

INSPECTION REPORT

Career Development-UK

19 August, 2002



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 Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Career Development-UK is a private training provider with charitable status. It is based in Cleator Moor in Cumbria and has centres in Whitehaven, Workington, Carlisle, Barrow-in-Furness and Oldham. It offers a broad range of training provision that includes work-based learning for young people, New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, and programme centres. Areas of learning include engineering (motor vehicle), business administration, management and professional, health and social care, hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism, land-based provision, foundation programmes, retailing, customer services and transportation.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Leadership and management are satisfactory as is equality of opportunity. Quality assurance, however, is unsatisfactory. Provision in the areas of learning, including engineering, retailing and customer services, foundation programmes, business administration management and professional and hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism is satisfactory. Provision in land-based and health and social care is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

Land-based provision	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

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Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

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

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	3
Programme Centres	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- good development planning
- effective action to meet the diverse needs of learners
- good training sessions
- very good training in programme centres

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor management of data
- ineffective initial assessment
- poor planning of training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better prioritisation of staff training
- better use of individual learning plans

THE INSPECTION

1. Thirteen inspectors spent a total of 65 days at Career Development-UK in August 2002. They interviewed 141 learners and examined 142 individual learning plans. Inspectors saw 117 learners' portfolios and visited 38 provider sites. They interviewed 44 employers or work-placement supervisors and visited 50 work placements. Inspectors held 73 interviews with provider staff and observed and graded 32 training sessions. All except two were graded as satisfactory or better, with a significant proportion graded as good or better. Two were graded as outstanding. Inspectors used the most recent self-assessment report, produced in May 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Land-based provision	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	2	7	0	0	0	10
Business administration, management & professional	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	2	4	0	4	0	0	0	10
Total	2	7	8	13	2	0	0	32

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Career Development-UK, known as Direct Training Services Ltd until December 2001, was established in 1987 and is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Its activities are overseen by trustees from British Nuclear Fuels PLC, Cumbria County Council and Copeland Borough Council. The company's head office is in Cleator Moor in Cumbria and there are centres in Whitehaven, Workington, Carlisle, Barrow-in-Furness and Oldham, in Greater Manchester. It employs over 120 full- and part-time staff.

3. Career Development-UK offers work-based learning for young people, in New Deal 18-24, New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, foundation programmes and programme centres. There are currently 677 learners across the various training programmes. Training is provided both on and off the job. There is currently no subcontracted provision. Funding is provided by contracts with learning and skill councils (LSCs) in Cumbria and Greater Manchester as well as Jobcentre Plus in Cumbria, and Dumfries and Galloway. The provision in Scotland was not inspected.

4. The economy in Cumbria relies mainly on manufacturing and agriculture. Manufacturing, however, has recently suffered some decline. Tourism, especially in the national park, plays an important role. The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001 had catastrophic effects on the area, affecting manufacturing and tourism. It also meant that there was a reduction in employment and work-placement opportunities for learners at Career Development-UK. Unemployment in Cumbria is 3.1 per cent, in Oldham it is 4.1 per cent, compared with 3.6 per cent in the northwest of England and 3 per cent nationally, according to May 2002 figures. Barrow-in-Furness and Copeland both have unemployment rates well above the national average.

5. The proportion of Cumbria's population from minority ethnic groups is low, at 0.4 per cent, while in Oldham it stands at 8.7 per cent, according to the 1991 census. According to 2001 statistics, 51 per cent of school leavers in Cumbria achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above. In Oldham the figure was 41 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. Many learners at Career Development-UK have fewer qualifications at these levels.

Work-based learning for young people

6. Work-based learning for young people is satisfactory across most areas of learning. Achievement rates vary across the areas of learning, and from year to year. Training is provided on the job in a variety of work placements and on employers' premises, as well as off-the-job at training centres and specialist facilities, such as Clay Flats for motor vehicle training. Most of the training observed was satisfactory or better.

Life Skills

7. In Life Skills programmes, 26 per cent of the 111 learners who started in 2001-02 left to take up places in further education or jobs with training. The retention rate was 58 per cent. In the current year, from April to July 2002, there have been 32 starts and 12 leavers, of whom only one has gone into employment. Training in Life Skills is satisfactory.

Programme Centres

8. Programme centres were opened in 2001 and in their first year of operation only 20 per cent of learners went into jobs. In the current year, job outcomes are improving and 32 per cent of those who left between April and July 2002 have gone into a job. In the first year of operation, the retention rate was just 54 per cent, but this has also increased significantly to 74 per cent in the current year. The standard of training in the programme centres is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

9. Career Development-UK's senior management team is based at the Cleator Moor head office. The team comprises a chief executive, an operations director of the commercial business department and an operations manager of the government-funded programmes, supported by the quality assurance manager and business systems and finance manager. The scope of the inspection included only the government-funded operations. This section is managed by the operations manager and five business managers who are located in the main centres of operations. Each centre has its own administration, training and recruitment staff. Career Development-UK has policies to cover equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in May 2002 and was its first one prepared using the 'Common Inspection Framework'.

STRENGTHS

- good investment in facilities at training centres
- good development planning
- effective action to meet the diverse needs of learners
- very effective self-assessment process
- clear quality assurance policies and procedures

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective co-ordination of staff meetings
- poor management of data
- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities with employers
- some poor application of complaints procedure
- poor use of evaluations
- some poor internal verification practice

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better prioritisation of staff training

10. Career Development-UK has recently made a significant investment in facilities at several of the training centres. New training equipment, including computers with Internet access, has been installed at all training centres and there are good resources for activities such as jobsearch. All training centres are now networked and information and data on learners can be transmitted between the training centres and head office.

