



Education and Training
Inspectorate

ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Transport Training Services (NI)
Limited

Report of an Inspection in
March 2015

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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1. Context

Transport Training Services (NI) Limited (Transport Training Services) was established in 1992 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Transport Training Board for Northern Ireland, a private company limited by guarantee that is registered for charitable status. Transport Training Services operates from specialist accommodation in Nutts Corner, Crumlin and is led by a non-executive chairperson, a chief executive and three directors with responsibility for finance and administration, technical training, and business development. The staffing complement includes three full-time tutors, one part-time essential skills tutor and two full-time administrative staff members.

Since August 2013, Transport Training Services has been contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to deliver professional and technical training, under the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, in the professional and technical area of transportation operation and maintenance at levels 2 and 3. Transport Training Services are also contracted to deliver the level 2 apprenticeships in driving goods vehicles; passenger carrying vehicle driving bus and coach; and vehicle fitting operations; no apprentices have been registered to date on these programmes.

Transport Training Services has sub-contracting arrangements in place with other local training suppliers to deliver the Department's 2008 ApprenticeshipsNI legacy programmes in vehicle body repair and refinishing at level 2 and 3, and in warehousing and storage at level 2. These programmes are being phased out; only one apprentice remains on the vehicle body repair and refinishing programme and 3 apprentices remain on the warehousing and storage programme.¹

All of the apprentices are employed in a variety of vehicle maintenance and repair settings across the eastern region of Northern Ireland, mostly in vehicle manufacturers' franchised dealerships. Most (74%) of them attend directed training at Transport Training Services in one-week long training blocks. The remainder, comprising 20 heavy vehicle apprentices, attend block-release at approved vehicle manufacturers' training centres in England. Transport Training Services provides the workplace assessment for the apprentices' vocationally competent qualification (VCQ), and also the directed training and assessment for their essential skills. The remaining apprentices receive all of their training from Transport Training Services.

At the time of the inspection, 77 apprentices were registered on the transportation operation and maintenance apprenticeship programme; 39 were registered on the level 2 and 38 on the level 3 programmes. Forty-eight apprentices were in light vehicle maintenance and repair², 23 in heavy vehicle maintenance and repair, five in vehicle refinishing, and one in vehicle body repair. In the current year, only nine apprentices needed to complete the essential skill of ICT, with two requiring literacy and two requiring numeracy at both level 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, none of the apprentices were undertaking directed training across the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT)³.

¹ The apprenticeship in warehousing and storage was not inspected due to the small numbers remaining on the programme.

² One light vehicle maintenance and repair apprentice receives his directed training for the VRQ with a manufacturer's specialist training supplier located in England; Transport Training Services delivers the VCQ and the essentials skills training.

³ There was insufficient evidence available at the time of the inspection to report separately on the quality of the essential skills provision.

The recruitment to the body repair and refinishing strand has declined significantly, in part due to the increased number of ApprenticeshipsNI training providers contracted in 2013. Only five apprentices were recruited to both the level 2 and 3 programmes in 2014/15.

Overall, the apprentices' academic profile on entry to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is good. According to the information supplied by Transport Training Services, just over one-half (51%) of the apprentices had attained four or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics or equivalent qualifications, on entry to their apprenticeship programme; and two-thirds (67%) had attained four or more GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent qualifications. Just over one-third (35%) of the apprentices have essential skill needs in literacy and/or numeracy.

2. Overall Finding

Overall, the quality of training provided by Transport Training Services is outstanding.

Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Quality of Provision for Learning	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Very good

What does Transport Training Services need to do to bring about further improvement?

- To strengthen further the self-evaluation processes by capturing more effectively the key strengths and areas for improvement of the organisation, including the sub-contracted provision to inform improvement planning.

3. Key Findings of the Inspection

3.1 Achievements and standards are outstanding.

The apprentices are very well motivated and are enthusiastic about their training programme. The tutors expect high standards of behaviour and work from them, and promote a positive and productive ethos for learning. The standard of the apprentices' work is at least very good, and often outstanding. They acquire quickly the key practical occupational skills and knowledge for their area of work. Most of the apprentices display high levels of confidence, are able to cope well with increasing levels of responsibility and independent working, and take responsibility for their own learning and development. Commensurate with their stage of training, they are able to complete confidently and efficiently a wide range of maintenance and repair tasks to the appropriate industry standard. These include: routine services; removing and replacing major components; diagnosing and rectifying complex faults; and repairing and refinishing body panels using contemporary techniques. Importantly, most of the apprentices are developing competence, for example, in the use of manufacturers' data and schematic diagrams, multi-meters and oscilloscopes to identify faults.

