



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Training for Success and  
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in  
Rutledge Recruitment and Training

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## 1. Context

Rutledge Recruitment and Training (Rutledge) is a private limited company, and is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes<sup>1</sup>. The organisation is led by its chief executive officer and two directors, who are supported operationally by an operations manager, a human resources manager, an internal auditor, eleven branch managers, fourteen support officers and a number of administrative staff. The training provision is managed by the head of training supported by four training managers, ten internal verifiers, and 66 tutors. The organisation has sub-contracting arrangements in place with Ballycastle Community Workshop to deliver plant operations to a small number of apprentices (9).

Rutledge has 12 branches across Northern Ireland, grouped regionally: region one comprises Enniskillen, Londonderry, Omagh and Strabane; region two: Armagh, Bangor, Belfast, Lurgan and Magherafelt; and region three: Antrim, Ballymena and Coleraine.

At the time of the inspection, 540 trainees and 859 apprentices were registered across the professional and technical areas of business administration, barbering, beauty therapy, children's care learning and development (CCLD), construction, contact centre operations, customer service, hairdressing, health and social care, information technology (IT) users, IT and telecoms professionals, plant operations, retail, stores and warehousing, team leading and management.

A minority (22%) of the trainees have a recognised disability and/or additional learning support needs, and a further 13% of them have significant personal and social barriers to learning. A small number (7%) of the trainees and a significant minority (42%) of the apprentices entered their programme with four or more GSCE passes at grades A\* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics. A significant minority (43%) 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 for learning and development; and
- the quality of the leadership and management.

## 3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

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

Overall quality of learning and training programmes		
Training for Success	39%	Important areas for improvement
ApprenticeshipsNI	61%	Good

Occupational area/essential skills overall performance levels	
Barbering, beauty therapy, and hairdressing	Important areas for improvement
Children's care, learning and development	Good
Contact centre operations, IT and telecoms professionals and IT users	Good
Customer service and retail	Requires significant improvement
Health and social care	Good
Wood occupations	Good
Essential skills	Important areas for improvement

## KEY FINDINGS

### Strengths:

- the good standards of work achieved by most of the trainees and apprentices;
- the good quality of the provision, particularly for the apprentices, in the professional and technical areas of CCLD, contact centre operations, IT and telecoms professionals and IT users, health and social care, and wood occupations;
- the good quality of most of the learning, teaching and training;
- the high strategic priority given by senior management to providing good quality learning facilities and resources that are easily accessible, including dedicated and supportive staff who facilitate well the trainees' and apprentices' learning, teaching training and development; and
- the good range of appropriate learning programmes offered across the organisation's extensive network of branches.

### Areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of the provision in beauty therapy, barbering and hairdressing, and essential skills, which have important areas for improvement and customer service and retail which requires significant improvement;
- improve the quality of leadership and management to provide better curricular leadership of each of the professional and technical areas and the essential skills;

- implement strategies to increase the work-experience placement rate across the provision, which is too low at 43%; and
- improve the poor retention rates on the Training for Success (58%) and the ApprenticeshipsNI (67%) programmes, and the progression rate (67%) on the Training for Success programme.

#### **4. Outcomes for learners**

The standards attained by the trainees and apprentices range from very good to having important areas for improvement, but are good overall. In IT and telecoms professional, for example, the apprentices can use competently a range of software programmes, can identify components and features of common networks, understand binary coding systems, and carry out troubleshooting routines. Similarly, in health and social care, most of the trainees and apprentices are developing well their understanding of good professional practices, including effective hygiene and infection control in health and social care settings. Across the professional and technical areas, the proportion of trainees in a work-experience placement is too low at 43%; consequently the majority of them do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and consolidate their occupational and employability skills; more needs to be done to develop their work-readiness in order to increase their motivation for and engagement in a placement.

Most of the apprentices' oral communication skills are good; they communicate with confidence to a variety of audiences in a range of settings, including in their workplace. However, the trainees' oral communication skills are too variable. While most of them are confident communicators, a minority are overly reticent to participate in discussions, particularly in training sessions. Rutledge needs to do more to develop the trainees' confidence and competence to engage in dialogue across a range of settings. The progress being made by a significant minority of the trainees and apprentices in their literacy and numeracy is too slow with significant gaps in their learning files. The written communication skills of the trainees and apprentices are also too variable; a minority of them are not developing sufficiently their extended writing skills. There are examples of trainees being able to apply numeracy well, such as in wood occupations where most of them are able to accurately measure and mark out their work. However, across the organisation, a minority of the trainees are not able to appropriately transfer and apply their literacy and numeracy skills within their professional and technical work.