11. Career Development-UK has set up a very good development plan. The targets in the plan are focused on learners' experiences, success and achievement. Targets for

retention and achievement rates are challenging. All other targets contribute to improving the quality of training with further staff training and development, satisfactory performances in internal and external inspections and audit processes. The development plan is linked directly to the self-assessment process and lists the required actions with a priority rating, as well as the desired outcomes. The person responsible is clearly identified, along with the desired result, target achievement date, the monitoring individual and actual achieved date. The plan covers all areas of the business and provides a good tool to bring about improvements in business performance.

12. Staff meetings are not co-ordinated effectively throughout the organisation. Numerous meetings are held between areas of learning staff, assessors and verifiers, training centre staff, business managers, team leaders, teams, and senior managers. The meetings are successful in letting staff know how the organisation is changing and developing. However, some staff have to attend many meetings because they have multiple roles and responsibilities and are not always sure of the purpose of the meeting they are attending. No one takes overall responsibility for co-ordinating and managing these meetings. The remit of each group is unclear, as is the purpose and function of the group.

13. There is poor management of data at Career Development-UK. A range of methods is employed to manage data on learners, especially with regard to retention, progress, and achievement of apprenticeship frameworks and national vocational qualification (NVQ) units. A new software system for managing data has been in place since January 2002, but it is still not fully functional. New learners are put on to the system, but existing learners have not yet been added. There is poor access to learner data and the company is unable to provide accurate numbers of learners or retention and achievement rates.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

14. Career Development-UK is taking effective action to meet the diverse needs of its learners. There is a clear equal opportunities policy that is reviewed regularly. At induction, learners receive a comprehensive introduction to equal opportunities which they find informative and useful. They are also given information about the complaints and appeals procedure. Learners who do not attend the full induction do not receive as much information. They rely on their assessors to supplement their equal opportunities knowledge. Assessors are required to discuss equal opportunities with learners as part of their progress reviews.

15. Career Development-UK provides additional support for learners. This includes arranging transport and appropriate venues so that Asian women can attend sessions. Career Development-UK's publicity materials reflect an appropriate gender and racial mix and are designed to be appropriate to the needs of the different centres. There is some staff training in equal opportunities and diversity and staff pass the information on to the learners effectively.

16. Employers receive a partner handbook that contains a brief section on equal opportunities, but there is no follow up to the handbook. Employers would welcome further input from Career Development-UK. Learners can discuss any equal opportunities issues arising in the workplace during their progress reviews.

17. There are effective procedures for complaints and appeals that are clearly understood by the learners. Information on the procedures is held in each training centre and by each employer. Learners know what procedures to follow if they have a complaint, although these procedures are not always fully complied with. Two cases were found by inspectors where the issues raised were not dealt with correctly according to the procedure and were not fully documented. In another case, the issue had been resolved with the learner but had not been recorded.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

18. The quality assurance policy and procedures are clear. Following the development planning there are now comprehensive action plans. The policy and procedures are available in all training centres and are summarised in the partner handbook provided for the employers. Procedures and policies are updated regularly. Quality assurance is discussed at the staff meetings to ensure that the correct forms and procedures are used. New procedures introduced as a result of the development planning are also explained.

19. Career Development-UK has a well-established self-assessment procedure. The self-assessment process involves all staff. The self-assessment report was discussed at the business managers' meetings. The business managers were each required to formulate their own self-assessment and development plan for their training centre. These centre-based reports were then combined to form the full self-assessment report and development plan. The self-assessment report is largely accurate, although some weaknesses were not identified and inspectors have given lower grades than those given by Career Development-UK.

20. Learners are not currently required to evaluate training sessions on a regular basis in all training centres. Career Development-UK does not often seek feedback from employers and the employers do not routinely complete general questionnaires. This was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Completed evaluations and questionnaires are very rarely analysed and are not used as a basis for improving the training.

21. The internal verification process is not always carried out satisfactorily. In general, the forward planning of internal verification activities is good. External verifier reports are usually positive and carried out regularly according to awarding body requirements. However, there were some instances when internal verification documents were not completed fully. Internal verification had also to be carried out by internal verifiers who were based at a considerable distance from the assessors and learners. Some areas of learning have too few qualified internal verifiers.

22. Development opportunities exist for all staff. However, the staff development plan does not always ensure that the large number of new staff has the skills required for their new job roles. This issue was identified in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	13	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	10	4

23. There are currently 23 learners following programmes in amenity or commercial horticulture at NVQ level 1 and 2. Ten clients are following an environment task force programme of work with supervisors on local horticulture projects. This is a new programme that started in May 2002. Learners on work-based NVQ programmes for young people start their training at one of the Career Development-UK horticultural sites, before taking a work placement with a local employer where NVQ assessment can take place. Learners on commercial horticulture NVQs are assessed entirely at Career Development-UK horticulture sites. Inspectors are unable to comment on learner retention and achievement rates as the data available at the time of inspection were unreliable.

STRENGTHS

- good development of practical skills

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective initial assessment
- poor assessment practice
- poor learning and vocational resources
- poor off-the-job training
- inadequate progress reviews of adult learners
- poor links with employers

24. Learners develop good practical skills in horticulture. They work in small groups with supervisors who are vocationally experienced and demonstrate practical skills effectively. The close working relationship with supervisors also enables learners who have additional learning and social needs to develop their communication and social skills.

