

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

WORK-BASED LEARNING INSPECTION

Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI
Provision in Springvale Learning Limited

Report of a Third Follow-up Inspection in May 2022



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Third follow-up inspection to Springvale Learning Limited

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a second follow-up inspection of Springvale Learning Limited in September 2019¹ which concluded that it remained that the organisation needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all of the trainees and apprentices. The provision for the professional and technical area of Construction remained as having important areas for improvement, while the provision for the professional and technical area of Health and Social Care was re-evaluated as now having important areas for improvement.

The second follow-up inspection identified the following areas for improvement:

- continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of the provision for construction and health and social care;
- further refine and embed the quality improvement planning process to plan more effectively for sustained improvement, particularly the more effective tracking and monitoring of progress across the professional and technical areas and the essential skills; and
- improve further the retention and progression rates on the Training for Success programme, and the retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in February 2022 and a follow-up inspection in May 2022.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the following key actions or changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- A new management team has recently been recruited which remains at an early stage of development and embedding; all management positions are now filled, with clear roles and responsibilities.
- A number of new posts were identified and staff have been appointed recently to these roles, to include an employment officer, a marketing officer and a well-being officer who is a trained counsellor.
- Staff have been appointed to replace those who left, including a joinery tutor, a plumbing tutor, an essential skills tutor and the qualifications coordinator. Two internal tutor mentors have recently been appointed and an external support organisation has also been engaged to support the new tutors.
- In September 2021 the domiciliary care provider currently delivering the professional and technical qualification was awarded their own ApprenticeshipsNI contract for health and social care. In line with the service level agreement with Springvale Learning Ltd, the provider will continue to provide training and workplace assessment to ensure that all remaining apprentices complete their programme.

¹ [Second Follow-up Inspection - Springvale Learning Limited \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk/second-follow-up-inspection-springvale-learning-limited)

- A number of working groups have been recently set up, to include behavior management, technology-enhanced learning and special educational needs.
- Transversal skills and employability programmes have been delivered to a number of local post-primary schools.
- Improved tracking and monitoring of the provision has been put in place for those learners identified as being at risk, including regular reviews of attendance.

However, in part as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic, a number of the planned improvements remain at an early stage of development and embedding; the impact of the key actions required have yet to be realised.

Views of trainees, apprentices and staff

- Forty-eight percent of the trainees and apprentices responded to the questionnaires. These respondents and those spoken to in a focus group, in directed training and in the workplace reported that they feel well supported in the organisation, that their confidence levels have improved as a result of participation on the programmes and they feel that they can now contribute better in class discussions. They also reported that they are well informed about how to stay safe and feel safe and secure in the organisation and the workplace. They find the training they receive useful, for example learning new techniques that helps them improve their accuracy and efficiency in their workplace.
- Eighty percent of the staff responded to the questionnaire. They reported that the organisation supports them well to deliver face-to-face learning and that they have good digital skills that enable them to prepare for and deliver online learning. They also report that they have access to appropriate IT equipment, internet facilities and learning resources in the organisation.

Key Findings

The outcomes for learners remains an important area for improvement.

- The retention rate on the Training for Success programme for 2020/21 is still a significant area for improvement (47%)².
- The progression rates of the trainees on the Training for Success programme to further training, education or employment still require significant further improvement (47%).

² All performance data used in this report was provided by the organisation.

- The retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme for 2020/21 is still a significant area for improvement (56%).

Construction remains as having important areas for improvement.

