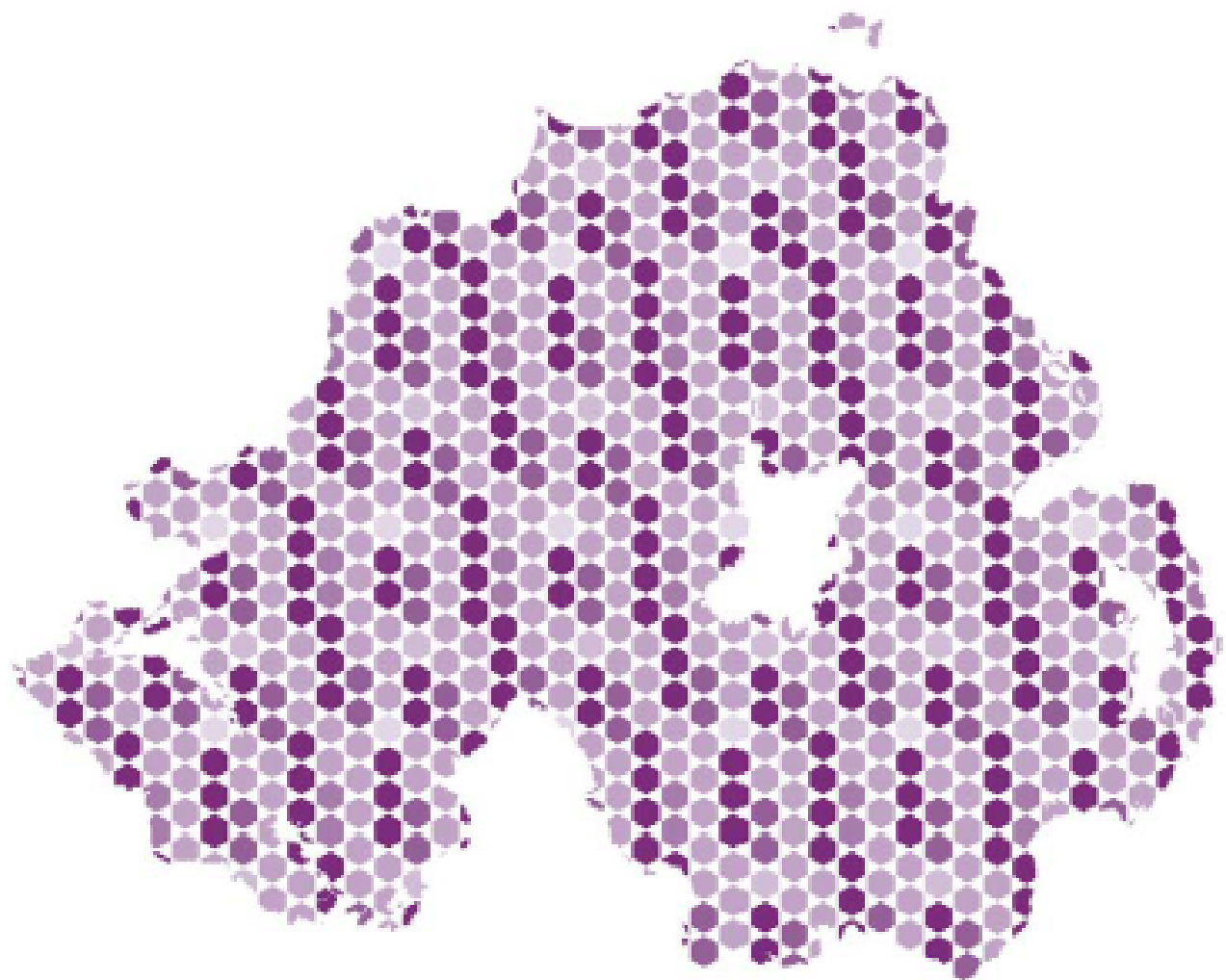


FURTHER EDUCATION INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

An Evaluation of Provision for
Learners with Special Educational
Needs or Disabilities in Further
Education and Training for Success
Report of an Inspection
in December 2008-January 2009



