



*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 on

Jobskills and Training for Success Provision Swann Training Services

Inspected: October 2007

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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.

PART ONE

SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Swann Training Services (STS) is a charitable organisation, limited by guarantee. It was established in 1982 as Ulidia Training Services as a direct response to youth unemployment in the East Belfast area. It became known as STS in 2004. Swann Training Services supplies training for the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) through the Jobskills Access, Traineeship and Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes, and the Training for Success Job-Ready strand and Level 2 Apprenticeship programmes.

1.2 Swann Training Services is managed by a manager and a voluntary Board of Directors who act in an advisory capacity. There are seven other members of staff: a development officer who is responsible for the recruitment, placement and review of trainees; four tutors who are responsible for the management of directed training in the vocational areas, key and essential skills, and work-based learning; and two additional members of staff who are responsible for quality control and contract management, and fork lift training. The pastoral support and monitoring of the trainees' overall progress in directed training and in the workplace is also an integral part of the role of the vocational tutors.

1.3 Traditionally STS has targeted and worked with people from the local community in East Belfast who are often second or third generation unemployed. Most of the trainees who attend the Jobskills Access and level 2 Training programmes, and the Training for Success Job-Ready strand come from the wards of the Mount, Island, Ballymacarret and Woodstock. According to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the wards of the Island and the Mount are in the top 10% of the most socially and economically deprived. Those trainees who register on the MA programme in hospitality and catering are drawn exclusively from the North Down and Ards area.

1.4 The trainees on Jobskills programmes complete the framework appropriate to their level of training, including a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), key or essential skills, and, where applicable, a technical certificate. Those trainees on the Job-Ready components follow a programme designed to enable them to progress to higher level training, further education or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs and, where necessary, includes essential skills training.

1.5 At the time of the inspection, only a small number (4%) of the trainees on the Jobskills Access and Traineeship programmes, and Training for Success Job-Ready components held at least four General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications at grades A* to C on entry to their programme. However, the majority (70%) of the trainees on the MA programme in hospitality and catering held four or more passes at GCSE, and a majority (52%) have the equivalent of a level 3 qualification or better.

2. PROVISION

2.1 The number of trainees enrolled in the Jobskills and Training for Success programmes has increased by approximately 77%, since the last inspection in 2002 when 44 trainees were on the programme. This expansion has been largely due to an increase in the number of trainees on the MA programme in hospitality and catering. (This figure does not include the 28 motor vehicle trainees who are registered with STS for a short period and receive their training with another provider.)

2.2 Swann Training Services offer National Vocational Qualifications at levels 1 and 2 in the programme areas of administration, distributive operations, stores and warehousing, and retail, and at level 3 in hospitality and catering. In Training for Success, it offers all components of the Job-Ready programme and the level 2 Apprenticeship training.

2.3 During the week of the inspection 102 trainees were registered on Jobskills and Training for Success programmes. Seventy four were receiving all of their training with STS. The remaining 28 trainees were registered with STS for motor vehicle under the Job-Ready Pre-Apprenticeship component, but were receiving all of their training with another provider. Of those 74 trainees receiving all of their training with STS, seven (9%) are on the Access programmes, eight (11%) on the Traineeship programmes, 27 (36%) on the MA programme and 32 (43%) on the Job-Ready strand. Within the Job-Ready strand, six were registered on the Personal Development component, 22 on the Skills for Work component and four on the Pre-Apprenticeship component.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 The inspection focused on the quality of training provided on the programmes in distributive operations, stores and warehousing and retail (National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels 1 and 2), hospitality and catering (NVQ level 3), and the area of learning preparation for life and work. The latter includes the Access programme, the provision for key and essential skills, trainee support, and the careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). During the inspection the induction programme for those trainees on the Job-Ready strand was also inspected. This includes the Personal Development, Skills for Work and Pre-Apprenticeship components, and will also be included in the area of learning preparation for life and work.

