



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Craft Training Limited

Report of an 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

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1. Context

Craft Training Limited (Craft Training) is a private training company with training facilities in Cookstown, Londonderry, Omagh and Strabane; its headquarters and main provision is based in Strabane. It is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. At the time of the inspection, 69 trainees and 204 apprentices were registered¹ across the professional and technical areas of animal care, business administration, catering, children's care, learning and development, construction, food and drink, furniture production, hospitality, information technology (IT) user, management, retail, and warehousing and storage.

The organisation is managed by a managing director and five executive directors, and supported by six administrative staff, 16 tutors and a business development manager. The organisation, first established in 2004, has a clear social purpose to provide suitable training programmes in the geographical areas it serves. Many of the young people registering on the Training for Success programme live in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland: Derry City and Strabane is the second highest local government district containing the most deprived super output areas².

A significant minority (35%) of the trainees has a disability and/or has additional learning support needs. A further 30% have significant and complex barriers to learning. A minority of the trainees (12%) and apprentices (13%) entered their programme with four or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics. Most (80%) of the trainees are in a suitable work-experience placement.

2. Views of trainees and apprentices

As part of the evaluation of Craft Training's arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding young people and adults at risk, 91 of the trainees and apprentices took the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, and 26 of the returns contained additional written comments.

The returns show that almost all (98%) of the trainees and apprentices who responded were positive about their learning experiences in the organisation and that it caters well for their needs. They report that they are well-supported by the staff and that they feel safe and secure.

In addition, inspectors met with some focus groups of trainees and apprentices across the provision. The trainees and apprentices reported that they enjoyed their programmes and that the staff were approachable, encouraging and proactive in supporting them to achieve to their potential. The trainees and apprentices also reported that care and welfare is a high priority in the organisation, with an appropriate range of suitable care, guidance and support services available to them to optimise their learning opportunities.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for learners;
- quality of provision; and
- effectiveness of the leadership and management.

¹ Programme registration data provided by the organisation at the time of the inspection is included in the Appendix of this report

² Based on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NIMDM 2017)

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Overall quality of the programmes inspected		
Programme	Proportion of registrations	Performance level
Training for Success	25%	Good
ApprenticeshipsNI	75%	Good

Overall quality of the professional and technical areas inspected ³ and the essential skills provision	
Construction	Good
Essential skills	Very good
Food and drink	Good
IT User	Good
Retail	Good

KEY FINDINGS

Strengths

- The overall very good retention rate (88%) and outstanding (100%) achievement and progression rates across the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes.
- The good standards of work attained by most of the trainees and apprentices, including the steady progress they make in developing key occupational and employability skills.
- The effective care and welfare provided for the trainees, enabling many of them to overcome significant barriers to learning and improve their personal capabilities.
- The high proportion (80%) of the trainees on the Training for Success programme who are in relevant work placements.
- The good or better quality of most (79%) of the learning, teaching and training, particularly the high levels of support provided for the trainees and apprentices.
- The very good quality of the essential skills provision and the good quality of the provision in the professional and technical areas of construction, food and drink, IT user and retail.

³ A representative sample of professional and technical areas, agreed with the organisation, was selected for inspection.

- The increasing engagement with employers in order to develop apprenticeships that meet better their training needs and provide employees with access to apprenticeship training.

Areas for improvement

- The further refinement of the delivery model for the apprenticeship programmes to ensure that the directed training is consistently of a high quality with adequate stretch and challenge.
- The need to revise the quality improvement plan in order to set more sharply focused actions and targets to ensure that the key areas for improvement are addressed in an impactful and timely manner.
- The closer monitoring of the staffing complement to ensure that the tutor workload is manageable and that there remains sufficient capacity to meet the growing apprenticeship provision.

5. Outcomes for learners

Most of the trainees and apprentices achieve good standards of professional and technical skills and knowledge across the areas inspected. They develop steadily their confidence and competence in completing key occupational tasks, particularly those skills relating directly to their current work placement or employment, to an appropriate industry standard. In construction, for example, the trainees and apprentices are developing well their ability to use hand tools confidently to build brick walls, erect stud partitions and hang doors. Similarly, in IT user, most of the trainees and apprentices are becoming increasingly competent in using a range of contemporary office software applications to support in a meaningful way the business functions of their workplace, including using spreadsheets, databases and proprietary software systems. In food and drink, the apprentices through their acquisition of key occupational skills such as boning, quality control checks and accurate labelling contribute to improved overall quality standards in their workplaces. The apprentices in retail are developing well an appropriate range of key retail and customer service skills such as stock control and sales management.

