

INSPECTION REPORT

Industrial Services Group

10 September 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

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

Industrial Services Group

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	2
What learners like about Industrial Services Group	7
What learners think Industrial Services Group could improve	7
Key challenges for Industrial Services Group	8

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	11
Quality assurance	13
Foundation programmes	15

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Industrial Services Group (ISG) was originally established in the early 1980s, as a service of Devon County Council. Following the reorganisation of local authorities, the current organisation was formed in 1998. The group is operated as a partnership between Devon County Council, City of Plymouth Council and Torbay Council. It provides employment opportunities and training for people with physical, sensory, mental health issues and learning disabilities. ISG has a contract with Jobcentre Plus for the Workstep programme. The Workstep clients are employed either in work placements with host employers across Devon or in one of ISG's four supported business units which are located in Plymouth, Torbay, Exeter and Barnstaple.

2. The chief executive has overall responsibility for the operation of ISG and reports to a joint management committee, which is made up of elected members from each of the three local authorities. The senior management team consists of five managers who report to the chief executive and they have individual responsibility for the industries division, the equipment division, the employment division, group accounts and human resources. The four staff teams, which include employment consultants and job coaches, are each led by an employment co-ordinator. These teams support the Workstep clients who are employed in the local community and are based either at, or near to, one of the four business units. ISG has been accredited with the Investors in People standard, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

3. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people in the area from minority ethnic groups is 1.1 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Foundation programmes

4. Since April 2001, 804 clients have participated in the Workstep programme. Four hundred and forty of these clients transferred to Workstep from the supported placement scheme, of whom 276 remain on the programme. Of the 496 current clients, 302 are on work placement with 200 host employers in a range of occupational areas including agriculture, customer service, local government, manufacturing, retail and tourism. One hundred and ninety-four clients are employed at one of ISG's four supported business units. Work at these units includes the refurbishment of wheelchairs, working in mobility showrooms, manufacturing, assembly, packaging and the provision of community equipment services. One third of clients have a learning disability and a quarter have restricted mobility or dexterity. Clients are referred to ISG by disability employment advisers, a local path finder initiative, through the ISG website and a free telephone line. Initial assessment of clients' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are carried out by an information advice and guidance team and the employment consultants. Off-the-job training is provided by local further education colleges, training providers and

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

ISG's training staff. There are training facilities at ISG's business units. All clients are employed. Clients in work placements are visited at least twice a year by their employment consultant for progress reviews.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	35
Number of learner interviews	99
Number of staff interviews	100
Number of employer interviews	39
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	52
Number of partner/external agency interviews	10
Number of visits	58

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the foundation programme is good, as is the leadership and management and the arrangements for quality assurance. ISG's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		2
Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability/employment training</i> - Workstep	496	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **The clients develop good skills in ISG's business units and on work placements with host employers.** They gain a wide range of work-related, personal and social skills during the programme. Many of the clients work on a wide range of tasks and have opportunities to try a number of roles in their supported employment. Some become multi-skilled. Clients achieve good standards of work and develop the skills needed for their employment.

7. Progression into unsupported employment is satisfactory at 14 per cent for clients who started in 2001-02. Of the clients who have progressed into unsupported employment, 62 per cent progressed in the current or previous contract year.

8. **ISG actively encourages clients to take training courses** and to work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and other accredited qualifications. Many clients have completed courses in computing, health and safety, first aid, lift truck driving, manual handling and other industry-related programmes. Since April 2001, 261 clients have started courses leading to accredited and non-accredited qualifications and 513 qualifications have been achieved.

Quality of education and training

9. **ISG provides particularly good support for clients.** Staff frequently support individual clients with personal issues and sometimes act as their advocates. Effective strategies support clients and help them to maintain employment. Job coaches offer good support to clients who have specific development needs for their employment. The group has a helpline that clients can contact for advice, information and support.

10. **A good variety of training and employment are provided by ISG for clients to develop their skills in the workplace.** External clients work with a wide range of host employers and are trained for their employment. Well-supported and individual on-the-job training is provided in ISG's business units. A broad range of accredited programmes and training courses are available to clients. There are good opportunities for clients to learn new skills.