3.2 During the inspection a team of four inspectors from the Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) and an Associate Assessor observed training sessions and visited trainees in the workplace. A total of 35 trainees were observed in directed training sessions, in vocational, key and essential skills, and 20 trainees were visited in the workplace. Discussions were held with the manager, development officer, member of staff responsible for quality control and contract management, the vocational and essential skills tutors, employers and trainees. In addition, the inspectors examined a sample of vocational and essential skills portfolios, internal and external verifier reports, minutes of management and team meetings and other relevant documentation.

3.3 Prior to the inspection a sample of the trainees completed a pastoral care questionnaire that provided them with the opportunity to comment on the quality of their training and learning experiences, and the pastoral care arrangements in STS. The Manager also completed a questionnaire relating to the provision of pastoral care within the organisation.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In the main areas inspected, the organisation has a few strengths in its educational and training provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement, which need to be addressed promptly if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all the learners, and the needs of the community and economy.

The Inspectorate will monitor and report regularly on the organisation's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

4.2 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The main strengths are the:

- good links with a range of external organisations that promote the trainees' personal and social development.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- insufficient planning at strategic and operational level to monitor trainee progress and achievement;
- insufficient planning by management to integrate effectively workplace and directed training;
- lack of staff development that focuses sufficiently on supporting the staff in developing a range of training and learning strategies; and
- strengthening of the self-evaluation and development planning processes.

4.3 STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

The main strengths are the:

- excellent progression and good success rates for the Access trainees at 100% and 84% respectively;
- good to excellent success rates across all Jobskills provision;
- good standards of occupational competence of most of the trainees, commensurate with their stage and level of training; and
- good standards of oral communication demonstrated by nearly all of the trainees.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- modest retention rates across all Jobskills programmes;
- inappropriate level of written responses by MA trainees; and
- poor achievements rates in key skills in the Access and Traineeship programmes.

4.4 QUALITY OF TRAINING AND LEARNING

The main strengths are the:

- good relationships between staff, tutors and trainees;
- quality of the workplace training for almost all trainees; and
- good provision for the development and assessment of essential skills.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- limited range of training activities in directed training;
- procedures to monitor and review trainees' progress;
- quality of the individual training plans;
- poor provision for the development and assessment of the key skills within the MA programme;
- poor integration of directed and workplace training in the MA programme; and
- lack of a structured approach to CEIAG.

Table of Grades

Overall Grade	Revised Grading System	Original Grading System
	5	3
Contributory Grades		
Leadership and Management	5	3
Standards and Outcomes	4	2
Quality of Training and Learning	5	3

Area of Learning Grades	No of Trainees	Revised Grading System	Original Grading System
Hospitality and Catering	27	5	3
Preparation for Life and Work	66	4	2
Access	7	4	2
Personal Development	6	4	2
Skills for Work	22	4	2
Pre Apprenticeship	4	4	2
Essential Skills Literacy	39	4	2
Essential Skills Numeracy	47	4	2
Key Skills AoN	27	6	4
Key Skills Communication	27	6	4
Trainee Support	74	3	2
CEIAG	74	5	3

PART TWO

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The quality of the leadership and management has a number of shortcomings. There is insufficient planning at strategic and operational level to integrate effectively the workplace and directed training, and to monitor effectively overall trainee progress and achievement against the full frameworks.

5.2 The mechanisms for reviewing and monitoring trainee progress are not sufficiently rigorous. For example, in the MA programme the procedures for tracking progress focus inappropriately and exclusively on achievement of the NVQ award.

5.3 Whilst STS places appropriate emphasis on the trainees' evaluation of their training experiences, the current quality assurance procedures do not sufficiently identify weaknesses in standards, achievements, or training and learning, nor do they involve employers in the process. Consequently, the quality assurance procedures are not effective in informing improvement planning. There is a poor match between the grades allocated by the vocational teams and the Inspectorate.

