



**A report by HM Inspectors on behalf of the Department
for Work and Pensions**

**Ingeus
Provider Led Pathways to
Work
Edinburgh, Lothian and
Borders
13 May 2010**

HM Inspectors undertake independent inspections of the quality of the arrangements made by providers of Pathways to Work and Flexible New Deal by agreement between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Inspection teams include HM Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors. A nominee of the provider also joins the inspection team as a full team member. Information about HMIE is available on www.hmie.gov.uk. This includes information on the inspection process within the *HMIE Handbook for Inspection of Employability Programmes, November 2009*. Information about Pathways to Work and Flexible New Deal is available on www.direct.gov.uk.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the effectiveness of the provider's services in this contract, and to identify strengths, good practice and points for action that the provider should take to improve the quality of its services and the outcomes for participants.

The inspection of the Ingeus Provider Led Pathways to Work programme took place from 15-19 March 2010. The inspection team undertook a range of related activities, including:

- observing interviews;
- observing training sessions;
- visiting participants in the workplace;
- holding discussions with participants, staff members, employers and key partners;
- evaluating participants' action plans and CVs; and
- analysing and evaluating data and documentation.

At the beginning of the inspection process we invited participants and stakeholders to tell us their views on the service by completing a questionnaire before the inspection week. These views are taken into account in the findings noted in this report and are highlighted in Appendix 1.

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1. The provision

Ingeus UK has been operating since 2002 and is part of the Ingeus group of companies. It has been delivering the Provider Led Pathways to Work provision in Edinburgh, Lothian and the Borders since December 2007.

It operates from four sites: Edinburgh, Livingston, Musselburgh, and Galashiels. In the first two years of the contract Ingeus UK have worked with 10,040 participants.

2. Particular strengths of the provision

- The range of voluntary activities provided to participants.
- The well trained and highly motivated staff.
- The careful monitoring of staff performance.
- The attractive, welcoming and well equipped premises, highly regarded by participants.

3. Good practice

- The arrangements for staff recruitment, selection, induction and support.
- Staff empowerment, teamwork and motivation.
- Proactive links with organisations in the local community.

Further information on identified good practice is available from the provider.

The evaluations for the Provider Led Pathways to Work, delivered by Ingeus for Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders are as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Overall, how effective is the provision? | good |
| How well are participants progressing and achieving high quality outcomes? | weak |
| How well is the provider enhancing the quality of its services? | good |
| How effective are the provider's learning, development and support processes? | very good |
| How effective is leadership and management? | very good |

**4. How well are participants progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?
Evaluation: weak**

The target job entry rate for mandatory participants was 42% by December 2009. The actual job entry rate according to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data is 13%. Mandatory participants make up three-quarters of the client group. Although the trend in this area has been improving over a period of time, available evidence suggests that the provider will fall far short of the contracted outcomes for this group. Outcomes for voluntary participants are more positive. The target job entry rate was 42% at December 2009. The actual job entry rate was 39% and job outcomes are likely to be very close to target by the end of the contract. The target for 'sustained outcomes' of participants staying in work for 26 weeks was set at 49% by December 2009. DWP data indicates that the actual figure was 42%. Although below target, the overall trend for sustained outcomes is positive.

Staff make good use of a variety of interventions to raise the level of participants' employability. Work focused interviews, condition management support and workshops all contribute well to develop participants' confidence, increase motivation and enhance their practical skills in areas such as information technology. Advisors recognise the benefits of engaging participants in a range of activities. They promote positively a wide range of support activities. This includes, for a significant number of participants, provision of free gym membership to develop their health and wellbeing. Participants increase their confidence and motivation as a result of the support given.

Staff deal appropriately and positively with participants from a wide range of backgrounds. They are flexible in making arrangements that are supportive and suitable to meet the needs of individual participants. They are strongly committed to positive use of the Condition Management Programme (CMP).

Action planning and goal setting with participants is done in a reflective and clear way. Staff and participants review actions from previous interviews and all interviews lead to updated plans that are formally agreed with participants. Managers conduct helpful 'caseload reviews' with staff to monitor how participants are progressing and to work with staff on dealing with any ongoing issues.

Arrangements for safeguarding are robust and comprehensive. All staff are aware of how to deal with any safeguarding concerns brought to them. Consultation and engagement of staff has helped ensure that policies and practices are appropriate. Well-planned, compulsory training is in place and appropriate disclosure checks are undertaken. Staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. The standard of training in promoting equality and diversity is very high. However, opportunities to promote equality and diversity within participants' experiences are too limited. Staff need to further develop participants' awareness of diversity in the workforce.

