



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
The Prince's Trust

Journey to Success

Report of an Inspection in
February 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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Contents

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of participants	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	3
7. Leadership and management	4
8. Safeguarding	5
9. Overall effectiveness	5
Appendix	
A. Project registrations	
B. Inspection methodology and evidence base	
C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate	

1. Context

The Prince's Trust is a registered charity; it is governed nationally by a board of Trustees and supported locally by a Northern Ireland (NI) Council. The project promoter is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to deliver the Journey to Success European Social Fund (ESF) project. The main aims of the project are to support hard-to-reach young people aged 16-24 years to progress into employment, training or further education. The project consists of four separate programmes: Get Into, Team, Get Started and Fairbridge; all of these programmes are also national Prince's Trust programmes.

The Journey to Success project is delivered across Northern Ireland and operates from its headquarters in Belfast along with an office in Derry-Londonderry. It also operates, through its delivery partners, out of all six further education colleges and in two community-based partners' offices in Belfast. The project is organised at a strategic level by a Northern Ireland director and an executive management team. At an operational level, the project is run by four programme managers and an outreach manager. In addition, there are 15 programme-specific executives, seven outreach executives, a volunteers' executive, a contract manager, a contract executive and a contract co-ordinator. At the time of the inspection, 994 participants^[1] were registered on the project and 35 participants were in a work-experience placement through the Get into Retail programme.

Whilst the individual programmes vary in duration, depending on the participants' individual needs, all of the participants are engaged for a minimum of one week to a maximum of nine months. Each participant is also supported by a programme executive for the duration of their time on the programme. It is of note that participants can also avail of a 'progression mentor/volunteer' for a maximum of six months post-programme support.

2. Views of participants

All of the participants interviewed during the inspection reported positively on the individualised support and guidance and commented on improved confidence and self-esteem levels from their participation on the programme. A significant proportion of them also valued the opportunities to re-engage in education through the essential skills provision and almost all of them commented on the informative taster days, support networks and the good opportunities to develop new friendships. Those with access to work-experience placements reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the practical element of this provision, and those with children also commented on the programmes' flexibility to suit their childcare commitments.

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.

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

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Very good
Quality of provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

Work placements are a significant feature of the Get Into and Team programmes and 35 participants were at this stage of the programme during the inspection. The majority of the participants observed in the learning and development activities, classes and in work placement are producing good to very good standards of work. They are developing well a good range of industry-related and specialist skills, for example, bar service and barista skills through the Get into Bars and Hospitality programme and customer service and stock-taking skills through their engagement on the Get into Retail programme. There are also examples of the participants enhancing their knowledge of fire and safety routines through the Get Started in Fire and Rescue programme.

At the time of the inspection, the Prince's Trust had achieved 82% of its overall recruitment target with 4,062 participants recruited to the project against a target of 4960 (2015-18). The in-house outreach team manage the referral process well and liaise with a range of referral agencies to support overall recruitment to each of the programmes which comprise the project. The marketing team continue to revise their promotion materials and communication strategies, including an effective use of social media, to improve further access to their target group and to maximise recruitment opportunities. It is a strength of the project that the retention rate has been consistently very good in years one and two at 83% and 85% and is currently outstanding in year three at 98%. The progression into employment target for the project is currently on track at 24% (992/4062) against an overall 26% target set. The progression into further education or training is below the overall target of 34%, it is currently 29% (1176/4062). The project promoter has appropriately identified this as an area for improvement.

Whilst the project promoter did not set specific achievement targets in their original bid, it is notable that they have introduced internal challenging targets for participants' achievement at level 1, entry level and in non-accredited short courses. They have identified, however, that they are currently below target to date across all of these areas. For example, 845/2520 (34%) have achieved at level 1, 160/632 (25%) have achieved entry level qualifications and 632/1671 (38%) in non-accredited qualifications. The low qualification attainment by the participants has been recognised as an ongoing area for improvement in the quality improvement plan, and the project promoter is also working to track further how many participants have gained one or more qualifications, in order to better demonstrate their achievements.

