



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision  
in The Women's Centre, Derry

PROSPER 2

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for participants, on provision for learning and development, on leadership and management, and on the overall quality of the provision.

Current performance level
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:

Overall effectiveness outcome
The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any area(s) for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.
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, which includes the need to produce an improvement plan, which will be the basis for 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, which includes the need to produce an improvement plan, which will be the basis for a formal follow-up inspection.

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

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## **1. Inspection method and evidence base**

Two ETI inspectors observed 23 participants in four learning and development sessions; and interviewed 12 participants in focus group meetings. Discussions were held with the centre director, the centre co-ordinator (Waterside), the employment project's officer and four tutors. Samples of the participant's work and individual learning plans and tutor's programmes of work and session plans were examined; and the project promoter's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were scrutinised.

## **2. Focus of the inspection**

The inspection focused on:

- 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. Context**

The Women's Centre is a community development organisation with charitable status. It aims to contribute to the social and economic regeneration of Derry City and the North West region through the promotion of women's equality and access to education, employment, and social and economic life. The Women's Centre is managed on a day-to-day basis by a Centre Director who is supported by a voluntary board of directors who inform and influence the strategic direction of the centre.

The Women's Centre is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the European Social Fund programme PROSPER 2, and 106 participants<sup>1</sup> are currently registered on the project. The PROSPER 2 project promotes women's empowerment and employment through access to education, training and skills. The aims of the project are: to enable unemployed and economically inactive women to gain jobs, skills, work experience and qualifications; to address disadvantage and the challenges/barriers faced by women furthest from the labour market; and to deliver support activities to build employability and capacity.

PROSPER 2 is delivered at the Women's Centre, Derry and the Waterside Women's Centre. The project activities are supported by on-site childcare provision which is an essential part of the project as it enables access to the programmes for women with young children. Participants also have access to a range of personal support measures including counselling services, job search activities and where appropriate development of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills while on the programme.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 participants	Very Good
Provision for learning and development	Very Good
Leadership and management	Very Good

#### 5. Outcomes for participants

The outcomes for participants are very good. Almost all of them engage well in their learning and development activities. The participants are developing well their knowledge and understanding of adult care, fashion and garment making, information technology and hair styling, and are making very good progress in the completion of their targeted accredited qualifications. Most of the participants are achieving very good standards in their written work, are able to apply their learning in appropriate contexts, and display high levels of motivation and enthusiasm to progress in their learning beyond the level 1 programme. The expectation for the participants to achieve high standards in their work is shared at all levels across the staff team.

Work-experience sampling and voluntary work opportunities are available, and are promoted well during the induction process and then again revisited when the participants are engaged on the programme. The project staff work with a range of community, voluntary and private employers to provide a range of experiences which support the development of the participants' employability and professional and technical skills.

Almost all of the participants report high levels of satisfaction with their programme. They report the project provides them with good opportunities to meet socially, develop friendships, improve their communication skills, and that their confidence, motivation and capacity for learning have improved as a result of participating on the project.

Recruitment to the project, to date, has exceeded the targets set. In the first year of the project 202 participants were recruited against a target of 180. At this stage in year 2 of the project a total of 190 participants have been recruited against the target of 180.

In year 1 of the project, the retention rate on accredited qualifications was very good at 70% and the achievement rate was outstanding at 100%. The current retention rate on year 2 is outstanding at 86%.

In year 1 of the programme, the progression rate into further training and employment exceeded the targets set, however progression to further education programmes is an area for improvement.

## **6. Provision for learning and development**

The quality of the provision for learning and development is very good. The curriculum is appropriate and focuses on four areas: Information and Digital Technology; Administration and Finance; Care; and the Creative Industries. The organisation also provides an appropriate range of pre-employment programmes which are an effective introduction to the world of work. There are also established progression opportunities at level 2 in essential skills and in health and social care provided by the local further education college. The relationships developed between the participants and the staff in the organisation are mutually respectful and effectively support the development of the participants' confidence and self-esteem.

The overall quality of the learning, teaching and assessment is very good and is characterised by an inclusive and supportive ethos; highly effective use of the questioning strategies to extend and deepen the participants' understanding of key concepts; high expectations; stretch and challenge; and the embedding of literacy development across all aspects of assessment for and of learning.

As part of the project the Women's Centre offer Jobs Club drop-in support for job search, job applications and interview support.

The quality of the care and welfare is very good. Very effective links and partnerships have been established with a range of external organisations and agencies to support the delivery of the project and to help the participants who present with a range of additional personal and learning needs. Appropriate sign-posting and referral processes are in place to meet the personal support needs of the participants, in addition to the provision of in-house counselling within the Women's Centres. The participants who have very young children report that the provision of crèche facilities is a crucial factor in enabling them to sustain involvement in their learning programme.

The quality of the participants' individual learning plans is very good. The plans identify well the long and short term goals of the participants and they are revisited once the participants are engaged on the programme to review their goals and progress. In induction there is an effective assessment and progression plan which records the outcomes from their initial assessments, identifies the individual participant's learning pathway and their targeted levels. If appropriate, participants are encouraged to undertake essential skills training within the Centre or are signposted to level 2 provision at the local college.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The quality of the leadership and management is very good, at both strategic and operational levels, and is characterised by a strong commitment to social inclusion, community development and regeneration. The staff have worked hard to address the areas for improvement identified in the baseline inspection visit, and in particular have: introduced initial assessments of the participants' literacy and numeracy skills on entry to the project, which is used effectively to inform their individual learning programmes; and have developed further the distance travelled toolkit that demonstrates clearly the impact of the project on the participants' personal, social and employability skills.

Project staff are working hard to develop further connections to other Women's Centre projects, and to other community and voluntary agencies to provide appropriate work-experience opportunities and progression pathways, to and from the project. The links with the local FE college to provide participants with essential skills support and development at level 2, and qualifications at level 2 in health and social care are developing well. Project staff are aware of the need to develop a range of appropriate progression pathways for participants beyond the life of the project, in order for the project to meet the targets set in the original bid.

The quality of the accommodation is very good in the Women's Centre, Derry and provides good accessibility for the participants. Resources to support learning and development are also very good and include access to interactive whiteboards, computers in classrooms, and sewing machines for participants undertaking the Level 1 Award in Fashion. In the Waterside Women's Centre there is a need to develop further the resources for learning.

The systems and processes used to manage the provision are very effective, and very good progress has been made in the development of an in-house system to monitor distance travelled by individual participants with regard to their personal, social and employability skills.

Project staff have worked hard to develop further their self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, including gathering performance data on retention, achievement and progression, and the related improvements in the personal and social skills of the participants. There is a need to use the data collated more effectively in the self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan, to demonstrate better the impact of the project, and to collate more systematically feedback from all key stakeholders.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, The Women's Centre's PROSPER 2 project has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and adults at risk. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department, however the project promoter needs to:

- review and standardise the safeguarding policies and procedures across the two centres.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

The Women's Centre, Derry has a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the participants.

## APPENDIX

### Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
PROSPER 2 Year 1	202	112%
PROSPER 2 Year 2	180	106%



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