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



QUALITY STANDARD EXCELLENCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This evaluation focuses on the provision made by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to support learners of all ages with special educational needs or disabilities in Further Education (FE), and similarly learners with special educational and additional learning needs on Training for Success [TfS] programmes who were registered in September 2008. The evaluation builds on work undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) in 2008, namely:

- a survey of provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities enrolled on mainstream college courses and discrete courses for the learning disabled across the six area based further and higher education colleges; and
- the findings from TfS inspections carried out by the Inspectorate in the period from October to December 2008 with respect to learners with special or additional learning needs.

1.2 During the period December 2008 to January 2009, a team of inspectors held further discussions with learners, college support staff, main course tutors, and middle and senior college managers, to explore more fully issues relating to teaching, training and learning emerging from the original survey. In addition members of the team met with learners and relevant staff from both TfS supplier organisations, and the Department's Careers Service, to review the quality of the provision for learners registered from September 2008 and identified as having special educational needs.

2. PROVISION

2.a FURTHER EDUCATION

2.1 The criteria which govern special educational provision within the FE sector are set out in the FE (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. Article 13 of the Order sets out the general duties of governing bodies of institutions of FE, and requires colleges to have regard to the needs of learners over compulsory school age who have "learning difficulties". This phrase refers to those who have difficulties and/or disabilities which impact on their learning. Colleges are also required by the Department to examine provision for learners with special educational needs, identify strengths and weaknesses and make proposals for improvements. This activity is carried out within the context of the annual college development planning (CDP) process, in particular the budget-setting and curriculum target-setting aspects of each of the CDPs.

2.2 The Department has a range of strategies which aim to support the key objective of improving access to FE for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Principally, the Department provides funding through the Additional Support Fund for the colleges to support the enrolment of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities on mainstream courses. Funding for such learners is incorporated into the FE funding mechanism and this ensures that colleges are able to meet the costs of learners with a learning difficulty or disability that may require additional levels of support. The Additional Support Fund is also available to provide additional technical and/or human resource support, such as brailers, specialist

software and signers. In addition, the Department ring-fenced funds totalling £1.5 million in 2007/2008 to help colleges to meet the extra costs associated with the provision of education to learners with learning disabilities who require a discrete learning environment.

2.b TRAINING FOR SUCCESS (TfS)

2.3 The Department uses the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) definition to identify those learners as being 'disabled'. Under the DDA, disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". This definition covers learners with a variety of conditions, including learning, speech and physical disabilities, visual impairment, cancer, multiple sclerosis, or mental ill health problems.

2.4 In 2007 the Department developed the TfS professional and technical training provision to replace the former Jobskills programme. Training for Success aims to provide 16-24 year olds with a flexible menu that learners in the age 16-24 age group can enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through achievement of qualifications, employment, individually tailored training, personal development and employability skills. Until September 2008, it consisted of three strands: level 2 Apprenticeships, level 3 Apprenticeships and the Job Ready strand. In September 2008, TfS 2008 replaced Jobready provision and Apprenticeships were rebranded ApprenticeshipsNI. Within TfS 2008, there are three strands; Skills for Your Life, Skills for Work Level 1; and Pre-apprenticeship level 2.

2.5 Data made available by the Department indicates that in October 2008 there were 5,893 non-waged learners on the TfS and residual Jobskills programmes and in January 2009 there were 5,342 on the TfS 2008 programme. The Department recognises that many young people will not be able to progress directly from school to paid employment, and that some may need additional support to cope with the demands of work, as a result of their particular disabilities or additional learning needs. The personal training plans (PTPs) for the TfS 2008 cohort of learners are currently being completed; by the end of January 2009 3,679 PTPs had been approved; 398 for learners on Skills for Your Life, 1,398 Skills for Work and 249 Pre-Apprenticeships (52 Weeks); and 1,634 Pre-Apprenticeships (78 Weeks). Departmental staff are presently collating data on the specific numbers of learners with disabilities or additional learning needs within TfS 2008, and exact figures will not be available until all of the PTPs have been processed and approved.