5.4 Swann Training Services has in place appropriate policies and procedures for the Protection of Young People and Vulnerable Adults. The organisation has further recognised the importance of this area of work and has already put in place arrangements to work with an appropriate agency to update their policies and procedures, and for the development of the whole staff team in this area of their work.

5.5 Good links have been established with a range of external organisations. These include community and support groups, and a range of statutory and non-statutory bodies and outside agencies including the Sensory Impaired Learning Support Service and Opportunity Youth. The support provided by these partnerships adds considerably to the trainees' success in their vocational programme, and promotes their personal and social development.

5.6 The internal verification procedures are well-established and are implemented regularly but are insufficiently rigorous.

5.7 Continuous professional development is supported by management and STS has achieved the Investors in People (IIP) award. However, staff development does not focus sufficiently on supporting the staff in developing an appropriate range of training and learning strategies. A formal staff appraisal system is not in place which would help staff to identify opportunities to update their experiences and gain additional and relevant qualifications.

6. STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

6.1 A majority of the trainees enter their training programme with significant barriers to learning characterised by low levels of self-esteem and confidence, and poor records of prior achievement. Almost all of those registered on the Jobskills Access and Job-Ready programmes have not achieved in school and have low entry qualifications.

6.2 All of the Jobskills level 1 and 2 trainees are placed in good quality work placements and achieve good standards in the workplace where they are well supported by their employers. Standards of attendance and timekeeping are generally good. The standard of the trainees' practical skills are mostly good. They can carry out a range of tasks to the standards required by their employers. All of the trainees engage well in their training and are able to work effectively as members of teams in the workplace.

6.3 Almost all of the MAs are in job roles that provide them with good opportunities to develop appropriate occupational skills and competences in line with the demands and requirements of the industry. Most demonstrate high levels of motivation and confidence in the workplace, and a significant minority are in promoted posts, or are experiencing additional responsibilities as a result of their engagement with their vocational training.

6.4 The standard of oral communication demonstrated by nearly all of the trainees is good or better. The MA apprentices are highly articulate and are able to discuss service processes and requirements, as well as their health and safety duty by law.

6.5 The standards of written communication demonstrated by the Jobskills level 1 and 2 trainees are good despite the majority having low levels of prior academic achievement on entering the programme. Within the MA programme, however, the standard of written communication is variable. The content and level of most of the trainees responses are mainly basic and lack appropriate depth and rigour; responses mostly affirm what the trainees already know. In almost all instances the trainees' evidence is handwritten with limited use of information and communication technology (ICT) evident.

6.6 Over the last three years achievements in key skills for those trainees on the Traineeship programme are poor overall; of the eight trainees who completed their level 2 programme none achieved the requisite number of key skills and therefore did not achieve their full NVQ framework requirements. Within the MA programme achievements in key skills were good at 83%.

6.7 For those trainees on the Access programme achievements in key skills were poor overall. They were good for information technology (IT) at 83%, poor in communication at 39%, and no trainees achieved application of number. Last year STS moved to the delivery of essential skills for Access trainees, and achievements were excellent at 100%.

6.8 Over the last three years, of the 72 Access trainees who started the programme, 37 completed the programme and 31 gained the full award. This represents a modest retention rate of 56%, and a good success rate of 84% for those who completed the programme.

6.9 Over the last three years, of the 18 level 2 trainees who started the programme, nine successfully completed their training. Taking into account the two trainees still on the programme, this represents a modest retention rate of 61% and an excellent success rate of 100%.

6.10 Over the last three years, of the 30 level 3 trainees who started the programme, nine completed the programme and gained the full award. Taking into account the nine trainees still on the programme, this represents a modest retention rate of 60% and an excellent success rate of 100% for those who completed the programme.

6.11 Over the last three years, progression to further education, training or relevant employment for those who successfully complete their training programmes ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Progression is 100% for trainees completing the Access programme, and 89% and 78% for those completing the Traineeship and MA programmes respectively.

7. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND LEARNING

7.1 Swann Training Services provides a caring and supportive environment for all the trainees, many of whom have significant personal, emotional and social difficulties. Across the vocational programmes inspected very good relationships exist between the staff, tutors and the trainees, and between trainees and their employers.

7.2 The analysis of the trainee questionnaires completed prior to the inspection indicates that most of the trainees enjoy being at Swann Training Services. They highlight in particular, the encouragement and support they receive from their tutors.

7.3 Induction is satisfactory for the majority of the trainees. However, for those trainees on the MA programme they have a poor understanding of the content of their MA framework including their knowledge and understanding of the number of units required to complete the NVQ award, as well as the components of the key skills.

7.4 Procedures for the initial assessment of the trainees' literacy, numeracy and IT skills at the commencement of their training programme is inconsistent within the organisation. Those trainees undertaking essential skills training undergo a thorough initial assessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and the findings are used well to inform the learning programme. However, for the MA apprentices, whilst there is an initial assessment undertaken of their occupational skills, there are no formal initial assessment procedures to identify individual learning needs to inform the planning for appropriate support in the development of the key skills.

7.5 The quality of the workplace training is consistently good or better for nearly all of the trainees. There is a good match between the NVQ unit requirements and the workplace experiences gained by almost all of the trainees. They have good opportunities to develop an appropriate range of occupational skills and competences appropriate to their roles and responsibilities undertaken within the workplace. In distributive operations and retail, for example, trainees are able to stock take, display merchandise appropriately and to complete orders for delivery.

7.6 The quality of directed training is variable. In the training for distributive operations and warehousing there are a limited range of training activities to extend and develop the trainees' knowledge and understanding; there is an over reliance on the completion of work sheets. Within the MA programme there is insufficient integration of directed and workplace training. The employers are not sufficiently involved in the NVQ process.

7.7 The quality of the individual training plans across all Jobskills programmes is ineffective in bringing together the range of training and learning opportunities within the workplace and the requirements of the NVQ, and key and essential skills. The procedures to monitor and review the trainees' progress are not rigorous enough. The targets set are not sufficiently specific to support the trainees in the development and progress towards the achievement of their NVQ and key and essential skills, to allow progress to be monitored effectively.

7.8 The quality of the assessment procedures is satisfactory overall. The pace of assessment, however, is variable and trainees on the MA programme do not make sufficient progress towards achieving their targeted qualifications.

7.9 The overall provision for the development and assessment of the essential skills is mostly good. The trainees have good opportunities to develop and apply their essential skills within a range of social, personal, and vocational contexts. However, the vocational and essential skills tutors need to work more closely together to identify opportunities to further develop the trainees' essential skills within their occupational area.

7.10 The provision for the development of the key skills within the MA programme is poor. There is no planning for their development or monitoring of the trainees' progress; provision is assessment driven. The key skills training is not an integral part of the vocational programme and does not support fully the NVQ or workplace training.

7.11 While continuous professional development is supported by management it does not focus sufficiently on supporting the staff in developing a range of training and learning strategies.

7.12 The quality of the accommodation is adequate and appropriate for group work. The classrooms are in good repair, bright and well-heated. The Jobskills level 1 and 2 trainees, and Job-Ready trainees have access to a good range of ICT. Within the MA programme the tutor has worked hard to improve the range of resources available to support training and learning. However, the MA trainees need to have improved access to computers, reference books and journals to allow for research and encourage more independent learning. The premises have been adapted for disabled access.

7.13 There is no structured approach to CEIAG by the organisation; there are no formal structures or procedures in place to meet the aims of the organisation's guidance policy.

PART THREE

AREA OF LEARNING

8. HOSPITALITY AND CATERING

Programme Inspected: Hospitality and Catering

Provision	Total Number Registered	Grade Awarded
NVQ Level 3	27	5

In the area inspected, the organisation has a few strengths in its educational and training provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement which need to be addressed promptly if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all the learners, and the needs of the community and the economy.

The Inspectorate will monitor and report regularly on the organisation's progress in addressing these areas for improvement

8.1 MAIN FINDINGS

The main strengths are the:

- high levels of motivation and confidence demonstrated by most of the MAs;
- good standards of occupational competence demonstrated by most of the MAs in the workplace; and
- excellent success rates at 100% in the vocational award.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- provision of a coherent and challenging learning programme;
- involvement of employers in the training process;
- modest average retention rate of 60%;
- use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support training and learning; and
- strengthening of the self-evaluation procedures and use of performance indicators to review the effectiveness of the MA provision.

9. PREPARATION FOR LIFE AND WORK

Programmes Inspected: **Job-Ready (Personal Development, Skills for Work and Pre-Apprenticeship)**
 Jobskills Access
 Essential Skills
 Key Skills
 CEIAG
 Trainee Support

Provision	Total Number Registered	Grade Awarded
Overall	74	4
Personal Development	6	4
Skills for Work	22	4
Employability	n/a	n/a
Pre-Apprenticeship	4	4
Access Provision	7	4
Essential Skills	39	4
Key Skills	27	6
CEIAG	74	5
Trainee Support	74	3

In the areas inspected the organisation has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing these areas for improvement

9.1 MAIN FINDINGS

The main strengths are the:

- excellent progression and good success rates on the Access programme at 100% and 84% respectively;
- excellent achievements in essential skills at 100% for those trainees on the Access programme;
- good standards of written and oral communication skills of the Access trainees;
- appropriate range of work placements which provide good opportunities for skills development;
- increased level of confidence and self esteem demonstrated by the Access trainees as a result of their engagement in their training programme; and
- good provision for learner support for all trainees.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- development of a wider range of training and learning strategies within directed training;
- planning for the development, application and assessment of the key skills in the Level 3 programme;
- involvement of employers in the setting and monitoring of short term training targets in the workplace; and
- strengthening of the self-evaluation and development planning processes.

PART FOUR

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Swann Training Services needs to revise its annual development plan to take account of the following key priorities for development:

- implementation of mechanisms which support coherence and integration in the planning, implementation, monitoring and review of training programmes;
- management strategies to improve retention rates; and
- management strategies to raise standards, assure and improve the quality of training and learning.

JOBSKILLS ACCESS TABLE

Year	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Progressed to Traineeship	Progressed to relevant employment
2004/05	5	86%	83%	40%	60%
2005/06	6	74%	82%	64%	36%
2006/07	7	40%	86%	75%	25%
Total Average		56%	84%	65%	35%

06/07 - 3 trainees still in training

JOBSKILLS TRAINEESHIP TABLE

Year	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Progressed to Modern Apprenticeship	Progressed to relevant employment
2004/05	5	60%	100%	0%	100%
2005/06	6	67%	100%	0%	100%
2006/07	7	57%	100%	0%	50%
Total Average		61%	100%	0%	89%

06/07 - 2 trainees still in training

JOBSKILLS MODERN APPRENTICESHIP TABLE

Year	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Progressed to Modern Apprenticeship	Progressed to relevant employment
2004/05	4	100%	100%	n/a	100%
2005/06	18	50%	100%	n/a	80%
2006/07	8	63%	100%	n/a	25%
Total Average		60%	100%	n/a	78%

04/05 - 1 trainee still in training

05/06 - 4 trainees still in training

06/07 - 4 trainees still in training

JOBSKILLS OVERALL TABLE

Year	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Progressed to relevant employment or training
2004/05	16	81%	92%	100%
2005/06	47	74%	88%	95%
2006/07	57	49%	88%*	93%*
Total Average		63%	88%	96%

06/07 – 14 trainees still in training

All of the figures included in the tables and in this report were supplied by Swann Training Services.

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