



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in Customised Training Services (Strabane and Londonderry)

Report of an Inspection
in September 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%

All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by Customised Training Services.

Grading System

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

Performance Level
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

PART ONE - SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Customised Training Services was established in 1990 as a company limited by guarantee and operates from three premises in Strabane and one in Londonderry (Derry). It has a voluntary Board of Directors whose members are drawn from the public sector, business, local industry and the local community.

1.2 Since September 2007, Customised Training Services has been contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to deliver the Training for Success programme in Strabane and Derry. Since September 2008, it has been contracted to deliver the ApprenticeshipsNI programme in Strabane, Derry and Omagh at level 2 only, in the professional and technical areas of business and administration, beauty therapy, children's care, learning and development, construction, contact centre operations, hairdressing, health and social care, information technology (IT) users, hospitality and catering, retail, and warehousing and storage. It has also been contracted to deliver the ApprenticeshipsNI programme for barbering at levels 2 and 3 in Derry.

1.3 Customised Training Services has entered into sub-contracting arrangements with two other supplier organisations to deliver vocational training to trainees on the Training for Success programme. Since 2007, the North West Regional College has been sub-contracted to deliver vocational training in several professional and technical areas, including beauty therapy, children's care, learning and development, electro-technical services, hairdressing and plumbing. Strabane Training Services has been sub-contracted to deliver vocational training in the construction crafts of decorative operations, plastering and trowel occupations, and since September 2011, beauty therapy and hairdressing. All of the training for the essential skills and the vocational training in the other professional and technical areas is delivered in-house by staff from Customised Training Services.

1.4 Nearly all of the trainees on the Training for Success programme are recruited from Strabane and the wider Strabane District Council area, with only a small number (14) recruited mainly from Derry. Due to the small number of trainees currently recruited in the Derry office, all of the provision for the Training for Success programme is managed and delivered from the Strabane offices.

1.5 The academic profile of the trainees recruited to the Training for Success programme is low, with only a small number having achieved at least a grade C in their General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) in English (6%) or mathematics (7%). A significant minority of the trainees (42%) have no formal qualifications.

1.6 The latest statistics (August 2011) published by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI) show that the Strabane and Derry District Council areas have percentages of the available workforce registered as claiming a specific unemployment related benefit at 7.0% and 8.2% respectively. These claimant count percentages are well above the overall Northern Ireland average of 5.3% and are among the highest of all the district council areas.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection, 97 trainees were registered on the Training for Success programme; of these, 21 (22%) were registered on the Skills for Work strand, 36 (37%) on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand, and 40 (41%) who started on the programme in September 2011 were still completing induction and sampling across a range of the professional and technical areas to determine the strand that would best meet their needs.

Of the 57 existing Training for Success trainees, 7 were registered on a business and administration programme, 3 on a children's care, learning and development programme, 12 on construction programmes, 15 on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes, 1 on a hospitality and catering programme, 4 on an Information Technology (IT) users programme, 1 on a motor vehicle programme, and 14 of them were registered on a retail programme. At the time of the inspection, the majority (56%) of the trainees were in a suitable work placement and were attending according to the guidelines of their programme. A minority (22%) had been in at least one work placement but had left it for various reasons.

2.2 Seventy-five apprentices were registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; of these, 39 were registered in business and administration, 22 in health and social care, 11 in IT users, and 3 in retail.

2.3 Eighty-two trainees (91%) on the Training for Success programme and 43 apprentices (58%) on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme were undertaking training in the essential skills of literacy (116), numeracy (110), and information and communication technology (72).

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 The Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) carried out an inspection of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in Customised Training Services in September 2011. The professional and technical areas of business and administration, construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care, IT users, and retail, as well as the provision for the essential skills and the care, guidance and support of the trainees were inspected. A team of eight inspectors, and an associate assessor deployed in health and social care, observed a total of 105 trainees and apprentices in 29 directed training sessions, during workplace training and when carrying out their duties in the workplace. Discussions were held with the manager, a board member, the co-ordinators of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, tutors, trainees, employers and workplace supervisors, representatives from the sub-contracting organisations, and one specialist support provider. The inspection team also examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work, their personal training plans (PTPs) and portfolios of evidence, the organisation's self-evaluation report, service level agreements with sub-contractors, and other relevant documentation.

