

INSPECTION REPORT

Shape

09 January 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

SHAPE

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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning 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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

Shape

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Shape Accredited Training Centre (Shape) was established by Cleveland Youth Association in 1978. Shape is the training arm of Cleveland Youth Association and is a company limited by guarantee. The company has a main training centre in Middlesbrough and four additional community centres in North Ormesby, Grove Hill, Eston and Middlesbrough. Shape offers training in construction and health, social care and public services for foundation and advanced modern apprentices and learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Shape also provides foundation training in the form of Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes. Shape also offers training in retailing and customer service, information and communications technology (ICT) and business administration but these areas had too few learners to be inspected separately. The contracts for construction, business administration, retailing and customer service and care of elders have not been renewed by the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and will come to an end between December 2003 and June 2004.

2. A chief executive, who was appointed in February 2003, and four learning and development managers make up the senior management team. The learning and development managers are each responsible for a key area of management: quality assurance, equality of opportunity, marketing and key skills, in addition to managing an occupational area. There is also a senior manager, working on a consultancy basis, who is responsible for finance. The chief executive has overall responsibility for Shape and for the other two arms of the company and is responsible to a board of trustees. There are 44 people employed by Shape, of whom 13 are part-time, including two people who job share. In December 2003, Shape was reaccredited with Investors in People, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

3. Shape funds its training provision through Tees Valley LSC and, until recently, through European Social Funding. In July 2003, Middlesbrough was ranked as the ninth most deprived area in the country. In November 2003, the unemployment rate in the Northeast was the highest of all the regions in England at 3.2 per cent, compared with a national average of 2.4 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Construction

4. There are 23 learners on construction training programmes. Eleven learners are following work-based learning programmes and 12 clients are on a New Deal full-time education and training programme. There are six foundation modern apprentices, two NVQ learners and six New Deal clients in carpentry and joinery. In brickwork there are three NVQ learners and five New Deal clients. The 12 New Deal clients are working towards units for an intermediate craft certificate. Five of the carpentry and joinery

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learners are in work placements, the others attend the training centre. The typical duration for the programme is 17 months for foundation modern apprentices, and 12 months for other young people on work-based learning programmes. New Deal clients are normally on programme for 26 weeks. They work towards achieving some units of an intermediate craft certificate and NVQ at level 2 units. New Deal clients spend one day each week carrying out jobsearch. Shape recruits most learners directly and carries out an initial assessment to determine the programme which best suits the needs of the learner and to identify any required additional support. Induction takes place over a three-day period in the company's training centre. Off-the-job training for the relevant technical certificate or NVQ related knowledge is carried out in the training centre in the first six months of training. Modern apprenticeship learners also work towards their key skills in this period of training. Qualified assessors from Shape carry out progress reviews in the workplace every 12 weeks. The frequency of assessment varies.

Health, social care & public services

5. There are 83 learners in health, social care and public services. Thirty-four are in dental training, following NVQs at level 3. Forty are in early years, of whom 32 are foundation modern apprentices, five are advanced modern apprentices, one is taking an NVQ at level 3 and two are on New Deal programmes. The remaining nine learners are on care programmes. Six of these are foundation modern apprentices, two are taking NVQs and one is on New Deal. The contract for the care programme was discontinued at the end of 2003 and the funding has expired for the nine learners, they are, however, being supported to complete their awards. There are no men on the health, social care and public services training programmes. All learners are employed or on work placements in nurseries, primary schools, dental practices or residential care settings in the Middlesbrough area. Learners can start training at any time of the year. Learners attend the centre either in the evenings or during the day for portfolio-building and off-the-job training. There is one work-based assessor in early years and seven in care training.

Foundation programmes

6. There are 47 learners on foundation programmes at Shape Training. All learners are on the E2E programme, but 11 are following a specific young mums-to-be programme. The new chief executive replaced Shape's Life Skills programme for young people aged 16 to 18 with the E2E programme in September 2003. E2E programmes intend to develop motivation, self-confidence, personal effectiveness, vocational awareness, literacy, numeracy or key skills for young people. They may have negative experiences of learning or barriers to learning, or be unclear about their future career aims. Work experience is offered within the programme. The young mums-to-be programme offers specific support to young women. The training aims to develop parenting skills, alongside the development of self-confidence, knowledge of budgeting and practical childcare. E2E is offered at local community centres to ensure learners can access the training.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	24
Number of learner interviews	50
Number of staff interviews	54
Number of employer interviews	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	16
Number of partner/external agency interviews	4
Number of visits	22

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, Shape's leadership and management and equal opportunities arrangements are satisfactory. However, the arrangements for quality assurance are not satisfactory. The quality of foundation programmes is satisfactory. Its construction and health and social care provision is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

Construction	4
Contributory grades:	
New Deal 18-24	4
Work-based learning for young people	4

Health, social care & public services	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 18-24	None

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Entry to Employment	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. **Retention and achievement rates are poor on all work-based programmes in construction.** Only four out of 89 learners completed their foundation modern apprenticeship between 2000 and 2003. For the same period, only 24 out of 178 learners achieved their NVQ. No advanced modern apprentices were retained during the period 2000 to 2003. The retention rate for foundation modern apprentices during this period was 12 per cent and for NVQ learners, 24 per cent. Of the 62 clients on the New Deal programme from 2001, nine have entered employment and only four have achieved all the targets on their individual learning plan.