25. The initial assessment of learners is ineffective. Learners are assessed using a

horticulture skills scan which requires learners to complete a series of questions. Responses are graded and the scores are totalled. The final score determines the NVQ level that the learner should work towards. The questions asked and the grading criteria are inappropriate and unrelated to the requirements of the NVQ. Most learners on NVQ programmes are also assessed for basic skills. Young people who are assessed at level 1 on the basic skills test are given a key skills initial assessment, although completion of key skills training is not considered relevant to their programme of learning. The results of the initial assessment are not used effectively as a basis for the learning plan and some learners are working towards qualifications that are inappropriate to their needs. All adult learners are placed on the same two units of the level 2 NVQ regardless of their experience, aspirations, or training that they are undertaking. Some learners are unaware they are completing NVQ units, while others are completing units in which they have no interest. The choice of qualification or units is determined by the provider rather than the needs of the individual learner or the work in progress on the horticulture sites. Adult learners are given the opportunity to achieve qualifications in first aid and health and safety in addition to their NVQ units.

26. Assessment practice is poor. There is insufficient assessment of learners on all programmes. No clients on the environment task force option have yet been assessed. Portfolios of evidence contain insufficient evidence of competence. Awarding body paperwork is missing from portfolios and candidate job sheets have not been introduced effectively. The self-assessment report recognised the slow progress of learners towards NVQ achievement. In commercial horticulture portfolios, learners had been signed off as competent by the assessor when there was insufficient evidence of competence and the necessary paperwork and monitoring sheets were not completed.

27. Horticultural training resources are inadequate. The horticultural site at Barrow is in very poor condition. Two large glasshouses are used for crop and amenity training and learners are working to establish bedding areas and improve the site. The classroom is an old portable unit with insufficient space. There is no whiteboard, overhead projector, video or computer facility, and books are out of date and in short supply. There is a shortage of horticulture tools and machinery. There is no regular base for the teaching of horticulture at Carlisle and tutors have to bring in the teaching and learning resources as they are needed. All the tools and equipment have to be stored and transported in the supervisor's van.

28. The management and teaching of off-the-job training is poor. Training is not well planned, there are no clear schemes of work or lesson planning. Teaching is not well linked to the learners' experience or on-the-job training. Handouts are poor, and many are out of date and at an inappropriate level for the learners. There is no use of information technology (IT) in learning. Basic skills support for learners with identified needs is given at the main site. This is not popular with learners as the support is not linked to their vocational area. However, considerable personal support and guidance is provided by the tutors, who are aware of their learners' needs.

29. There is not enough reviewing of progress on the environment task force option

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and few clients had received a progress review. Few learners on adult programmes had received a progress review. Learners on work-based learning for young people receive regular progress reviews, but they do not identify actual progress towards the NVQ and there is insufficient action-planning or target-setting.

30. Few learners are in work placements, a fact recognised by the self-assessment report. For those learners in work placements, links with the employers are not well developed by Career Development-UK. Employers are not told what learners will be doing during off-the-job training. They do not have a copy of the standards of competence and are not effectively involved in the training process. Learners who are in work placements receive good on-the-job training.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	81	3

31. There are 81 learners in engineering work-based learning programmes. Seventy-eight learners are on motor vehicle programmes and three on a performing manufacturing operations programme. Thirteen learners are advanced modern apprentices, 32 are foundation modern apprentices and 36 are on individual NVQ programmes at level 1, 2 or 3. There are four Jobcentre Plus clients, two of whom are on the full-time education and training option, taking the level 2 NVQ in vehicle maintenance and repair. There are two clients on the New Deal and work-based learning for adults 25+ programme taking an in-house fabrication and welding course. Learners are given an initial assessment as part of their induction. The results of the initial assessment determine the programme and type of additional support the learners are given. All learners have work placements and 45 per cent of them are employed. There is a variety of employers, from large main dealers to small owner/manager garages. Learners attend the training centres one day each week for background knowledge courses. Evening classes are also available for level 3 NVQ learners whose employers will not release them during the day. Key skills training is part of the qualification and takes place at various training centres, with specialist training staff.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			5		11		12		12						
Retained*			4		0		9	75	10	83						
Successfully completed			0		0		9	75	10	83						
Still in learning			4		9		0	100	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		21		11		29		8							
Retained*	0		16		0		15	52	7	88						
Successfully completed	0		3		0		17	59	7	88						
Still in learning	4		13		7		8	28	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		19		25		35		43							
Retained*	0		0		19	76	22	63	33	77						
Successfully completed	0		0		11	44	22	63	33	77						
Still in learning	11		17		8	32	0	100	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices
- particularly good support for learners
- very good off-the-job training at one training centre
- particularly good understanding of training programmes by learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor involvement in training by employers
- poor planning and structure of key skills training
- poor induction process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better practical resources
- better use of individual learning plans

32. Retention rates are good. For the advance modern apprenticeship programme over a five-year period, the average retention rate is 80 per cent. For the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, over a four-year period, the average retention rate is 78 per cent. For the NVQ programmes over a five-year period the average is 72 per cent. The achievement rate for the advanced modern apprenticeship is good. In 1997-98 the achievement rate was 75 per cent, in 1998-99, 83 per cent and in 1999-2000, 75 per cent. The achievement of foundation modern apprenticeships and NVQ programmes is 88 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively, in 1998-99, but zero and 44 per cent, respectively, in 2000-01, with a significant proportion of learners still in learning.

33. Staff support for learners is particularly good, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Basic skills support is provided by specialists who devote half a day each week, on an individual basis, to any learner who has an identified need. Some basic skills tutors are trained counsellors and when pastoral issues are identified the tutor deals with them. If the issue raised is outside their individual area of expertise then outside agencies are brought in. Motor vehicle staff development programmes include drug and alcohol awareness, suppressing aggression and basic skills. All staff know those learners who have additional learning support needs and those who have social needs. There are numerous examples of learners receiving additional help. This includes a member of staff giving a learner a lift to and from work for a year until the learner passed the driving test and got a specially adapted car. Any learners who are having serious problems with their work placements are switched within days to a different placement.

