



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballycastle Community Workshop

Report of an Inspection
in October 2010

CONTENTS

Section	Page
PART ONE: SUMMARY	
1. CONTEXT	1
2. PROVISION	1
3. THE INSPECTION	2
4. MAIN FINDINGS	2
PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION	
5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	4
6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	5
7. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	6
PART THREE: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	
8. CONCLUSION	8
9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	8

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small minority

All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by Ballycastle Community Workshop.

Grading System

The Education and Training Inspectorate use the following performance levels in reports:

Performance Level
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

NOTE: In this report the word 'trainee' is used as an inclusive term to refer to: young people on the Training for Success Programme, known as participants in the Operational Guidelines; those on Programme-Led Apprenticeships; and employees in training on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

PART ONE: SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Ballycastle Community Workshop Training Limited (BCW) is a community-based training organisation which has been providing Government funded training initiatives in the Moyle area since 1981. The organisation has charitable status and is based in an enterprise park in Ballycastle.

1.2 Since September 2007, BCW has been contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to supply training under the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, at level 2 on the National Qualifications Framework in business administration, hairdressing, plastering, retail and trowel occupations, with a maximum capacity of ten places in each professional and technical area. The organisation also delivers the Training for Success programme.

1.3 The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) 2010 indicate that, of the 26 council districts in Northern Ireland, the Moyle District is ranked ninth on the overall deprivation index and sixth on the employment rate deprivation index.

2. PROVISION

2.1 Over the past five years, the numbers recruited to training programmes in BCW have declined significantly and currently there are small numbers enrolled. At the time of the inspection, a total of 26 trainees and apprentices were in training with BCW, which represents a decrease of 16% over the past five years. All of the trainees and apprentices are completing appropriate qualifications at either Level 1 or Level 2.

2.2 The organisation has a small management team which includes the Manager, Assistant Manager, and Quality Officer. A full-time administrative assistant supports the work of the management team. As a result of the decreasing numbers of trainees, the Manager and Assistant Manager currently work on a part-time basis, for four days each week. The Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI provision is managed at an operational level by a small team of part-time tutors. The organisation has a committed Board of Directors who meet with all staff on a bi-monthly basis.

2.3 At the time of the inspection, BCW was providing training for twenty six apprentices and trainees. Of the six apprentices, three were following apprenticeships at level 2 in administration and the remainder in hairdressing. The majority (50%) of the apprentices have four or more General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at grade C or above. In addition, BCW was providing training for ten trainees registered on Training for Success programmes, and for a similar number of trainees on Programme-Led Apprenticeship programmes. Of the trainees on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme, three were registered on administration programmes; two each in bricklaying and hairdressing and three on plastering programmes; a minority (20%) of these trainees had achieved four GCSEs at grade C or above on entry to the programme. Overall, a minority of the trainees and apprentices had achieved a GCSE at grade C or above in English (23%) or mathematics (12%). Twenty-three (88%) of the trainees and apprentices are completing an essential skills qualification.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 In October 2010, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out an inspection of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in BCW. A small team of inspectors, supported by an associate assessor, observed eight directed training sessions in which 17 trainees were undertaking training. The team also interviewed a total of ten trainees and apprentices in on-the-job training. Extended discussions were held with the Manager and Assistant Manager, the Quality Manager, and the vocational and essential skills tutors. The inspection team also examined samples of the trainees' work, portfolios of evidence and personal training plans (PTPs). The organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

3.2 The arrangements for the inspection of care, guidance and support and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups include the opportunity for trainees to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings by the inspection team with groups of the trainees across the professional and technical programmes. Twenty-six questionnaires were issued to the trainees, 17 (65%) of which were returned to the Inspectorate; none of these contained additional written comments. The returns show that the trainees' levels of satisfaction about their experiences in BCW are very good. In particular, they appreciate the good support they receive from staff. The Inspectorate has reported to the Manager the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with the trainees.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In most of the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by BCW is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, achievements and standards, and the provision for learning which need to be addressed if the needs of all the apprentices and trainees are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- very good quality of the hairdressing provision;
- commitment of the staff to the care and welfare of the trainees;
- opportunities for the trainees to acquire additional qualifications and experiences; and
- good standards of written work in most of the portfolios.

4.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- quality of the leadership and management of the provision;
- poor overall retention rate at 49%; and
- implementation of strategies to disseminate the good practice identified during the inspection.

