



*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

**North City Training Limited
Belfast**

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 minority

All the statistics relating to Jobskills in this report have been supplied and verified by North City Training.

Grading System

The Education and Training 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.

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

1. CONTEXT

1.1 North City Training Limited (NCT) supplies Jobskills and Training for Success (TfS) programmes for the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department), and has been the lead partner of the North Belfast and Newtownabbey New Deal consortium since 1998, and of the Larne consortium since April 2007. North City Training provides vocational training in five different locations in North Belfast, Newtownabbey and Belfast city centre, and has a head office on the Antrim Road.

1.2 North City Training provides training for young people and adults from a wide geographical area. Almost all of the catchment wards served fall within the top 10%, and almost two-thirds within the top 5% of areas of multiple deprivation, as measured by the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2005.

1.3 North City Training provides training for members of both traditional communities. Almost all of the trainees (91%) on Jobskills and TfS programmes are in the A3 category. Most of these young people have significant personal, motivational and behavioural problems and often have essential skills needs and poor records of attendance and achievement in school. Almost one-quarter of the current trainees (24%) are referred to NCT by the Probation Service, Restorative Justice, or Alternative Education Programmes.

1.4 There are particularly low levels of adult educational attainment in many of the wards covered by NCT. In the Crumlin, Shankill, and Woodvale wards of Belfast the proportion of adults aged 25 to 74 with no qualifications was recorded in the Report of the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities¹ as 82%, 70% and 74% respectively.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection, 89 trainees were registered with NCT on Jobskills training programmes. Of these, 31 were on Access programmes, 50 on Traineeship programmes, and eight on Modern Apprenticeship programmes. Of the 126 trainees on the TfS programme, 21 were registered on Personal Development, 71 on Skills for Work, 28 on Pre-Apprenticeship, and six on Apprenticeship programmes. Of the 59 participants on the New Deal 18-24 programme, 43 were on the Full-Time Education and Training, eleven on the Voluntary Sector and five on the Essential Skills training. At the time of the inspection, there were 87 participants on the New Deal programme for those aged 25 and over. Of these, 21 were registered on the Education and Training Opportunities, 60 on the Preparation for Employment, and six on Essential Skills Training.

2.2 Trainees are recruited to the Jobskills, and TfS programmes from a wide catchment area, which spans inner-city and Greater Belfast, and Newtownabbey. Most of the Jobskills and TfS trainees leave post-primary education with few or no qualifications. At the time of the inspection, only a small number (5%) of the trainees on the Jobskills and TfS programmes held either General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English or GCSE mathematics, at grade C or above.

¹ Report of the Taskforce on Protestant Working Class Communities published by the Department for Social Development January 2005

2.3 Most of the directed training for the Jobskills and TfS programmes is delivered on one of the five NCT sites. There is a wide range of provision, including administration, child care, distributive operations, general construction operations, information technology, playwork and trowel occupations. In addition, training in catering, hairdressing and wood occupations are purchased from three other providers. North City Training works with 15 full partners and a number of associate partners from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to deliver the New Deal contracts for North Belfast, Newtownabbey and Larne.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 On the basis of information available to the Department, including NCT's self-evaluation reports and a range of inspection reports, North City Training was designated, prior to the inspection, as a provider of high quality training, with the capacity for sustained self-improvement. North City Training is the first organisation to be inspected on a proportionate basis, as a low-risk provider.

3.2 In January 2008, a team of three inspectors, assisted by a team of professional associates, carried out an inspection, to evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation's leadership and management in supporting teaching, training and learning and promoting the achievement of good standards in vocational training and preparation for employment, across all of the programmes it supplies for the Department. In particular, the inspection focused on the efficacy of the organisation's key processes including; strategic and operational planning; design, delivery, and evaluation of teaching, training and learning; provision of care, support and guidance, and the implementation of self-assessment and improvement planning.

3.3 The inspection team held extensive discussions with the Executive Director and with members of the management team. In addition, interviews were held with vocational and essential skills tutors, co-ordinators, monitoring, support and development officers, employers and trainees. The inspectors scrutinised NCT's corporate and departmental business and development plans, sampled vocational and essential skills portfolios, internal and external verifier reports and other relevant documentation. They also visited Jobskills and TfS trainees and New Deal participants in the workplace, and met with groups of trainees.

