



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Network Personnel Steps to  
Work Lead Contractor for North  
West Contract Area

Report of an Inspection  
In September 2010-February 2011

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

### Statistics

All performance statistics in this report have been supplied by Network Personnel.

### Grading system

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

Performance Level	Grade	Descriptor
Outstanding	1	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	2	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	3	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	4	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	5	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	6	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

## **PART ONE**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In September 2008, the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) introduced its new employment programme, Steps to Work which subsumed the main New Deal programmes. The primary purpose of the Steps to Work programme is to help participants who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. The programme has been devised to ensure a more flexible approach to provision which can be targeted at the individuals' personal barriers to employment. Participation in Steps to Work is a mandatory requirement for all Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants aged 18 to 24 years who have been claiming JSA for six months or more, and those aged 25 and over who have been claiming JSA for 18 months or more. Steps to Work is also available on a voluntary basis to participants who are unemployed or economically inactive and who want to start or return to work.

1.2 Steps to Work is delivered in a '3 step process':

**Step One:** Participants receive ongoing one-to-one support and guidance from an Adviser from the Jobs and Benefits office/JobCentre with the primary aim of helping the participants find work as soon as possible. Available provision is focused on interventions of short duration such as Short Accredited Courses or Core Gateway.

**Step Two:** This is targeted at participants who require additional assistance to bring them closer to the labour market and help them find and sustain employment. The participant is offered and provided with a wider range of longer-term support; the provision will normally last for up to 13 weeks but can be up to 52 weeks.

**Step Three:** This is targeted at participants who have completed Step Two but have not found employment. The participant is provided with follow-up support and advice from an Adviser for a period of up to six weeks. They may also access some provision such as Short Accredited Courses or elements of Core Gateway, if needed.

#### **2. CONTEXT**

2.1 Network Personnel is contracted by the Department as Lead Contractor for the delivery of Steps to Work provision in the North West region of Northern Ireland. The North West region covers a wide geographical area including Coleraine, Cookstown, Limavady and Magherafelt. Participants are referred to the Lead Contractor through the Cookstown JobCentre and the Coleraine, Magherafelt, and Limavady Jobs and Benefits offices.

2.2 Network Personnel was established in 1989 as a training and employment organisation within The Workspace Group, a not-for-profit organisation established in 1985 to stimulate social and economic regeneration in the Magherafelt area. It operates from the Workspace Group's premises in Magherafelt town centre. Network Personnel manages the delivery of the Steps to Work programme in Cookstown and Magherafelt, and has sub-contract arrangements in place with two providers, Elle Enterprises (Northern Ireland) Limited (Elle Enterprises) and Roe Valley Community Education Forum to manage the delivery of the provision in the Coleraine and Limavady areas respectively. It also sub-contracts the delivery of the Self-Employment Test Trading strand of the programme to

four Enterprise Agencies across the contract area and the provision of the Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) to Business in the Community, which manages the delivery of the provision from its premises close to Belfast city centre. In addition, a sub-contract agreement is in place with Beat'n'Track for specialist support in music across the contract area.

2.3 At the time of the inspection, 156 (33%) of the participants had no formal qualifications on entry to the programme. One hundred and sixty-four (35%) of the participants had vocational and other qualifications ranging from basic level certificates to diplomas and certificates at level 3. Sixty-seven (14%) of the participants had achieved English at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grade C or above and 65 (14%) had achieved mathematics at GCSE grade C or above. Nineteen participants (4%) held a Higher National Diploma or degree level qualification.

2.4 The January 2011 data supplied by the Department indicates that there were 5,545 Jobseeker's Allowance claimants in the North West region. This represents an increase of 16% from February 2009, just after the contract began. The number of participants eligible for mandatory participation on the Steps to Work programme in this region is 1,050.

2.5 The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) 2010 indicates that the Limavady local government district is ranked as the fourth most deprived local government district on the rank of employment rate. Statistics provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) for January 2011 show that the Limavady District Council Area has the third highest percentage of the available workforce registered as claiming a specific unemployment related benefit, at 7.1%. The statistics for Coleraine (5.1%), Cookstown (4.7%) and Magherafelt (4.0%) are below the Northern Ireland average of 5.2%.

