



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success Provision in
Impact Training (NI) Limited

Report of an Inspection in
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Providing Inspection Services for

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Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Contents

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Overall finding	1
3. Key findings of the inspection	2
4. Conclusion	6
5. Professional and Technical Reports	6
6. Inspection method and evidence base	16
7. Information about Impact Training	17
8. Quantitative terms used by the ETI	18

1. Context

Impact Training Limited is a community based, not for profit, training organisation established in 1978. The organisation is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) to provide professional and technical training under the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. At the time of the inspection, the organisation was providing training under the Training for Success programme in administration, children's care learning and development (CCLD), engineering, hospitality and catering, information technology (IT) users, retail, stores and warehousing and wood occupations¹. The provision under the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has declined significantly over recent years, and there are no apprentices currently registered on the programme.

Impact Training operates from two sites; its headquarters and main site, which is located on Lanark Way in Belfast, and a second site which is situated on the Shankill Road in Belfast. The organisation currently employs 23 staff, including 14 tutors and a management team of five staff; comprising a general manager, an assistant manager, a business development manager, a training co-ordinator and an operations co-ordinator. The managers report to the Management Committee, whose members reflect well the business, educational and community needs of the area and are drawn from the local community.

Almost all of Impact Training's trainees are recruited from the six Greater Shankill wards. Based on the Noble Indicators of multiple deprivation measure, all of these wards are in the top 15% of the most deprived in Northern Ireland (NI), and four of them are in the top ten.

At the time of the inspection, there were 134 trainees registered on the Training for Success programme; 23 were on the Skills for your Life strand, 56 were on the Skills for Work level 1 strand and a further 42 were registered on the level 2 strand. The remaining 13 trainees were registered on the legacy Training for Success provision².

Most of the trainees commence their training programmes with low levels of educational attainment. Based on the data provided by Impact Training, 46% of the trainees hold no prior formal qualifications on entry to the programme. Only 33% of the trainees entered the programme with four or more General Certificate Secondary Education (GCSE) or equivalent qualifications, at grades A* to G. The organisation reports that many of the young people who register with them have a range of barriers to learning; 17% have additional learning needs and a further 25% have personal and social development needs.

2. Overall Finding

Overall, the quality of training provided by Impact Training is good.

Overall Effectiveness	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Quality of Provision for Learning	Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

¹ At the time of the inspection the number of trainees registered in Hospitality and Catering and in Administration was too low to include. The number of trainees registered in Stores and Warehousing was also too low to include as a professional and technical area; therefore Retail; Stores and Warehousing were inspected together.

² The Legacy Training for Success programme was introduced in 2007 and was superseded by the Training for Success 2013 programme.

Professional and Technical Area Performance Levels	
Children's Care and Learning Development	Good
Distribution, Storage and Retail	Good
Engineering	Satisfactory
Essential Skills	Very Good
Information Technology (IT) Users	Good
Wood Occupations	Very Good

What does Impact Training need to do to bring about further improvement?

- Improve the retention rates across all strands of the Training for Success programme;
- further develop employer engagement at a strategic level to inform curriculum planning; and
- develop the scope of work related learning; including the use of guest speakers and industry visits to enhance the trainees' knowledge and understanding of relevant career pathways.

3. Key Findings of the Inspection

3.1 Achievements and standards are good.

Achievements and standards range from very good to satisfactory but are mostly good. They are very good in essential skills and wood occupations, good in children's' care learning and development, IT users, retail; stores and warehousing, and satisfactory in engineering. The trainees are increasingly developing their occupational skills in the directed training sessions and in the workplace.

There is a highly supportive ethos in the organisation and the tutors and managers set high expectations with regard to the trainees' engagement in learning, behaviour and achievement. Attendance at directed training and in the workplace is well-monitored and is mostly good. Most of the trainees are well motivated and are keen to progress in their learning. The trainees report that they feel well supported by the staff and their employers. Almost all of the tutors and employers report noticeable improvements in the trainees' confidence and self-esteem as they progress through their training.

Most of the trainees develop an appropriate range of good or better occupational skills. The occupational standards of work in their portfolios and in the workplace, and the quality of their written work within the professional and technical areas are mostly good. Almost all of them demonstrate increasing levels of confidence in their spoken communication and in their interactions with tutors, employers and others in the workplace, including customers.

The majority of the trainees make significant progress in their literacy and numeracy skills from a low level of competency. The standards of the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills range from good to very good and are mostly good. The quality of their written work within the professional and technical and essential skills portfolios is mostly good or better.

At the time of the inspection a majority (52%) of the trainees were in a work-placement. While the organisation works hard to identify appropriate work-placements, more needs to be done to source further suitable work-placement experiences for the trainees. The tutors monitor closely the trainees' progress in the workplace and additional support is provided in order to encourage and motivate the trainees to sustain and commit to their training. Through the work-placement experiences, most of the trainees develop and apply good professional and technical skills and enhance their personal life and employability skills; including teamwork and communicating with others. The quality of the workplace training is consistently good or better for the trainees visited during the inspection. Employers and the local community are supportive of Impact Training. For example, the organisation has developed a key strategic partnership with a local retail employer to support and energise the delivery of the stores and warehousing provision.

