



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Hugh J O'Boyle Training
Limited, Downpatrick

Report of an Inspection
In May/June 2011

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A number of quantitative terms are used in this report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very/few/a small minority

All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by Hugh J O'Boyle Training.

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 Hugh J O'Boyle Training Limited (Hugh J O'Boyle Training) is a privately owned, training organisation. It was established in 1986, to provide training programmes for young people and adults in the Down District Council area. The organisation has two sites; its headquarters and main site, which is located in Downpatrick, and a second site, Belfast Centre of Learning (BCL), which is situated on the Ormeau Road in Belfast. The organisation is managed by the director, who also has the role of quality officer and co-ordinator for internal verification, and is supported by the general manager, the financial manager, and the training manager. The management team of the organisation is currently significantly depleted as a result of long term illnesses and consequently the director, and the finance manager have temporarily undertaken a range of additional management responsibilities. There is a team of 21 staff and almost all of the professional and technical tutors work across both sites.

1.2 Hugh J O'Boyle Training is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to supply training under the Training for Success (TfS) and the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, at level 2 in the professional and technical areas of business and administration, children's care learning and development and retail. This report focuses on the TfS and ApprenticeshipsNI provision on the Downpatrick site only, because the TfS and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes are not offered currently on the BCL site.

1.3 The latest statistics (April 2011) published by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI) show that the Down District Council area has 4.9% of the available workforce registered as claiming a specific unemployment related benefit. This percentage is just below the Northern Ireland total of 5.1%. The trainees and apprentices on the TfS and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in Downpatrick are recruited from the town itself and from a number of major urban settlements including Ballynahinch and Newcastle, and a significant rural area across South Down. The current economic climate has resulted in a significant downturn in the three biggest industries in the area: construction, fishing, and farming. According to the Noble Index, the district is ranked 15th in the least deprived wards, although according to statistics provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DETI 2011), the figures for youth and long-term unemployment remain significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average. Two of the most deprived wards in the district council area are located in Downpatrick.

1.4 The prior achievements of the trainees and apprentices on entry to the TfS programme are low overall, and are very low on the children's care learning and development (CCLD) programme. Of the 59 trainees and apprentices currently in training, 24 (41%) had no qualifications on entry. At the time of the inspection, 36 (63%) of the trainees and apprentices were identified as having essential skills needs in literacy and 38 (66%) of them as having essential skills needs in numeracy.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection, 50 trainees were registered on the TfS programme; of these, 1 (2%) was registered on the Skills for your Life strand, 33 (66%) on the Skills for Work strand, and 16 (32%) on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship. All of the trainees on the TfS programme are completing training in a range of professional and technical areas at

level 2 or below. Of the 50 TfS trainees, 14 (28%) are registered on a business and administration programme, 15 (30%) on a retail programme, and 21 (42%) on a CCLD programme. All of the trainees have a work placement, attend directed training sessions in their professional and technical areas and in the essential skills as appropriate, and some attend a programme of personal and social development.

2.2 Seven apprentices were registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; one in business and administration, three in retail, one in catering and two in CCLD. There are two residual Jobskills apprentices also registered with the organisation; one in retail and one in CCLD.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 The Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) carried out an inspection of the TfS and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in Hugh J O'Boyle Training in May/June 2011. A team of five inspectors observed a total of 49 trainees and apprentices in six directed training sessions. They also observed the trainees and apprentices undertaking workplace training and assessment, and carrying out their duties in the workplace. Discussions were held with a range of staff, including: the director, acting general manager and quality officer; the finance and acting operations manager; the designated child protection officer and the deputy officer; tutors; trainees and apprentices; workplace supervisors; employers; and the workplace monitoring officer. The inspection team also examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' personal training plans (PTPs), trainees' and apprentices' work in their portfolios of evidence, the organisation's self-evaluation report, service level agreements with other agencies, organisational policies and other relevant documentation.

3.2 The inspection of the arrangements for pastoral care and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups provided the opportunity for the trainees and apprentices across the professional and technical areas to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meeting with the inspection team. Fifty-six questionnaires were issued to trainees, 34 (61%) of which were returned to the Inspectorate; 19 (34%) of these contained additional written comments. The returns show that almost all of the trainees enjoy being at Hugh J O'Boyle Training. In particular, they appreciate the high levels of care and support they receive from the staff, and most comment on the good experiences they have had in the organisation and in the work place. However, a few of the trainees and apprentices commented on the restricted social space available to them. The Inspectorate has reported the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with trainees to the senior managers.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by Hugh J O'Boyle Training is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which Hugh J O'Boyle Training has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor Hugh J O'Boyle Training's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- very good levels of pastoral care and support for almost all of the trainees and apprentices;
- good links and productive working relationships with most of the employers;

- good or better quality of the directed training, and the good quality of the workplace training for most of the trainees and apprentices;
- good standards of work and progress displayed by most trainees and apprentices in business and administration and retail, and the very good standards of work and progress displayed by them in Children's Care Learning and Development;
- excellent success rates in the full framework across all of the professional and technical areas inspected; and
- self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes which are well-embedded in the overall strategic and operational planning of the organisation.

