

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

# WORK-BASED LEARNING INSPECTION

Skills for Life and Work and Training for  
Success provision in Clanrye Group

Report of an Inspection in May 2023



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



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## Introduction

The Clanrye Group (Clanrye) is a registered charity contracted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver the Skills for Life and Work and Training for Success training programmes, across Newry, Mourne and Down District and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough council areas. DfE introduced the Skills for Life and Work programme in September 2021 to replace Skills for Your Life and Skills for Work Level 1 of Training for Success. It is a programme designed for young people aged 16-17, or under 22 years for those with a disability, and under 24 years for those who qualify under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) (2002). Clanrye is also one of three organisations in Northern Ireland contracted by DfE to provide specialised support for young people, aged 16 to 22 years, on the Skills for Life and Work, Training for Success, and ApprenticeshipsNI training programmes across the region as part of DfE's disability support service (DSS). Clanrye currently provides support for 31 work-based training providers (all data in this report was provided by the organisation) and avails of specialised support for its own trainees from the other two contracted DSS organisations.

In May 2023, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of the organisation's training programmes on behalf of DfE. Clanrye delivers provision for the professional and technical (P&T) areas of retail and horticulture, and for personal development and employability and the essential skills from training facilities in Newry and, since 2022, in Portadown also. Through a service level agreement, it is supported by the Southern Regional College (SRC) to deliver the P&T areas of construction and hospitality and catering from SRC's Newry and Portadown campuses.

Almost all (98%; 114) of the current trainees are enrolled on a three-year training programme and present with a complex range of learning support needs or disabilities. There is wide variation in their previous educational experiences and levels of attainment. A majority of the trainees (57%; 66) entered their training programmes with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications.

At the time of the inspection, 116 trainees were registered across the P&T areas of construction, horticulture, hospitality and catering, and retail. Ninety-three trainees were registered on the Skills for Life and Work training programme, with most of them completing qualifications at level 1 and the remainder at entry level. Twenty-three trainees were registered on the legacy Training for Success training programme, with a majority completing qualifications at entry level; a small number were completing level 2 qualifications. Almost all of the trainees (114) were completing at least one of the essential skills.

## Views of trainees and staff

Feedback from all of the trainees spoken to was positive about their learning experiences. All of them reported that they feel safe and well supported and enjoy being on their training programme. They are improving their skills and confidence, through meeting and speaking with others and have good opportunities to make new friends. They find all of the staff approachable, respectful and helpful.

A significant minority of the trainees (48%; 56) completed the online questionnaire. Almost all of them reported that: the classroom/workshop training is well taught; the organisation has provided clear guidance and rules around acceptable and unacceptable behaviours; they are well informed of the progress they are making; and they get good advice about relevant personal and social matters. Almost two-fifths of these trainees provided additional written comments which were also positive about their experiences on the programme.

Seventeen percent (21) of the staff completed the online questionnaire. They all reported that: the organisation supports them well to deliver learning and training; they have good access to equipment and learning resources; there are good channels of communication in the organisation; they are well informed about how to stay safe and secure and know who go to if they have a problem or concern; and they feel well supported and are happy with their experiences working in the organisation. In their written comments, staff were positive about the organisation being a welcoming and supportive environment in which to work.

## Focus of the inspection

The report is based on an inspection of the provision for the Skills for Life and Work and Training for Success training programmes in Clanrye, and the essential skills. The inspection focused on the P&T area of retail; this area accounts for 34% of the overall contracted training provision, with 39 trainees enrolled. The inspection also included the capacity of the organisation to identify and bring about improvement, and the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding.

## Summary of overall findings

### Overall effectiveness

At the time of the inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, Clanrye has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the trainees.

### Overall quality of the programmes inspected

Programme	Proportion of registrations	Performance Level
Skills for Life and Work	80%	Very Good
Training for Success	20%	Very Good

### Overall quality of the professional and technical areas inspected and the essential skills provision

Programme	Performance Level
Retail	Very Good
Essential skills	Very Good

## Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and apprentices reflect current legislation and practice.

### Strengths

- The well-planned curriculum which is meeting well the learning and development needs of the trainees and supporting their progression.
- The very effective quality of the learning and teaching observed.
- The high levels of care and support in place for the trainees.
- The positive feedback from the trainees and all of the key stakeholders interviewed about their experiences with the organisation.
- The very effective leadership and management of the training programmes.
- The well-experienced and skilled staff who are provided with very good opportunities to undertake well-targeted professional learning, which impacts positively on the trainees' overall learning experiences.

### Area for improvement

- To continue to develop and refine further the processes used for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning, particularly the better analysis and use of its available organisational data.