3.2 The arrangements for the inspection of care, guidance and support and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups includes the opportunity for trainees and apprentices to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings by the inspection team with groups of trainees and apprentices across their professional and technical areas. Two hundred questionnaires were issued to the trainees and apprentices; 52 (26%) of the questionnaires were returned to the Inspectorate and 20 of them contained additional written comments. The returns show that the trainees' and apprentices' experiences in Customised Training Services are very good. In particular, they appreciate the good support they receive from staff, the good match between the workplace training and their target qualifications, and the progress they have made in developing their personal and employability skills. The Inspectorate has reported the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with trainees to the manager.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 Overall, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor Customised Training Services' progress on the areas for improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- very good quality of the training and learning;
- outstanding quality of the provision for health and social care;
- very good quality of the care, guidance and support for the trainees and apprentices;
- very good standards of work demonstrated by most of the trainees and apprentices in directed training and in the workplace;
- very good to outstanding retention rates; and
- outstanding achievement rates.

4.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- inadequate provision for retail;
- quality assurance and improvement planning processes; and
- lack of appropriate and relevant online training and support materials for tutors and trainees across the professional and technical areas inspected.

Table of Performance Levels

Overall Performance Level	Good
Contributory Performance Levels	
Leadership and Management	Good
Quality of Provision for Learning	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Area of Learning	
Business and Administration	Good
Construction	Very Good
Essential Skills	Very Good
Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy	Good
Health and Social Care	Outstanding
Information Technology (IT) Users	Good
Retail	Inadequate

PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The quality of leadership and management in Customised Training Services is good. The manager has responsibility for the day-to-day running of both the Strabane and Derry offices and has developed an inclusive and open style of management; good relationships exist with the board of directors, staff across the organisation, and with sub-contracted organisations. Across Customised Training Services, however, the roles and responsibilities of the manager, the various programme co-ordinators and the tutors overlap and it is unclear, at times, who has overall responsibility for the management and quality assurance of the various strands of the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI provision.

5.2 Across the professional and technical areas inspected, the quality of the programme co-ordination is variable. In health and social care it is outstanding; there is detailed planning, excellent levels of support for the apprentices from the professional and technical and essential skills tutors, and high levels of employer engagement. In construction, the essential skills, and hairdressing and beauty therapy, the quality of the co-ordination is good or better. In business and administration and IT users, it is just satisfactory; the role of the programme co-ordinator is not clearly enough defined and it is not always obvious where the responsibility for the operational management of the provision lies. In retail, the quality of the co-ordination is inadequate; there is insufficient recording, tracking and reviewing of key performance data by the co-ordinator in order to monitor effectively the performance and progress of the trainees.

5.3 With the exception of health and social care, where the arrangements for quality assurance are outstanding, the overall quality assurance and improvement planning processes within Customised Training Services are mostly satisfactory. Although the management and tutors in Customised Training Services are highly committed to improvement, the use of management information and data to plan, review and inform judgements on the provision, as well as monitor the progress of the trainees, lacks rigour. The arrangements for quality assurance with sub-contracted organisations also need to be strengthened, in particular the processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning. While the quality assurance and quality improvement planning processes in place between Customised Training Services and the North West Regional College are mostly effective for the provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy, similar arrangements need to be extended to the partnership with Strabane Training Services to ensure that any weaknesses in the provision are identified and addressed effectively.

5.4 The range of provision offered by Customised Training Services is good. Across most of the professional and technical areas inspected, an appropriate and balanced curriculum is provided to improve the occupational, personal, social and employability skills of the trainees and match well their career aspirations. The provision in health and social care is outstanding; a broad, comprehensive programme has been devised which enables the apprentices to achieve a range of additional relevant qualifications, such as emergency first aid, over and above the requirements of their apprenticeship framework. In business and administration, however, the workplace training element of the ApprenticeshipsNI provision in one company is not matched well to the work roles of the apprentices and they have only limited opportunities to develop a sufficiently broad range of business and administration skills in the workplace.

5.5 The staff in Customised Training Services are well qualified and good opportunities are provided for them to undertake appropriate continuous professional development. In the essential skills, for example, three of the tutors are qualified to teach more than one essential skill and a further three of them are currently completing the training to teach

another essential skill. In health and social care, the professional and technical tutors are very well-qualified, highly experienced and committed to the development of good practice in health and social care. Although the staff in hairdressing and beauty therapy have high levels of specialist expertise and sound practical skills, the management in Customised Training Services, in partnership with Strabane Training Services, needs to provide better opportunities for them to develop further their pedagogic skills. While a process of tutor observation is in place in Customised Training Services to allow management to review the progress and performance of staff, it needs to be further developed to share the good practice across the organisation.

5.6 The quality of the accommodation, equipment and learning resources for the programmes in Customised Training Services, and within sub-contracted organisations, is good. The rooms are mostly laid out well to support the teaching and training strategies being deployed, and most of the trainees have good access to appropriate resources across nearly all of the professional and technical areas inspected.

5.7 Management in Customised Training Services has invested significantly in up-to-date computing and information and learning technology (ILT) equipment in the form of computers, data projectors, interactive white boards and e-beam technology across their training facilities. The provision of appropriate and relevant online training and support materials for tutors and trainees, across the professional and technical areas inspected, is currently under-developed.