Over the last four years, based on the information supplied by Impact Training the average retention on the Training for Success programme is satisfactory at 59% and 86% of those who stay on the programme achieve their target qualification. The average retention rate on the Skills for Your Life strand of Training for Success is 60%, and all who stay achieve their target qualification. Over the past four years, the average retention rate on the Skills for Work level 1 strand is satisfactory at 59% and almost all (96%) of those who stay achieve. The average retention rate on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand is inadequate at 58%, and 86% of those who stay complete their training. The average progression rates across the strands of the programme are very good. Most (86%) of the trainees who complete their training progress to further education, training or employment.

Over the last four years, the average retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme was very good at 88%, and all (100%) of the apprentices achieved their full training frameworks.

Over the last four years, the average achievement rates in the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology have been outstanding at an average of 98%, and almost all who stay achieve their essential skills. Significantly, almost half of the trainees are currently working towards the essential skills at a level higher than that required by their framework, with 52% working towards a level 2 in literacy, 50% a level 2 in numeracy and 42% a level 2 in information and communication technology (ICT).

3.2 The Quality of the Provision for Learning is good.

Impact Training provides a sufficiently broad range of training programmes that meet well the needs and career pathways of the trainees. A significant strength of this provision is the strong commitment of the management and staff, at all levels, to provide a Science Technology Education and Mathematics (STEM) related engineering training provision for young people progressing from local post-primary schools. At the time of the inspection the organisation had made a strategic decision, reflecting a number of operational considerations, not to recruit to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme and to strengthen their focus on the Training for Success provision. The legacy ApprenticeshipsNI provision had predominantly been in hospitality and catering.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning ranges from very good to satisfactory, and is good overall with most (76%) of the sessions being good or better. There is an appropriate focus on the development of professional and technical, personal, social and life-skills, and essential skills. Most of the tutors demonstrate a clear commitment to the trainees' learning. The very good sessions were characterised by effective planning and the use of a range of suitably contextualised activities, and integrated information and learning technologies (ILT) to engage and motivate the trainees. In the less effective practice, the trainees are not applying and developing the breadth of their occupational skills.

For those trainees in work-placements, the quality of work-based learning is good and it enables them to develop effectively their personal, professional and technical skills. The programmes meet well the individual needs of most of the trainees. A strength of the organisation is the well established links with a number of local employers to support the trainees' work readiness skills.

The trainees benefit from a comprehensive induction programme which is effectively supported through robust initial assessment processes. These are used well to plan for the trainees' learning. The induction programme has been successful in raising the trainees' awareness of careers support and the importance of developing their social skills in readiness for their work-placement and future employment.

The senior management and staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to the pastoral care of the trainees and have developed appropriate policies and procedures to support them. The quality of the pastoral care provided for the trainees is very good and is a strength of the organisation. There is a learner-centred focus, a highly inclusive ethos and commitment to the trainees' care and wellbeing across the organisation. The trainees benefit from very good additional learning support arrangements. They have good access to an appropriate range of support services, including the Cedar Foundation and sign-posting to other services, such as counselling services. The organisation has excellent links with the parents and carers of the trainees; which strengthens the support they receive and helps them to commit to their training.

The quality of the careers, education, information advice and guidance is good. The organisation makes effective use of the Department's Careers Service to provide impartial advice and guidance, and appropriate procedures are in place for involving parents and carers in decisions relating to the trainees' choices. The trainees have regular timetabled employability sessions and those approaching the end of their training have timetabled progression planning sessions. In the employability sessions, the tutor makes good use of the trainees' professional and technical experience and their placement to provide a relevant context to develop their wider employability skills. More use could be made of former trainees who have successfully progressed from Impact Training as role models, to motivate and raise the aspirations of the current trainees. The progression planning sessions focus appropriately on the next step and on progression opportunities, job-search and interview skills. The Job Assist advisors³ provide a valuable input to this process. There is an appropriate range of industrial visits and speakers from a range of industries including engineering and childcare employers, however the professional and technical tutors need to further enhance these opportunities by making more use of site-visits and visiting speakers from their sector so that the trainees are better informed about all of their progression and employment options. The local further education college is invited in to talk about progression opportunities, and some of the trainees who are interested are taken to visit the college. Through this link, more needs to be done to ensure the trainees have a better understanding of the pathways in their sector to encourage more of them to consider progressing to level 3 programmes or to employment.