11. **ISG has good links with host employers.** The support provided to employers is very good and includes an employer helpdesk and comprehensive information on ISG's website. Job coaches work effectively with host employers to identify and provide training to clients on work placements.

12. **Staffing arrangements for Workstep are well resourced.** Most staff are well qualified and experienced. ISG provides a wide range of training and development opportunities for staff to further develop their skills.

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

13. Training at ISG is satisfactory and in some areas it is good. Nine learning sessions were observed and graded, 89 per cent of which were satisfactory or better. Most trainers are competent in a range of skills and knowledge. They are able to work effectively with a wide range of clients and adapt their training to meet clients' needs. However, some of the training is insufficiently stimulating. Job coaches work with some clients on an individual basis and this makes a significant improvement in the client's performance.

14. Physical resources across ISG are satisfactory and in some places are good. Clients have access to a wide range of aids to enable them to work effectively. The business units are appropriately equipped and clients have a good working environment.

15. **Target-setting at progress reviews is weak.** The targets set do not adequately reflect clients' goals. Most of the targets are not specific and are often recorded as general statements. Some clients are identified as ready to progress, but do not have clear targets set for this to be achieved.

16. **ISG's induction procedures are weak.** The process does not adequately cover the rights and responsibilities or the status of clients. Some clients have little understanding of the Workstep programme. Equal opportunities is not sufficiently promoted during induction. Most of the information given to clients at induction is written in a complex style and is not easy to read for those with literacy needs.

17. **Literacy, numeracy and language support is insufficient.** Most clients' individual development plans do not include a systematic review of their additional needs. Their needs are not effectively identified by ISG's initial assessment checklist. Some clients are referred to other providers for literacy and/or numeracy support, but for most of these clients this support is not an integral part of their employment and training.

Leadership and management

18. **ISG has very effective strategies to increase employment and training opportunities.** It has significantly increased the number of host employer work placements and the proportion of new clients employed on these placements has also increased. ISG has successfully replaced its previous strategy of ongoing financial support to host employers with practical support from local teams of employment consultants and job coaches.

19. **ISG's planning and management of Workstep are good.** There is clear direction from senior managers that effectively integrates the aims of the programme into all aspects of the organisation. Planning and management are strongly focused on the provision of effective support to enable people with a disability to reach their full potential. It includes good arrangements for recruitment and post-progression support. Arrangements for client support services are planned and managed well.

20. **Team work at ISG is good.** Staff have a clear understanding of the aims of Workstep and work effectively in their own teams and across other teams to help clients achieve

their goals. Effective team working ensures that staff respond promptly and effectively to identify work placements and match clients appropriately. Area teams are well organised and the staff work very well together to support local clients.

21. **ISG has inclusive arrangements to meet the diverse needs of clients.** The comprehensive support structures are used effectively by staff to identify clients' individual needs, build their confidence and develop their potential. The programme provides individually planned support mechanisms to develop and improve clients' job skills and employability.

22. **A broad range of partnership arrangements to widen participation has been developed by ISG.** These links are effectively used to promote the services of ISG and recruit clients from under-represented groups. Through strong collaborative work with partner organisations, ISG has generated many innovative projects to widen participation.

23. **ISG has developed particularly effective arrangements for quality assurance** which are applied across the organisation. The procedures are well planned to assure the quality of clients' experience at each stage of the programme. The effectiveness of the framework is checked through regular monitoring, audits and sampling. The process identifies areas for improvement and appropriate action plans are developed and implemented.

24. **Good use is made of feedback from clients and employers.** A range of surveys have been carried out and the results have been used effectively to plan improvements to the programme. The views of host employers are sought through a range of methods and the results are closely monitored.

25. ISG's self-assessment report is based on the Workstep quality standards and a rigorous analysis of its provision. The consultation process involved most of the clients and used feedback from host employers, but did not include the partner organisations. **The report is evaluative and self-critical.** It recognises most of the strengths and weaknesses which were identified by inspectors.

26. **ISG provides a wide range of staff development and training opportunities.** There is a strong commitment to personal and professional development within ISG. The organisation has established a well-defined culture of developing individuals to achieve their potential. Staff development and training is well supported.