34. Off-the-job training at one training centre is good although this only applies to 10 of the 81 learners. Group numbers are small and a variety of teaching aids are used, up to seven in one session. Learners participate well and there are regular checks to make sure they have retained what they have learned. The facilities for practical demonstrations are limited. As a short-term measure, the 10 learners based in this training centre are taken to the main centre for practical training every three weeks.

35. Learners are well informed and very knowledgeable about the NVQ system and the processes that lead to achievement. They have a copy of their updated monitoring system in their portfolios and can see their progress and position at a glance. At each progress review learners are reminded of what is required of them and their portfolios also contain details of the course requirements, although the portfolios are not kept by the learners. Portfolios are good and each item is cross-referenced to the unit requirements. However, individual learning plans are not used as working documents. These are stored in the learner's personal file. Many are incomplete and are not

updated on a regular basis. Learners are unaware of their content or significance.

36. Employer involvement in the training is poor. Only 45 per cent of learners are employed. There are no work-based assessors and some employers refuse to pay the learners' training allowance, which is then paid by the provider. Most employers do not take part in the progress review process, apart from signing the documents. They have insufficient understanding of NVQs and the modern apprenticeship framework and some take little interest in their learners' training programmes. This is despite being given information by the provider in the form of a good partner's handbook.

37. The planning and structure of key skills training is poor. Learners do not understand the key skills requirements. Since the introduction of the latest key skills curriculum, the training has been starting towards the end of the programme and is not planned or structured. Training in key skills is not an integral part of NVQ training. Application of number, for instance, takes place at different training centres, when a trainer is available. No motor vehicle trainer/assessor is qualified to give training in key skills. The provider's staff focus on the NVQ training and, as the learner nears the end of the programme, they devote extra time and resources to teaching key skills until the learner completes the apprenticeship framework.

38. The quality of induction for learners who transfer programmes and those who start outside of academic term times is poor. The time allocated can vary from one or two hours, to a full day. In some instances, the induction is carried out at the work placement. The member of staff allocated depends upon who is free at the time. The content can vary, depending on the skill area of the tutor. The one-day induction programme comprises health and safety training, administration details, a company profile and the equal opportunities policy. The provider has recently introduced a new induction programme, which lasts for three days. Some learners are critical of the content and the way the induction is carried out and of being placed with mixed age groups and different vocational areas.

39. The company has recently invested £12,000 in equipment for the main site. The classrooms and workshops are adequate but outdated. The organisation borrows late model motor vehicles for learners to work on. The engine tuning equipment is not suitable for full analysis and fault finding on modern motor vehicles. There are no facilities to train learners on vehicle air-conditioning systems.

Good Practice

Learners are taken on one-day team-building sessions in addition to the main programme. These include a visit to the car museum at Holker Hall and an adventure day that includes go-karting, archery, quad-biking and assault courses.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	93	3

40. Career Development-UK provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQ training in business administration for 93 learners, including two New Deal 18-24 and three New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults. The tables do not include those who started in 2002-03. Most learners are recruited by referrals from careers advisers and can start at any time of the year. Career Development-UK's staff interview all applicants. The recruitment process includes an initial assessment of basic and key skills. Some learners attend off-the-job training sessions at Career Development-UK's training centres one day each week and the rest of their training is in the workplace. Specific training events covering different aspects of key skills are available on a cyclical basis at the training centres. Training advisers/assessors visit learners in the workplace at least once every four weeks to carry out workplace assessments and portfolio reviews and to monitor and review their progress.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			17		21		25		17						
Retained*			0		18		13	52	8	47						
Successfully completed			0		2		11	44	8	47						
Still in learning			15		16		0	100	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			59		51		35									
Retained*			0		27		19	54								
Successfully completed			0		8		16	46								
Still in learning			30		19		0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			22		20		6		12		25					
Retained*			0		5	25	5	83	5	42	13	52				
Successfully completed			0		5	25	5	83	5	42	11	44				
Still in learning			9		2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0				

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good training support for learners
- good training sessions
- good assessment practice
- good portfolios of evidence

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention rates on foundation modern apprenticeship and NVQ programmes
- poor planning of key skills training
- some inadequate inductions
- inadequate progress reviews

41. Learners receive good support from Career Development-UK, beginning with the accurate assessment of their learning needs. This strength was partially identified in the self-assessment report. Learners receive additional literacy, numeracy and

communication support if they need it. They are also given support with personal issues and are helped to build their self-confidence. Learners are shown how to use basic computer programmes and are taught employability skills, including time keeping, personal presentation, telephone techniques, and how to lay out business documents. Some of those on the training programme gain additional qualifications in first aid and health and safety. The support is provided by a mixture of group training and individual coaching. Staff ensure that all personal issues are dealt with in strict confidence. Learners value the support which they receive from Career Development-UK.

42. All the training sessions observed were either good or very good. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. Trainers have excellent professional skills and training is interesting, clear to follow, and aimed at the right level for learners but challenging. Work materials and handouts are well produced. Learners complete a session evaluation form at the end of the course. Learning and understanding are checked as the sessions proceed and learners make good progress. Facilities and learning resources are of a good standard.

43. Assessment is good, with direct observation being used well. Assessments are pre-planned and learners and employers are fully involved. One planned observation was postponed because the learner was not doing the sort of tasks that would show competence. Assessment of additional evidence did take place. Assessment takes place regularly, is well documented and learners are given clear feedback. Learners are instrumental in identifying which parts of their qualification evidence prove competence and then cross-referencing it. In most cases, learners choose optional units by identifying tasks in the workplace. This provides the best opportunity for gathering evidence. Learners discuss it with their assessor, who provides professional guidance if necessary. The assessor and learner draw up an action plan after the assessment, with targets to be reached by the next visit. When a unit is completed and signed off by the assessor, the learners' individual learning plan is updated and the assessors' records are completed.

44. Portfolios are of a good standard and contain a diverse range of work-based evidence. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. All work is indexed, clearly referenced and authenticated with witness testimonies and evidence slips. Learners use additional IT skills to find extra information, for example on health and safety, to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and which can be used in their portfolios. Most learners use clip art and drawing programmes to illustrate work. Where learners are working on key skills the work is included in the administration portfolios. Key skills projects are closely linked to the sort of work learners do in the workplace. One learner working at a solicitors carried out an analysis on divorce rates, and used the resulting data to prove her competence in IT and application of number. All learners take full ownership of their portfolios and are justifiably proud of them.

45. Retention rates are poor on the foundation modern apprenticeship and NVQ training programmes. On the foundation modern apprenticeship programme for the

contract year 1999-2000, the retention rate was 54 per cent. For the following year's intake the retention figure to date is 53 per cent and 37 per cent of learners are still in learning. The contract year 2001-02 has 51 per cent of learners still in learning and 49 per cent having left with no qualification. The NVQ training programme shows a decline in the retention rate from 52 per cent in 1997-98 to 42 per cent in 1998-99, a rise to 83 per cent in 1999-2000 and then a further decline to 25 per cent in the contract year 2000-01. There are currently 41 per cent of learners still in learning in the contract year 2001-02 with 59 per cent having left with no qualifications. Achievement rates across all three programmes are satisfactory. The attainment of administration skills and knowledge is good.

46. Training in key skills is poorly planned. Some learners begin their key skills training at the start of their training programme. For some of these learners key skills training then stops, and starts again once they have completed their NVQ. Other learners only start their key skills training after they have completed their NVQ. There is little continuous assessment for key skills, even though learners may collect evidence on a regular basis. There is no planning of key skills training or assessment of key skills evidence. Training workshops have recently been introduced to support learners in gaining key skills qualifications, but attendance is voluntary.

47. Some learners' induction programmes are inadequate. Learners who join the training programme and do not initially have a work placement receive a more detailed induction programme than those who are successful in securing a work placement immediately. Learners who are already in employment receive a shorter and less detailed induction programme from Career Development-UK's staff on their employers' premises.

48. Learners' progress reviews are not thorough enough. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. There is insufficient reference to show how learners are developing as individuals, how they interact with other work colleagues, or deal with managerial relationships. Insufficient attention is paid to on-the-job experiences, other than those that relate to their NVQ evidence. Learners' knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities issues and topics are not checked. Employers are not always involved in the progress review process, other than countersigning the report form. Where employers are involved, they attend for the whole of the progress review, which can stifle discussion and inhibit learners from sharing any concerns they may have with the reviewer. Progress reviews lack objectivity and detail in the comments that are recorded.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	68	3

49. There are currently 68 learners in this occupational area, although, the tables do not include those who started in 2002-03. There are 14 customer service advanced modern apprentices. Twenty-nine learners are working towards a foundation modern apprenticeship, of whom 22 are on customer service, four on retailing and three on distribution and warehousing programmes. Fourteen learners are on an NVQ programme, four of whom are in customer service, two are in retailing and eight are on distributive operations. In addition, nine clients are on a New Deal option, of whom three are on customer service, five on retailing and one on distribution and warehousing. These learners work towards two units of an NVQ. There are two customer service clients on a work-based learning for adults programme. Just over half the learners are employed. The learners are registered across six training centres. They are recruited direct from employers, from Jobcentre Plus, career advisers or advertisements. Induction can be at the training centre or in the workplace, dependent on learner status. Work placements are arranged for those who are not employed. Off-the-job key skills training is available and learners can attend portfolio-building workshops. All learners receive an initial assessment interview in addition to basic skills and key skills assessments. Assessors normally visit every two to three weeks. There are no work-based assessors. Progress reviews take place every two to three months. Training advisers are responsible for the training and assessment of learners.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts			8		18		14									
Retained*			6		9	50	8	57									
Successfully completed			0		2	11	7	50									
Still in learning			6		7	39	1	7									

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			19		14		25									
Retained*			16		7	50	6	24								
Successfully completed			0		3	21	6	24								
Still in learning			16		4	29	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			12		9		2									
Retained*			10		5	56	1	50								
Successfully completed			0		5	56	1	50								
Still in learning			10		0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good individual support for learners
- good learner development in the workplace

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient planning and co-ordination of training
- low retention and achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better skill scan at initial assessment
- more thorough process of evidence authentication
- earlier introduction of key skills training for all learners

50. Staff give learners very good pastoral support. They take care to organise suitable

work placements to meet individual learners' needs and on occasions fund the placement if the employer is unable to afford to pay the learners. Staff often drive learners to and from the training centre for support and training sessions. Staff provide effective individual support, either at the training centre or in the workplace, to help improve literacy and numeracy skills and also for key skills training. Information on external support agencies is available. Learners speak well of their training advisers and have developed good relationships with them. They find staff easy to contact and are able to attend the training centre for individual support when convenient to them. Contact details for health and safety and equality of opportunity are in the learners' portfolios. Most learners have frequent visits from their assessors at times that are convenient to the learners and their employers.