The planning and delivery of the personal development programme is very good. All of the trainees have access to a broad range of personal development activities. The personal development tutors have a youth work background and are very effective in engaging the young people. The tutors provide effective mentoring to trainees who are identified as needing additional support. A good range of strategies is used effectively to engage the

³ The Job Assist advisors are based in the Job Assist Centre, as part of the Greater Shankill support for those seeking employment opportunities in the local area.

trainees including; the effective use of ILT, active learning and group work. There are however, opportunities to better consolidate the trainees' literacy skills in their personal development portfolios. The trainees have significant opportunities to participate in residential and other activities including visits to museums, the City Hall and other parts of Belfast which increases their confidence and willingness to travel beyond their local area to seek work-placements and employment. The trainees are involved in appropriate recreational activities including the football team which develops their self-confidence, teamwork and provides cross-community opportunities to engage with others. The organisation also has links with a driving school that provides subsidised driving lessons to the trainees and a highly effective road safety event was organised that required trainee participation and increased their awareness of keeping themselves and others safe. In addition, the trainees can avail of regular alternative therapies sessions that are very popular and the trainees report they are very beneficial for their therapeutic effect that helps them to control their emotions and focus better on their learning. The organisation also provides a drop-in facility for the trainees with supportive interventions from a range of services including the Forum for Action on Substance Abuse (FASA), and a registered nurse. The trainees report that they have benefitted significantly from the range of personal development activities and services.

The quality of the personal training planning process is mostly good. The personal training plans are used very well by the staff to capture the prior achievements of the trainees, and to record the outcomes of diagnostic assessment. Progress reviews are specific and targets are progressive and ensure that the trainees make progress in their learning. The training plans are enhanced by the tracking system which is used to good effect to monitor and track the trainees' personal and social development. Consideration should be given to developing the reviews further to include recording the progress made by the trainees in developing the skills and attributes necessary to obtain and sustain work-placements.

3.3 Leadership and Management is very good.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good. The senior managers are supported very well by the management committee which is dedicated to the work of the organisation. There is a high level of scrutiny undertaken by the management committee and the accountability and reporting processes are robust.

The organisation is well-managed by the general manager and the training co-ordinator, who are supported by a team of motivated tutors and support staff. There are effective channels of communication between staff at all levels and regular meetings take place to share information. The roles and responsibilities of the managers and staff are mostly well defined. Across the professional and technical areas and essential skills the leadership and management is good or better. The assessors and tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced, and committed to their work and to enhancing the life chances and experiences of all of the trainees.

Impact Training has demonstrated a commitment to raising the quality of the teaching, training and learning and the development of the tutors' pedagogic practice. Most of the tutors have good opportunities to undertake continuous professional development, which has an appropriate focus on developing their pedagogic practice and is supplemented by a cycle of directed training observations, which are used to good effect to identify good practice and areas for improvement. The evaluations of the quality of the teaching, training and learning, however, for a small number of observations are overly positive and do not provide the tutors with sufficient feedback to help them improve.

The organisation has developed a range of well-developed links with employers to support placement activity and the development of trainees' professional and technical skills. However there is a need to further develop employer engagement at a strategic level to inform curriculum planning; particularly in relation to the engineering and IT users provision, and to ensure the curriculum is better matched to the needs of industry and future employment opportunities for the trainees.

Communication with the organisation's wider stakeholders is highly effective and they have developed cohesive community links and partnerships. The organisation works collaboratively with other training providers and centres across Belfast to improve community relations and to help the trainees develop a better understanding of others. For example, the development of shared educational and recreational activities across the participating organisations; this includes a football league and the Youth Build programme. These activities provide innovative opportunities to maximise the trainees' personal development and team building experiences. The organisation also works across the community and the region to promote good relations and citizenship, to increase the trainees' employability skills through sharing resources to support and enhance the quality of teaching, training and learning in the interests of all learners across the city.

The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are good. At a strategic level, management information is collated and analysed regularly and is used effectively to plan for improvement. The organisation has identified accurately key areas for improvement and has put in place appropriate plans to address these areas. While measurable targets for improvement are set, the actions required to address them need to be more clearly defined.

The quality of the accommodation and learning resources is mostly good and there is effective use of ILT in most of the professional and technical areas to enhance the quality of teaching, training and learning. Overall, the quality of the classrooms and other learning resources are conducive to effective learning and teaching. Plans are in place and funding secured for future investment in the accommodation and physical resources.

The arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply comprehensively with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. The organisation's code of conduct and policy is in line with current legislation and appropriate policies are signposted for learners during induction. The information regarding the designated safeguarding staff is displayed prominently in the organisation. Reporting arrangements are clear and are known to staff, and shared with the trainees and their parents and carers.

4. Conclusion

Overall the quality of education and training provided by Impact Training is good.

5. Professional and Technical Reports

5.1 Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD)

Key findings

In CCLD the quality of training provided by Impact Training is good.

Context

At the time of the inspection, there were 21 trainees registered on the Training for Success programmes: eight trainees on the Skills for Your Life strand; eight on the Skills for Work Level 1 strand; and five on the Skills for Work level 2 strand. During the inspection 11(53%) of the trainees were in work-placements; arrangements have been made for a further seven trainees to commence work-placements in the next few weeks; and the remaining three trainees are waiting for AccessNI checks.

