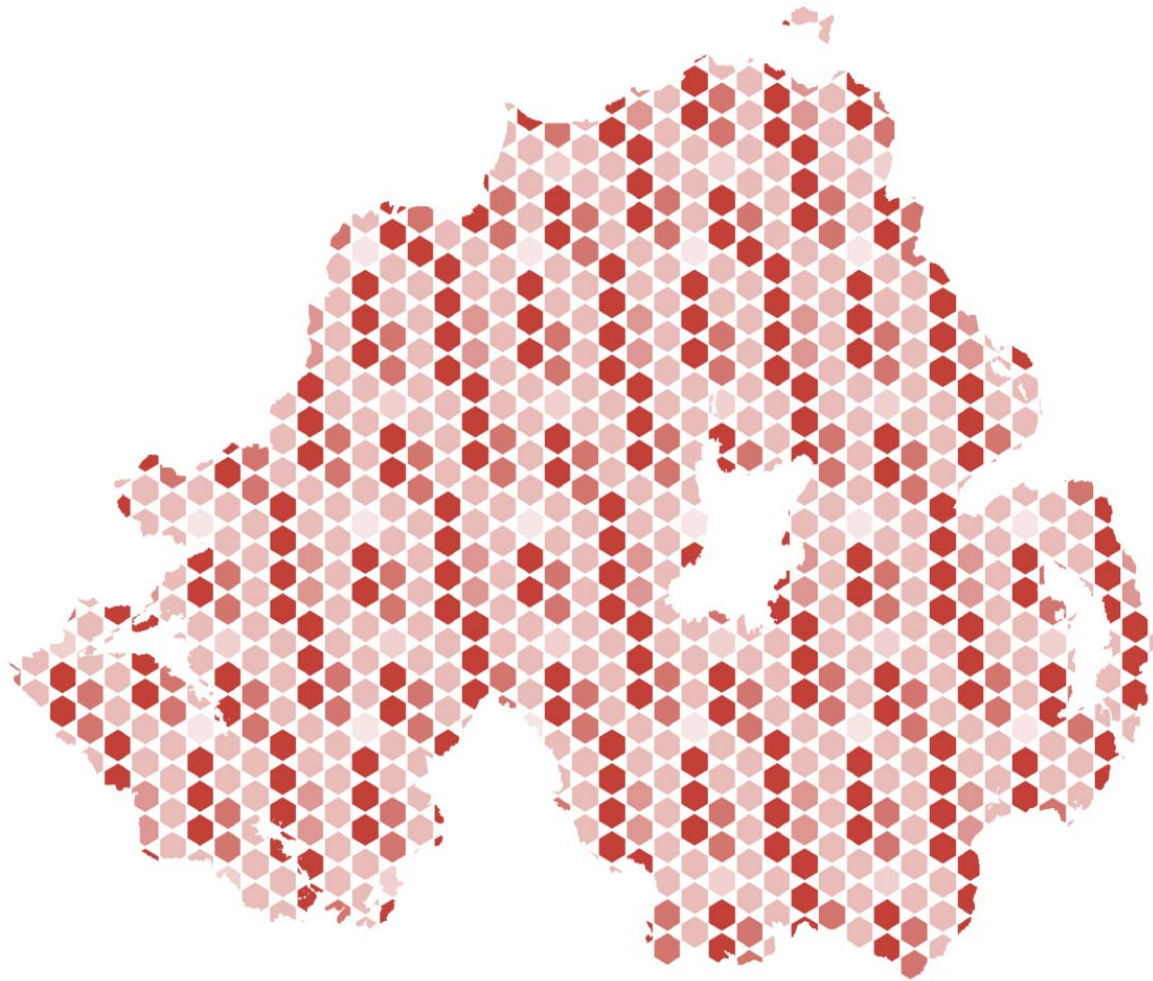


TRAINING INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Springvale Learning Steps to
Work Lead Contractor for
West Belfast Contract Area

Report of an Inspection
In April-November 2009



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CONTENTS

Section	Page
PART ONE	
SUMMARY	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. CONTEXT	1
3. PROVISION	2
4. THE INSPECTION	3
5. MAIN FINDINGS	3
PART TWO	
OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION	
6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	5
7. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS	6
8. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND SERVICES	8
PART THREE	
9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	11
APPENDIX	

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 Springvale Learning.