The majority of the participants are developing well their personal and social skills with most of them commenting positively on improved confidence levels, from a very low base point. There are also ongoing opportunities for the participants to acquire, develop, apply and improve their employability skills, including key transferable skills. Team-working and problem-solving skills, for example, are developed well through the residential and community project aspects linked to the Fairbridge and Team programmes. The programmes also help to improve the physical and emotional resilience of the participants with many of them reporting that they feel less anxious as a result of their participation and completion of the programme. Whilst the project promoter has developed an effective system for collating the soft skills development of the participants, there is a need to further develop this work to demonstrate better how the project has impacted on the participants' lives.

6. Quality of provision

There is a well-structured curriculum offer available through the project's four programmes and these are detailed well in each of the programme-specific toolkits. Whilst all of the programmes have a different emphasis, and vary in content and duration, they all include very good access to a flexible menu of provision. This includes: one-to-one mentoring; personal, social and employability development; Prince's Trust accredited qualifications up to level 1; the essential skills qualifications; job-search and on the job training; community involvement; and work-experience placement programmes with a wide range of large and small employers.

The Get Into and Team programmes concentrate effectively on developing the participants' employability skills, including personal and social skills development, through the sector-specific work placement aspect. For example, The Get into Bars and Hospitality programme provides good access to relevant industry qualifications, including food safety and customer service, alongside an appropriate range of other practical skills. The Team programmes, delivered and offered in all six colleges and two community-based partners, provide all of the participants with good opportunities to access employability, personal development, essential skills, and a very good range of enrichment activities.

The Get Started and Fairbridge programmes focus more closely and appropriately on the personal, social and life-skills development of the participants, through the residential and community work elements, with the Fairbridge programme, in particular, working well with those who are hardest-to-reach. The Get Started programme is delivered in partnership with specialist organisations and a work-based learning provider; at the time of the inspection two programmes were running, Get Started with Fire and Rescue Service and a Get Started taster day in barbering and hairdressing. Both of these programmes were developing well the participants' knowledge of these areas. The Fairbridge programme combines to good effect group activities, opportunities, experiences, outdoor learning, in partnership with an outdoor pursuits centre, and one-to-one support to help participants gain the personal, social and life skills needed to stabilise their circumstances.

An effective induction process is in place, which includes individual profiling, group contracts and codes of conduct, in order to set much needed boundaries from the outset. The programme planning is well-considered and they each include: personal development plans, a 'My Journey' document, a goals document and detailed risk assessments. The frequency of the personal development plans vary across the programmes, for example, they are only completed once for Team but are completed on a daily basis for participants on the Fairbridge programme, reflecting the need for quick wins and regular feedback to support engagement for this participant group. Whilst the majority of the 'My Journey' and the goals document (long/medium/short term) include appropriate targets, there is a need to evidence better the progression element to reflect the sound knowledge the executives have about the participants' needs and how they are being addressed. In addition, participant engagement is tracked appropriately through on online diary entries.

The quality of the directed training and learning and development sessions observed ranged from good to very good and was mostly very good. In the effective practice there was a very good range of active learning strategies, including highly effective ice-breakers. Whilst there are good opportunities for the participants to develop their oracy skills in most of the sessions, there is a need to extend this good practice to develop further their wider literacy skills across all aspects of the provision. All of the sessions observed were characterised by mutually respectful relationships between the tutors/trainers and participants and the majority of the participants were engaged in the learning and development process and improving in confidence through good levels of participation in a range of individual, paired and group work tasks. Going forward, and due to the range of delivery partners involved, there is a need to improve the planning for learning in the sessions to ensure they better address individual needs of the participants and that opportunities for sharing best practice are maximised. There is also a need to provide more specialist careers support, guidance and advice for some participants, many of whom are unclear about their next steps, the role of the progression mentor and/or how to progress.

The care and welfare provided for the participants impacts positively on their learning and development. The project team are highly effective at providing individualised support and, where applicable, at engaging with and signposting to a range of specialist support organisations. Public transport costs are reimbursed, and it is a strength of the project that participants can avail of a social space with breakfast and lunches provided where required. Additionally, the participants on the Fairbridge programme also benefit from the Health Trust's wider resources, for example, access to weekly health and safety clinic appointments, facilitated through Skype, as well as access to in-house washing facilities and shower rooms. The Team's participants can also avail of the support services available through the wider college resources and support systems. In addition to monthly programme-specific celebration events, there is also an annual celebration event to recognise the personal development and achievements of the participants which culminates in the presentation of the seven overall Prince's Trust awards.