9. **Retention rates are poor on all health, social care and public services programmes.** Half of the learners who started with Shape in 2002-03 have left their programmes, although all of the learners who started on the dental programme in 2002-04 have been retained.

10. **Achievement rates are poor in health and social care training.** Of the 296 learners who started their programmes over the past four years, only two have completed their full framework. No learners in early years or care have completed their foundation modern apprenticeship framework. At the time of the inspection, eight out of 34 dental learners had exceeded their funding period.

11. **Learners develop good skills on the E2E programme.** There are structured opportunities to develop skills in areas such as ICT, budgeting and jobsearch. Learners are also supported in developing communication and teamwork skills with activities such as football and art. Learners achieve certificates in kinetic lifting and handling and food hygiene as well as in literacy and numeracy. Young women on the young mums-to-be programme develop confidence in the handling of babies and parenting. The programme has not been running long enough to comment on retention.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Construction	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Health, social care & public services	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Total	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	8

12. **Off-the-job training in construction is good.** Learners receive good individual coaching during their off-the-job practical training sessions. The ratio of staff to learners is good at these sessions. Lessons are well prepared and allow learners to work at their own pace. Staff are well qualified and industrially experienced.

13. **There are insufficient work placements for brickwork.** The three brickwork NVQ learners are carrying out training in workshop areas as no work placements are available. Learners are unable to complete some aspects of their award because there are no work placements. **The planning for the on-the-job training is insufficient.** Employers are not usually involved in planning the training and assessment and are often unaware of the requirements of the learners' qualifications.

14. **Health, social care and public services learners are given good individual support.** Learners with personal problems are offered practical support from the local mentoring service. Dental learners who are unable to attend off-the-job training are visited in the workplace and given individual tuition. **Assessment practices in dental training are good.** Assessors plan assessments with the learner and the employer. Learners are set clear targets that are reviewed at least twice monthly. There are good links with employers and they are kept informed of learners' progress. They are aware of the requirements of the learners' training programme and work flexibly to ensure assessments take place.

15. **Off-the-job training in early years is inadequate.** There have been delays in teaching background knowledge for new learners. Some learners only receive support for portfolio-building and receive no other vocationally relevant training. **Assessment of early years learners' work is inadequate.** Assessor judgements are not recorded. There are long gaps between visits from the assessors and between the completion of written work and assessment.

16. **Internal verification practice for early years is poor.** Currently there is no active qualified internal verifier. There is insufficient internal verification sampling and interim scrutiny of learner portfolios. A new team member has just been appointed to the early years team.

17. **Shape provides effective support for learners on the E2E programme.** Young women on the young mums-to-be programme commented that the provision has given them the confidence to cope. Experienced tutors help learners to overcome any difficulties that may prevent them from attending training. The local mentoring service works with Shape to provide support with personal development and self-confidence.

18. **The after-care system for E2E learners is inadequate.** There is no systematic monitoring of learners once they have left the programme. The progress of learners who return to visit staff at the centre is recorded. Those who do not come back to the centre are not systematically followed up. **Some learning on the E2E programme is insufficiently planned.** There is a yearly and two-weekly plan of activities. Tutors do not give learners sufficient information about the annual plan. Learners do not fully participate in the planning of their programme and are not sufficiently aware of the options that are available to them outside of the two-week planning period.

19. All learners have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed as part of either their interview or induction. There are two support workers within Shape who offer additional support to all learners. This support has recently been extended to support learners on work placement and at work. In all areas there is satisfactory support for literacy and

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numeracy that is related to the learners' work.

Leadership and management

20. There has been good management of change by the newly appointed chief executive. Counsellors were appointed to support staff through the changes and interviews were used to identify staff's development needs. Significant changes have been made to the organisation, to streamline management, secure financial stability and improve training. Shape's internal communication is now good. **There are good formal and informal lines of communication.** All staff receive a monthly newsletter, attend regular team meetings and quarterly staff conferences. Individual staff supervision takes place on a monthly basis. **Shape has very effective links with a wide range of external organisations.** These extensive contacts and good local knowledge contribute to finding good work placements and potential employment for learners. They also provide learners with access to a range of support networks to enable them to continue in learning.

21. Since September 2003, Shape has had an identified senior manager responsible for equality of opportunity. **Shape records and deals effectively with complaints from learners.** The process is clearly documented. Complaints are well recorded and learners and staff are clear about the process. **There are good initiatives to develop equality of opportunity.** There is good support for learners and staff with learning difficulties. A member of staff with dyslexia is supported by the provision of an assistant to complete paperwork. Construction workshops have been adapted to use flashing lights to indicate when machinery is in operation, to meet the needs of hearing impaired learners.