### **3. PROVISION**

3.1 At the time of the inspection, there were 461 participants on the Steps to Work provision across the North West region. One hundred and seven of them were registered on Step One; 66 on Core Gateway, six on the Self-Employment Basic Awareness strand, seven on the Start a Business strand and 28 on a range of Short Accredited Courses. The remaining 354 participants were registered on Step Two; 163 (46%) on Back to Work, 70 (20%) on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) lasting 52 weeks, 50 (14%) on Essential Skills Training, four (1%) on Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) lasting 26 weeks, 44 (13%) on Self-Employment Test Trading, 19 (5%) on Step Ahead and four (1%) on the Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP). Of the current participants, 70% of them were male. Data provided by Network Personnel indicates that 32% of the starts on the Steps to Work programme are voluntary. The same statistics show that most of the participants on the Self-Employment Test Trading strand are also voluntary.

3.2 With the exception of the directed training for NVQs and VRQs, which is delivered by a range of other training providers, Network Personnel, Elle Enterprises and Roe Valley Community Education Forum deliver most of the directed training, including the Core Gateway provision for the Steps to Work programme. During the inspection, Network Personnel was working directly with 90 Step Two participants in Cookstown and Magherafelt, Elle Enterprises was working with 115 participants, and Roe Valley Community Education Forum was working with 101 participants. Five of the other sub-contractors were actively working with Step Two participants; Causeway Enterprise Agency (24), Cookstown Enterprise Agency (six), Roe Valley Enterprise Agency (3), Workspace Enterprise Agency Draperstown (11), and Business in the Community (4).

3.3 All of the participants registered on Step Two activities were receiving some form of employability preparation, such as Jobsearch, curriculum vitae (CV) building, and interview skills, alongside their main strand of the Step to Work programme. In order to raise occupational skills, 70 participants were undertaking National Vocational Qualifications, and four participants were undertaking Vocationally Related Qualifications, in a good range of professional and technical areas. These include business and administration, children's care, learning and development, computing and information technology, construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty, health and social care, hospitality and catering, light vehicle repair and retail.

#### **4. THE INSPECTION**

4.1 This report is based on an inspection of Network Personnel and a sample of the work of its seven sub-contractors. The inspection took place over two phases; phase one took place in September 2010 and interim findings were left with the Lead Contractor at that time. The second phase of the inspection took place in February 2011 and involved a team of five inspectors and an associate assessor.

4.2 During the inspection, the inspection team:

- visited 88 participants on work experience placements;
- observed 217 participants in 34 directed training sessions;
- held discussions with 62 participants across five focus groups;
- held discussions with the managers of Network Personnel, and senior staff from the sub-contractors;
- held discussions with key training and support staff;
- examined a wide range of documentation including samples of participants' written work and their Personal Training Plans (PTPs);
- held discussions with 34 employers; and
- held discussions with District Managers, Managers and Team Leaders from the JobCentre and the Jobs and Benefits offices.

#### **5. MAIN FINDINGS**

5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of the Steps to Work employment programme provided by Network Personnel is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which Network Personnel has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the organisation's progress on the areas for improvement.

Overall performance level	Good
Contributory performance levels:	
Leadership and management	Good
Employment outcomes and achievement	Good
Quality of training and services	Good

5.2 The main strengths are the:

- good management of the Steps to Work programme by the Lead Contractor;
- good quality of the training and learning in the majority of the directed training sessions observed;
- good quality of most of the work placements, which are well matched to the participants' individual needs and result in positive workplace experiences for most of the participants;
- good quality of the support provided for most of the participants across the contract area; and
- good provision for the Core Gateway, Step Ahead and Self-Employment Test Trading strands.

5.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- overall progression rates into sustained employment at 19%;
- strengthening of the participant monitoring and review process; and
- further development of procedures for staff, across the contract area, to share good practice in the delivery of the Steps to Work programme.

## **PART TWO**

### **OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION**

#### **6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

6.1 The leadership and management of the Steps to Work programme by Network Personnel, in collaboration with its two main sub-contractors, Elle Enterprises and Roe Valley Community Education Forum, is good. Productive working relationships have been established by the managers of all three organisations which are characterised by good collegiality, mutual respect, and equality in decision-making.