51. Both employers and work-placement providers give good support to the learners. They provide formal and informal training and coaching to develop learners' skills and knowledge and help to prepare them for assessment. Some learners have had additional courses, for example, on health and safety, and many undertake staff training programmes to meet the job requirements. Learners use videos and training packs in the workplace to develop their retailing and customer service skills and knowledge. Learners gain wide work experience, often working in different departments, to become multiskilled and meet the requirements of their programme. Learners are closely supervised in the workplace and they soon build up confidence. Managers treat learners as members of staff. Learners work effectively with colleagues and as they progress they take on increased responsibilities. Training advisers provide effective coaching in the workplace to help learners gain knowledge and collect suitable evidence for assessment.

52. There is insufficient planning and co-ordination of training activities. Until very recently there was no structured, off-the-job training for occupational skills and knowledge. There is some development of lesson plans for off-the-job training, but these are not yet fully in place. Learners attending the first and only such training at one centre identified that they had learned more in that session than in the previous 10 months of their programme. There is insufficient planning and co-ordination of training with the employer. The employer is not involved in the initial assessment to ensure learners are placed on an appropriate programme. The training provided in the workplace is rarely recorded. Learners make insufficient use of employer training materials as evidence of background knowledge. At one work placement, the learner had received training in health and safety, manual handling, and risk assessment, but the training adviser was unaware of this. Where coaching is provided this is informal and often not recorded, and there is no overall record of learning activities. Where off-the-job training is available it is not well attended. Learners are often unable to leave the workplace. It is often left to the learner to obtain permission, rather than the training adviser speaking directly with the employer. There is some good key skills training, but poor attendance means that this is often given individually, rather than in a group.

53. Managers and supervisors generally have only a very limited understanding and awareness of the learners' programme. They sometimes contribute to assessment

planning, agreeing appropriate opportunities with dates and times. However, they do not sit in on the progress reviews, but join the process at the end where they are asked to add a comment to the progress review form and sign the document. Managers and supervisors rarely contribute witness testimonies to the learners' portfolios. There are good learning resources at some training centres, but learners are not always aware of what is available, particularly if they do not attend off-the-job training.

54. Retention and achievement rates are poor. This was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The average retention rate on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme for 1999-2002 is 58 per cent. The achievement rate is just 23 per cent for the same period. On the larger foundation modern apprenticeship programme, the retention rates are lower, at 24 per cent for 1999-00 and 50 per cent for 2000-01. On the NVQ programme, the achievement rates are 50 and 56 per cent respectively, for the same years, which is less than satisfactory. Retention rates for 2001 are good, however, at 83 per cent.

55. Assessment is generally satisfactory with some good recording of observations and referencing to the standards. Portfolios are generally well presented. However, some portfolio evidence, such as candidate statements, is not signed off correctly. These sometimes do not have the learners' name or the date. They are often not corroborated by a workplace witness or assessor annotation to confirm competence.

56. The self-assessment report identified as a strength the integration of key skills training with the customer service training. The lack of integration in retailing was identified as a weakness. Generally, key skills training was linked satisfactorily to the training programmes, although there were some variations between training centres. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Not all training centres introduce key skills training at an early stage in the programme.

57. Skills scans used at initial assessment are badly designed and not sufficiently thorough. The employers are not involved in the initial assessments and are not involved in ensuring that the learners are placed on an appropriate programme.

Poor Practice

A progress review was held at the bottom of a staircase in a workplace. The learner was twice called away to work on the shop floor and there were constant interruptions.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	60	3

58. Career Development-UK has 60 learners on catering and hospitality programmes. The tables shown do not include starts for the period 2002-03. There are currently two advanced modern apprentices, 53 foundation modern apprentices and five learners on NVQ training. All modern apprentices currently study key skills, which are integrated with their NVQ. Career Development-UK's recruitment officers canvass employers and recruit learners on to programmes. Learners are also referred by the careers service. The work-based assessors are also responsible for asking their existing clients to refer new learners. Career Development-UK carries out a one-hour induction in the workplace for employed learners and a more in-depth induction for referred learners. There are six assessors and three internal verifiers who deliver most training and assessment in the workplace. The employers also provide some training, as agreed with the assessor.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people														
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			1		3		2						
Retained*			0	0	0	0	0	0						
Successfully completed			0	0	0	0	0	0						
Still in learning			0	0	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people														
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			78		17		26						
Retained*			0		2		14							
Successfully completed			3		2		14							
Still in learning			51		1		1							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			18		1		4									
Retained*			0	0	1	100	1	25								
Successfully completed			2	11	1	100	1	25								
Still in learning			5	28	0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- flexible arrangements for assessment
- improving attainment level for foundation modern apprentices

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective induction
- poor initial assessment
- poor planning of training
- insufficient resources to support learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better internal verification process

59. Career Development-UK makes flexible arrangements for assessment, to suit the needs of individual learners. Assessors increase the frequency of assessment visits when learners are progressing more quickly than expected. Learners are able to telephone and attend the training centre for individual portfolio work, if they have gathered extra evidence to be assessed. One learner had additional assessment visits to enable her to achieve her NVQ before going on maternity leave. Assessors frequently visit learners during the evenings and at weekends to allow for shift patterns. Some assessments have been carried out during the early hours of the morning for night club workers. Learners are visited on average every two weeks to be assessed or have their scheduled progress reviews.

60. There are signs of improvement in NVQ achievement rates, with several learners

close to completing. Retention and achievement rates on the NVQ and advanced modern apprenticeship do not show a similar pattern but the numbers of learners are considerably lower. The retention rate on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme is improving. In 1999-2000, the retention rate was 58 per cent, which decreased to only 18 per cent during 2000-01, partly because of the effects on the local economy of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The retention rates has since improved to 69 per cent.