Overall, almost all of the trainees and apprentices who complete their training over the past three years achieved their targeted qualifications. Similarly, over the same period, in the essential skills, nearly all of the trainees and apprentices who completed their training achieved their targeted essential skills qualifications with a minority of them successfully achieving more than one level of the essential skills.

Whilst most of the trainees and apprentices are making appropriate progress in their learning and development, a minority in the professional and technical areas of barbering, beauty therapy, customer service and retail, hairdressing, essential skills, health and social care, and wood occupations are making slow progress due to poor attendance and gaps in the provision. Across the professional and technical areas, most of the trainees and apprentices demonstrate positive dispositions to learning, are motivated, and engage well in their learning and training and are able to respond appropriately to a range of questions. A minority of the trainees, however, demonstrate insufficient progress in the development of their personal, social skills and wider employability skills; their attendance is erratic and they struggle to engage in and persist with their learning. They lack sufficient capacity to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, behaviours and progression; as a result they develop insufficient resilience and attitudes to cope well enough in the world of work.

It is a concern that the retention rate has remained consistently low over the three year period 2013/2016. Over this period, the retention rate on the Training for Success is too low and requires significant improvement and on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme it is an important area for improvement. Whilst most of the trainees and apprentices make appropriate progress during their training, the progression of trainees to employment or further training is an important area for improvement. A minority of the level 2 apprentices do not progress to level 3 and this is also an important area for improvement.

## **5. Quality of provision**

The curriculum in all of the professional and technical areas provide a balanced programme of learning and the organisation consults well with employers to carefully choose the accredited qualification units to meet their specific needs and those of the trainees and apprentices.

Whilst there is a pre-entry guidance and induction programme in place, the arrangements for them need to be reviewed and strengthened to ensure that all of the trainees and apprentices are placed on the most appropriate programme at the right level. The trainees and apprentices all undergo an appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment process that is used to determine the levels in essential skills that they should be working towards. The trainees' and apprentices' personal training plans are mostly of a good quality and capture their prior achievement, additional learning needs and any other barriers to learning. While the dedicated support officers monitor regularly the trainees' and apprentices' progress, the reviews are too focused on the achievement of units in the professional and technical areas. There is a need for the progress reviews to review more explicitly the trainees' and apprentices' attendance, to evaluate the effectiveness of the additional support provided for them and to set individualised targets for the sustained development of their personal, social and employability skills. The results of these assessments, however need to be used to inform better the planning for learning and teaching, matched to the trainees and apprentices assessed needs.

For trainees appropriately identified with additional support needs, the effective links with a range of external specialist support providers is used well and accessed regularly to underpin their learning and progress; particularly in relation to additional learning support for the essential skills.

The planning for learning is mostly good. Standardised schemes of work and lesson plans have been developed across the professional and technical areas, the essential skills, and in the careers and life skills provision. In the most effective practice, the planning makes good connections to the occupational standards and to the development of the essential skills and matches well the different needs of the trainees and apprentices. However, for a minority of trainees and apprentices the rigidity in the approach to the planning for their learning results in their specific needs not being met effectively; in these cases the planning for differentiated learning needs to be developed further.

The quality of most of the learning, teaching and training is good or better, with one-quarter of the sessions being very good or better, and is good overall. The more effective sessions are characterised by the use of a range of learning strategies and the effective use of information learning technology (ILT) to engage and motivate the trainees and apprentices in their learning. In health and social care, for example, role plays, demonstration and practical activities enhance the learning experience; the theory is applied effectively to practice and questioning strategies are used well to extend learning.

In the less effective practice, there is limited use of differentiation; the use of questioning to extend and deepen understanding is not well enough developed; the sessions lack appropriate pace; teaching is overly tutor-led and the trainees and apprentices are not sufficiently challenged, particularly the more able learners. In customer service and retail, for example, there is limited identification of the individual learning needs and planning for differentiation is weak, resulting in low levels of engagement of the trainees in their learning.

