



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Steps to Work Provision in TWL Training Antrim Contract Area

Report of an Inspection
in April-December 2010

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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 TWL Antrim.

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 the 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 with the primary aim of helping them to 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 TWL is contracted by the Department as Lead Contractor for the delivery of the Steps to Work employment programme in the Antrim area of Northern Ireland. The Antrim contract covers a very wide geographical area, reaching from Ballycastle in the north, down to Carrickfergus and Larne. Participants are referred to the Lead Contractor through five Jobs and Benefits offices: Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne, Antrim and Ballymoney.

2.2 The organisation is a private company and is a subdivision of the Employability division of The Intraining Group. The Group was established as a division of the Newcastle College Group in March 2008. TWL operates another Steps to Work contract in Northern Ireland, in South and East Belfast. Overall responsibility for the Steps to Work contracts sits with the Intraining senior management team, based in England. The contracts are managed locally by the senior management team (SMT) in Northern Ireland; the SMT comprises the Northern Ireland Regional Manager who is supported by the Regional Administration and Compliance Manager, two District Managers, a Health and Safety Manager, a Quality Improvement Manager and a Partnership Manager. The two contracts operate across three sites in Belfast and five in Antrim, in line with the local Jobs and Benefits offices.

2.3 TWL employs 21 staff in the Antrim contract area; a District Manager, eleven Skills Advisers, four of whom hold site supervision responsibility for a specific TWL office, five administrators, one of whom is also a site supervisor, and three full-time and two part-time employer engagement consultants. This staffing complement, including the imminent appointment of a further two posts commencing in January 2011, represents an increase in staffing of 53% since 2009.

2.4 The organisation operates the Antrim contract through five offices which include the TWL head office in Antrim, new premises in Ballymoney and satellite offices in Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne. The contract covers a very wide geographical area, which includes areas with pockets of severe deprivation, high and rising unemployment and very few job vacancies resulting in a significant increase (50%) in mandatory participants being referred to the Steps to Work programme.

3. PROVISION

3.1 At the time of the inspection, there were 394 participants on the Steps to Work programme across the Antrim contract area. Fifty-six of these were registered on Step One; 25 on Core Gateway and 31 on a range of Short Accredited Courses. The remaining 338 participants were registered on Step Two; 157 on Back to Work, 87 on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) lasting 52 weeks, 35 on Essential Skills Training, 13 on Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) lasting 26 weeks, 29 on Self-Employment Test Trading, six on the Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP) and eleven on Step Ahead. Of the current participants, 71% are male and 43% are aged between 18 and 35 years. Over the last year, the data provided by TWL shows that around 30% of the participants starting the Steps to Work programme are voluntary registrations.

3.2 TWL Antrim, as Lead Contractor, was working directly with 114 registered participants across the five offices. The organisation has nine main sub-contracted partners to support its delivery of the Steps to Work contract in Antrim, including: Elle Enterprises, Oriel Training Services, Transition Training, Community Service Volunteers Media Northern Ireland (CSV Media), Mentor Training and Larne Community Enterprises. In order to address geographical barriers encountered by participants from the more rural areas, TWL has contracted with Ballycastle Community Workshop (BCW) to deliver Core Gateway, Essential Skills, and Back to Work. In addition, Business in the Community offer graduate level provision and Ulster Supported Employment Limited (USEL) manage the Step Ahead provision for participants with disabilities. At the time of the inspection, the nine main sub-contractors were actively working with participants; Ballycastle Community Workshop (22), Business in the Community (BITC) (6), CSV Media (1), Elle Enterprises (71), Larne Community Enterprises (24), Mentor Training (27), Oriel Training Services (40), Transition Training (20), and USEL (5).

3.3 On the Step Two strand all of the participants were receiving some form of employability preparation, such as Jobsearch, curriculum vitae (CV) building, and interview skills, alongside their main strand of Back to Work work-experience placements, Essential Skills Training, Step Ahead and Self-Employment Test Trading opportunities. In order to raise occupational skills, 100 participants were engaged in NVQs and VRQs in an appropriate range of professional and technical areas, including, hospitality and catering, health and social care, computing and information technology and retail. A small number (six) were benefiting from participation in the Graduate Acceleration Programme (GAP).

