



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
**Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

Jobskills and New Deal Provision

in

Seven Towers Training

Antrim and Ballymena

November 2007

FOLLOW-UP TO THE JOBSKILLS AND NEW DEAL EXTENDED INSPECTION OF SEVEN TOWERS TRAINING (STT)

The original inspection from October 2005 to February 2006 highlighted a number of strengths in the provision. These included the:

- good standards of work achieved by most of the trainees;
- good retention rate on the modern apprenticeship (MA) programme in mechanical engineering at 84%;
- excellent success and progression rates across the programmes inspected at over 90% and good success rates on the New Deal 18-24 programmes at 89%;
- effective use of initial assessment to identify the learning needs of each trainee;
- good or better quality of the trainees' workplace training;
- excellent quality of the trainees' directed training sessions for essential and key skills;
- good quality of leadership provided by the training manager;
- well managed and co-ordinated training programmes; and
- effective links with a range of stakeholders.

The inspection also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the poor retention rates across most of the Jobskills programmes inspected at 56%;
- the poor retention and progression rates to sustained employment on the New Deal 18-24 programmes at 35% and 15% respectively, together with the poor success and progression rates to sustained employment on the New Deal 25+ Preparation for Employment (PEP) option at 53% and 9% respectively;
- the variable quality of the directed training provided for trainees in mechanical engineering and in wood occupations;

- the insufficient involvement of employers in reviewing the trainees' progress and in setting short-term training targets for skills development in the vocational areas of hairdressing and beauty therapy;
- the limited use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support training and learning in beauty therapy, wood occupations, and decorative occupations;
- the inadequate programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provided for the trainees; and
- the insufficient use of key performance indicators to inform the review and evaluation of the quality of provision for the Jobskills and New Deal programmes.

In the interval since the inspection, the main changes that affect the work of the organisation include the:

- implementation of procedures aimed at improving retention, including the development of an 'at risk' strategy for trainees at risk of leaving their programme, the introduction of an apprentice progression path in the vocational area of mechanical engineering and the introduction of a pre-vocational Access programme in September 2006;
- appointment of two new co-ordinators in essential skills and mechanical engineering, and two other members of staff in essential skills;
- significant investment in ILT resources to support training and learning; and
- provision of an appropriate staff development programme, focusing particularly on essential skills.

In November 2007, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out a follow-up inspection, and the following are the most significant improvements since the original inspection:

- the improved retention rates in the programmes inspected. Across Jobskills programmes the overall rate has increased from 63% in 2004-2005 to 74% in 2006-2007, while on the New Deal 18-24 programme retention has increased significantly from 35% in 2004-2005 to 94% in 2006-2007;
- the well improved rates of progression to sustained employment on the New Deal programmes. The rates have increased from 15% to 37% on the 18-24 programme and from 9% to 12% on the 25+ programme; both rates exceed the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 21% and 7% respectively;
- the well planned directed training sessions for trainees in mechanical engineering and in wood occupations;
- the effective liaison between the vocational tutors and employers in the vocational areas of hairdressing and beauty; employers are now more sufficiently engaged in

setting, monitoring and reviewing short-term training targets, and are better informed of the content of the trainees' National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) awards;

- the development and implementation of an appropriate programme of CEIAG, including jobsearch activities; and
- the development of improved procedures to support the self-evaluation and development planning process for the Jobskills and New Deal programmes, including the systematic review of key performance indicators and targets.

The area which requires further improvement is:

- the need for appropriate staff development to support the use of ILT across all programmes.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, Seven Towers Training has major strengths in its educational and training provision. The educational, training and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The parents and local community can have confidence in the organisations capacity for sustained self-improvement.

	The original inspection (old grading system)	The follow-up inspection (old grading system)	Revised Grading System
Grade for overall provision	2	1	2
Contributory grades:			
Leadership and Management	2	1	2
Standards and Outcomes	2	1	2
Quality of training and Learning	2	1	2

		The original inspection (old grading system)	The follow-up inspection (old grading system)	Revised Grading System
Contributory grades:				
Jobskills		2	1	2
New Deal	18-24	*	*	*
	25+	*	*	

Programme area grades	The original inspection (old grading system)	The follow-up inspection (old grading system)	Revised Grading System
Contributory grades:			
Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy	2	1	2
Jobskills	2	1	2
Mechanical Engineering	2	2	3
Jobskills	2	2	3
Building and Construction	2	1	2
Jobskills	2	1	2
Preparation For Life and Work	2	1	2
Essential Skills:			
Jobskills New Deal	2	1	2
CEIAG	n/a	2	3
Trainee Support	n/a	1	2

* As a consequence of the low numbers of participants registered on the New Deal programme at the time of the follow-up inspection, no inspection grade was awarded.

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