2.6 Provision is made within both TfS 2008 and ApprenticeshipsNI to ensure that additional support is made available to learners with special educational needs. In March 2007, just over 90% of the learners identified with disabilities or special educational needs were participating in the Jobready strand of TfS 2007. Early indications are that it is likely that a similar pattern will emerge this year, with at least the majority participating as learners on the non-waged TfS 2008 programme, as opposed to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

2.7 The Department has put in place a range of strategies with the objective of identifying and supporting the needs of learners with special educational needs. Alongside the Report of the Training for Success Disability Working Group produced by a sub-group of the Department's Disability Liaison Group, are the response to the Bamford Review and the work of the Ministerial Sub-Committee of Children and Young People. Within the TfS

operational guidelines, and in the context of the broad category of special educational needs, clear and separate definitions are provided with regard to the terms, 'disability' and 'additional learning needs', with attendant variations to the programme to meet the needs of these learners. These include attendance requirements; content; demands and duration of the training programme. All TfS suppliers have access to a range of additional support mechanisms, including support from five designated Specialist Support Providers. These are the Cedar Foundation (support for learners with learning disability), Disability Action (support for literacy and numeracy and workplace coaching), Include Youth (group support and peer mentoring), Opportunity Youth (personal development and individual support) and the Sensory Support Service (learners with sensory impairments). Within TfS 2008, the Department will fund up to a maximum of £1,000 per participant towards the provision of specialist support, where a need has been identified in the learner's PTP, and which has been approved by the Department.

2.8 In addition, a Disability Premium/Supplement may be payable to the supplier to provide additional resources in terms of training time, equipment, or support in order for the participant to benefit fully from training. In instances where it is decided that public transport is not a suitable option for a learner with a disability or additional needs the Department refunds the costs of taxis to and from a supplier's premises.

2.9 The Department recognises that some learners entering TfS 2008 may need significant additional input of resources in terms of training time, equipment, or support in order to fully benefit from training, as a consequence of a disability or a serious behavioural or emotional problem. Some of these learners may have a current statement of special educational need and/or have attended a special school or unit. However, it is not mandatory that all learners who have a statement of special educational need are required to undertake TfS 2008 and the Department recognises that an apprenticeship route, further education, or employment may better meet their training needs.

3. THE EVALUATION

3.1 In January 2009, a team of inspectors from the Inspectorate carried out visits to two area based colleges and seven supplier organisations: all identified as having a strong focus on providing education and training opportunities for learners with special and additional learning needs. Interviews took place with middle and senior managers, key staff members, eight careers advisers, and learners across the organisations visited. Relevant policy and other documentation were also examined.

3.2 In total, the organisations visited in January 2009 had 89 learners with special educational needs on full-time FE programmes, 99 learners on TfS Skills for Your Life and 798 learners on Skills for Work. Of the learners visited, of those registered on Skills for your Life, 64% had transferred to the programme from special schools or learning centres within mainstream schools, as had 28% of those learners registered on Skills for Work.

3.3 Overall, the main aims of the work were to identify the extent to which learners with a range of special and educational needs are supported during the period of transition and transfer to FE or TfS, and the level of assistance available to help them engage purposefully with education and training while on their programmes.