27. **The arrangements for clients' literacy, numeracy and language support are incomplete.** Some clients attend classes with other providers, however, ISG is in the early stages of establishing its own provision. Insufficient training has been provided for staff who carry out initial assessments of clients' additional needs. ISG does not evaluate the effectiveness of initial assessment in identifying clients' support needs. Delivery of ISG's support for clients' numeracy needs is planned, but not yet available. Planning for language support has not been developed.

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

28. **ISG's promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is insufficient.** The implementation of the equal opportunities policies and procedures are not regularly monitored. ISG does not offer equality of opportunity policies to host employers who do not have their own policies. Equal opportunities are not sufficiently promoted at induction or reinforced at progress reviews.

29. **The complaints system is ineffective.** ISG does not sufficiently monitor clients' complaints. Many clients have literacy support needs and find it difficult to understand the complaints procedure and make written complaints.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very effective strategies to increase employment and training opportunities
- good planning and management of the Workstep programme
- inclusive arrangements to meet the diverse needs of clients
- particularly effective quality assurance arrangements
- good use of feedback to make improvements
- broad range of partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- incomplete arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support
- insufficient promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities
- ineffective complaints system

Foundation programmes

Employability/employment training

Strengths

- particularly good support for clients
- good development of skills
- good range of training and employment opportunities
- good links with host employers
- good team working to support the aims of the programme
- well-resourced staffing arrangements

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting
- weak induction
- insufficient support for literacy, numeracy and language skills

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP:

- the encouragement to progress
- they give you a positive chance to see what you are good at
- the opportunity for disabled people to fulfil their potential
- the work and the environment
- I would not have come back to work without their help
- I was at a desperately low point, they've brought me back to life
- they're always there at the end of the telephone and they come to see me
- the high level of support on a one to one basis
- the financial support for my course
- the approachable staff
- I enjoy training others and we help each other
- it's safe and secure here

WHAT LEARNERS THINK INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP COULD IMPROVE:

- the communication - it could be better
- needs advertising more
- a more challenging job
- the communications for people with learning and visual impairment
- the complaints system, so that I can complain to someone I trust
- more space on the factory floor

KEY CHALLENGES FOR INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP:

- continue to develop progression into unsupported employment
- continue to develop the quality of provision
- ensure that all new clients receive appropriate induction and current clients take part in the revised induction process
- improve target-setting at all stages of the programme and provide the staff involved with appropriate training and support
- develop effective arrangements to meet clients' literacy, numeracy and language support needs
- promote and reinforce equality of opportunity

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective strategies to increase employment and training opportunities
- good planning and management of the Workstep programme
- inclusive arrangements to meet the diverse needs of clients
- particularly effective quality assurance arrangements
- good use of feedback to make improvements
- broad range of partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- incomplete arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support
- insufficient promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities
- ineffective complaints system

30. ISG has very effective strategies to increase employment and training opportunities. It has significantly increased the number of host employer placements for clients. In 2001, only 20 per cent of clients were on work placements with host employers and this has increased to 61 per cent who are placed with 200 employers. The number of new clients employed on external work placements has also increased from 52 per cent in 2001-02 to 73 per cent in 2003-04. ISG promotes the benefits of Workstep placements to recruit host employers and has developed a detailed marketing plan to support this approach. It effectively maintains an employer network of approximately 800 employers and this group has become the main source of clients' work placements. Since 2002, ISG has adopted the approach of reducing or eliminating financial support to host employers. Financial support is for a specific duration. The objective for clients to progress to unsupported employment is made clear to host employers at the outset of the work placement. ISG has replaced its previous strategy of ongoing financial support to employers with practical support from local teams of employment consultants and job coaches. This provides host employers with a greater level of support and prevents financial support becoming a barrier to clients' progression. Internally, ISG has diversified to include service-sector opportunities to broaden the range of employment and training available to clients.