The achievements and standards are good.

During the direct training sessions the trainees are well behaved and respectful of the tutor. The levels of attendance and time-keeping are very good. Almost all of the trainees on the programme engage well in classroom activities, display good levels of participation, and most provide good oral responses to questions. The majority of the trainees present with low levels of written skills and the standards of work in portfolios ranges from satisfactory to good, and are mostly satisfactory. Stronger links need to be developed between CCLD and essential skills to support the trainees to provide more extended written responses and to demonstrate more clearly their understanding of good practice across all aspects of children's care, learning and development. Almost all of the trainees are receiving good or better opportunities to develop their skills in the workplace and they are making good progress in line with their abilities. In the most effective practice, the workplace supervisors know the trainees well and plan a structured and progressive programme which helps develop the skills, confidence and self-esteem of the trainees. One important area of development for all of the trainees is their knowledge of, and skills in, how they can use descriptive and mathematical language to support and enhance children's learning and development in a range of play activities and in the provision of snacks. All of the trainees visited report that they feel very well supported by their workplace supervisors and by the tutors. All of the workplace supervisors were very positive about the level of contact and communication with staff from Impact.

The average retention rate is satisfactory (65%); the average achievement rate is very good (88%); and the average progression rate to further education, training or employment is very good (86%).

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

The tutor knows the trainees well, is aware of their individual needs, and is committed to their learning, care and welfare. The quality of the training sessions observed ranged from satisfactory to good, and are mostly good. Lessons are planned well and an appropriate range of active teaching and learning approaches are used such as group work, word storms, practical activities, and the effective use of ILT. Planning for the delivery of the programme is detailed and thorough but often with too much emphasis on the completion of discrete tasks. There is a need to develop stronger links between underpinning theory and its application in practice, for example, to ensure that the trainees are aware of and understand the Safeguarding policy and procedures in their work-placements. There was a good emphasis on the correct spelling of key words during the sessions observed and in the marking of the written work of the trainees. The provision for careers information, advice and guidance is good with an appropriate emphasis on developing the wider employability knowledge, understanding and skills of the trainees. There is a need, however, to develop further the programme of guest speakers and external visits to further enhance the trainees' knowledge and awareness of the wider careers opportunities within the sector.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The leadership and management of all aspects of the CCLD provision is effective. The tutor is appropriately qualified and suitably experienced. There is a positive ethos across the organisation, based on very good working relationships at all levels, and strong pastoral support. Monitoring and review processes are regular and thorough. There has been an appropriate focus over the last few years on the development of the tutor's pedagogic skills. It is now timely to shift the focus to continuing professional development in relation to professional and specialist updates on strategic developments, new practice and emerging issues in CCLD. This would help to ensure continued high quality learning experiences for the trainees. In addition, the organisation needs to invest in a range of CCLD resources to support the tutor in their training role.

The self-evaluation process for CCLD is good although there is a need to strengthen the quality improvement planning processes, to ensure that they capture more fully the overall actions for change and improvement in CCLD. Particularly in relation to improving retention, the quality of teaching, training and learning, and the further integration of the essential skills and CCLD provision.

5.2 Engineering

Mechanical and manufacturing engineering

Key findings

In mechanical and manufacturing engineering the training provided by Impact Training is satisfactory.

Context

Over the last four years, recruitment levels have declined slightly. At the time of the inspection, 27 trainees were registered on Training for Success strands in performing engineering operations. Seven (26%) of them were registered on Skills for your Life; six (22%) on Skills for Work level 1; and 14 (52%) on Skills for Work level 2. Only a minority (11%) of the trainees were in work-placements.

The achievements and standards are satisfactory.

The overall standard of the trainees' work is mostly satisfactory. While most of them develop good welding and flame-cutting skills during directed training, they are not applying and developing further their occupational skills in a wider context, including in a workplace setting. Most of the trainees have a sound understanding of the key principles relating to engineering fabrication and welding technology. In directed training, for example, they are able to set-up metal inert gas (MIG) welders to the correct settings and weld together steel plates to an acceptable standard. The quality of the trainees' practical assessment portfolios is mostly good. The engineering drawings are neat, labelled correctly, and the associated notes are appropriately succinct and mostly free from spelling and punctuation errors. The majority of the trainees develop positive working relationships with their tutors and peers, and increasingly are able to take greater responsibility for their own learning. A minority of them, however, have inconsistent patterns of attendance and struggle to develop good enough employability skills to sustain a work-placement.

Over the last four years, the majority (58%) of the trainees were retained, and most (87%) of those who remain achieve. All of the trainees who successfully complete level 1 programmes progress to level 2, and the majority (68%) of those who successfully complete level 2 progress to employment. None of the level 2 trainees progressed to higher training or education programmes.

The quality of the provision is satisfactory.