61. The assessment process is good, and occupationally competent assessors carry out all assessments in the workplace. Action plans are detailed and give clear guidance to learners and workplace supervisors. Assessment materials include detailed observation reports showing good use of all the available evidence.

62. The induction training is ineffective. Induction is carried out in the workplace by either a recruitment adviser or by the occupationally competent assessors. The induction consists of a one-hour session, which is unimaginative and remembered by most learners as a form-filling exercise. An initial discussion takes place to decide whether the learners are eligible, and then a skills scan sheet is completed. The induction also involves completing the sign-up paperwork, an overview of the health and safety and equal opportunities policies, and agreeing an initial action plan. There is also some reliance on the learners to read other key information at home. This is not an effective training method and not a memorable process for the learners. The workplace environment is usually busy and will often have background music or be busy with customers, making concentration difficult.

63. Initial assessment is poor. It is carried out as part of the induction process and continues during the early stages of the course. The skills scan during induction is inadequate. It is based on the learners' self-assessment of their experience. It is ineffective in identifying the appropriate level for the learners' programme. Some of the questions are about the learners' willingness to travel, work split-shifts and previous experience. The initial assessment is also based on discussion and interview. There is no routine testing of basic skills and there is often a delay before learners receive the support they need.

64. The planning of training is poor. There is some reliance on the employers to provide the training which learners need to prepare them for assessment. Learners do receive training in the workplace, but there is no formal planning or scheduling of specific training linked to the individual learning plans. Some learners have made slow progress. All learners attend the training centres for basic food hygiene training and, in one training centre, there is an opportunity for some additional qualifications, such as health and safety, first aid and manual handling training, but there is no other formal off-the-job training linked to the NVQ.

65. There are insufficient learning resources. Learners are not given any books to help them with their learning. One training centre has a list of books available centrally, other centres have books personally provided by the assessor and each training centre

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has Internet access, but no learners have made use of these limited resources. Standard course books are provided for the basic food hygiene course.

66. The internal verification process is not sufficiently developed. There is good portfolio-based verification but insufficient observed verification by occupationally competent verifiers. The internal verifiers based at the company sites keep records of sampling and record feedback to assessors. There are not enough observations of assessors or standardisation exercises. Some assessors were misinformed about the number of required observations.

Health, social care & public services

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	217	4

67. Career Development-UK has 91 advanced modern apprentices, 104 foundation modern apprentices and 22 learners completing NVQ training. Career Development-UK offers NVQ training in care and early years care and education at level 2 and 3. Dental nursing is offered at level 3 and oral healthcare at level 2. Four New Deal clients are working towards three or more units of an NVQ in care. Modern apprentices work towards key skills at level 2. Six dental nurses are working towards level 3 NVQs. Learners work in nursing homes, residential homes, primary schools, nurseries and dental practices. There are nine assessors and three internal verifiers who are managed by the business managers. Learners may join the programme at any time. They are recruited from Connexions, New Deal personal advisers and by referral from employers. Career Development-UK checks all work placements for safety and suitability. All learners are interviewed by Career Development-UK's staff and undertake an initial assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills. There is a one-day induction in the local training centre, or half a day in the workplace if the learners are unable to attend the centre. Some specific training is provided at the training centres, but most training takes place in the workplace. All learners are assessed in the workplace by training advisers. Some workplaces have work-based assessors and they assess learners with help from the training advisers.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	44		25		39		26		29							
Retained*	0		0		19		11		20	69							
Successfully completed	0		0		19		7		22	76							
Still in learning	44		23		20		4		0	0							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	10		84		40		48		6						
Retained*	0		0		29		38	79	3	50						
Successfully completed	0		0		19		38	79	3	50						
Still in learning	10		84		10		0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			23		7		14		19						
Retained*			0		4		0	0	13	68						
Successfully completed			2		1		7	50	13	68						
Still in learning			19		3		0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good retention rates on modern apprenticeship programmes
- good working relationships with employers

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate off-the-job training
- poor assessment practices
- no occupationally experienced assessor and internal verifier for early years care and education at one training centre

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- improve the use of the individual learning plan

68. Retention rates on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes are good. In

1999-2000, 79 per cent of learners completed their full modern apprenticeship framework. In 2000-01, 48 per cent have already completed their planned learning programmes. Retention rates for advanced modern apprentices and learners completing NVQ training are satisfactory. Achievement of individual planned programmes of learning is satisfactory.

69. Learners have good working relationships with employers, which give them good pastoral support. Career Development-UK involves employers and keeps them informed of all aspects of learners' training. Training advisers visit all workplaces frequently. Most visits take place at weekly intervals. As part of verification activities, the internal verifier visits the workplace every four months. Most workplaces have a noticeboard dedicated to NVQ training. Career Development-UK has recently distributed an information pack to all employers. Many Career Development-UK staff are former employees of workplace providers and are known and trusted by them.

70. Training in key skills is satisfactory. Career Development-UK has task sheets which are now being distributed to all modern apprentices. As part of the staff development programme, staff are working towards their own key skills at level 3 and the key skills trainer's award.

71. None of the off-the-job training provided by Career Development-UK meets the background knowledge requirements of the NVQ. Career Development-UK relies on training from employers to give the learners the background knowledge they need to be competent. This training is not monitored or quality assured by Career Development-UK to ensure that it meets the NVQ requirements. Most of Career Development-UK's training is provided on an individual basis by training advisers at the workplace. This form of training does not allow learners to develop their skills, confidence and motivation by learning from others' experience and knowledge. The learners do not fully understand the negative effect of inadequate training on safe practice.