- The organisation has continued to have a significant turnover in plumbing tutors which has impacted significantly on the continuity of training. The sector-wide difficulty recruiting suitably qualified and experienced tutors, has resulted in gaps in the trainees' learning. As a result, the retention rate in 2019/20 (21%) and 2020/21 (29%) had not improved sufficiently and continues to require urgent improvement (21%). Currently the trainees on the new Skills for Life and Work programme have been retained. The retention of the trainees needs to be a priority.
- A new plumbing tutor has been appointed and more recently an additional associate tutor has been recruited. To support the new tutors, a tutor induction policy has been recently introduced with two tutor mentors recently appointed internally to provide pedagogic support, along with two external mentors to provide technical input. This capacity building work is still at an early stage and should continue in order to improve the outcomes attained by the trainees, and the quality of the learning, teaching, training and assessment in plumbing.
- A revised retention strategy has been recently implemented, including a range of measures such as more rigorous tracking, monitoring and review procedures underpinned by a case conferencing process to identify the trainees' support needs. The strategy, and its impact have not yet been realised. There should be continued monitoring of attendance across the provision to support the legacy Training for Success trainees to stay on their programme and achieve their qualifications, and to improve the progression rates across the provision.
- With the recent appointment of the new employment engagement officer, priority has been given to developing further links with employers. This has been to good effect and there has been a significant increase in the work placement rate with almost all (90%) of the carpentry and joinery and plumbing trainees now in a relevant work-experience placement.
- The overall very good quality of learning, teaching and training in carpentry and joinery has been sustained. Effective approaches to learning, teaching and training are used to enable the trainees with a wide range of learning and support needs to make progress in their learning. Level 2 trainees are challenged to undertake complex construction projects and to self-assess their work.
- Investment has been made in toolkits to enhance and to support the delivery of the carpentry and joinery provision.

- The recovery plan for carpentry and joinery, and plumbing identifies appropriate actions to promote improvement, and there are clearer arrangements for management oversight of the progress being made on them. The plan needs to be strengthened to include specific targets for improvement by which to gauge progress and measure impact on the quality of provision.

Health and social care remains as having important areas for improvement.

- Throughout the pandemic the organisation, through its sub-contractor arrangement, has continued to provide flexible access to training for a small number of health and social care apprentices. Retention and progress of the apprentices should be monitored closely to ensure that as many as possible successfully complete their programme.
- The existing good or better quality of learning and teaching in health and social care has been sustained: effective and flexible approaches to learning, teaching and training are used to enable the apprentices to engage well in their training, both individually and in small groups, and to make progress in their learning.
- The literacy and numeracy essential skills needs of the small number of apprentices are being addressed.
- Effective processes for tracking, monitoring and evaluating the apprentices' progress have been developed, including strengthening links with employers and workplace supervisors, to ensure that progress across all aspects of the training programme is recorded.
- The organisation has paused recruitment to the health and social care apprenticeship programme and are exploring the viability of continuing to offer the programme in the future. In line with the existing service level agreement, the sub-contractor will support the current cohort of apprentices to complete their programme. While there is evidence of some work being undertaken around the identification of a possible new associate tutor, and employer engagement, to date there is insufficient detail around decision-making and planning for a replacement delivery model.
- The self-evaluation and quality improvement plan for health and social care should be further developed, to identify clearly the current challenges and the strategic actions to address these.

The leadership and management remains as an important area for improvement.

- The newly appointed management team have responded well to the feedback received during the recent interim follow-up visit. For example, they have put in place a number of measures including revised procedures for the tracking and monitoring of learner progress with weekly key performance indicators being produced to identify at an early stage learners who are at risk of dropping out.

- While staff retention and recruitment have proved a challenge, there has been continued investment in staffing and resources. The prioritisation of capacity building of staff is appropriate; this work is still at an early stage and its impact on the quality of provision and retention of staff needs to be closely monitored.
- A wellbeing officer who is a trained counsellor has been recently appointed to strengthen the arrangements for supporting the trainees, along with a range of strategies including referral to external agencies and programmes.
- The quality improvement processes continue to be an area for improvement. Better use needs to be made of data, including trend data to better inform the evaluations being made. The resulting quality improvement plan needs to identify more well considered actions to bring about the desired improvements.

Overall Effectiveness

Springvale Learning Limited needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all of the trainees and apprentices.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of the provision for construction and health and social care;
- improve the retention rates on the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes and the progression rates on the Training for Success programme;
- improve the quality improvement planning processes both at whole-organisation, and at professional and technical areas; and
- support and retain staff and tutors at all levels.

Further action will be considered by the Department for the Economy.

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