6.2 Communication between Network Personnel, sub-contractors, and JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits office staff is very good and underpins the effective management of the Steps to Work provision. Regular meetings are held across the organisations, and the effectiveness of the meetings is reviewed regularly by the Lead Contractor, with appropriate action taken as required to improve communication. For example, due to different operational requirements, separate meetings are now held with the main sub-contractors on a quarterly basis, and between these and the four Enterprise Agencies also on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Lead Contractor attends bi-monthly meetings with the staff from the JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits Offices. These meetings are also being expanded, appropriately, to include the Steps to Work Team Leaders. More work needs to be done, by the Lead Contractor working in collaboration with staff from the JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits Offices, to ensure that issues such as low numbers of referrals to some Steps to Work strands, for example, In-Work Enhanced Support and Confidence and Motivation, are addressed.

6.3 The management by the sub-contractors of their elements of the Steps to Work provision is good. It is clear that the sub-contractors value the effective working relationships which have been developed with the Lead Contractor.

6.4 Network Personnel and the sub-contractors provide the participants with access to good quality accommodation, which is well equipped with information communication technology (ICT) equipment and other facilities. The staff of Network Personnel and the sub-contractor organisations are appropriately qualified and are well deployed. Good emphasis is placed on the continuous professional development of staff by the three main partners, with annual joint staff development days, and more recently the provision of a workshop, facilitated by an external training provider, to share good practice in the delivery of the Core Gateway provision across the contract area. A positive start has been made in the sharing of good practice across the various providers, although this remains at an early stage; the sharing of the outcomes and experiences by Roe Valley Community Education Forum of their involvement in the enhanced support pilot, for example, has been limited and should be further developed.

6.5 Network Personnel and its two main sub-contractors, Elle Enterprises and Roe Valley Community Education forum, have established strong links with a wide range of employers. They work hard to source work experience placements, within the constraints of a challenging economic climate, which are well matched to the needs, skills and aspirations of most of the participants, and have successfully secured placements with a range of major national and international retail companies. The quality of the relationships between employers and the provider organisations is good, and the latter have participated in promotional events with employers and community and voluntary organisations, including job fairs, breakfast mornings, careers conventions and local community awareness sessions. Network Personnel has recently implemented a commercial software package to manage employer contacts and communication and to enable all staff to be aware of contacts with an

employer by any members of staff, which ensures that duplication of contact does not occur; this is currently being evaluated with a view to a roll-out across all three organisations. The participants in Network Personnel are encouraged to register with recruitment organisations to assist them in their progression to employment. There are good links between Network Personnel and a number of key training providers, including the local further education colleges, to provide access for the participants to a wide range of training programmes. In addition, links have been established to relevant support agencies, such as the Cedar Foundation, to address the support needs of a small number of the participants.

6.6 The quality assurance procedures established by the Lead Contractor are generally effective. The self-evaluation and quality improvement process is mostly good, with evidence of appropriate action planning which takes good account of the views of participants and external stakeholders. Across the training provision, however, the process lacks a sufficiently detailed focus on the quality of training and learning to raise standards and promote improvement. The use of management information and key performance indicators such as individualised milestones for participants or short-term personalised targets, against which progress can be reviewed and reported, is also variable across the contract area. There is only limited evidence of the effective use of detailed labour market intelligence, including a detailed analysis of levels of deprivation and social need, to support the overall quality assurance process and inform better the strategic planning of the Steps to Work provision by the Lead Contractor.

6.7 There is significant variation in the quality of the operational management of the Back to Work strand across the contract area. For example, in recognising the importance of continuity and consistency in communication, Network Personnel has innovatively deployed four support workers to source work experience placements, act as mentors to participants and to provide consistent points of contact for specific groups of Advisers within the JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits offices. Although plans are in place to support the sharing of best practice, the support workers and monitoring officers in Network Personnel, Elle Enterprises and Roe Valley Community Education Forum have only a limited knowledge of the working practices adopted by each other.

## **7. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

7.1 In the period from January 2009 to November 2010, the overall progression rate from Step Two into sustained employment is 19%. While this is below the Department's target of 25%, it is a noteworthy achievement during a period of economic downturn across a wide geographic area, rising unemployment rates and falling employment opportunities, particularly in the Limavady area. Network Personnel should, however, continue to develop further strategies to increase the number of participants moving into sustained employment across the contract area (Table 2).

