



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
Compass Advocacy Network

WE CAN Project

Report of an Inspection in
January 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Contents

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Focus of the inspection	1
3. Overall findings of the inspection	1
4. Outcomes for learners	2
5. Quality of provision	2
6. Leadership and management	3
7. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendix

- A. Project registrations
- B. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Compass Advocacy Network is a charitable organisation, and is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the WE CAN European Social Fund project. The main aims of the project are to reduce economic inactivity, combat discrimination, facilitate greater social inclusion, and develop equal opportunities for people with learning disabilities to move into supported employment. The project provides opportunities for participants to undertake on-the-job training opportunities in a real work environment, achieve accredited employability and personal development qualifications up to level 1, participate in information and guidance work-hubs, and undertake job sampling opportunities.

Compass Advocacy Network is managed by the chief executive who is supported by a core team of four staff to deliver the WE CAN project, as well as other training, support, and administration staff, and volunteers as required. At the time of the inspection 28 participants¹ were registered on the project. The participants' attendance on the project depends on their individual personal support and development needs, and ranges from one-half day up to three full days. Work-related training is delivered mainly through the organisation's five social enterprises, and participants can also make use of 'The Base' facility for social and recreational activities as part the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's day opportunities programme. In addition, they are provided with opportunities to undertake relevant short courses in health, social, and leisure related matters.

2. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all participants, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- the outcomes for participants;
- the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the quality of provision for learning and development; and
- the quality of the leadership and management.

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity to sustain improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very Good
Quality of provision	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

¹ All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter at the time of the inspection.

KEY FINDINGS

4. Outcomes for learners

Recruitment levels to the project are high, with 83% of the original target having been met successfully to date. The number of participants undertaking job-sampling opportunities for participants is well above the targets set for year 1 (160%), and year 2 (140%) of the project to date. The uptake of qualifications is good and the number of participants achieving employability qualifications at entry levels 2 and 3, in year one of the project, is well above the target set; one participant was targeted but eight participants achieved. The participants demonstrate good or better standards of work and a small number can transfer and apply their knowledge and skills to other work settings through, for example, undertaking successful job-sampling and work-experience placements.

The participants interviewed spoke very positively about their experiences on the project and nearly all of them reported that they are progressing well in their learning and development. They particularly highlighted how the project has helped to open up more opportunities for them to experience relevant and realistic work-related activities, and to undertake and achieve relevant qualifications. Although the number of participants who secure employment has increased by 25% in year two of the project, it remains low and should continue to be monitored by management.

Most of the participants are developing very well their personal, social and employability skills through a wide and varied range of work-related activities; examples include working independently or as part of a team to categorise and recycle a range of materials, handling stock and dealing with customers in a realistic retail environment, or preparing and redecorating furniture to a high standard to customer specifications. Almost all of the participants report that their independence, confidence and self-esteem have increased as a result of them being engaged on the project.

5. Quality of provision

The curriculum offer is broad, offers appropriate progression opportunities, and is matched well to the learning and development needs, ability levels, and previous experiences of the participants. Management and staff take a professional and disciplined approach to learning and training to ensure the participants have a realistic understanding of the world of work.

Very effective processes are in place to track and monitor the progress the participants are making in the development of their personal, social, and employability skills. The personal training plans are of very good quality, are individualised, and capture well the participants' previous experiences, qualifications, and barriers to learning and employment. The project team have high aspirations for the participants and set specific short-term learning and training targets which are appropriately challenging for the participants to support and enable them to reach their highest potential. Regular progress reviews take place, including feedback from all key stakeholders, and appropriate action is taken to ensure that the participants are progressing in line with targets set. The participants are kept well-informed about their progress.

The provision for learning and training is well planned and delivered in a flexible manner to support the participants to overcome their barriers to learning and employment. Very good learning resources are used to support participants undertaking accredited qualifications and matched well to their varying learning and support needs and ability levels. In the practical work-related training observed, the participants were well engaged and clearly understood their job roles. They worked well, both individually and as part of a team, and communicated

well with staff and their peers. They were able to explain in detail the work they were undertaking, the expected outputs, and the standards expected of them. Those participants who were operating recycling equipment or engaged in practical tasks such as painting and decorating were aware of and adhered to safe working practices and were equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment.

The quality of the care and welfare provided for the participants is very good and impacts positively on their personal development. The participants interviewed all stated that they felt safe and secure in the organisation and knew who to contact if they had an issue or problem. Appropriate support is in place for those participants with additional learning support needs and the organisation works very well with a wide range of statutory and external support agencies to help the participants to overcome their individual barriers to learning, employment, and progression.

6. Leadership and management

The project is led and managed very effectively at both strategic and operational levels. Very effective management systems and processes have been developed to manage the project and to record and report on the progress of the participants. Very effective links and partnerships have also been established with a wide range of statutory and other community and voluntary agencies to support the delivery of the project.

The quality of the accommodation and physical resources used is very good. The organisation has made a significant investment across its social enterprises, including the purchase of industry standard recycling equipment and the refurbishment of its retail and up-cycling facilities, to support the delivery of the WE CAN project.

Management and staff are hard-working and committed and are well experienced in the delivery of programmes for adults and young people with learning needs and disabilities. They reflect a strong socially inclusive and supportive ethos which permeates the organisation. Mutually respectful working relationships have been developed between staff and participants.

Management and staff have taken appropriate action to address the areas for improvement identified during the baseline inspection. While the processes used for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning have improved, they need to be developed further, particularly the better analysis and use of key performance data, the use of more evaluative language, and the clearer identification of key strengths and areas for improvement in the self-evaluation report, and the prioritisation of key areas for improvement and the use of more specific targets in the quality improvement plan.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding participants reflect the guidance issued by the Department.

7. Overall effectiveness

Compass Advocacy Network demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants.

The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.

A. Project registrations

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
European Social Fund WE CAN project 2015/2016	58	107
European Social Fund WE CAN project 2016/2017	19	49

B. Inspection method and evidence base

Two ETI inspectors interviewed 9 participants in a focus group and observed 5 participants in work-related training. Discussions were held with the chief executive, the director of services/safeguarding champion, the project co-ordinator/senior skills trainer, the training and employment officer, the office manager, day operations staff from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, training staff, and employers. The management information systems, including the tracking and monitoring systems, samples of the participants' work and personal training plans, and planning documents were examined. The project promoter's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were scrutinised.

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%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on Outcomes for learners, Quality of Provision and on Leadership and Management.

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of enrolments measured over the full duration of their programme.
Achievement	The percentage of participants who completed their targeted individual outcomes.
Progression	The percentage of successful completers who achieved positive progression.

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