



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
Derry Youth and Community
Workshop

Learning North West

Report of an Inspection in
March 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

Derry Youth and Community Workshop (DY&CW) is a registered charity which is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Learning North West European Social Fund Project (ESF) project. The aim of the project is to identify participants who are experiencing barriers to employment because of the specific disabilities of autism, dyspraxia or dyslexia and to assist them in overcoming their barriers and to support them on the journey towards and into employment. The project aims to recruit 90 people, over a three-year period, who are economically inactive and aged 16 - 60 years.

DY&CW is led by a general manager and a voluntary board of directors. The Learning North West project is managed by a project manager who is supported by a placement officer and an administrative officer. During the programme, participants receive one-to-one mentoring and support and they also have the opportunity to avail of job sampling opportunities when they are ready. Employers are supported in making reasonable adjustments to facilitate participants in entering job sampling, volunteering and/or employment opportunities. In addition, participants are able to access accredited training at levels 1 and 2 in customer service, retail and the essential skills. They can also receive training in communication, building confidence and self-esteem, team working skills, employability, job search and curriculum vitae creation and updating. An action plan is created for each participant on entry and tailored appropriately to meet their individual needs. The timescale for participation on the project vary considerably, dependent on the needs of the participant and the progress they make in addressing barriers to employment. Typically, a client will spend on average 6 to 12 months on the programme, although 16 participants who were recruited in 2015/16 remain on the programme.

At the time of the inspection 27 participants were registered on the project and the participants engage according to their individually assessed need. Seven of the participants are currently undertaking job sampling opportunities which meet their needs and interests.

2. Views of participants

The participants interviewed by the inspection team were positive about their experiences on the project and in particular the good levels of individualised support provided by the staff. Participants commented on their improved confidence, self-esteem and self-worth, and in some cases their social and communication skills through their engagement with the project. They report that their overall well-being has been improved through the mentoring support, recreational and social activities offered. The participants value highly the group activities provided, which in many cases ensure an important structure to their week which helps them address social isolation through developing friendships within the project and in the wider community. A small number of the participants undertaking job sampling opportunities report that this has increased their motivation to find paid employment.

3. 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:

- outcomes for participants;
- quality of provision; and
- effectiveness of the leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

The majority of participants demonstrate good standards of work and are making appropriate progress in their learning. They are developing well their personal, social, and employability skills. Most of the participants have benefited to good effect from engaging with the training provision available.

Most of the participants undertaking job sampling are in retail settings. They gain sound work-related skills, including customer service, stock control and using a cash register. The employers who provide job sampling opportunities report that participants are developing more positive attitudes to work, acquiring team working skills and appropriate work practices in line with their stage of training. The tasks undertaken by the participants are meaningful, relevant to the workplace and they contribute positively to the employers' workflows. The participants are able to apply well the skills they have learned and can communicate effectively, in line with their stage of training, support and learning needs.

The majority of the participants are making good progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem and in addressing barriers to progression through engaging in the project's in-house training and individual mentoring support. During the inspection, while seven participants were engaging in a job sampling placement, it was evident that the other participants interviewed were making appropriate progress but not yet ready to be placed with an employer. In addition, for the 16 and six participants recruited respectively in the first two years of the project, further review and refinement is necessary to ensure that each participant is progressing at an optimal pace and that the project remains the best provider to meet their ongoing needs.

Recruitment to the programme is largely in line with the targets set. At the time of inspection, the project had achieved 93% of its overall target, with 84 participants recruited against a target of 90. The retention rate has been outstanding in each year of the project. Over the period of the project, it is a positive outcome that 17 of the 57 participants who left the programme, against an overall target of nine, have progressed into paid employment. Although the project staff have not set any other targets, it is a strength that a further five participants have progressed to further education courses, and 17 to other Department funded training programmes, including 13 into Training for Success. Most of the participants have made good progress in the development and application of their soft skills, including for example, their confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. While there is significant anecdotal evidence that the project is impacting positively on the acquisition by the participants of a range of softer skills, this is not measured and collated systematically by the project promoter in order to demonstrate more fully the overall impact of the project.

The flexible and supportive one-to-one mentoring system has been a key factor in the high levels of retention and in improving the participants' confidence and self-esteem.

6. Quality of provision

The overall curriculum and provision in Learning North West is relevant and is aligned well with the needs of almost all of the participants. They can access a range of accredited and non-accredited training opportunities to enhance the quality of their lives and improve employability skills such as: personal development and skills training; essential skills support; food value; and a range of online short courses such as basic food hygiene and first aid. The participants have good access to job search activities, including, where appropriate, interview skills training and curriculum vitae building. The project is delivered flexibly and includes an appropriate range of enrichment opportunities for the participants such as weekly Boccia, dancercise and regular group outings.

