



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
People Plus NI (formerly Paragon
Training NI Limited)

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in March 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



CSE



FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF PEOPLE PLUS NI (FORMERLY PARAGON TRAINING NI LIMITED)

The original inspection carried out in October 2015¹ concluded that the organisation needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The main areas for improvement were the need to:

- develop a better shared understanding of highly effective practice in learning, teaching and training in order to improve the quality of planning and pedagogy across the provision;
- formalise the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, particularly within health and social care, essential skills, retail and youth work, to inform better improvement planning and continuing professional development;
- continue to monitor and evaluate more effectively the trainees' and apprentices' progress; and
- enhance further the careers provision, in order to broaden the trainees' and apprentices' awareness of possible work-experience, progression and employment opportunities.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in June 2016 and a follow-up inspection in March 2017. In the interval since the original inspection, the following key actions which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- Paragon Training NI Limited was acquired by People Plus NI in February 2016 and as a consequence, significant changes have been made to the management and staffing structure;
- systems to monitor quality have been introduced and a programme of classroom observations and mentoring has been implemented;
- staff development has been provided on self-evaluation and quality improvement planning and on effective practice in learning, teaching and training;
- the timetable for essential skills has been reviewed; and
- a student council has been established to involve the trainees and apprentices in the development of the provision.

Key Findings

The quality of provision requires significant improvement.

- The learning, teaching and training in the sessions observed, had important areas for improvement; in particular, the opportunities for learning were significantly reduced by the poor attendance of the trainees.
- The work-experience placement rate is too low and there remains a need for the organisation to engage more effectively with employers to increase the numbers of trainees in relevant, high quality placements.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/training-for-success-and-apprenticeshipsni-provision-in-paragon-training-ni-limited.pdf>

- The careers provision requires significant improvement, in particular, there is a need to develop a planned programme of guest speakers and industry visits in each of the professional and technical areas to enhance the trainees' experience and knowledge of workplace practice, and to develop their wider employability skills, particularly for those not currently in a work-experience placement.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management requires significant improvement.

- Self-evaluation across the organisation is not sufficiently robust to identify areas for improvement in the provision and to inform improvement planning.
- The recently introduced systems to monitor quality have not yet led to improvement in the quality of the provision or the overall outcomes for learners.
- A system to track the progress of trainees and apprentices has been developed although it needs to be refined further to produce accurate and timely data to inform planning for improvement.
- The retention rates on the Training for Success (41%) and ApprenticeshipsNI (55%) programmes and the achievement rate (56%) on the level 3 apprenticeship have all declined and require significant improvement.
- There has been significant investment in improving the quality accommodation in the West premises, including the provision of a social area for the trainees and apprentices.

Overall Effectiveness

People Plus NI now needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices. The areas for improvement include the urgent need to:

- improve the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, to include the use of accurate and timely data, and to implement a quality improvement plan that sets appropriate, prioritised, and timely targets for sustained improvement;
- improve the quality of the learning, teaching and training;
- use effectively the tracking and monitoring systems to identify trainees and apprentices who are not making sufficient progress in their learning and for those who are at risk of leaving;
- develop employer engagement at both a strategic and operational levels to increase the quantity of relevant, high quality work-experience placements for the trainees; and
- develop further the careers education, information, advice and guidance provision, including the use of guest speakers and industry visits, to enhance the trainees' experience and knowledge of their professional and technical area and to develop their wider employability skills.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The ETI carried out an inspection in October 2015, the quality of the essential skills provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The key areas for improvement were the need to:

- develop and embed the management and coordination roles within the essential skills provision in order to improve the curricular leadership, the timetabling arrangements, the tracking of progression and the collation and use of data to inform more effective self evaluation and quality improvement planning;
- improve the use of the outcomes of the initial and diagnostic assessment processes in the planning for teaching, training and learning and develop a more comprehensive range of teaching, training and learning strategies to meet the needs of all of the trainees and apprentices more effectively;
- improve the pace of the achievement and progression of the trainees and apprentices within essential skills; and
- demonstrate more effectively the transferability of the standards achieved in the essential skills within the professional and technical work of the trainees and apprentices.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in June 2016 and a follow-up inspection in March 2017.

Key findings

Since the original inspection:

- the timetabling arrangement have been reviewed with shorter sessions being introduced and now includes small group or one-to-one support sessions;
- initial and diagnostic assessment is now used to inform class composition with respect to the range of levels the trainees are working towards;
- a standardised tracking system has been developed for essential skills to track learner progress and the progress is reviewed regularly;
- formal training has been provided in aspects of teaching and learning including differentiation, learner engagement, assessment of learning and effective use of information and learning technologies;
- an initial assessment evidence tracker and learning log have been introduced in the essential skill of information and communication technology; and
- significant changes in staffing have taken place to the essential skills team.