31. ISG's planning and management of Workstep is good. There is clear direction from senior managers that effectively integrates the aims of the programme into all aspects of the organisation. Planning and management are strongly focused on the provision of effective support to enable people with a disability to reach their full potential in employment. It includes good arrangements for recruitment and post-progression support. Detailed and effective business planning is carried out annually for each division and the organisation. The commercial aspects of the business are well managed to

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

ensure an appropriate range of commercial contracts for the business units. ISG has significantly expanded its local staff teams of employment consultants and job coaches and this has improved the ratio of clients to staff. The staff offer well-planned support for clients who are employed internally and externally. ISG also provides clients with access to a range of innovative support services, for example a counselling service for mental health issues and an information, advice and guidance service. Arrangements for clients' support services are planned and managed well. ISG makes good use of performance management systems to monitor progress against targets. These include clear targets for clients' progression into unsupported employment that are appropriate to their employment goals and development.

32. ISG provides a wide range of staff development and training opportunities. There is a strong commitment to personal and professional development within ISG. The organisation has established a well-defined culture of developing individuals to achieve their potential and this applies to staff and clients. Individual members of staff are encouraged to identify their development needs and are well supported by ISG in the development of their skills and experience. All staff have an annual appraisal where their development needs are discussed. Members of staff are employed by one of the three local authorities that form ISG and are on different terms and conditions of employment. However, they are usually able to access development opportunities and training provided by any of the three authorities. Recent training has included a session on target-setting in client reviews for 22 staff, and 15 staff have participated in skilled advisers training for the information, advice and guidance service they provide to clients. Individual development includes opportunities to achieve accredited and non-accredited qualifications. ISG provides opportunities for staff to develop their occupational skills and specialist areas of work. Staff development and training is planned effectively to benefit clients and to support the Workstep programme.

33. ISG's systems to manage information are satisfactory. Sufficient information for monitoring, target-setting and decision-making is available to staff. However, some of the systems are not used efficiently. Some aspects of ISG's management of information are reliant on records held by partner organisations or by individual staff and their knowledge of specific areas of the programme. For example, the group does not have a database of external clients' achievement of qualifications.

34. Communication within ISG is satisfactory. Staff are kept informed of developments and key information through a variety of methods. These include the group e-mail system, newsletters, team and staff meetings. Individual members of staff also receive communications from their local authority employer. Communications at local level vary, but are mostly effective. Considerable efforts are made within the organisation to ensure that the necessity of working across the three local authorities does not impact on the effectiveness of internal communications. ISG's communication with a wide range of organisations, including their employer network, is effective. The group has established a comprehensive website to provide information about Workstep, job opportunities and disability. There are useful telephone helplines for clients and employers, with a single telephone number to ensure the approach to all potential clients is appropriately co-ordinated.

35. ISG has clear governance arrangements. Each of the three local authorities are represented on the joint management committee. This group meets regularly and involved in the development of ISG. They receive comprehensive reports on progress from ISG's chief executive.

36. ISG's overall management of resources is efficient and effective. Financial planning is detailed and includes a range of forward planning. Most of the resources are adequate and some are good. The business units are well equipped, but some areas are at maximum capacity. Some staff share computers and find this arrangement difficult to manage.

37. ISG's arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are incomplete. The organisation is in the early stages of establishing its' own provision. Two members of ISG's staff have recently started to deliver literacy support. Both have teaching qualifications, but are not experienced in delivering literacy and numeracy support. Arrangements have been made for them to be trained and currently a qualified and experienced consultant provides specialist advice and guidance. A process to assess clients' literacy and numeracy support needs has recently been introduced for all new clients. The initial assessment is based on self-assessment and is carried out by the employment consultants. However, insufficient training and support has been provided for this task. ISG does not evaluate the effectiveness of initial assessment in identifying clients' literacy and numeracy support needs. Delivery of numeracy support is planned, but is not yet available. Planning for language support has not been developed. Some clients receive literacy and/or numeracy support at their local college or training provider. However, this support is not always sufficiently linked to their employment or the development of their employability skills.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

38. ISG has inclusive arrangements to meet the diverse needs of clients on the Workstep programme. The comprehensive support structures are used effectively by staff to identify clients' individual needs, build their confidence and develop their potential. Experienced and well-qualified staff manage ISG's single point of entry system, which has been carefully designed to reduce barriers to employment on the programme. Staff provide particularly good, individually tailored support to clients, to allow them to secure and retain their jobs. The individual development plans are produced following detailed initial and diagnostic assessments and completion of the client's vocational profile. The programme provides effective and individually planned support mechanisms to develop and improve clients' job skills and employability. ISG effectively matches clients' skills and needs to jobs. Most clients report job satisfaction and are offered opportunities on a wide range of training programmes, many leading to qualifications. The employment consultants and job coach teams regularly monitor and review the needs of clients on external work placements, in partnership with their host employer. An employers' link for the disability service has been established to provide support to employers on disability employment issues, such as training on disability awareness. The regular reviews of individual development plans with clients are carried out supportively and focus on

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

helping clients achieve their personal and occupational goals.

