

ZENOS 

**ZENOS LTD**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT  
REPORT 2008**

**Issue 2**

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## ZENOS COMPANY PROFILE

Zenos Ltd is a private company specialising in the ICT sector. We are now the leading ICT training provider in the Systems Support and Software Development sector, and the largest Microsoft accredited IT academy in the world. In June 2007, Zenos was voted by City & Guilds as the leading provider in the delivery of E-Quals in IT Systems Support and Development. Zenos was awarded a Grade 1 Outstanding by Ofsted at the inspection in June 2008.

Zenos Ltd has been running Advanced Apprenticeship programmes since 2001 where we started with just 25 learners. We now have over 1000 currently in training on our work based and academy programmes. For 2008, Zenos has started to deliver the Train to Gain programme in London, the North East and West Midlands, with plans to expand this provision to other regions in 2008/09. Zenos has plans to extend the Advanced Apprenticeship programme to cover learners over 25 years old. This provision will become available in 2008/09.

Zenos works with a host of blue-chip companies including Fujitsu, Xerox, HP, Synstar, and Cap Gemini to provide high quality IT training.

Zenos has the following accreditations:

- Ofsted Grade 1 Outstanding Provider
- Microsoft Gold Partner
- Microsoft Academy of the Year
- Institute of IT Training Gold Award
- City & Guilds Top E-Quals Provider
- CompTIA's European pioneering Award for Training Innovation
- LSC 'A' Provider

Zenos programmes have been designed to enable participants to achieve the Advanced Diploma for IT Practitioners, the NVQ for IT Practitioners at Level 3, and Key Skills for business at Level 2. Uniquely, they have been mapped to Microsoft, Cisco, and ITIL courses and during the programme participants can also gain valuable vendor qualifications such as MCSA, MCDST, and CCNA.

Zenos offers its range of training programmes for school leavers, young adults via Advanced Apprenticeships and Train to Gain for IT employees through a variety of delivery methods, courses, workshops, self-study, one-to-one coaching, and mentoring. From 2007, Zenos will be offering courses and qualifications to commercial business and fee paying individuals.

In response to market needs for ICT skills, especially with regard to the 16-18 age group, Zenos opened 12 regional Academies between 2006 and 2007. The Academies are located at High Wycombe, Milton Keynes, Telford, Wakefield, Birmingham, Stevenage, Basingstoke, Wokingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Warrington and London. Zenos has subsequently opened two new academies in September 2008 located at Derby and Aynhoe Park (Banbury). Plans are in place to further extend the Academy network in 2009.

Zenos services include:

- Training Needs Analysis
- Course design and construction
- Course delivery
- Assessment and accreditation
- Mentoring and individual skills development
- NVQ and Key Skills programme management
- Electrical and electronic fundamentals training
- CompTIA's A+ and Network+ certification
- Microsoft Certification
- Unix Certification
- IT and technical support
- Microsoft and Cisco Fast Track Solutions

## **INTRODUCTION TO THIS SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Zenos has already produced a self-assessment report for 2008, that particular version being prepared in advance of the Ofsted Inspection in June 2008. This second issue takes stock of the outcomes from the inspection, and the latest published data available on success rates following the end of the 2007/08 contract year.

In previous editions of our self-assessment reports Zenos has actively consulted with staff on the Common Inspection Framework, and asked them to propose strengths and weaknesses of the provision. This approach is not considered to be making best use of resources for this particular edition, and instead we have concentrated staff consultation into providing input to the themes within the new Quality Improvement Plan. Each department manager presented their key priorities to all Zenos staff at our annual Conference in October.

Zenos has begun the process of integrating the LSC's Framework for Excellence (FfE) performance framework within this self-assessment. At the time of completion the results from the Employer Responsive questionnaire were not available, and the Learner Responsive exercise had not started. The appropriate FfE score for the Effectiveness dimension and Finance dimension are indicated within the relevant section of the report.

At the end of this document there is a selection of Good News stories which are routinely collected and added to our Customer Recognition Database. Each story is a direct quote from a learner or employer who has chosen to specifically feed back their views and experiences in being involved with Zenos programmes.

This new edition of the self-assessment has been drafted by an external contractor, and reviewed and moderated by the Zenos management team.

## **Ofsted INSPECTION - JUNE 2008**

Zenos was inspected by Ofsted between 23 and 26 June 2008. The outcome from the inspection is that Zenos was judged:

1. Effectiveness of Provision – Outstanding: Grade 1
  - a. Capacity to Improve – Outstanding: Grade 1
2. Achievements and Standards – Outstanding: Grade 1
3. Quality of Provision – Outstanding: Grade 1
4. Leadership & Management – Outstanding: Grade 1
  - a. Equality of Opportunity (Contributory Grade) - Good: Grade 2
5. ICT for Practitioners – Outstanding: Grade 1

### **The key strengths identified are:**

- High success rates across all programmes
- Outstanding development of learners' employability skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Particularly effective planning and monitoring of training and assessment
- Unique programme creating excellent opportunities otherwise unavailable to under 18s
- Highly innovative training programmes to meet the needs of learners and industry
- Particularly good pastoral and vocational support
- Outstanding leadership and management
- Particularly strong partnership working
- Very good systems to monitor and review targets
- Particularly good internal communications

### **The key areas for improvement are:**

- No significant areas for improvement

The Ofsted inspection has been a major success for Zenos considering that the judgements have been gained during a period of extensive growth and change to Zenos programmes. The inspection will further raise the profile and reputation of Zenos as a quality training provider in England and will be used to progress the companies strategic plans for the future.