4.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- provision of a more coherent and structured programme of personal and social development to further improve the wider employability skills and personal effectiveness of the trainees and apprentices; and
- further improvement in retention rates across all programmes.

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

Area of Learning	
Business and Administration	Good
Children's Care Learning and Development	Very Good
Essential Skills	Good
Retail	Good

PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The quality of the leadership and management in Hugh J O'Boyle Training is good. The director and acting manager, together with the finance and acting operations manager, provide consistently good leadership and direction for the organisation. They support their staff well to provide good quality training, care and guidance for the trainees and apprentices, some of whom present with significant barriers to learning. Hugh J'O Boyle Training is well-established in the local area and the core values of the organisation are conveyed clearly to trainees, apprentices, parents, staff, employers and other key stakeholders. There are effective channels of communication across the organisation, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

5.2 The organisation has a strong pastoral ethos characterised by good internal relationships, and productive external contacts with a number of local schools, support agencies and statutory bodies. Hugh J O'Boyle Training has also developed productive working relationships with a range of local employers, which are used to good effect for the benefit of the trainees and apprentices. The organisation has worked hard to develop placement opportunities with empathetic employers, most of whom contribute significantly to the development of the trainees' self-confidence and work-readiness skills. It is a noteworthy achievement that work placements have been secured for all of the trainees on the TfS programme, despite the local downturn and high associated unemployment rates in the area.

5.3 There are systematic procedures in place to monitor and review regularly the trainees' and apprentices' performance and progress in their directed training and in the workplace. There are weekly staff meetings, monthly management support meetings and frequent monitoring and review processes. The outcomes of all of these processes are used well to review individual trainees' and apprentices' progress against the targets set. Appropriate intervention strategies are put in place where it is identified that any of the trainees or apprentices need additional support.

5.4 There are good arrangements in place within the organisation to ensure that the processes of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are effective. Key performance data is used well by management and is beginning to be used more effectively by professional and technical staff to monitor and to set realistic performance targets, particularly in relation to retention, across the professional and technical areas. A planned review by management of the TfS provision, and the planned appointment of an additional tutor for personal development, are timely in order to ensure that the needs of all trainees are being addressed fully.

5.5 The range of training provision is good. The professional and technical areas offered meet the needs of most of the trainees and apprentices. The trainees and apprentices have good opportunities to progress in their learning, and to enhance and develop their occupational skills and competencies. However, at present, all of the trainees and apprentices do not have sufficient opportunities to develop fully their personal and social skills, and this needs to be addressed by the senior managers.

5.6 Across the provision, the tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced, and are deployed effectively. They are encouraged to undertake a range of continuous professional development activities. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for the sharing of good practice across all training and learning sessions to ensure greater consistency in programme delivery. The use of information and learning technology (ILT) is under-developed and is not used adequately to enhance practice in directed or workplace training, or to support independent learning.

5.7 The quality of the accommodation is mostly good. The directed training environments are welcoming and are vocationally stimulating, particularly in business and administration. However, there is an overall lack of social space for trainees and apprentices within the Downpatrick office. Hugh J O'Boyle Training needs to ensure that all accommodation is adequate and fit for purpose, and that a suitable range of good quality ILT-based resources is made available to encourage and support the trainees' and apprentices' independent learning, and focused, developmental project work.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

6.1 Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated, keen to achieve, and are making good progress in their learning. They are developing appropriate work-related skills, and positive attitudes and dispositions within their work place settings. A significant number (56%) of level 1 TfS trainees enter training with very low levels of prior achievement and low levels of confidence and self-esteem; this is particularly evident for those trainees in CCLD. However, they are well supported in their directed training and in the workplace and almost all of the tutors and employers report discernible improvements in the trainees' confidence, occupational skills and attitudes to work.

6.2 Most of the trainees and apprentices are provided with good opportunities to develop and apply appropriate occupational skills across the professional and technical areas. In CCLD, most trainees achieve good or very good standards of practical skills and good standards of skills in their written work. Most are able to plan effectively activities to support children's learning and can identify and evaluate appropriately the skills and capacities being developed in the children. In retail, most of the trainees and apprentices perform effectively a range of key functions, including checking deliveries, stock rotation, display, merchandising and cash and credit payment systems. In business and administration most of the trainees are developing relevant work-based skills for their training framework including reception work, dealing with telephone enquiries, processing payments, word processing and photocopying.