39. A broad range of partnership arrangements to widen participation has been developed by ISG. Partners include local colleges, employers, and voluntary and community organisations, with extensive links at regional and national levels. Many of the partnership links are with specific groups that provide useful advocacy and advice services for clients. These links are also effectively used to promote the services of ISG and recruit clients from under-represented groups. Through strong collaborative work with partner organisations, ISG has generated many innovative projects to widen participation, such as the employers' network. The effective and efficient use of external funding has broadened the range of routes into employment, for example, a recent training programme to enhance clients' skills and employability.

40. Resources are satisfactory. Clients who have mobility difficulties can access all premises. Most training and learning resources are satisfactory. ISG's staff who teach literacy skills are not qualified or experienced, but are well supported by a qualified and experienced consultant. Resources to support communications are appropriate, for example, specialised software, a portable loop induction system and access to British Sign Language interpreters. However, some clients experience difficulty in accessing materials in Braille.

41. ISG's marketing and promotional strategy is satisfactory. The marketing plan has clear objectives that identify and address the needs of learners with disabilities and barriers to employment. The website includes an extensive range of services and employment opportunities through links with local authorities, health and social services. It provides useful information on disability and relevant legislation. The well-developed approaches to engage employers and agencies in the recruitment of clients include newsletters, presentations, cold-calling potential host employers and displays at local conferences. However, the overall marketing strategies do not specifically include elements of equality of opportunity for race, gender or sexual orientation.

42. The corporate equal opportunities policies of the three local authorities are satisfactory. ISG complies with each of the different frameworks and effectively follows the procedures to meet the needs of clients. However, the implementation of corporate equal opportunities policies and procedures are not monitored on a regular basis. ISG meets most of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Most premises have been appropriately adjusted and equipment in the workplace is provided in most cases.

43. ISG's promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is insufficient. ISG is well resourced to promote services for and to clients. The induction course for new clients includes some information on equal opportunities, but there are no support materials available to help clients understand the authorities' policies and procedures. ISG carries out some monitoring of host employers' arrangements, but does not offer policies to host employers who do not have their own. Equal opportunities are monitored with clients during their progress reviews, but this process does not sufficiently reinforce most clients' understanding. The training for staff is satisfactory. They have participated in a wide

range of training courses related to equal opportunities. However, this has not included specific training to update staff on the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Much of the information is provided through distribution of documents or is introduced at the basic acceptable behaviour training. Many staff and clients are unaware of the implications of the Act to meet the needs of minority ethnic groups. There are few displays relating to equality of opportunity at any of ISG's premises. ISG's new recruitment strategy gives priority to staff with disabilities to apply for jobs internally, but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this initiative.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

44. ISG has developed particularly effective arrangements for quality assurance and they are applied coherently across the organisation. The procedures are well planned to assure the quality of clients' experience at each stage of the Workstep programme. There are clear and standardised procedures in place for referrals, initial assessment, induction, personal development plans, reviews, training and post-employment support. ISG makes effective use of data to monitor the provision for quality assurance purposes. Within and across ISG, there is a strong commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement. Members of staff are fully consulted in the development of the quality assurance arrangements. They have a good understanding of the framework and carry out the processes thoroughly. A member of staff acts as a quality champion in each of the centres. The effectiveness of the procedures for quality assurance is monitored through regular audits and sampling, to check that the processes are carried out to the specified standards. The audit arrangements identify areas for improvement and appropriate action plans are developed and implemented. For example, audits of progress review records identified that target-setting needed to be improved. Initial training for staff involved in this aspect of the programme has been provided. Regular and detailed quality reviews are carried out across the organisation. The findings are fully discussed at senior management meetings and actions are taken to improve the quality of the programme, such as the development of ISG's placement service to include job coaches. This initiative has been very effective in helping clients who have difficulties in specific areas of their work, to improve their job skills and retain their employment.