While the trainees are provided with a well-balanced programme of practical skills training and theory sessions, the range of occupational units offered is too narrow. Currently, the trainees undertake practical skills training only in welding and flame-cutting of mild steel plate. As a result, the trainees do not develop a sufficiently broad range of engineering skills to prepare them for engineering-related employment opportunities available locally or in the greater Belfast area. The quality of the directed training ranges from satisfactory to good and is mostly satisfactory. The planning for the trainees' learning is not sufficiently detailed and appropriately sequenced. Consequently, the range of teaching and learning strategies deployed is too narrow and formative assessment strategies are not applied rigorously enough.

The quality of the trainees' personal training plans is mostly good; they capture well prior achievements and set clear targets aligned well to the ability of the trainees. Monitoring and reviewing is carried out regularly, reflecting accurately the trainees' achievements. While the recently upgraded tracking system records and presents clearly the trainees' achievements, progress is not measured well enough against their time on the programme. The quality of the pastoral support provided for the trainees is very good; the tutors are effective in developing an excellent rapport with the trainees and provide high levels of support and encouragement. It is a concern, however, that only a minority of the trainees are able to secure and sustain a suitable work-placement. Consequently, too few of the level 2 trainees are able to demonstrate their occupational competences in a workplace setting.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

A significant strength of this professional and technical area is the strong commitment of the management and staff, at all levels, to provide a STEM related engineering training provision for young people progressing from local post-primary schools, aligned to their interests and aptitude. Notably, there is a team of highly dedicated, hard-working and appropriately qualified tutors who are committed to continuous improvement, particularly to meeting better the diverse and often challenging needs of the trainees. In light of the imminent and necessary refurbishment of the engineering facilities, planning work has just begun to refresh the curriculum and upgrade the range of specialist training resources. A recently appointed additional tutor has significantly contributed to improving the quality of the provision and enhances the skill profile of the curriculum team. Internal quality assurance arrangements are applied consistently to good effect. The regular quality compliance sampling of the trainees' work and lesson observations do much to stimulate professional debate and inform quality improvement planning. A feature of the outworking of these processes is the strong focus on wearing Impact branded work wear and safety equipment, and the introduction of ILT to enhance teaching and learning.

While the organisation works hard at developing links with local employers to secure suitable work-placements, more needs to be done to establish strategic links and partnerships with larger employers and other educational providers, to create suitable progression pathways for the trainees. In particular, there is insufficient engagement with key engineering employers and the local further education college to draw on their experience and expertise to inspire and support the trainees to progress to apprenticeships or further education.

5.3 Essential Skills

Context

A high proportion of the trainees have essential skill needs on entry to their training programmes. At the time of the inspection, 103 were undertaking training in literacy, 101 in numeracy and 113 in ICT.

The quality of the achievements and standards is very good

The standards of behaviour, punctuality and attendance in the essential skills sessions are mostly good. The trainees' levels of motivation are also mostly good and the majority of them appreciate the opportunity to achieve a recognised qualification in communication, application of number and ICT. Many of the trainees present with significant barriers to learning. The organisation, however, works hard to create a climate for achievement and almost all of the trainees respond very well to the organisation's strong ethos of inclusion and pastoral care. There is clear evidence that, for most, their learning dispositions become more positive over time and almost half of the current trainees are targeting level 2 qualifications in communication, application of number and ICT. Most of the trainees achieve good standards of oral communication skills and can discuss their programme of study and their experiences in the workplace with relative confidence. They can also apply their numeracy skills to their workplace tasks with increasing competence. There is a need, however, to improve further the speaking and listening competencies of a minority of the trainees, particularly in children's care learning and development, so that they can engage more effectively in their learning activities and in their workplace settings. The trainees' skills in writing, and their capacity to apply their learning in the essential skills to support their written work, particularly their extended writing, in their professional and technical areas, is variable and needs further consolidation. The standards of the trainees' summative work in communication, application of number and ICT are mostly very good. Their formative work is mostly well presented and shows progressive improvement over time. Given the low entry profile, the standards achieved in the essential skills are mostly very good. All of the trainees who complete their training achieve the essential skills required by their framework and to date a minority of trainees have achieved the essential skills at a level above their framework.

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

In all of the directed training sessions the tutors work very hard to support the trainees, to engage them effectively in their learning and to progress them within and across the essential skills levels. All of the tutors have a very good rapport with the trainees and almost all respond well to the supportive relationships based on mutual respect. The essential skills tutors work well as a team and have put appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment processes in place which are mostly used well to inform planning.

Overall, the quality of teaching, training and learning ranged from very good to good, and was mostly good. In the more effective sessions, the tutors use a good range of teaching, training and learning approaches, including one-to-one teaching strategies to respond to the trainees' individual learning needs; opportunities for peer learning were also well embedded in the better sessions. In these sessions, the pace of learning was fast and the trainees were engaged well in their learning through a stimulating variety of activities. On occasions, however, there were limited opportunities for active learning and too much emphasis on task completion.

Whilst the overarching planning was mostly good, more needs to be done, at a whole organisation level, to develop further opportunities to transfer and to embed the essential skills more effectively within the range of professional and technical areas, the personal development, and the workplace aspects of the programme.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The overall planning for the implementation of the essential skills at leadership and management level is very good. The managers have invested substantially in the essential skills provision and support trainees to progress across more than one level of the essential skills during their programme. This provides effective opportunities for the consolidation and development of the essential skills. Trainees benefit from the opportunity to be nominated by tutors and managers for external awards and have gained recent success, and recognition, in external competitions, for their achievements.

The leaders, managers and tutors recognise the importance of the essential skills and set high expectations for the trainees. Within the essential skills provision, the managers are developing further the tracking system for the essential skills. The data generated provides a good opportunity to match distance travelled, against entry profile, and planning is in place to use this data to inform the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes

The timetabling arrangements, and the additional support, provided for the trainees are informed effectively by well embedded initial and diagnostic assessment processes. There are very good channels of communication in place to monitor the trainees' progress and there is a range of timely, strategic interventions in place to address barriers to progression. All of the essential skills staff are appropriately qualified and are supported well by an experienced essential skills co-ordinator. There is a cycle of tutor observations in place and the outcomes of which are collated to inform planning for continuing professional development.

5.4 Information Technology (ITQ) IT Users

Key findings

In IT Users, the quality of training provided by Impact Training is good.

Context

At the time of the inspection, 15 trainees were registered on the Training for Success programme. One trainee was registered on the Skills for Your life strand, four on the Skills for Work level 1 strand, with the remainder on the Skills for Work level 2/Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand. At the time of the inspection, eleven (73%) of the trainees had a work-placement. All of the remaining trainees previously had work-placements.

The achievements and standards are good.

Most of the trainees work well in the directed training sessions observed and produce work aligned with their ability levels. Attendance at directed training is mostly good, and the trainees are making good progress in their professional and technical units. The trainees are developing a broad range of skills in the use of business administration software applications in their assessed work. The level 2 trainees have a good knowledge and understanding of important issues about the secure use of IT systems in the workplace. The level 1 trainees display a sound understanding of IT systems and applications to support

their work. The trainees' oral skills in directed training sessions, however, are variable; they are mostly reticent in their responses. Those trainees in work-placements engage well with their colleagues and customers where they are developing relevant employability skills. The quality of their files is mostly good; they have good opportunities to redraft their work, and marking for improvement is implemented well. While effective use is made of a wide range of assignment briefs to assess underpinning knowledge and skills there is insufficient use of product evidence from the workplace. Although the trainees receive well considered advice and guidance on a range of progression pathways, their knowledge and understanding of careers opportunities in the IT sector are underdeveloped.

Outcomes over the past four years have been consistently strong across each strand of the Training for Success programme. The average retention rate is very good at 81%, and the average achievement rate is outstanding at 97%. Although the average progression rate is also strong at 88%, very few trainees have progressed to ApprenticeshipsNI programmes.

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.

The quality of the directed training sessions is satisfactory. The trainees receive effective one-to-one support from the tutor and they are mostly well-engaged in their learning, particularly in the well-planned briefing and consolidation sessions away from their computers. There is however, insufficient use of differentiated learning strategies, to stretch and challenge the more able trainees in their learning. Overall, the use of online learning and electronic assessment platforms to enhance the quality of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Although the trainees undertake a relevant induction programme, they have too few opportunities to develop a knowledge and understanding of the industry through guest speakers, and external visits to leading IT companies.

Most of the trainees in work-placements are in IT related settings that match well the requirements of their training frameworks. A minority of these trainees, for example, are provided with good opportunities to undertake additional training in the workplace to enhance further their IT skills.

The quality of the personal training planning process is good. They capture well the prior achievements of the trainees and the progress reviews are implemented effectively. The employers are well informed about the progress of the trainees in their professional and technical units.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The programme is co-ordinated effectively by the programme tutor who is well-experienced in the delivery of IT programmes. It is noteworthy that just under three-quarters of the trainees are in work-placements. The progress of the trainees is tracked effectively by the tutor. The trainees on the Skills for Work level 1 strand have good opportunities to develop professional and technical skills beyond the requirements of their training frameworks. The curriculum content on the level 2 strand, however, does not provide the trainees with sufficient opportunities to develop wider IT skills in multi-media, computer App design or network configuration to extend their career progression opportunities. More work is needed to enhance strategic links with sectoral bodies, employers and colleges of further education to inform curriculum planning.

Self-evaluation is well-implemented, and it has helped identify important areas for improvement, including the use of electronic portfolios. The effectiveness of internal verification arrangements, however, is in need of improvement, particularly in the use of regular standardisation meetings. The quality of the accommodation and computer hardware and software resources used to support the delivery of the programme is mostly good.

5.5 Retail; Stores and Warehousing

Key findings

In retail; stores and warehousing, the quality of training provided by Impact Training is good.