Performance Levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate has six performance levels as set out below:

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 that can be targeted at the individuals' personal barriers to employment. Participation in Steps to Work is mandatory for all Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants aged 18 to 24 years who have been claiming JSA for six months or more, and for 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 with the primary aim of helping them 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 those 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 those 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 Springvale Learning (Springvale) is contracted by the Department as the Lead Contractor for the delivery of the Steps to Work provision in the West Belfast region of Northern Ireland. This region covers the densely populated parliamentary constituency of West Belfast and participants are referred to the Steps to Work programme from the Andersonstown Road Job Centre and the Jobs and Benefits offices on the Falls and Shankill Roads.

2.2 Springvale was established in 1992 as a private limited company with charitable status. Since then, it has supplied a range of training and employment programmes on behalf of the Department. Springvale is located in a purpose built training facility on the Springfield Road, Belfast, approximately two and a half miles from the city centre; there is also a small satellite training facility on the Shankill Road. Nineteen subcontractors support Springvale in the delivery of the Steps to Work programme, with offices and training facilities located across the West Belfast contract area.

2.3 The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) indicate that West Belfast is the most deprived parliamentary constituency area within Northern Ireland. Almost 80% of the people in the contract area live in one of the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) claimant count for November 2009 shows that West Belfast has the highest claimant count for JSA at 9.1%, which is significantly above the Northern Ireland average of 4.8%.

2.4 Based on data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the number of people living in West Belfast in receipt of JSA during the period September 2008 to October 2009 increased from 3,820 to 5,840, a rise of 53%. Although this is below the Northern Ireland average increase of 77% for this period, the number of people living in West Belfast mandated to participate on the Steps to Work or New Deal programme at the time of the inspection, was the highest across all of the Steps to Work contract areas. While the current economic downturn and subsequent redundancies have contributed significantly to the high level of unemployment within this area, there is also a history of high levels of long-term unemployment. As a result, the majority of the participants on Steps to Work programme have participated on equivalent programmes two or more times in the past.

2.5 At the time of the inspection 1,210 JSA claimants had reached the mandatory eligibility threshold; 715 (59%) of these were aged 18 to 24 years and 495 (41%) were aged 25 years or over.

3. PROVISION

3.1 At the time of the inspection, there were 554 participants registered on the Steps to Work programmes with Springvale; 47 on Step One and 507 on Step Two. No participants were registered on Step Three provision.

3.2 On Step One provision, 35 of the participants were on Core Gateway completing Jobsearch activities. The remaining 12 participants were completing a Short Accredited Course, Construction Skills Register, to help support their applications for employment in the construction industry.

3.3 On Step Two provision, 167 of the participants were registered with Springvale Learning, and the remainder with the following subcontractors: Belfast Metropolitan College (8); Corpus Christi Services (6); Colin Glen Trust (8); CSV Media (4); Dairy Farm Training (40); Divis Joint Development Committee (6); Employment Prospects (28); Falls Community Council (10); Higherforce (4); Impact Training Services (48); JK Employment Services (28); NDS Employment and Training (43); Ortus Enterprise Development Agency (2); Paragon Training (69); St Teresa's Community Project (8); Upper Andersonstown Community Forum (17); Ulster Supported Employment Limited (2); and Work West Enterprise (9). Two hundred and eight (41%) of the participants were registered on the Back to Work strand; 139 (28%) were on the 52 week National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) strand; 74 (15%) on the 26 week Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQ) strand; 73 (14%) on the Essential Skills Training strand; eleven (2%) on the Self-employment Test Trading strand; one in Work Enhanced Support; and one on the Step Ahead strand. Twelve participants were also receiving Enhanced Support while on Step Two.