An extensive range of programmes and services is available to both mandatory and voluntary participants. Participants' needs are addressed well through the workshop activities available and the flexibility of drop-in support. Participants are encouraged and supported in enhancing their skills and qualifications in line with employment needs. Workshops aimed at preparing participants for work in particular industries are supported by local employers. This ongoing and developing work is having a positive impact on participants' confidence and work readiness.

**5. How well is the provider enhancing the quality of its services?
Evaluation: good**

Staff are highly motivated and positive about working for Ingeus. Managers make effective use of a number of strategies to motivate staff. These include the identification and rewarding of 'high performers', both locally and within the overall organisation. Use of a number of 'fun' strategies helps to motivate staff and actively encourages their engagement in innovation and improvement.

Staff are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss performance at monthly performance reviews and in a range of forums, both formal and informal. There are regular 'workgroup' meetings of staff peers in each area looking to share ideas, solve problems and look at tips, techniques and challenges. Case conferences are also a regular weekly feature. These focus on gathering views on challenging problems and sharing ideas and solutions. The recently instigated 'staff forum' provides an opportunity for discussion with a broader range of staff and senior managers. These mechanisms, enhanced by the sharing of statistical and performance information, underpin a culture of improving the service. Ingeus set performance targets for advisors on job entries. However, the individual targets for job entry outcomes for staff are below the global level of job entry outcomes needed to fulfil the contract target.

Staff teams are actively involved in seeking improvement to their practices in areas such as client attendance. Approaches are innovative and effective. Managers make good use of the RESMAN system to monitor and manage staff activity with participants. Monitoring and review activities generate evidence about performance which is usually acted upon immediately. Staff have extended and developed their use of client questionnaires and client focus groups.

The use of management information statistics to inform improvement is limited mainly to the use of data for monitoring job starts and attendance to measure achievement against targets. There is further scope for managers to use data better to inform quality improvement. Despite the prompt development of strategies to improve, for example, the job start performance, there is limited systematic evaluation of these strategies. This makes it difficult to fully evaluate the impact of changes, and to understand which elements of the changes put in place have been most successful.

Limited use of feedback from employers restricts the effectiveness of self-evaluation activities. The new role of employer partnership coordinator has created some good opportunities for more productive links with employers. Recent activities with employers have included their contribution to well-received workshops for participants. Specific links made with a small number of local employers have been very productive, at times leading to improved outcomes for participants.

Strong and effective links have recently been established with a number of key agencies. As a result of this work, the capacity for well informed referrals by employment advisors has increased. Collaboration with organisations such as the local council and Remploy have led to joint working to improve opportunities for participants. This client liaison service has developed recently. A fuller evaluation of the work and the impact on participants will help to focus the work more productively. These recent developments have combined to make a positive contribution to improvements in quality and to better outcomes for participants.

6. How effective are the provider's learning, development and support processes?

Evaluation: very good

The recent introduction of the specialised role of client engagement advisor allows specialist staff to work in a more focused way with some participants who may need more intensive support before working with an employment advisor. Employment advisors promote a wide range of helpful activity beyond the required work focused interviews for mandatory participants. This activity includes workshops, one-to-one support, referrals to specialist agencies outside the organisation, referral for specialist advice within the organisation and the use of drop-in facilities. Participants are encouraged to be active, and to undertake a wide range of additional voluntary activities. Ingeus uses a client contact service to provide timely reminders to participants to attend interviews. This service is used effectively to re-engage participants who are not engaging with the service, or identify participants with specific support needs.

The organisation has developed a wide range of in-house support workshops which meet the needs of participants well. Workshops assist participants in their personal development and support their progress toward employment. In a few workshops, facilitators did not employ a range of delivery methods which met fully the learning needs of participants.

Participants develop increased self-confidence through a personal programme that is likely to include elements such as interview skills training and mock interviews. The

CMP is promoted well, and a high proportion of participants use this service for advice sessions or for ongoing support. Having staff on site eases effective referrals. Over 20% of participants access support from CMP staff.

Work focused interviews are well structured, include an effective review of previous actions and conclude with the participant agreeing clear actions for ways forward. The discussion is clear, motivational and always directed toward preparedness for work. Advisors show a strong interest in participants, listening carefully, and skilfully use questions to move the client forward. In more than a few cases, however, advisors did not allow the client time or opportunity to assimilate and reflect on information and feedback.

'Jobstation' areas, resourced to support drop-in job search, are well equipped with a range of ICT and paper-based resources. Due to use for other purposes, the drop-in Jobstation service is unavailable for a couple of hours each week in the Edinburgh office. Participants with physical and sensory disabilities have equal access to resources through available assistive technology. Advisors make good use of diagnostic tools and labour market intelligence to enable participants to be clear and realistic about long term goals. Participants with identified needs, including literacy needs, are given appropriate guidance or referral information to help them meet any development need.

