



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Training for Success and  
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in  
CRAFT Training Limited

Report of an Inspection in  
February 2016



Providing Inspection Services for

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



## Quantitative 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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning, on Leadership and management, and on the overall quality of professional and technical areas:

Current performance level	Previous performance level <sup>1</sup>
Outstanding	Outstanding
Very good	Very good
Good	Good
Important area(s) for improvement	Satisfactory
Requires significant improvement	Inadequate
Requires urgent improvement	Unsatisfactory

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

Overall effectiveness outcome	Previous performance level
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.	Outstanding and very good
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.	Good
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.	Satisfactory
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.	Inadequate and unsatisfactory

<sup>1</sup> The ETI performance levels were revised with effect from the 1 September 2015.

<b>Key Performance Indicators and Definitions</b>	
<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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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

A team of seven inspectors and five associate assessors observed a total of 65 apprentices and trainees in 33 directed training sessions. The inspectors visited 50 workplaces and 73 trainees and apprentices were interviewed in focus group meetings. The inspectors held discussions with the directors, managers, team leaders and tutors. In addition, the inspectors examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans. The organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

The inspectors evaluated the organisation's arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding young people. The inspection included the opportunity for the trainees and apprentices to express their views on their training and learning experience by completing an online questionnaire prior to the inspection.

The questionnaire returns show that all of the apprentices and trainees feel safe and secure, and well-supported in CRAFT Training Limited (CRAFT). Almost all of the apprentices and trainees who responded to the questionnaire and all of those who made written comments were positive about the quality of the training and support provided in CRAFT.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Learners	200	44	22%	8

## 2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices, the purpose of the inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

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

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation and which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Improving Quality: Raising Standards in Further Education and Work-based Learning*. <http://www.etini.gov.uk/improving-quality-raising-standards/improving-quality-raising-standards-iqrs-further-education-2010.pdf>

## 3. Context

CRAFT is a private training company with training facilities in Londonderry, Omagh and Strabane; its headquarters are based in Strabane. The organisation is managed by a managing director and five executive directors, supported by seven administrative staff and 14 tutors. CRAFT, first established in 2004, has a clear social purpose to meet inclusively the education and training needs of the young people in the geographical areas it serves,

particularly in its immediate localities. Many of the young people recruited locally to the training programmes live in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland (NI) with high levels of multiple deprivation<sup>2</sup>. Notably, the district council area of Derry City and Strabane has the highest claimant count across all of the council areas of NI, at 6.4%, which is significantly above the NI average of 3.4%<sup>3</sup>.

CRAFT is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) to provide the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. At the time of the inspection, there were 81 trainees on the Training for Success programme. Of these trainees: two were on the Skills for Your Life strand; 66 on the Skills for Work level 1 strand; and 13 on the Skills for Work level 2 strand. There were 198 apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; 139 at level 2 and 59 at level 3. At the time of the inspection, there were no registrations in the professional and technical areas of business administration, management, contact centre operations or beauty therapy.

On the Training for Success programme, 70% of the trainees were registered in the professional and technical area of construction; 16% in hairdressing; 10% in information technology (IT); and 4% in retail. On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, 24%<sup>4</sup> of the apprentices were registered in the professional and technical area of construction; 2% in hairdressing; 50% in hospitality, catering, food and drink; 7% in IT; and 17% in retail and warehousing<sup>5</sup>.

Based on information provided by CRAFT, a minority (21%) of the trainees have an assessed and supported disability and/or have additional learning support needs. In addition, CRAFT report that a further 38% of the trainees have significant barriers to learning; the most prevalent being mental health issues, addictions and involvement with the criminal justice system. A minority of the trainees (14%) and apprentices (24%) have declared no formal qualifications on entry to their training programme. Only a minority of the trainees (20%) and apprentices (26%) entered their programme with four or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C or equivalent. A significant minority of the trainees hold at least a GCSE qualification at grade C or equivalent in English (36%) and/or in mathematics (33%). A minority (29%) of the apprentices hold at least a GCSE qualification at grade C or equivalent in English, and a significant minority (32%) of them hold a GCSE qualification at grade C or equivalent in mathematics.

At the time of the inspection, most (81%) of the trainees on the Training for Success programme were in a suitable work-experience placement.

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good

<sup>2</sup> The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) statistics show that some of the electoral wards in the areas served by CRAFT are the most deprived in Northern Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> Based on NISRA claimant count for council areas published by Department for Trade and Enterprise in January 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Includes seven apprentices registered in the professional and technical areas of floor covering and furniture that were not inspected.

<sup>5</sup> Includes six apprentices registered in the professional and technical area of warehousing that was not inspected.