Context

Training for Success programmes are offered in retail and stores and warehousing at levels 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, 20 trainees were registered on retail, three were registered on the Skills for Your Life strand, nine on the Skills for Work level 1 strand and eight on the Skills for Work level 2 strand. Six trainees were registered on the stores and warehousing Skills for Work, four on the Level 1 strand and two on the level 2 strand. 68% of the retail trainees and 17% of the stores and warehousing trainees were on workplacement at the time of the inspection.

The achievements and standards are good

Most of the trainees are making good progress and are achieving in line with their prior attainment. The tutors work hard to engage the trainees in their learning and to motivate them to progress, for example the recent introduction of the pilot Co-operative Support Programme⁴ which has been developed to facilitate all of the stores and warehousing trainees to develop practical warehousing skills within a real industry environment. Trainees attend the Co-operative store and warehouse one day per week for training over an eight week period, with their tutor and concurrently receive mentorship from the store manager. This provides opportunities for all of the stores and warehousing trainees and a significant minority of the retail trainees to demonstrate and gain leadership skills while in a commercial training environment.

There are good opportunities during directed training sessions to develop language skills through discussion and debate. A majority of the trainees display good or better oral communication skills while a minority are reticent in their verbal responses. Employers report that many of the trainees on placement have increased their confidence and are demonstrating improving occupational skills at a good pace. However, there are limited opportunities within the assessment portfolios to extend the quality of the trainees' written work and develop their spelling and grammar.

Over the last four years, 52% of the trainees in retail complete their training programmes, and all of them achieve their full framework. The outcomes in stores and warehousing, in contrast are low, with only 32% completing their training programmes. Most (88%) who complete achieve their full framework. Progression is very good for almost all trainees.

The quality of the provision for learning is good

⁴ The Co-operative Support Programme is a pilot programme developed in partnership with the local Co-operative stores and warehousing facilities in the Greater Shankill area.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning in the directed training observed is good or better, and is mostly good. In the very good sessions there is effective planning to support the learning, including the use of a broad range of relevant ILT and active learning approaches that enhance the trainees' learning experiences. In the practice observed requiring further development; the differentiation approaches are not evident in the written planning.

The tutors have a good rapport with the trainees and provide them with good levels of support. The tutors work hard to raise the aspirations of the trainees, many of whom present with barriers to their learning and challenging behaviour. The quality of the personal training plans and reviews are good with clear realistic targets that are monitored and tracked well. The trainees are aware of their progress and are involved in tracking their own performance. The reviews could be further improved by increasing the employer involvement. Careers education, information and guidance is delivered effectively with good opportunities to avail of personal career planning. The use of occupationally relevant guest speakers and industry visits is underdeveloped. A more planned and structured programme of activities would benefit the trainees' learning.

The placements secured across retail, stores and warehousing are appropriate and well suited to the needs of the individual trainees. The trainees with work-placements have good opportunities to access relevant work-related learning and to develop their employability skills. The recent introduction of the programme run in conjunction with, and at the premises of, the Co-operative store is providing a real working environment for retail, stores and warehousing trainees to experience a commercial business environment and develop their employability and workplace skills and experience. However the retail, stores and warehousing trainees without a placement require a more structured programme to follow during the time spent in their directed training.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good

The leadership and management of the retail, stores and warehousing is strong, with an appropriate emphasis on continuous improvement and personal development for all of the trainees. The provision is co-ordinated effectively and the tutors have established effective channels of communication with a range of stakeholders, including local retail, stores and warehousing employers. Feedback from trainees, employers and staff is used appropriately to inform the quality assurance processes. The tutors are highly committed and have engaged in a wide range of continuing professional development activities. Leadership and management promote a consistent approach to positive behaviour in the training environment and in the workplace.

There are well-established links with employers who are highly supportive of Impact Training. Through these links the organisation has been able to establish a key partnership with a local retail business to provide an innovative and motivating learning environment to support the work-based learning and skills development of a significant minority of the retail trainees and all of the stores and warehousing trainees.

The physical environment provided for the trainees is conducive to learning, with appropriate resources available. An effective and robust tracking system is in place to monitor the progress of all trainees by tutors and management on a regular basis.

5.6 Wood Occupations

In wood occupations, the quality of training provided by Impact Training is very good.

Context

At the time of the inspection, 35 trainees were registered on the Training for Success programme. There were five trainees on the Skills for Your Life strand, 20 trainees on the Skills for Work level 1 strand, five on the Skills for Work level 2 and five on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strands. There were no apprentices currently registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

The achievements and standards are good.

The trainees display positive attitudes to learning and engage well in the directed training sessions; attendance and behaviour observed during the inspection was very good. The tutors support the trainees very effectively to help them reach their full potential. In the directed training sessions almost all of them demonstrate the ability to work well independently and in pairs; the level 1 trainees are being stretched and challenged to undertake higher level units and a small number are being encouraged to progress to the level 2 programme.

The standard of the trainees' occupational skills is mostly good. The trainees are making good progress in developing their occupational skills in the directed training sessions; the level 1 trainees are able to install a door latch and handles to a good standard and the level 2 trainees are developing their skills in hanging a door to set tolerances. Most of the trainees with a relevant work-placement are able to carry out a range of appropriate joinery tasks to a good standard and are developing well their employability skills.