The sessions for the essential skills, health and social care and retail trainees and apprentices, are too long, particularly for those trainees who have difficulties with literacy and numeracy and/or have barriers to training and employment. In addition, a significant minority of the essential skills sessions have trainees targeting too many levels, posing a significant challenge for the tutors to effectively support all of them. Overall, the attendance in the directed training sessions varies from outstanding to requiring urgent improvement, but overall it has important areas for improvement.

The assessment arrangements for the professional and technical training are good. For example, an electronic portfolio is used effectively in CCLD and contact centre operations, IT and telecoms professional and IT users to support the regular reviewing, tracking and recording of the trainees' and apprentices' progress. Across most of the professional and technical areas, the internal verification procedures are robust. There are examples of good practice in CCLD and in health and social care where clear feedback is given on how the written work could be extended, developed or improved. However, across the other professional areas marking for improvement is mostly underdeveloped and there is a need for the trainees and apprentices to be provided with clear and constructive feedback on how their work can be improved. Most of the employers are well-informed of the trainees' and apprentices' overall progress, however, in beauty therapy, barbering and hairdressing, CCLD and customer service and retail there is a need for improved communication with employers to monitor the progress of the trainees and apprentices.

The trainees benefit from a comprehensive taught programme for personal development and employability skills. The training sessions are well-planned and most of the trainees engage positively in the learning activities and make valuable contributions to group discussions. Across the branches, there is also a growing and effective range of enrichment activities, providing the trainees with practical projects and social events that enable them to develop and strengthen their interpersonal skills and self-confidence.

While the trainees are provided with an adequate taught careers education information advice and guidance programme, complemented occasionally with guest speakers and industry visits, more needs to be done to raise further their aspirations for employment and/or further training. The careers provision for the apprentices is underdeveloped; while management and staff have developed suitable careers learning resources specifically for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, the provision is not delivered in a structured and consistent manner. Overall, the careers programme needs to take greater account of the context of the trainees' and apprentices' professional and technical area, to ensure they are fully aware of the nature and breadth of the employment and progression opportunities available to them, and any associated personal development and career planning.

The care and welfare arrangements impact positively on the learning, teaching and outcomes for the trainees and apprentices. Across all of the branches, the staff work hard and to good effect to establish a caring and supportive learning environment. All of the trainees and apprentices interviewed reported that their tutors and support officers were approachable, encouraging and proactive in meeting their learning needs. In addition, a varied and appropriately targeted range of external support agencies provide the trainees with pertinent information and training in critical personal and social issues, with an important

focus on keeping themselves safe and healthy. Management are proactive in developing a wide range of links and partnerships with external agencies to ensure the trainees are provided with well-targeted advice and guidance on key health and well-being issues. This includes whole-group workshops and where necessary specific individualised support.

## **6. Leadership and management**

The chief executive officer and the senior management team are highly committed to quality improvement in the interests of all of the trainees and apprentices. They have a clear vision for the development of the provision, including plans to expand it across a wider range of professional and technical areas and across Northern Ireland.

The management of the organisation has been appropriately re-structured recently and the number of staff and their roles and responsibilities re-aligned to reflect the reduced recruitment levels. The responsibility for the oversight of the curriculum for the Training for Success trainees and the co-ordination of the professional and technical areas is however distributed across the branch managers and the training managers, and it is unclear who has overall responsibility for the planning and co-ordination of a coherent and cohesive curriculum. In particular, the planning for the timetable for the training for success curriculum is an important area for improvement. It is not clear who has responsibility for monitoring the attendance in each of the professional and technical areas and the overall attendance at organisation level. Going forward, the organisation needs to review more thoroughly its strategies and approaches to promote and underpin to greater effect higher levels of attendance and punctuality, particularly on the Training for Success programme.

Staff turnover is high; almost one-quarter of the tutors have left the organisation in the last financial year. This has resulted in gaps in provision impacting negatively on the rate of progression of a minority of the trainees and apprentices. It is appropriate that this has been recognised by the organisation as important area for improvement and that action has been initiated to recruit and retain staff.

The branch managers and training managers work hard to support the tutors and the support officers in their role, and appropriate management information systems are in place to complement this process. While there are regular meetings at branch level to review the provision and to share information, there is no effective mechanism in place to identify and address the inconsistency in the quality of the provision across the branches.