<b>Professional and technical areas performance levels</b>	
Construction	Very good
Essential skills	Good
Hairdressing	Important areas for improvement
Hospitality, catering, food and drink	Good
Information technology	Good
Retail	Very good

### **Going well**

- The strong commitment of the directors and staff to provide inclusive learning programmes and pathways to enable young people living in disadvantaged areas to progress to employment and/or further learning.
- The very good quality of the pastoral support and additional learning support provided for the trainees and apprentices.
- The very good outcomes of the provision, with most (75%) of the trainees and apprentices over the last three years completing successfully their training.
- The extensive and well-established links with employers to provide work-experience placements for the trainees, leading to most (81%) of them securing relevant placements.
- The very good quality of the provision in the professional and technical areas of construction and retail.
- The ongoing investment in developing the information and communication technology infrastructure to support and enhance learning.

### **What does CRAFT need to do to improve?**

- Increase the staffing complement in the professional and technical areas of hairdressing and information technology to meet more effectively the directed training requirements of the apprenticeship provision.
- Develop the capacity of the professional and technical and essential skills teams to conduct more rigorous evaluations of their own practice and to identify and prioritise key actions to bring about further improvement.
- Refine the collation, monitoring and reviewing of key data, particularly the analysis of trends over time, to inform more effective self-evaluation and quality improvement planning.
- Strengthen the continuing professional development arrangements for tutors in order to support better development and sharing of effective practice, and to inform the induction processes for new members of staff.

## **5. Achievements and standards**

Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated, demonstrate very good standards of behaviour and apply themselves enthusiastically to their learning, both in directed training and in work-based training. During the inspection, their attendance and punctuality to directed training were mostly good or better. While most of the trainees and apprentices have a low entry profile in English and mathematics they are developing positive dispositions to learning. Consequently, they engage well in their learning, are keen to progress and continually build their confidence levels and capacity to learn and apply new skills and knowledge.

The standards of work achieved by most of the trainees and apprentices are good or better. In the directed training sessions and in the workplace, most of them are steadily becoming more confident and competent in developing and applying key occupational skills and knowledge.

In the professional and technical areas of construction and retail, the trainees and apprentices are making very good progress in their learning, demonstrating occupational skills to a mostly very good standard. In the workplace, they are well-motivated and prepared to complete complex and challenging tasks, with minimal support, to appropriate industry standards. It is noteworthy that in construction, for example, that a minority of the trainees who commenced training with low levels of prior attainment have progressed very well in their learning and consequently are targeting a level 3 apprenticeship qualification.

In the remaining professional and technical areas, while the trainees' and apprentices' progress is mostly good, it is more variable and is an important area for improvement in hairdressing. The majority of them are achieving consistently good or better standards of work. In the workplace, for example, they develop a sound understanding of the principles and technology that underpin the key functions of their work roles. They are making good progress in achieving the units of their qualification in a timely manner. For a minority of the apprentices, however, due to current staffing levels there have been short delays in completing assessment tasks. It is timely that CRAFT is currently reviewing its strategic planning and staffing capacity to mitigate these undue delays. In addition, for a small number of the apprentices, their progress in developing and applying new learning is too slow; there is an undue focus on the accreditation of their existing occupational skills and insufficient planning to extend their skills and knowledge.

The trainees and apprentices are developing an appropriate range of English and mathematical skills, with increasing capacity to apply these skills in vocational contexts; this is particularly evident in the professional and technical areas of construction and retail. The standards of the trainees' and apprentices' spoken communication skills are generally good. For a small number of the trainees who are more reticent communicators, however, there are missed opportunities to plan for, and review systematically, the continuing development of their communication skills. The standard of the trainees' and apprentices' written work ranges from good to satisfactory. The apprentices' work is mostly well-presented with few punctuation or grammatical errors, but the trainees' work is too variable. For the majority of the trainees, more needs to be done to develop further their extended writing skills, including developing these across a broader range of contexts.



Over the last three years, 2011/12 to 2013/14, based on the information provided by CRAFT, the average retention and achievement rates on the Training for Success programme are very good at 75% and outstanding at 100%, respectively. Of the total number of trainees who commenced the Training for Success programme in 2013, 79% have been retained and all of them who completed achieved. Of those trainees who successfully completed their training, almost all of them (99%) progressed to employment or a higher training or education programme.

Over the same period, the average retention and achievement rates on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme are good at 75% and outstanding at 100%, respectively. All of the apprentices sustained employment on the successful completion of their apprenticeship.

All of the trainees and apprentices who completed their training achieved all of the essential skills required for their qualification framework. A minority of them also achieved their essential skills at least one level higher than that required in their framework.