The inspection also provides Zenos with a number of significant challenges, the main one being how to ensure that the high standards are maintained, and where appropriate are further enhanced.

## **Quality Improvement Plan 2008/09**

The Quality Improvement Plan which accompanies this self-assessment report builds on the outcome from the inspection, and sets out a programme of further quality improvement priorities for 2008/09.

Key highlights are

- A further 5% improvement in success rates across both Academy and Work Based Learning programmes over the next year.
- Improvements in employer satisfaction
- Improvements in learner satisfaction
- Further improve the quality of learners work
- Apply for and achieve Training Quality Standard, and Matrix Standard
- Integrate the LSC's Framework for Excellence within self-assessment process

## **DESCRIPTION OF ZENOS AND ITS PROGRAMMES**

In late 2008 Zenos Ltd became part of the Melorio PLC Group. The Zenos board is made up of the Chairman, Executive Director, Managing Director and Finance Director and is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation, and all operational aspects including the performance of the LSC contracts. Zenos Ltd has a senior management team comprising the:

- Quality Manager
- National Training Operations Manager
- HR Manager
- Programme Managers
- National Sales & Recruitment / Placement Manager
- Operations Managers
- Regional Training Managers.

During 2008, Zenos has continued to enhance the capability of the management team to oversee the training and the operation of the growing numbers of new academies which includes the appointment of a Managing Director, and an executive Finance Director. These appointments will allow the Chairman and Executive Director to focus on strategic business development as the company continues to grow and change to meet potential business opportunities.

All Zenos operational staff are highly trained industry experts with the appropriate trainer, assessment and internal verification qualifications. Employees are encouraged to gain additional qualifications, over and above those specifically relevant to their role, such as NVQ level 4. Zenos now employs Psychometric Testing for all staff at recruitment, and this has been successful in helping us select the most suitable candidates.

Learning and assessment takes place either at the learners' places of work, at our academies, or at other venues such as conferencing facilities. We are now making much more use of the facilities at our new academies to run off-the-job training and NVQ workshops. NVQ workshops provide excellent opportunities for work-based learners to collate and record relevant NVQ evidence. These sites will become more widely available as more academies come on stream. High-quality computer equipment and training resources are all provided by Zenos at academies, and are shipped to other venues as required.

Learners are advised of their responsibilities via the Learner Training Agreement that is completed at the sign-up. Learners who attend the Zenos Academies receive a handbook, which comprehensively details all the centre rules and procedures.

In 2007/08 1126 learners were recruited on to Zenos programmes. 835 started on programme led academy training, 241 on traditional work based learning programme, and 47 learners onto NVQ3 Train to Gain Programme.

### **Advanced Apprenticeships - Employer Based Learning**

All learners recruited on to the work-based route are employed status from the start of their training. Before a learner is signed up to the programme a check is made that their job role is a match for the NVQ. Initial Assessment and Induction takes place as part of a week long

workshop. Learners are tested for their key skills in numeracy and literacy, as well as their technical knowledge and this is used to identify development needs in advance of completing the key skills units.

During the course of the 16 month programme, learners attend a number of workshops, which cover all aspects of the Key Skills, technical certificate and NVQ. Traditionally these have taken place at external venues such as on employer's premises, or at conferencing facilities. Zenos now makes extensive use of the facilities available at our regional academies.

Elements of the programme require the learner to complete assignments and pass exams. Learners complete Feedback Action Plans following each workshop and assessment visit.

Assessment of learners' work and observation in the work place is the responsibility of the Programme Facilitators. These activities take place at the workplace or at NVQ workshops. The new standards for the NVQ has made it more task driven, and this will result in improved control of the process by Zenos assessors, leading to improved progression.

Programme Facilitators attend monthly 'standardisation' meetings to ensure consistent interpretation of NVQ requirements. The Programme Manager, Quality Manager and Internal Assessors carry out internal verification of the NVQ, Key Skills, and learners' assignments.

Learner progress is closely monitored by each learner's designated Student Liaison Officer. Progress is recorded at each stage of their programme, and following each workshop and the completion of each assignment. Comprehensive records are kept on our Salesforce management database and are monitored on a daily basis by senior management so managers are aware of the situation at any given time. A traffic light system is used to identify learners who are on track to achieve, those who are marginally behind, and those requiring individual attention to bring them back on track.

Formal progress reviews take place at 12-weekly intervals and are undertaken by the learner's Programme Facilitator. These reviews cover all components of the programme, including progress for each of the programme elements and targets for the next 12 weeks. In addition, important wider issues such as Equal Opportunities, and Health & Safety are covered, reinforcing learners' knowledge and skills.

