



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in North Down Training Limited

Report of an Inspection
in February 2017



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

North Down Training Limited is a company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission in Northern Ireland, and contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes¹. The organisation is managed by an acting general manager supported by a team leader.

At the time of the inspection, 74 trainees and six apprentices were registered across the professional and technical areas of Amenity Horticulture, Business Administration, Customer Service, Hospitality and Catering, IT User, Retail Stores and Warehousing.

Most (76%) of the trainees have a disability and a further 10% have additional learning support needs. In the current year none of the trainees or apprentices entered their programme with four or more GSCE passes at grades A* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics. A minority (41%) of the trainees are in a suitable work-experience placement.

2. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for learners;
- the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of the leadership and management.

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Important areas for improvement
Quality of provision	Requires significant improvement
Leadership and management	Requires urgent improvement

Overall quality of the programmes inspected		
Programme	Proportion of registrations	Performance level
Training for Success	92%	Requires significant improvement
ApprenticeshipsNI	8%	Requires significant improvement

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

Overall quality of the professional and technical areas inspected² and the essential skills provision	
Amenity Horticulture	Important areas for improvement
Hospitality and catering	Requires significant improvement
Retail Skills	Requires significant improvement
Essential Skills	Good

KEY FINDINGS

Strengths

- The dedication of the staff at all levels to provide an inclusive and supportive ethos which underpins the development of the trainees' and apprentices' positive dispositions and attitudes to learning.
- The good quality of the essential skills provision and the progress made by the trainees and apprentices in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the outcomes for the trainees and apprentices, particularly the low retention rate (58%) on the Training for Success programme and the very low retention rate (31%) on the Skills for Work level 2 strand.
- Review and develop the curriculum offer for the Training for Success programme to improve its breadth and coherence, and ensure that it meets effectively the learning and development needs of all of the trainees.
- Address the important or significant areas for improvement in the professional and technical areas of horticulture, hospitality and catering and retail provision.
- Develop and formalise the guidance and the support for the trainees and apprentices to ensure that they impact effectively on learning and progression as part of a necessary range of improvements in care and welfare.
- Improve the strategic and operational leadership functions to ensure that the roles and responsibilities impact more effectively on the development of successful learning programmes.
- Improve the collation and use of data to effectively track, monitor and report on progress and outcomes, and to plan for improvement in the quality of the trainees' and apprentices' learning experiences, including the sub-contracted provision.
- Improve the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes at strategic level and at the level of each of the professional and technical areas and the essential skills.
- Review and strengthen, as a matter of urgency, the arrangements for safeguarding which are unsatisfactory.

² A representative sample of professional and technical areas, agreed with the organisation, was selected for inspection.

4. Outcomes for learners

Whilst almost all of the trainees and apprentices engage well in their learning and are supported by all staff to develop positive dispositions to learning and progression, the standards of work they achieve are overly variable across the professional and technical areas. In horticulture, hospitality and catering and in retail almost all of the trainees who are in supportive work-experience placements develop mostly good occupational standards. The development of these standards, however, is heavily reliant on the input from the staff in the workplace particularly in the areas of hospitality and catering and retail and, as a consequence, too few of the trainees are developing their practical skills and competencies well enough. In horticulture, where the trainees have access to a training environment which supports and promotes practical skill development, they achieve better standards in line with the requirements of their programme.

By contrast, where the organisation has invested appropriately in in-house training for the essential skills, most of the trainees and apprentices are making progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and are able to produce work of a good standard. Overall, most of the trainees and apprentices develop good communication skills and most can produce work to the required standard. Their written work, however, could be developed further by more frequent opportunities to write extended pieces of greater complexity and opportunities to demonstrate more independence in their thinking and in presentation of their work.

Over the last three years, whilst the average achievement rate on the Training for Success programme has been very good (82%), the average progression rate has been consistently low (20%), as has the average retention rate (58%), and both are important areas for improvement.

Almost all of the trainees and apprentices are supported effectively to develop their personal and social skills and most report favourably on the positive impact of the support they receive on the development of their sense of self-esteem and motivation to learn. The narrow curriculum offer and structure, however, does not support fully the development of a full range of wider skills and dispositions, and requires immediate review in both retail and hospitality and catering where the curriculum enrichment opportunities, including guest speakers and industry visits, are very limited.