3.4 There is a wide range of training and services provided by Springvale's Steps to Work programme, which includes Jobsearch and work experience placement support, motivation and confidence building, enhanced one-to-one support, short accredited courses, self-employment support, specialist music advice and support, essential skills training provision, and a programme of VRQs or NVQs across a wide range of vocational areas.

The VRQ and NVQ provision includes business administration, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, children's care learning and development, electrical engineering, health and social care, hospitality and catering, information technology, plumbing, retail and warehousing, and welding.

3.5 The majority (55%) of the participants on the Steps to Work programme had no qualifications. A minority (29%) had at least one General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) at grades A* to G. A minority achieved a GCSE at grade C or above in English (16%) or mathematics (10%). The remainder of the participants (16%) hold a range of vocational and other qualifications. Around 25% of the participants are on a Steps to Work Programme for the first time. The remainder (75%) have participated on a similar employment programme. Around 40% on one other occasion and 35% on at least two other occasions. Just over 52% of the participants were mandatory, and the remainder were voluntary.

4. THE INSPECTION

4.1 This report is based on an inspection of Springvale and a sample of the subcontractors' provision. The inspection took place over two phases. Phase one (April 2009) involved three inspectors for three days, and focused on leadership and management. Phase two (November 2009) involved a team of eight inspectors for a further three days. During the inspection, inspectors:

- visited 74 participants on work experience placements;
- observed 184 participants in 23 directed training sessions;
- held discussions with 35 participants across five focus groups;
- held discussions with senior managers from the Lead Contractor and the subcontractors;
- held discussions with key training and support staff;
- observed Lead Contractor meetings with subcontractors;
- observed Lead Contractor meetings with JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits office staff;
- scrutinised a sample of participants' action plans, Personal Training Plans (PTPs) and work;
- held discussions with 47 employers; and
- held discussions with JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits office managers.

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of training and services provided by Springvale Learning is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation 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 (grade)	Good (3)
Contributory Performance Levels (grades):	
Leadership and Management	Very Good (2)
Employment Outcomes and Achievements	Satisfactory (4)
Quality of Training and Services	Good (3)

5.2 The main strengths are the:

- very good leadership and management provided by the Lead Contractor;
- commitment by the Lead Contractor to develop and implement innovative approaches to facilitate progression to employment, which promote inclusion and support economic development in a context of rising unemployment and high levels of deprivation within the contract area;
- good opportunities provided for participants to develop appropriate additional skills and knowledge, which improve their employability;
- excellent investment in personal care and support services to increase the participants self-confidence, self-esteem and career aspirations;
- good quality of the participants' work experience placements, which are matched well to their abilities and provide them with good opportunities to develop their employability skills; and
- good or better quality of most of the directed training.

5.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- low progression rate to sustained employment at 5%;
- development of the Lead Contractor's quality assurance processes to ensure that key weaknesses across the provision are identified and addressed; and
- variation in the quality of the monitoring and review of the participants' progress and achievements across the Lead Contractor and the subcontractors.

PART TWO

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

6.1 The quality of the leadership and management of the Steps to Work provision by Springvale is very good. As Lead Contractor, Springvale has in place appropriate service-level agreements with 19 local subcontractors in order to provide a very good range of services and programmes to improve the employability skills and associated employment prospects of the participants. Springvale has taken cognisance of the community divide within the area and ensures there is appropriate access to services and programmes for participants across the different communities. Recently, for example, Springvale opened an additional training facility just off the Shankill Road to meet the growing demand for Core Gateway provision from the Shankill Jobs and Benefits office.

6.2 The Lead Contractor's senior management team, well-informed by information provided by the subcontractors and the JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits office managers, has developed a very good understanding of the participants' complex personal, educational and social barriers to employment. To address these barriers, the participants have access to a very good range of additional services and support to complement their Steps to Work programme. These include professional health advice, industry visits and speakers, essential skills screening, professional qualifications, charity projects, and intensive one-to-one support.

