



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

European Social Fund provision in  
Clanrye Group Ltd

Positive Directions

Report of an Inspection in  
February 2018



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**

The Clanrye Group Ltd (Clanrye) is a voluntary organisation with charitable status which operates a social enterprise; it is contracted by the Department for the Economy (Department) to provide the Positive Directions European Social Fund (ESF) project. The project promoter also delivers a range of other funded programmes, including a second ESF project.

The aims of the Positive Directions project are to enable people between the ages of 16 and 65 with disabilities, to develop and acquire the necessary employability and occupational skills, experience and qualifications to progress to further education, other training, employment, voluntary work or self-employment. To support the success of the project, the organisation collaborates with a range of organisations, including partnership arrangements with: the Department for Communities; the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The organisation also works in conjunction with the Jobs and Benefits offices in Lurgan, Newry and Portadown to deliver the project to participants progressing from their Condition Management Programme, delivered in collaboration with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

The project is managed by the programme manager, the quality manager and the team lead who are supported by a team of tutors, employability officers, social enterprise officers and administrative staff. The project is overseen by the general manager and deputy manager who report to the board of directors on the project's performance and outcomes on a bi-monthly basis. The Positive Directions project operates out of the Clanrye offices in Newry, the Portadown office and the organisation's Slieve Gullion premises.

At the time of the inspection, 224 participants<sup>1</sup> were registered on the Positive Directions project. The programme duration for participants is a maximum of eighteen months. The project is delivered to them through accredited vocational provision up to level 2, personal development and employability provision and opportunities to engage in a range of social enterprise activities across the local area. The participants attend a varied programme of weekly sessions across two days; they undertake occupational qualifications in catering, customer service, horticulture, information and communication technology (ICT), and retail. It is a strength of the project that participants have the option to address any literacy and numeracy barriers by completing an essential skills qualification in literacy and numeracy, delivered by the local further education college at the Clanrye offices in Newry and Portadown. The participants are also provided with opportunities to access industry-relevant short courses in a good range of specialist areas.

## **2. Views of participants**

The inspection team met with a sample of current and past participants individually and in three focus groups across the offices. All of the participants interviewed were highly positive about their experiences on the project and stated that it had significantly improved their level of confidence and met well their individual needs. They commented that they valued greatly the encouragement and guidance provided by the staff which had significantly improved their self-esteem, supporting them extensively to gain qualifications, improve work-readiness and acquire employability skills.

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<sup>1</sup>All performance data in this report was provided by the ESF project promoter at the time of the inspection.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

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

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

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Very good
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Outstanding
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very good

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

The majority of participants achieve very good standards of work; they also develop an appropriate range of literacy and numeracy skills within their occupational learning and training. In the sample of learning and development sessions observed, they develop relevant occupational and employability skills to an appropriately high standard. In horticulture, for example, the participants are developing a wide range of new skills, including potting, planting and growing different seeds; they also have opportunities to develop and apply landscaping skills. In ICT, they acquire new skills in the use of email, word-processing, spreadsheets, multimedia presentations and databases. These skills increase their employability and support their independence. Employers report that most of the participants are able to engage confidently with supervisors and customers. They also report that the participants' skills and abilities are well-matched to work roles and that this is closely monitored and supported by Clanrye.

Over the past three years, Clanrye has developed highly effective relationships with appropriate referral agencies and organisations in the voluntary and community sector along with multi-agency partnerships to support recruitment from the target group. A unique element of this project is that it builds successfully on the work of the Condition Management Programme. This is an initial 12 week programme to support individuals on benefits, often long-term, to progress toward re-training and ultimately employment. There are many positive examples of individuals who have been successfully supported through both programmes, working in collaboration, into work after long periods on benefits. The project provides participants with good opportunities to achieve relevant qualifications and training, including building upon the progress many have made previously on the Condition Management Programme. This enables them to continue their journey towards progressing to further education, training, employment or voluntary work. The project promoter is close to meeting its overall recruitment target with 224 participants recruited against a target of 240 (93%) to date.