3.4 For the purposes of this report, the term 'trainees' will be used to report on the provision for all of the learners across the range of programmes provided by NCT for the Department.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 North City Training is a key provider of vocational training and employment programmes in some of the most socially and economically deprived areas of Belfast. In this context the quality of the training provided in this organisation is very good. The educational and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met. The local community can have confidence in the organisation's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- quality of the leadership and management, at all levels in the organisation, which effectively implements rigorous quality improvement arrangements across Jobskills, Training for Success and New Deal programmes;
- quality of the care, support and guidance, in particular the careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), provided for the trainees, who have unusually high levels of personal, motivational and behavioural problems, and low levels of literacy and numeracy on entry to the programme;
- well planned and managed work placements that provide most trainees with good opportunities to develop their employability and occupational skills;
- arrangements for monitoring and assessing the trainees in the workplace and in all aspects of their training, which are highly effective and promote good standards of work for most of the trainees;
- good progress made by most trainees in developing skills for life and work, considering the major personal and social problems they have on entering the programme;
- progress in learning, which includes practical training and skills for life and work and is good across the Jobskills, Training for Success and New Deal programmes;
- retention rate for Access trainees, which is good at just over 60%, considering their barriers to learning on entry to the programme, and the significant number who suspend their training due to pregnancy or custodial sentences;
- progression to work or further training, which is good for those who complete the full framework of the Traineeship programme, at 90%; and
- good success rates at almost 80% for Access trainees who complete their programme.

4.3 The main area for improvement is:

- the links with all educational and training providers to address the essential skills deficiencies experienced by most of the trainees.

4.4 GRADES

	Grade
Overall Grade	2
Contributory grades:	
Leadership and Management	1
Achievements and Standards	3
Quality of Training and Learning	2

Grades continued

Programme	Grade
Jobskills	2
New Deal	3
Training for Success	2

Area	Grade
Preparation for Life and Work	2
CEIAG	2
Preparation for Employment	1
Trainee Support	1
Assessment of trainees' needs and abilities	1
Guidance and counselling	1
Essential Skills – Communications	2
Essential Skills - Numeracy	2

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and management of NCT are excellent at all levels of the organisation. The Executive Director and the senior managers provide strong strategic direction. There is a clear, learner-centred vision for the organisation and the well-qualified staff work closely together and share a strong commitment to NCT's strategic objectives. There are excellent opportunities for staff to engage in continuous professional development.

5.2 The key processes for the design, delivery, and evaluation of teaching, training and learning and for the provision of care, support and guidance are very good, and are effective in promoting well-planned and coherent training experiences across the programmes. Appropriate policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Young People and Vulnerable Adults are in place.

5.3 The procedures for initial assessment are rigorous and robust. Trainees' skills and competences and barriers to learning, including their essential skills needs, are clearly defined. The outcomes of assessments are used effectively to plan individualised learning and development programmes, and provide appropriate support to address additional learning needs.

5.4 North City Training has identified a clear and coherent curriculum entitlement for trainees on all of the programmes they offer, including each of the strands of TfS. The trainees are following appropriate and challenging programmes which, considering the major barriers to learning and employment most present on entry, enable most of them to grow in confidence and develop their personal and occupational skills through well-structured directed training, work sampling or work-based training. The procedures for tracking, monitoring and evaluating trainee progress are systematic and very rigorous.

5.5 The quality of the CEIAG is very good and impartial and informed advice, guidance and support are an integral part of the provision for all trainees. The staff work closely with the Careers Service to ensure that trainees are on the programme matched most closely to their needs, capabilities and aspirations, and good use is made of inter-agency case conferences to address trainees' personal problems.

5.6 The procedures for self-assessment and improvement planning, which include direct observation of teaching, training and learning, are effective in implementing rigorous quality improvement arrangements across all of the programmes. The use of information and learning technology (ILT) in teaching is underdeveloped and there is considerable scope to explore the ways in which ILT can be used to support differentiated learning.

5.7 Management information data is collated and evaluated regularly, and used effectively to identify and address areas in which improvement is required. North City Training has engaged in benchmarking its performance against key indicators with similar organisations on a national level, and there is a need to extend this good practice to include benchmarking against local organisations with similar provision.

5.8 The Executive Director and the senior managers represent NCT and, at times, the Training Sector, on a range of key strategic groups. Good relationships have been developed with a wide range of organisations from the statutory and voluntary sectors, and these links are highly effective in providing appropriate levels of support for trainees.

KEY PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

A strategic area-based approach to planning for education and training provision, to develop more effective links between all providers, including schools, colleges, and training organisations, and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies, to work collectively to address the essential skills deficits experienced by most of the trainees entering this training organisation.

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