All participants receive an informal assessment on entry to the project through engagement with the project manager. The initial assessment identifies well the personal, social, educational and employability skills barriers to progression of most of the participants. The outcomes from this initial engagement, however, are not used well enough to inform participants' individual action plans in order to clearly identify all of the barriers to progression in their learning and development, and to set short-term milestones to promote progression towards their specified personal and employability goals. The areas of focus and development for each participant need to form a succinct plan with specific incremental actions which can be monitored and reviewed systematically in order to promote progression. The engagement between the participants and the project staff is used well to plan a programme of activities which meets their social needs and interests. Participant diaries record the often intensive work which takes place with them, but this system needs to be developed further to measure better its impact.

The quality of the directed training observed ranges from good to very good, but is mostly good. Provision is planned well and helps most of the participants recognise and build upon their strengths. The sessions are enhanced by good learning resources and there is an appropriate focus on practical tasks and skills development in the sessions observed. Almost all of the participants engage well in the training and development activities and make progress in their learning and skills development. In the most effective practice observed, there is planning to meet the individual needs and areas for development for each participant. Also, there is clear evidence of formative work, ongoing formative assessment and positive feedback to the participants to promote further learning. The participants should also be encouraged by project staff to reflect more on, and to take more responsibility as appropriate, for their own learning and development.

The work sampling placements contacted are well matched to the participant's interests and needs. The project staff meet regularly with participants and employers. While the review processes are mostly effective, employers need to be involved more fully in the process, including setting and monitoring specific targets for progression. All of the employers interviewed reported positively on the contact and communication provided by the project staff.

The provision for the care and welfare of the participants impacts positively on their learning and development and contributes well to successful outcomes for most of them. There is an inclusive, caring ethos across the organisation with respectful, positive working relationships evident between the participants and staff at all levels. The project staff are particularly skilled in building positive relationships with each participant in order to build trust and address their barriers to progression. Participants report that they feel safe and secure in the

organisation. The staff provide holistic care and welfare for the participants and address effectively additional barriers to progression through signposting them to a range of relevant external support and community agencies. Good use is made of the available and ongoing internal training provision to support progression opportunities for a majority of the participants.

7. Leadership and management

The chief executive of DY&CW along with the board of directors support well the objectives of the project through significant investment in accommodation, staffing, resources and own match-funding. Effective links and partnerships have been established with a range of external organisations, statutory agencies and other community and voluntary groups to support the work of the project and the participants. The project promoter has also established good working relationships with a range of referral agencies including the local Job and Benefits office to identify and support appropriate recruitment to the project. Links to employers, however, need to be developed further to provide more opportunities for participants to undertake a wider range of relevant work sampling activities and/or progress to employment. The training environments are well-resourced with appropriate learning and support materials. Senior managers ensure younger participants are supported well to progress coherently to other appropriate Department funded provision within the organisation.

The manager and project staff are enthusiastic and demonstrate high levels of commitment to engage and support the participants, most of whom present with a wide range of complex barriers to progression and employment, to participate in the project. A well-established programme of continuous professional development ensures that the project staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to work well, and meet to best effect, the participant's individual needs.

At operational level, the project is managed well; the project manager is supported to good effect by two other members of staff. There are clear lines of communication between senior managers and the project team, including a regular scheduled cycle of team meetings which focus on progress towards targets, and the progress of individual participants. The project promoter, however, needs to collate more effectively the information gathered to better inform the team members about the support and services that are being provided to the individual participants, monitor the impact and to track the progress the participants are making towards attaining employment.

While there is an organisation-wide self-evaluation process and quality improvement planning cycle, the quality assurance processes still need to be more formalised, refined and further embedded across the work of the project promoter, in order to provide more detailed evidence and evaluation on the quality of the work of the Learning North West project. The staff are, however, encouraged to be reflective and are aware that they need to continue to gather data in a format which demonstrates more clearly the impact of the project. In order to promote overall improvement in the provision, and ensure targeted quality improvement, there is a need for a consistent use of prioritised and more measurable actions.

8. Safeguarding

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

9. Overall effectiveness

Derry Youth and Community Workshop's Learning North West project demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants. There are areas for improvement that the project promoter has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement are the need:

- to develop further the participants' individual action plans and reviews including to demonstrate more clearly the impact the project has on the development of their soft skills; and
- to formalise and embed further quality assurance processes in order to produce a quality improvement plan with a more consistent use of prioritised and measurable improvement actions.

The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.

A. Project registrations

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
European Social Fund Learning North West 2015/2016	24	80%
European Social Fund Learning North West 2016/2017	37	123%
European Social Fund Learning North West 2017/2018	23	77%

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk.

Two ETI inspectors and an associate assessor observed 15 participants in a range of settings, including learning and development sessions, focus groups and job sampling placements. Discussions were held with Derry Youth and Community Workshop's management team, project staff, three employers/supervisors in the workplace and five employers by telephone. The management information system, including the tracking and monitoring system, samples of the participants' work, action plans and planning documents were examined. The project promoter's self-evaluation report, quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were also 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 project promoter:

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