



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Training for Success provision in  
Ulster Supported Employment  
Limited

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2019



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**

Ulster Supported Employment Limited (USEL) is a non-departmental public body. Since September 2017, USEL has been contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Training for Success programme<sup>1</sup>. The organisation is managed by the chief executive who is supported by a wider management team, including the head of employment services, the operations manager Workable (NI) and a Training for Success (TfS) co-ordinator. The TfS co-ordinator is responsible for the operational management of the programme and manages a team of five associate tutors.

The organisation recruits young people with disabilities or health conditions and has a contract to deliver training in six professional and technical areas. Recruitment has increased slightly this year; at the time of the inspection, 21 trainees were registered in the areas of customer service and retail.

The organisation reports that all of the trainees have a disability and/or additional learning support needs. None of the trainees entered their programme with four or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics and most (90%) have no prior level 1 or 2 qualifications. Most (88%) of the second-year trainees are in a suitable work-experience placement.

## **2. Views of trainees**

As part of the evaluation of the organisation's arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding of young people and adults at risk, most (90%) of the trainees took the opportunity to complete a confidential online questionnaire prior to the inspection; a significant minority of them provided additional written comments.

The returns show that almost all of the trainees who responded are positive about their learning experience in the organisation. They report that it is meeting their needs and they feel well-prepared for progressing when they have completed their programme. They all agreed that they had made the right choice by joining this training programme.

In addition, inspectors met with a focus group of eight trainees. The trainees reported that they feel safe and are well-supported in both their learning and with any personal and social issues that they experience.

## **3. Focus of the inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for learners;
- quality of provision; and
- effectiveness of the leadership and management.

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

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Overall quality of the programmes inspected		
Programme	Proportion of registrations	Performance level
Training for Success	100%	Good

Overall quality of the professional and technical areas inspected <sup>2</sup> and the essential skills provision	
Customer Service	Good
Essential skills	Good

#### KEY FINDINGS

##### Strengths

- The high retention rates for those trainees who have completed more than one year.
- The high achievement rates in the professional and technical qualifications for the small number of trainees who have completed, with all of them progressing to further education or training.
- The effective development of most of the trainees' wider skills and dispositions, which has a significant positive impact on their personal lives and enhances well their employability.
- The comprehensive and effective pre-entry advice and guidance that identifies accurately the learning support needs of the trainees, resulting in appropriate supportive interventions which are implemented from an early stage in the training programme.
- The good quality of the learning, teaching and training, which is underpinned by good relationships between the tutors and the trainees which promotes a positive culture for learning.
- The high levels of effective care and welfare provided by the staff to support the trainees in all aspects of their learning and development.
- The effective leadership and management of the provision.

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

## Areas for improvement

- Further develop the systems for tracking and monitoring all aspects of the provision to ensure that all the trainees are being challenged appropriately.
- Improve the soft-skills development tool in order to measure and quantify more effectively the impact of the various interventions.
- Strengthen the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes for the professional and technical areas and the essential skills.

## 5. Outcomes for learners

In customer service and the essential skills, the standard of work and technical skills and knowledge attained and demonstrated by the trainees is good.

In customer service, the trainees can work together as a team to complete group practical tasks to a good standard. They are able to effectively use the internet to source information and use it to complete various tasks, including working out potential profit margins. In the workplace, most trainees have developed well their confidence and are able to carry out job roles which involve dealing with customers; these include handling cash, using the till and assisting with the operation of a bowling alley. The work placement providers report that most of the trainees carry out their duties to a good standard.

Most of the trainees are able to express their views clearly and they make good contributions to group discussions, building on the points of others. All of them are able to read and respond to visual texts, such as an advertisement, and can identify the target audience and the purpose of the text. The trainees can write basic sentences and use straightforward punctuation with accuracy, but there is undue variation in the standards of their handwriting and presentation of work. Some of the trainees require additional support to organise their writing in paragraphs. In numeracy, the trainees carry out simple calculations and solve problems using their knowledge of fractions but not all of them are confident in the use of number. In ICT, they use a range of software packages and can upload and save images to a file, but with varying degrees of competence.