All learners have the opportunity to take additional sector-recognised qualifications such as Microsoft Certified Professional which can greatly enhance their future career prospects.

### **Advanced Apprenticeships - Programme-led (Academy) Pathway**

As part of our work with employers, a need emerged for young people to possess a good level of skills prior to entering employment. This came at a similar time the LSC was introducing Programme Led Pathways for apprenticeship programmes. As a consequence, Zenos has developed an innovative approach to deliver an intensive 20 week programme which meets the development needs of learners and the skills needs of employers. These programmes, aimed mainly at the 16 to 18 age group, are delivered in our new Academies.

At present we have 14 Zenos Academies which have places for around 750 programme-led apprentices at any one time. There are two scheduled intakes each year starting in September and February. Learners are scheduled to spend 20 weeks in an academy before continuing their learning within a suitable job role with an employer.

Learners are recruited to the programme via careers events and via local initiatives such as direct marketing, advertising, school visits and referrals from Connexions. All candidates are thoroughly interviewed before a decision is made on whether to accept them onto the

programme. Learners receive an initial assessment and thorough induction during the first week of the programme.

Learners follow a defined programme of training and assessment covering all aspects of the NVQ, Key Skills and technical certificate. Learners also take exams in CompTIA A+, and Microsoft Certified Desktop Service Technician (MCDST), which give them excellent opportunities to gain valuable industry-recognised qualifications in addition to the Advanced Apprenticeship framework.

Learners' progress is closely monitored during the first six weeks by the Trainer, Training Centre Manager, and the Zenos Head Office Management Team to ensure they have a realistic prospect of successfully completing the programme. They are then formally reviewed every 3 weeks, and on completion of the academy programme. Progress is recorded on Progress Review Forms and comprehensive data is stored on Salesforce.

Towards the end of the 20 week programme, learners are supported in finding suitable employment by a professional recruitment team, and have the services of a designated Placement Officer, who is allocated to each academy. Learners are then able to continue their learning and gain work experience as part of the employer based phase of the programme.

### **Train to Gain**

Zenos began operating the Train to Gain Programme in 2008. All learners recruited onto the three month programme are in the 19 to 65 age group, the vast majority over 25 years old. All learners are employed with an appropriate contract of employment and are working towards the NVQ3 for IT Professionals, with the option of attending one of the following Microsoft, CompTIA, or Cisco industry recognised vendor courses.

Learners receive an initial assessment as part of the one day induction programme, leading to the completion of an Individual Learning Plan. The Train to Gain programme includes a full one day NVQ workshop. Regular assessment and progress review visits are scheduled to take place at the learner's work place. On completion of the NVQ3, learners can then take up the opportunity to attend one of the vendor courses mentioned above.

### **Learning & Skills Council (LSC) Contracts**

Zenos currently has contracts for the delivery of the above programmes with the following local Learning & Skills Councils:

- Thames Valley (Lead)
- Birmingham & Solihull
- Shropshire
- Black Country
- Cheshire & Warrington
- London Central
- West Yorkshire
- Hertfordshire

# PERFORMANCE DATA

## Learner Characteristics

CONTRACT YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
<b>TOTAL STARTS</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>1126</b>
<b>Male</b>	347 (85%)	297 (86%)	597 (88%)	959 (85%)
<b>Female</b>	60 (15%)	49 (14%)	84 (12%)	167 (15%)
<b>White</b>	332 (82%)	288 (83%)	536 (79%)	697 (62%)
<b>Ethnic Minority</b>	75 (18%)	58 (17%)	145 (21%)	429 (38%)
<b>Disability</b>	2 (0.5%)	0	9 (1%)	20 (2%)
<b>Non Disability</b>	405 (99.5%)	346 (100%)	672 (99%)	1106 (98%)
<b>Age 16-18</b>	45 (11%)	32 (9%)	432 (63%)	820 (73%)
<b>Age 19+</b>	362 (89%)	314 (91%)	249 (37%)	306 (27%)

## Qualification Success Rates - Overall & Timely Success Rates

End Year	Measure	No of Learners	Zenos NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Zenos Framework Rate	National Framework Rate
2004/05	Overall	221	22%	56%	20%	49%
	Timely	252	10%	32%	10%	28%
2005/06	Overall	479	34.6%	55.6%	34%	41%
	Timely	562	11%	36.2%	10.9%	22%
2006/07	Overall	657	60.7%	53%	59.7%	49%
	Timely	698	43%	37%	42.7%	34%
2007/08 P12 QSR	Overall	926	87.6%	67.9%	87.6%	63.8%
	Timely	897	81.3%	49.4%	81.3%	45.6%