3.4 Across the provision, 67% of the participants had no or few formal qualifications on entry to the programme with just over 3% having four or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at grade C or above. On the Step Two provision, 9% of the participants had Level 3 or higher qualifications on entry to their programme.

3.5 The September 2009 data supplied by the Department indicates that there were 6,145 Jobseekers Allowance claimants in the Antrim area, 870 of whom were eligible for mandatory participation on the Steps to Work programme. Between September 2009 and September 2010 the number of mandatory participants in this region has increased significantly by almost 50%, rising from 870 to 1,295. Statistics provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) indicate that in three of the seven council areas which comprise the Antrim contract, the claimant count is at or close to the NI average of 5%, with the remaining four council areas ranging from 3.9% to 4.2%.

4. THE INSPECTION

4.1 This report is based on an inspection of TWL Training and a sample of the sub-contractors' provision; the work of nine of the sub-contractors was inspected. The inspection took place over two phases; phase one took place in May 2010 and interim findings were left with the Lead Contractor at that time. The second phase of the inspection took place in December 2010, and involved a team of seven inspectors. During the inspection, the inspectors:

- visited 120 participants on work experience placements with twenty two employers;
- observed ten training sessions in centres operated by TWL Training and its sub-contractors;
- held discussions with approximately 100 participants, individually and in small groups;
- held discussions with the members of TWL Training's management team and senior staff from the sub-contractors inspected;
- 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 five employers; and
- held discussions with District Managers, team leaders and Advisers from the Jobs and Benefits offices.

4.2 The arrangements for the inspection of personal support and the protection of vulnerable adults included the opportunity for the participants to complete a confidential questionnaire, seeking their views on the quality of the provision. In addition, discussions were held with groups of the participants during the inspection. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were issued to the participants; 68 (57%) were returned to the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) of which 17 contained additional written comments.

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1 In most of the areas inspected the quality of the Steps to Work employment programme provided by TWL is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the participants are to be met more effectively.

Overall performance level (grade)	Satisfactory (4)
Contributory performance levels (grades):	
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory (4)
Employment Outcomes and Achievement	Satisfactory (4)
Quality of Training and Services	Good (3)

5.2 The main strengths are the:

- quality of the directed training sessions observed, the majority of which were good or better;
- enthusiasm and commitment of frontline staff across the contract area, who work hard to support participants;
- significant investment in equipment and resources across most of the TWL Training's offices; and
- good quality of the work experience placements for participants, on almost all strands of the programme.

5.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- strengthening of the leadership of the programme to promote greater coherence across the provision;
- further development of the quality assurance arrangements to improve the provision; and
- low overall progression rates into sustained employment at 11%.

PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

6.1 The leadership and management of the Steps to Work contract for the Antrim region by the Lead Contractor, TWL Training, is satisfactory. Since the inception of the contract in September 2008, there has been protracted instability of the leadership and management of the contract, particularly at a strategic level. This has resulted in inconsistencies and shortcomings around key aspects of the contract, including, for example, the relationships with key stakeholders, the perceptions of the organisation within the local community, and the development of important strategic links with a wide range of external agencies.

6.2 Despite having only recently appointed a new Northern Ireland Regional Manager and a Partnership Manager in November 2010, TWL has made improvements in several of the areas for development which were identified during the first phase of the inspection. There has been extensive support for these improvements by the Intraining head office, including prompt action to provide interim management of the contract, the establishment of a project team to develop a new management information system (MIS) and a significant investment in equipment and accommodation across the TWL Training offices. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the induction of the recently appointed locally-based senior managers. This has included a well-structured, three day induction programme at the Intraining head office and the extended hand over and training period provided by the Intraining interim managers.

