



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Impact Training (NI) Limited,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 2011

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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 Impact Training.

Grading System

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

Performance Level
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

PART ONE: SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Impact Training (NI) Limited, (Impact Training), is a community-based charitable organisation, which was registered as a company in 1978. It promotes the social inclusion of young people and adults, mostly from the North and West Belfast areas, and aims to help them gain employment.

1.2 Impact Training has been contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to supply training under both the Training for Success and the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes at level 2. The organisation's main premises are located on Lanark Way on the Shankill Road in Belfast. Impact Training has a long history of cross-community co-operation in this area, and maintains close collaborative links with other training supplier organisations in the area.

1.3 The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) identifies North and West Belfast as two of the most deprived parliamentary constituency areas within Northern Ireland. The trainees and apprentices registered with Impact Training are mostly recruited from the seven Greater Shankill wards, all of which are in the top 15% of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland; four of them are in the top 10%. Each of these areas has high levels of unemployment and low levels of educational attainment.

1.4 A significant minority of the trainees and apprentices recruited to the programmes have clearly identified personal, motivational or behavioural problems. The organisation reports that they often have complex needs and multiple barriers to education, training or employment, including: alcohol, solvent or drug- related abuse or dependencies; health related problems; homelessness; family problems or involvement in anti-social criminal activities. Most of the trainees and apprentices have essential skills needs.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection, Impact Training was providing training for 186 trainees and apprentices. They are undertaking a range of professional and technical qualifications including, business administration, children's care, learning and development, engineering, hospitality and catering, information technology, retail, warehousing and stores and wood occupations.

2.2 Of the trainees and apprentices currently in training, 54 (29%) are on programmes in hospitality and catering; 34 (18%) in engineering; 30 (16%) in wood occupations; 20 (11%) in children's care, learning and development; 20 (11%) in retail; 12 (7%) in warehousing and stores; eleven (6%) in Information Technology; and five (2%) in Business Administration. A group of nine (5%) trainees are on the Skills for Your Life Programme; 40 (22%) are on the Skills for Work programme; 97 (51%) are on the Programme-Led Apprenticeships programme; and 40 (22%) are on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

2.3 The majority of the trainees and apprentices enter the training programmes with poor levels of prior academic achievement. Of the 186 trainees currently in training, 51% had no formal qualifications on entry, 12% of them had four General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications or equivalent at grades A*-C, and a further 30% had achieved GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades D-G. Around 22% of the trainees and apprentices came to Impact Training from local schools having attained a level 1 or level 2 qualification in the essential skill of communication, and 9% of them had attained a qualification in the essential skill of application of number.

2.4 Around 75% (139) of the current trainees are undertaking an essential skills qualification in literacy and 80% (148) of them are undertaking numeracy. The remainder of the trainees are exempt from the essential skills.

2.5 Overall leadership and contract management is the responsibility of the Manager, who is supported well by a Deputy Manager and a Training Co-ordinator. An additional 20 staff members are employed by Impact Training to support the delivery of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. Of these, ten are professional and technical tutors, four are essential skills tutors, three are employability/mentor staff and one is an employer liaison officer. There are also two dedicated administrative staff. Impact Training is supported effectively by a management committee, whose members are drawn from the local community.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 Impact Training was identified as a supplier organisation with a good track record for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning and the capacity for sustained self-improvement. As such it was chosen as an organisation for a new, proportionate model of inspection.

3.2 In May/June 2011, the Inspectorate carried out a proportionate inspection of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in Impact Training. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the accuracy and reliability of Impact Training's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes and to determine whether their evaluations of the quality of the provision matched those of the Inspectorate. Over a period of two days, a team of six inspectors and one associate assessor observed a total of 119 trainees in 23 directed training sessions, and interviewed 42 trainees in their workplace. Extended discussions were held with senior managers, tutors and trainees. In addition, 27 employers were interviewed by the inspection team. The team also examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work, portfolios of evidence, personal training plans (PTPs) and progress reviews. The organisation's self-evaluation report, development plan and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