## Zenos Academy Performance

Academy		Intake 1 Sep 06 – Feb 07	Intake 2 Feb 07 – Jul 07	Intake 3 Sep 07 – Feb 08	Intake 4 Feb 08 – Jul 08
High Wycombe	Recruited	32	35	36	37
	IL @ 6 wks	29	27	32	34
	Completions	25	22	32	32
	Success Rate	86%	81%	100%	94%
Milton Keynes	Recruited	34	36	36	32
	IL @ 6 wks	34	34	36	28
	Completions	28	27	35	20
	Success Rate	82%	79%	97%	71%
Telford	Recruited	32	29	36	24
	IL @ 6 wks	29	26	32	20
	Completions	27	19	29	14
	Success Rate	93%	73%	91%	70%
Wakefield	Recruited	32	21	28	22
	IL @ 6 wks	29	19	27	20
	Completions	25	11	26	16
	Success Rate	86%	58%	96%	80%
Basingstoke	Recruited		23	29	18
	IL @ 6 wks		19	26	17
	Completions		15	24	15
	Success Rate		79%	92%	88%
Birmingham	Recruited		55	53	53
	IL @ 6 wks		45	49	49
	Completions		37	44	38
	Success Rate		82%	90%	76%
Leeds	Recruited		20	31	24
	IL @ 6 wks		18	29	19
	Completions		11	29	19
	Success Rate		61%	100%	100%
Newcastle	Recruited		24	35	37
	IL @ 6 wks		22	32	36
	Completions		15	29	28
	Success Rate		68%	91%	78%
Stevenage	Recruited		29	32	19
	IL @ 6 wks		27	27	16
	Completions		21	25	12
	Success Rate		78%	93%	75%
Wokingham	Recruited		37	48	23
	IL @ 6 wks		34	46	20
	Completions		27	43	18
	Success Rate		79%	93%	90%
London	Recruited			44	68
	IL @ 6 wks			42	59
	Completions			38	39
	Success Rate			90%	66%
Warrington	Recruited			30	23
	IL @ 6 wks			28	21
	Completions			27	21
	Success Rate			96%	100%
Total All Zenos Academies	Recruited	130	309	438	380
	IL @ 6 wks	121	271	406	339
	Completions	105	205	381	264
	Success Rate	87%	76%	94%	79%

Data Source – Zenos Salesforce

Success Rate = Proportion of Completions v the In Learning Figure (IL) @ 6 weeks rounded to nearest whole number

## SELF-ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

In compiling this self-assessment we draw from the Ofsted findings in their report dated June 2008 to supplement and illustrate our own internal measures.

### Key Strengths

- High and continually improving framework success rates
- Learners rapid progress towards framework completion
- Outstanding development of learners employability skills
- High quality teaching and learning
- Good range of high quality learning resources
- Innovative and unique programme of learning
- Excellent support for all learners
- Highly effective monitoring of learners progress
- Particularly strong partnership working
- Good promotion of equal opportunities
- Effective quality improvement arrangements
- Comprehensive processes and guidelines for staff
- Outstanding financial management and assurance

### Key Areas for Improvement

- No significant areas for improvement

### Other Developments included within the Quality Improvement Plan

- Develop consistency in checking and reinforcing learners understanding of equal opportunities at progress reviews.
- Reinforce and accredit Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision via achievement of 'Matrix' Standard
- Achievement of Training Quality Standard (Part A - Employer Responsive) in 2009

## ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

### Grade 1- Outstanding

Zenos delivers **high and continuously improving framework success rates** for learners on advanced apprenticeship programmes. Compared with 2006/07 Overall success rates have increased by 29% in 2007/08, with performance now at 86.6%. This compares very favourably with the national average for Advanced Apprenticeships where performance for framework success rates is 63.8%. Timely framework success rates have improved significantly from 43% in 2006/07 to 81.3% in 2007/08, and also significantly exceed the national averages for advanced apprenticeships which are at 45.6%.

Learners on Zenos programmes make **rapid progress towards the completion of their advanced apprenticeship programme**. Learners on the programme led academy programme complete all aspects of their technical and key skills programme during the first five months of the advanced apprenticeship. Timely success rates for the academy programme are 86%. Zenos has also made rapid improvements in ensuring learners on the 'Work Based' Advanced Apprenticeship programme make good progress towards completion of their Framework. This is reflected in the timely success rates 73% now being achieved in

this area. The progress of each learner is closely monitored at every stage of the programme, and managers instigate rapid actions if learners fall behind the programme schedule by ensuring additional support is provided.

Zenos **development of learners' employability skills is outstanding**. Zenos academy programmes provide learners with vital technical skills, behavioural expectations and work ethic that enable them to successfully progress from school to employment as IT engineers. Zenos flexible application of its recruitment criteria has allowed some young people to join the academy programme who might otherwise have been declined entry. Zenos has been particularly successful in helping individuals to turn their lives around and obtain valuable employment in the IT sector. The effectiveness of the Zenos academy programme has enabled 82% of those who complete their learning to progress into suitable roles within the IT industry.

#### **Framework for Excellence Judgement – Effectiveness Dimension (Quality of Outcomes)**

2007/08 QSR = 87.6% = 123.5 FfE Points x 1.0 (Proportion of Advanced Apprenticeship Leavers = **Score 123.5**)

**FfE Category - Outstanding**

#### **QUALITY OF PROVISION**

##### **Grade 1 – Outstanding**

All learners receive **high quality teaching and learning** from our Trainers and Programme Facilitators. All Zenos training courses are fully supported by session plans and schemes of work, and where appropriate include embedded skills for life content. Zenos regularly observes teaching and learning in the academies and similarly for those trainers supporting employer based advanced apprenticeships. Outcomes from teaching and learning observations regularly show that most Trainers are achieving good (grade 2). All Zenos managers who observe teaching and learning have received training from National Training Resources to enable them to effectively carry out the process in accordance with Ofsted principles. All Zenos Trainers and Programme Facilitators are occupationally competent and are all working towards the required teaching qualifications by 2010.