**Table 1: Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two**

Steps to Work Strand	TABLE 1 – LEAD CONTRACTOR STATISTICS (NORTH WEST REGION)			
	(2009-2010) 05/01/09-31/03/10		(2010-2011) 01/04/10-05/11/10	
	Number of Leavers	Leavers into sustained employment for 13 weeks of more	Number of Leavers	Leavers into sustained employment for 13 weeks of more
Back to Work	392	71 (18%)	340	59 (17%)
NVQ 52 weeks	50	11 (22%)	75	13 (17%)
Vocationally Related Qualifications	4	0 (0%)	9	3 (33%)
Essential Skills Training	74	10 (14%)	53	3 (6%)
Self-Employment Test Trading	49	18 (37%)	58	24 (41%)
Step Ahead	-	-	6	4 (67%)
Graduate Acceleration Programme	-	-	5	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>110 (19%)</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>106 (19%)</b>

7.2 Since the beginning of the Steps to Work programme in January 2009, 66% of all leavers participated in the Back to Work strand. Taking into consideration the number of leavers who moved into sustained employment, outcomes for this strand are satisfactory at 18%. Almost all of the participants on the Back to Work strand report a good improvement in their employability skills.

7.3 Over the same period, 11% of all leavers participated in the Essential Skills Training strand; the numbers of participants moving into sustained employment from this strand are low at 10%. Most of the participants, however, are well motivated, achieve good standards of work in their essential skills, and make good progress in their learning. Of the participants who have undertaken qualifications in the essential skills, 93% of those who completed their programme achieved their targeted qualification.

7.4 Since January 2009, 11% of all leavers participated in the NVQ strand, and 1% participated in the VRQ strand; the overall outcomes of participants moving into sustained employment from both strands is 19%. The participants currently on these strands are making good progress towards the achievement of their target qualifications. They report that their self-confidence is greatly increased and that, in addition to their professional and technical skills, they are also developing wider employability skills such as effective team-working and other work-readiness skills. The overall retention and achievement rates on these strands are poor, however, at 59% and 45% respectively.

7.5 Since January 2009, 1% of all leavers participated in the Step Ahead strand. Although the number of participants registered on the strand is low, the outcomes into sustained employment are very good at 67%. The Lead Contractor and sub-contractors work hard to ensure that the work placements on the Step Ahead strand are well matched to

the skills, needs and personal attributes of the participants. The participants value highly the opportunity to develop their employability skills in a range of occupational areas and settings, including construction and information technology. They achieve good standards of work across a wide range of job roles, including administrative and retail operatives, and nursery school assistants.

7.6 Of the 10% of all leavers who participated in the Self-Employment Test Trading strand since the beginning of the Steps to Work programme, outcomes into sustained employment are good at 39%. This strand is particularly successful in Cookstown (45%) and Magherafelt (58%). While the outcomes for Limavady are also good at 42%, the number of participants registering on the strand in this area is currently too low. The number of participants registering on the strand in Coleraine has increased significantly from ten in the period January 2009 to March 2010, to 24 in the period April 2010 to November 2010.

7.7 Since the introduction of the Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) within Steps to Work in January 2010, 1% of all leavers participated in GAP. While a small number of the participants on this strand have progressed into sustained employment, they had not yet reached the 13-week sustained period, and consequently the outcomes into employment for this strand remain low. The work placement inspected provides good opportunities for the graduate to demonstrate good standards of work, in line with her degree specialisation of computer science.

## **8. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND SERVICES**

8.1 The arrangements for the inspection of personal support and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults includes the opportunity for the participants to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings by the inspection team with groups of participants across the Lead and sub-contractors. Over the two phases of the inspection, three hundred and fifty questionnaires were issued to the participants, 213 (61%) of which were returned to the Inspectorate; 37 of them contained additional written comments. The returns show that the participants' experiences in Network Personnel are good. The Inspectorate has reported the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with the participants to the Lead Contractor.