4. THE LEARNERS

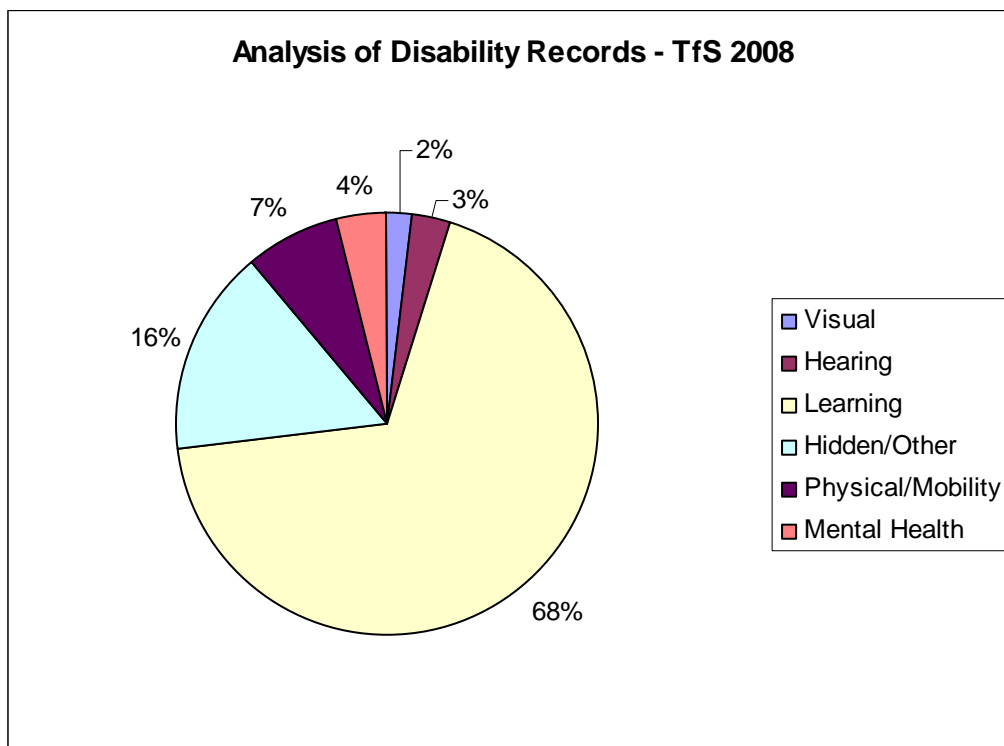
4.1 During this evaluation two groups of learners have been clearly identified:

- learners with special educational needs such as severe or moderate learning difficulties, or disabilities, who are found predominantly in FE discrete provision, TfS Skills for Your Life, and Skills for Work; and
- learners with special or additional learning needs such as personal, social and emotional difficulties, who are found mainly in TfS Skills for Work.

4.2 Training for Success 2008 provision recognises that many learners who do not come within the definition of disability, face real barriers to learning and work as a result of learning difficulties or disabilities, emotional, behavioural or social problems, such as drug or alcohol abuse, involvement with the criminal justice system or domestic violence. These young people are identified within the guidelines as those with 'additional or special needs'.

4.3 Learners with additional needs are defined in the operational guidelines as those who, because of a disadvantage, may not be immediately suited to entering training at Level 2 Apprenticeship or above, and require additional input of resources in terms of training time, equipment, or support, but do not fall into the disabled category. This may include learners who require further development in literacy and/or numeracy. Others may be included at the discretion of the Careers Service where a clear need has been identified. These may include learners who have linguistic difficulties, for example, difficulties with the English language, speech defects, or receptive disorders; or those exhibiting behavioural or emotional problems which limit their progress in training; or displaying lack of motivation through low self-esteem or disinterest in career or life prospects. The guidelines specify that whilst evidence of additional needs can be obtained from various sources, the most important sources are the schools, and in particular careers teachers and special educational needs co-ordinators. Other agencies including the Careers Service, social workers, probation officers, and educational welfare officers are also held to be important sources of information.

4.4 Preliminary analysis of 1,097 TfS 2008 disability records indicate that the most common disabilities experienced are as highlighted in the graph below. The main disability group identified is learning disability at 68%; followed by hidden disabilities at 16%; physical and mobility disabilities at 7%; hearing and visual disabilities at 5%; and mental health issues at 4%. Many of the learners present a number of disabilities, and there is evidence of increasing numbers of learners with hidden disabilities such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder or Aspergers syndrome and complex mental health difficulties.