## **6. Provision for learning**

CRAFT provides a broad range of programmes with flexible delivery models, tailored well to meet the different needs of the trainees and apprentices. For the Training for Success programme, CRAFT offers a highly supportive, well-resourced training provision in the professional and technical areas of construction, hairdressing, IT and retail. The programmes are appropriately designed to provide small group sized training sessions, and high levels of one-to-one support, to meet the diverse and often challenging learning needs of the majority of the trainees. A key feature of the Training for Success provision is the high priority and persistent focus on building the trainees' self-confidence, interpersonal skills, resilience and key occupational skills to enable them to sustain a work-experience placement, achieve success and gain employment.

CRAFT provides flexible ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, mainly in catering, food production, hospitality, IT and retail, which are tailored to support employers develop new and existing employees' occupational skills and knowledge to equip them for their work roles, and build their confidence and capacity for future learning and development. Most of the apprenticeship provision is provided on a one-to-one basis in the apprentice's workplace.

The quality of the learning, training, and teaching in most of the directed training sessions is good or better; in a minority of the sessions it is very good. In these sessions, there is thorough planning for differentiated learning tasks, which are matched closely to the trainees' and apprentices' workplace learning experiences. There is effective use of active-learning and information and learning technology (ILT) to engage and support the trainees' and apprentices' in their learning. In addition, these sessions are characterised by a supportive and inclusive ethos that contributes significantly to raising the trainees' and apprentices' aspirations, builds their confidence and self-esteem and underpins a positive disposition to learning. In contrast, in a minority of the directed training sessions, there are important areas for improvement. In particular, there is insufficient planning to provide the most appropriate levels of stretch and challenge to meet the varying needs and abilities of the trainees and apprentices. There is a need to enhance the range and quality of the learning resources available to the trainees and apprentices on CRAFT's virtual learning environment (VLE). For example, to stimulate and support more independent learning, especially for those apprentices with significant and relevant prior work-based learning experiences.

The quality of the essential skills provision is good overall. For the Training for Success programme, the one-to-one support provided to the trainees is a particular strength of the provision. For the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, the essential skills provision for the apprentices is appropriately organised in consultation with most of the apprentices and their employers. In a minority of instances, however, the training has been too slow to start. More needs to be done to ensure that the essential skills training is timely and supports fully the learning needs of each apprentice.

The quality of the pastoral support provided for the trainees and apprentices is very good. The staff, at all levels, are highly committed to meeting the pastoral care and welfare needs of the trainees and apprentices, in order that they can achieve to their full potential. A strong inclusive ethos permeates all aspects of the provision, with relationships between the staff and the trainees and apprentices based on mutual respect. There is a well-structured induction process, incorporating effective systems for identifying and meeting individual learning support needs at an early stage. Robust, regular monitoring and review processes help identify and challenge issues relating to erratic attendance and lack of progress. CRAFT has worked hard to establish links with the trainees' parents or carers, to strengthen family support for learning and progression and to help them to complete their training.

There is a well-considered and structured programme of employability, and personal and social development, including, for example, healthy living, sexual health and drugs and alcohol that helps build the trainees' work readiness and personal effectiveness. The trainees are also provided with opportunities to participate in a range of enrichment activities, including self-directed social and charitable events.

The quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is good. Although all of the trainees and apprentices develop well a good understanding of the world of work through their work-experiences in the workplace, their knowledge and understanding of potential career pathways is inconsistent across the provision. In the best practice, the trainees and apprentices are well-informed about progression opportunities and career pathways, through insightful advice and guidance from guest speakers and industry visits. This effective practice needs to be shared and implemented fully across all of the professional and technical areas.

The trainees' and apprentices' additional learning support provision is given a high priority by CRAFT; as a result it is well-resourced with a dedicated co-ordinator to ensure there are effective individual learning plans in place to inform and tailor any additional learning supported provided. An appropriate range of external support services and agencies are also used to good effect to holistically support the trainees' personal development, particularly for those with complex and interrelated learning, physical, personal and social needs.

The quality of the trainees' and apprentices' personal training plans is consistently good across the professional and technical areas. They capture well the trainees' and apprentices' prior achievements and any additional learning needs. Whilst appropriate high-level milestones are set and monitored regularly, the reviews would benefit from the setting and monitoring of interim targets that reflect in greater detail individualised development planning for each trainee and apprentice. While the tutors do provide feedback, marking and signposting for improvement are mostly underdeveloped. More careful attention is required to incorporate the feedback into the planning for the trainees' and apprentices' future learning. There is also a need to strengthen the links between the professional and technical area reviews and the essential skills reviews to ensure the learning opportunities across all aspects of their learning are integrated and facilitate the transferability of the trainees' and apprentices' English and mathematical skills.