8.2 The quality of the strategic planning for the Core Gateway provision is very good; the Lead Contractor, Elle Enterprises, and Roe Valley Community Education Forum have reviewed the provision and been pro-active in ensuring that the needs of the participants are met fully. Good opportunities for the sharing of good practice have been developed among the tutors delivering the programme, and an appropriate start has been made to the introduction of the essential skill of ICT at pre-level 1 by Elle Enterprises and Roe Valley Community Education Forum. All of the tutors are appropriately qualified and good relationships exist between them and the participants; in Roe Valley Community Education Forum all of the tutors are former Core Gateway participants who use their own experiences to help motivate the current participants. The quality of the Core Gateway provision ranges from satisfactory to very good; overall it is mostly good. The participants engage well in the sessions and the tutors build positively and effectively on the participants' past experiences. The sessions are mostly well planned and are suitably resourced by the tutors. Although good use is made of guest speakers, the process should be strengthened to ensure that all participants are fully informed about the choices available to them in the Step Two provision. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the use of a wider range of training and learning strategies to address the lack of differentiation in the provision and to take better account of the diverse range of starting points and prior achievements of all of the participants.

8.3 The quality of the provision for Jobsearch is mostly satisfactory. Most of the tutors in the directed training establish good working relationships with the participants and provide good encouragement to them to engage positively in the process of seeking suitable employment. The progress of the participants, however, is often constrained by the large and diverse groups, ineffective planning by tutors and a reliance on low-level activities such as lengthy periods of time spent by the participants repeatedly scanning the local press and undertaking internet searches for job vacancies. There is too little direction provided by some of the tutors and too few opportunities for the participants to share their experiences. The Lead Contractor has recently appointed a dedicated Jobsearch tutor to co-ordinate and improve the quality of this important part of the provision across the contract area. Attendance at Jobsearch is variable for participants across the various strands of the Steps to Work programme. The participants on the Back to Work strand, for example, attend class once every week, those on the NVQ/VRQ strands attend class once every month for the first four months of their training and learning programme and once every week thereafter, and the participants on the Step Ahead strand attend class once a month.

8.4 On the Back to Work strand the Lead Contractor and main sub-contractors have worked hard to source work experience placements that are well matched to the skills and aspirations of the participants. The Lead Contractor, working in collaboration with the JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits Office staff, has agreed appropriately that the Advisers identify a broader range of potential job goals for the participants. Although almost all of the participants are enhancing their employability skills, a significant number of employers visited during the inspection report that the work placements are unlikely to lead to sustained employment. It is clear that a small number of participants currently on work placement on the Back to Work strand would also benefit from undertaking confidence and motivation training prior to taking up their placement.

8.5 While the provision for directed training for the essential skills is regularly timetabled by Network Personnel, Elle Enterprises, and Roe Valley Community Education Forum, the allocation of time for the provision varies across all three and should be reviewed and standardised. The tutors work hard to encourage and support the participants, and to meet their individual learning needs. The participants on the programme are provided with an appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment process, and the outcomes of this are used well in the majority of cases to plan for learning. In a small minority of cases, where specific support needs have been identified, the outcomes of the diagnostic process are not consistently used to plan effectively for individualised support, and this should be reflected more fully in the participants' personal training plans and review documentation. The tutors across the provision use a good range of training and learning strategies, although opportunities to share best practice across the partnership are limited. There is good evidence that the essential skills provision increases most of the participants' confidence, and almost all value the opportunity to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

8.6 The NVQ and VRQ strands offer very good opportunities for the participants to develop occupational skills in a good range of professional and technical areas. Almost all of the participants spoken to are well-motivated, have a positive attitude to learning and are making good progress towards achieving their qualification. Almost all of them are in work placements which are matched well to their professional and technical areas. They are engaged in a range of meaningful tasks, and are developing appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding, to industry standards. The allocation of time for directed training varies across the contract area, even within the same professional and technical area, and should be more standardised to ensure that the participants are receiving sufficient time for the development of their knowledge and understanding. The quality of the directed training in the sessions observed was mostly good. Across the contract area, there is significant demand for training in children's care, learning and development. Most participants are

placed in primary schools as classroom assistants and there are good opportunities to achieve an NVQ at level 2. They should, therefore, receive appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance to ensure that they are clear about the progression and employment pathways available to them. In addition, the initial interview and induction processes lack rigour and should be improved to ensure that participants make informed choices about the demands of undertaking a qualification, and to address the poor retention on the strand.