## Key findings

- The pre-enrolment advice and induction process in place is used very effectively to collect information on the trainees' individual learning and support needs, to provide information on the training provision and their P&T area of choice, and to develop links with parents and carers. At present the process is mainly paper-based and the organisation should consider using information technology (IT) and online interactive media to make the process more engaging for the trainees.
- The curriculum provided across the P&T areas and in the essential skills is matched well to the trainees' learning, development, and progression needs. It is well-planned and includes an appropriate mix of practical and theory-based training. A significant enrichment programme is also in place and includes participation in a range of recreational activities, undertaking tasks to support the development of independent living skills, attendance at college and employer open days, and a programme of guest speakers and external visits. The curriculum content of both the employability and personal development programmes has been reviewed recently and as a consequence, revised to make it more appropriate to the needs of the trainees.

- A key strength of the essential skills provision is that they are not taught as discrete subjects. There are purposeful links to the P&T areas and a very good focus on the application of information and communications technology (ICT), literacy, and numeracy skills in real-life contexts.
- All of the learning, teaching and training sessions observed were very effective. They were well planned with: a very good understanding of and empathy for the trainees' learning needs; well-considered differentiation; the use of active learning strategies; and high levels of concentration and engagement demonstrated by the trainees. Tasks included the use of visual stimuli and enlarged text, where appropriate, to support the trainees' learning and development needs. Challenging behaviour in lessons was well-managed, with evidence of very good working relationships having been developed between the tutors, support staff and the trainees. Trainees were encouraged to use their creative abilities, to work independently and to engage in critical assessment with their peers, and to use IT, where appropriate.
- The standards of the trainees' work in both retail and essential skills were good or better. The trainees can write formal and informal letters, with very good understanding of structure and tone, and they plan for and draft extended writing tasks. There is evidence of very good marking for improvement by the tutors. In hospitality and catering, the trainees are developing good food preparation and practical cooking skills in a modern industry-standard work environment.
- The trainees are prepared well to undertake a work-experience placement, and the placements visited were relevant and matched well to their chosen vocational pathway. At the time of the inspection a significant minority (49%; 57) of the trainees were in a suitable work-experience placement and a majority (63%; 73) have had a placement at some stage during their programme. The organisation supports proactively the trainees to undertake a work-experience placement. Those trainees, however, who are assessed as not ready to access a placement or those who are unable to secure a placement are engaged appropriately in internal workshops, enrichment activities, community-based projects and Clanrye's social enterprise project. The trainees in retail are developing good practical skills, for example, stock-taking, dealing with customers and handling cash and card payments. In horticulture, they are developing good practical gardening, landscaping and plant management skills in a range of settings.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke to employers involved in the training programmes for all of the P&T areas delivered by the organisation, as well as workplace providers. They all reported that they are very well supported by Clanrye; they are aware who to contact in the event of any issues arising, with regular channels of communication and contact established, including regular site visits by the organisation to review trainee progress. These employers and workplace providers are focused on developing the personal and social skills of the trainees and are committed to improving their life chances.

- Due to almost all of the current trainees being enrolled on three-year programmes, outcomes at the time of the inspection were limited. During the period 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, to date, of the small number of the trainees that completed the essential skills programme, all achieved their targeted qualification in literacy and numeracy. As ICT is not a mandatory requirement of the post-primary curriculum, very few of the trainees on entry to Clanrye had a prior qualification, or the skills and knowledge, to fulfil the required standard for level 1 and level 2 ICT essential skills. As a consequence, since the trainees were just over half-way through the programme at the time of inspection, none had been entered yet for the qualification. There were very good standards of ICT observed in the classwork and in the portfolios overall.
- Over the same period, there have been no achievements on the retail programme, however, most of the trainees (89%) who started the programme have been retained. The overall retention rate for the current trainees across the P&T areas is positive (83%).
- The organisation has put in place an effective process to support improvements in the overall quality of the provision, with an ongoing focus on high quality learning, teaching and training. This includes a cycle of peer observations and the sharing of good practice among staff. Processes are also in place to elicit the views of the trainees on the range of activities in which they are engaged to inform improvement. A staff employability forum has been established to support the ongoing development of employability resources to best meet the needs of the trainees.
- Very good systems have been put in place, including the development of a high quality software application, to track and monitor all aspects of the trainees' learning journey, including attendance, the progress they are making in their learning and training, and the development of a range of vocational, transferable, soft, 'at home', and practical work-related skills. The range of information available should be collated more effectively to provide the trainees and their parents/carers with a concise holistic overview of the progress made during their time on the training programme, and to inform and support further their next steps. It should also be used to better inform the organisation's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process.
- A robust internal quality assurance process is in place for the essential skills. The team carries out quality checks at frequent intervals with the outcomes used to improve the overall quality of the provision; there is evidence that the process has supported an improvement in standards. The tracking process in place is detailed, monitored and updated frequently and ensures early intervention for trainees requiring support. A number of the essential skills tutors are also external verifiers which has improved the team's understanding of the application of the assessment criteria.

