

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CALL 2 VISIT

European Social Fund provision in Poleglass Community Association

Building Your Future

Report of a Call 2 Visit in January 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
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Context

Poleglass Community Association is contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the Building Your Future 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 January 2022, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Call 2 visit to Poleglass Community Association 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, 98 participants¹ were registered on the project.

ETI met and spoke with a sample of participants during their learning and development sessions, in a focus group and through one-to-one telephone conversations. Eighteen percent of the participants completed the online questionnaire.

All of these participants found that the induction process prepared them well for both their face-to-face and online sessions. They reported that they are given regular feedback on their work and are making good progress in their programme. In addition, the participants stated that the project: gave them hope for, and greater control of their future; opened up opportunities for achievement of vocational qualifications; supported their personal and social development, as well as their mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing; and a sense of belonging and self-worth. All of the participants would highly recommend the project to anyone wanting to progress to employment and/or further education.

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 Building Your Future 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 further support:

- the participants in addressing their barriers to progression; and
- the mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of all participants, especially those who are vulnerable and hardest to reach.

¹ 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 offer for the participants is very good; it is continually evolving in line with their individual needs and aspirations. It provides a relevant, broad range of non-accredited and accredited programmes that supports well the participants' progress to further education, training and/or employment. Throughout the lockdowns, there was continuity of learning with a full and comprehensive programme of activities delivered online through the organisation's newly introduced learning portal and via their online video channel. The activities and programmes, currently delivered face-to-face and online, enable the participants to: achieve appropriate qualifications, develop their vocational and wider skills; and strengthen their mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.
- The face-to-face sessions observed were very good; the key strengths were the high levels of engagement, positive relationships demonstrated between the participants, who assumed peer-coaching roles during the sessions, and the skilful use of questioning from the well-experienced and highly committed mentors. All of the project outcomes are very positive. The project has exceeded its overall enrolment target for Call 2 and almost all of the participants have been successfully retained on the project. Into employment and progression to further education and training targets have also been exceeded.
- Well-targeted progression pathways at levels 2 and 3 that meet the needs of participants have also been developed through the project's links and partnerships with employers, further education colleges and training organisations. For example, the project has developed and delivered a pre-apprenticeship programme in building services which has successfully supported 39 young people to progress to an appropriate apprenticeship programme. Participants furthest from the workplace can also progress to the organisation's level 2 health and well-being programme. The project is also piloting the its first women into construction taster course, which is a positive development in addressing the industry's gender imbalance, culminating in the women obtaining licenses for the telescopic forklift and Moxxy articulated digger.
- The individual action plans comprehensively record and reflect the barriers and challenges faced by the participants. Consequently the well-considered intervention programmes created for them are individualised to meet their specific needs and address their barriers to progression. The use of the "distance travelled" measurement tool targets the participant's specific developmental needs and is effective in tracking and monitoring their progress. Participants observed during the visit have made significant progress in their personal development from their starting point on the project.

- The strategic leadership and management of the project is very good. Appropriate actions have been taken to address the areas for development identified during the baseline visit in January 2019. These include the development of a wide range of links and partnerships with employers, further education colleges and training organisations, which have been used to very good effect to provide a suitable range of programmes and/or progression pathways for the participants. Stakeholder representatives including the local city council and partner training organisations report that communication and relationships with the project are excellent and that Poleglass Community Association is a proactive, energetic organisation fully committed to helping the participants overcome their significant challenges and progress to education and/or training and employment and to live healthy lives.
- The project uses a range of additional related activities to augment and enhance the experience for the participants who report that they have been instrumental in supporting their mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing. For example, the development of the horticulture provision at the Colin Allotments develops both the participants' key employability skills and improves their mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing. The project also secured additional tablets to enable participants to engage in the wide range of online courses and activities.

Safeguarding

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

The project promoter, however, needs to:

- amend reporting procedures to ensure that they include clear guidance to all staff members and participants in relation to both child protection and adult safeguarding.

Overall outcome

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, Poleglass Community Association demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for the Building Your Future ESF project.

APPENDIX

A. Call 2 Performance Data

European Social Fund – Building Your Future	Over the four-year period ²
Numbers of enrolments and % against target	354 (106%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	138 (265%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	67 (168%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	324 (92%)

B. Methodology and evidence base

The arrangements for this face-to-face and online visit included: reviewing participant files; discussions with a small sample of participants in their work placements and at the project promoter's premises; discussions with key stakeholders (employers and collaborative partners); and with key staff (including the quality improvement planning 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%

² 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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