

# WORK-BASED LEARNING INSPECTION

## Skills for Life and Work and ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in Coalisland Training Services Limited

Report of an Inspection in May 2023



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



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## Introduction

Coalisland Training Services Limited is a work-based training provider contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the Skills for Life and Work and ApprenticeshipsNI (ApprenticeshipsNI 2021 programme) training programmes. It is a private company limited by guarantee with charitable status and governed by a voluntary management committee. DfE introduced the Skills for Life and Work programme in September 2021 to replace Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work Level 1 of Training for Success. It is a programme designed for young people aged 16-17, or under 22 years for those with a disability, and under 24 years for those who qualify under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) (2002).

In May 2023, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of the training programmes provided by Coalisland Training Services on behalf of DfE.

At the time of the inspection, a total of 33 learners (trainees and apprentices) were registered across the professional and technical (P&T) areas: children's care, learning and development; hairdressing; health and social care; trowel occupations (bricklaying); and wood occupations. Of the 22 trainees registered, 20 were registered on the Skills for Life and Work; seven at level 1 and 13 at level 2. Two trainees were registered on the legacy Training for Success 2017. Of the eleven apprentices registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, five were registered at level 2 and six at level 3. A majority (51%) of the learners were completing at least one of the essential skills.

Only a minority of the trainees (18%) and the apprentices (27%) commenced their training programme with four or more GSCE passes at grades A\* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics. Most (82%) of the trainees and apprentices present with a disability and/or a learning need (all data in this report was provided by the organisation).

## Views of the trainees, apprentices and staff

Inspectors met and spoke with a total of 10 trainees and apprentices in focus group meetings and a further 11 during their learning, teaching and training sessions. They all reported that they receive helpful feedback regularly from their tutors on how they are progressing. The trainees and apprentices also reported that they would benefit from improved signposting and awareness raising around progression pathways to further education and training.

Eighty-two percent of the trainees and apprentices (27) registered completed the online questionnaire; ten of those who responded made additional written comments. All of their responses indicated that: they find their training programme both interesting and challenging; they receive good opportunities to undertake additional learning to enhance their core qualification; they are able to access appropriate information and communication technology (ICT), internet facilities and learning resources in the organisation; and that staff in the organisation care about their progress and wellbeing.

Fifty-five percent of the staff (6) completed the online inspection questionnaire. All of their responses indicated that the organisation supports the tutors well to deliver face-to-face and online learning; there are good channels of communication within the organisation; and that staff receive accurate, timely updates and information about any changes that will affect them. A few of the staff provided additional written comments. They reported that the organisation is inclusive and caring place to work, where trainees and apprentices, staff and management are valued.

## Focus of the inspection

The report is based on an inspection of the organisation's provision for the Skills for Life and Work and the ApprenticeshipsNI training programmes, and the essential skills. The inspection also included the capacity of the organisation to identify and bring about improvement, and the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding.

## Summary of overall findings

### Overall effectiveness

At the time of the inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, Coalisland Training Services Limited has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices.

### Overall quality of the programmes inspected

Programme	Proportion of registrations*	Performance Level
Skills for Life and Work	65%	Good
ApprenticeshipsNI	35%	Good

\* As less than 10 (xx%) of the learners were registered on the legacy Training for Success programme, no Performance Level has been awarded for this programme.

### Overall quality of the essential skills provision

Essential skills	Very good
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### Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding trainees and apprentices reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

### Strengths

- The well-embedded pastoral care and welfare provision which is highly effective in meeting the diverse needs of the trainees and apprentices.
- The well-considered curriculum that is matched closely to the needs and aspirations of the trainees and apprentices.

- The consistently effective learning, teaching and training observed.
- The very good essential skills provision.
- The good retention rates for the current cohort on the Skills for Life and Work (73%) and ApprenticeshipNI (74%) training programmes and the outstanding achievement rates (100%) for the essential skills.
- The good standards of work attained by most of the trainees and apprentices in their professional and technical training, and essential skills.
- The high proportion of the trainees benefiting from a relevant, high quality work-experience placement.