Zenos ensures that each learner has access to a **wide range of high quality learning resources**. Zenos provides learners with up-to-date training manuals and we prepare our own well written training materials. All centres are equipped with relevant IT hardware and a good range of industry standard software. Zenos is able to create appropriate network simulations to create real life conditions that learners will be faced with in future employment.

In the last self-assessment report, Zenos identified that it needed to develop an improved process to enable early identification of learners additional support needs. During 2008, Zenos has developed the initial assessment process introducing the Key Skills Builder Initial Assessment and Diagnostic tests which accurately identify each learner's key skills levels and identify development activities. An updated initial assessment process ensures that all learners who are likely to have additional learning needs (ALN) are quickly identified and their cases referred to our Basic Skills Advisor to identify an Additional Needs Support Plan. During the summer of 2008, Zenos has specified a process and supporting guidelines for

identifying and meeting learners' Additional Social Needs (ASN) in accordance with LSC Guidance.

Zenos provide learners in the 16 to 18 age group with an **innovative and unique programme of learning** to enable them to enter rewarding careers in the IT industry. Traditionally the IT sector has only recruited people from older age groups, normally those aged 19 and over. In order to provide young people access to the sector Zenos has developed and continuously improved a programme to allow those below 18 to first gain the essential skills and knowledge required by employers, before placing them into employment. These young people are now taking up career opportunities that were not previously available to them, and also give employers access to staff that have received the technical knowledge and skills they require when recruiting new members of staff.

#### **Framework for Excellence Judgement – Learner Responsiveness – Learner Survey**

The results of the 2008/09 Learner Survey were not available when completing this Self-Assessment Report

#### **Framework for Excellence Judgement – Employer Responsiveness (Employer Survey)**

The results of the 2008/09 Employer Survey were not available when completing this Self-Assessment Report

#### **Framework for Excellence Judgement – Employer Responsiveness (Amount of Training)**

This area will be included in the self-assessment report for 2009.

Zenos provides **excellent support for all learners** throughout their learning programmes. Learners are given effective advice and guidance during the recruitment stage. On the academy programme, candidates are given relevant information on the career opportunities available in the IT sector, and are interviewed to see that they will be suited to a role as an IT professional. For those on employer based programmes Zenos ensures that potential recruits are in suitable job roles that will enable them to benefit from the NVQ3. Zenos employs a team of Student Liaison Officers who provide a unique central support service and monitor the progress of all their learners. Training Centre Managers provide a similar service for those learners who attend the Zenos Academies. Zenos provides learners with vital support in finding relevant employment through a team of Placement Officers allocated to each Zenos Academy. Their role is to seek employment opportunities and work with learners in the job application process via CV preparation and interview skills.

Zenos plans to enhance the support to learners by applying for and gaining Matrix accreditation for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) in 2009.

## LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

### Grade 1 – Outstanding

Zenos arrangements for **monitoring learners' progress are highly effective** and rigorous. Zenos maintains detailed real time management information records on the progress of all learners which are then used effectively by managers to identify appropriate intervention measures. Zenos management information is able to accurately record the programme schedule and progress made towards this. This is used to ensure academy based learners are able to complete their learning within the defined schedule, and has made a significant impact on improving Zenos timely framework success rates from 11% to 81% over the past four years.

Zenos has **particularly strong partnership working** with key organisations such as Microsoft, E-skills, Key IT employers, Connexions, and the LSC at national regional and local level. Zenos has a high profile within the IT industry and has developed strong relationships with the leading multinational employers in the sector such as Xerox, Fujitsu and EDS.. Zenos academy intake staff works closely with local Connexions to promote careers in IT to school children.

### Equal Opportunities

Zenos has **good arrangements for the promotion of equal opportunities**. Zenos has been successful in increasing participation from traditionally under-represented groups in the sector. Zenos recruits a higher proportion of ethnic minority learners on its advanced apprenticeship programmes than the national average of the population. Zenos provides provision within the academies for Muslims to prey, and has worked with parents of Muslim girls to manage any concerns they may have allowing participation on the programme, Zenos success in this area is also positively contributing to the LSC's objective of increasing the participation of ethnic minorities on advanced apprenticeship programmes. Zenos has an effective induction programme that covers equality of opportunity. Learners understanding is regularly checked and reinforced at progress reviews; however Zenos needs to ensure that this takes place more consistently across the full range of the provision.