4.5 Analysis of additional or special needs records of learners on the TfS 2008 programme identify the following issues, which act as barriers to employment: poor social skills; involvement in illegal, paramilitary, or antisocial activities; drug or health-related problems; alcohol, solvent, or drug-related abuse or dependencies; homelessness and pregnancy; and difficulties experienced due to having been in/leaving care. Generally these learners display the following qualities and characteristics: poor levels of literacy and numeracy skills; poor records of attendance during the last year in school; very low levels of achievement in formal school-based examinations; poor behaviour in, or attitude to, education, training and/or employment; second or third generation unemployed; low levels of motivation; and poorly developed or unrealistic career aspirations.

4.6 Within the context of this evaluation, findings indicate that organisations are dealing with increasing numbers of learners who present with multiple, complex personal, social, emotional and mental health related needs. The Inspectorate recognises the complexity and sensitivity of current issues which staff in FE and supplier organisations face on a daily basis. Such issues manifest themselves in day-to-day challenges to staff in terms of the management of learners displaying unacceptable and/or anti-social behaviours, and poor levels of motivation to learn and achieve.

5. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

5.1 The main strengths of the provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities across the FE and TfS provision within and across the organisations visited are the:

- better opportunities created by the TfS 2008 programme to respond more flexibly and meet more appropriately the diverse needs of these learners;

- commitment of the organisations and staff to meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and additional learning needs, from the communities they serve;
- increased provision of suitable accredited courses, and the improved focus on developing the employability skills of those learners with a range of special and additional learning needs for whom full-time or part-time employment is not a realistic option;
- development of more rigorous approaches to initial assessment and personal training planning processes to ensure that the diverse needs of learners are being met and monitored;
- improved tracking of learner progress which has led to more informed decisions being taken on more suitably matched accreditation and employment opportunities;
- increased awareness of staff at all levels of issues relating to disability and additional learning needs;
- examples of good practice identified through this work, with most of the organisations using an effective range of activities and approaches to engage learners in their learning experience; and
- strong working relationships which have been developed with staff from a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community agencies that are used to good effect to provide learners with the most appropriate support arrangements.

5.2 A number of areas remain in need of attention, however, to ensure that the needs of those learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and multiple, complex additional learning needs, are met more effectively within and across the organisations visited. The main areas for improvement are the:

- opportunities for young people with special educational needs to access appropriate guidance during the transition period from school to FE or TfS, including information relevant to appropriate learning pathways, support services and benefits;
- depth and quality of the information that accompanies young people with special educational needs from schools to the FE college or training provider;
- capacity of the designated specialist support organisations to provide timely and appropriate support; and the expansion of the designated specialist support providers to include organisations with expertise in behaviour management and/or mental health issues;
- review of funding to facilitate more flexible and individualised approaches to the deployment of specialist support to address the disparity between learners funded through FE routes and those funded under TFS;

- implementation of a staff development programme to provide training for FE and TfS tutors and support workers in dealing with complex conditions, including challenging behaviour and the use of reasonable force;
- training to raise the awareness of TfS staff in particular, of specialist assistive technology resources and relevant on-line programmes;
- development of a centralised bank of resources and expertise, to meet the particular and specialised educational needs of learners on TfS programmes, to maximise access to, and use of, specialist resources; and
- need for improved understanding across all relevant Departments to facilitate intra-agency and inter-departmental communication, to increase, at both strategic and operational levels, the cohesion and coherence of provision for learners with special educational needs.

6. MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC CLIMATE AND DECLINE

6.1.1 Over the past few years, most of the organisations visited have worked very effectively in identifying sympathetic employers, usually in small to medium work places which provide opportunities for learners to experience the workplace, and develop employability skills in the local community. The organisations report that this situation is becoming increasingly difficult, as a result of the rising unemployment rate. One organisation reported 68 approaches to employers to find a work placement for one trainee in business administration.

6.1.2 The colleges are attempting to use the opportunities for sheltered work placements within their own campuses and there is room to extend this good practice. The majority of the supplier organisations visited would value the opportunity to access and make use of additional resources to simulate similar realistic work environments.

6.1.3 Greater consideration needs to be given, by all organisations, both FE and TFS providers, to exploring the possibilities of collaborative working with specialist organisations to gain voluntary work placements and to develop project work in the local community and voluntary sectors.

