

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CALL 2 VISIT

European Social Fund provision in  
Derry Youth and Community Workshop Limited

Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS)  
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 Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) 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, 56 participants<sup>1</sup> were registered on the project.

Thirty percent of the participants completed the online questionnaire. All of the respondents indicated that the programme is well managed and that the face-to-face and online sessions are well taught and delivered. They also indicated that the programme is preparing them well for their next steps, whether that is finding a job or accessing further education or training. All of them indicated that they were well informed about staying safe and secure in the organisation and that they felt well supported and knew who to contact if they had a problem or concern.

ETI also spoke to a sample of participants. They were positive about the high levels of individualised advice, guidance and support offered. They valued the opportunities to gain qualifications, develop a curriculum vitae (CV), and undertake mock interviews. They reported that the programme had helped to build their confidence and self-esteem and supported them well when making job applications.

## **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 LEMIS North West ESF project.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

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

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

- identify more clearly 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.

## Key Findings

The Call 2 visit identified the following key findings.

- The curriculum provided for the participants is good. A well-planned programme of accredited and non-accredited training is delivered, either online or face-to-face, which includes a range of employability and personal development courses, essential skills provision, and an in-house caring programme with embedded first aid and palliative care units that guarantees the participants an interview with a number of local care providers. The curriculum is matched well to the participants' individual learning and development and progression needs, and is underpinned by effective tailored mentoring support. If required, the project promoter provides opportunities for participants to undertake training and achieve qualifications above level 1, in order to enhance further their chances of progressing. Curriculum delivery was adapted to fully online provision and continued for the participants throughout the lockdown periods. The learning and development and mentoring sessions observed were effective; they were characterised by high levels of support, advice and guidance, and the development of mutually respectful working relationships between the mentors and participants.
- Appropriate processes are in place to baseline, track and monitor the progress the participants are making on the project through an initial assessment, the development of individual action plans and the implementation of effective participant contact logs. Newly established processes have also been put in place to more effectively track and monitor the development of the participants' soft skills. There needs to be a better overall assessment of the distance travelled by the participants during their time on the project. The project promoter has identified the need to more clearly evaluate the positive impact the project is having on improving the life chances of the participants within the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes; for example, through the use of case studies or participant testimonials.
- Over the four-year period of the project, all of the outcomes on the project are positive; the overall target for recruitment 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; this has included training in mental health first aid, autism, 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.
- There is effective and strategic leadership and management of the project by the project promoter and the sub-contractor. Good working relationships exist among the project team who demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting the participants to progress. The areas for development identified in the inspection of March 2018<sup>3</sup> have been progressed. An appropriate quality improvement planning process is in place, however, the areas for development should be more clearly specified and there should be a clearer identification of the work of the sub-contractor within the documentation.
- Effective links and partnerships have been established with a wide range of community and voluntary agencies, Jobs and Benefits offices and other relevant external agencies to support recruitment to the project, offer workplace experience or volunteering opportunities, and to signpost participants, where required, to more appropriate training, specialised provision or additional advice and guidance where required. The stakeholders interviewed were positive about their experiences working with the project and the support provided for the participants.

## Safeguarding

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

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 the designated safeguarding training, as arranged.

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<sup>3</sup> European Social Fund provision in Derry Youth and Community Workshop - LEMIS North West ([etini.gov.uk](http://etini.gov.uk))

## **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 LEMIS North West ESF project.

# APPENDIX

## A. Call 2 Performance Data

European Social Fund – LEMIS North West	Over the four-year period <sup>4</sup>
Numbers of enrolments and % against target	1620 (101%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	821 (194%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	149 (122%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	1520 (94%)

## B. Methodology and evidence base

The arrangements for this face-to-face visit included: observation of two sessions of practice (face-to-face); speaking with a sample of participants (five) during their learning and development sessions, by telephone and in individual meetings; face-to-face and telephone discussions with key stakeholders (employers and community providers); and with the sub-contractor and key staff (face-to-face) (including the quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements); and, the opportunity for all 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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