Overall Effectiveness

In essential skills, the quality of education and training provided by People Plus NI now requires significant improvement. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the low attendance at essential skills classes;
- improve the progress the trainees are making in their learning and address the low outcomes;
- provide effective and consistent leadership for the essential skills provision;
- improve the collection, reconciliation and analysis of the key performance data for the essential skills; and
- improve the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning for the provision including the use of reliable data to inform self-evaluation.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The ETI carried out an inspection in October 2015, the quality of the health and social care provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The key areas for improvement were the need to:

- improve the overall quality of the learning, teaching and training and the standards of work achieved by the apprentices in their written work and in the workplace, through extending and enhancing the learners' knowledge, understanding and skills beyond what they already know and can do;
- enhance the quality of the review process for the apprentices to include individualised and specific targets against which progress can be measured; and
- develop and strengthen further the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes for the health and social care programmes, to include a more robust, data informed and evidence based evaluation of the impact of teaching and training on learning and progression.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in June 2016 and a follow-up inspection in March 2017.

Key findings

Since the original inspection:

- a structured programme has been put in place for the delivery of the Training for Success programme, with trainees mostly making good progress; and
- consistent and sustained improvement in the quality of the health and social care provision for the apprenticeship programmes has been impeded significantly, at both co-ordination and delivery level, by ongoing staff changes and absences.

Conclusion

In health and social care, the quality of education and training provided by People Plus NI now requires urgent improvement. The areas for further improvement include the need to:

- ensure that the learning, teaching and training provided for the apprentices is delivered in a more timely, regular and consistent manner to enhance further their knowledge, understanding and skills;
- enhance further the quality of the review processes for the apprentices to include individualised and specific incremental targets which are shared with the employers and apprentices and against which progress can be measured;
- improve the average retention rates on the apprenticeship programmes at both level 2 and 3 which are 51% and 62% respectively, and the achievement rate on the level 3 apprenticeship programme at 75%; and
- develop further the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes in health and social care which remain underdeveloped, to include the more effective monitoring and use of data and evidence based evaluations of the impact of teaching and training on learning and progression, in order to promote improvement in the overall quality of the provision.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF RETAIL

The ETI carried out an inspection in October 2015, the quality of the retail provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The key areas for improvement were the need to:

- improve the quality of the learning, teaching and training, including the effective use of information and learning technology to enhance learning;
- establish more effective links and partnerships with employers to enhance the curriculum delivery for trainees and to expand the quantity and range of high quality work placements; and
- further develop, strengthen and monitor the self-evaluation, action planning and quality assurance arrangements.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in June 2016 and a follow-up inspection in March 2017.

Key findings

Since the original inspection:

- a mentoring programme, which includes observation of practice, has been introduced to support tutors to improve the quality of the teaching and learning;
- a detailed tracking system has been introduced to monitor the progress of the trainees across all elements of their framework;
- the retention rate on the Training for Success level 1 programme has dropped significantly to 28%;
- the proportion of trainees in a work-experience placement has declined significantly and is currently too low at 25%; and
- the organisation has successfully recruited to the apprenticeship programme.

Conclusion

In retail, the quality of education and training provided by People Plus NI now requires significant improvement. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- continue to improve the quality of the learning, teaching and training, ensuring appropriate planning for differentiation to meet the individual needs of all of the trainees;
- extend the range of learning experiences for the trainees, including increasing the number in a relevant work-experience placement, and better access to a programme of industry visits and guest speakers, to develop more effectively their employability and occupational skills;
- address the unsatisfactory retention rates (28%) on the Training for Success programme and monitor more closely the attendance and progress of all of the trainees; and
- improve the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes.

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF YOUTH WORK

The ETI carried out an inspection in October 2015; the quality of the youth work provision was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The key areas for improvement were the need to:

- develop better communication channels between the work placements, the parents, the young people and the organisation, in order to support & guide the trainees more effectively in their learning & development;
- review the breadth & relevance of the curriculum offer to ensure it is comprehensive enough at level 1 to meet the employability needs of trainees and requirements for successful progression within the youth work sector; and
- to build further the links and more strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in the youth sector to enhance the trainees' career development and progression pathways.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in June 2016 and a follow-up inspection in March 2017.

Key findings

Since the original inspection:

- there have been significant changes to the staff team; an external youth provider now supports the delivery of the youth work programme;
- the youth work curriculum has been revised and now reflects recent policy developments in the youth sector;
- the trainees from East and West Belfast on the level 2 Peer Mentoring programme are now learning together; and
- the attendance across the youth work programmes, and the retention of trainees on the level 1 programme require urgent improvement.

Conclusion

In youth work, the quality of the education and training provided by PeoplePlus NI now requires significant improvement. The areas for further improvement include the need to:

- improve the poor rates of attendance of the trainees, in order that they can participate in larger, more meaningful group discussions and learning experiences;
- engage more of the trainees in youth work-experience placements, so they can contribute more effectively to class discussions, and apply their understanding of the youth work curriculum in work settings;
- develop further the links with parents, and the partnerships with placement providers and the wider youth work sector;
- monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality of the curriculum provision to ensure that it is progressive and well matched to the trainees' learning needs; and
- to improve the quality of the planning for improvement and the collation and analysis of data.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk