

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CALL 2 VISIT

European Social Fund provision in Job Directions

A Wee Job

Report of a Call 2 Visit in January 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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Context

Job Directions is contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the A Wee Job (Wee Job) European Social Fund (ESF) project. This project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020 and DfE. The strategic aim of the Programme is to: combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity; and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. It is aligned to the European Union 2020 Strategy for Jobs and Growth.

In January 2022, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a Call 2 visit to Job Directions on behalf of DfE to evaluate the capacity of the project promoter to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision. The Call 2 visit was informed by the quality improvement plan which has been scrutinised by ETI.

Views of participants

At the time of the Call 2 visit, 15 participants¹ were registered on the project.

While very few of the participants² completed the online questionnaire, ETI met and spoke with a small sample of participants in their work placements and at the project promoter's premises. They all reported that staff were very helpful and they received high levels of support during their time on the project.

Focus of the Call 2 Visit

The Call 2 visit focused on evaluating the extent to which the project promoter is able to demonstrate its capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for the Wee Job ESF project.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

Two of the key areas which the organisation has prioritised for improvement through its self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are to:

- improve access for participants to appropriate online learning and to enhance the range of training which can be undertaken in a COVID safe manner; and
- better understand the needs and aspirations of younger people with a disability and to create pathways for them to access the Wee Job project.

¹ All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter.

² Fewer than 5.

Key Findings

The Call 2 visit identified the following key findings.

- The curriculum offer is good and is appropriately tailored to match each participant's individual learning and development needs. Good opportunities exist for the participants to complete relevant short qualifications directly linked to their employment goals including manual handling, food hygiene, infection control and medical terminology. The project promoter is proactive in seeking further relevant opportunities to broaden the curriculum offer. A key feature of the provision is the funding and allocation of specific or specialised qualifications needed to support the participants to progress and improve their life chances. For example delivery of the Construction Skills Register health and safety training has provided employment opportunities for participants.
- Staff are well-experienced in the delivery of community based programmes. They have developed a welcoming, participant-centred and caring ethos and provide high levels of support to the participants throughout the duration of the project, particularly during their transition into work placements and/or employment.
- Over the four year period, to-date, the enrolment target has almost been achieved, and the retention rate is high. The targets for both the progression of participants into employment and education and training have been exceeded. While the target for participants remaining in employment six months after their date of leaving the project has not been met, it remains high in spite of the ongoing and difficult operating conditions faced by participants and employers as a consequence of the pandemic.
- A rigorous initial assessment process is in place, resulting in the development of a clear action plan for each participant, which is underpinned by a personalised communication and an effective case-conferencing process that tracks well the progress the participants. Going forward, there is a need for staff to better identify and report on the development of the participants' wider skills and dispositions, in order to measure the "distance travelled" by participants in their personal development from their starting point on the project.
- While progress has been made in addressing all of the areas identified in the baseline visit in December 2018, there needs to be better assessment of the impact of the actions taken to enhance provision and promote improvement for the participants.
- The project is well managed, at all levels, with effective links established with a range of organisations that offer specialist support services, provide further training opportunities, and refer participants to the project. The project promoter is collaborating with local post-primary schools to ensure that those young people with disabilities are aware of the work and benefits of the project and to ensure they view it as a viable progression pathway when they complete their formal education.

Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the Wee Job project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to:

- update the policies and procedures for child protection and safeguarding young people and adults at risk;
- amend reporting procedures to ensure that they provide clear guidance to all staff members and participants in relation to the organisation's approach to the safeguarding of young people and adults at risk; and
- keep the safeguarding training under review to ensure all staff members have training appropriate to their role and level of responsibility.

Overall outcome

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, Job Directions demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for the Wee Job project.

APPENDIX

A. Call 2 Performance Data

European Social Fund – A Wee Job	Over the four-year period ³
Numbers of enrolments and % against target	103 (99%)
Numbers of participants into employment upon leaving and % against target	29 (112%)
Numbers of participants into education and/or training upon leaving and % against target	33 (206%)
Retention - Numbers and % against target	95 (92%)

B. Methodology and evidence base

The arrangements for this face-to-face and online visit included: reviewing participant files; discussions with a small sample of participants in their work placements and at the project promoter's premises; discussions with key stakeholders (employers and collaborative partners); and with key staff (including the quality improvement planning and safeguarding arrangements); and, the opportunity for all participants to complete a confidential questionnaire. Inspectors also scrutinised relevant data and documentation provided by the ESF project promoter.

ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the [ETI website](#).

C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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%

³ From April 2018 to December 2021.

Overall outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the project promoter:

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx ESF project.

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx demonstrates capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision for xx ESF project.

At the time of the Call 2 visit, and in the areas evaluated, xxxx has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision for xx ESF project. ETI will continue to monitor how the project promoter brings about improvement and the Department may consider further action.

Safeguarding outcome

ETI use one of the following outcomes when evaluating the project promoter's arrangements for safeguarding the participants:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx ESF project reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx ESF project reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The project promoter, however, needs to:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the Call 2 visit, the arrangements for safeguarding the participants of the for xx ESF project are unsatisfactory. <DN insert detail>.

ETI will return to the provider within six working weeks to monitor progress in addressing the unsatisfactory arrangements for safeguarding.

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