The standards of the trainees' and apprentices' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, as demonstrated in their essential skills portfolios, are mostly good or better. They are able to, for example, plan and write letters which use persuasive language effectively to promote healthy eating. In numeracy, the trainees and apprentices develop and use effectively a wide range of problem-solving strategies, including the use of algebra. In ICT, they are able to apply spreadsheet software effectively in their professional and technical work. Within the vocational contexts, most of the trainees and apprentices develop and apply their spoken communication skills to a good standard although the quality of their written communication is more variable. Going forward, there is a need for a more consistent application and transferability of their written communication skills, particularly to support their vocational work.

The achievement rates in the essential skills provision are consistently very high; all of the trainees and apprentices who completed their training over the last three years achieved their targeted essential skills qualifications. It is noteworthy that they also made good progress in achieving beyond the targeted level, with just under one-quarter of them achieving an essential skill at least one level above the requirement of their framework.

It is a strength of the work of the organisation that all of the trainees and apprentices who complete their training achieve their targeted qualifications. Over the last three years, the achievement rate on both the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programme is outstanding at 100%.

Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated, demonstrate good standards of behaviour and apply themselves well to improving their wider employability skills. Although most of the trainees have a low entry qualification profile, including in English and mathematics, almost all make good progress in further developing their personal capabilities. They improve steadily their self-confidence and attitudes to learning, with many of them overcoming significant barriers to acquire new skills, enabling them to build positive and productive relationships with their peers, tutors and workplace supervisors. While a majority of the trainees require substantial additional support to overcome a complex range of personal and social barriers to learning and progress, they progressively build their personal resilience through the persistent, affirming work of the tutors and staff, and they often achieve above the expectations.

In the workplace, most of the employers report positively on how the trainees and apprentices are increasingly able to work collaboratively as part of a team, take initiative to solve complex problems and where appropriate are able to self-regulate independent working. While the apprentices in food and drink are able to achieve at a faster pace, due to prior experiences in the workplace, more care is needed to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for each apprentice to extend their knowledge and understanding of the sector beyond existing skills, knowledge and capabilities.

Overall, most (88%) of the trainees and apprentices complete their training successfully and progress to employment or further training, a noteworthy achievement by the organisation given their low levels of prior attainment. Over the last three years, the retention rate is very good (89%) on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme and good (75%) for the Training for Success programme. Progression to employment or further training is outstanding at 100%; 54% of the trainees progress to a higher programme and 58% of the apprentices progress from level 2 to level 3.

6. Quality of provision

Craft Training provides a varied range of professional and technical training programmes, comprising flexible delivery models that are tailored to meet the differing training and development needs of the trainees and apprentices, and of employers.

On the Training for Success programme, the organisation provides the trainees, particularly for those with low levels of prior achievement, with a choice of a suitable range of professional and technical areas which are linked well to their career aspirations. The trainees benefit significantly from the flexible approach taken to the delivery of the training and personal development programmes, which are designed to enable greater responsiveness to their individual needs. This includes the provision of well-targeted, high levels of care and support to meet their diverse and often challenging social as well as learning needs. A key strength of the provision is the strong focus on building the trainees' self-confidence, interpersonal skills and resilience along with the occupational skills to enable them to sustain a work-experience placement, achieve success and progress positively. It is notable that, although just under two-thirds of the trainees recruited to the Training for Success programme enter at level 1, a majority of them progress to employment or apprenticeship provision. There remains, however, a need to increase further the recruitment to level 2 programmes.

The ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, offered mainly in the professional and technical areas of catering, construction, food and drink, hospitality, IT user and retail, are tailored well to support new and existing employees to develop key occupational skills and knowledge to equip them, primarily, for their current job roles. In addition, the apprentices are able to build their self-confidence and enhance their capacity for future learning and development and to avail more readily of the possible progression opportunities. While a significant proportion of directed training for the apprenticeship provision is provided on a one-to-one basis in the apprentice's workplace, recently developed partnerships with some larger employers has enabled more group learning opportunities in a training room environment. On occasions, however, it is inappropriate that, due to workplace production patterns and other reasons, the directed training sessions are overly short in duration and the progress made by these apprentices is slower as a result. Going forward, Craft Training needs to review the delivery of the apprenticeship programmes to ensure, consistently, that there are sufficient directed training opportunities for all apprentices, with adequate stretch and challenge in order for them to extend their learning and skills.

A well-considered programme of personal and social development, including inputs from relevant external agencies, provides the trainees with highly beneficial personal, social, financial and safeguarding support and guidance. In addition, a range of workshops in important areas such as drugs awareness provide comprehensive preventative education to support and raise the level of the trainees' awareness of pertinent and current societal issues. They are also able to participate in a range of relevant enrichment activities, including self-directed social and charitable events.