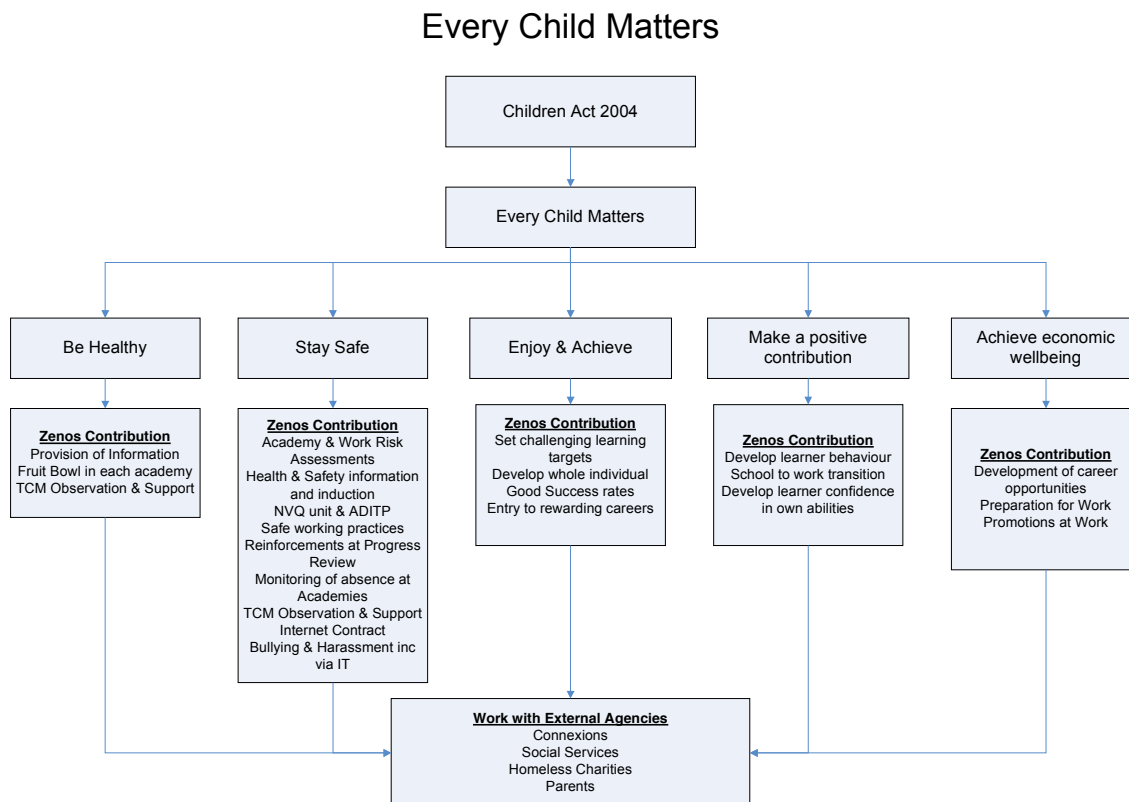
Zenos operates its recruitment criteria in a flexible way and this has allowed some young people to enter academy programmes who might otherwise have been excluded: for example young people who may be homeless or, had poor schooling, or have other social issues preventing them from participating. A student from the London Academy came to Zenos having lived by himself from the age of 14. He chose to leave behind a gang and drug background and went on to achieve distinction in his work, maturity in his attitude and behaviour and gained a significant position with a nationally known employer. This is just one example of the life changing impact a Zenos apprenticeship can have.

Data for 2007/08 has shown that Zenos has recruited more females, and learners from ethnic minority groups onto its programmes compared with 2006/07. The proportions of females increased from 12% to 15%, whereas those from ethnic minority groups increased from 21% to 38%.

## The Children Act and Every Child Matters

Zenos carries out its responsibilities in respect of the Children Act 2004 as a provider of vocational training to young people between the ages of 16 and 18. The nature of our provision indicates that health, welfare & social care issues are more likely to be identified and supported within the Zenos Academies, however arrangements are also appropriate to learners on the work based route.

Below is a diagram which shows how Zenos delivers its obligations under the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.



## Quality Improvement

Zenos has **effective quality improvement arrangements** in place which directly lead to improving success rates, high quality of delivery, and support to learners.

Zenos quality assures its programmes via the following key activities:

- Observation of teaching and learning by Training Managers
- Management of assessment and internal verification
- Effective recording and analysis of learner data
- Regular monitoring and review of learner progress
- Employer and Learner Customer Evaluations
- Audit of processes and key documentation
- Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plans

Information and feedback from quality assurance is routinely discussed at team and management meetings where corrective actions are identified, or revisions to processes and operating guidelines are proposed. For example, the Zenos academy programme is reviewed both during and on completion of each intake. Feedback from formal and informal observations of teaching and learning, are used to help trainers further improve their performance contributing to the high quality of training delivered to learners. Programme content and schedules are adjusted in response to information on progress and success. The effective operation of the above activities has ensured Zenos has been able to considerably improve the success rates of learners over the past three years, and deliver a consistently high quality training programme.

Zenos has developed **comprehensive processes and guidelines for staff** within the Quality Manual, which is regularly reviewed and updated. Staff are introduced and fully briefed on the importance Quality Manual and the need to comply with agreed company processes at their induction. The Quality Manual is available to all staff in electronic format on the Zenos server, with paper copies located at each Zenos Academy and a limited number at Zenos Head Office. Zenos involves appropriate staff in the development of processes and guidelines to ensure they are relevant to the organisation and the effective management of the training programmes.