22. **Management information is not sufficiently used or analysed by Shape.** National and local information is not used in planning. Information is collected, but it is not used to target under-represented groups or to monitor attendance and achievement of learners. There are insufficient strategies to deal with cross-provision issues at Shape. There is no business plan and staffing and resources are not covered within the development plan. Targets are set but they are not specific or measurable.

23. **The staff appraisal system is not used effectively.** There are few targets for staff to aim for and little staff development. There are no reviews of job descriptions. A new lesson observation system has been put into place, but not all staff have been observed and the observations do not link through to the appraisal system. There is no yearly plan for the observations. A new system of appraisal has just been introduced but it is too early to judge the impact of this. **Shape's arrangements for quality assurance are inadequate.** Shape has many systems and procedures but these focus upon areas such as health and safety. All learners complete initial assessments, which are consistently seen in files. There is good recoding of these results and the support required, but the support is not always provided. **The internal verification process is poor.** Observation of assessors is poorly planned and infrequent. There is no process in place to plan these observations. Assessment standardisation meetings are held within teams, there is no sharing of practice and insufficient support is provided for new staff.

24. Shape has a satisfactory self-assessment process. Staff are involved in the process. Learners' and employers' views are taken into account. Self-assessment is mainly accurate and self-critical. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspectors.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of change to bring about improvements
- good communications
- very effective partnerships
- good recording and responses to complaints from learners
- good initiatives to develop equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis and use of management information
- insufficient strategies to resolve cross-provision issues
- ineffective use of appraisal system
- inadequate quality assurance

Construction

Strengths

- good off-the-job training

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient work placements in brickwork
- insufficient planning of on-the-job training

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good individual support for learners
- good assessment practices in dental training
- good links with employers

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates
- poor achievement rates
- poor internal verification practice in early years
- inadequate off-the-job training in early years
- inadequate assessment in early years

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good progression
- good support for learners
- good skills development

Weaknesses

- insufficient after-care system
- insufficient planning of learning

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SHAPE:

- the very supportive and approachable staff
- the practical support for problems
- 'the staff always have time for you'
- the training which they say has improved in the past three months
- being able to work at their own pace
- the practical work
- 'learning how to manage and run my home'
- receiving certificates
- the tutors

WHAT LEARNERS THINK SHAPE COULD IMPROVE:

- nothing
- the number of assessors - they want more
- the frequency of assessments to help them complete the qualification
- the length of time spent with the assessor - learners want more
- the number of work placements
- 'the whole NVQ'
- the length of the New Deal programme - learners want more time
- provide a tea room

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KEY CHALLENGES FOR SHAPE:

- maintain and further develop the improvement strategy
- systematically share good practice in teaching and learning
- build on the newly developed strategy for retention and achievement
- develop meaningful and specific targets to provide direction and focus
- improve retention and achievement for all learners

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good management of change to bring about improvements
- good communications
- very effective partnerships
- good recording and responses to complaints from learners
- good initiatives to develop equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis and use of management information
- insufficient strategies to resolve cross-provision issues
- ineffective use of appraisal system
- inadequate quality assurance

25. There is good management to effect improvements in Shape. Shape has gone through significant changes in direction, management and staffing in the past six months, led by the new chief executive. The board of trustees and the chief executive have worked successfully to bring about financial stability. This has involved selling property, and significant staff reduction. Shape's staff worked hard to keep training in place, particularly to support the needs of disadvantaged young people. Shape has a clearly defined mission statement and a three-year action plan supported by the LSC. Morale and staff confidence is now much improved. Counsellors were employed to help staff through the process of change. The interview process, where staff had to reapply for posts, was used as a positive method to listen to their needs. As a result, staff training and development is now given a very high profile and staff roles and responsibilities are clear. The board of trustees has an action plan to enable it to plan strategically and to better reflect gender and ethnic imbalances. Training and staff roles have been changed to better meet the needs of the learners. Shape has made it a priority to offer good support to learners as part of its strategy to improve retention rates. Staff have been recruited from a wide range of backgrounds to meet the needs of the new E2E programme.

26. Communication is good at Shape. Staff have clear lines of communication. Roles and responsibilities are clear. A flatter management structure is now in place. Weekly team meetings are used to discuss ongoing support and achievement of learners. Individual and team targets are being allocated, but this is not yet being applied consistently. All members of staff are supervised individually each month. Staff conferences are held on a quarterly basis and have been in place since April 2003. These conferences are used as a forum for discussion, team-building and training. Staff

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and learners' successes are celebrated with presentations at these events. A staff newsletter is now produced monthly. Board meetings take place every two months to take strategic decisions. A smaller group of board members meets the chief executive each month to discuss operational issues. Learners report good working relationships with staff. Information from learner evaluations is regularly fed into team meetings.