Table of Performance Levels

Overall performance level	Satisfactory
Contributory performance levels	
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Quality of Provision for Learning	Satisfactory

PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The quality of the leadership and management of BCW is satisfactory. The management team is strongly committed to the care and welfare of the trainees. There are good opportunities for the trainees to acquire additional qualifications, including training in disability awareness, conflict management, first aid and, where appropriate, assistance with driving theory. In addition, there are good relationships with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies, including the Community Policing Section of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). These agencies contribute effectively to the overall training programmes and provide the trainees with appropriate opportunities which extend their learning.

5.2 The senior managers have developed good working relationships with a range of key organisations, including Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Department of Moyle District Council, the North Antrim Business Agency and the Northwest Lifelong Learning Association. Despite these strong strategic links, and the good relationships that have been developed with local employers, the general lack of employment opportunities in the area coupled with the economic downturn have created major problems in securing work placements for the trainees, particularly in the construction industry. Currently, only four (40%) of the trainees on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme are in work placements.

5.3 The current arrangements for managing the provision are not sufficiently robust to ensure that all of the trainees are enabled to make appropriate progress and realise their full potential. As a result, there is variation in the quality of the provision across the range of ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success programmes. The quality of the teaching, training and learning is very good in hairdressing, good in administration, satisfactory in construction, but inadequate in the essential skill of literacy. Across all of the training programmes, the lack of rigorous procedures for tracking the trainees' progress is impeding their progress towards achievement of their framework requirements.

5.4 The roles and responsibilities of staff within the organisation are clearly defined. Most of the staff are appropriately qualified and have relevant industrial experience. They are supported well in their continuous professional development and there are good opportunities for them to attend relevant training courses, including an appropriate opportunity for the hairdressing tutor to update her technical and product knowledge through attendance at an international hair show.

5.5 The quality of the accommodation varies from very good to satisfactory. The organisation has recently made a significant investment in the upgrading of the Information Technology suite and the plastering workshop; a trainee social area and careers room have also been established. The hairdressing department has recently been refurbished to a very high standard. The remainder of the accommodation is of a satisfactory standard.

5.6 The quality assurance and improvement planning processes are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that good quality training and learning is achieved and maintained, across all of the programmes. The self-evaluation process does not highlight sufficiently the slow progress made by the majority of the trainees towards completion of their qualifications, or the impact this may have had on the retention rate. While BCW has recently introduced an achievement board to motivate the trainees in their learning, more needs to be done to

improve retention rates across all of the programmes. The procedures for the collation, analysis and use of data are not sufficiently rigorous to inform planning for improvement. Similarly, the arrangements for the observation of teaching, training and learning are not sufficiently systematic to identify and plan for the improvements that are required to promote coherence and consistency within and across the training programmes.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

6.1 With the exception of the hairdressing trainees, who are highly motivated, a significant minority of the trainees enter their programmes with considerable barriers to learning, including low levels of motivation and self-confidence. The senior managers report that the trainees recruited last year (2009/2010), in particular, presented such a wide range of behavioural problems, including drug and substance abuse and high levels of challenging and anti-social behaviour, that it became necessary to terminate training for a quarter of them, with the consequent negative impact on retention figures.

6.2 While BCW has recently implemented a number of appropriate measures to improve the attendance of the trainees, further work is required to improve their time-keeping and punctuality and raise the aspirations of a significant minority of them.

6.3 The standards of written work achieved by trainees on the Skills for Work programme range from good to poor, but are mostly satisfactory. In contrast, most of the apprentices and Programme-Led apprentices achieve good standards of work in their vocational portfolios.

6.4 The apprentices on the business administration programme are competent and confident in setting up databases and in the use of mail merge techniques to send brochures to customers. They can also identify action to be taken to improve customer service, including for example, streamlining procedures to improve communication between housekeeping and reception staff in a local hotel.

6.5 In hairdressing, the trainees develop good occupational skills and enhanced skills such as team-working, effective communication and managing time and resources. The majority of the employers report that the apprentices' skills have improved since registering on the training programme.

6.6 Most employers are involved effectively in the training review process and have sufficient opportunity to comment on the progress the trainees are making in the development of their occupational and essential skills.

6.7 The standards of the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills are variable, and written work in their essential skills portfolios ranges from very good to poor. The standards of work are good in the essential skills portfolios in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), but poor in literacy.

6.8 Over the past three years, the overall average retention rate across all training programmes is poor at 49%. Between April 2007 and March 2010, the retention rates for the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes are poor at 50% and 46% respectively. Over the same period, the overall success rate is good at 85% across all programmes. The success rates for Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI are good at 82% and excellent at 100% respectively. The progression rate from Skills for Work to Programme-Led Apprenticeships is also good at 83%.

7. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7.1 The relationships between the tutors and the trainees are good. The staff are committed to their welfare and personal development. Most of the tutors establish effective relationships with almost all of the trainees and provide them with good levels of support. Trainees on the Training for Success programmes benefit from a timetabled Lifeskills class which focuses on personal and social development, and includes alcohol and drugs education and the management of personal finances

7.2 Although almost all of the trainees report that they found their induction to be useful, a minority of them do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the structure of their training programme including, where appropriate, the requirements for essential skills.

7.3 The quality of one-half of the training sessions observed was good or better. A small number (13%) of them were very good. Where the training was good or better, it was characterised by effective planning and appropriate pace and challenge. In contrast, more than one-third of the sessions observed were just satisfactory; typically in these sessions, a narrow range of training and learning approaches was used, and in one session which was inadequate, the planning was weak and the pace of the work did not take sufficient account of the trainees' differing abilities. There is a need to ensure that the good practice identified in teaching, training and learning during the inspection is disseminated effectively across the professional and technical areas.

7.4 The quality of the planning for the essential skills varies; it is good in numeracy and ICT, where the vocational and essential skills tutors work well together to plan for the development and assessment of the trainees' essential skills within the professional and technical areas. In contrast, there are weaknesses in the planning for the development of the essential skill of literacy. Considerable work is required by the senior managers to strengthen the provision, including the need for the literacy tutor to liaise closely with vocational tutors to plan tasks which are linked more firmly to the relevant professional and technical area, and to individualise the learning to meet the needs of all of the trainees.

7.5 The quality of the personal training plans is satisfactory. While some account is taken of the outcomes of the initial assessments, more needs to be done to ensure that the plans are individual in nature and identify clearly any additional educational needs. The plans do include some targets for achievement and progression, although these need to be more specific, and underpinned with a more effective process for the monitoring and review of progress.

7.6 The quality of most of the work placements, for those trainees who are in them, is good. They are provided with good opportunities to develop suitable occupational, personal and social skills that improve their employability prospects. Most employers support the trainees well. There are, however, insufficient numbers of work placements to meet the needs of all of the trainees. As a result, there is scope for more creative planning to address this issue, and for the implementation of innovative work-based projects, particularly for those trainees who wish to work in the construction industry, to enable them to develop appropriate work-related skills and competences.

7.7 The arrangements to provide trainees with good quality careers education, information, advice and guidance range from very good to satisfactory. They are very good for trainees in hairdressing and include appropriate industrial visits and access to a variety of guest speakers, some of whom are former trainees and who have now established their own businesses. The provision for Exploring Enterprise, available across all of the professional and technical areas, provides individuals who may wish to establish their own business in the future with good opportunities to explore their ideas and develop the requisite knowledge

and skills. Trainees on the Training for Success programme have the opportunity to learn about careers in youth work and in the Fire Service from representatives from these agencies. Trainees across the majority of the occupational areas would, however, benefit from further visits from relevant guest speakers and increased opportunities to visit local businesses to enable them to understand more fully the career pathways available to them.

7.8 The organisation has developed effective links with a range of appropriate voluntary organisations, including Opportunity Youth, Include Youth, and Disability Action to provide additional support for trainees with particular and additional needs.

7.9 The quality of the arrangements for the care, guidance and support of the trainees is very good. While the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, the following areas need to be addressed:

- the formal identification of the deputy designated officer; and
- an update and review of the training in pastoral care issues for the management committee.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 In most of the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by BCW is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, achievements and standards, and the provision for learning which need to be addressed if the needs of all the apprentices and trainees are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Ballycastle Community Workshop needs to revise its annual improvement plan to take account of the following key priorities:

- improved procedures for the collation, analysis and use of data to monitor performance and support improvement planning; and
- the implementation of strategies to track trainees' and apprentices' progress towards achievement of their qualifications in order to improve retention rates.

***OVERALL SUMMARY TABLE 2007-2010**

Programme	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate %	Success Rate %	Progressed to FE/other training	Progressed to relevant Employment
Training for Success/ Apprenticeships NI 2007-2008	22	36%	100%	50%	38%
Training for Success/ApprenticeshipsNI 2008-2009	34	47%	100%	62%	15%
Training for Success/ApprenticeshipsNI 2009-2010	28	61%	62%	50%	38%
Overall Totals	84	49%	85%	55%	28%

* Data provided by Ballycastle Community Workshop

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