



Education and Training
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in
Stepping Stones NI

Youth Service

Report of a Quality Improvement
Planning Inspection in
September 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 September 2018, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a quality improvement planning inspection of Stepping Stones NI. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the effectiveness of the project promoter's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes in the Youth Service project. At the last inspection in April 2017, the project promoter demonstrated its capacity to identify and bring about improvement. The project promoter has recently undergone substantive staffing changes, including at management level.

Focus of the quality improvement planning inspection

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

- the tracking and monitoring of the project outcomes; and
- the impact of the newly introduced quality improvement planning processes on the provision for learning and teaching.

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

Key findings

The inspection identified the following key findings:

- Appropriate systems and processes are in place to track and monitor recruitment levels and outcomes attained to date, which are mostly in line with the targets set. Work is ongoing to sustain these mostly positive outcomes. The number of participants progressing to paid employment is currently low and this needs to be increased.
- Whilst there is evidence that the revised quality improvement planning process is having some impact on the provision for learning and teaching and participant progression, it remains at an early stage of development and needs to be further embedded in order to promote sustained improvement.

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 (Department). However, the project promoter needs to:

- embed the recently introduced changes to reporting and recording arrangements for safeguarding in order to promote consistency in practice across the organisation.

Overall Outcome

At the time of the quality improvement planning inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, Stepping Stones NI has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision. The ETI will continue to monitor how the project promoter brings about improvement and the Department may consider further action.

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

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