3.3 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups included the opportunity for trainees and apprentices from across the professional and technical programmes to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meet with the inspection team. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were issued to trainees, almost all of which were returned to the Inspectorate. The returns show that the trainees' experiences in Impact Training are excellent. In particular, the trainees and apprentices appreciate the high levels of support they receive from staff, and the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities provided by the organisation. They highlighted their enjoyment in taking part in a range of projects, and activities which allow them to contribute positively to the enhancement and development of their local community. The Inspectorate has reported the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with trainees to the senior managers.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education and training provided by Impact Training is very good. The organisation is meeting very effectively the training and pastoral needs of the trainees and apprentices; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- outstanding leadership and management at all levels of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, and in particular the significant investment by the management team in staffing, resources and accommodation to effectively support the delivery of the provision.
- very good processes for quality assurance, critical self-evaluation and continuous improvement planning, which are underpinned by an effective use of reliable data;
- very good quality of the training and learning sessions observed, including the effective use of information and learning technology (ILT); two-thirds of the sessions observed were very good or better;
- outstanding quality of the care, guidance and support which meets well the individual needs of all of the trainees and apprentices;
- very good quality of most of the work placements and the good involvement of employers in the training process;
- good or better standards of work demonstrated by most of the trainees and apprentices; and
- excellent overall success rate and good overall progression rate over the past three years.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- modest overall retention rate; and
- lack of work placements for a minority of the trainees.

Table of Performance Levels

Overall performance level	Very good
Contributory performance levels	
Leadership and Management	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Quality of Provision for Learning	Very Good

PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and management of Impact Training is outstanding. The management team, supported by the management committee, provide strong strategic direction based on an inclusive, responsive and trainee-centred ethos. The mission, vision and values of the organisation are well-established and the overall aim, to provide high quality training programmes, is shared by staff at all levels of the organisation, members of the management committee and other key stakeholders.

5.2 The arrangements for self-evaluation and quality improvement are rigorous and robust and there is a well-developed culture of planning for continuous improvement. At a strategic level, standardised and systematic processes for the planning, monitoring and review of training and assessment have been developed and implemented effectively across all the training programmes. These include structured observations of the directed training and learning sessions, the scrutiny of the personal training plans and reviews, and sampling of other relevant documentation. Good feedback, including any identified areas for improvement are provided to, and valued by, the tutors. There are systematic processes in place for obtaining regular feedback from trainees, staff and employers, and the outcomes of these evaluations are used effectively to inform planning for improvement. In addition, management information data is collated and analysed regularly, and used effectively to identify areas in which improvement is required. The inspection confirms that the organisation's own evaluation of its provision matches very closely that of the Inspectorate. The quality improvement plan captures almost all of the main areas for improvement identified, with the exception of the very good work which is being undertaken to secure new and additional work experience placements and projects for trainees in engineering, warehousing and stores and wood occupations.

5.3 Innovative approaches are used to meet new and emerging challenges, and to maximise the training and learning opportunities available to the trainees and apprentices. For example, in light of the difficulties that the organisation is facing in securing work experience placements in engineering and wood occupations for a minority of their trainees, due to the economic recession, a range of appropriate, community-based projects and appropriate work activities have been put in place. In addition, Impact Training has also received a charitable donation which it plans to use to purchase two local buildings in need of renovation, to provide further work experience opportunities for trainees. These opportunities not only help to develop the trainees' professional and technical skills but also their sense of citizenship and social responsibility.

5.4 The quality of the care, guidance and support for the trainees and apprentices is outstanding. The caring ethos of the organisation is reflected in the strong commitment of the managers and all of the staff to meeting well the individual welfare needs of the trainees and apprentices, and in the clear focus on developing the work-readiness skills of the trainees on the Training for Success programmes. An appropriate emphasis is placed on supporting those trainees with significant personal issues through the provision of staff mentors, and by providing an effective employability and careers education, information, advice and guidance programme alongside their professional and technical training.

5.5 The senior managers provide outstanding leadership which is effective in promoting high standards and very good working relationships. There are open channels of communication, and managers and staff display a strong commitment to their work. They have high expectations of the trainees and apprentices and provide them with very good levels of support. The well-qualified and inter-disciplinary staff team work together closely and share a strong commitment to Impact Training's strategic objectives and to meeting the

individual needs of the trainees. There are good opportunities for all staff to engage in continuous professional development. Currently, three members of staff have completed the Certificate in Teaching at the University of Ulster, and three more of them will start the programme in September 2011. This development opportunity for staff is impacting positively on the learning experiences of the trainees across the wider organisation. In addition, Impact Training is engaged in an effective Technology Enhanced Learning project, with two other local supplier organisations, to improve the ILT skills of the tutors across all professional and technical areas.

