



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in  
GEMS Northern Ireland

CO-MENT project

Report of a Quality Improvement  
Planning Inspection in  
November 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## **Introduction**

In November 2018, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a quality improvement planning inspection of GEMS Northern Ireland (GEMS NI) to evaluate the effectiveness of the project promoter's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes. At the last inspection in November 2016, the project promoter demonstrated a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement.

## **Focus of the quality improvement planning inspection**

The quality improvement planning inspection focused on the following key areas which the project promoter had prioritised for improvement through its self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes:

- to widen the curriculum offer available to participants and to more effectively share information about training opportunities across the partners; and
- to increase the involvement of partner organisations in self-evaluation, including observations of mentoring and directed training delivered by partners, to ensure consistency of delivery.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

## **Key findings**

The inspection identified the following key findings:

- GEMS NI has been successful in increasing the range of courses available to participants through a number of strategies, including the introduction of a dual mentor/vocational trainer role and the provision of accredited training opportunities through partner organisations in new areas such as beauty, digital fabrication, essential skills and ICT. Information about the available training opportunities is now shared much more effectively through an online collaboration environment managed by GEMS NI, with contributions made by partner organisations, and which keeps partner organisations well informed; and
- self-evaluation and quality improvement planning continues to embed, with increased involvement of partner organisations and a good, shared understanding of priorities. The work is underpinned by a revised service level agreement that includes: enhanced monitoring of participants' progress; a cycle of partner session observations by GEMS staff; a supportive approach to sustaining improvement through peer support; appropriate thematic working groups; and sharing of resources and knowledge. The quality and consistency of case studies of participants' progress continue to improve and now appropriately include a "next steps" plan to inform participants about progression opportunities.

## **Safeguarding**

Based on the evidence available at the time of the quality improvement planning inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding participants reflect broadly the guidance from the Department for the Economy. The project promoter, however, needs to:

- review and contemporise its policies and procedures for safeguarding young people and adults at risk; and
- specify the safeguarding reporting arrangements for partner organisations in the service level agreement.

## **Overall Outcome**

At the time of the quality improvement planning inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, GEMS NI continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

The outcome from this inspection will inform the next steps for the project promoter with regard to the inspection cycle.

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