7. Leadership and management

There is a strong strategic vision for the project which is underpinned well by the five core values of the Prince's Trust. The four programmes are appropriate and matched well to the varying needs of the participant group. The introduction of the pilot 'Engage' programme, which is unique to Northern Ireland, has had a positive impact in preparing young people for progression to a Prince's Trust programme. Representatives from the management team also sit on a range of local and national steering groups and forums to ensure they remain abreast of emerging trends with this participant group. The project also benefits from the highly effective use of volunteers to enhance the provision and the management team have devised a comprehensive application and induction process to support these roles. To date, there are 66 volunteers and six secondees from the civil service who bring a wide skillset to the programmes and who act as progression mentors for the participants when they progress beyond the project.

There are effective lines of communication across all of the programmes and clear roles and responsibilities for all staff. The project team have very good, relevant previous experience of working with young people in a range of settings and they use this knowledge well to signpost participants to the correct programme within the project. Management are committed to providing ongoing continuing professional development opportunities for staff to enable them to effectively manage the complex needs of the participants; all of the staff, for example, recently completed mental health first aid training. It would be beneficial for all staff to develop

further their knowledge of specific learning needs, for example, autism awareness training, to fully support all of the participants in their learning. There is also a regular cycle of team meetings and delivery partner manager meetings to share and support best practice. The quality of accommodation across all of the offices and partner sites visited is mostly very good and they are well-resourced to suit the individual programmes.

There are well-established partnerships in place and open working relationships between the delivery partners and the community-based partners, including a variety of additional specialist providers. There is a cycle of meetings between the delivery partner managers and the project team and the delivery partners interviewed commented on the strong communication channels. Communication could be improved further through a more formal sharing with them of the available feedback on the progress the participants are making. It is a strength that the project teams involved with work placements are supported well by the internal outcomes team to source and match participants to a range of appropriate work placements, thereby ensuring their needs are more closely met.

There are also strong links and partnerships with a wide range of employers to develop effective and in some cases innovative industry programmes, a small number of which provide guaranteed jobs. In addition, it is noteworthy that a majority of the community projects involved in the Team programmes have been developed in conjunction with the delivery partners or key employers/stakeholders, for example, the collaboration with a range of large retail employers for the provision of the 'Get Into' programmes.

Whilst the project promoter has adequate management information systems which capture participant data and track and monitor the key performance data related to the project, the project promoter has invested in a new client relationship management system to strengthen this process. The new system enables a more effective data analysis across each of the programmes and across all of the region, whilst also enabling comparisons against the Prince's Trust national programmes.

The project promoter has demonstrated a commitment to quality improvement and has introduced an appropriate quality assurance cycle, which includes feedback from questionnaires, focus groups and observations across each programme. Whilst it is appropriate that individual programme self-evaluations and quality improvement plans have been introduced, these are at an early stage and could be used better to inform the overall project's self-evaluation report. There is also a need to use the wide range of information collated, including programme-specific performance data on recruitment and progression, to better evidence the key strengths, areas for improvement and trends in the provision. There is a need for a more consistent use of measurable targets in the quality improvement plan.

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 Prince's Trust Journey to Success project demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the participants.

The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.

A. Project registrations

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
Journey to Success ESF project 2015/2016	1400	88%
Journey to Success ESF project 2016/2017	1391	83%
Journey to Success ESF project 2017/2018	1271	75%

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

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

Three ETI inspectors observed 81 participants, including four past participants, in a range of settings; this included learning and development sessions, focus groups and work-experience placements. Discussions were held with: the executive management team; the marketing communications manager, volunteers' manager and outcomes manager; all five programme managers; 12 executive officers; five delivery partner managers; four work placement providers; eight tutors/trainers; and three progression mentors. The management information systems, including the tracking and monitoring systems, samples of the participants' work and personal action plans, and the programme managers' and delivery partners' 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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