6.3 The quality of the communication, administrative support, and advice and guidance provided by the Lead Contractor to subcontractors, JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits office staff and employers is excellent. There are regular and purposeful monthly meetings with all subcontractors to review participant caseload, the quality of provision, outcomes and future developments. There are also regular monthly meetings with the managers and team leaders of the local JobCentre and Jobs and Benefits offices. The agenda for these meetings is focused appropriately on a review of the participants' action plans and PTPs, waiting lists for initial interview or for work experience placements, current trends, and the estimated future demand for the Steps to Work programme.

6.4 The Lead Contractor and the subcontractors deploy a very good range of appropriately qualified staff with specialist skills. They also provide good or very good training facilities to support the participants in addressing their barriers to employment. During the period September 2008 to October 2009, the Lead Contractor and the subcontractors have recruited additional staff to meet the growing demand for Steps to Work services and provision. Recently, for example, additional employment engagement officers were recruited to provide good quality, tailored support and coaching for those participants applying for jobs. Senior managers are committed to providing and developing a complement of staff with suitable specialist support skills to ensure that the most appropriate services and programmes are available to participants. These include job coaching, essential skills training, motivation and confidence building, music advice and support, curriculum vitae writing, and development of industry-relevant skills and knowledge. The Lead Contractor is continually updating their premises to provide modern and relevant facilities and resources. This includes a recently upgraded computer suite and a well-equipped recreational area.

6.5 The quality assurance arrangements vary from very good to satisfactory; they are mostly good. The Lead Contractor's quality assurance monitoring officer audits rigorously the subcontractors' administrative arrangements to ensure record-keeping and procedures comply with operational guidelines and good practice. In addition, the quality of the

subcontractors' provision for Core Gateway, induction and Jobsearch are regularly and effectively evaluated and reported on. The quality of the Lead Contractor's arrangements for self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory. While all the subcontractors provide a written self-evaluation report on the quality of their provision in a common format, there is subsequently insufficient shared discussion, moderation and distillation of the key areas for improvement across the subcontractors, to inform a collective development plan. Springvale needs to develop further its quality assurance of the Steps to Work contract, to include more effective arrangements for the evaluation of the various strands of the Steps to Work contract, and devise an integrated development plan for all of the providers within the contract.

6.6 Since phase one of the inspection, Springvale has taken effective steps to improve the quality of its leadership and management functions. A business improvement manager has been appointed to review its business operational structures and processes, with a view to improving further the quality and efficiency of the training and employment services provided. A very good start has been made in identifying appropriate areas for development.

7. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

7.1 Since the commencement of the Steps to Work contract in September 2008, Springvale has struggled to progress participants into sustained employment. Over the period September 2008 to October 2009, 919 participants completed Step Two or left early; of these, 125 (14%) participants progressed to employment. Currently, only 47 (5%) participants have sustained their employment for at least 13 weeks, which is very low and significantly below the Department's target of 25%. A further 22 (2%) progressed to further education or to another Steps to Work strand, and 772 (84%) of them returned to JSA or to other benefits. In addition, there is significant variation in the progression rates to sustained employment across the subcontractors, ranging from 0% to 13% (tabulated in the Appendix).

7.2 Although the very low progression rate to sustained employment has occurred during a period of economic downturn, with rising unemployment rates and falling employment opportunities, there remains an urgent need for Springvale to develop further its strategies to improve the progression rate to sustained employment.

Table 1: Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two

	Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two					
	2008-2009 (29/09/08-31/03/09)		2009-1010 (01/04/09-31/10/09)		First Year of Contract (01/09/08-31/10/09)	
Steps to Work Strand	Number of Leavers	Leavers into Sustained Employment for 13 weeks or more	Number of Leavers	Leavers into Sustained Employment for 13 weeks	Number of Leavers	Leavers into Sustained Employment for 13 weeks
Back to Work	536	31(6%)	41	5 (12%)	577	36 (6%)
NVQ 52 weeks	21	2 (10%)	81	0 (0%)	102	2 (2%)
VRQ 26 weeks	64	4 (6%)	27	1 (4%)	91	5 (6%)
Essential Skills Training	87	3 (4%)	52	0 (0%)	139	3 (2%)
Self-Employment Test Trading	5	1 (20%)	5	0 (0%)	10	1 (10%)
TOTAL	713	41 (6%)	206	6 (3%)	919	47 (5%)

7.3 Most of the participants on the Back to Work strand are progressing well in their acquisition of employability skills; they are able to take and carry out instructions, maintain good timekeeping, are confident to take initiative to solve problems and to participate effectively in team work. The majority of the participants are developing further their vocational skills within a suitable working environment. A minority, however, do not have sufficient opportunities within their work experience placements to build on their prior experiences or on their particular interests. As a result, they are not well-motivated to improve their employability or find employment.