### **Areas for improvement**

- To develop further the learning, teaching and training, with the use of a wider range of active learning and digital learning technology approaches.
- To refine further the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process.
- To increase the recruitment to the Skills for Life and Work and ApprenticeshipsNI training programmes.
- To provide the trainees and apprentices with consistent careers education, information, advice and guidance.

### **Key findings**

- There is a well-considered curriculum that is matched closely to the needs and aspirations of the trainees and apprentices. As a result, alongside their core framework qualifications, the trainees and apprentices have good opportunities to undertake well-targeted additional learning and qualifications to enhance their employability skills. When required, external support is provided to enable the trainees and apprentices to sustain engagement on their programme and overcome barriers to education and training.
- In the P&T areas and employability sessions observed, the learning, teaching and training was consistently effective and matched well to the identified training needs of the trainees and apprentices. The tutors had empathetic and supportive working relationships with the trainees and apprentices, and as a consequence, most of them engaged well in their learning. The tutors employed effective strategies to motivate them to develop relevant skills, knowledge and work-readiness.

- In the essential skills, the learning and teaching sessions observed were effective with good levels of support for individual trainees. The tutors had very good awareness of the trainees' barriers to learning and adapted their teaching strategies accordingly, informed by a well-considered diagnostic assessment process which takes good account of contextual issues. There were excellent working relationships between the trainees and the staff. The tasks were contextualised appropriately to the P&T areas, which enabled the trainees to see the meaningful application of their ICT, literacy, and numeracy skills.
- To enhance and develop further the learning experiences across all of the learning, teaching and training, there is a need to develop a wider range of active learning and digital learning technology approaches. The organisation's evaluation of the quality of learning, teaching and training needs also to be better informed by the direct observation of practice.
- The achievement rates in the essential skills provision are outstanding. All of the trainees and apprentices who completed their essential skills courses achieved their targeted qualification.
- Overall, the standard of the trainees' and apprentices' written work is good. They write with good levels of accuracy and awareness of audience and purpose. There is, however, variability in their oral skills, which they are being supported well to develop further through very good levels of adult interaction, good links with P&T areas and enrichment activities.
- The standards of work attained and demonstrated by the trainees and apprentices in their P&T training were good. Most of them make good progress in the development of industry-standard occupational skills and competences which they can apply confidently in different settings. In hairdressing, for example, the trainees benefit greatly from a realistic industry-standard onsite training salon where they can carry out their training and assessment with customers from the local community who attend the salon regularly.
- High-quality, relevant work-experience placement opportunities are provided for most (77%) of the trainees and almost all have had a placement at some stage during their training programme. The employers reported that the trainees are developing their skills well in the workplace. Effective channels of communication have been established by the organisation with the employers to plan for the skills development of the trainees. When necessary, the organisation liaises effectively with employers, advocating on the learners' behalf to make any required adjustments to working conditions.
- The retention rate on the Skills for Life and Work programme for the current cohort is good at 73%; similarly, retention on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is also good at 74%.

- The achievements of the trainees and apprentices are celebrated in an annual award ceremony hosted in the local theatre, which they attend with their parents/guardians. During their training programmes, they are rewarded for their engagement through the learner of the month award. In 2021, the achievements of a childcare apprentice were recognised through the award of the Northern Ireland Apprentice of the Year and the apprentice was invited to speak at the Apprentice Award Ceremony in 2022.
- The level of knowledge and understanding about career and progression pathways varies unduly for the trainees and apprentices. Although they have a clear line of sight to suitable employment, in some instances, the trainees and apprentices would also benefit from consistent signposting and increased awareness around the progression pathways to further education and training.
- A good range of programmes and enrichment activities are provided in order for the trainees and apprentices to build their self-esteem, confidence, team-working skills, which in turn promotes their health and well-being.
- The staff prioritise and promote the trainees' and apprentices' health and wellbeing effectively. They know the barriers to learning and development that the trainees and apprentices are facing and reported that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have presented with increased levels of poor mental health and anxiety. High levels of individual support are provided by the dedicated mentor and counsellor. Interventions such as recorded sessions, extra classes, including one-to-one classes, are provided to ensure that those trainees and apprentices experiencing barriers can sustain their training. There is also access to appropriate levels of support from the organisation's well-established links and partnerships with a wide range of external support agencies.
- The leadership team has established productive relationships with the local post-primary schools, through the delivery of a range of programmes and qualifications which provides a potential pipeline for recruitment to the P&T areas. The organisation has also established good links with employers to provide work-experience placement opportunities for most of the trainees, and to progress learners to the apprenticeship programme and to employment. Recruitment, however, to each of the five P&T areas is low, particularly in health and social care, and remains an area for improvement identified by the organisation.
- The management committee members are dedicated to improving the life chances of the trainees and apprentices; the membership includes individuals who bring a wide range of experience, skill-sets and expertise to support the development of the organisation and its provision.
- The self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan identify the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision. While it is informed effectively by a range of data, such as learner and employer surveys and performance data, it should be improved further by an evaluation of the attendance of the learners