For the trainees with identified additional learning support needs, there are effective links with a range of external specialist support providers; these are used well to support their personal development and underpin the learning and progress of these young people. This is particularly evident in relation to the additional learning support, and its positive impact, across the essential skills provision.

The careers education, information, advice and guidance provision is linked well to the trainees' and apprentices' progression opportunities within their professional and technical area. The trainees are provided with good individualised careers education, information, advice and guidance through a taught programme of employability. This is delivered at an early stage in their training in order to provide them with the necessary employability skills to enable them to gain and sustain a work placement which is aligned with their interests and progression pathway. A programme of industry visits and guest speakers enhances further their knowledge of the professional and technical area and potential progression pathways. While it is clear that the trainees and apprentices are aware of the immediate progression routes within their vocational area, more needs to be done to broaden awareness of a wider range of possible progression opportunities, such as further education or related job roles.

The quality of most (79%) of the learning, teaching and training observed is good or very good; in just over one-third (34%) of the sessions it is very good. The more effective are characterised by high levels of learner engagement, knowledge and skills development that is linked well to the trainees' and apprentices' workplace experiences and individualised personal support and encouragement which builds a positive ethos and higher aspirations for further learning. In these sessions also, a wider range of learning approaches are used to promote more active learning and to meet better the varied range of ability of the trainees and apprentices. While the trainees and apprentices have access to a well-resourced digital learning platform, the use of this resource to support and promote independent learning is sporadic and largely underdeveloped. The less effective practice, in 21% of the sessions observed, is characterised by: inadequate planning for learning resulting in training and learning approaches that lack the appropriate stretch and challenge; the use of unsuitable training delivery spaces in the workplace; and low levels of pace in the learning and progress.

The quality and impact of the learning and teaching in the essential skills provision is very good. The tutors plan effectively for differentiation that is underpinned well by the results of diagnostic assessment. They build and foster excellent relationships with the trainees and apprentices, are well-informed about their barriers to learning which results in a supportive, individualised tailored learning environment. In nearly all of the sessions, the tutors use to good effect a wide range of strategies that include active learning, collaborative group work, project-based learning and effective questioning that results in high levels of learner engagement and well-paced progress. Most of the apprentices have one-to-one sessions that are well-planned to provide an effective learning programme that builds on their prior knowledge and with good links made to the work they do in their job role.

The quality of the trainees' and apprentices' personal training plans is consistently good or better. They capture well their prior achievements and particular attention is given to identifying accurately and in a timely manner any additional learning support needs. Whilst appropriate high-level milestones are set and monitored regularly, the progress reviews would benefit from a greater use of interim targets that reflect in more detail the individualised planning for each trainee and apprentice.

While the trainees and apprentices are provided with regular feedback on their progress and achievements, marking for improvement lacks rigour and is mostly underdeveloped. More careful and well-planned marking for improvement is required, particularly to promote and underpin greater secretarial accuracy in the trainees' and apprentices' written vocational work. There is also a need to strengthen the link between the reviews of their vocational work and those of their essential skills work, to ensure that all available learning opportunities are exploited fully to underpin the development and transferability of their written communication skills.

The care and welfare provided for the trainees and apprentices impacts positively on the learning, teaching and the outcomes they attain. They report that they enjoy their training programmes and that the staff are approachable, encouraging and proactive in supporting them to achieve to their potential. The trainees and apprentices also report that their care and welfare is a high priority in the organisation, with an appropriate range of suitable care, guidance and support services available, in order for them to optimise their learning and progression opportunities. Across the offices, the staff at all levels work hard, and to good effect, to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning environment. A particular strength is the impactful work of the office managers who actively provide holistic, sensitive and well-targeted support for each of the trainees in order that they overcome their personal barriers to learning and remain on their training programme.

7. Leadership and management

The directors and senior managers are experienced, understand their job roles well and are effective. The evidence shows they are highly committed to developing learner-centred training programmes, particularly to combat the low levels of prior achievement and self-confidence of the young people who access their provision. Accordingly, Craft Training has invested in a training provision that facilitates the placing of the learners into smaller groups; this enables more effective pastoral support to ensure that the trainees and apprentices continue on their programmes and make progress. The directors and senior managers work hard and with success to establish sound strategic links and partnerships with schools, employers and other locally-relevant stakeholders to build a strong community engagement in order to promote and support the training they provide. The recent appointment of a business development manager has further enhanced the organisation's links and partnerships with a wide range of employers in the local area and beyond; as a result, the organisation's capacity to secure relevant work placement opportunities for the trainees and to promote apprenticeships has increased.