72. There is poor assessment practice in all centres. Training advisers rely on learners' responses to pre-set written questions. This is usually in the form of written answers, with no provision for learners with literacy problems. Many of the questions relate to frequently occurring activities, which could easily be observed by assessors in the workplace. Reviews of learners' progress reveal that learners find it hard to complete written questions for assessments, but alternative methods of assessment have not yet been introduced. Training advisers accept certificates of attendance at training sessions as proof that learners have acquired the knowledge for their NVQ, without confirming that the knowledge and understanding are adequate. Assessment planning covers whole units and is uniform for all learners, and they have little opportunity to identify their own evidence or preferred assessment methods.

73. There is no occupationally experienced assessor and internal verifier at the training centre for most early years care and education learners. Learners demonstrate insufficient understanding of children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development which forms the basis of all early years care and education work. Learners

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working at level 3 NVQ do not provide sufficient evidence of their ability to promote these aspects of child development. Learners are observed supporting children's literacy and numeracy needs, but they do not link their work with the children to the national curriculum for early years care and education.

Foundation programmes

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	28	3
Programme Centres	107	3

74. There are currently 12 learners on Career Development-UK's Life Skills programme in the Whitehaven centre, six in Workington and 10 in Barrow, although the tables do not include those learners who started their training programme recently. Young people are referred from Connexions and attend a minimum of 16 hours a week for 19 weeks, although this can be extended by agreement if required. The Life Skills programme offers basic skills support, IT, work tasters and personal development. There are 107 adult clients attending programme centres in Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington under Jobcentre Plus contracts. Clients attend the programme centre for jobsearch training between six and 30 hours a week for up to 30 weeks. In addition, the programme centres offer a variety of formal training modules that clients may access voluntarily. All learners can take additional training and qualifications, including computing, first aid, health and safety and food hygiene qualifications. There are three full-time programme centre staff at Carlisle, two at Whitehaven and two at Workington. There are two Life Skills trainers at Whitehaven and one at Workington.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Life Skills	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	32		111												
Retained*	21		65	59												
Successfully completed	1		29	26												
Still in learning	20		0	0												

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

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

Programme Centres										
Programme Centres	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	146		608						
Planned learning completed	23	16	0	0						
Gained job	23	16	123	20						
Still in training	76	52	31	5						

STRENGTHS

- very good training in programme centres
- innovative use of resources
- good range of additional qualifications

WEAKNESSES

- poor individual learning plans on Life Skills
- insufficient target-setting in programme centres
- inadequate progress reviews on Life Skills programmes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better management of attendance at programme centres

75. Training sessions for adult learners in the programme centres are consistently given in an informative and interesting manner. There is good recognition of different starting points and allowances are made for varied abilities. Trainers make sure they involve all the learners in the learning sessions. Evaluations are carried out after each session and these show that learners understand and appreciate the progress they have made and retain most of the information they are given. Training is given in small groups of between four and six learners. The trainer is often assisted by another trainer, so that learners can be given individual assistance discreetly, when required. Learners enjoy these modules and say they have helped them to learn.

76. Training staff make innovative use of resources in every training session and encourage learners to acquire knowledge. Staff vary the methods and teaching aids used throughout a session in order to meet the diverse needs and preferred learning styles of the learners. Staff also use a variety of ice-breaker exercises, which help the learners to concentrate and focus on the task in hand. Trainers have had training in accelerated learning techniques and have introduced these techniques throughout the training centres. The diverse training materials and accelerated-learning aids create colourful and welcoming learning environments which have a strong positive effect on the learners.

77. Career Development-UK provides a wide range of additional accredited activities for learners. These include first aid, computer courses, health and safety and food hygiene qualifications. Learners gain confidence and learn skills which increase their chances of finding employment. In addition to the accredited courses, special interest sessions are organised. For example, Life Skills learners are encouraged and motivated to achieve certain milestones by the offer of martial arts or self-defence courses or, for those over 17 years old, driving lessons are offered as incentives. Three learners are currently receiving driving lessons and three are attending ju-jitsu classes under this scheme.

78. Individual learning plans are poor on the Life Skills programme. The plans contain general aims for each learner, but there are no clear, measurable targets. They focus on specific tasks, rather than on the learning that is needed. Initial assessments are not used sufficiently in drawing up the learning plan. In many cases, Connexions provide an assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy for use by the provider in planning a programme of learning. There is no routine linking to occupational preferences and the provider does not always test learners' basic skills where an assessment has not been provided. It is not possible to assess learners' progress during their programmes because their starting point is not clearly identified or recorded.

79. There is insufficient target-setting for learners attending the programme centres. Learners attend the programme centre for jobsearch activities that are complemented by a range of modules, such as how to create a good first impression and preparing a curriculum vitae. Attendance at modules is voluntary and based on a discussion between the learner and trainer. There is no formal link between the learners' assessed needs and attendance at the modules. Many learners do not attend these sessions. There are no agreed jobsearch targets for learners to work towards.

80. Progress reviews are inadequate on the Life Skills programme. They are carried out monthly, but are ineffective in identifying the progress made by learners towards their learning goals. Progress reviews do not link back to previous reviews and do not adequately reflect progress made, or set clear measurable targets for learners to work towards. Work-placement providers are not always fully involved in the progress review process and contribute mainly at the end of the progress review.

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81. Learners agree their attendance patterns during the initial interview. This is monitored by the administration department using a signing-in book at the main entrance. However, there is no planning for the numbers expected to attend the programme centre on any given day, and trainers do not know how many learners to expect. Trainers have no means of recording attendance patterns of individual learners. Personal files are often vague and give no real indication of when a learner has been in the training centre or of what they have achieved during that time.