There has been a good start to the development of a virtual management system (VMS) to enable web-based access to progress reviews, to promote more independent monitoring and reviewing, especially by the apprentices and their employers, although progress in embedding this system has been slow and inconsistent.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The directors and senior management team collectively are considerably experienced and highly committed to developing learner-centred training programmes, particularly to address the low levels of achievement and self-confidence of many of the young people progressing from local post-primary schools to work-based training. Appropriately, CRAFT has invested in a suitable staffing complement to enable smaller group sizes to facilitate more one-to-one learning support, fostering and underpinning an inclusive and caring ethos. The investment in a dedicated additional learning supported co-ordinator reflects the organisation's commitment and success in supporting trainees and apprentices to achieve their full potential, irrespective of their prior achievement. CRAFT's attainment of the Silver Award for Investors in People reflects the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement.

The directors and senior managers work very hard to establish strategic links and partnerships with schools, employers and local fora to build a strong community engagement in supporting the training they provide. Consequently, the organisation, through its recruitment officer, has a trusted and productive relationship with a wide range of employers, increasing CRAFT's capacity to secure work-experience placements for the trainees and to develop bespoke apprenticeship programmes. Notably, the adaptability and collegiality of the staff enable the organisation to be highly flexible and responsive to meeting the needs of the trainees, apprentices and employers. In particular, CRAFT strives to balance sensitively the training and assessment needs of the apprentices with the business needs of their employers, which in the most part is met successfully. Going forward, there is a need for CRAFT to formulate more clearly the guidelines for employers and the apprentice's personal training plans in respect of directed training requirements, to ensure all of the apprentices progress in their learning at the most appropriate pace.

At all levels in the organisation, there is a strong commitment to self-evaluation and quality improvement planning. There is regular and frequent communication amongst staff in respect of the quality of the training provided, and effective reporting of information to inform management decisions. There is a well-established internal quality assurance process enabling the staff and management to review performance quarterly, and identify clearly any quality compliance issues and underperformance. The organisation's annual quality improvement processes draw appropriately on a wide range of information, including lesson observations, and feedback from trainees, apprentices, parents and employers, to inform the self-evaluation report. While the self-evaluation report and improvement plan identifies and addresses most key areas for development, it is too descriptive and lacks sufficient rigorous critical evaluation of the quality of the learning, teaching and training, particularly in the individual professional and technical and essential skills area reports. In addition, there is insufficient analysis and reporting of key performance data and trends over time to underpin the evaluations.

The tutors are experienced, with high levels of expertise in their professional and technical areas. Most of them have also achieved their Certificate in Teaching. While the staff demonstrate high levels of commitment and have high aspirations for the trainees and apprentices, the sharing and dissemination of good practice is an important area for further development, including more a comprehensive induction programme for new tutors, to

ensure effective practice is more consistent across the organisation. In the professional and technical areas of hairdressing and IT there is an important need to review the staffing complement to ensure that it is matched appropriately to the growing provision in these areas and the associated timetabling of regular and frequent directed training sessions for the apprentices.

The quality of the accommodation is mostly good. Most of the workshops and classrooms are well-equipped to support learning, teaching and training, although in hairdressing the salons require additional investment in consumables to reflect better industry standard practices. While CRAFT has appropriately invested in a VLE to support learning, particularly for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, its development and effectiveness across the professional and technical areas are inconsistent; CRAFT needs to continue to standardise the quality and use of the learning content.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, CRAFT has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department for Employment and Learning, but further development is required of the organisation's e-safety policy to extend it to incorporate education and training for both staff and trainees on the safer use of social media.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

CRAFT Training Limited 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 areas for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.

## **9. Professional and technical area reports**

### **9.1 Construction**

#### **Key Findings**

In construction the quality of the training provided by CRAFT is very good.

#### **Achievements and standards are very good.**

Most of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated, display exemplary behaviour, and apply themselves well to their training tasks. They are particularly diligent in keeping their work-area clean and tidy and their attendance and punctuality to directed training are mostly very good. Most of the trainees and apprentices demonstrate good or better technical knowledge of their occupational area. Over the duration of their programme, they steadily develop high levels of confidence and competence in their practical skills, mostly demonstrated to a very good standard in directed training and in the workplace. The trainees are able to, for example, hang doors and carry out painting and decorating operations to an appropriately high industry standard. While the trainees and apprentices have good or better spoken communication skills, their written communication skills are more variable with extended writing an area for further development. Over the last three years, the retention rate on the Training for Success programme is very good at 78%. On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, the retention rates at level 2 and 3 are good at 70% and 75% respectively. The achievement and progression rates on both the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes are outstanding at 100%.

