainee and questioning them about their work. The assessor did not record their observations or the trainee's answers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 4**

10. Lofthall Training Services Ltd is a private limited company. It has two directors. One is responsible for the operation of the company, and the other for recruitment and marketing. The training centre co-ordinator, the head verifier and the head tutor are responsible for work-based training. A team of tutors carries out work-based training, assessment and verification. Staff in the nursing and residential homes also provide training in the workplace. There is an administrative team at the company's head office in Lincoln. The company has an equal opportunities policy. It has a policy statement for quality assurance. The company produced a self-assessment report before inspection in May 2001.

STRENGTHS

- good arrangements to monitor training
- good promotion of equal opportunities
- effective arrangements for gathering and analysing trainees' views
- good staff development programme

WEAKNESSES

- poor action-planning
- poor target-setting
- no training for staff on equal opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance procedures
- poor monitoring of quality assurance procedures
- no formal arrangements for gathering feedback from employers
- weak internal verification

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better minuting of meetings

11. Written agreements, between Lofthall Training Ltd and the homes used for work placements, detail the roles and responsibilities of each party. There are written plans of training which show when the on- and off-the-job training occurs throughout the year.

12. Company managers are clearly aware of the extent of the progress of the trainees. Data are collected on trainees' background and their achievements and destinations when they leave or finish the training programme. This data are used to provide tutors with a file on each of their trainees. These files are used to monitor the progress of each trainee throughout their training programme. A summary of the retention, achievement and completion rates across the organisation is prepared three times a year. No action plans are produced to rectify issues identified from the data collected. The self-

assessment report did not acknowledge that the company does not set itself specific targets.

13. Communications and relations between the company and trainees and staff from the nursing and residential homes are positive and constructive. Staff and employers from the homes speak well of the company and find tutors helpful. The tutors are readily available to discuss trainees' problems and concerns. The company calls meetings for internal verifiers and tutors, assessors and managers. The meetings are not properly minuted. Minutes rarely contain action points or state who is responsible for carrying actions out.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

14. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. The company has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy which has clearly stated aims and objectives. There are specifically defined responsibilities for managers, employees and trainees and clear arrangements for monitoring the implementation of all sections of the policy. A copy of the equal opportunities policy is issued to every learner. There is a separate policy on harassment. Trainees have a good understanding of equal opportunities. The clear procedures for complaints and appeals are fully understood by trainees.

15. There has been no systematic training on equal opportunities for staff. The training centre co-ordinator has undertaken her own equal opportunities training and has informally shared what she has learned with other staff.

16. The company collects and analyses data on the gender, ethnicity and disabilities of trainees. These data are collected through the recruitment process and trainees' responses to questionnaires. Data are analysed every four months but are not taken into account when planning training or ways of widening participation.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

17. The impact of quality assurance on achievement and retention is minimal. Retention and achievement rates remain low. The self-assessment report does not acknowledge that there are no procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of quality assurance activities. The impact of quality assurance on achievement and retention is minimal. Retention and achievement rates remain low. Workplaces are visited three times a year to monitor training. A summary report is produced after each visit and discussed with the employer and relevant tutor. No plans for improvement occur as a result of these visits. The self-assessment report does not acknowledge that there are no procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of quality assurance activities. The monitoring of the company's quality assurance procedures is poor. No action has been taken to rectify poor internal verification of the slow progress of trainees. A new procedure for monitoring quality assurance activities was introduced in July 2000 but this has not been implemented.

18. Feedback from trainees is collected throughout the training programme. Trainees answer questionnaires at induction, halfway through the training programme and at the end of their course. Issues the trainees raise are followed up rapidly. Trainees answer questionnaires about their tutors. They are asked to comment on a wide range of issues including the quality of teaching, support and resources. The trainees responses are made known to the tutors in order to help them improve their practice. Trainees also respond to questionnaires about training in the workplace. The company does not collect feedback from employers. Tutors regularly visit employers but do not record their views about the training programme.

19. The self-assessment report did not acknowledge that arrangements for staff development are good. All staff receive an annual appraisal during which their training needs are identified. All new staff receive a detailed induction during which their training needs are identified and prioritised. The company ensures all staff receives appropriate training to enable them to carry out their job effectively. All tutors are qualified assessors and have or are working towards verification, assessment of prior learning and teacher training qualifications.

20. The self-assessment report failed to identify that internal verification is weak. There is no internal verification plan and the sampling of work and monitoring of assessors is poor. At the time of inspection the company was developing a plan for internal verification.

21. The self-assessment report was the fifth produced by the company. It is descriptive rather than subjective. Though strengths and weaknesses are identified there is little evidence to support the judgements. Some weaknesses had not been identified. This year saw the first action plan to be produced by the company. It does not contain target dates for the review or completion of identified actions to rectify weaknesses. There is no reference to the poor retention and low achievement rates.