



*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 an Inspection

Elle Enterprises New Deal Consortium Coleraine

Inspected: January 2008

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A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small number

The statistics in this report have been supplied by the Department for Employment and Learning.

Grading system

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) is piloting a new 6-point grading scale to replace the original 4-point scale as set out below. Where grades are recorded in this report, the grade is given on both the old and the revised scales.

ORIGINAL GRADE	REVISED GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
1	1	Outstanding characterised by excellence.
1	2	Consistently good; major strengths
2	3	Important strengths in most of provision. Areas for improvement which the organisation has the capacity to address.
2	4	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed.
3	5	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action.
4	6	Major shortcomings which require urgent action

PART ONE

SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Elle Enterprises Northern Ireland Limited (Elle Enterprises) is contracted as the lead partner by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to provide training for the Ballymena, Ballymoney and Coleraine New Deal consortia.

1.2 The Ballymoney and Coleraine consortia are managed from Elle Enterprises' main premises in Long Commons, Coleraine. The consortium consists of Elle Enterprises as the lead partner, Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland (CVNI), Coleraine Borough Council and the Northern Regional College. At the time of the inspection no participants were registered with Coleraine Borough Council or the Northern Regional College. The Ballymena consortium is managed from Elle Enterprises' Broughshane Street premises in Ballymena. The consortium comprises the lead partner, Rutledge Joblink Ballymena (RJB) and Seven Towers Training (STT). Elle Enterprises employs nine full-time staff including the director and area manager, four training officers, three administrators and one part-time essential skills tutor. The training officers are the main point of contact for participants, their role includes initial assessment, organising placements and training, reviewing and monitoring progress, and delivering Jobsearch sessions.

1.3 Across the three consortia, 59% of the participants had no qualifications on entry to their programme, 16% had achieved level 2 qualifications in English or mathematics, 11% had four or more General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at grade C or above, and 14% had other qualifications at level 2 or above.

1.4 The latest figures (December 2007) supplied by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) indicate that the percentage of working age individuals claiming Jobseekers Allowance in the Ballymena area is 1.5%, which is below the Northern Ireland (NI) average figure of 2.1%. The claimant count rate in Ballymoney is also below the NI average at 1.9%, while Coleraine is above the NI average at 2.3%.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection 92 participants were registered across the three consortia, 28 in Ballymena, 18 in Ballymoney and 46 in Coleraine. Seventy-seven of the participants were registered with Elle Enterprises, six with the CVNI, six with STT and three with RJB.

2.2 Thirty-nine participants were registered on the New Deal 18-24 options, 24 on Full-Time Education and Training (FTET), six on the Voluntary Sector Option (VSO), three on the Essential Skills Training (EST) option and six on the Environmental Task Force (ETF) option. Fifty-three participants were registered on the 25+ options, 29 on the Preparation for Employment Programme (PEP), 18 on the Education and Training Opportunity (ETO) option and six on the EST option.

2.3 Participants on the FTET were working towards a range of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level two, four in business and administration, four in children's care, learning and development (CCLD), three in distribution, warehousing and storage operations, one in information technology (IT) users, two in professional cookery and nine in retail operations. In addition, one participant was working towards the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) award. Twenty of the participants were working towards a full NVQ award.

2.4 Participants on the Education and Training Opportunity (ETO) option were also working towards a range of full NVQs, one in business and administration, one in distribution, warehousing and storage operations, three in catering and hospitality, four in CCLD, one in IT users, and six in retail operations. The remaining two participants were working towards the ECDL award.

2.5 The nine participants registered on the EST options were targeting essential skills qualifications at an appropriate level in literacy and numeracy. The majority of participants on the PEP were placed with private or public sector organisations in a variety of contexts, with the remainder placed in the voluntary sector. The six participants on the VSO were all appropriately placed in the voluntary sector. Three of the six participants on the ETF were placed with the CVNI, one was placed with Coleraine Borough Council and the remainder with community organisations.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 In January 2008, a team of five inspectors visited Elle Enterprises and carried out an inspection of participants, both in the workplace and directed training. The team observed 25 participants in the workplace and 42 in directed training.

3.2 Discussions were held with the director of Elle Enterprises, the area manager, the training officers for each of the three contract areas, course tutors, workplace supervisors and representatives from consortium partners. In addition inspectors examined a wide range of documentation including the consortia self-evaluation reports and development plans, participants' written and practical work, policies, procedures, minutes of meetings, Internal Verifier documentation and participants' personal files.