45. ISG makes good use of feedback from clients and employers. A variety of comprehensive surveys has been carried out. An in-depth survey of clients had a good rate of response. The results were fully analysed and used effectively to plan improvements to the programme. For example, arrangements have been made for each client to have a named employment consultant. This effectively provides continuity of support for the client and for those on external placements, with their host employer. The views of host employers are sought through a range of methods and the results are closely monitored. ISG identified that the feedback requested from host employers did not provide sufficient qualitative information to fully identify areas for improvement. The procedure and feedback mechanisms have been revised and a detailed information pack for host employers has been produced. ISG actively seeks the views of disability employment advisers on referrals, progression and support of the clients. This information has been used to make effective improvements to the programme, for example, arrangements for client interviews to be held at local Jobcentre Plus offices

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

when this would be helpful for the client.

46. The monitoring of the on-the-job training is satisfactory. This is carried out by production managers and supervisors. Many of the staff have at least basic qualifications in training. Some make very effective changes to the way they deliver their programme to meet the needs of clients. For example, one supervisor has rewritten a training manual for clients with literacy and numeracy needs. Staff are observed delivering on-the-job training and carrying out reviews, however, this practice is not carried out systematically throughout ISG. The quality assurance framework does not include standard procedures for the observation of teaching and learning. The observations are effective in identifying areas for improvement and preparing action plans for individual staff. Observations of training and client reviews are also used effectively by ISG to identify areas for improvement across the programme. For example, to improve clients' understanding of the Workstep programme, ISG has produced clear and well-designed client information packs.

47. Off-the-job training which is provided by local colleges and external training providers is effectively monitored by ISG. Problems are dealt with promptly and effectively. ISG's monitoring of literacy and numeracy classes identified that the training was not sufficiently linked to the development of clients' employment skills. ISG has recently established its own team to deliver literacy and numeracy sessions internally. This initiative is at an early stage of development. When clients attend external courses, their line managers clearly identify how they can use and develop their new skills in the workplace. Clients' progress towards qualifications is closely monitored and appropriate actions are taken to provide support when needed. The monitoring of internal and external verifier reports is satisfactory.

48. ISG's self-assessment report is based on the Workstep quality standards. The organisation has carried out a thorough analysis of its provision which involved most of the clients and host employers, but it did not include the partner organisations. The report is particularly evaluative and self-critical. The self-assessment recognises most of the strengths and weaknesses which were identified by inspectors. A detailed action plan with clearly identified responsibilities, targets and time frames, has been produced to deal with the weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

49. The complaints system is ineffective. ISG does not monitor clients' complaints sufficiently. Complaints are normally dealt with by line managers, but if the problem is not resolved at this stage, then the employee does not have any further recourse other than to make a formal grievance in writing. No formal complaints have been made. Many clients have literacy support needs and find it difficult to understand the complaints procedure and make written complaints.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability/employment training</i> - Workstep	496	2

Employability/employment training

Strengths

- particularly good support for clients
- good development of skills
- good range of training and employment opportunities
- good links with host employers
- good team working to support the aims of the programme
- well-resourced staffing arrangements

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting
- weak induction
- insufficient support for literacy, numeracy and language skills

Achievement and standards

50. Clients develop good skills in ISG's business units and on work placements. Many gain a wide range of work-related, personal and social skills from their participation in the programme. Clients develop valuable employability skills, such as good timekeeping and regular attendance. In some areas of manufacturing, clients gain a range of technical skills related to light industry. For some clients, their training and work experience includes the development of complex skills. For example, a client who had previously worked for many years in domestic cleaning now operates as an internet dispatcher, using computerised sales technology. Many clients carry out a wide range of tasks as they try a number of roles in their supported employment. A few clients become multi-skilled. Most clients who lack confidence initially make excellent progress. Some have gained enough confidence to give presentations to groups. There is a wide range of opportunities for skills development within ISG's business units. For example, clients in an engineering workshop have developed manual and computer-aided craft skills. The standard of clients' work is good and where applicable, meets the requirements of industry-standard quality control processes.