5.8 Customised Training Services is committed to providing an inclusive training provision for trainees and apprentices from a wide range of social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. The organisation has established good links and partnerships with an appropriate range of external organisations and agencies including local schools, other training providers, job brokering services, support agencies, and is currently involved in a number of initiatives with local community groups including a programme for young mothers, an off-the-streets programme for young people, and a horticultural programme for ex-prisoners.

6. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

6.1 The quality of the provision for learning is very good. In most (83%) of the directed training sessions observed, the quality of the training and learning was good or better.

6.2 Across most of the professional and technical areas, the training sessions are well-planned by the tutors with clear learning goals that are matched well to the ability levels of the trainees, and the job roles and learning needs of the apprentices. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of work-readiness skills for the trainees on the Training for Success programme. In health and social care, the use of work-based mentors is outstanding; the mentors are fully involved in the training programme, provide excellent support and coaching for the apprentices and are fully included in planning training and monitoring and reviewing the apprentices' progress.

6.3 In the personal development, employability and careers clinics, the quality of the learning and teaching is good or better. The sessions engage all of the trainees by building upon their own specific interests and abilities. All trainees work towards achieving an accredited personal development qualification at an appropriate level, which is used well to address their individual barriers to learning, and results in most trainees making excellent progress in the development of their confidence and motivation. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos in the directed training sessions with outstanding opportunities for trainees to develop relationships which promote mutual respect, tolerance and understanding.

6.4 In the essential skills, the quality of provision for learning is very good. The quality of most of the directed training is good or better, with a majority of the lessons observed being very good. Most of the tutors deploy a very good range of activities to engage and enhance the learning experiences for the trainees, including practical activities, effective use of ILT to engage them and support their training and learning, discussions, group work and one-to-one support. In most classes, the tutor is supported to good effect by a learning support tutor. This arrangement works well with clear benefits for learner support and classroom management. The assessment for the essential skills is well planned and a very good, effective internal moderation process has been established. On the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in business and administration and health and social care, the essential skills are well-embedded in the apprentices' professional and technical training and, in health and social care, a minority of them achieve at levels above the requirements of their apprenticeship framework.

6.5 In retail, the quality of the provision for learning is inadequate. During the inspection only two hours of directed training in total were provided for all of the trainees and apprentices. The quality of the directed training is mostly satisfactory; it is not sufficiently vocationally relevant in order to develop the trainees' and apprentices' understanding of retail principles and practice, and within the session observed, the learning activities were not matched well enough to their diverse needs, and wide range of experiences and ability levels.

6.6 The quality of most of the work placements for trainees on the Training for Success programme is good. Many good opportunities exist within the work placements to consolidate and extend the trainees' and apprentices' occupational and transferable skills and provide them with good, varied learning opportunities. In retail, the quality of the workplace training for trainees on the Training for Success programme is mostly satisfactory; although there is insufficient tracking of the trainees' progress in the workplace, including the development of their occupational and transferable skills.

6.7 Although there is some variation across the professional and technical areas, the quality of the PTPs is mostly good. Across most of the professional and technical areas inspected on the Training for Success programme, the PTPs show clearly the outcomes of initial assessment, the barriers to learning and employment, and the individual training, development and essential skills needs of the trainees. The monitoring and review procedures are mostly implemented effectively. In retail, the PTPs are variable in quality; a minority lack sufficient detail on the trainees' existing qualifications, and on appropriate targets for the development of their occupational and transferable skills. On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, across most of the professional and technical areas, the PTPs are not sufficiently differentiated to meet the specific needs of all of the apprentices. In IT users, for example, they contain the required detail, including the outcomes from initial assessment, but there is little evidence of the tracking of the apprentices' acquisition and extension of their occupational skills and there is insufficient employer involvement in the review process.

6.8 The quality of the arrangements for the care, guidance and support is very good for trainees on the Training for Success programme and good for most of the apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Excellent cognisance is taken of the individual needs of trainees on the Training for Success programme through effective initial assessment which informs well the planning of flexible training provision to support their different needs. Each trainee on the Training for Success programme is assigned an individual mentor who is informed of any issues regarding their mentees, and tutors report that this process works well. Customised Training Services has established effective links with an appropriate range of external agencies including Disability Action, Divert, Include Youth, the Koram Centre and

Zest to help support and meet each trainee's individual needs. While the support arrangements and outcomes are very good, there is a lack of clarity on how each of the key elements of initial assessment, additional learning support, employability and professional and technical training link together to inform overall programme planning. In addition, there is considerable variation in the quality of support for apprentices, which ranges from outstanding to satisfactory; this is an area which needs to be addressed through the sharing of the good practice from the Training for Success provision.