The speaking and listening skills of most of the trainees are good; they are developing their self-confidence and their ability to communicate effectively with their peers and tutors, and with employers and customers in the work-place. The trainees' files and portfolios are well-presented and of an appropriate standard. The tutors integrate very well the development of numeracy skills within the learning experience, however, they need to support the trainees' to continue to develop their literacy skills by providing more opportunities for independent writing.

The overall retention rate on the Training for Success programmes is good (61%), almost all (90%) of the trainees who are retained achieve. The progression rate of the level 2 trainees to employment is very good (81%).

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning in directed training ranges from good to very good, and is mostly good. The key features of the very good sessions are; the supportive and inclusive ethos, the effective use of a wide range of ILT and active learning approaches that enhance the learning experience, the very good assessment for learning methods used, and the effective use of self, and peer-to-peer assessment. In the practice observed requiring further development; the differentiation approaches are not evident in the written planning, and questioning strategies are not well enough developed.

Nearly all of the trainees enter the organisation with very low qualifications, significant barriers to learning, and their levels of initiative, and basic work-readiness skills are significantly underdeveloped. While, at the time of the inspection, only a significant minority (49%) of the trainees were in a work-placement, most (80%) of the trainees have experienced at least one work-placement. The organisation has an appropriate focus on the development of the skills and attributes necessary for the trainees to sustain relevant work-placements through the provision of programmes to enhance their motivation and attitudes to work. The provision for the trainees not in a work-placement is very good; there is a range of extended project-based learning activities in place to support the occupational skills development of the trainees.

The trainees have good opportunities to explore alternative career options and pathways through access to guest speakers from industry and the public sector, and to attend careers fairs. There are, however, limited opportunities for trainees to participate on work-related learning activities to support their learning, such as industry visits and guest speakers.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The strategic management of the wood occupations provision is highly effective. For example, the management along with the course team recognise the need to increase the numbers of trainees in a work-placement and has established a very productive relationship with a large public body and is engaging with two large national construction companies to increase the number of relevant work experience opportunities for the trainees. The wood occupations provision is co-ordinated very well; there is an appropriate curriculum in place that meets effectively the learning and training needs of the trainees and there are appropriate quality assurance systems in place.

The self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are effective in identifying the key issues for improvement in the provision. Measureable targets for improvement are set, however, the actions needed to address them need to be more clearly defined. Communication with the employers is very good; they report that they are very well-informed of the content of the trainees' programme, issues are dealt with promptly and they are updated regularly on the progress the trainees are making in their programme.

The tutors are occupationally well qualified and experienced in the delivery of training programmes. The organisation has invested significantly in new tools and equipment and in technologies to support improvements in the teaching, training and learning, such as interactive whiteboards and response technology which are used to very good effect.

6. Inspection method and evidence base

The inspection focused on:

- the quality of the leadership and management of the organisation;
- the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the achievements and standards; and
- the quality of provision for training and learning.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in these three aspects of training supplier organisations, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Improving Quality: Raising Standards Work-based Learning* <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/improving-quality-raising-standards/improving-quality-raising-standards-iqrs-work-based-learning.htm>

A team of 8 inspectors observed a total of 33 directed training sessions. Inspectors visited 31 workplaces and trainees were interviewed in focus groups. The inspectors also held discussions with the management team, tutors and staff. In addition, inspectors examined samples of the trainees' work, schemes of work and lesson plans and trainees' personal training plans. The organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

The inspection also focused on the arrangements for care, support and guidance and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups. The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the trainees to complete a confidential online questionnaire prior to the inspection.

The returns from the trainees were mostly positive, with five written comments provided. The trainees who completed the questionnaire indicated that the tutors were supportive and that they felt well cared for in the organisation.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Trainees	134	106	79%	5

7. Information about Impact Training (NI) Limited

Current registrations by programme

Programme	Number of trainees and apprentices	% of total registrations
Training for Success	134	100%
ApprenticeshipsNI	-	-
Total	134	100%

Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Retail	20	15%
Stores & Warehousing	6	5%
Wood Occupations	35	26%
Engineering	27	20%
Children's Care Learning & Development (CCLD)	21	15%
Information Technology	15	11%
Hospitality & Catering	5	4%
Administration	5	4%

Qualifications of current apprentices on entry to their programme

Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme	Training for Success (%)
% of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	3%
% of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	12%
% learners with GCSE English and mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	6%
% of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	33%
% learners with no qualifications	46%

Note: All data was sourced from Impact Training at the time of the inspection.

8. Quantitative terms used by the ETI

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%

Performance levels

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

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of enrolments at week 4 of year one who completed their occupational training framework, measured over the full duration of their course.
Achievement	The percentage of trainees/apprentices who completed their occupational training framework and who fully achieved their framework qualification.
Progression	The percentage of successful completers who progressed to further/higher education/training or employment.

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