

# EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CALL 2 VISIT

European Social Fund provision in  
Derry Youth and Community Workshop

Learning North West

Report of a Call 2 Visit in April 2022



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



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## Context

Derry Youth and Community Workshop Limited is contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the Learning North West European Social Fund (ESF) project. This project is part-funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020 and DfE. The strategic aim of the Programme is to: combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity; and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. It is aligned to the European Union 2020 Strategy for Jobs and Growth.

In April 2022, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Call 2 visit to Derry Youth and Community Workshop Limited on behalf of DfE to evaluate the capacity of the project promoter to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision. The Call 2 visit was informed by the quality improvement plan which has been scrutinised by ETI.

## Views of participants

At the time of the Call 2 visit, 24 participants<sup>1</sup> were registered on the project.

Twenty-nine percent of the participants completed the online questionnaire. All of the respondents indicated that the project prepared them well for their next steps, whether that is finding a job or accessing further education or training; and that the organisation has provided clear guidance and rules around acceptable and unacceptable behaviours while learning in the organisation, in the workplace and online. The majority indicated that they have good access to the internet and ICT equipment at home and most of them have good digital skills to enable them to fully engage and participate in the online learning part of the programme.

ETI also met and spoke with a sample of participants. All noted the increased confidence and self-esteem that the project provided and which led to progression in life-skills, training and/or employment.

## Focus of the Call 2 Visit

The Call 2 visit focused on evaluating the extent to which the project promoter is able to demonstrate its capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for the Learning North West ESF project.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

Two of the key areas which the organisation has prioritised for improvement through its self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are to:

- put appropriate processes in place to identify the impact the project is having on supporting the participants to progress; and
- more effectively track and monitor the development of the participants' soft skills.

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<sup>1</sup> All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter.

## Key Findings

The Call 2 visit identified the following key findings.

- The curriculum provided for the participants is good; the provision includes a good range of relevant accredited and non-accredited training which is aligned well with the needs of the participants. The provision is focused on enhancing the quality of the participants' lives and improving their employability skills, through for example, personal development, essential skills and 'better off' calculations courses, as well as a range of online short courses such as food safety and first aid. The participants have good access to job search activities, including, where appropriate, interview skills training and curriculum vitae (CV) building. The curriculum is enhanced by a broad range of work-placements and job sampling opportunities that are matched well to the interests and capabilities of the participants and which provide them with good opportunities to experience and develop their work-readiness skills and to progress into employment.
- The learning, development and mentoring sessions observed were effective. During the mentoring sessions, for example, participants are afforded the opportunity to reflect on the progress made against their baseline position, with appropriate feedback and encouragement provided by tutors. The learning sessions were characterised by effective questioning, peer support, and active, purposeful learning. Resources for learning are contextualised to support learning and are differentiated to meet the wide range of learning needs and styles of the participants.
- Initial assessment approaches are effective in identifying the participants' gaps in learning and their barriers to progression to further education, training and employment. The information is used effectively to plan a tailored programme of learning and development that targets the participants' specific needs. While the progress reviews are effective and records are kept of actions required by participants and mentors, the project promoter has identified that there could be more effective tracking and monitoring of the development of the participants' soft skills. The organisation plans to introduce a new "distance travelled" measurement tool; it will be important that the organisation keeps its effectiveness under review to ensure that it accurately reflects the distance travelled by the participants and the positive impact the project is having on addressing the participants' barriers to learning and development.
- Over the four-year period, all of the outcomes on the project are positive; the overall target for recruitment has almost been met, and the targets for the progression of participants into employment or education and training have been exceeded. Almost all of the participants have been successfully retained on the project. With Call 2 closing, any participant who is exiting Call 2 and enrolling on Call 3 will be recorded with an outcome of into education or training<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> As per DfE European Social Fund Information Memo 09/22 – Performance monitoring – updating participant data.

- All of the staff are very well qualified and experienced in the delivery of community programmes. They report that they have very good continuing professional development opportunities to further enhance their roles and broaden their expertise; these have included mental health first aid and autism training, palliative care, community development and neuro-linguistic programming. It is a strength that all of the project mentors regularly attend information events and training around the arrangements for welfare and benefits. As a result, they are able to provide accurate and up-to-date advice and guidance on the transition from benefits, which is often cited as one of the biggest barriers to employment.
- The dedicated and committed mentors provide a person-centred, individualised care, guidance and support service that develops well the participants' capacity to understand, protect and sustain their mental health and wellbeing and promotes their social inclusion. In focus group meetings, the participants spoke highly of their learning experiences and the pastoral support provided by the mentors and the positive impact of the interventions in transforming their lives. At the onset of the pandemic, a range of online programmes was introduced to support the participants' health and wellbeing, including quizzes, cooking, and bingo. For those participants who were reluctant to engage online during the lockdowns, the mentors kept in contact by telephone, private social media groups, and garden gate visits, delivering care packages of food and materials so they could participate in the planned activities, such as cooking.
- There is effective and strategic leadership and management of the project. The organisation has a strong ethos of social inclusion and is committed to supporting the personal, social and work-related needs of participants with a range of barriers to learning. Since the previous inspection<sup>3</sup>, the areas for development have been progressed. An appropriate quality improvement planning process is in place. Well-established links with a good range of external support agencies, organisations, employers and the families are used well to support the wider needs of participants. There are also effective links and partnerships with social workers, jobs and benefits offices, autism and disability organisations to support recruitment to the project.

## Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants on the Learning North West ESF project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

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<sup>3</sup> [European Social Fund provision in Derry Youth and Community Workshop – Learning North West project \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://etini.gov.uk)

The project promoter, however, needs to:

- update the policies and procedures for child protection and safeguarding young people and adults at risk; and
- ensure that the Safeguarding Champion attends safeguarding training, as planned.

## Overall outcome

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, Derry Youth and Community Workshop Limited demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for the Learning North West ESF project.

# APPENDIX

## A. Call 2 Performance Data

European Social Fund – Learning North West	Over the four-year period <sup>4</sup>
Numbers of enrolments and % against target	135 (90%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	21 (111%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	38 (158%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	131 (97%)

## B. Methodology and evidence base

The arrangements for this face-to-face visit included: observation of three sessions of practice (face-to-face); speaking with a sample of participants (eleven) during their learning and development sessions and in a focus group meeting; discussions with key stakeholders (an employer and a parent); discussions with key staff (including the quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements); and, the opportunity for participants to complete a confidential questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised relevant data and documentation provided by the ESF project promoter.

ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the [ETI website](#).

## C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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%

<sup>4</sup> From April 2018 to December 2021.

## Overall outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the project promoter:

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx ESF project.

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for xx ESF project.

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx ESF project. ETI will continue to monitor how the project promoter brings about improvement and the Department may consider further action.

## Safeguarding outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the project promoter's arrangements for safeguarding the participants:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx ESF project reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx ESF project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to: ....

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx ESF project are unsatisfactory. <DN insert detail>.

ETI will return to the provider within six working weeks to monitor progress in addressing the unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding.



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