The apprentices display high levels of respect and professionalism when interacting with customers, colleagues, their supervisors and tutors. Nearly all of the apprentices speak very confidently about their work and can communicate effectively using appropriate terminology and technical language with their peers, tutors and customers. The apprentices' assessment portfolios are completed to an exceptionally high standard; job cards are

detailed, meticulous, and mostly free from spelling and grammatical errors. The standards of literacy and numeracy in the apprentices' assessment portfolios is good or better with evidence that the professional and technical tutors and most employers provide good opportunities for extended writing to consolidate their literacy skills. They are also able to interpret technical data and transfer their numeracy skills to the jobs they are working on in the workshop, for example, using the correct torques when replacing components. It is a key strength that the majority of the apprentices achieve significantly above the minimum pass grade in their written assessments.

Over the last four years, based on the information supplied by Transport Training Services, the outcomes on the Apprenticeships NI programme are consistently very high. Overall, almost all (91%) of the apprentices are retained and almost all (99%) of those who remained on their programme achieved their full training frameworks.

Significantly, the majority (74%) of the level 2 apprentices sustain their employment and almost all (98%) of them progress to the level 3 apprenticeship programme. In addition, almost all (96%) of the level 3 apprentices who complete their training sustain their employment.

Over the last four years, the average achievement rates in the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT have been outstanding at 100%. In 2013/2014 all of the year one level 2 apprentices achieved their essential skills qualifications in literacy and numeracy at level 2, which is at a level above that required by their training framework. All of the apprentices who require the essential skill in ICT target level 1. An initial assessment needs to be developed for ICT to identify those apprentices who could target and achieve level 2.

3.2 The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is strategically well-informed by the organisation's in-depth knowledge of the industry and their well-established links and partnerships. The programmes are well-designed to meet effectively the needs of the employers and prepare young people well for a career in the vehicle maintenance and repair industry. A significant minority of apprentices for instance, are able to access in-service tailored training programmes aligned to the franchised dealer requirements and standards.

The quality of the directed training is very good to outstanding. The training sessions are well-planned, characterised by an ethos of mutual respect, high levels of co-operation, and appropriately high levels of stretch and challenge. A key feature is the effective use of questioning, group discussions, research and exploratory practical tasks to deepen the apprentices' understanding and transferability of key principles and concepts. They benefit greatly from the well-equipped, modern workshop facilities that are used to good effect to develop their practical occupational skills, including additional support to compete in regional or national skills competitions.

Assessment arrangements are very well-developed. The apprentices and their employers are provided with clear guidance in order for them to plan and exploit fully the available opportunities in the workplace to achieve occupational competence in a timely manner. Recording, tracking and evaluation of apprentice progress are rigorous and supportive. Regular progress reports provide the apprentices and their employers with a detailed record of achievements, information on how to improve further, and set targets for future training and assessment. In the workplace, the apprentices are provided with a wide range of

learning experiences that are matched well to their qualification, and often aligned to the stage and content of their directed training. They are supported well by their workplace mentor and by frequent visits from their Transport Training Services tutor. As a result, excellent relationships have developed between the organisation, the employers and the apprentices.

The classes for all of the apprentices who require the essential skills are held one day a week for approximately 15 weeks at the beginning of the apprentices' training period. The tutor uses an integrated approach for the delivery of the literacy and ICT essential skills but there is no provision currently planned for the delivery of numeracy for the small number of apprentices who require it. The model of delivery for the essential skills training needs to be reviewed to ensure that all apprentices receive all of their essential skills in a timely manner. Very good use is made of relevant vocational contexts in the assessment work to engage the apprentices.

The quality of the pastoral care provided for the apprentices is outstanding. They are very well-supported by the tutors and employers both in their directed training and in the workplace. A positive ethos exists and good working relationships have been developed between the tutors and the apprentices who report that there are good opportunities for them to avail of one-to-one support when needed. The apprentices also state that the training is delivered as flexibly as possible to meet their learning and support needs. An appropriate induction system is in place, which provides the apprentices with relevant information about their programme and other key related areas such as health and safety procedures and first aid. The provision for additional learning support is very good. Only a very small number of the apprentices have been identified as having additional learning support needs and appropriate support has been put in place for them. While links have been established with a number of external support organisations, they are narrow and should be extended to provide the apprentices with care, guidance and support information on a broader range of personal, social and health issues.

The quality of the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance is very good. The apprentices are mostly well-informed of possible career opportunities and progression pathways in the motor industry by both their tutors and employers and they are keen to achieve higher professional levels within the vehicle maintenance and repair industry. The organisation has recently established a dedicated careers room for the apprentices which includes a range of good quality careers information and support materials, and very good links have been established with the Department's careers service and with a range of post-primary schools to promote training and career progression opportunities for young people. While appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance are provided to the apprentices it is mostly done on an informal basis.