The development of the trainees' wider skills and personal capabilities is a key strength of the work of the organisation and almost all of them make good or better progress in the acquisition and application of these skills. The staff identify and prioritise appropriately key goals for each of the trainees and examples of progression and success were notable. The trainees engage respectfully with each other and with adults, show good listening skills and are developing sound strategies for self-regulation. Most of the trainees are improving to good effect their self-confidence and self-esteem and take increasing responsibility for their behaviour. The attendance rate for the trainees is outstanding (96%).

For those trainees who have been in training for more than a year, the retention is currently outstanding at 89%. At the time of the inspection, all of the 2019/20 cohort had been retained.

To date, only a small number of trainees have completed their training programme; those that have completed all achieved their professional and technical qualifications and progressed to further education or other training. The rates of achievement in the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are also high.

## 6. Quality of provision

All of the trainees enter training with low or no prior qualifications. Nearly all of them are registered in the professional and technical area of customer service, which is an appropriate pathway for them. The curriculum the trainees experience is enriched through educational visits, enterprise projects and work with local charities. The work-experience placements are carefully matched with the trainees' ability levels, interests and aspirations, which works well and they benefit significantly from learning in the workplace.

The curriculum is well-planned to meet the needs of the trainees, most of whom have complex barriers to learning. The first year of the programmes is focused appropriately on developing their wider skill and dispositions, their personal and social well-being and their employability. Through the essential skills work their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are also further developed. In the second year of the training programme they commence professional and technical training and undertake work-experience placements. Nearly all of the trainees who have completed their first year are in a high quality, relevant work-experience placement, in which they make good progress in acquiring and applying good vocational skills.

The pre-entry support for the trainees is systematically planned and very effective. The process involves appropriately their parents/carers and the trainees take part in a pre-induction programme to ensure that they make well-informed choices and have an early opportunity to meet the staff. The organisation has developed highly effective links with the transition officers. As a result, the individual needs of the trainees are clearly identified at a very early stage. The induction programme is comprehensive and nearly all the trainees reported that they found it useful. In order to more comprehensively track the progress of the trainees, in the widest possible sense, USEL has incorporated a soft-skills development tool. The use of this tool, however, is at an early stage and it needs to be further developed to more effectively measure and quantify the impact of the various interventions that take place.

The quality of the learning, teaching and training observed in customer service is good or better with a significant minority of it being very good. The lesson planning is effective, resulting in a good lesson structure with clear learning objectives and good promotion of the trainees' learning. In the most effective practice, an appropriate range of learning strategies are used, including open-ended questioning, practical activities, peer learning opportunities and well-organised group work. The tutors have developed very good relationships with the trainees; as a result, most of the trainees engage well in their learning and make good headway.

In the essential skills, a majority of the learning, teaching and training observed was good. In the best practice, the tutors: plan for the trainees' individual learning and progression needs; use information and learning technology (ILT) skilfully to engage them and to stimulate discussion; evaluate accurately the impact of the learning and teaching methods; and provide good opportunities for self-assessment. The marking for improvement is most effective in literacy with good identification of the trainees' strengths and clear signposting on how to improve their work. This practice needs to be disseminated across the other areas. In the less effective practice, in one-eighth of the sessions observed, the tutors do not take sufficient cognisance of the trainees' individual learning needs and do not plan effectively enough for the ability range.

The personal training plans are of a high quality and well-informed by the outcomes from the initial assessment process. The trainees' barriers to learning are identified clearly, the plans are regularly updated and progress is tracked well. The trainees' parents/carers are encouraged to engage with the staff on an ongoing basis to ensure that the trainees' needs are being met appropriately. All the staff provide detailed progress reports for the reviews that are carried out regularly.