The project effectively provides supportive progression for participants into a wide range of employment areas, with very good opportunities for them to achieve relevant qualifications that increase their employability. The retention rate for the project has been consistently very good over each of the past three years, at 81%, 89% and 87% respectively. The project promoter has exceeded its work-placement target, progressing 150 participants (target 130) to a suitable and meaningful work-experience placement. Participants are progressed to work-experience placements at an appropriate pace, matched closely to their personal development, learning support, employability and personal needs. The project has been successful in progressing 22 participants into training, well above the target set (10 participants). The project has also met its target of participants supported into voluntary work. It has exceeded significantly the target in relation to deterioration in health/personal difficulties, with 41 participants, (almost double the target) meeting this. To date, the project promoter has progressed 32 participants to employment (68% of the target), 22 participants to DfE programmes (73%) but only a small number of participants (18%) to further education.

The flexible and supportive individualised learning approach and the one-to-one support is a strength of the provision and has been a key factor in improving the participants' confidence and self-esteem. Most of the participants build high levels of confidence, resilience and commitment to overcome their barriers, including their disabilities and a diverse range of social, emotional and personal barriers to accessing training, further education, employment or voluntary work. Through their engagement with the project, most (84%) of the participants can demonstrate improved wider skills and dispositions, including increased self-esteem, improved health and well-being, greater confidence, improved communication, improved employability and life skills and relevant accredited qualifications. Over the three years of the project, 82% of participants have achieved a level 1 qualification, with 92% having achieved at level 2.

## **6. Quality of provision**

Clanrye has developed a balanced and flexible curriculum which includes an appropriate range of accredited vocational training, personal development and employability provision. The curriculum includes social enterprise and enrichment activities to support the development of the participants' personal, social and employability skills. The planning for learning is comprehensive and very well matched to the individual needs of the participants. The curriculum delivery is participant-centred with opportunities for them to access a range of relevant vocational qualifications, up to and including level 2.

The range of employability experiences provided by the project is highly valued by the participants and is impacting positively on improving their occupational skills development. The participants are provided with an appropriately differentiated programme of well-planned and commercially relevant social enterprise activities across the vocational areas. The breadth of social enterprise activities provided supports very well the participants' opportunities to work sample and to develop their work-readiness and employability skills.

Clanrye provides well-planned and effective pre-entry advice and guidance to the participants; induction arrangements are comprehensive and effective. The processes and underpinning systems for identifying and managing individual support needs are well-established and effective, with a strong focus on progressing them at a pace aligned closely with their needs. A coherent approach to planning, identifying, reviewing and supporting the participants' individual needs is in place and works well. The regular review and support sessions have a strong focus on progressing them at an appropriate pace towards further education, training or employment/voluntary work, and include a broad range of motivating social enterprise activities and tailored one-to-one support. The initial assessment processes have been further developed to include the use of a skills analysis for each participant which is linked well to

their individual learning and training plans. The well-planned and effective 'three-way' process involves tutors, employability officers and participants to agree individual plans with each participant across the project, and to identify and prioritise appropriate actions. The participants' personal files capture well their prior experiences, qualifications and any barriers to learning and employment and the information is used well to inform planning. As a result, most of them overcome successfully their barriers to learning and progression. A well-developed 'peer to peer' system is in place, which works effectively to support the participants' diverse learning and support needs.

The quality of the provision for learning and development, including the learning and development sessions observed, is very good overall. In all of the sessions observed, there was a very good rapport and mutual respect between staff and participants that supported a highly positive learning environment. The sessions were characterised by: effective planning; good use of active learning strategies; appropriate use of learning outcomes to explain, share and display the aims of the session; clearly focused questioning used to enhance and monitor participants' knowledge and progress; and effective opportunities for peer learning and small group collaboration between the participants.

Almost all of the participants are progressing well in their skills development and they apply well their new skills and knowledge in social enterprise and commercial activities and community projects. In particular, they are developing well socially, supporting each other, increasing their confidence and ability to live independently, and overcoming what are often significant barriers. The tutors and other support staff engage effectively with the participants and foster very good relationships through a range of well-considered strategies, including one-to-one support. A well-established programme of enrichment activities are key to supporting the participants to overcome their barriers to learning and progression. These include social enterprise activities in a 'commercially relevant' business context, where the participants are developing further their employability and customer service skills, and social activities such as 'everybody active' which are highly valued by the participants.