During 2009 Zenos will be introducing the questions from the Framework for Excellence Employer and Learner surveys into its own feedback questionnaires. This will complement the evaluation activities that will be taking place as part of meeting the Training Quality Standard requirements.

## **Health & Safety**

The Zenos Health & Safety Policy comprises a general policy statement, organisation, overall responsibility, management responsibility, and employee responsibility.

The Managing Director has overall organisational responsibility for Health & Safety, whereas the Quality Manager has responsibility for managing the implementation of the policy. Managers are responsible for ensuring health & safety procedures and work instructions are being adhered to.

The policy is communicated to staff via the staff handbook, and forms part of the quality manual. The policy is communicated to learners at their induction, and is included in their portfolio, or as part of the Zenos Academy Learner Handbook.

The policy document was reviewed and updated in late December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 as part of the continuous improvement process.

Each of our academies has the HSE Health & Safety poster on display, as well as a copy of the Employers Liability Insurance and the Zenos Health & Safety Policy statement. Each academy has had a Risk Assessment carried out, and the reports are held by each Training Centre Manager and the Zenos Quality Manager (Health & Safety Officer). Our training Centre Managers are required to be trained to act as First Aid Officers, and each centre has the appropriate First Aid Box.

Clearly displayed in all locations are the emergency evacuation procedures that clearly define emergency exists routes, fire alarm call points, and assembly points. Fire drills are carried out at least once with every academy intake and every six months within the Head Office.

The Training Centre Manager is responsible for carrying daily health and safety checks within their individual academy and the Technical Trainer is responsible for the health and safety of the learners within their classrooms.

Health and Safety is covered as a specific item during their induction, which is followed by an initial assessment within the academies and a Health and Safety fact sheet for work based learners. The initial assessment and fact sheet are then used as a discussion document during the learner's first progress review to reinforce key health and safety areas.

Further development of the learner's knowledge and understanding is carried via two Advanced Diploma workshops. These two workshops focus on the safety of others who might be affected by the learner's actions and also identifying health and safety hazards and potential risks within a work place. Health and Safety is then finally assessed again as part of their NVQ both for academy and work based learners.

Health & Safety in the learner's workplace is reviewed as part of the Zenos New Business Development process, and when learners transfer from the Academy phase to the Work Based Learning phase of the Advanced Apprenticeship programme. Copies of employers Liability Insurance, Health & Safety Policy, and Risk Assessments are obtained and sent to the Quality Manager for verification. These documents are also required from organisations where work based learners are enrolled onto either an Apprenticeship or Train to Gain programme.

Zenos Facilitators (Assessors) have received Health and Safety training that is sufficient for them to identify hazards and potential risks within the workplace and take appropriate action to ensure learner safety.

Incidents and accidents to learners are required to be recorded in the appropriate accident book and reported to the Quality Manager. The Quality Manager will review the situation and identify whether it comes under the scope of RIDDOR. In such cases a report will be prepared using the Learner Incident Record Forms and submitted to the appropriate LSC regional contact.

Health and Safety is reviewed during the monthly Zenos Management Meeting.

### **Financial Management and Assurance**

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the financial aspects of the company. We employ a fully qualified Financial Director who forms part of the Zenos senior management team. The Financial Director is supported by a Finance Officer.

Our most recent accounts were uploaded to the LSC via Bravo Solutions as part of the Qualified Provider Framework (QPF) process in December 2008 to enable Zenos to tender for LSC new contracts for the remainder of 2008/09, and for 2009/10.

Zenos has **outstanding financial management and assurance**. Our financial status, financial systems, and financial controls were last reviewed and tested by the LSC Audit Team in May 2008, and again in June 2008 as part of Leadership and Management within the Ofsted inspection. The LSC awarded Zenos a **grade 1** for Financial Management and Assurance, and the audit of learner files resulted in no errors being identified that required repayment of funds back to the LSC.

Zenos operate effective financial systems which are regularly reviewed. All documentation in learners files are subject to regular internal audit to ensure the correct evidence is in place to support our funding claims from the LSC. The FFE Financial dimension questionnaire has been completed and submitted to the PFA team at the LSC. Zenos has self-assessed our

performance as outstanding, which is consistent with recent findings from Ofsted and the LSC.

**Framework for Excellence Judgement – Finance (Financial Health)**

Grade A Financial Status

**FfE Category – To be notified by the LSC**

**Framework for Excellence Judgement – Finance (Financial Management & Control)**

**FfE Category - Outstanding**

**Framework for Excellence Judgement – Finance (Use of Resources)**

**FfE Category – To be notified by the LSC**

**EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVISION**

**Grade 1 – Outstanding**

The **overall effectiveness of provision is outstanding** based on our self-assessment grades for achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management. Zenos capacity to further improve is also outstanding based on the rapid improvement in increasing learners success rates, our history of success in delivering identified areas for improvement, and our plans we have in place to further build on the quality of the provision into 2009.