in their training sessions. The summary of key findings is too detailed and needs to be refined in order to identify the key strengths of the provision. The quality improvement plan should be enhanced to include interim targets to bring about and sustain quality improvement.

- The tutors have good opportunities to develop their occupational, support and pedagogic skills through undertaking professional learning. For example, some have completed online learning, managing challenging behaviour, mental health and drug awareness programmes.
- The organisation has invested in maintaining the accommodation which is of good quality as are the learning resources. The workshops and the hairdressing salon are also of a good standard, resourced with an appropriate range of tools and equipment. The organisation has also made a significant investment in Wi-Fi and computers, along with electronic tablets for the trainees and apprentices.

## Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding trainees and apprentices reflect broadly current legislation and practice.

The organisation, however, needs to:

- review and revise the safeguarding team structure, to identify a full-time member of staff best placed to take on the role of the designated person.

## Overall effectiveness

At the time of the inspection, and in the areas evaluated, Coalisland Training Services Limited demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices.

There are areas for improvement that the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas for improvement are:

- Develop further the learning, teaching and training, with the use of a wider range of active learning and digital learning technology approaches.
- Refine further the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process.
- Increase the recruitment to the Skills for Life and Work and ApprenticeshipsNI training programmes.
- Provide the trainees and apprentices with consistent careers education, information, advice and guidance.



# Appendix 1

## A. Programme Registrations

**Table 1 – Current registrations by programme**

Programme	Number of registrations at level 1	% of total registrations	Number of registrations at level 2	% of total registrations
Skills for Life and Work	7	21%	13	40%
Programme	Number of registrations at level 1	% of total registrations	Number of registrations at level 2	% of total registrations
Training for Success	*	#	*	#
Programme	Number of registrations at level 2	% of total registrations	Number of registrations at level 3	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	5	15%	6	18%

\* Fewer than 5

# Figures suppressed

**Table 2 – Current registrations by professional and technical area**

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Children's care, learning and development	-	-	7	21%
Hairdressing	5	15%	*	#
Health and social care	*	#	-	-
Trowel occupations (bricklaying)	7	21%	*	#
Wood occupations	8	25%	*	#

\* Fewer than 5

# Figures suppressed

## B. Methodology and evidence base

ETI inspectors observed six learning, teaching and training sessions, and spoke with 10 trainees and apprentices in focus group meetings and a further 11 during their learning, teaching and training sessions. Inspectors had discussions with three employers by telephone and also met with key staff and the chair of the management committee. Samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were reviewed. Trainees, apprentices and staff had the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire. The inspection was also informed by the organisation's quality improvement planning processes and associated documentation, including the organisation's self-evaluation report.

ETI's Inspection and [Self-Evaluation Framework for Work-based Learning](#) 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%

### Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

## Programme(s) / essential skills/P&T area outcomes

The ETI use the following performance levels:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

## Safeguarding

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the arrangements for safeguarding:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and/or apprentices reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and/or apprentices reflect broadly current legislation and practice. The organisation, however, needs to: ...

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and/or apprentices are unsatisfactory. < Insert detail >. The ETI will return to the organisation within six working weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues which have been identified.

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