5. Quality of provision

In retail and in hospitality and catering, the curriculum is not sufficiently broad and does not provide a balanced and cohesive programme of learning to develop comprehensively the work related skills required by both industries. In retail, better links and communication with employers are needed to support the trainees' learning, more effectively, and to support the development of their skills in the workplace. Similarly, in hospitality and in catering, increased engagement with employers is needed to develop the range of supportive workplace learning and training experiences to improve the development of the trainees' and apprentices' occupational competencies. The curriculum offer is better in horticulture, and the trainees have access to a good range of training, including health and safety training, and resources to facilitate the development of good standards. However, there is limited employer engagement and more needs to be done to increase the number of work-experience placement opportunities to meet the development needs of the trainees' and to provide them with appropriate progression to employment.

The pre-entry information and guidance provision for the trainees has been identified, appropriately, as an important area for improvement by the organisation and, as a consequence, the induction programme has been reviewed to good effect. The pre-entry and exit guidance for all of the trainees with a recognised physical or learning disability is well-established and effective. The support agencies, including Disability Action, and the Careers Service Northern Ireland, liaise with the trainees and their parents/carers to ensure that there is a well-informed transition from special education provision to the Training for Success programme, and to establish suitable progression pathways.

Initial and diagnostic arrangements are well-developed and used effectively to determine the levels of the trainees' and apprentices' literacy and numeracy skills. This information, together with the outcomes of initial assessment, is used to good effect to inform the planning for the provision of the essential skills training. However, the professional and technical tutors and the work-experience placement supervisors are not made sufficiently aware of the trainees' additional learning support needs, and associated planning for development, in a minority of instances. For a significant minority of the trainees with recognised additional support needs, it is noteworthy that there is well-targeted, one-to-one support provided either weekly or monthly by Disability Action.

While the trainees' progress reviews are carried out regularly, they are not sufficiently comprehensive; in particular, more attention is needed to evaluate, and adjust as necessary, the impact of any support interventions provided for the trainees. The reviews in the personal training plans are not linked well enough to a robust tracking system to monitor and review the progress made by each trainee and apprentice; across all aspects of their framework.

The provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance for the trainees and apprentices is not well enough developed. Whilst the trainees are provided, on occasion, with useful careers information through industry visits such as to a food and catering exhibition, the overall planning for these important aspects of curriculum provision and enrichment, needs to be more systematic and co-ordinated. The trainees do, however, benefit from a regular taught provision which provides them with good opportunities to research career opportunities and prepare for possible job interviews. For the small number of apprentices currently registered, the careers provision is inadequate and requires significant review and development.

The quality of the directed learning, teaching and training in the professional and technical areas, and in the employability sessions, is an important area for improvement. In over one fifth (22%) of the sessions, the teaching of the underpinning knowledge was not linked well enough to the development of the occupational skills in the workplace. This is a particular challenge for 59% of the trainees who, at the time of the inspection, were not in a work-experience placement. In the professional and technical sessions in retail and in hospitality and catering, whilst the tutors worked hard to engage and motivate the trainees, the balance between theory and practice needed to be improved in order to develop the full range of the trainees' and apprentices' knowledge and skills relevant to the workplace. The trainees in horticulture benefitted from a good range of individual support provided by the tutors and the work-experience placement supervisors to support the trainees in their skills development.

The quality of most of the essential skills directed training sessions observed (80%) is good or better. The tutors have developed effective working relationships with the trainees and apprentices and use a good variety of teaching, training and learning strategies to engage and motivate the learners. The organisation has accorded additional time to essential skills training which supports the trainees and apprentices well to achieve their target qualifications and has also supported a minority of the trainees (36%) to progress and achieve across more than one level in both literacy and numeracy.

The care and welfare provided for the trainees and apprentices does not impact positively enough on their training and teaching and learning outcomes. While the organisation has a well-established culture of inclusion and fosters a caring and supportive ethos, there are key aspects of the provision that are underdeveloped and constrained by the current management arrangements. It is a concern that only 41% of the trainees are currently in a work-experience placement, especially in key professional and technical areas. Consequently, a significant number of trainees, particularly in hospitality and catering, have insufficient well-planned work-experience opportunities to support their classroom based activities, to improve their understanding of the world of work, and to develop and apply their employability skills.

The organisation is taking steps to improve the trainees' independence and links well with a range of external agencies, particularly for learning disability support. The organisation also works hard to develop the self advocacy skills of those trainees on the Skills for your Life strand.

7. Leadership and management

The organisation has undergone considerable change in the last year and, as a consequence, leadership and management roles and responsibilities are not clear, are not well embedded at strategic and operational levels, and therefore require urgent improvement. The acting general manager is supported by a team leader, and two recently appointed directors, all of whom have worked hard to ensure that the effects of the changes on the trainees and apprentices have been minimised but the organisational structure needs to be strengthened and formalised as a matter of urgency to facilitate more robust strategic planning, development, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

The strategic priorities of the organisation need to reflect a stronger emphasis on high quality curriculum planning, development and delivery. In particular, the planning for the curriculum needs to ensure that all of the trainees and apprentices can access high quality learning experiences that lead to appropriate and enhanced skills development.