**Framework for Excellence Judgement – Effectiveness Dimension (Quality of Provision)**

Ofsted Inspection (June 2008) Overall Effectiveness Grade – Outstanding Grade 1

**FfE Category - Outstanding**

## ZENOS SUCCESS STORIES

Below is a selection of recent success stories drawn from our extensive database which illustrates some remarkable personal achievements and positive feedback from learners and employers who have received real benefits from being part of Zenos programmes.

### FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYERS

“At Midland Computers we seek out enthusiastic people to nurture into becoming highly skilled technicians. Zenos IT Academy provided us with an inexpensive solution to recruiting local young people at the start of their career by giving them essential IT skills ensuring they’re capable of fulfilling their potential.

The representatives of the academy have ensured the process ran as smoothly as possible by facilitating all stages of procurement and extended training”

Peter Barfield (Internet Director)

**MIDLANDCOMPUTERS**

"We have not only been impressed with the technical skills which the Zenos learners come equipped with, but equally importantly, they are also effectively coached in the expectations we have in regard to punctuality, personal presentation and work ethics in general."

Jayne Wills  
Human Resources  
SCC

“I just wanted to thank you very much for your kind hospitality today. We both found the day extremely useful, both in meeting your trainees and seeing your facility. We were both really impressed with your set-up and the professional way the Academy is run. I’m very pleased that we managed to see all of the candidates. I would like to see Stephen as his CV looks very impressive. Does he drive? If so, would be able to meet us in Maidenhead? If not, I will try to get back to Milton Keynes as soon as possible”.

Helen Westhall  
BlueSquare Data Services Ltd - Carrier Neutral Data Centres”

“What a little star I have employed with me. He is doing so well.

I would like to personally thank you both for the work that you have put into John to give him the opportunity to do this and do it so well. Moreover, I would like to thank you for the thought and gift that you sent to John last week. It arrived at the office on Friday and I was due to meet with him (actually in the Coombes School) later that day. I took the package with me thinking that it would be training material for the next courses. To say that he was pleased would be an underestimate. John was both really surprised and thrilled to have received this from you for his commitment to the course and I was proud to have been there to see his face when he opened it.

Thank you so much for the doing that, it will remain a meaningful moment for John for a very long time”.

## **FEEDBACK FROM LEARNERS**

### Darren from Fujitsu commented at his 12 weekly review:

“I am thoroughly enjoying the Zenos course up to now, and I am looking forward to sitting my MCPs. I am happy with everything so far, and Louise has helped me out a lot”.

### Ryan Williams – September 2007 – Leeds Academy

Ryan travelled to the Leeds Academy from Manchester everyday and achieved 100% attendance. He was consistently a good student and always gave 100%. He started a job in IT support for a company connected to FIFA and has progressed quickly through the company. I have received an email from him last month telling me he was in Paris awaiting his connection to South Africa. He was going there on an all expenses paid business trip. He wanted to thank Zenos for everything and said that never in a million years did he expect to go to South Africa, never mind with work and at the age of 19! He was also very happy that he will be receiving free world cup tickets. He is a great example to use when encouraging our current students to study hard and buckle down.

### Hardy Skogstad, Concep Global, August 2008

“It’s my second day here at Concep, and I am enjoying myself very much. It is really great because most people that I have heard from claim that when they do work experience they end up making tea and coffee etc. However (and for this I would like to thank you so much) here I’m looking at their network, researching wireless options, configuring hardware etc etc. I have only been here for not even 2 days, but I am really enjoying myself. Thank you for getting me this. Already attended my first meeting yesterday with another one scheduled for next week regarding a complete update of their internet and so forth. Really exciting stuff.”

### A letter from a learner to one of our Assessors:

“Just a quick letter to say how much I appreciate what you have done for me throughout the past 5 months. I know at times I have probably been a pain in the backside and found it difficult to concentrate fully on the work set out. You have really helped me as well as everyone else get through it.

I am grateful for the opportunity Zenos has given me and although this type of course was obviously not for me, I have managed to get through the full duration of the course. I would never have been able to do this without your help!

I am so pleased I have successfully completed the course even though I had some rough patches you and Sally reassured me and helped me build some confidence

I am really thankful for your assistance, guidance, support and commitment towards me.

Thank You!

(middle name:- I can’t do it, but I can and I did!)”

## **FEEDBACK FROM AN “APPECIATIVE PARENT”**

Received November 4 2008

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the transformation I have seen in my son.

In just a couple of months he has gone from having a lack of confidence in his own abilities, and matching enthusiasm, (common features of a young person) into a young man, wanting not only to achieve the very best results he can possibly attain given the circumstances presented, but doing everything he can to exceed everyone’s expectations but more importantly he own”.

### **Other Quotes we have received**

“The Zenos course was pretty useful because it gave useful knowledge of computers plus I got A+ and MCDST as a bonus”

“The course gives enough knowledge to create a good foundation for IT”

“The Job Placement Officer Hayley, helped me to find a job, she was pretty helpful and she helped on my CV which I have now lost”

“Overall Zenos is good if you do the work”

“My time at Zenos has been invaluable; I have gained far more than qualifications”

“I found it hard but the staff pushed me and helped me get through it”.

Zenos has given me the key to an adult life”