The tutors and support staff are experienced and knowledgeable about contemporary practice in their respective professional and technical areas; they build positive and productive relationships with the trainees and apprentices and provide an environment that is inclusive and conducive to learning. A cycle of tutor observations conducted by the head of training and the training managers is in place, the outcomes from which are shared with the tutors and is effective in bringing about improvements in practice.

Management has invested significantly in physical accommodation and the quality of most of it is good. The locations of offices are selected carefully, in town centres to provide the trainees and apprentices with ease of access. The classrooms are well maintained and enhanced by stimulating displays of, for example, careers information, word banks and the trainees' and apprentices' work. The quality of the workshops and salons is also of a good quality, resourced with an appropriate range of tools, equipment and learning resources. There is, however, a need for the computer networking system to be updated and for more up-to-date hardware, software and ILT equipment, such as interactive whiteboards and mobile devices, to support learning and teaching.



Good links have been established with a range of employers, particularly on the ApprenticeshipsNI provision, the organisation, however, should strengthen further its employer engagement to provide a broader range and number of work-experience placement opportunities for the majority of the trainees.

The organisation's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes have important areas for improvement. At a strategic level, although management information is collated and analysed regularly, the information is not used well enough to identify and address key areas for improvement. Individual self-evaluation reports are compiled for each professional and technical area and the organisation has identified effectively and accurately the areas for improvement in the majority of the self-evaluation reports. The quality improvement plans, however, are not sufficiently robust to address effectively key areas for improvement in the provision. There is a need to include clearer actions and targets for improvement which are monitored regularly and their impact evaluated, and to involve the course teams more fully in the improvement process.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at risk reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department. However, the organisation needs to:

- review and update the safeguarding policies and procedures to be more in line with current practice; and
- inform trainees and apprentices more effectively of safeguarding roles, responsibilities and contact arrangements in a language and medium that is easily accessible to them.

## **7. Overall effectiveness**

Rutledge Recruitment and Training needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices. 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 within 18 months.

## Programme registrations

Table 1 - Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	859	61%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Your Life	9	1%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 1)	133	10%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 2)	395	28%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 3)	3	<0.5%

Table 2 - Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Business administration	15	3%
Barbering	56	10%
Beauty therapy	20	4%
Children's care, learning and development	90	17%
Construction	55	10%
Customer service	2	<1%
Hairdressing	40	7%
Health and social care	60	11%
IT Users	69	13%
Retail	98	18%
Stores and warehousing	35	6%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Business administration	14	2%
Barbering	5	1%
Children's care, learning and development	77	9%
Construction	20	2%
Contact centre operations	185	22%
Customer service	56	7%
Hairdressing	13	2%
Health and social care	376	44%
IT users/ IT and telecoms professionals	41	5%
Plant operations	9	1%
Retail	47	5%
Stores and warehousing	13	2%
Team leading & management	3	<1%

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

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Training for Success (%)</b>	<b>Apprenticeships NI (%)</b>
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	7%	42%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	20%	49%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at Grades A*-C	21%	61%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	17%	62%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	50%	64%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	11%	8%

**B. Inspection methodology and evidence base**

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk).

Fourteen ETI inspectors and one associate assessor observed 424 apprentices and trainees in 97 directed training sessions; visited 44 trainees and apprentices in their workplace; and interviewed 234 in focus group meetings. Discussions were held with the chief executive officer, the finance director, operations director, operations manager, human resources manager, internal auditor, four branch managers, four training managers, seven support officers and six 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 Rutledge Recruitment and Training'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 1399 questionnaires issued, 275 (20%) were returned, including 28 with written comments. The questionnaire returns show that that nearly all of the trainees and apprentices who responded indicated that they made the right choice in following their training programme, and felt safe and well supported in the organisation.

### 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:

Overall effectiveness outcome
The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any area(s) for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.
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, which includes the need to produce an improvement plan, which will be the basis for 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, which includes the need to produce an improvement plan, which will be the basis for a formal follow-up inspection.

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
<b>Retention</b>	The percentage of enrolments at week 4 of year one who completed their occupational training framework, measured over the full duration of their course.
<b>Achievement</b>	The percentage of trainees/apprentices who completed their occupational training framework and who fully achieved their framework qualification.
<b>Progression</b>	The percentage of successful completers who progressed to further/higher education/training or employment.

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