

UPDATE ON PROGRESS: EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON TRAINING FOR SUCCESS

Since the publication of the Committee's report on Training for Success the Department has been working to implement the recommendations. The Department appreciates greatly the support of the Committee and its focus on Training for Success and the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. Although only in its second year, as a result of the improvements in the programme and better marketing the Department has seen a significant increase in enrolments across all strands of the programmes. Annex A sets out the numbers from 2006-2009.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Procurement

- a. The Department took on board the enhancements recommended by the Committee when awarding the contracts in Steps to Work.
- b. In the run up to the renewal of Training for Success contracts in 2010, the Department will work with Central Procurement Directorate to take on board as many of the Committee's recommendations as possible, including the scope and criteria for select tendering procedures and reassessing the single contract which covers the whole of Northern Ireland.

2. Changes to Programme

a. Training for Success

Training for Success has a clearer focus on young people in training and not employed.

There are 3 distinct strands to the Training for Success programme.

i. Skills for Your Life

Focuses on young people who have significant barriers to employment such as substance abuse and disaffection with education. These barriers are addressed before any skills training can be provided. Training in the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is also included in their programme.

ii. Skills for Work

Focuses on young people who have very low levels of education and no qualifications. The programme includes professional and technical training at level 1 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grade D-G) and the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

iii. Pre-Apprenticeship

- (a) Aimed at young people working towards an apprenticeship but who do not have the requisite qualifications. Training is focused at level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C) and the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- (b) The Department has revised this component to provide trainees with the necessary 'pre-employment' skills for sectors including the construction industry. In the case of construction the Department is exploring whether there is scope to accommodate this industry's model proposed since the publication of the Committee's report. While there is

flexibility in the pre-apprenticeship programme, the restrictions on the use of work placements are yet to be resolved.

b. **General Changes to Training for Success**

- i. In conjunction with the Training Suppliers, the Department has determined that a reasonable time period for the completion of the Personal Training Plan will be up to 12 weeks from the commencement of training. This enables organisations working with those individuals with the greatest barriers to spend more time on agreeing the Training Plan. This also ensures the young person is on the correct programme to meet their needs.
- ii. For clarity of branding the title 'Job Ready' has been removed from the Training for Success programme.
- iii. Training for Success no longer contains a separate component of Employability skills. Such training is incorporated at the front end of all the components of Training for Success and is an integral part of the assessment and induction phase of training.

c. **Provision for Young People with Disabilities**

- i. The Department has responded positively to the report from the Expert Working Group established to review training provision for young people with disabilities in the context of Training for Success. A number of the recommendations have been implemented already and work is underway with others. A few will be taken forward in conjunction with the Department's Careers Service and in consultation with Specialist Support Providers and Support Groups.

The Department will continue to work with the Expert Working Group.

d. **ApprenticeshipsNI**

- i. The Department has separated out the Apprenticeship programme as its flagship programme. It is aimed at people in work. They work towards qualifications at level 2 and level 3 (equivalent to 2 A levels), plus a Technical Certificate and Essential Skills. The content of the programme is determined by the appropriate Sector Skills Council (SSC). The SSC also specifies the content of the pre-apprenticeship programme including qualifications and specific skills.
- ii. The age restriction for apprenticeships has been removed from 1 September 2008.

3. **Quality and Contract Management**

- a. The Department has almost completed a Quality Improvement Strategy, including taking forward the Committee's recommendations.
- b. The Department has agreed with the Education and Training Inspectorate that organisations providing Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI will be inspected at least every three years. In addition, the organisation is required to complete an annual self evaluation report and an improvement action plan.
- c. The Department has strengthened its procedures in relation to monitoring the contracts. In addition to ongoing liaison with the organisation by the

Contract Managers the Assistant Contract Managers have two formal visits each year to ensure compliance with the operational guidelines.

- d. The Department's Financial Audit Support Team has a programme of audits and those organisations new to the programme have early financial audits.
- e. The Department has in place a process for removing a contract in light of a poor inspection or non-compliance with the Operational Guidelines.
- f. The Department has requested that the Inspectorate sends a copy of its Annual Report to the Committee.

4. **Other Issues**

- i. A £40 Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was introduced from September 2008 for all participants on the Training for Success programme. This is not means tested and ensures that those whose families are in receipt of benefit will not have their benefit entitlement affected.
- ii. The Department has in place contingency arrangements for apprentices who have been made redundant. In light of the economic downturn, the Department has been working with the further education sector to provide an alternative to level 3 apprenticeships to enable continuation of skills training. This will also provide an opportunity to test the piloting of programme-led training provision.
- iii. In consultation with the Sector Skills Councils the 5 year rule on GCSEs has been removed and the delivery of Essential Skills must make full use of the context of the participant's professional and technical area.

Annex A

Jobskills 2006/07	Starts			
Access	1895			
Traineeship	4612			
MA1Level 2	2102			
MA2Level 2/3	1180			
	9789			
Training for Success 2007				
Personal Development	282			
Skills for Work Level 1	1807			
Employability Skills	91			
Pre-Apprenticeships	2028			
Apprenticeships Level2/Level3	3239			
Apprenticeships Level 3	221			
	7668			
Training for Success 2008				
TfS 2008	4873			
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2/3	5069			
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 3	445			
	10387			
		Occupancy as 11 March 2007	Occupancy as 11 March 2008	Occupancy as 11 March 2009
Jobskills				
Access	1846	486		122
Traineeship	4849	1583		363
MA1	3330	3146		1731
MA2	2946	1940		1114
	12971	7155		3330
Training for Success 2007				
Personal Development		192		39
Skills for Work Level 1		1199		188
Employability Skills		2		0
Pre-Apprenticeships		1386		119
Apprenticeships Level2/Level3		2797		2230
Apprenticeships Level 3		211		183
		5787		2759

Training for Success 2008

TfS 2008			4179
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2/3			4615
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 3			407
			9201
Total	12971	12942	15290