3.3 In preparation for the inspection the participants completed a pastoral care questionnaire, which provided them with an opportunity to comment on the quality of their training and learning experiences.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In the areas inspected, the consortia have major strengths in their educational and training provision. The educational and training needs of the learners are being well met, along with the needs of the community and the economy. The community can have confidence in the consortia's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- good quality of the work placements;
- high levels of motivation and commitment of most participants to their work placements;
- improvement in employability skills achieved by the majority of participants;
- good standards of occupational skills demonstrated by most participants in the workplace;
- percentage of participants moving into sustained employment at 22% and 12% on the 18-24 and 25+ options respectively, which are at or above the NI average; and
- good quality of the leadership and management.

4.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- planning for the development of essential skills within the EST option.

Grades	Revised Grading System	Original Grading System
Overall Grade:	2	1
Contributory grades:		
Leadership and Management	2	1
Achievements and Standards	2	1
Quality of Provision for Learning	3	2

PART TWO

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The lead partner provides effective leadership and management for all consortia partners. Regular consortia meetings are held every two months to review and plan the management of the consortia. The meetings are well attended by partners actively involved in the consortium and include appropriate representation from the local Jobs and Benefits Offices. Area team meetings, attended by all of the staff in each of Elle Enterprises area offices, are also held on a monthly basis, to discuss and plan for a range of operational issues.

5.2 The training officers are highly motivated and supportive and have established excellent links with participants, employers, jobcentre staff and directed training tutors.

5.3 The self evaluation and development planning process is both appropriate and effective, and results in areas for improvement being quickly identified and addressed.

5.4 Good care and support arrangements for all participants are in place across the consortia.

5.5 The planning within the EST option is inconsistent and does not take a holistic approach. In particular, the initial assessment process is not used well to inform the planning for training, learning and progression. Management need to improve planning for the development of individual participants' essential skills needs within the EST option.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

6.1 The consortia maintain a range of good quality work placements which are selected to match the needs and aspirations of the participants. They provide the participants with good opportunities to progress to sustained employment.

6.2 At the time of the inspection, good standards of occupational skills were demonstrated by most of the participants in the work place.

6.3 Most of the participants demonstrate high levels of commitment and attendance. On the FTET and ETO options most of the participants value the qualifications they are working towards and consider that they will improve their employability opportunities.

6.4 The majority of the participants on the Full-Time Education and Training (FTET) and Education and Training Opportunity (ETO) options are making good progress in achieving their target qualifications.

6.5 Statistics available from the Department for the period 2006-2007 show that across the consortia the percentage of participants on the 18-24 year old options moving into sustained employment is 22%, which is above the NI average of 21%.

6.6 For the same period, statistics show that the percentage of participants on the 25+ New Deal options progressing to sustained employment are 16% and 13% for the Ballymoney and Coleraine consortia respectively, which are both above the NI average of 12%. The progression to sustained employment in the Ballymena consortium, however, is below the NI average at 7%.

7. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7.1 The analysis of the participants' questionnaires, completed prior to the inspection, indicates that 81% are satisfied with their training experiences. The key features highlighted by the participants are the quality of the work placements and the high levels of support provided by staff.

7.2 All the consortium members have good arrangements for the care and support of the participants which promote excellent relationships with employers.

7.3 The quality of almost all of the directed training sessions observed was good. A small number of participants, however, have insufficient access to, and use of, information learning technology (ILT) to develop their information communication technology (ICT) skills and to support and enhance their learning.

7.4 The work placements provide most of the participants with good opportunities to develop suitable occupational, personal and social skills that will improve their employability opportunities.

7.5 The monitoring and assessment of the participants' progress in the workplace is regular and effective. The learning and development plans provide broad targets for learning, but are not sufficiently detailed to support short-term learning objectives. As a result, a small minority of employers are not sufficiently informed about the workplace requirements of the NVQ.

7.6 Within the EST option, there is a need to improve the links between the initial assessment process and the planning for training, learning and progression.

PART THREE

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Elle Enterprises needs to revise its annual development plan to take account of the following key priority for development:

- to widen participation and improve the planning, initial assessment and delivery of essential skills.

APPENDIX

Statistics supplied by the Department for Elle Enterprises New Deal Consortium

Table 1 New Deal options for 18-24 year olds during 2006-2007

Contract area	Number of leavers	Progressed to sustained employment
Elle Enterprises (Ballymena)	57	21%
Elle Enterprises (Ballymoney)	32	22%
Elle Enterprises (Coleraine)	65	22%
Overall	154	22%

Table 2 New Deal options for 25+ year olds during 2006/2007

Contract area	Number of leavers	Progressed to sustained employment
Elle Enterprises (Ballymena)	43	7%
Elle Enterprises (Ballymoney)	32	16%
Elle Enterprises (Coleraine)	72	13%
Overall	147	12%

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