6.3 There is good evidence of an improvement in the quality of the relationships between the Lead Contractor's senior staff and those from the Jobs and Benefits offices and the sub-contractors. The majority of the Jobs and Benefits office and sub-contractors' staff interviewed during the inspection reported that communication with the Lead Contractor has improved. They report that the roles and responsibilities of TWL staff are more clearly defined including designated staff to respond to queries at each level. In addition, the role of Site Supervisor has been created for each of the five TWL Training offices; their responsibilities include the provision of a single point of contact, to provide accurate performance reports which inform improvement planning and the review of outstanding actions undertaken with the TWL District Manager. Nevertheless, the lack of effective systems to ensure consistency and promptness in making payments to the sub-contractors remains a major concern and does much to undermine the effective management and leadership of the contract.

6.4 Although already identified by the Lead Contractor as a priority action for the recently appointed Regional Manager, the prolonged absence of an effective communication strategy continues to constrain further improvement across the contract. The quality of communication with all key stakeholders remains a crucial area for improvement, including the further development of important external, strategic links to support TWL Training in developing as a credible, locally recognised organisation which makes a significant contribution to the local economy and the communities in which it operates.

6.5 Across all strands, the leadership of the contract lacks coherence and cohesion; as a result, it is not sufficiently effective. Since the start of the contract, the ongoing upheaval and inconsistencies in staffing at a strategic level within the Lead Contractor organisation has resulted in an excessive focus on the administrative management of the contract with insufficient attention being paid to the strategic leadership and development of the provision. In the main, the Lead Contractor staff have responsibility for functional areas of management which, inappropriately, does not extend to or include, for example, management of specific

strands. Consequently, there is inadequate accountability for the leadership and development of each of the Steps to Work strands; there is also only a limited understanding by the key staff of the interrelationship between the strands and the lack of a shared understanding between the Lead Contractor and Jobs and Benefits office team leaders and Advisers regarding the potential suitability and benefits to participants of the various strands of the Steps to Work programme.

6.6 The Lead Contractor has made a good start in developing effective procedures to quality assure the training and learning within TWL Training, and with the sub-contractors who deliver Core Gateway. The Lead Contractor's Quality Manager regularly observes Core Gateway sessions and provides constructive, helpful feedback to tutors. Appropriate action is taken by the Lead Contractor to identify and meet staff development needs; there is clear evidence that this work is welcomed and valued by the sub-contractors and that it is contributing to the continuous improvement of the provision. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for tutors to meet to share their experiences and explore aspects of best practice which exist across the contract. The strategic quality improvement and development planning processes across other strands of the contract remain under-developed. There are too few opportunities for staff from individual offices to meet to review provision, to improve the rigour of the self-evaluation process and actively engage in, and contribute meaningfully to, the development planning process. The constructive working relationships established between the Lead Contractor's Quality Manager and the sub-contractors provides a sound basis upon which to develop a more systematic approach to quality improvement by establishing a wholly inclusive approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning, led by TWL Training and undertaken jointly with all sub-contractors.

6.7 Almost all of the sub-contractors manage their elements of the Steps to Work programme efficiently and effectively. The quality of communication and levels of co-operation between the sub-contractors are good. There are examples of the development of close working relationships resulting in the sharing of good practice among the various sub-contractor staff. The Lead Contractor and sub-contractors make good use of local labour market intelligence and, through the work of the Employer Engagement Consultants, this information is used to good effect in sourcing work experience placements which are well matched to the participants' aspirations and abilities and which are well aligned to local employment opportunities. There are rigorous arrangements in place for the risk assessment of the health and safety of the participants in the work placements.

7. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

7.1 Over the first complete year of the contract, from April 2009 to March 2010, the overall progression rate of the participants from Step Two provision into sustained employment is 11% which is well below the Department target of 25%. The rate of progression into employment was poor at 5% for those participants who commenced the programme in October 2008. The rate of progression into employment for current participants, has improved significantly, however, to 21%.