6.3 Most of the trainees and apprentices are making good progress in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy, and a minority (8%) are achieving beyond the minimum level required by their framework. Overall, the majority of trainees are developing good standards in their written work, and in the organisation and presentation of their portfolios of evidence, commensurate with their current levels of ability. However, most trainees and apprentices do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their spoken communication skills and would benefit from a stronger emphasis on the development of these skills through a more structured personal and social development programme.

6.4 Over the past three years, the retention rate for the TfS programme is poor at 57%. There is, however, an improving and upward trend in the retention rate for the TfS programme from 41% in 2009/2010 to 65% in 2010/2011. The success rate is excellent at 100%. The progression rate to further training, education or relevant employment is satisfactory at 74%.

6.5 Over the same period, the retention rate for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is satisfactory at 72%. The success rate is excellent at 100%.

6.6 The success rates in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy are excellent at 100%. Over the past three years, all trainees and apprentices who completed their training achieved an essential skills qualification at a level in line with, or above, their framework requirement.

7. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7.1 The quality of the provision for learning is good. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of the trainees', and apprentices' occupational skills, as well as their literacy and numeracy skills. There is an effective induction programme for all trainees and apprentices to ensure that they have been recruited onto the professional and technical area that best meets their needs. The programmes are planned well to support progression in learning. Almost all of the trainees and apprentices become more confident, self-reliant and effective in their workplace as they progress through their programme. However, the organisation's provision for personal and social education lacks coherence and needs to be strengthened to ensure that all trainees and apprentices have the opportunity to develop more fully their wider employability and personal effectiveness skills.

7.2 The quality of the training and learning in all of the directed training sessions observed was good or very good. The tutors prepare well for their sessions and plan appropriately to take account of the wide range of the trainees' and apprentices' training and learning needs. Much of the tutor preparation integrates effectively careers education, and essential skills, within the planning and delivery. Tutors provide effective support and encouragement for the trainees and apprentices, resulting in good levels of interest and engagement by them in their training. The pace of almost all of the sessions is good and there are appropriate levels of challenge. However, in almost all of the directed training sessions the use of ILT, by tutors, trainees and apprentices, is underdeveloped and more emphasis needs to be placed on developing the effective use of ILT to support independent learning, particularly through more project and research- based activities.

7.3 The quality of the workplace training is consistently good or better for most of the trainees and apprentices visited during the inspection. Hugh J O'Boyle Training has worked hard to develop and foster very good links with supportive employers. Monitoring and review processes, and assessments in the work place are regular and well planned. The achievements of the trainees and apprentices through workplace learning are well tracked and most of them are provided with suitable, regular feedback which indicates clearly to them the progress they are making. For a minority of the trainees and apprentices, the appropriateness of their work placements should be reviewed to ensure that there are adequate levels of challenge and support for them to develop and apply an appropriate range of occupational skills, particularly in the area of business and administration.

7.4 All of the professional and technical staff in Hugh J O'Boyle Training work collaboratively with the essential skills tutors to support the development of the trainees' and apprentices' literacy and numeracy skills across the professional and technical programmes. The essential skills tutors have started to plan more effectively for the contextualisation of literacy and numeracy within each of the professional and technical areas, and there is good planning to support and develop the literacy and numeracy skills of the trainees and

apprentices in the workplace. A good range of initial and diagnostic processes are used by the essential skills tutors and the recording and outcomes of these are used appropriately to plan for learning. A number of the trainees receive additional and appropriate support to help them with their essential skills. There is consistent evidence, in the trainees' and apprentices' work, of marking for improvement by most of the tutors.

7.5 The quality of the personal training plans is mostly good. Almost all of the plans are detailed and reflect well the outcomes of initial assessment, the targets for achievement and progress, the individual and support needs of the trainees and apprentices, and the progress made by them towards their target qualification, along with appropriate tracking of their transferable and occupational skills. In a minority of the plans, however, there is insufficient detail of qualifications on entry, and there needs to be a stronger emphasis on ensuring that all relevant details are recorded in all of the plans.

7.6 The arrangements for care, guidance and support provided by Hugh J O'Boyle Training are very good. They are characterised by a caring and supportive ethos, and by good relationships at all levels in the organisation. Appropriate procedures are in place for involving parents/carers in decisions relating to the trainees' and apprentices' programme and specific support needs. The senior management and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the overall pastoral care of the trainees and apprentices and have developed and implemented appropriate policies and procedures to support them.

7.7 The arrangements for supporting the trainees and apprentices in their learning are good. The outcomes from initial assessment are used well to identify, and to plan for, individual additional support needs. Hugh J O'Boyle Training provides effectively additional learning support for those trainees and apprentices who have barriers to learning. The trainees and apprentices have good access to an appropriate range of personal and social support including support from the Cedar Foundation, Mencap and Disability Action, and a range of counselling services.