27. Shape has established effective partnerships with external agencies. A partnership with a mentoring service ensures learners have access to good advice and guidance on a regular basis. This covers general career advice, and also focuses on personal and social development issues. For E2E learners this is particularly valuable. The mentoring staff supply evidence from sessions which are used towards key skills units. A three-way partnership has been created between Shape, the mentoring service and another E2E provider so that learners can attend a residential course and train as peer mentors. In the provision for young mums-to-be, Shape's good working partnership with the health service and Surestart means that young women are given relevant and appropriate learning experience. Good partnerships have been formed with local schools. Taster sessions are offered to school children, with units of accreditation being made available. Shape has formed ongoing partnerships to offer learners with a hearing impairment the chance to take part in work-based learning. There are specialist staff and equipment and written materials translated into a suitable format for the learners. Shape has representatives at many network meetings. Partners report that staff are consistently open and willing to share good practice.

28. The management of health and safety is satisfactory. Policies are up to date, well written and conform to legislation. Procedures are well established. Workplace monitoring is completed six-monthly. Health and safety training is given to all learners at induction and they receive a certificate. This training has recently been tailored to meet the needs of E2E learners.

29. Resources are satisfactory. Shape has a large main building with annexes available for training activities. Construction learners have suitable accommodation for practical activities. Training rooms are adequately furnished with appropriate teaching resources. A number of laptop computers are available and there is a recently installed suite of good-quality networked computers with full internet access. In addition, Shape uses three community-based sites, primarily for E2E learners. Accounts are audited monthly and annually to monitor and maintain financial viability. LSC funding is the main source of income but other sources of funding are now being identified.

30. Shape's approach to the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills is satisfactory. All learners have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed either at interview or induction. Most learners receive feedback on the results of the tests. There are two generic support workers for literacy and numeracy. There is no strategy for developing support for literacy, numeracy and language.

31. Shape does not analyse or use management information effectively. Little comparison is made with national or regional benchmarks. Monthly reports are now made to the management team on achievements but this information is produced for full

achievement only. There is no systematic monitoring of unit or element achievement. Some records of partial achievements are kept by teams, but these are not used by the management team to monitor progress. A small team is working to create a system for this. Targets are now being set in programme teams regarding achievement and retention. These are not always reviewed on time. Little analysis has been made within the organisation to assess where learners are progressing slower than others and why. Shape is investigating alternative data collection systems which will allow the organisation to better identify progress.

32. Shape does not make effective use of the staff appraisal system. An appraisal system has been in place for some years. Staff have few targets to aim for and little professional development. Job descriptions are not currently reviewed as part of this process. The new management will soon be carrying out the next round of appraisal. New, comprehensive systems which lead directly to a training and development plan are in place. It is too early to judge how effective these systems will be.

33. There are insufficient strategies to deal with issues which affect the whole organisation. The provider has a development plan for operational issues in the organisation. This follows on from self-assessment activity where strengths and weaknesses are assessed and actions are allocated annually. The plan does not fully cover all areas of operation and there is no specific business plan to deal with financial issues. For example, staffing and resourcing issues are not covered. Targets set within the development plan are not specific and measurable. The three-year plan written for the LSC sets out the strategic vision of the company. It is based on some research, covers the main operational areas and has assessed both risks and opportunities. Key management issues, such as the development of a literacy and numeracy strategy or advice and guidance, are not included. The provider recognises that a fully detailed strategic and business plan is not yet in place.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

34. Shape has designated a member of the senior management team to monitor the arrangements for equality of opportunity. The team member took up post in July 2003 and was appointed equal opportunities officer in September 2003. Since September an additional database for equal opportunities has been created. Data on applicants for training positions and actual learner recruitment have been collected and entered onto the database. Information from the data has been collated but detailed analysis has not yet taken place. Data on staff composition have also been collected and collated.

35. There is a good and effectively used complaints procedure. The procedure for complaints is comprehensive. Learners understand the procedure, which is covered well at induction and during progress reviews, and use it with confidence. Complaints from learners are numbered and subsequent actions are recorded in subsections in the complaints file. Learners are very well protected against potential bad practices of employers. Grievance and harassment procedures are comprehensive.

36. There are some good initiatives to support and develop equal opportunities at

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Shape. There is good support for staff and learners who have additional support needs. One instructor has dyslexia. A support worker has assisted him in his duties for four years. Shape has recently had two hearing impaired learners in construction. A recognised signer gave additional support and exam papers were rewritten in British Sign Language versions. One of these two learners successfully completed his foundation modern apprenticeship and received an award at the company's annual award ceremony.

37. There is a clear and comprehensive equal opportunities policy and code of practice. This was formally implemented in December 2003. Reference is made to current legislation. There are procedures and policies covering bullying and harassment.

38. All staff received equal opportunities training in December 2003. Equal opportunities are covered during the induction period for all new members of staff and learners. Learners receive a learner handbook at induction in which equal opportunities and grievance procedures are detailed. Most learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is reinforced during progress reviews. The progress review form has been modified recently to include a section to check and reinforce learners' understanding of equality of opportunity issues.

39. Access to training areas for people with disabilities is satisfactory. No staff have physical disabilities. The organisation has received an award recognising its positive approach to training disabled people. All off-the-job training is carried out in single-storey premises.