Table 1: Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two

Step Two leavers into employment	TABLE 1 - LEAD CONTRACTOR STATISTICS (ANTRIM CONTRACT AREA)			
	(2008-2009) 01/10/08 – 31/03/09		(2009 -2010) 01/04/09 – 31/03/10	
	Number of leavers	Leavers into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more	Number of leavers	Leavers into sustained employment for 13 weeks or more
Back to Work	16	2 (12.5%)	242	27 (11%)
NVQ 52 weeks	2	1 (50%)	43	8 (19%)
VRQ	1	0	28	1 (3%)
Essential Skills Training	2	1 (50%)	39	4 (10%)
Self-Employment Test Trading	0	0	28	2 (6%)
Total	21	4 (19%)	380	42 (11%)

7.2 Over the past year, 64% of all leavers participated in the Back to Work strand. Of those who left the programme, only 11% progressed into sustained employment. The Lead Contractor has recently employed additional staff to source work placements in the private and public sectors, with the aim of improving the opportunities and likelihood for participants to gain sustained employment. Presently, 91% of the participants are placed in either the private or public sector and this has resulted in 17% of leavers in the current year, progressing to sustained employment. While overall outcomes in terms of progression to sustained employment are low, most participants on the Back to Work strand are developing good employability skills while on their work experience placements.

7.3 Over the past year, the progression rates into sustained employment for the NVQ 52-week strand and VRQ 26-week strand has improved to 19%. However, the progression rate into sustained employment for the VRQ strand remains low at 3% which is significantly lower than the Department's target. At the time of the inspection, 87 participants were undertaking NVQs with a further 13 undertaking VRQs. Between April 2009 and March 2010, just 35 participants joined the NVQ and VRQ programmes, compared to 161 participants joining during the current year. This year, to date, 21% of the participants registered on a VRQ programme have progressed to sustained employment for 13 weeks or more. The poor retention (44%) and success (25%) rates for the NVQ programme over the last year have improved significantly during the current year with progression to sustained employment at 75%.

7.4 The Self-Employment Test Trading strand is well managed and the main sub-contractor works hard to ensure that potential participants with good business ideas are fully aware of the opportunities provided by this strand. In contrast, however, the Step Ahead strand in this contract area is currently under-developed and the provision is fragmented; overall it lacks cohesion and coherence. While there are significant numbers of participants in receipt of benefits for an extended period of time across the area, only eleven were registered on this strand at the time of the inspection and this is an issue which needs to be addressed. In order to ensure that sufficient numbers of participants can benefit from Step Ahead, TWL, sub-contractors and staff from the Jobs and Benefits offices need to work

together to market the strand more effectively by raising potential participants' awareness of the availability of the strand.

7.5 While the participants on the Graduate Acceleration Programme make good progress in developing their technical skills and other relevant transferable skills in organisation and management, progression to sustained employment is unsatisfactory.

7.6 At the time of the inspection there were 35 participants registered on the Essential Skills Training strand, and a further ten awaiting registration. Three of the sub-contractors provide the training for the Lead Contractor although each operates a different model of delivery. The Lead Contractor has worked hard to introduce their quality management procedures across the lead organisation, including a strong focus on the better use of data for the monitoring and evaluation of the essential skills provision. These procedures, however, have not been rolled out effectively to the sub-contractors involved and consequently, there is insufficient monitoring or evaluation of the quality of essential skills provision by TWL.

7.7 The quality of the Personal Training Plans and the monitoring and review records for those on the Essential Skills Training strand is at best variable and, in almost all cases, there is a lack of consistency in the setting of measureable targets and the recording of the precise progress made by the participants. In the directed training sessions visited, all of the tutors work hard to meet the participants' learning needs and all the essential skills tutors provided very good one to one support. However, the planning is not sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of the individual participants and there are too few instances of effective group work or collaborative learning. The pace of progress is variable. A majority of the participants are making good progress in their learning but a significant minority of them find the essential skills work overly challenging resulting in an inappropriately slow pace of progress for these participants. Overall the rate of retention on the Essential Skills Training strand is poor at 50%, the outcomes of those initially registered on the strand are also poor at 35%.

8. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND SERVICES

8.1 The responses from the Inspectorate's confidential questionnaire and the comments from the participants showed that most of those who responded were content with the quality of the provision provided by TWL and its sub-contractors. They reported that they enjoyed their programme and that it provided them with good opportunities to learn in different ways, which were interesting and which developed their employability skills.

8.2 The quality of almost all of the directed training sessions observed is good or better. Almost all of the sessions observed are well planned with an appropriate emphasis placed on developing the participants' work readiness skills. The quality of support for the participants in directed training sessions is good and there are good working relationships between the tutors and participants. The tutors provide effective, individual support and encouragement, which enables participants to make good progress in their training and learning. For example, the Lead Contractor and one of the sub-contractors provide sound support and guidance within their Jobsearch sessions when participants undertake real, scored interviews with a small interview panel, who provide constructive, helpful feedback to them. Despite TWL Training involvement in a pilot programme for the provision of Enhanced Support and the reported positive outcomes for the participants involved, this strand is underused across the contract.

8.3 The Confidence and Motivation strand has been developed well by one of the TWL Training site supervisors. The participants who have undertaken this strand report a marked improvement in specific aspects of their work-readiness including heightened confidence, improved communication skills and a positive attitude to their future. Given the inadequate number of referrals to the Confidence and Motivation strand and Enhanced Support strand and in order to underpin improved rates of progression to sustained employment, urgent action needs to be taken to ensure that the Lead Contractor along with the sub-contractors and key staff from the Jobs and Benefits offices, reach an improved awareness and shared understanding of the two support strands and the important benefits they can afford a wide range of participants.

8.4 The quality of the work experience placements for participants on the Back to Work strand are generally good; they are matched as closely as possible to the needs, interests and career aspirations of most of the participants. Most of the participants on this strand are placed with employers by the Lead Contractor, and the staff are working hard to increase the availability of suitable work placement opportunities in the private and public sectors. More than 90% of the participants are currently gaining experience in private or public sector work placements. Almost all participants visited are carrying out an appropriate range of tasks in the workplace and developing relevant employability skills, including good timekeeping, team-working, and working independently. The participants spoke highly of the support they receive from staff in TWL, and from sub-contractors and employers.

8.5 Although the range of Short Accredited Courses offered to participants is satisfactory, the pace of uptake by participants of the available courses is slow and there is insufficient monitoring of the completion rates, and associated outcomes, by the Lead Contractor. In addition, there are inappropriate levels of awareness among those participants on the Step Ahead strand of the availability of Short Accredited Courses, resulting in opportunities to enhance their employability prospects being missed.

8.6 Most of the participants on the Self-Employment Test Trading strand are provided with very good advice and support from the business adviser on an on-going basis. They have good opportunities to complete relevant training, and develop a good range of appropriate skills which enables them to set up and sustain their businesses. Most participants are highly motivated, hard-working and flexible, and are making good progress in establishing a sustainable business venture. In most cases, the business ideas match sufficiently the participants' background, abilities and aspirations. 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 test trading period.

8.7 At the time of the inspection, there were six participants on the GAP programme. This programme is managed effectively by a sub-contractor, Business in the Community, who have responsibility for this strand across all of the Steps to Work contract areas in Northern Ireland. All of the participants are placed with appropriate employers and are allocated a personal mentor within their placement company. All of the work placements are matched well to the participants' primary degrees and their personal interests. The participants have very good opportunities to develop further their technical skills and knowledge acquired initially through their primary degrees. They also develop a good range of personal transferable capabilities which include initiative-taking and problem solving, planning and organising workloads, and communicating effectively with a range of clients and customers. The development of these transferable skills is supported well through an accredited tailored Graduate Certificate in organisation and management or in professional practice.