#### **The provision for learning is good.**

The tutors have high aspirations for the trainees and apprentices; they foster a supportive and inclusive ethos that contributes significantly to increasing the trainees' and apprentices' motivation, confidence and self-esteem. In addition, the high quality pastoral care underpins effectively the personal development of each trainee and apprentice. The quality of the directed training ranges from good to very good, and is mainly good. In the most effective practice, there is thorough planning to ensure differentiation in the practical training tasks, ensuring that the tasks are matched well to the level and experience of each trainee. In addition, there is a close match in the trainees' directed training with their work placement training opportunities, to underpin and consolidate good progress in their occupational skills development. The tutors use their own specialist occupational experience and expertise to good effect to make the learning interesting and challenging. The range of learning, teaching and training strategies used in the theory sessions is, however, too narrow. There is a need to make more effective use of active learning strategies and ILT to involve the trainees better in their learning. Whilst the assessments of the apprentices' occupational competences are undertaken frequently in the workplace, their directed training sessions are not regular enough. There is an important need to review the planning of the directed training for the apprentices to ensure a more appropriate balance between the employers' business needs and the apprentices' entitlement to regular directed training.

### **Leadership and management are very good.**

A broad range of construction programmes for the trainees and apprentices ensures there are clear progression pathways from the Training for Success strands to higher level programmes, including to ApprenticeshipsNI programmes at level 2 and 3. The provision is co-ordinated well; there are effective communication channels across all levels within CRAFT and also with employers. The course team has developed very strong links with a wide range of employers within the construction sector, including large regional employers, which are used to good effect to secure work placements for the trainees. Consequently, the majority (72%) of the trainees are in suitable work-experience placements. The tutors are appropriately experienced, and are highly committed to supporting each trainee to overcome any barriers to sustained work-experience placements and to achieving their full potential. They undertake regular continuing professional development, including well-targeted training to develop further their pedagogical skills; most of them have achieved the Certificate in Teaching qualification. While the course team meets regularly to monitor key performance indicators, an important area for improvement is the need for a sharper focus on evaluating more critically the quality of the provision, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data to identify and capture more comprehensively effective practice and key areas for development.

## **9.2 Essential Skills**

### **Key Findings**

In essential skills, the quality of the training provided by CRAFT is good.

### **Achievements and standards are good.**

Most of the trainees and apprentices have a low entry profile in English and mathematics and are developing positive dispositions to learning. As a consequence, they engage well in their essential skills sessions and are keen to progress. Their attendance is mostly good and their standards of behaviour are very good. The trainees and apprentices develop an appropriate range of skills and competencies in their use of English and mathematics. There is good evidence of their increasing capacity to apply their learning within their professional

and technical areas, especially in construction and retail. In construction, the trainees and apprentices demonstrate good standards of application of their learning in numeracy to their vocational work. In food and drink and hairdressing, there is a need for the trainees and apprentices to apply and consolidate further the development of their essential skills within their vocational work. The standards of the trainees and apprentices spoken communication skills are generally good, although some of the trainees are reluctant communicators and there are missed opportunities for the development of their communication skills and for the tracking of their progress. The standard of the trainees' and apprentices' written work ranges from satisfactory to good. The apprentices achieve mostly good standards in writing, in line with the requirements of their programmes. A minority of the trainees also achieve good standards of written work but the majority need to continue to develop their writing and to demonstrate the application of this skill across a wider range of contexts. For the last three years, all of the trainees and apprentices who completed their training achieved all of the essential skills required by their framework.

### **The provision for learning is good.**

The essential skills staff are all appropriately qualified, are highly supportive of the trainees and apprentices, and work hard to encourage them to succeed. There are initial and diagnostic assessments in place, although the outcomes from these processes are not always used consistently to plan for learning, particularly in ICT. More use needs to be made of the outcomes from these processes to plan to stretch and challenge the more able trainees and apprentices, particularly in ICT, and to track their progress more robustly. In numeracy, literacy and ICT, the quality of the learning, teaching and training is mostly good. In most of the sessions, the planning is good and the tutors use an appropriate range of contextualised resources to interest the trainees and apprentices. In the better practice, the tutors use a wide range of strategies, including well-integrated active learning and ILT based activities, to motivate and engage the learners. The one-to-one support provided to the trainees is a particular strength of the provision. Significantly, the organisation has a dedicated additional learning support co-ordinator, to prepare individualised support plans for trainees, where required, and to provide effective team teaching support for colleagues. In the less effective practice, there is too much whole group teaching, too little effective differentiation with too many levels of trainees in one group. In the sessions for the apprentices, the rapport between the tutors and the apprentices is good, the tutors are well-prepared, and the apprentices make good progress. Across the provision, whilst the tutors do provide feedback, marking for improvement, and signposting for improvement, are mostly underdeveloped. More careful attention is required to incorporate the feedback into the planning for future learning.