The arrangements for care and welfare impact positively on the participants' learning and development. There are strong and mutually respectful working relationships between management, project staff and participants. The managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the care and welfare needs of the participants. They are allocated a tutor and an employability officer and receive individual guidance and support as an integral part of the project delivery. The social enterprise officers and tutors also work closely and supportively with the participants to support their development and acquisition of social enterprise skills. There are well-established, effective signposting links to a range of services to support participants who have specific needs, including learning support needs and emotional, social and health-related problems.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The organisation's senior management team and the board of governors have a clear strategic vision for the project; they work together strategically and effectively to ensure the provision continues to contribute to meeting the wider social and economic needs of the area. The management team are highly supportive of the project and are effective in setting its strategic direction. There is participant-focused planning along with a strong commitment to invest in staff, accommodation and resources. The curriculum has been well designed to match employers' needs, for example, supporting participants' ICT skills development to help a number of them to progress to employment. The high quality partnership working is a key strength of the project. Strategic links and partnerships are strong and all of the stakeholders interviewed value highly the Positive Directions programme and the responsiveness of the project staff. The project promoter has developed 'placement partnerships' with a number of employers to support participants' skills development, reflective of the needs of the voluntary and community sector and matching well participants' needs and aspirations.

The roles and responsibilities of the project staff are well defined and support extensively the participants' individual needs. Management and staff are highly committed to making the project a success. A key strength of the provision is the specialist expertise and professionalism of the staff, which are used to good effect to enrich the participants' learning experiences and to build positive relationships with them. Staffing levels for the project are very good, with clear roles and responsibilities established to successfully manage the project. This includes clearly defined assistant tutor, employability and social enterprise roles to support the participants' skills development. Internal and external communication is very good and includes the effective use of social media to promote the project. The staff interviewed are highly committed to supporting the participants. The quality of the accommodation to deliver the training and support the participants is very good, including recent investment in information and learning technology to further enhance learning and training.

The project promoter demonstrates a strong commitment to the continuing professional development of the project staff. This includes the well-considered development and implementation of learning and teaching strategies to support and improve learning, teaching and training, including differentiation strategies, assessment for learning and self-assessment strategies. It was apparent that this additional up-skilling is highly valued by the staff. The project promoter also demonstrates that it is responsive to feedback from participants and stakeholders, and has organised a range of well-targeted events to share best practice and to further promote improvement.

The project promoter has worked hard to develop strong working partnerships with a range of small to medium-sized businesses and larger employers in the retail sector. The links with these employers are also used well to provide workplace visits and mock interviews to further support the participants' employability and skills development. Employers value the contact with the project and report effective working relationships with Clanrye which are underpinned by clear communication from the project staff with them. It is noteworthy that 50% of participants secured employment through their work-placement, with 25% of them gaining employment in the retail sector. The project promoter has identified the need to further build on these links and partnerships to extend the placement and employment opportunities of the participants.

There is a well-developed management information system which is used effectively to record and track the progress of the participants. The system is regularly updated and facilitates the monitoring and tracking of qualifications completed. Information on key performance data is also monitored and analysed robustly and used to good effect to further promote improvement. The project promoter has implemented systems to comprehensively monitor and track soft outcomes which are used well to inform regular review meetings and to ensure that the quality of the provision and progression outcomes for individual participants are monitored and evaluated and that any good practice is shared.

There is an organisation-wide self-evaluation process and quality improvement cycle that is well embedded across the project team. The project managers and staff are highly reflective and have accurately identified the key areas for improvement. Senior management are well informed of the planned actions to bring about improvement, which are tracked and reviewed regularly. There is a dedicated quality management function, implementing a reflective quality improvement process; this is underpinned well by the use of robust data and the collation and identification of key strengths and areas for improvement across the project.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding participants reflect the guidance issued by the Department.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

The Clanrye Positive Directions project demonstrates a high level of capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the participants.

The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.

## A. Project registrations

Programme	Numbers of enrolments	% against target
European Social Fund Clanrye 2015/2016	63	79%
European Social Fund Clanrye 2016/2017	85	106%
European Social Fund Clanrye 2017/2018	76	*95%

\*This % is to the end of February 2018. There is a further month still for the 2017/18 registrations.

## 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).

Two ETI inspectors and one associate assessor observed 32 participants in a range of settings, including eight learning and development sessions and three focus groups. Discussions were held with the management team, employment officers, the social enterprise co-ordinator, tutors, social enterprise officers, employers, external partners and referral agencies. The management information system, including the tracking and monitoring systems, the skills analysis, samples of the participants' work and personal training plans, and planning and review documents were examined. The project promoter's self-evaluation report, quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were 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 project promoter:

The project promoter has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.
The project promoter demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor how the project promoter sustains improvement.
The project promoter needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor and report on the project promoter's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The project promoter needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the participants. The ETI will monitor and report on the project promoter's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
<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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