Craft Training strives to balance the training and assessment needs of the apprentices with the business and workflow needs of their employers, which for the most part works well. In some areas, however, the pace of progress being made by the apprentices is too slow and they have too few opportunities to extend their learning beyond their immediate job role. There remains an important need for the organisation to keep the timetabling arrangements for apprentices under review and to ensure the most appropriate timetables for directed training are consistently implemented. In food and drink, for example, the organisation needs to monitor more closely the duration of the directed training time to ensure that all of the apprentices are well enough supported to up-skill at an appropriate pace and have sufficient opportunities to extend and broaden their learning, and to enhance their future career opportunities.

Most of the staff are appropriately qualified with relevant industry experience and expertise. While a majority of them have completed and achieved the Certificate in Teaching qualification or higher, and benefit from other opportunities for continuous professional development, a small number of the tutors have not yet completed the relevant teaching qualification for this phase. In addition, there is an important need to monitor closely the workload of the current staffing complement, particularly in food and drink, to ensure it is manageable and that there is sufficient capacity to meet the growing apprenticeship provision.

Across the professional and technical areas, there are effective levels of programme co-ordination, with suitable tracking and monitoring in place to ensure that delivery to meet the professional and technical frameworks is managed effectively. The provision for the essential skills is particularly well-managed; a well-considered, effective tracking system is used to inform and prioritise the apprenticeship essential skills provision, incorporating a robust risk-based approach to ensure that those apprentices identified at most risk of not attaining are receiving higher levels of support in a timely manner.

The quality of the accommodation is mostly good. The organisation's own workshops and classrooms are mostly well-equipped to support the learning, teaching and training. The quality of the accommodation for the delivery of the apprenticeship programme on employers' premises is, however, much more variable. On the larger premises there are bright and spacious training rooms available. By contrast, in the smaller employers the training areas are, on occasions, cramped, noisy and not conducive enough to high quality learning and training; this impacts adversely on the learning experiences for these apprentices.

At all levels in the organisation, there is a strong commitment to the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes. There is a well-established quality assurance process, enabling the staff and management to review performance regularly and identify promptly any quality compliance issues and address any identified underperformance. The organisation's self-evaluation reports are informed well by a pertinent range of information and data, including feedback from session observations and the views of trainees, apprentices, parents and employers. While the associated quality improvement action plan captures accurately the higher level areas for improvement, with appropriate targets and review milestones, the range of interim actions are not well enough defined. There is a need for sharper short, medium and long-term targets and associated success measures to drive more impactful and timely improvement. In addition, the linkage of relevant actions, where necessary, to each professional and technical area is not clear enough.

8. Safeguarding

On the basis of the evidence provided during the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at risk reflect broadly current legislation and practice. However, the organisation needs to:

- review and contemporise its policies and procedures for safeguarding young people and adults at risk, including to develop the role of an adult safeguarding champion.

9. Overall effectiveness

Craft Training 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 ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

Programme registrations

Table 1 - Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	204	75%
Training for Success, Skills for Your Life	*	*
Training for Success, Skills for Work (level 1)	40	15%
Training for Success, Skills for Work (level 2)	#	*#

* Less than 5

not disclosed

Table 2 - Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Animal care	13	18.8%
Business administration	*	*
Catering	*	*
Children's care, learning and development	7	10.1%
Construction	32	46.4%
IT User	9	13.0%
Retail	*	*
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Animal care	*	*
Business administration	*	*
Catering	8	3.9%
Children's care, learning and development	*	*
Construction	35	17.2%
Food and drink	109	53.4%
Furniture production	*	*
Hospitality	10	4.9%
IT User	8	3.9%
Management	*	*
Retail	14	6.9%
Warehousing and storage	9	4.4%

* Less than 5

Table 3 - Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme

Programme	Training for Success (%)	ApprenticeshipsNI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	12%	13%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	17%	15%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at Grades A*-C	25%	13%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	22%	13%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	29%	16%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	22%	25%

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk.

Seven ETI inspectors and three associate assessors observed 80 apprentices and trainees in 28 directed training sessions. In addition, they visited 53 trainees and apprentices in their workplace and interviewed 76 of them in focus group meetings. Discussions were held with 33 employer representatives in the workplace and/or by telephone. Samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were examined. The organisation's self-evaluation report, quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

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%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and on leadership and management.

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

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 areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of enrolments measured over the full duration of their programme.
Achievement	The percentage of participants who completed their targeted individual outcomes.
Progression	The percentage of successful completers who achieved positive progression.

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