6.9 A representative group of trainees on the Training for Success programme is elected each year to present the trainees' voice within the organisation and to influence the decisions that may affect them in their training. All of the trainees interviewed in focus groups responded positively about their training experiences and commented on the high levels of individual pastoral support and care provided by the training staff. A high priority is given to the emotional health and well-being of the trainees. Examples of this include a funded breakfast club available for all trainees every morning, effective mentoring arrangements, high levels of individual learning support, and free transport to off-site training facilities.

6.10 The quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is very good for trainees on the Training for Success programme but is just satisfactory for apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Customised Training Services has established good links with employers which are used effectively to inform the trainees' career planning and to provide them with appropriate opportunities for work-related learning. This includes the use of guest speakers from local businesses to inspire trainees during induction sessions and employer participation in employability session projects. A comprehensive induction programme is provided for all trainees on the Training for Success programme to build relationships, inform them of the programme expectations, training arrangements and support, to provide health and safety training, and to assess their individual support needs, essential skills levels and preferred learning styles. The induction programme is also used effectively to inform the development of the trainees' PTPs. Trainees receive effective personal career planning and impartial advice and guidance to help them make informed choices and to set appropriate goals. In contrast, the careers information for the apprentices is not sufficiently formalised and there is only limited guidance provided in relation to the progression routes available to them.

6.11 While the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, the management of Customised Training Services need to update the safeguarding and pastoral care policies to reflect more fully current legislation, and to take further action to formally share their policy on safeguarding in an appropriate format with all employers, parents and sub-contractors. In addition, although satisfactory policies are in place for bullying and harassment, they are not sufficiently user friendly for trainees or parents and there are omissions, particularly in relation to e-safety procedures for trainees.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

7.1 The achievements and standards demonstrated by most of the trainees and apprentices are very good; in health and social care they are outstanding. The trainees on the Training for Success programme are making good progress in their learning, across the various strands of the programme.

7.2 In business and administration, most of the trainees on the Training for Success programme are well-motivated and enjoy their training programme. They receive good support in their training, and are making good progress in developing their business and administration skills, including the effective use of office equipment. In construction, the

standards achieved by the construction craft trainees in their practical training are very good and new trainees make very good progress in the use of basic hand tools and techniques. The Programme-Led apprentices in electro-technical services are making very good progress through their technical certificate, and they achieve very good results in the theory and practical tests; almost 80% of the grades awarded are at credit or distinction level, which is a significant achievement given their weak academic profile on entry to the programme. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, the majority of the trainees are developing a good standard of occupational skills and their oral communication skills are mostly good. In retail, it is a concern that none of the trainees on the Skills for Work strand, who commenced training in 2010/11, have yet achieved a vocationally relevant qualification in retail.

7.3 In the essential skills, achievements and standards are very good. The quality of the work in the action-based activities is good or better, with clear evidence of marking for improvement by the tutors.

7.4 On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, the achievements and standards demonstrated by the apprentices are mostly good or better. In health and social care, the quality of work contained in their portfolios of evidence, ranges from very good to outstanding. The apprentices demonstrate very good standards of practical work and have a well-developed understanding of the value of good health and social care practice. In business and administration, most of the apprentices make good use of a wide range of software applications in their professional units. They have made good progress in their work and all have completed successfully their professional and technical units. In IT users, the achievements and standards are mostly very good. Almost all of the trainees are able to demonstrate and apply good occupational competences. The portfolios of evidence are well-structured and organised, and while most contain appropriate work-related evidence, they are overly similar in terms of some of their content. In retail, the apprentices achieve good standards of work in the tasks they are asked to perform in the workplace and, through effective employer support, they make good progress in developing and demonstrating a suitably wide range of occupational and transferable skills.

7.5 Over the past three years, the retention rate for those trainees on the Training for Success programme is very good at 79%. The achievement rate is outstanding at 93%. The progression rate to further training, education or relevant employment for these trainees is satisfactory at 65%.

7.6 Over the same period, the overall retention rate for apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is outstanding at 95%. The achievement rate is also outstanding at 94%.

7.7 The achievement rates in the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are very good at 82%, 83% and 83% respectively.

PART THREE - PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA REPORTS

8. BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

MAIN FINDINGS

8.1 In business and administration, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is good.

8.2 Customised Training Services provides business and administration to trainees under the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. Seven trainees are registered on the Training for Success programme, two on the Skills for Work strand and five on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship. Thirty-nine trainees are registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme at level 2; 33 are existing employees in an international electronics manufacturing company, and the remainder are employees in a major retail cash-and-carry facility, both based in Derry. The ApprenticeshipsNI provision expanded significantly, from two apprentices to 117 apprentices over the period 2009/10 to 2010/11, although there has been no recruitment to this programme over the last six months.