8.8 The overall quality of the NVQ/VRQ provision is good. A good range of professional and technical areas are delivered across the contract area to meet the needs of the participants. Almost all of the participants are in good work placements that are well matched to their professional and technical areas. Most of the participants displayed good standards of work in their work placements and are developing their wider employability skills including increased levels of self-confidence. In one example, the participant was unable to engage with customers when he joined the programme but with the support of key staff in the workplace he developed his self-confidence and oral communication skills and is now a valued member of the team in the workplace. The quality of training in most of the NVQ/VRQ directed training sessions observed is good and is characterised by a good range of learning experiences, including demonstrations, group discussions and individual support. The relationships between the tutors and the participants are good and almost all of the participants are well-motivated, and have a positive attitude to learning. Most of the tutors provide good learning experiences, which are relevant to current industry practice and meet the needs of the participants. The Personal Training Plans, however, are overly descriptive and generic and do not reflect sufficiently the participants' strengths and any barriers to employment. The reviews are also too descriptive and do not adequately record the participants' progress or set appropriate short-term targets to improve their employability skills.

8.9 There has been considerable and rapid expansion in the Core Gateway provision over the past month, with a total of 70 participants engaged in the programme across seven offices during the week of the inspection. Training sessions are run on a regular basis by the Lead Contractor and two of the sub-contractors. The quality of the Core Gateway inspected is good. The planning for the provision is thorough and detailed and incorporates a suitably broad range of training and learning approaches, and relevant materials. The Lead Contractor's provision is standardised across the various offices and quality is monitored effectively through the regular observation of training sessions. The participants on the programme have good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills, and as a result improve their employment opportunities. They are provided with appropriate induction and have access to a good range of support materials. The tutors are well qualified and are very committed to the participants. The participants speak highly of them and value the support they receive. The quality of the Jobsearch, which is an integral part of the Core Gateway provision, is good. A range of appropriate approaches is used effectively to help participants plan, prepare and progress to employment. The participants value the opportunity to produce a curriculum vitae (CV), access relevant job availability websites, and enhance their interview skills. As a result of attending Core Gateway, most of them report that they feel more confident and motivated to seek employment. Most of the participants have a good understanding of the pathways available to them in Step Two of the programme. Currently, the Lead Contractor does not provide sufficient opportunities for the Core Gateway tutors to meet together to learn from each other and share good practice to promote the improvement of the provision.

8.10 While most of the participants have access to good quality Jobsearch facilities, which include internet access, newspapers, and current job advertisements, the quality of the service provided is mainly satisfactory, and on occasions good. There is an over-reliance on searching internet-based directories to find employment within a narrow range of job goals. There is a need to broaden the range of strategies to match participants with a greater range of prospective employment opportunities which exploit better their transferable skills and capabilities. The Lead Contractor also needs to provide appropriate opportunities for all Jobsearch staff to share and explore good practice in order to raise standards and promote improvement.

8.11 The quality of the Personal Training Plans across the contract, is inadequate. They are not sufficiently tailored to meet the personal, social or work-related development needs of individual participants. As a result, they do not contain clearly defined targets and outcomes which will help prepare the participants for progression to higher level training, further education or employment. Too little cognisance is taken of the outcomes of any initial assessments or the views of employers, and there is insufficient evidence of the use of the plan in monitoring and reviewing the participants' progress. Too few of the participants interviewed were aware of their Personal Training Plans or the milestones contained within them.

PART THREE

9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

9.1 In order to raise the quality of its provision, TWL Training should:

- increase the number of participants progressing into sustained employment;
- improve and stabilise the regional and local leadership of the Antrim contract, including the effectiveness of communication and relationships with all key stakeholders; and
- strengthen the quality improvement and development planning processes across the contract area.

Table 2 - Progression Rates to Sustained Employment by Sub-Contractor

Progression Rates to Sustained Employment from Step Two (1/4/2009 – 31/3/2010)			
Organisation	Number of leavers	Number entering sustained employment	% found work for 13 weeks or more
Armstrong Learning Ltd	5	0	0%
BCW Training	3	0	0%
CSV Media	2	0	0%
Elle Enterprises	101	16	16%
Larne Community Enterprises	31	5	16%
Mentor Training (Self Emp)	25	1	4%
Oriel Training Services	29	3	10%
Paragon Training	2	0	0%
Possibilities	2	0	0%
Transition Training	37	1	3%
USEL	1	0	0%
Total	238	26	11%

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