7.4 A total of 761 participants commenced the Back to Work strand during the period September 2008 to October 2009. Of the 577 participants who left the strand, 76 (13%) progressed to employment, including 36 (6%) to sustained employment for at least 13 weeks. A further three participants progressed to further education or to another Steps to Work strand, and 498 (86%) returned to JSA or to other benefits.

7.5 Almost all of the participants observed on the VRQ or NVQ strands are achieving good or better standards of occupational skills. Most of them are acquiring good employability skills; they have high levels of enthusiasm and personal effectiveness, maintain good timekeeping, and are able to work effectively as part of a team or independently. The quality of their work is good and demonstrates clearly a good understanding of the fundamental principles of their vocational area.

7.6 A total of 230 participants commenced the NVQ 52 week strand during the period September 2008 to October 2009. Of the 102 participants who left the strand, only five completed their programme and only one gained their target qualification. This represents a very poor retention rate of 5% and a poor success rate of 20%. Of these 102 participants who left the strand, 17 (17%) progressed to employment, including two (2%) to sustained employment for at least 13 weeks. One participant progressed to further education, with the remaining 84 (82%) returning to JSA or to other benefits.

7.7 A total of 152 participants commenced the VRQ 26 week strand during the same period. Of the 91 participants who left the strand, 55 completed their programme and 34 successfully gained their targeted qualification. This represents a modest retention rate of 60% and a modest success rate of 62%. Of the 91 participants who left the strand, 13 (14%) progressed to employment, including five (6%) to sustained employment for at least 13 weeks. A further 78 (86%) participants returned to JSA or to other benefits.

7.8 Most of the participants on the Essential Skills strand are improving their self-confidence and have a positive attitude towards addressing the weaknesses in their literacy and numeracy skills. The standard of their work is good and the majority are making good progress in completing their targeted qualification.

7.9 A total of 210 participants commenced the Essential Skills strand during the period September 2008 to October 2009. Of the 139 participants who have left the strand, 77 completed their programme and 44 successfully gained their targeted qualification. This represents a poor retention rate of 55% and a poor success rate of 57%. Of these 139 participants who left the strand, only 14 (10%) progressed to employment, including three (2%) to sustained employment for at least 13 weeks. A further 18 (13%) participants progressed to another Step Two strand or further education, and 107 (77%) returned to JSA or to other benefits.

7.10 The majority of the participants on the Self-employment Test Trading strand are developing a range of important enterprise skills to enable them to manage a business. These include budgeting, financial and other planning and basic book-keeping skills. Most of them are enthusiastic and able to solve problems in a creative way. A minority of the test trading ventures are, however, not economically viable in the short-term and are unlikely to be sustainable by the end of the strand.

7.11 A total of 21 participants commenced the Self-employment Test Trading strand during the same period. Of the ten participants who have left the strand, five (50%) progressed to self-employment, including one (10%) participant who sustained self-employment for at least 13 weeks. A further five (50%) returned to JSA or to other benefits.

8. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND SERVICES

8.1 Most (89%) of the participants' responses and comments to the Inspectorate's confidential questionnaire and interviews were positive. They reported that they enjoyed their programme and that it provided them with good opportunities to learn in different ways, which are interesting, challenging and develop their employability skills.