Whilst the organisation has a range of links and partnerships with a number of employers and a good variety of support organisations, there is an urgent need to increase employer engagement to secure more high quality work-experience opportunities for the trainees to develop further their employability.

The quality of the accommodation and learning resources are mostly good.

The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning is not informed well enough by robust data collation and analysis. There is a need to build staff capacity for self-evaluation within and across each professional and technical area and the essential skills, and to include increased monitoring, evaluation of, and feedback from, the sub-contracted partner

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding trainees and apprentices at risk are unsatisfactory.

The following issues need to be addressed urgently:

- a designated safeguarding officer needs to be identified, trained appropriately and made known to all staff, trainees and apprentices both within the organisation and across all sub-contracted provision;
- safeguarding arrangements need to be consistent across all sites;
- access to all premises need to be secured in line with best practice;
- appropriate and up to date training needs to be made available to all staff, managers and directors; and
- safeguarding policies and procedures need to be updated in line with best policy.

7. Overall effectiveness

North Down Training Limited needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices. The ETI will return to the organisation within six weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues. The ETI will also monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection within 12 months.

Programme registrations

Table 1 - Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	6	100%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Your Life	21	28%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 1)	45	61%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 2)	8	11%

Table 2 - Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Amenity Horticulture	15	20%
Hospitality and Catering	10	14%
Retail and Warehousing	34	46%
IT Users	8	11%
Administration	7	9%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Hospitality and Catering	6	100%

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	0%	0%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	0%	0%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at Grades A*-C	0%	17%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	0%	0%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	0%	0%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	77%	0%

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 observed 64 trainees and apprentices in 19 directed training sessions; visited 32 in their workplace; and interviewed 54 in focus group meetings. Discussions were held with the acting manager, two directors, nine professional and technical and essential skills tutors. Samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were examined; and the organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were scrutinised.

As part of the evaluation of North Down Training Limited's arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding young people, the trainees and apprentices completed an online questionnaire prior to the inspection. Of the 80 questionnaires issued, 65 (81%) were returned, including seven with written comments. The returns show that the trainees and apprentices feel safe and secure in the organisation and most of them indicated that they made the right choice in following their training programme. A minority of trainees expressed concerns about the cleanliness of the accommodation provided and about the quality of their training. The concerns were shared anonymously with the management team.

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.

ADDENDUM TO THE INSPECTION OF NORTH DOWN TRAINING LIMITED IN MARCH 2017

On 31 March 2017 a safeguarding follow-up inspection was carried out in North Down Training Limited.

What does North Down Training Limited need to do to improve?

- Appoint and train urgently a safeguarding team including named designated and deputy designated officers, and clarify notifying and reporting arrangements within the organisation and with the subcontractor.
- Revise the Safeguarding Policy as a matter of urgency, to more clearly identify the safeguarding roles and responsibilities and reporting arrangements within the organisation, and re-distribute the updated policy and associated procedures to staff, students, parents/ carers, members of the board and the subcontractor.
- Develop a secure access to buildings policy and implement related procedures as a matter of urgency ensuring they are shared with and applied consistently by all staff and students.
- Ensure all staff attend the general safeguarding training 'Keeping Children Safe' organised for 4 April 2017.
- Provide additional safeguarding training for the management team, including the designated officer and the designated board member, and 'Safeguarding Adults' training for all staff that reflect the needs of the student group.
- Update the newly devised 'Staff Code of Behaviour' to better reflect the ethos of the organisation.

Conclusion

Safeguarding, in North Down Training Limited, remains unsatisfactory.

Further action will be considered by the Department for the Economy.

SECOND FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF NORTH DOWN TRAINING LIMITED IN JUNE 2017

Safeguarding

On 8 June 2017 the ETI carried out a second safeguarding follow-up inspection in North Down training Limited.

What does North Down Training Limited need to do to improve?

- Re-distribute and communicate the updated Safeguarding Policy, including roles and responsibilities and reporting arrangements, to parents and carers.
- Ensure, as a matter of priority, that the designated board member attends safeguarding training at the earliest opportunity.

Conclusion

Safeguarding, in North Down Training Limited, now reflects broadly the requirements of the Department.

Further action will be considered by the Department for the Economy.

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