3.3 The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The board of Transport Training Services is led by a non-executive chair who exercises an appropriate scrutiny function, ensuring that the work of Transport Training Services reflects the objectives of the Transport Training Board. The chief executive has provided effective leadership, for example, by undertaking a strategic review of the business, producing a two-year corporate plan for the development of the organisation, and establishing improved communication systems.

There are high levels of collegial working across the organisation, with a shared vision to meet the needs of the apprentices and their employers, and to promote high standards of training for the transportation operation and maintenance sector. Through a strong ambition and commitment to provide high quality training that is aligned well to the needs of the industry sector, Transport Training Services has built a reputation of providing consistent, reliable training that meets effectively the needs of the apprentices and employers.

The Transport Training Services has established self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes though aspects require further development to include a wider range of evidence. The organisation, has recently introduced more formal arrangements to capture the views of its staff though these processes need to be further developed to capture more effectively the strengths of the organisation, including the work of the sub-contractors. In addition, the report needs to be informed better by government priorities to highlight the main areas for development and expansion of the provision; for example, to develop more innovative strategies to increase the recruitment to the vehicle body repair and refinishing programmes. There is also a need for the senior management team to review the co-ordination of the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision and to provide a more structured and timetabled careers and support programme for the apprentices, with appropriate monitoring and tracking processes in place to allow an evaluation of the impact of the provision on their learning.

The online tracking system developed to monitor and track the apprentices' progress is sector-leading; it collates and measures robustly the progress the apprentices are making in each of their units and across the programme. The tutors are rigorous in ensuring that the reports to employers and the records kept by the apprentices accurately reflect the progress the apprentices are making in their programme. The system supports well the integration of the on the job and off the job training.

The training director and tutors are highly committed, well-qualified, experienced and engage frequently in relevant continuous professional development to meet the current and emerging technological developments within the industry. It is a key strength of the organisation that the tutors regularly update their specialist skills to reflect the technological advances in motor vehicle technology, for example, one tutor continues to update his technical knowledge and skills through regular attendance at a major car manufacturers' training programme in England; and all of the tutors have achieved level 2 and 3 qualifications in the maintenance and repair of electronically and electrically propelled vehicles. They have also undertaken the Certificate in Teaching qualification, with some of them progressing to Diploma level.

The quality of the Transport Training Services training facilities is outstanding. A recent significant investment has provided a contemporary training facility that is well-equipped with industry standard equipment and learning resources. The training rooms, workshops and public spaces are bright, spacious, welcoming and maintained to a very high standard.

Transport Training Services has strong links and partnerships with the industry employers, the sector skills council, industry bodies, schools and other key stakeholders. Consequently, Transport Training Services is effective in supporting economic and workforce development within the sector, particularly for light and heavy vehicle maintenance and repair.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection Transport Training Services has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department but the following areas need to be addressed:

- management should ensure that all necessary safeguarding training for staff is completed urgently; and
- an e-safety policy needs to be developed, along with guidance and support for apprentices in relation to keeping safe online.

4. Conclusion

Overall the quality of education and training provided by Transport Training Services is outstanding. The organisation has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

5. Inspection method and evidence base

The inspection focused on:

- the achievements and standards;
- the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the quality of provision for training and learning; and
- the quality of the leadership and management of the organisation.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in these three aspects of training supplier organisations, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Improving Quality: Raising Standards Work-based Learning* <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/improving-quality-raising-standards/improving-quality-raising-standards-iqrs-work-based-learning.htm>

A team of 4 inspectors observed a total of 6 directed training sessions. Inspectors visited 22 workplaces and interviewed 35 apprentices in focus groups and in the work place. The inspectors also held discussions with the chair of Transport Training Services board, its management team, staff and tutors. In addition, inspectors examined samples of the apprentices' work, tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans and apprentices' personal training plans. The organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

The inspection also focused on the arrangements for care, support and guidance and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups. The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the apprentices to complete a confidential online questionnaire prior to the inspection. There was a very low response rate to the online questionnaire with no written comments. The feedback from the small number of completed questionnaires and the apprentices in the focus group interviews shows that they have high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the teaching and training in Transport Training Services, including the good support they receive from staff in the organisation

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Learners	79	6	8%	0

6. Information about Transport Training Services

Current registrations by programme

Programme	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	80	100

Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Body Repair and Refinishing	6	8
Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	48	60
Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	23	29
Warehousing and storage	3	4

Qualifications of current apprentices on entry to their programme

Programme	ApprenticeshipsNI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	51
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	67
(%) of learners with GCSE English and mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	65
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	85
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	5

Note: All data was sourced from Transport Training Services at the time of the inspection.

7. Quantitative terms used by the ETI

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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Key Performance Indicators

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

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