### **Leadership and management have important areas for improvement.**

The organisation has invested substantially in the essential skills provision in order to support the trainees and apprentices to progress across more than one level of the essential skills. There is a need however, to capture and to record more effectively the trainees' and apprentices' progress across the levels achieved. The essential skills tutors are supported well to undertake a range of continuing professional development. One tutor, for example, is undertaking a Masters in Education programme with a particular focus on the use of ILT in learning and teaching, which is benefiting the organisation in building its capacity to make more effective use of ILT in the essential skills provision. While the class sizes for the essential skills are appropriately small and provide good opportunities for individualised support, the sessions are, however, too long for most of the trainees. The scheduling for the essential skills provision for most of the apprentices is appropriately organised in consultation with the apprentices and their employers. In a minority of instances, however, the training has been too slow to start. More needs to be done to ensure that the essential skills training is timely and supports fully the learning needs of each apprentice. While there

are self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process in place for the essential skills, insufficient use is made of data collation and analysis, across levels and strands, to inform the self-evaluation report. A tutor observation process is in place and whilst it is beneficial in the sharing of practice, the outcomes of this process are not yet articulated clearly enough to inform planning for improvement.

### **9.3 Hairdressing**

#### **Key findings**

In hairdressing, the quality of training provided by CRAFT has important areas for improvement.

#### **Achievements and standards have important areas for improvement.**

The trainees are very co-operative and respectful to their tutor and peers, with mostly good levels of attendance and time-keeping. Most of the trainees report that their confidence and self-esteem have improved as a result of their training. They feel well-supported by the tutors, and for those in work-experience placements, by their employers. While most of the trainees are making appropriate progress in their training, progress for the small number of apprentices is too variable. The apprenticeship provision is overly focused on assessment, to confirm and accredit the apprentices' existing knowledge and skills. However, the apprentices are working at a standard commensurate with the expectations of their employers. The development of the trainees' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is an important area for improvement. In particular, there is limited planning, including jointly with the essential skills tutors, to develop opportunities for the trainees to apply and consolidate their writing skills within a vocational context. In the trainees and apprentices portfolios of work there is insufficient marking for improvement. Over the last three years, the retention rate is good at 62% and the achievement and progression rates are outstanding at 100%, for the Training for Success programme. Over this period, only three apprentices have been recruited, with one completing the qualification.

#### **The provision for learning has important areas for improvement.**

The directed training has important areas for improvement. The pace and level of challenge of the training activities are not well enough matched to the range of needs and abilities of the trainees; there is insufficient differentiation to meet the differing needs of the level 1 and 2 trainees. The learning, teaching and training is overly directed and the use of ILT to enhance the trainees' learning experiences is underdeveloped. There is a need to develop further the range of materials available for the trainees and apprentices on the VLE. Although there are good opportunities for the trainees to develop their occupational skills in their work-experience placements, there is a need to improve the co-ordination of the work-experience, including better communication with employers, in order to improve the cohesion between the directed training and the workplace training. The employers are not well enough informed of the content of the training programme and how they can best support the development of the trainees. The monitoring and reviewing of the trainees and apprentices progress is too inconsistent, particularly in the workplace in relation to the planning of the apprentices' assessment and future training. There is a need to set more specific targets, against which the apprentices' progress can be evaluated.

#### **Leadership and management have important areas for improvement.**

The recently appointed tutor is suitably qualified and experienced, and works hard to sustain a positive and caring ethos during directed training sessions. The quality of the accommodation and physical resources is good; there are appropriately equipped training hairdressing salons, supported with suitable ICT infrastructure to access the VLE. The provision and storage of hairdressing products needs to be reviewed, to ensure they match better industry standards. Appropriate health and safety protocols and risk assessments need to be embedded more rigorously in the training salons, and incorporated clearly in the trainees' and apprentices' training sessions, in order to promote best industry practice. There is also a need to establish a more regular client base for training purposes across the training salons, to support more realistic off-the-job training. The arrangements for quality assuring the trainees' and apprentices' assessments are underdeveloped. Importantly, there is no evidence of recent internal or external quality support for the recently appointed tutor, to ensure qualification assessment standards and associated requirements are adequately met. The use of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are underdeveloped. There is a need for a more comprehensive self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan that contains incisive, evidence-based and prioritised actions to sustain improvement. In particular, there is an important need for an action plan that reflects the immediate continuing professional development needs of the tutor, including a more robust induction programme.

#### **9.4 Hospitality, catering, food and drink**

##### **Key findings**

In hospitality, catering, food and drink the quality of training provided by CRAFT is good.

##### **Achievements and standards are good.**

Most of the apprentices display positive attitudes to learning and value the opportunity to undertake the apprenticeship programme. The apprentices' portfolios show good or better standards of work being achieved consistently. The majority of the apprentices are gaining increased confidence levels as they progress through their qualification, particularly as they develop their underpinning knowledge and assessment targets are achieved. A minority of the apprentices are, however, not progressing at the most appropriate pace; insufficient planning has led to undue delays in their assessment and is impacting negatively on their confidence and motivation levels. There is a need to monitor more rigorously the progress of each apprentice to ensure that the pace of their learning and assessment is in line with their expectations, confidence and ability level. Over the last three years, the retention rate for the hospitality apprenticeship is good at 75% and achievement is outstanding at 100%. The retention and achievement rates for the food and drink apprenticeship are outstanding at 90% and 100% respectively. All of the apprentices who complete their apprenticeship remain in employment. All of the apprentices who registered on the new catering apprenticeship in 2015 have remained on the programme.

##### **The provision for learning is good.**

The tutors have established effective relationships with the apprentices and their supervisors, in order to negotiate and deliver tailored directed training sessions in the apprentices' workplace, often on a one-to-one basis. The quality of the directed training ranges from very good sessions to those with important areas for improvement, and is good overall. In the very good sessions there is effective planning to support the learning; the individual learning needs of the apprentices are being met effectively through tailored learning approaches. In the sessions with important areas for improvement, there are missed opportunities to assess and take appropriate account of the apprentices' progress in their learning and understanding; there is an over-emphasis on assessment for



accreditation. The range of learning resources to support learning and formative assessment, including those on the VLE, is too narrow; there is an over reliance on text-based worksheets. While the assessments are well-planned for the majority of the apprentices, there is a need to improve further the assessment planning to engage more fully all of the apprentices and their employers in the process, including better preparation for the tutor's assessment visits. There is effective tracking and marking for improvement. Links between vocational and essential skill tutors need to be strengthened to contextualise more the essential skills training to hospitality, catering, food and drink. For a small number of the apprentices there has been a delay in the commencement of the essential skills training.

### **Leadership and management are good.**

The tutors have appropriate industry experience in the hospitality and catering sector with relevant industry standard expertise, knowledge and skills to deliver the ApprenticeshipsNI frameworks. Regular team meetings take place and communication between the tutors and management is good. The tutors are well-supported by management and provided with professional development opportunities to improve further their pedagogical skills. There is a need, however, for the tutors to share and embed best practice more effectively, to ensure the quality of the learning, teaching and training is consistently good or better. Links and partnerships with employers are well-developed. For the majority of the apprentices, there is meaningful participation by their employers in the planning, assessment and reviewing of their training. This needs to be developed further for a minority of the employers, to engage them more in the apprentice's training. While CRAFT produces a short self-evaluation report for this professional and technical area, the team need to be more actively involved in the self-evaluation and the quality improvement planning processes in order to carry out a more in-depth evaluation of their practice and identify and prioritise key areas for further development. In particular, to plan for more stretch and challenge in the provision to meet the varying training needs of the apprentices, to ensure the apprenticeship programme not only affirms and accredits existing occupational competence but extends their learning and broadens their opportunities for up-skilling and career progression.

## **9.5 Information technology**

### **Key findings**

In information technology (IT), the quality of training provided by CRAFT is good.

### **Achievements and standards are good.**

Almost all of the apprentices and trainees are well-motivated and enthusiastic about their training. They are developing well a broad range of IT skills to support the functions of their work roles. They are becoming confident users of commercial software packages for word-processing, emailing, producing spreadsheets and for handling and manipulating data. The apprentices are, for example, able to use their IT skills to access and maintain customer information competently on their company's bespoke management information system. Importantly, the apprentices have selected the most appropriate range of units, matched well to their personal development needs and the opportunities they have to apply and develop these skills in their work role. Most of the trainees are making good progress in developing and applying IT skills confidently and competently in their work-experience placement. The apprentices' progress is, however, more varied; most of them, due to a recent increase in recruitment, are experiencing short delays in their induction on to the programme. Over the past three years, the overall retention on ApprenticeshipsNI is good at 75% and on Training for Success programme is outstanding at 82%. The achievement and progression rates across both programmes are outstanding at 100%.

## **The quality of provision for learning is good**

The quality of the learning, teaching and training varies from good to very good, and is good overall. The directed training sessions are well-planned; there is effective use of practical tasks and questioning to engage the trainees and apprentices and to consolidate the development of new skills and concepts. In the most effective practice, the tutor worked alongside a visiting industry expert to deliver more complex and technical aspects of the programme. The trainees are well-supported and all of them have appropriate work-experience placements. A good start has been made in the use of ILT to enhance and support learning; a range of learning materials is available on the VLE to support the trainees' and apprentices learning. There is a need to develop further this learning resource to support more independent learning, particularly with an extended range of practical tasks for the trainees and the apprentices to practise and develop independently their IT skills.

## **Leadership and management have important areas for improvement.**

CRAFT has a clear vision for the growth in this priority skill area. Recently, recruitment to the apprenticeship has grown significantly. Consequently, the current staffing complement does not meet adequately the growing workload, particularly in providing regular and frequent directed training for the apprenticeship programme. It is appropriate, that CRAFT has just reviewed the existing staffing complement and has prioritised staff recruitment to support this growth area. The current tutor is experienced and highly committed to developing the most effective training programmes and supporting the trainees and apprentices achieve to their full potential. Good links have been established with a range of local companies in order to source suitable work-experience placements for the trainees and/or to provide an apprenticeship programme. Whilst there is a self-evaluation report that captures the main areas for future development, there is a need for a more rigorous and comprehensive evaluation of the provision, to identify and prioritise key actions to bring about sustained improvement.

## **9.6 Retail**

### **Key findings**

In retail, the quality of training provided by CRAFT is very good.

### **Achievements and standards are very good.**

Almost all of the apprentices are well-motivated and enthusiastic about their training. They can apply their learning in a range of contexts and speak positively about the benefits of their apprenticeship. The apprentices demonstrate a positive attitude to their customers. Most of the employers report that the apprentices' communication and personal skills have improved well through the apprenticeship and that they can apply their learning with confidence in the workplace. The apprentices' portfolios are well-structured and the quality of written work is consistently good. The apprentices are making steady progress in their training and they demonstrate increased understanding of retail theory and practices, which they apply successfully in the workplace. They demonstrate high standards of personal presentation and customer care skills. All of the apprentices give a high priority to working safely in the retail environment. The apprentices are well-informed of progression opportunities and future career options. Over the past three years, the average retention rate on the apprenticeship programme is good at 74%, and the achievement and progression rates are outstanding at 100%.

### **The provision for learning is very good.**

The quality of the learning, teaching and training is very good; a key strength of the directed training is the use of active learning strategies to engage the apprentices. Information and learning technology is used effectively to enhance the apprentices' learning experiences. There is a high level of individual support and pastoral care provided to each of the apprentices. The tutors are enthusiastic and supportive, develop a productive rapport with the trainees and apprentices, and integrate well the development of the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT within the directed training sessions. A range of appropriate resources have been developed to stretch the apprentices' knowledge and understanding of working practices and to support improvement in their literacy and numeracy skills, relevant to commercial retail settings. The monitoring and review process is robust and involves employers, to inform the future planning of the training delivery and the targeted development of work-specific skills and knowledge.

**Leadership and management are good.**

CRAFT management has clear objectives for this professional and technical area to maintain the high levels of personal development, achievement and standards for all of the apprentices. The tracking and monitoring processes are well-developed and based on accurate data, providing the apprentices with up-to-date information about their progress. The tutors are well-qualified and have relevant professional expertise and experience which they use to good effect within the provision for learning. The tutors are encouraged to participate in continuing professional development opportunities, including the peer observation process to develop further their practice. CRAFT engages effectively with a range of employers, across the retail sector, particularly to develop a flexible provision of work-based training that meets well the needs of small to medium-sized companies and their employees. The tutors maintain effective communication with the employers to support the apprentices in their training and progression opportunities. The employers are well-informed about the training and are involved in the planning and identification of company-relevant units for the apprentices.

## APPENDIX

### Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	198	71%
Training for Success (2008)	0	0%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Your Life	2	1%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 1)	66	23%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 2)	13	5%

### Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Construction	57	70%
Hairdressing	13	16%
Information technology	8	10%
Retail	3	4%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Construction	47	24%
Hairdressing	5	2%
Hospitality, catering, food and drink	99	50%
Information technology	13	7%
Retail and warehousing	34	17%

### Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme

Programme	Training for Success (%)	ApprenticeshipsNI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	20%	26%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	28%	31%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at Grades A*-C	36%	29%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	33%	32%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	57%	36%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	14%	24%

Note: All data was sourced from CRAFT Training Limited at the time of the inspection.

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