7.8 The provision for careers, education, information, advice and guidance is good. The programme is well embedded into the trainees' and apprentices' professional and technical work and is focused on their individual needs. The organisation makes effective use of the Department for Employment and Learning Careers Service to provide impartial advice and guidance and to help trainees and apprentices to make appropriate and informed choices.

7.9 While the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, the management in Hugh J O'Boyle Training need to take further action to share formally their policy on safeguarding with employers and parents.

PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA REPORTS

8. BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

8.1 In business and administration, the quality of the training provided by Hugh J O'Boyle Training is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which Hugh J O'Boyle Training has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the organisation's progress on the areas for improvement.

8.2 The main strengths are the:

- good quality of the directed training sessions observed during the inspection;
- effective induction programme for trainees and apprentices;
- strong pastoral care for most of the trainees;
- good employer links and the quality of the work-based training for most of the trainees and apprentices;
- well-planned careers education, information, advice and guidance programme; and
- excellent success rates across all strands of the provision.

8.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- need to develop a coherent programme of personal and social education for all of the trainees on the Training for Success programme;
- quality of the work-placements for a minority of the trainees on the Training for Success programme; and
- need to ensure that all of the additional qualifications provided to trainees on the Training for Success programme match the skills needs in this professional and technical area.

Performance Level	Total Number of Trainees/Apprentices
Good	15

9. CHILDREN'S CARE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

9.1 In children's care learning and development, the quality of the training provided by Hugh J O'Boyle Training is very good. The organisation is meeting very effectively the training and pastoral needs of the learners and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

9.2 The main strengths are the:

- very good quality of the directed training and the good opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to gain additional qualifications;

- very good support provided for the trainees and apprentices by all of the staff and the good progress made by them in their learning, particularly in the development of their practical skills in working with children and in their written work;
- good quality of most of the work placements and the good match between the directed and workplace training;
- good links with employers and their well-developed involvement in the review and monitoring of the progress made by the trainees and apprentices; and
- excellent average success and progression rates across all programmes at 100% and 91% respectively.

9.3 The main area for improvement is:

- the modest retention rates across all the Training for Success programmes.

Performance Level	Total Number of Trainees/Apprentices
Very Good	24

10. ESSENTIAL SKILLS

10.1 In the essential skills the quality of training provided by Hugh J O'Boyle Training is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which Hugh J O'Boyle Training has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the organisation's progress on the areas for improvement.

10.2 The main strengths are the:

- good planning for the delivery and development of the trainees' and apprentices' essential skills of literacy and numeracy;
- good use of the outcomes of the initial assessment process to address the individual learning needs of the trainees and apprentices;
- good start to the effective vocational contextualisation of the essential skills learning;
- good standards of work produced by most trainees and apprentices;
- excellent success rates at 100% for those who are retained in both literacy and numeracy; and
- opportunities for trainees and apprentices to achieve beyond the minimum requirement of the framework.

10.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- modest retention rates; and
- embedding of the development of the trainees' spoken communication skills within a more coherent programme of personal and social development.

Performance Level	Total Number of Trainees/Apprentices
Good	Literacy : 36 Numeracy: 38

11. RETAIL

11.1 In retail, the quality of the training provided by Hugh J'O Boyle Training is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which Hugh J O'Boyle Training has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the organisation's progress on the areas for improvement.

11.2 The main strengths are the:

- good quality of the workplace training for most of the trainees and apprentices;
- good standards of work displayed by most of the trainees and apprentices;
- excellent success rates across the programmes; and
- good level of pastoral care and support for the trainees and apprentices.

11.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- modest retention rates; and
- need to develop a range of learning activities, in the directed training sessions, that target and enhance more effectively the trainees' and apprentices' ICT and independent learning skills.

Performance Level	Total Number of Trainees/Apprentices
Good	18

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by Hugh J O'Boyle Training is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which Hugh J O'Boyle Training has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor Hugh J O'Boyle Training's progress on the areas for improvement.

13. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

13.1 Hugh J O'Boyle Training needs to revise its annual improvement plan to take account of the following key priorities:

- the further development of a coherent programme of personal and social education for all of the trainees on the Training for Success programme; and
- the further improvement in the retention rate across all programmes.

APPENDIX**OVERALL SUMMARY TABLE 2008-2011**

Programme	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate %	Success Rate %	Progressed to FE/other training	Progressed to relevant employment
Personal Development/Skills for Your Life	20	40%	100%	5	0
Skills for Work	115	57%	100%	23	1
Pre-Apprentice (Level 2) Programme Led Apprenticeship	33	70%	100%	0	4
Level 2 Apprenticeship	43	72%	100%	3	21
Overall totals	211	60%	100%	31	26

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