5.6 The management team has made ongoing significant investment in providing additional staff and resources, including high quality accommodation, and access to information and communication technology (ICT) resources, to support the delivery of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI training programmes. The organisation is developing a virtual learning environment in collaboration with two other training supplier organisations. The premises and resources are maintained to a very high standard.

5.8 The manager of Impact Training represents the organisation on a range of key strategic groups across the work-based learning sector. She uses these opportunities effectively to gather relevant labour market intelligence and develop an informed perspective on trends and developments within and across the various professional and technical areas. Good relationships have been developed with a wide range of employers and organisations from the statutory and voluntary sectors, and these links are highly effective in providing appropriate levels of specialised support for trainees.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

6.1 Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated to progress in their learning, and achieve their target qualifications. They are well-supported and strongly encouraged to develop and apply good work-related skills. The tutors and managers set high expectations with regard to the trainees' attendance, behaviour, achievement and progression. The behaviour of the trainees during the inspection was very good. Almost all of the trainees report significant increases in their self-esteem and confidence through participation in their training programme. Attendance at directed training and in the workplace is mostly good.

6.2 Most of the trainees and apprentices achieve good standards as demonstrated by their responses during classroom and/or workshop activities, in the written work in their portfolios, and in their work placements. Most of the work placements visited are of a very good quality and the trainees are provided with good opportunities to further develop their practical and wider employability skills. Communication between staff in Impact Training and employers is very good and most of the employers are well-informed and effectively engaged in the training process. For example, an employer in an engineering firm was able to request specific training to ensure that the trainees were appropriately skilled to undertake specific work-based tasks. In addition, trainees on the hospitality and catering programmes are provided with excellent opportunities to develop their practical skills at weekly workshops delivered by two local chefs. There is a clear focus by the managers and tutors on appropriate target-setting and regular, effective monitoring of the trainees' progress.

6.3 Over the past three years, the average retention rate for the trainees and apprentices across all of the provision is modest at 64%; it ranges from poor in warehousing and stores and retail at 51% and 58% respectively to good in children's care, learning and development and hospitality and catering at 83% and 84% respectively. The management have appropriately identified the retention rates as an area for improvement in their quality improvement plan.

6.4 Over the same period, the success rate for those trainees who completed their programmes is excellent at 100%. Almost all of the trainees improve significantly their essential skills of literacy and numeracy with excellent success rates of 94% and 90% respectively, and a good success rate in ICT essential skill at 87%. It is noteworthy that a majority of the trainees and apprentices achieve their essential skills at a level above that required by their training programme; 54% of the trainees achieved a higher level in literacy, 48% in numeracy and 63% in ICT. This is a significant achievement given the many barriers to learning the trainees present with at the beginning of their training programme.

6.5 The overall progression rate to further education, training or employment in Impact Training is good at 89%. The progression rate for trainees from Skills for Your Life is excellent at 93%, for trainees on Skills for Work it is good at 88%, and for those on the Pre-Apprenticeship and Programme-Led Apprenticeships programmes it is satisfactory at 75%. The senior managers have recognised the progression rate for Pre-Apprenticeship and Programme-Led Apprentices as an area for improvement in their quality improvement plan.

6.6 Almost all of the trainees and apprentices benefit from the opportunity to achieve appropriate additional qualifications including, for example, food hygiene, paediatric first aid and Construction Skills Register (CSR) certification.

7. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7.1 The quality of teaching, training and learning is very good. In all of the training sessions observed, the quality was good or better; two-thirds of the sessions were very good or better. Nearly all of the sessions were well-planned, with a good blend of training and learning approaches. As a result, almost all of the trainees and apprentices were well engaged in their learning. Impact Training makes very good use of visiting speakers to encourage and motivate the current trainees and apprentices, including former trainees who have progressed to management roles in local companies.