8.3 The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The tutors have good opportunities to develop their professional understanding of the assessment requirements for the revised occupational standards during regular team meetings and through external training. Although the ApprenticeshipsNI provision has been mostly well-managed, it is not sufficiently embedded into Customised Training Services' quality assurance arrangements. The use of management information to plan and review the ApprenticeshipsNI provision is inadequate. This is a concern given the significant expansion of the provision over the past two years. The training and development managers on the ApprenticeshipsNI provision in both companies visited have been well-involved in the design of the programme. The use of work-based mentors, however, to support the apprentices is underdeveloped. Most of the apprentices and trainees have good access to specialist physical resources across all of the programmes.

8.4 The quality of the provision for learning is good. Induction arrangements are effective in ensuring that apprentices and trainees have a good understanding of the key elements of their training frameworks. The quality of the personal training plans is variable. For the Training for Success provision, they show effectively the individual training and development needs of the trainees. On the ApprenticeshipsNI provision, they are not sufficiently differentiated to meet the specific needs of all of the apprentices. Monitoring and review procedures are implemented effectively across the provision. All of the trainees are in work placements that meet the requirements for their professional and technical units. They benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum to improve their personal, social and employability skills. Effective use is made of initial assessment to plan their training programme. The main ApprenticeshipsNI provision is not well-matched to the work roles of the apprentices, who work as manufacturing operatives. In their work, they make significant use of specialist software packages, and would be better suited to taking a specialist professional and technical programme in Information Technology.

8.5 The quality of the learning experiences of the apprentices and trainees is mostly good. The apprentices report high levels of satisfaction with the flexible training sessions that are provided in the workplace. Nearly all of the essential skills provision for apprentices is well-embedded into their professional and technical training. The quality of the directed

training sessions for trainees on the Training for Success programme is good. It is well-planned with clear learning goals that are matched closely to the ability levels of the trainees. The trainees, however, are not provided with sufficient opportunities to offer extended spoken responses in their training. The use of ILT to enhance the quality of training and learning is under-developed across all of the provision.

8.6 Achievements and standards are very good. Most of the apprentices and trainees are well-motivated and enjoy their training programme. They have made good progress in their work; all have completed successfully their professional and technical units. The apprentices, however, have insufficient opportunities to plan independently the assessment tasks in their portfolios of evidence. The trainees receive good support in their training, and are making good progress in developing their business and administration skills, including the effective use of office equipment. Over the past four years, the average retention and achievement rates for the Skills for Your Life strand are very good at 73% and 81% respectively. Retention on the Skills for Work strand is good at 67% and achievement is outstanding at 100%. Retention on the Programme Led Apprenticeship strand is very good at 83% and achievement is outstanding at 100%. Progression rates to employment or further training are very good or better. Retention and achievement rates over the last two years for the ApprenticeshipsNI provision are outstanding at 94% and 100% respectively.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last four years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
Personal Development/Skills for Your Life	37	73	81	100
Skills for Work	30	67	100	100
Programme Led Apprenticeships	6	83	100	80
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2	117	94	100	100

9. CONSTRUCTION

MAIN FINDINGS

9.1 In construction, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is very good.

9.2 Customised Training Services provides construction operations, decorative occupations, electro-technical services, plastering, and trowel occupations under the Training for Success programme; 12 trainees are currently registered. The numbers recruited to construction programmes rose from 8 in 2009/10 to 22 in 2010/11.

9.3 The quality of leadership and management is good. The partnerships with Strabane Training Services and the North West Regional College, to deliver construction craft and electro-technical services programmes respectively, work well. The personal training plans are mostly very good and include accurate information on the trainees' career and

employment objectives, barriers to employment, and hobbies and interests. The quality assurance processes to monitor the trainees' progress in their qualifications is satisfactory. There is insufficient support from management in Customised Training Services and Strabane Training Services, for those tutors less experienced in the delivery of construction craft theory.

9.4 The quality of provision for learning is very good. Customised Training Services designs very good individual learning programmes for the trainees, which match well their career aspirations. The organisation has worked hard to supply the trainees with very good work placements, which provide the trainees with good learning opportunities. The practical training for the construction craft trainees is effective and encourages them to move quickly through well-designed set tasks. There are, however, insufficient active learning opportunities in directed training which leads to the trainees becoming overly passive at times. The trainees in electro-technical services achieve very good results in their theory and practical tests; almost 80% of the grades awarded are at credit or distinction level.

9.5 The programme managers and tutors know the trainees' personalities and abilities very well and provide them with very good support and positive encouragement. Customised Training Services provide very good personal development and essential skills programmes to the trainees, which meet well their individual needs and help them to mature and settle into their chosen employment pathway. Attendance by the Training for Success trainees is mostly good.