51. Clients' progression into unsupported employment is satisfactory at 14 per cent for those who started in 2001-02. For clients on the former supported placement scheme,

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

the progression rate is 7 per cent between 2001 and 2004. Of the total number of clients who have progressed into unsupported employment, 62 per cent progressed in the current or previous contract year. Clients' progression plans are carefully monitored and appropriate actions are taken when necessary.

52. ISG encourages clients to attend training courses and to work towards qualifications, such as NVQs and other accredited qualifications. Since January 2003, 73 clients have started a qualification, 26 have achieved and 34 clients are working towards their qualification. Many of the clients have completed courses in computing, health and safety, first aid, lift truck driving, manual handling and other industry-related programmes. Since April 2001, 261 clients have started courses leading to accredited and non-accredited qualifications and 513 qualifications have been achieved.

Quality of education and training

53. ISG provides particularly good support for clients on the Workstep programme. Staff frequently support individual clients with personal issues, such as assisting with finance, budgeting, tax and benefit matters. Staff sometimes act as advocates for the client with the host employer. Effective strategies support clients and help them to maintain employment. For example, four clients attended individual counselling sessions to help them with personal and work-related problems. Good support is provided on an informal basis by employers when clients experience personal problems. ISG has a useful and effective helpline that clients can contact for advice, information and support. At the business units, clients are encouraged to assist each other and there is particularly good development of supportive teamwork, for example, a profoundly deaf client is qualified in signing at level 2. He regularly helps other deaf clients and their supervisors communicate at staff meetings. ISG's job coaches have supported clients who have specific needs for their employment. ISG provides good financial and practical support for clients' training programmes.

54. A good range of training and employment is available for clients to develop their skills in the workplace. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. External clients work with a wide range of host employers in factories, farming, horticulture, laundries, supermarkets, printing, distribution centres and a clock repairer. These clients have appropriate on-the-job training with their employer and some participate in off-the-job training supported by their employer or ISG. Many clients widen their range of skills and broaden their experience through their supported employment. Regular and individual on-the-job training is provided in ISG's business units for skills such as machining fabrics, manufacturing and maintenance of wheelchairs. ISG has a good range of work contracts to provide clients with relevant opportunities to learn new skills. Planning of work contracts includes consideration of the local sectors of employment, and training to support progression into open employment. Opportunities for clients to learn new skills take place when the work in the factories diversifies into new business. Appropriate training is arranged to ensure that clients have the skills to manufacture the products on a commercial basis. When clients express an interest in working in a different section of a business unit, or when supervisors recognise that a change of job role would be

appropriate, suitable training and support is provided. Training in IT skills is well supported by ISG and needs are identified either through the review process or by the client's request. A wide range of training courses and programmes are available to clients.

55. ISG has good links with host employers which are very well established, sometimes over several years. Host employers consider ISG's levels of service and support to be good. The employment consultants are particularly effective in their work to maintain the links. They are in regular contact with their clients' employers and provide useful information, advice, guidance and support. ISG provides a good range of services to employers, including an employer helpdesk and comprehensive information on its website. ISG's job coaches work well with employers to identify and provide specific training for individual clients. For example, two clients were at risk of losing their employment as their work did not meet the required standards. The job coach provided tailored training and support and the clients become competent at performing the tasks necessary for their work placement.

56. ISG's staffing arrangements for Workstep are well resourced. Most staff are well qualified and experienced. The staff team includes people with disabilities and some of these are participants on the Workstep programme. They provide a valuable insight into clients' needs and expectations. Staff have a comprehensive and relevant range of expertise and skills such as in education, marketing, business, disability and occupational skills. Other staff have professional qualifications and experience in a range of occupational areas, such as engineering, that are directly related to ISG's commercial activities. Staff who are responsible for the support and development of clients have a good range of skills, such as counselling and signing. Some staff have teaching qualifications and others are qualified assessors and/or verifiers. ISG offers a wide range of training and development for staff to develop their skills.