6.2 PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES FOR A MINORITY OF LEARNERS

6.2.1 In the organisations visited there are a small number of learners (approximately 15%) for whom the Skills for Your Life component of TfS provides a therapeutic and social programme geared to social inclusion with the emphasis not on employability but transferable skills. These focus on independent living skills and independent travel training. These learners are not likely to be able to gain employment, even in a sheltered environment, due to their learning, physical and health related issues, and therefore progression to Skills for Work is not appropriate for these young people.

6.2.2 The Department should draw the attention of the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to the need to consider providing appropriate progression opportunities for this minority of learners.

The Life Skills Programme provided by one of the area based colleges gives full-time learners the opportunity to gain qualifications and encourages them to work towards different types of accreditation. The structure of the course is flexible to allow individual learning profiles to be developed for each student. Group meetings and tutorials are an essential part of the course. Learners are encouraged to work towards accreditation in arts and crafts, distributive operations, enterprise, hairdressing, life skills, motor vehicle, personal social and health education, using the internet and working skills. The Life Skills programme runs in collaboration with the Mencap Job Club. This initiative provides a progression route for learners to enter the world of work and to eventually obtain work placement and employment. Within the Life Skills programme, a range of effective teaching strategies and methods stretch, challenge and encourage learning. Good use is made of the Information Learning Technology and Assistive Technologies to create an inclusive and interactive learning opportunity for the learners .

6.3 TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

6.3.1 Most of the organisations visited expressed concerns about the lack of planned, co-ordinated transition arrangements in their localities and the lack of consistency in practice in the role of transition officers. The latter have been appointed in each of the Education and Library Board areas to facilitate the transition process for learners with special or additional learning needs.

6.3.2 Under the current Special Education Needs Code of Practice, transition is a term used to refer to that time in a child's life when plans are made to move from school to adult life. In 2002, an Inter Departmental Working Group (IDG) facilitated the collaboration between the DE, the DHSSPS and the Department in relation to the transition process for those children with statements of special educational needs aged 14 upwards¹. Evidence from this evaluation show that the recommendations within the IDG report still remain valid, and in particular:

- a. the appointments of transitions co-ordinators to strengthen the transition planning process in school and provide a co-ordinated approach with other statutory agencies and advice givers;
- b. the restructuring of the Careers Service to focus, as a priority, on learners aged 14-19 with statements of special educational needs by appointing careers managers and specialist careers advisers;
- c. the development of publicity and information material for pupils and parents to ensure that they are aware of the support available from the Transitions Service; and
- d. the delivery in schools of independent living skills to improve self-help and independent living.

¹ Report on Transitions Arrangements ETI 2008

6.3.3 Many of the IDG's proposals and those contained in the Inspectorate's Transitions Report, are being progressed in one of the Education and Library Board (ELB) areas visited during this evaluation, where a strategic overview of transition planning is being undertaken. The findings from this work suggest that geographical inconsistencies in the level and value of the service provided still occur, and that there remains a need to develop improved communication/links between the transition officers from both health and social care and education services in leading and managing aspects of the transition process.

6.3.4 Also there is a need for the DE and the Department, to provide a common source of information within the transition process for parents/carers and learners. The latter need to receive informed and impartial advice and guidance about the full range of learning pathways available as they progress from school, including provision available under the TfS programme.

In one ELB area, a multi-agency steering group has been established to break down barriers and improve the flow of information between the various agencies in the interests of enabling learners to make the transition from school, voluntary organisation or day centre most effectively and to maximise the joint expertise of the group. The steering group includes representation from the health trust, voluntary agencies, the careers service, the local college, persons such as transitions officers from the education and library board and support staff.

The group are currently working on a communications strategy which include Transition Identification of Need Records, Transition Plan Checklist and transfer of information protocols. The chair of this group is also taking the lead in developing greater consistency through a "yearly Diary" system in transition arrangements in the other ELB areas.