8.7 On the Step Ahead strand, Roe Valley Community Education Forum has devised a very good programme of work, based on the occupational areas of furniture production, painting and decorating, and garden maintenance. The participants involved in this programme experience real job challenges and pressures, including the estimating and costing of jobs, the provision of a range of high quality commercial products and services to the general public and adhering to rigorous health and safety procedures. All of the participants are enthusiastic and motivated, keen to progress in their work placements and value the support provided by the employers, the Lead Contractor, and the relevant sub-contractors. Most of the participants have the opportunity to achieve accredited qualifications in areas related to their job roles, including basic food hygiene, and Construction Skills Register (CSR) cards. This model of delivery should be shared across other Steps to Work Lead and sub-contractors, as an example of good practice, to develop further the employability skills and the achievement of the job goals of the participants.

8.8 Nearly all of the participants on the Self-Employment Test Trading strand are acquiring a good range of important enterprise skills to enable them to manage a business, and they are positive about the impact of the Basic Awareness and Go-For-It provision. Most participants are well-motivated, adaptable, hard-working and enthusiastic and report that this strand provides an excellent safety net, facilitating the trial of a business idea while minimising their risk. In most instances, there is a good match between the participants' test trading projects and their skills, background and aspirations.

8.9 The Graduate Acceleration Programme is effectively managed by Business in the Community (BITC). Although current graduate participant numbers are low across the contract area, the work placement inspected is appropriate and provides the participant with good opportunities to develop skills in line with her degree specialisation.

8.10 The quality of the monitoring and review process across the contract area is weak. The personal training plans for the participants are too generic and not sufficiently tailored to meet their individual training needs. They are not effective working documents and do not adequately detail the starting position of the participant, or provide the participants and work experience placement employers with clearly defined, measurable targets to be achieved within each review period. Employers are not sufficiently aware of the content of the personal training plans, which limits their capacity to support the development and progression of the participants. In addition, there is inconsistency in the procedures used by the Lead Contractor and sub-contractors for the systematic monitoring of the participants' progress in the workplace. Elle Enterprises, appropriately, carry out the participants' four weekly reviews largely in the workplace, although Network Personnel and Roe Valley Community Education Forum endeavour to undertake reviews in the workplace, the reviews are normally undertaken during directed training, with insufficient input from employers. The support workers at Network Personnel maintain a record of contact with the employers but the effectiveness of this aspect of monitoring is diluted by the lack of specific practical targets in the personal training plans and the low levels of engagement with employers in the review process to promote the progress of the participants. This weakness has been recognised by Network Personnel and a more strategic and participant-centred use of personal development plans is being piloted by Roe Valley Community Education Forum, in order to address the identified shortcomings in the monitoring and review process.

8.11 The quality of the arrangements for the care and support of the participants by Network Personnel and the sub-contractors is very good. All of the participants feel valued and good working relationships exist between the tutors and the participants.

8.12 Network Personnel promotes effectively the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. The arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.

## **PART THREE**

### **9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

9.1 In order to raise the quality of its provision, Network Personnel and its sub-contractors should:

- further increase the number of participants progressing into sustained employment;
- strengthen the quality of the monitoring and review process for participants; and
- further develop procedures for staff, across the contract area, to share good practice in the delivery of the Steps to Work programme.

**APPENDIX**

**Table 2 - Progression Rates to Sustained Employment by Sub-contractor**

<b>Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two (05/01/2009–05/11/2010)</b>			
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number of leavers</b>	<b>Number of Leavers who found sustained employment for 13 weeks or more</b>	<b>% into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more</b>
Elle Enterprises	314	41	13%
Network Cookstown	135	25	19%
Network Magherafelt	204	55	27%
Roe Valley Community Education Forum	350	53	15%
Causeway Enterprise Agency	30	6	20%
Cookstown Enterprise Agency	31	14	45%
Roe Valley Enterprise Agency	19	8	42%
Workspace (Enterprise Agency Draperstown)	26	15	58%
Business in the Community	5	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1114</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>19%</b>

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