8.2 The arrangements for the initial assessment of the participants are mostly good. Through the Gateway period with an Adviser, a comprehensive profile of the participants' prior achievements and experiences is built up. The participants' action plans capture well the relevant background information, including prior educational achievements and training and employment history. The participants' job goals are clear with most action plans taking appropriate account of their abilities and their career aspirations. For a few of them, the strand to which they are referred does not match sufficiently their abilities and employment prospects; this is particularly evident for those on the Self-employment Test Trading strand. All participants registering for the Essential Skills Training strand undertake a rigorous initial assessment, which informs well their future training needs and targeted qualification. To promote best practice, the Lead Contractor also provides participants placed with them with an essential skills initial assessment, irrespective of the strand on which they are participating, to inform them of any essential skills training needs.

8.3 The quality of the participants' Personal Training Plans (PTPs) varies from good to satisfactory; the majority are good. The majority of the PTPs take account of the results of initial assessment and identify an appropriate range of measures to address the participants' main barriers to employment. This is particularly evident for those receiving Enhanced Support, and for those undertaking Essential Skills Training. A significant minority of the PTPs, however, do not set sufficiently specific targets, with measurable outcomes, to address individual participant's barriers to employment. Although, there is regular and effective monitoring and review of the participants' progress, the outcomes from this work are not captured consistently in the PTPs.

8.4 Springvale and its subcontractors have developed links with a good range of employers, which are used well for work experience placements. Approximately 53% of the employers are in the private sector, 12% in the public sector, and the remaining 35% in the voluntary sector. The participants also have access to suitable ICT-related placements within Springvale's subsidiary charity, Comara, which refurbishes computers for the developing world. The Lead Contractor has begun to develop strategic partnerships with a small number of medium to large employers in order to facilitate better progression to sustained employment for Steps to Work participants. There is, however, the need to further

expand these strategic partnerships with a greater range of employers to identify more prospective employment opportunities for suitable participants. At the time of the inspection, only a minority (11%) of the participants registered on Step Two provision were waiting to commence work experience placements; this was mainly due to the vetting procedures required for those participants to work in childcare settings.

8.5 The quality of personal support provided for participants registered with both the Lead Contractor and the subcontractors is excellent. Almost all of the participants reported that they receive high levels of personal support, care and guidance. As a result, they are building the self-confidence and personal effectiveness necessary to begin to improve their employability skills through the various training programmes, Jobsearch activities, and work experience placements. The training staff are very supportive; through both formal and informal meetings the participants report that they have good opportunities to discuss personal circumstances, raise confidence levels, and address the training and other needs that impede their progress towards employment. Participants registered with Springvale also have access to appropriate health care advice provided by a health care professional located on the premises.

8.6 The quality of the provision for both the Step One Motivational and Confidence Building programme and the Enhanced Support programme is excellent, and valued by the participants. The Lead Contractor has implemented a tailored programme, GOALS, to increase the participants' self-awareness, self-confidence, and their determination to succeed. This enables and encourages them to set realistic personal goals and to organise and plan their personal circumstances to achieve them.

8.7 The quality of the careers guidance is mostly good. Through initial interviews most participants are provided with a good overview of the employment sector they have opted for and are made aware of the employability skills required for progression to sustained employment. The participants placed with Springvale also have the opportunity to take part in industry visits and benefit from advice from guest speakers who are also local employers. A few of the participants, however, are not sufficiently well-informed about the requirements and options of the progression pathways to further and higher education.

8.8 The quality of the Core Gateway provision ranges from good to very good; it is mostly very good. The programmes are well-structured and planned in detail. The pace and range of activities are very good and include identifying personal qualities and skills, understanding employers' requirements, curriculum vitae building, and Jobsearch skills. The participants engage well in the activities and report that they enjoy this aspect of the provision and that it enhances their confidence and self-esteem. Since phase one of the inspection, effective arrangements have been put in place to share the good practice of the Core Gateway provision across the Lead Contractor and subcontractors, which has helped to improve the overall quality.

8.9 The quality of the Jobsearch provision is good. All participants are provided with discrete and regular sessions to assist them in the preparation of a curriculum vitae, search for employment vacancies using the internet, complete job application forms and prepare for interviews. The sessions are well-organised and the tutors take due cognisance of their individual abilities and career aspirations. In the best practice observed, dedicated employment liaison officers maintain an up-to-date database of employment vacancies, which is used to match individual participants with suitable employment opportunities, and subsequently prepare them well for interviews.