57. Training at ISG is satisfactory and in some areas it is good. Of the nine observations carried out during the inspection, eight were judged to be satisfactory or better and six were good or very good. Most trainers are competent in a range of skills and knowledge. They are able to work effectively with a wide range of clients and adapt their training to meet clients' needs. However, a few trainers are not experienced and do not have the training skills to help clients with some of their needs. Some training is insufficiently stimulating. For example, some clients are trained by watching others and through verbal instructions and their understanding is not always checked. In other areas, well-prepared templates are available for clients to use to ensure that they carry out tasks correctly and to reinforce their learning. For example, in a business unit where bed frames are manufactured, an example of each frame is displayed with the parts coded to help clients with the assembly process. When necessary, job coaches work on an individual basis to train clients. The employment consultant and job coach work closely with the client and their employer to resolve any work difficulties. This specific skills training frequently makes a significant improvement in the client's performance.

58. The process for clients' vocational profiling has been extensively developed by ISG. It includes detailed discussions with the client about their previous educational

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP

attainment and job history. The vocational profile also effectively explores their personal and domestic arrangements, including religious affiliation. However, consideration of the client's existing skills and abilities is not thorough. Information in clients' vocational profiles is well recorded and used appropriately to identify relevant employment and training opportunities.

59. Physical resources across ISG are varied and mostly satisfactory. In some places there are good resources. Clients have access to a wide range of aids to enable them to work effectively. The business units are appropriately equipped and clients have a good working environment. However, in a few areas, space is constrained. Computer equipment is available to clients in some locations. In one training session, a visually impaired client did not have access to appropriate aids to support the learning process. ISG has thorough processes for its health and safety arrangements.

60. Target-setting during progress reviews is weak. The targets do not adequately reflect clients' goals. Most of the targets are not specific and are often recorded as general statements. ISG recognised in the self-assessment report that target-setting for clients needed to be improved. A training day for staff has recently been provided, but this training has not yet led to consistent improvements across the organisation.

61. ISG's induction procedures are weak. This was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. The process does not adequately cover the rights and responsibilities or the status of clients. The client development plan does not provide specific information about current data protection procedures. In some cases, individual client files include information about other clients. Equal opportunities issues are not covered comprehensively during the induction and some clients are not provided with the complaints procedures. Most of the information from the induction is complex and is not easy to read for those with literacy needs.

62. Literacy, numeracy and language support is insufficient. Most clients' individual development plans do not include a systematic review of their additional needs. Clients' needs are not effectively identified using ISG's initial assessment checklist. Some clients are referred to local colleges for literacy and/or numeracy support, but for most clients this support is not an integral part of their employment and training. Some training in literacy skills is provided by ISG's staff, but the arrangements are very recent and it is too early to judge their impact on the development of clients' skills.

Leadership and management

63. Team work at ISG is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the aims of Workstep and work effectively in their own teams and across other teams to help clients achieve their goals. For example, good team working ensures that staff identify work placements and match clients appropriately. Managers and staff are very approachable, accessible and supportive. Area teams are well organised and the staff work very well together to support clients. Employment co-ordinators are fully involved with their team in the detailed follow-up activities relating to clients' needs. At area level there are regular weekly meetings of employment consultants and their line manager where ongoing

training and support needs are discussed and recorded. When funding requirements are identified for training needs or other support mechanisms, these are normally dealt with promptly. Line managers also meet regularly to discuss targets and exchange information about the latest developments. Team work is good and supports the day-to-day management of the Workstep programme.

64. The quality assurance arrangements are well established and are used effectively by staff. At the monthly co-ordinator meetings, staff regularly discuss quality assurance and set targets for improvement. The monthly meetings enable the co-ordinators to share good practice across the areas. The self-assessment report involved managers, staff and clients across the organisation. It accurately identifies the main strengths and weaknesses of ISG's Workstep provision.

65. ISG has good arrangements to meet the needs of individual clients. Their employment, training and support is usually well matched to their skills, abilities and development for employment goals. Barriers to clients' entry and progression are dealt with appropriately. However, ISG's equal opportunities procedures are insufficient to reinforce clients' understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Equal opportunities information is not sufficiently explained at induction and reinforced during reviews with clients.