



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
Network Personnel

Jobmatch project

Report of an Inspection in
November 2017



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

Network Personnel is wholly owned by the Workspace Group, a charity with its headquarters in Draperstown, and is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Jobmatch European Social Fund (ESF) project. The main aims of the project are to provide guidance, training and employability support for participants aged 18 or over who are unemployed or economically inactive. The project operates across Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Cookstown, Dungannon, Larne, Magherafelt, Newtownabbey and Omagh.

The project is managed by the Jobmatch manager and team lead, supported by eight employment coaches, two self-employment coaches, five facilitators¹ and an administration/data officer. At the time of the inspection 172 participants² were registered on the Jobmatch project. The participants attend regular mentoring sessions and a selection of accredited and non-accredited training based on their assessed needs. A work-experience placement is an option but no participants were on placement at the time of the inspection. Participants attend between one and four sessions per week, for up to a maximum of one year.

2. Views of participants

The inspection team met with a sample of participants across the offices, individually and in small focus groups. All of the participants reported that they valued the guidance and support provided by the project staff, most felt that they were progressing well towards employment and thought the training provided was relevant and of a good quality.

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 | High level of capacity for sustained improvement |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Outcomes for learners | Very good |
| Quality of provision | Good |
| Leadership and management | Very good |

¹ Shared with other Network Personnel ESF projects

² All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter at the time of the inspection.

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

Network Personnel are very effective in identifying and registering participants from the target group. At the time of the inspection, the project was ahead of its overall recruitment target with 1051 participants registered to date, well above the three year target set of 960 (2015-18). It is good that 696 of those participants have completed their programme and 226 remain. It is very good that 316 of the completers (45%) have achieved their employment goals to date with 292 in work and 24 in self-employment. The standards demonstrated by most of the participants in the sessions observed were good. They engaged well in the directed training and mentoring sessions, had a positive attitude towards learning and development and responded well to feedback. It is good that a minority of participants have achieved essential skills qualifications though overall outcomes are below target, with 72% of the targeted 222 qualifications achieved to date. It is good that 65% of all participants achieve a qualification and in particular that of those entering employment, 75% achieved a qualification and this was a factor in their success.

The retention rate on the project was good (80%) in 2015-16 and improved to very good (86%) in 2016-17. The project provides effective supportive progression for participants into a wide range of employment areas with good opportunities to achieve relevant level one qualifications that increase their employability such as construction skills registration, first aid, food safety, forklift truck driving and manual handling. The lower than expected progression rate into further education and training (56%) is in part due to the success of participants gaining employment, however it is appropriate that the project promoter has identified this as an area for further improvement.

Most of the participants demonstrate a high level of commitment to overcoming personal barriers and are motivated to progress in their learning and towards employment. The innovative Shed non-accredited craft and woodwork activities provide a caring and supportive environment that helps develop the personal and social skills of a small number of participants with multiple barriers to employment. A minority of participants would benefit from more individualised and targeted support, including access to short work-experience placements to help them increase their confidence and self-esteem and to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

6. Quality of provision

Network Personnel offer a broad and relevant curriculum that all participants can access. This includes accredited level one courses in childcare, computer skills, computerised accounts, health and social care, personal and social development and social media in business. The courses are offered on a regular cycle across the offices and supplemented by a range of appropriate e-learning courses. Every participant is appropriately sign-posted towards relevant qualifications based on their assessed needs.

At the first interview all of the participants receive a good quality initial assessment and an action plan is agreed that identifies their barriers to employment and the actions planned to address them. While this assessment is completed consistently it could be improved to capture more accurately the participant's prior experience, skills and barriers in a way that would enable more effective evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions. There are regular review meetings and participants are encouraged to drop into the office when they need support or access to IT. The job fairs and Career Connection events are a particular strength and have successfully helped participants gain employment. Careers education information and guidance could be improved particularly in relation to progressing to further education and training.

The directed training and mentoring sessions are planned well and use a range of interactive approaches to engage participants in their learning and development. All of the sessions observed were of a good or better quality. The sessions are enhanced by very good learning resources and participant access to ICT. The tutors and employment coaches appropriately encourage the participants to reflect, however, they need to more consistently support the participants to develop their independence and to take responsibility for their own learning and development. To improve further, planning should be enhanced to include more targeted support that is shared more effectively with the participants.

Care and welfare impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for participants. The employment coaches and all of the project staff are very caring, respectful and supportive and they have developed very positive relationships with the participants. There is a strong emphasis on meeting the participant's wider needs in the one-to-one mentoring sessions.

7. Leadership and management

The Network Personnel senior management team have a clear vision for the development of the Jobmatch project and the complementary provision that participants can access. There is participant focused strategic planning and a strong commitment to invest in staff, accommodation and resources.

There is a very good induction process for new staff and they feel they are supported well by the organisation. Network Personnel support well the continuing professional development of staff and they can access a wide range of resources on the internal network. Internal and external communication is very good and includes the effective use of social media.

The Jobmatch project staff have developed effective links with a wide range of employers across the office areas and with relevant officials in the Jobs and Benefits Offices. These links are used well to refer participants to the project and to provide progression pathways to employment. There are equally strong links to other internal provision and if appropriate, participants are referred to another project that would better suit their needs.

All of the appointments and courses are organised well and there is a very effective follow-up process to ensure participants remain engaged. It is a strength that the team have collaborated with another ESF provider to share effective practice in measuring and monitoring participant progress.

There is an organisation wide self-evaluation process and quality cycle and while the process still needs to be refined and further embedded, the Jobmatch team are highly reflective and have accurately identified most of the main areas for improvement. The project team have appropriately identified the need to make better use of data and other evidence to better inform self-evaluation. The action planning could be more succinct and prioritise more effectively the key areas for improvement.

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

The Jobmatch project promoter demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the participants.

A. Project registrations

| Programme | Numbers of enrolments | % against target |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Jobmatch ESF project 2015/2016 | 262 | 101% |
| Jobmatch ESF project 2016/2017 | 484 | 138% |
| Jobmatch ESF project 2017/2018 | 305 | 87% |

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

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

An ETI inspector and an associate assessor observed 21 participants in a range of settings including mentoring, learning and development sessions and focus groups. Discussions were held with the Jobmatch and Network Personnel management team, employment coaches and key stakeholders. The management information systems, including the tracking and monitoring systems, a sample of the participants' work and personal training plans, and employment coaches and tutors planning documents were examined. The project promoter's self-evaluation report, quality improvement plan 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 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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