8.10 The quality of the VRQ and NVQ training is good. All of the training sessions observed were good or better. Participants have access to well-resourced training facilities, which cover an appropriately wide range of vocational areas. Most of the training is planned well and provides them with good opportunities to develop both their practical skills and a sound understanding of fundamental principles. Their progress and achievements are reviewed regularly, and most are making good progress towards the completion of their targeted qualification within the duration of their Steps to Work provision. In addition to their main target qualification, many of the participants also complete additional short industry-specific courses, which increase significantly their employability. These additional courses include food hygiene, SAGE accounts, manual handling and child protection. The provision of directed training in children's care learning and development, however, varies unduly across the Lead Contractor and the subcontractors, ranging from five to two hours each week for similar courses. There is a need for the Lead Contractor to evaluate the impact of these variations on the overall quality of the directed training provision.

8.11 The quality of the Essential Skills Training is mostly good or better. In most of the essential skills training sessions observed, the quality of the teaching and learning is good; the sessions are well-planned and good use is made of suitable learning materials. The learning tasks are matched well to individual participants' essential skills needs as identified in their training plans. The pace of the work is good and the participants make appropriate progress towards the achievement of their targeted qualification. On occasions there is, however, insufficient differentiation in the teaching and learning. As a result, a minority of the participants do not make sufficient progress in line with their ability and prior achievements.

8.12 The quality of work experience placements across the strands is good. Most of the work placements provide the participants with meaningful experiences that are matched well to their abilities and career aspirations, and are in line with their action plans and PTPs. Almost all of the employers are supportive and provide the participants with good opportunities to develop a range of specialist skills and transferable skills. Although most of the participants are visited regularly in the workplace by the Lead Contractor or the subcontractor to monitor progress, the quality of the reviews is too variable. Most of the participants' PTPs reflect a thorough and comprehensive monthly review, which documents clearly achievements and future training targets. For a minority of the participants, however, the review process does not adequately address their social and emotional barriers to progress. As a result, the action needed to address these key barriers to employment is not documented well or implemented effectively.

8.13 The participants on the Specialist Support for Music strand are provided with well-resourced and good quality training, which leads to a recognised qualification. The training programme is well-structured and provides them with good opportunities to develop a range of specialist skills and an understanding of the music industry. Most are making good progress in achieving an appropriate range of employability skills.

8.14 The participants on the Self-employment Test Trading strand are provided with good support from specialist advisers. They have the opportunity to complete relevant training, and develop a relevant range of skills for starting and managing their own business. Although regular support and advice is provided for the duration of the test trading period, a significant minority are, however, making only limited progress in establishing a sustainable business venture.

PART THREE

9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

9.1 In order to raise the quality of its provision, Springvale Learning should:

- increase the number of participants moving into sustained employment;
- improve the strategic partnerships and planning with employers to provide more progression pathways for participants to sustained employment; and
- strengthen the self-evaluation process to ensure that there is a better shared understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses, and an agreed development plan that identifies appropriate actions for improvement across both the Lead Contactor and the subcontractors.

Progression Rates to Sustained Employment

Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two (29/09/2008 – 31/10/2009)		
Organisation	Number of Leavers	% leavers into sustained employment
Belfast Metropolitan College	48	8%
Corpus Christi Services	15	7%
Colin Glen Trust	11	9%
CSV Media	15	13%
Dairyfarm Training	98	2%
Divis Community Committee	9	0%
Dunlewey Centre	5	0%
Employment Prospects	147	7%
Falls Community Council	3	0%
Higherforce	17	0%
Impact Training Services	58	2%
JK Employment Services	68	4%
NDS Employment & Training	87	9%
Ortus Development Agency	2	0%
Paragon Training	113	8%
Springvale Learning	187	2%
St Teresa's Community Project	10	10%
Upper Anderson Community Forum	18	0%
Ulster Supported Employment Limited	0	
Work West Enterprise	8	13%
Overall	919	5%

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