7.2 Marking for improvement is used well in the majority of professional and technical areas and there is clear evidence of development of the trainees' and apprentices' work and skills as they progress through their training programmes. Similarly, feedback from assessment is used effectively through the review process to inform the trainees and apprentices of their progress.

7.3 In the essential skills, the trainees and apprentices are provided with very good learning experiences which are integrated and linked to all aspects of their programme including their professional and technical, and their personal development and careers education, information, advice and guidance programmes. Impact Training ensures that class sizes are kept small, and several examples of very good differentiated teaching and learning was observed.

7.4 The quality of the personal training plans is very good. Impact Training has established an effective process for devising, monitoring and reviewing the plans, involving appropriately staff, the trainees and employers. Good use is made of the outcomes from initial assessments with proper account being taken of the trainees' and apprentices' preferred learning styles and additional learning needs. The plans provide a sound framework upon which the staff provide appropriate training and any additional support. The target qualifications are well set out with clear, measurable milestones for achievement and

progress, which are well monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis, with appropriate input from employers. The personal training plans are well understood and used appropriately by the trainees and apprentices to review their learning. They do not, however, articulate clearly enough the wide range and very good quality of personal, social and emotional support provided by the organisation for a small number of trainees.

7.5 Impact Training provides a good range of training programmes for the trainees. The Skills for Your Life programme is tailored well to meet the diverse and challenging needs of this particular group. The differentiated planning and overall quality of this provision is good; there is an appropriate focus on these trainees' development of a range of literacy, numeracy, ICT, employability and personal skills.

7.6 The trainees on the Skills for Work and Programme-Led Apprenticeship programmes are provided with a good range of occupationally-relevant and varied training experiences. Almost all of the trainees benefit from the opportunities to achieve additional qualifications, and to participate in a good range of appropriate enrichment activities.

7.7 Impact Training has invested significant funds to improve the ILT resources and is working very hard to further embed the use of ILT across the range of professional and technical areas. The organisation is working to good effect with two other training suppliers organisations in a project to enhance the ILT skills of the tutors and to build up a range of shared online resources. Almost all of the teaching areas and workshops are equipped with computers and interactive whiteboards. The effective use of ILT to enhance and enrich the learning experiences of the trainees is progressing well.

7.8 A very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities are on offer to trainees. These include local history projects, cross-community art work, and music and photography workshops. The trainees also have good opportunities to take part in recreational activities and residential which are used to good effect to develop their personal and social skills.

7.9 The quality of the arrangements for the care, guidance and support of the trainees is outstanding. A strong culture of mutual respect characterises all aspects of the work of the organisation. The managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the overall pastoral care of the trainees and apprentices and have developed appropriate policies and procedures to support them. The staff have high expectations of the trainees and apprentices in all aspects of their programmes.

7.10 Very good links exist with a range of relevant external agencies. Trainees whose personal barriers limit progress towards completion of their qualifications are provided with very good levels of internal support, and signposting to relevant external agencies or personnel.

7.11 The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance is very good. A full-time tutor has been appointed to undertake this role and all trainees have access to an externally accredited programme. Impact Training operates an effective structure to celebrate and reward success and to motivate trainees and apprentices in their training, which include residential and activity days. These activities are very effective in the development and promotion of personal, social and work-related skills.

7.12 Impact Training promotes effectively the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. The arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIIY FOR DEVELOPMENT

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 In the professional and technical areas inspected, the quality of the provision in Impact Training is very good. The organisation is meeting very effectively the training and pastoral needs of the trainees; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

9. KEY PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

9.1 In order to improve the quality of the training provision, Impact Training needs to revise its annual quality improvement plan to ensure that it clearly identifies the need to extend the range and availability of work experience placements in order to increase the opportunities for trainees to develop their professional and technical skills.

***OVERALL SUMMARY TABLE 2007-2011**

Programme	Started (completed4 weeks)	Retention Rate %	Success Rate %	Progressed to FE/other training	Progressed to relevant employment
Training for Success 2007 -2008	82	63%	100%	37	7
Training for Success / ApprenticeshipsNI 2008-2009	142	73%	100%	75	15
Training for Success / ApprenticeshipsNI 2009-2010	185	55%	100%	47	12
Overall totals	409	64%	100%	159	34

*** Data provided by Impact Training**

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