

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CALL 3 VISIT

European Social Fund provision in
Twenty One Training Limited (21 Training)

Pathways for Urban Learners to Succeed in
Employment (PULSE)

Report of a Call 3 Visit in October 2022



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



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Context

Twenty One Training Limited (21 Training) is contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the Pathways for Urban Learners to Succeed in Employment (PULSE) European Social Fund (ESF) project, as part of a third Call for projects which will run from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. 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 October 2022, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Call 3 visit to 21 Training on behalf of DfE to evaluate the capacity of the project promoter to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

Views of participants

At the time of the Call 3 visit, 5 participants¹ were registered on the project.

The ETI met and spoke with a sample of the current and past participants during a learning and development session and in focus groups. They spoke about the supportive environment and how they had: established positive working relationships with the staff; received very good support addressing challenges faced; developed valuable friendships with other participants and, availed of opportunities to complete short training courses. They spoke about how the project improved their confidence, helped them to 'move out of their comfort zone' and do and achieve things they never thought they were capable of.

Twenty-two percent of the current and past participants completed the online questionnaire. They all indicated that: overall, they are happy with their experiences; the programme is well managed, interesting and challenging; the induction process was useful and prepared them well for the face-to-face programme; and, they know who to go to if they have a problem or concern and feel well supported when learning in the organisation.

Focus of the Call 3 Visit

During the Call 3 visit, ETI evaluated the effectiveness of the quality improvement planning processes and focused on two of the key areas which the organisation had prioritised for improvement through its self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes:

- to achieve the overall outcomes of the project in line with the targets set; and
- to plan an exit strategy.

¹ All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

Key Findings

The Call 3 visit identified the following key findings which include any areas for improvement to be addressed for the remainder of the third Call.

- The curriculum provided offers opportunities to sample learning experiences in the creative arts, digital media and immersive technologies. A majority of the participants to date took part in the two PULSE digital and creative summer camps at its two centres in Derry/Londonderry and Strabane. These experiences have been a positive incentive for the participants to engage with the project and have motivated them to progress to further training and education or employment. Of the participants progressing to training or further education to date, most progressed to a range of Skills for Life and Work programmes with 21 Training; namely barbering, bricklaying, childcare, construction, hair and beauty, information and communication technology, joinery, painting and decorating and retail. Of these, a small number progressed to the newly introduced vocational area of creative arts and media.
- In the learning and development session observed and in discussions with past participants it is evident that there are good opportunities to access industry equipment to develop and practice related industrial skills through a hands-on approach to, for example, setting up a recording environment and filming and videoing the production process. The staff working on the project who met with ETI have a good range of expertise and industry experience. They have undertaken work to standardise schemes of work across the two centres and have completed online specialist continuing professional development courses. The project staff are planning to develop a virtual reality tour of the organisation for participants.
- Additionally, a range of short level 1 courses, along with qualifications relevant to the needs of the local labour market are offered to participants, for example in manual handling, construction skills register training and first aid awareness.
- Confidence building and motivation are common needs identified by the participants during the one-to-one individual assessments undertaken with staff at the beginning of the programme. An individualised personal support plan is created for each participant, with regular review points. It is appropriate that the project promoter has identified the need to continue regular internal audits of these plans in line with the quality cycle. Prior educational attainment and work experience should be better captured in these plans at the initial assessment. Also, the further exploration of barriers to education and/or employment should be better reflected in the plans. Where appropriate, account of relevant information captured within these plans should inform the regular whole organisational safeguarding meetings.

- While overall enrolment target has almost been met, there is a focus on achieving the targets of increasing the percentage of participants progressing to employment. In addition, there is a separate focus on increasing the percentage of participants achieving two qualifications at level one.
- There are well-established links with a range of stakeholders, including for example the Western Health and Social Care Trust 16+ Pathway Service and Education Welfare Officers leading to ongoing referrals to the project. Where necessary, staff attend participant case conferences.
- The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are well-established, including the gathering of feedback from key stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and improve further the quality of the learning provision and support services provided for participants. The staff and management have a sound understanding of the participants' needs. A concise evaluation of the provision has been provided, including the development of an exit strategy for participants when Call 3 ends.
- It is appropriate that the project promoter has recognised the need to sustain and manage participant recruitment and engagement for the duration of Call 3, with planning for exit and progression. Overall, there is appropriate planning for learning and quality improvement, including planning for sustainability after the project ends and for the progression of participants. The organisation has invested in new immersive technologies and industrial standard production equipment. Potential future provision opportunities are being explored in digital media, creative and immersive technologies aligned to the NI Skills Strategy.

Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding participants of the PULSE ESF project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to:

- complete its review of the adult safeguarding policy and the child protection/safeguarding policy for young people;
- ensure, where appropriate, that any sensitive information captured within the personal support plans informs the regular whole organisational safeguarding meetings; and
- develop short summary staff and participant codes of conduct for personal and business use and during sessions on the appropriate use of social media, digital media and immersive technologies, including risk assessment of health conditions where appropriate.

Overall outcome

At the time of the Call 3 visit, and in the areas evaluated, 21 Training demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for the PULSE ESF project.

APPENDIX

A. Call 3 Performance Data

European Social Fund – PULSE

Since 1 April 2022²

Numbers of enrolments and % against target	63 (90%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	6 (43%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	52 (108%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	0 (100%)

B. Methodology and evidence base

ETI observed one learning and development session, undertook two focus group meetings with current and past participants and had discussions with key staff (to include quality improvement and safeguarding arrangements). Participants had the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised relevant data and documentation.

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 1 April 2022 - 14 October 2022

Overall outcome

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

At the time of the Call 3 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 3 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 3 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 for the Economy 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 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the xx ESF project reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the 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 3 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the xx ESF project are unsatisfactory. <DN insert detail>.

ETI will return to the project promoter within six working weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues which have been identified.

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