In this same board area the Trust has appointed ten Day Opportunity Co-ordinators whose role, for named individuals, is to find work placements, on-the job-training and supported employment, source further education and training, volunteering and opportunities to develop friendships.

6.4 TRANSFER OF INFORMATION

6.4.1 All of the organisations visited report concerns about the lack of prior and relevant information they receive about learners recruited onto their programmes. While they all carry out their own intensive initial assessments, relevant and appropriate information is required at an early stage of the learning programme to ensure that the needs of all of the learners are being met and that support is in place as quickly as possible.

6.4.2 In a significant minority of cases, important details about the prospective learner's strengths and weaknesses, including relevant information about particular learning needs or requirements such as medical conditions, are not made available to staff in the organisations by schools and other relevant agencies such as social services. There is need for agencies to develop suitable protocols to ensure that relevant information is provided to inform planning, identify learning needs and safeguard learners while they are in college, in training or with employers on work-placement, and in a small number of cases to ensure the safety of staff members working with learners with severe behavioural issues.

6.5 LEARNING PATHWAYS

6.5.1 All of the organisations visited value highly the work of the Department's careers advisers and the support they provide for learners with special or additional learning needs. However, given the increasing numbers of learners with a range of complex needs and medical conditions, the evaluation indicates that this is putting pressure at the transition point and there is a need for increased resources to ensure that:

- opportunities exist for learners with special educational needs to access appropriate guidance during the transition period, including information in relation to appropriate learning pathways to FE or TFS, support services and benefits; and
- formalised, planned opportunities are in place, for these learners to have contact with careers advisers over the summer months and in the early stages of their programme. This is necessary to confirm appropriate transition arrangements and to ensure that providers receive the information required to put in place support services to meet the needs of the individual as early as possible in the programme.

6.5.2 Evidence from this work suggests that careers advisers do not receive adequate information from schools/DE in relation to disengaged 16/17 year olds to allow them to target the mainly vulnerable young people who have "fallen through the cracks". Systems and/or appropriate working protocols should be put in place between the DE and the Department to ensure that relevant information from the School Leavers survey is shared with the Careers Service to allow careers advisers to follow-up on the young people who have been identified through the evaluation as not being in any form of education, training or employment.

6.6 SPECIALIST SUPPORT

6.6.1 All of the organisations visited find the services provided by the five designated specialist support organisations (SSOs) helpful. Evidence, however, suggests that the SSOs are unable to meet adequately the current demand, and do not have the capacity and flexibility to ensure timely, adequate responses to the needs of all of the TFS providers. This is related to the demand placed on the specialist support organisations by the supplier organisations, all requesting support towards the end of the Personal Training Planning process when learner needs are identified because the appropriate information has not been forthcoming at the transition stage. Specialist support organisations, therefore, are unable to plan effectively and to anticipate the demand.

6.6.2 Evidence from this evaluation indicates that the existing designated specialist support organisations do not provide sufficient breadth of services, to meet the additional needs of learners identified by providers in areas such as mental health, counselling, behaviour management and autism.

6.6.3 Almost all of the organisations visited while seeking out and paying for additional specialist support are also using a wide range of community and voluntary organisations that provide free services. One organisation has supplemented the specialist support organisations input with support for learners on drug and alcohol addiction, self-harm and suicide prevention, family planning and sexual health, debt and financial management, and diversity training, all to meet the identified needs of their learners.

6.6.4 Evidence from this survey suggests that training providers within the FE sector have greater flexibility to share resources and expertise. For example, in one college-based training organisation, the training manager purchases the services of specialist tutors from the college's Centre for Inclusive Learning to undertake an in-depth assessment of each of the learners on the Skills for Work programme, and advise on the support they require. Comprehensive guidance is provided for tutors on specific strategies that can be used to support the learners and where appropriate on the ways in which assistive technology can be used to support the individual trainee's learning programme.

6.7 STAFF TRAINING

6.7.1 In the organisations visited there is a need for staff training in challenging conditions, including ADHD and autism spectrum disorders; and in behaviour management strategies. The organisations report that training should focus on practical help, strategies and classroom management techniques that would help them deal with learners who present with these challenging conditions.

6.7.2 For staff generally, there is a need for training resources to facilitate inclusion, classroom management, and training in how to meet the needs of learners with the particular disabilities, specified in 6.7.1, in a classroom or workshop setting. There is also a need for organisations to be enabled to explore more fully opportunities to develop skills and accreditation in independent living skills and independent travel training for appropriate learners and to complement the work carried out in the schools sector as proposed in the Inspectorate's Report on Transitions².

6.8 LEARNING SUPPORT

6.8.1 Evidence from this work, and from a pilot questionnaire, show that supplier organisations have not had the same opportunities as their colleagues in FE, to explore the range of assistive technologies and their benefits to learners, and the use of technology to support learning and teaching for lower ability learners. In FE programmes where assistive technologies are used effectively, learners are facilitated to participate in all classroom activities and to gain greater independence in their learning.

6.8.2 Further Education colleges have the advantage and flexibility, of being able to use equipment purchased through the Additional Support Fund to support learners in FE programmes, for their learners in both their FE and TfS provision. This facility is not available in private training/supplier organisations. Consideration should be given by the Department to the provision of a centralised bank of resources so that expertise and equipment could also be made available to supplier organisations.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Evidence from this evaluation suggests that area based colleges are currently working to bring coherence into their provision for all learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and additional learning needs, across FE funded provision and TfS and their constituent campuses. Similarly it appears that many of the Supplier Organisations visited

² Report on Transitions Arrangements ETI 2008

are beginning to make decisions about their provision and are concentrating their efforts on TfS as opposed to Apprenticeships NI, due to the many challenges that exist in providing training for learners with additional learning needs.

7.2 Increasingly, many of the individuals entering education and training in FE and TfS programmes face many barriers to learning and employment and some are vulnerable to economic and social exclusion. Access to high quality, well planned individualised education, training and support is essential in preparing these learners to make effective transitions into employment or further training. There is a need for all relevant agencies to work together to maximise the use and impact of resources and expertise

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Employment and Learning should:

- review the range of specialist support available to training providers under TfS to meet the additional complex needs of the learners, in addition to the review of funding to enable more flexible and individualised approaches to the deployment of specialist support;
- continue to engage in multi-agency working to raise awareness of and influence the further development of the key roles and responsibilities needed to support learners with additional learning needs, across a range of organisations;
- help influence the transition planning processes to enable more effective communication and transfer of information to ensure that FE and TfS providers receive adequate, timely information on learners to enable them to meet individual need more quickly and efficiently;
- ensure that formalised opportunities are in place for learners with special educational needs to access appropriate information, advice and guidance during the transition period from school to FE or TfS, including information in relation to appropriate learning pathways, support services and benefits; and
- continue to work with the DHSSPS, at a strategic level, to ensure that all education and training provision funded under FE and TfS, complements the work undertaken in day care provision and contributes most effectively towards the development of independent living skills for those severely disabled learners.

Providers should:

- work co-operatively with local schools and relevant agencies to contribute to the development of effective protocols and procedures to ensure that learners with special educational needs, and their parents, are encouraged to pass on information relevant to the planning of their programmes and the provision of their support in FE and TfS;
- engage in a planned programme of staff training, to equip staff with the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with learners; and

- improve accessibility, and use of ILT and assistive technologies, to support training and learning in all organisations.

ORGANISATIONS VISITED DURING THE EVALUATION

Belfast Metropolitan College
Clanrye
H J O'Boyle, Downpatrick
Impact Training Ltd
North City Training
North Down Training
Northern Regional College
South Eastern Regional College
Springvale Training Ltd
Wade Training, Portadown
Workforce

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- SURVEY OF SLDD in FE COLLEGES 2008
- REVIEW OF TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS 2008
- EVALUATION OF TRAINING FOR SUCCESS 2009 (PENDING AT THE TIME OF THIS REPORT)

THE DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

- TRAINING FOR SUCCESS, DISABILITY WORKING GROUP REPORT JULY 2008

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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