The care and welfare impacts positively on the learning, teaching and outcomes for the trainees. A strong ethos of care and welfare is well embedded across the work of the organisation; the staff at all levels work hard to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning environment. There is a clear emphasis on meeting the care and welfare needs of the trainees through the provision of planned, well-targeted support interventions that are implemented in a timely fashion for the trainees. This individualised support extends to the workplace for those trainees in a work-experience placement, with regular visits by support staff to monitor progress and deal with emerging issues. Effective links have been established with an extensive range of appropriate external organisations, which are used very well to support the personal, social and emotional development of the trainees.

Careers education, information, advice and guidance is well-embedded in the vocational skills curriculum. Trainees use effectively a careers wheel to identify careers of personal interest to them, and to explore and discuss a variety of job roles. The effective 'Road to Success' posters have been developed to good effect to help trainees visualise their career pathway. A range of visiting speakers have delivered careers-related training sessions, including interview skills training.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The USEL board along with the senior management team provide effective strategic leadership; they have a clear strategic vision to support young people with disabilities or health conditions to benefit from targeted training and development in order to gain employment. There is a clear organisational structure and the staff have clearly identified roles and responsibilities which are carried out to good effect.

The continuing professional development of staff is a priority. As a result, most of the staff engage in relevant, provision-aligned professional development, including appropriate areas such as mental health awareness, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder training and managing challenging behaviours.

The middle managers are proactive, well-informed and manage the provision well. The co-ordinator of the programme is highly committed to ensuring the trainees are supported to achieve to the best of their ability and has forged strong links with their families. The staff work well together as a team for the benefit of the trainees. They are well-qualified and experienced and demonstrate high levels of commitment to them. The trainees' progress is monitored and tracked on a regular basis by the co-ordinator who has extensive knowledge about each of the trainees and their barriers to learning. While the co-ordinator reports monthly to the operations manager on all aspects of the provision, this process could be strengthened by the introduction of an appropriate tracking and monitoring system for all aspects of the programme.

There are well-established and effective collaborative links with external organisations and in particular with a wide range of specialist organisations and agencies to provide the trainees with access to suitable interventions and support. USEL works with a large number of employers across all of the programmes and as a result most of the trainees have suitable work-experience placements that are well matched to meet the complex support requirements. These employer links and partnerships with the local community have also been used to good effect to identify and support social enterprise and project-based learning opportunities for them.

The organisation places a high priority on the ongoing self-evaluation and associated quality improvement planning process. The relevant managers and tutors are involved in the process through a clearly defined quality cycle. A programme of robust tutor observations is in place to monitor the quality of the learning and teaching and this has led to a more consistent approach, particularly in the area of behaviour management. The outcomes of tutor observations, however, need to be used to better effect to inform the self-evaluation process. In addition, the self-evaluation process for the professional and technical areas and the essential skills needs to be more robust, making better use of the available data and with more of a focus on the quality of the provision for the trainees, their progress and achievements.

The accommodation and resources are of a good quality and include a well-used sensory room for the trainees.

## **8. Safeguarding**

On the basis of the evidence provided during the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at risk reflect current legislation and practice.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Ulster Supported Employment Limited demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the trainees. There are areas for improvement that the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.



### Programme registrations

**Table 1 - Current registrations by programme**

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	0	0
Training for Success Skills for Your Life	19	90%
Training for Success Skills for Work (strand 1)	*	10%
Training for Success Skills for Work (strand 2)	0	0

\* Less than 5

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

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Customer Service	19	90%
Retail	*	10%

\* Less than 5

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

Programme	Training for Success (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C including English and mathematics	0%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C	0%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at grades A*-C	0%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at grades A*-C	0%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-G	0%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	90%

## 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).

Three ETI inspectors observed 21 trainees in eight directed training sessions. They visited one workplace, contacted seven work-experience providers by telephone and interviewed eight trainees in focus group meetings and training sessions. Samples of the trainees' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were examined. The organisation's quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

## 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.

<b>Key Performance Indicators and Definitions</b>	
<b>Retention</b>	The percentage of enrolments measured over the full duration of their programme.
<b>Achievement</b>	The percentage of participants who completed their targeted individual outcomes.
<b>Progression</b>	The percentage of successful completers who achieved positive progression.

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