9.6 Achievements and Standards are very good to outstanding. The standards achieved by the construction craft trainees in their practical training are very good and new trainees make very good progress in the use of basic hand tools and techniques. The electro-technical trainees make very good progress through their technical certificate. Over the past three years, the average rate of retention for Skills for Your Life trainees is good at 68%, for Skills for Work trainees it is outstanding at 91% and for Programme-Led Apprentices it is good at 77%. The achievement rate for those Skills for Your Life trainees who complete their programme is outstanding at 100%, for Skills for Work trainees it is very good at 86% and for Programme-Led Apprentices it is good at 80%. Progression to further training or employment for all programmes is outstanding at 100%.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last four years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
Personal Development/ Skills for Your Life	19	68	100	100
Skills for Work	32	91	86	100
Programme Led Apprenticeships	19	77	80	100

10. ESSENTIAL SKILLS

MAIN FINDINGS

10.1 In essential skills, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is very good.

10.2 Customised Training Services provides the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to trainees under the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, with 125 trainees and apprentices currently registered.

10.3 The quality of leadership and management is very good. While a very good development plan is in place for the essential skills, data could be more effectively used in the self-evaluation process to further inform judgements. Customised Training Services gives the essential skills provision a high priority and employs an effective co-ordinator and eight tutors to deliver the provision. Three of the tutors are qualified to teach more than one essential skill and a further three tutors are currently completing the training to teach another essential skill. The timetabling is very flexible to support the needs of individual trainees. The review of essential skills in the personal training plans is mostly good. The quality of the accommodation, equipment and resources for essential skills is very good.

10.4 The quality of provision for learning is very good. The quality of most of the directed training is good or better with a majority being very good. A significant minority of the recently recruited trainees clearly exhibit motivational and behavioural issues. Most tutors deploy a very good range of activities to engage the trainees and enhance the learning experiences for them through practical activities, and the effective use of ILT, discussions, group work and one-to-one support. In most classes, the tutor is supported by a learning support tutor. This arrangement is very good with clear benefits for learner support and classroom management. Assessment is well planned with a very good internal moderation process in place, which includes, for example, standardisation using a tutor from another training organisation. The quality of the workplace training for the apprentices is also very good and, in business and administration and health and social care, the delivery of the essential skills is well-embedded in the apprentices' professional and technical training.

10.5 The trainees and apprentices are provided with very good support. The tutors know them well and effectively plan the learning to meet their individual needs. They exhibit patience, tolerance and genuine interest and concern for individual trainees, despite some very challenging behaviour by a small number of them. Each trainee is assigned a mentor when they join a programme. The mentor is informed of any issues regarding the trainees and the tutors report that this process works well. Relevant external support from an appropriate range of agencies is also provided for trainees where required.

10.6 Achievements and standards are very good. The trainees and apprentices are making good progress in the achievement of the three essential skills and a small number of them are achieving above their target qualification or the requirement of their apprenticeship framework. There is a marked change in the behaviour and attitude of second year trainees on the Training for Success programme compared to recently recruited trainees. The second year trainees acknowledged that their behaviour and attitude had changed positively during the first year and attributed this change to the respect they had developed for their tutors. The quality of the work in the action-based activities is good or better, with clear evidence of marking for improvement. Over the past four years, the overall average achievement rate for those who complete their programme is very good at 82%.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last four years)

Essential Skills	Number of learners	Achievement rate %
Literacy	793	82
Numeracy	815	83
ICT	368	83

11. HAIRDRESSING AND BEAUTY THERAPY

MAIN FINDINGS

11.1 In hairdressing and beauty therapy, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is good.

11.2 Customised Training Services, in partnership with the North West Regional College and Strabane Training Services, provides hairdressing and beauty therapy under the Training for Success programme, with 15 trainees currently registered. The numbers recruited to this professional and technical area have increased significantly, from six trainees to 27 trainees, over the period from 2007/08 to 2010/11.

11.3 The quality of the leadership and management is good. There is very good planning at a strategic level to provide an appropriate and well-balanced curriculum for the trainees in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Whilst an effective range of quality assurance and improvement planning processes are in place between the organisation and the North West Regional College, similar arrangements need to be extended to the partnership with Strabane Training Services, to ensure that any weaknesses in the provision are identified and addressed effectively. Whilst a major investment has been made in the new hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities in Strabane Training Services, the range of learning resources in the training salons, at present, is inadequate. The tutors and trainees do not have access to appropriate online training and support systems to support and enhance their training and learning.

11.4 The quality of provision for learning is mostly good. The tutors appropriately place a strong emphasis on the development of relevant work-readiness skills. Whilst the hairdressing and beauty therapy staff in Strabane Training Services have high levels of specialist expertise and practical skills, management in both Customised Training Services and Strabane Training Services, need to provide opportunities for them to develop their pedagogic skills. Customised Training Services has been very successful in recruiting empathetic employers, who are prepared to give their time and experience to develop further the trainees' occupational and transferable skills.

11.5 The trainees are provided with high levels of pastoral support and personal guidance by the staff in Customised Training Services. An atmosphere of mutual respect permeates the organisation, and the staff are committed to the welfare and personal development of the trainees.

11.6 Achievements and standards are mostly satisfactory. The majority of the trainees are developing good occupational skills. There are good strategies in place to ensure that the trainees recognise the importance of appropriate behaviour in the workplace. In addition, the standards of the trainees' spoken communication skills are mostly good. Over

the past four years, the average retention rate is very good at 75%. The average achievement rate for those who complete their programme, however, is inadequate at 58%. It is outstanding on the Skills for Work strand at 94%, but is inadequate on the Skills for Your Life strand at 50%, with only 8 of the 17 trainees who started the programme having gained the full award. On the Programme-led Apprenticeship strand, the achievement rate is currently low at 18%, however, 10 of the 14 trainees who started the programme were still in training at the time of the inspection. The overall progression rate to higher level programmes in hairdressing and beauty therapy is very good at 86%.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last four years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
Personal Development/Skills for Your Life	17	94	50	63
Skills for Work	24	67	94	86
Programme Led Apprenticeships	14	79	18	100

12. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

MAIN FINDINGS

12.1 In health and social care, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is outstanding.

12.2 Customised Training Services introduced the ApprenticeshipsNI programme in health and social care in 2008. Since that time, 263 apprentices have been recruited to the programme from a wide range of local health and social care organisations.

12.3 The quality of the leadership and management of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme in health and social care is outstanding. The detailed planning, excellent levels of support provided by professional and technical and essential skills tutors, and the high levels of employer engagement, combine to create an outstanding provision in this professional and technical area.

12.4 The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding. The tutors are very well-qualified, highly experienced and committed to the development of good practice in health and social care. They have designed a broad, comprehensive and well-balanced programme which enables the apprentices to achieve a range of additional and relevant qualifications, including emergency first aid, in addition to the requirements of the training framework. The essential skills are integrated fully into the provision and the high expectations of the apprentices, which underpin the entire training programme, are reflected in the achievements of a minority of them in levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT above those required by their apprenticeship framework.

12.5 The tutors provide excellent levels of support for apprentices and ensure that they develop a clear understanding of the principles of good practice in their work with clients, residents and patients. They have high expectations of the apprentices who respond very well to these demands. There are excellent levels of engagement with the employers; the frequency, regularity and quality of the engagement are significant features of the

programme. Each apprentice has a designated workplace mentor who provides on-the-job training and expert witness testimony for those vocational units in which direct observation of practice would be most intrusive. Communication channels between the Customised Training Services tutors and the workplace mentors are excellent. The mentors are fully engaged in the training programme, provide excellent support and coaching for the apprentices and are fully involved in planning training and monitoring and reviewing apprentices' progress. The arrangements for quality assurance are excellent. The programme is very well-resourced, and team teaching is a significant feature. The managers and staff from Customised Training Services are highly committed to improvement and are constantly striving to raise standards even further.

12.6 The quality of work contained in the apprentices' portfolios of evidence ranges from very good to excellent and the apprentices' daily practice reflects sensitive practice, very good standards of practical work and a well-developed understanding of the value of good health and social care practice. The retention and achievement rates, over the past three years, are outstanding, at 95% and 96% respectively.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last three years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2	263	95	96	n/a

13. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) USERS

MAIN FINDINGS

13.1 In IT Users, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is good.

13.2 Customised Training Services provides the IT Users ApprenticeshipsNI framework at level 2. In addition, over the past four years a small number of Training for Success trainees have undertaken vocational qualifications in IT. The numbers recruited to IT programmes has declined sharply over the past year; at the time of the inspection, for example, there were only 7 IT Users apprentices still on the programme.

13.3 The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. An appropriate and flexible curriculum offer is available to trainees and apprentices and the staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Within Customised Training Services, the role of co-ordination of the IT provision is not well enough defined and developed and it is not always clear where the responsibility for the operational management of the provision lies. As a result, the arrangements for the monitoring and quality assurance of the provision lack rigour, and a strategy for further recruitment onto the IT programmes is lacking. The personal training plans are satisfactory; they contain the required detail, including the outcomes from initial assessment, but there is too little evidence of the tracking of the apprentices' acquisition and extension of their occupational skills and there is insufficient employer involvement in the review process. The quality of the accommodation, equipment and resources for the IT programmes is good, the rooms are spacious and well laid out to support learning.

13.4 The quality of provision for learning is good. The quality of the directed training is good; the training methods and the well-planned activities meet the learning needs of the apprentices and the tutor works hard to link the directed training to the apprentices' job roles, and to identify appropriate opportunities for assessment.

13.5 Management in Customised Training Services need to implement more regular and effective arrangements for communicating and collaborating with employers. The current group of apprentices report that staffing and other issues in the initial stages of their programme were demotivating, and resulted in some apprentices disengaging, and leaving. The remaining apprentices are now provided with good support and encouragement, are motivated to complete the qualification, and are making good progress.

13.6 Achievements and standards are very good. Almost all of the apprentices are able to demonstrate and apply good occupational competences. The portfolios of evidence are well-structured and organised, and contain appropriate work-related evidence. Over the past four years, the average rate of retention on the Training for Success programme is very good at 73%; the average rate of achievement is outstanding at 84%. Over the past two years, the average rate of retention on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is outstanding at 93% and the average rate of achievement is outstanding at 100%. The average rate of retention for the current group of apprentices, however, is inadequate at 58%. While the rate of progression is outstanding for the Training for Success trainees, very few of the apprentices progress to higher level IT programmes.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last four years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
Training for Success	27	73	84	94
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2	107	93	100	n/a

14. RETAIL

MAIN FINDINGS

14.1 In retail, the quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is inadequate.

14.2 Customised Training Services provides the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in retail. Recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme varies significantly, ranging from one apprentice in 2007/08 to a maximum of 102 apprentices in 2009/10; currently only three apprentices are registered on the programme. On the Training for Success programme, recruitment has increased from eight trainees in 2007/08 to 31 in 2010/11; currently there are nine Programme-Led Apprentices and 5 Skills for Work trainees.

14.3 The quality of the leadership and management is inadequate. There is insufficient recording, tracking and reviewing of key performance data to monitor the performance and quality of the Training for Success programme. The quality and consistency of the personal training plans is variable; whilst a majority of them are sufficiently detailed and show the individual training and development needs of the trainees, the remainder lack sufficient detail on the trainees' previous achievements, and on appropriate targets for the development of their occupational and transferable skills.

14.4 The quality of the provision for directed training is inadequate. During the inspection only two hours of directed training in total were provided for all of the trainees and apprentices. The quality of the directed training is mostly satisfactory; while an appropriate range of resources have been developed by the tutor, the learning activities are not matched well enough to the wide range of abilities and experiences of the trainees and apprentices. In addition, there is an inappropriate focus on trainees achieving a national vocational qualification (NVQ), which is unsuitable for those without work placements. The quality of the workplace training for apprentices is good; through effective employer support, they make good progress in developing and demonstrating a good range of occupational and transferable skills. The quality of the workplace training for the Training for Success trainees who have work placements is mainly satisfactory; there is insufficient assessment of their progress in developing and achieving relevant occupational and transferable skills.

14.5 The trainees are provided with good support and encouragement, and most have established positive relationships with their tutor and workplace supervisors. They are provided with very good levels of additional support to develop their employability skills and to make informed career choices. Most have suitable work placements, which provide good opportunities for them to develop their confidence and interpersonal skills, on top of their occupational skills.

14.6 Achievements and standards are satisfactory. The apprentices demonstrate good standards of work. Over the past four years, retention and achievement rates for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme are outstanding (94%) and good (82%) respectively. Over the same period, retention and achievement rates for the Training for Success programme, are very good (73%) and outstanding (90%) respectively, however, none of the Skills for Work trainees, who commenced training in 2010/11, have yet achieved a vocationally-relevant qualification in retail.

Table of Achievements (outcomes over the last four years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
Training for Success	100	73	90	91
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2	102	94	82	n/a

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

15. CONCLUSION

15.1 The quality of training provided by Customised Training Services is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. Management need to put processes in place to address the following key priorities for development, to demonstrate a sustained capacity for self-improvement and build on the strengths that already exist across most of its provision.

16. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

16.1 Customised Training Services needs to revise its annual improvement plan to take account of the following key priorities:

- the inadequate provision for retail;
- the further development of the quality assurance and improvement planning processes;
- the review of the role of the programme co-ordinator across a number of professional and technical areas; and
- the lack of appropriate and relevant on-line training and support materials for tutors and trainees across the professional and technical areas inspected.

APPENDIX**OVERALL SUMMARY TABLE: 2007-2011**

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Number progressed to FE/other training	Number progressed to relevant employment
Personal Development/Skills for Your Life	132	74	91	70	0
Skills for Work	214	84	94	54	0
Programme Led Apprenticeship	47	74	89	15	5
Level 2 Apprenticeship	389	95	94	7	3
Overall totals		87	93	146	8

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