- A key strength of the provision is the well-developed preventative curriculum which places a strong focus on the trainees' health and wellbeing, and the promotion of self-care and keeping safe messages. There is evidence of good partnership working to support and meet the individual needs of the trainees, including working to address pertinent issues as part of the personal development curriculum, including for example mental health and wellbeing, gender identity, social isolation, addiction and poverty.
- The designated safeguarding team is experienced and responsive in supporting and as appropriate, referring or signposting trainees to relevant external statutory, community and voluntary organisations. Safeguarding and awareness training for staff and governors is given an appropriately high priority in the organisation. A strong emphasis is also placed on the health and safety of staff and trainees across the offices in which training is delivered.
- The leadership and management of the work-based learning provision, and the provision for retail and essential skills, is very effective at both strategic and operational levels. Senior management have articulated a number of issues and challenges facing the organisation in maintaining the viability and sustainability of the work-based learning provision, including significant budgetary pressures, managing the range of complex issues that trainees present with, the current cost of living crisis, and problems in addressing key issues around the administration of the programme.
- Very good channels of communication and effective working relationships have been developed among staff, at all levels, with roles and responsibilities being defined clearly.
- The process for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning should be further developed and refined. The self-evaluation report provides a good overview of the provision, however, the areas for improvement need to be more evaluative, and targets set within the quality improvement plans should be more clearly defined in order to allow progress to be measured. The process does not currently include an evaluation of the work of the external partners involved in the delivery of the provision.
- Social media and other online systems, such as the organisation's media channel, are used well to advertise and market the Skills for Life and Work training programme. The organisation seeks to celebrate continually the achievements and success of the trainees, as well as through a graduation ceremony when they successfully complete their programme; these celebrations are valued highly by the trainees and their parents/carers.
- Effective links and partnerships have been established with a wide range of stakeholders including industry bodies, employers, support providers, specialist agencies, statutory bodies, and multi-disciplinary support teams to support the delivery of the work-based learning provision. The links and partnerships are also used well to provide work placements for trainees and inform developments to the curriculum offer across the P&T areas.



- The staff delivering the training programmes have relevant professional and technical experience and demonstrate a wide variety of skills and specialist knowledge which support well its delivery. Staff spoken to during the inspection report that they are provided with very good opportunities to undertake relevant professional learning opportunities to develop their understanding of and ability to meet the often complex needs of the trainees.
- The quality of the accommodation and training resources observed is of a high standard across the organisation. The work-based learning provision is very well-resourced overall, including good quality facilities to support the use of technology enhanced learning.

## Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees reflect current legislation and practice.

## Overall effectiveness

At the time of the inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, Clanrye has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the trainees.

The area for improvement that the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address is to:

- continue to develop and refine further the processes used for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning, including the better analysis and use of its available organisational data.

The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

## Appendix 1

### A. Programme Registrations

**Table 1 – Current registrations by programme**

Programme	Number of registrations at entry level	% of total registrations	Number of registrations at level 1	% of total registrations
Skills for Life and Work	14	12%	79	68%

Programme	No of registrations at entry level	% of total registrations	Number of registrations at level 1	% of total registrations	Number of registrations at level 2	% of total registrations
Training for Success	14	12%	7	6%	*	#

\* Fewer than 5

# figures suppressed

**Table 2 – Current registrations by professional and technical area**

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Construction	18	15%
Hospitality and catering	29	25%
Horticulture	30	26%
Retail	39	34%

### B. Methodology and evidence base

ETI inspectors observed five learning, teaching and training sessions, and spoke with 60 trainees during these sessions, in focus group meetings, and in the workplace. Inspectors had discussions with five employers and met with key staff; they also met with the chairperson of the voluntary board of directors. Samples of the trainees' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were examined. Trainees and staff had the opportunity to complete a confidential questionnaire. The inspection was also informed by the organisation's quality improvement planning processes and associated documentation, including the organisation's self-evaluation report.

ETI's Inspection and [Self-Evaluation Framework for Work-based Learning](#) is available on the ETI website.

## 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%

### 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 area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

### Programme(s) / essential skills/P&T area outcomes

The ETI use the following performance levels:

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

## Safeguarding

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the arrangements for safeguarding:

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and/or apprentices reflect current legislation and practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and/or apprentices reflect broadly current legislation and practice. The organisation, however, needs to: ...

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding the trainees and/or apprentices are unsatisfactory. < Insert detail >. The ETI will return to the organisation within six working weeks to monitor and report on progress in addressing the safeguarding issues which have been identified.

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