40. Shape adequately promotes equality of opportunity to under-represented groups. There are good links with external agencies to promote Shape. However, there is no systematic targeting of publicity and many learners find out about the training available by chance.

41. There is an insufficient analysis of equality of opportunity data. A system to collect equal opportunities data has recently been introduced. The system has not been sufficiently developed to identify issues or to contribute to management decision-making and target-setting. This is recognised in the self-assessment report and in subsequent development plans for the organisation.

42. There is under-representation of staff and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are currently no staff or learners from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

43. The collection of feedback from learners and employers is satisfactory. All learners are asked to complete evaluations at various points in their training. This has been done consistently over a number of years. New formats have been put into place recently which allow Shape to collate the views from learners and employers and give a rating. Information is currently being analysed.

44. Shape's managers contributed to the self-assessment report for their programme areas. Other staff contributed through the programme areas. Managers also contribute within areas of expertise. A consultant, provided by the LSC, has given guidance on some aspects of the provision. The self-assessment is mainly accurate and self-critical. Some feedback from learners has been used but this is limited. Wider staff involvement is beginning in the action-planning process which has recently been started. Employer views are incorporated to a limited extent through employers' surveys and evaluations.

45. A new system to observe the quality of training has been started. Not all staff have been observed and not all programmes have been included yet. There is no overall yearly plan for these observations. Any development issues arising from the observations are not yet incorporated in the appraisal process. There is no business plan and no direct links are made from the appraisal process to development needs relating to the business.

46. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. There are many systems and procedures in place. Many cover administrative functions or elements such as the monitoring of health and safety and equality of opportunity. When staff roles were revised, many functions performed by previous members of staff were not reallocated and some quality assurance processes were not picked up consistently. For example, while all learners complete initial assessments and these are consistently present in files, with good recording of results and recommendations, the support needed is not always put into place. No checks are made to ensure learners receive this support. In the internal verification process, the procedures state that assessors should have two observations each year. Observations often take place four months later than planned. There is no method in place to ensure more timely observations. Assessment practices are not adequately monitored. Standardisation meetings are held in the programme teams but good practice is not adequately shared and new staff are not always adequately supported.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
New Deal 18-24	12	4
Work-based learning for young people	11	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good off-the-job training

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient work placements in brickwork
- insufficient planning of on-the-job training

Achievement and standards

47. Retention and achievement rates on all work-based learning programmes are poor. The number of learners who have achieved the qualification they have been working towards is very low. None of the advanced modern apprentices who started the qualification between 2000 and 2003 completed their full framework and only four of the 89 foundation modern apprenticeship starters completed the apprenticeship framework. For the same period only 24 out of 178 learners who started NVQ programmes have achieved their qualification. The retention rates from 2000 to 2003 are also poor. No advanced modern apprentices were retained in this period. Retention for foundation modern apprentices in the same period was 9 per cent and for NVQ learners it was 21 per cent. Of the 12 clients on the New Deal programme from 2001 only four have achieved all the targets on their individual learning plan and nine obtained employment.

48. Learners' work is generally appropriate and well presented. Portfolios contain clear and varied evidence that is cross-referenced to the NVQ performance criteria. Those learners on work placements are developing good industrial skills. Some bench joinery learners have achieved their technical certificate and completed their key skills units. They are on target to achieve their intended learning goal on time. New Deal clients are working towards achieving units of an intermediate craft certificate and NVQ units at level 2 in either brickwork or bench joinery. They are on target to achieve their planned learning goal on time.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																	
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts					2												
Retained*					0	0											
Successfully completed					0	0											
Still in learning					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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																	
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts			22		27		40										
Retained*			1	5	5	19	2	5									
Successfully completed			1	5	3	11	0	0									
Still in learning			4	18	1	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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
NVQ Training																	
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	1		26		85		67										
Retained*	0		0	0	13	15	24	36									
Successfully completed	0		0	0	10	12	14	21									
Still in learning	1		2	8	3	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

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 18-24																
	2003-04															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12															
Retained*	0															
Planned learning completed	0															
Gained job	0															
Still in training	12															

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Quality of education and training

49. Tutors give much individual coaching during off-the-job practical training sessions. There is a good ratio of tutors to learners. Schemes of work and lesson plans are prepared well and used effectively. Learners are given a chance to evaluate the lesson but there is little reference to their preferred individual learning styles. Learning materials are well prepared and are used to promote learning. Examples are graded to allow learners to work at their own pace, and challenge those of differing abilities. Staff are well qualified and industrially experienced and use their experiences to encourage learning. Learners understand and appreciate the way in which their on- and off-the-job training complement each other. Since the change in management, key skills training and assessment have been integrated with core vocational subjects and are introduced early in the training programme. Learners are now achieving their key skills earlier in the training programme and progressing more quickly. There is good support for learners in background knowledge and practical sessions. Additional staffing is provided individually in the classroom or workshops for those learners identified as having additional support needs, so that learners can work at their own pace.

50. Resources in the training centre are satisfactory and workshops and classrooms are clean and tidy. There are sufficient hand tools and machinery for learners to use. Some hand tools and equipment are old, although Shape has a system for replacing equipment. Classrooms are equipped with satisfactory learning aids to help learners with their background knowledge.

51. Arrangements to assess learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills during their induction are adequate. Those who require it receive appropriate additional support from vocational and specialist staff. Learners are well aware of the support available and how to access it. Witness testimonies and oral questions are used to support learners with additional literacy needs.

52. Assessment is satisfactory. For those learners in work placements a variety of

assessment methods is used. Qualified assessors visit the workplace to observe practical tasks taking place. These are planned and agreed with the learner and employer in most instances. Use is made of witness testimonies. However, there is no register of recognised witnesses. For other learners, all assessment takes place in the training centre with learners carrying out tasks under simulated workplace conditions. The validity of this evidence has been questioned by the external verifier. The provider recognises that these learners do not gather evidence from the workplace, and is working to improve the situation.

53. Learners receive satisfactory support. Learners are reviewed every 12 weeks in the workplace or training centre. In most cases, these progress reviews are planned in advance with the learner and the employer. Learners in work placements also have a monthly monitoring visit. Shape checks on learners' attendance and punctuality weekly by telephone calls to the employers. Initial assessment is used to identify learners requiring additional support and this is delivered by specialist staff on an individual basis in the classroom or workshop area. Employers are supportive of training and take an active part in learners' progress reviews.

54. There are insufficient placements in brickwork. None of the three brickwork NVQ learners are in work placements. All attend the training centre and are carrying out training in workshop areas. Learners are assessed carrying out simulated practical tasks. Learners are unable to achieve some aspects of their award because there are no work placements. The fact that there is no evidence from the workplace has been commented upon by the external verifier and the validity of the evidence has been questioned. Shape has experienced difficulty in obtaining good work placements and this was recognised as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Some community projects have been used to provide realistic working conditions, but at the time of inspection these had been postponed or delayed.

55. On-the-job training is not planned effectively. Those learners in placements are able to experience a wide range of practical tasks. However, there is little formal planning and co-ordination of these tasks. Employers are not always involved in planning the learners' training and do not fully understand the role of the employer in the planning and assessment process. Many employers do not have copies of the NVQ standards and are unaware of their required input or of the skills the learner needs to develop in the workplace. It is usually left to the learner to identify the requirements of the NVQ and match these to the work available in the workplace. At some employers' premises a skills scan has been conducted to identify what work is carried out and to what extent it covers the requirements of the NVQ. This aids the planning process but is not comprehensive and is not carried out consistently.

Leadership and management

56. Changes have recently been made to the management structure of the construction department. New managers have been put in place and there has been a change and reduction in roles for training staff. There is now a clear management structure and effective communication between all staff. Staff have a clearer understanding of their

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roles and responsibilities and there have been improvements in monitoring and analysing the progress of learners. The department has established effective links with local schools and external agencies to promote the construction industry. Actions are being taken to improve the effectiveness of the construction section but many of these are new and the impact on the learners has yet to be felt.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	80	4
New Deal 18-24	3	None

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good individual support for learners
- good assessment practices in dental training
- good links with employers

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates
- poor achievement rates
- poor internal verification practice in early years
- inadequate off-the-job training in early years
- inadequate assessment in early years

Achievement and standards

57. Shape is effective in developing learners' employability skills. All learners have the opportunity to gain additional skills in food hygiene, basic health and safety, paediatric first aid and moving and handling.

58. Learners in dental and care training demonstrate good practical skills related to their role at work. Dental learners are competent and knowledgeable in preparing for dental procedures such as root canal fillings. Most employers are pleased with learners' skills, competence and knowledge. All of the dental employers stated that the learners were able to work independently and to a very good professional standard.

59. Retention rates are poor, a weakness recognised in the self-assessment report. Of the learners who started with Shape in 2002-03, 50 per cent have left their programmes; however, all of the learners who started on the dental programme in 2002-04 have been retained. Of the early years foundation modern apprentices who started their programme in 2003-04, 25 per cent have already left the programme. There is a newly established system to identify learners who are at a high risk of leaving and some learners who planned to leave were supported by a member of the early years team and decided to stay. One learner was visited at home and given specific individual support to enable her to stay on the programme.

60. Achievement rates are poor. Of the 181 modern apprentices who started their

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programmes over the past four years, only two have achieved their full framework. Of 111 NVQ learners who started their programmes in the same period, just six have achieved their qualification. No learners in early years or care achieved their foundation modern apprenticeship. In early years programmes, achievement of the NVQ is delayed because the provider does not have direct claims status. This means that an external verifier has to be brought in to oversee the assessment process. Very few units have been signed off by the early years assessors for the 16 learners due to complete at the end of January 2004. These learners have already had one extension to their programme. For a period of four months there was only one member of staff in the early years team. Learners are making slow progress towards achieving their NVQ in dental training. At the time of the inspection, eight learners had exceeded their funding period. Although they are still poor, achievement rates in dental training have improved from 1 per cent in 2000-01 to 10 per cent in 2001-02.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts			8		12		12									
Retained*			0	0	4	33	5	42									
Successfully completed			0	0	0	0	2	17									
Still in learning			4	50	1	8	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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	18		46		46		39									
Retained*	0		0	0	9	20	18	46									
Successfully completed	0		0	0	10	22	10	26									
Still in learning	13		23	50	2	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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVO Training																
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		26		48		37									
Retained*	0		0	0	8	17	12	32								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	5	10	2	5								
Still in learning	4		11	42	11	23	11	30								

*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

Jobcentre Plus funded programmes																
New Deal 18-24																
	2003-04															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3															
Retained*	0															
Planned learning completed	0															
Gained job	0															
Still in training	3															

*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Quality of education and training

61. Learners receive very good individual support. Learners undergo diagnostic testing to assess their literacy, numeracy or key skills support requirements. Sessions are arranged to provide additional learning support. Dental learners who are unable to attend a training session are visited by the tutor and given appropriate work and the support to complete it. All staff effectively support learners to help them overcome their barriers to learning. Shape made a successful application to the Prince's Trust for financial support for a learner who was experiencing financial difficulties. Learners experiencing difficulties in a work placement are given support to resolve them or to change placements. Links with the local mentoring service provide individual practical and emotional support.

62. Assessment practices in dental training are good. Assessments are planned with the learner and the employer. Employers are fully involved in assessments and have a good understanding of the NVO requirements. Recent staff changes have resulted in changes in assessment practices, with assessment focused on completion. Detail in observation reports is good. Valid judgements are made using a range of evidence. Not all early years assessments are good. In some portfolios there is insufficient evidence of work practices and experiences. Internal verification in dental and care provision is

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satisfactory. In early years provision there is currently no internal verifier, although a recent appointment has been made.

63. Links with employers are good. Employers are given good information about learners and their programmes. Employers are generally kept informed of learners' progress. Absences from training are reported to employers and work-placement providers and Shape contacts employers weekly to check on learners' attendance. Dental practices regularly ring Shape to request new learners. Employers support the annual awards ceremony and some sponsor learners.

64. Key skills training and assessment is satisfactory. Learners are given support in compiling their portfolios and there is evidence of project work which effectively integrates the work for information technology and for application of number with their learners' main programme of vocational learning. An observed off-the-job training session provided evidence for communication and working with others. Learners enthusiastically solved the task set and then completed their written evidence with help and guidance from the tutor.

65. Resources are satisfactory. Teaching rooms are well decorated and provide sufficient space for learners to work. There are adequate reference books and journals for learners to access current and relevant information. Learners have access to laptop computers and a good-quality computer suite with internet access. All staff have relevant vocational qualifications and most have sufficient vocational experience.

66. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners are able to attend the centre for an informal event where they are able to join in practical and creative activities related to their specific vocational option. Tutors assess learners for their ability to work with people. Learners have an initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and key skills to identify any additional learning needs. Support for literacy and numeracy is set in a vocational context. Learners stated that they found the additional support useful. Some early years learners were not informed of their results.

67. The induction programme for learners is satisfactory. Learners are given copies of Shape's policies on health and safety and equality of opportunity. Learners are told about the requirements of their programme and of the work placement. A member of Shape visits the placement before the learner starts to discuss training and to assess health and safety. There is an effective guide for employers to which employers refer in the first instance to resolve any queries. Shape's staff are available by telephone or through visits to assist with any unresolved issues.

68. Off-the-job training in early years is inadequate. Modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 only receive portfolio development at the training centre. Foundation modern apprentices who started in 2002-03 said that it was many months since they had received any formal training sessions. Learners following the 2003-04 foundation modern apprenticeship programme said that their background knowledge sessions had been delayed. Learners were unable to describe the basic stages of child development. Evidence from a level 3 learner's NVQ portfolio did not demonstrate adequate

background knowledge. Shape has received accreditation for the progression awards and staff have developed workbooks. There have been some off-the-job training sessions for the first three units of the progression awards.

69. Assessments for early years learners are inadequate. Summative assessments are inadequate and the assessor's judgements are not recorded. There is insufficient evidence for assessment decisions to be made. The evidence in learners' portfolios shows long gaps between assessment visits. Once learners have completed their written evidence there are long delays before assessment takes place. Several learners require an extension to their programme because assessments have not been completed within the funding time. Learners understand the benefits of looking at NVQ assessment across the whole of their learning and can competently cross-reference their evidence. Learners take responsibility for their work. A work-based assessor provides good support and assessment opportunities for learners.

Leadership and management

70. Internal verification is satisfactory in dental training and meets the requirements of the awarding body. Internal verifiers are suitably qualified and have a good range of experience. They carry out adequate monitoring of assessors.

71. The internal verification process for early years training is inadequate. Currently there is no active qualified internal verifier. Assessors have insufficient support for them to carry out their role effectively. There is insufficient internal verification sampling and interim scrutiny of learners' portfolios. There have been delays in learners completing their NVQs as no internal verification has taken place. New staff have been appointed to the early years team. One member of the team is working to becoming a qualified verifier.

72. Staff contributed adequately to the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report failed to identify two strengths and three weaknesses, identified by the inspection team.

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Foundation programmes

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Entry to Employment	47	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good progression
- good support for learners
- good skills development

Weaknesses

- insufficient after-care system
- insufficient planning of learning

Achievement and standards

73. Learners develop good practical and personal skills. Learners can attend a range of options as part of their learning programme. Learners participate in vocational tasters and in practical sessions, including sport and art. Learners develop good skills in vocational areas such as carpentry, joinery, basic catering and care. They demonstrate the ability to cook basic, economical meals and to move people safely and with dignity. Learners attend a one-day outdoor pursuits day that focuses on target-setting, teamwork and communication skills. Learners identify the course as motivating them to continue with the programme and to achieve their goals. The work that learners do while attending Shape is focused on their goals and towards gaining employment or vocational training. Learners develop skills in communication, jobsearch, numeracy and literacy, all of which are relevant to job applications and employment. Most learners attend short courses such as food hygiene and first aid. Learners on the young mums-to-be programme develop confidence and demonstrate good practical parenting skills such as preparing feeds and bathing babies. The E2E programme has not been in operation long enough to comment upon retention rates.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Entry to Employment	2003-04															
	No.		%		No.		%		No.		%		No.		%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	54															
Progression ¹	7															
Achieved objectives ²	11															
Still in learning	47															

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

Quality of education and training

74. There is good progression of learners on the E2E programme. At the time of the inspection, seven learners had progressed into employment and four were on vocational training programmes in care, early years and carpentry and joinery. Other learners were planning to move on to training in early years and care. Shape has just received approval to run an NVQ at level 1 in housekeeping to meet the needs of learners wishing to progress into the care vocational area, but who are unable to work at level 2.

75. Support for learners is particularly effective. Most learners have many barriers to learning and employment. Some learners have criminal records, very young children or poor health. Many learners have poor self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation. Learners are given support with domestic and financial issues, including support with clothing to enable them to attend their training. Work takes place in small groups or individually, providing learners with very good support. Learners are encouraged to help others in the group. Tutors show a good understanding of learners' support needs and their potential barriers to learning. Learners' progress and achievement is celebrated at the quarterly staff conferences and at the annual awards ceremony. These events have a significant impact on the learners, as for many this is their first significant achievement.

76. Training and learning resources are satisfactory. All learning takes place in single-storey buildings with accessible toilets for people with restricted mobility. Rooms are adequately furnished and decorated, with sufficient space for practical activities. Learning for E2E learners takes place in community centres, to provide accessible training venues that learners are familiar with. Teaching and support staff are appropriately qualified and are experienced in supporting young people. Good use is made of Shape's vocationally qualified staff to develop learners' vocational skills.

77. There are sufficient work placements for the learners. There is a central list of employers who are sensitive to the needs of E2E learners. Employers have been

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informed of the support that these learners may need while on a work placement.

78. Some learning is insufficiently planned. Learners' literacy and numeracy support needs are assessed during induction and appropriate support is provided. Learners and their development officer complete a two-week training plan. However, the learner is not sufficiently involved in this planning. A yearly planner is available to all tutors, but is not shared with the learners. Most learners are not sufficiently aware of the scope of the programme. All learners have individual learning plans; however, the targets set are vague, such as 'to improve literacy'. Plans do not sufficiently detail how specific barriers to learning, such as punctuality, will be tackled. Although learning styles are assessed, this information is not used in the planning of individual learning and is not shared with other tutors.

79. Learners are given adequate support for the literacy and numeracy components of the E2E programme. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy is good and appropriate support is provided. Opportunities are taken to develop learners' confidence in literacy and numeracy in many aspects of the programme. For example learners do specific work with the local mentoring service on budgeting, to develop their numeracy skills. Learners are set tasks to develop their literacy and numeracy.

80. The after-care system is inadequate. Shape relies on former learners returning to the centre in order to monitor their progress once they have left the programme. If learners do call in to the training centre their attendance is documented in a book. However, there is no system for monitoring learners after they leave. There is no mechanism for providing support unless the learner returns to the centre.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management of the E2E programme is satisfactory. Staff at the three centres and the staff delivering the young mums-to-be programme communicate well with each other. Weekly meetings are planned to share information and to discuss future developments. The allocation of caseloads to the development officers leads to the duplication of some aspects of the provision and in particular to the finding of placements.

82. Shape works hard to ensure the continuous improvement of its training. This commitment is strongly reinforced by the new chief executive who has recognised the key strengths of Shape and made a strategic decision to focus upon this aspect of the provision.

83. Staff were involved in writing the self-assessment report, which provided a satisfactory account of the provision. However, it did not fully reflect the findings of the inspection team.