Advisors provide very good advice on issues such as finance and in-work benefits, employment options, job applications and training. They also provide helpful guidance for participants dealing with personal and health issues. They encourage participants to identify and deal with barriers to work in a positive and supportive way, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own decisions. All staff are knowledgeable and friendly, and have a very positive rapport with participants.

7. How effective is leadership and management?

Evaluation: very good

Regular and purposeful meetings across the organisation ensure managers reflect upon trends or changes in practice within the contract and elsewhere, and change their own practice as a result. Staffing roles and levels are planned around anticipated workflow, although new roles or changes are introduced quickly where there is a confidence that improvement can be made.

A thorough and rigorous recruitment and selection process is in place, ensuring that personal qualities and interpersonal skills of staff are appropriate to the role. The initial three weeks of intensive training within the induction programme covers the essential technical skills needed for effective support, such as CV construction. This period also involves reflective and supportive work around the interpersonal skills needed, and uses scenarios to encourage reflection and learning. Newer staff are mentored by 'high performing' staff to encourage greater success. Ongoing monitoring, supervision and support are provided, and a range of training opportunities offered. These processes result in a highly motivated and skilled staff being available to support participants.

The activities within the contract are almost entirely managed and delivered 'in-house' with an early and small element of work initially being subcontracted and brought back 'in-house'. There is a Service Level Agreement in place with SAMH, a well-established organisation working in mental health. However, there has been no use of this service

for some months. This model of delivering almost all elements of the contract internally has brought benefits for participants, primarily around the integration of the CMP service.

Resources available for the delivery of this contract are of a high standard. The premises are modern, welcoming, well equipped and well located. Private rooms are available for participants who prefer confidential one-to-one interviews. Plans are in place to improve accessibility in the Galashiels office. However, in a few instances, participants were concerned over sensitive issues being discussed in open plan areas. *IngeusNet*, a new, internal intranet available for staff use, is well designed, clear and user friendly. Senior managers recognise that there is scope to further develop this resource, including, for example, to help monitor the referrals to external agencies.

Staff are clear about what they are trying to achieve through the Pathways programme and in particular have a strong focus on finding appropriate jobs for individual participants. The Ingeus Centre for Policy and Research provides helpful expertise to support policy and practice development. Quality assurance procedures are clear and allow managers to monitor performance effectively. The culture of promoting improvement also empowers staff to develop ideas and take action quickly and with confidence. There is, however, a need to reflect more systematically upon the impact of key activities or changes made, primarily through reviewing data on participant success. This should have a focus on ensuring that, in the longer term, better informed decisions regarding the impact of support activities are made.

8. How effective is the provision overall? **Evaluation: good**

Ingeus has taken a number of effective steps to improve the performance of aspects of provision. In many respects, performance is close to the levels determined in the contract. This includes performance in relation to job entry and sustained jobs for voluntary participants. However, the low job entry rate for mandatory participants falls well below what is expected. This remains a major challenge. Quality assurance processes are in place, widely understood, and support clear monitoring of performance. Quality initiatives and problem solving are strong, visible across the provision, and make an impact on delivery. There is, however, a need for a greater emphasis on evaluating the impact of quality developments. For example, although the CMP is a positive delivery model, strengthened evaluation may provide further insights into how its benefits could be maximised. Participant support is exceptionally strong on an individual basis. This could now be further enhanced by analysis of trends or interventions which are having the greatest impact. Participants were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluation of the impact of their involvement with Ingeus.

Staff are highly motivated, empowered and committed to the improvement process. The recruitment, selection, training and support of staff is highly effective. This contributes to a work environment which is motivational for both staff and participants. As planned, recently enhanced links with employers should be developed further. The wide range of additional voluntary activities for participants is promoted well, and participants report great benefit from these.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the overall quality of provision, there will be no further inspection activity in connection with this report. In consultation with DWP, HMIE will work with both the provider and DWP to support improvements in job outcomes.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the provider.

- Improve the level of job entry and sustained employment rates for mandatory participants.
- Enhance quality improvement activities to ensure that they are more comprehensive and systematic, and focus on the impact on the client.

HM Inspector: Dr John Laird
13 May 2010

Appendix 1 Key points made by participants

More than 150 participants responded to the HMIE pre-inspection questionnaire. Responses were extremely positive. There were almost no comments of a negative nature.

What participants liked:

- Treated with respect and understanding. Non threatening but at the same time very motivational. Excellent workshops;
- The staff are very approachable and friendly;
- The programme has given me the confidence to return to work after a long time off;
- Physiotherapy and gym membership. My advisor, being sympathetic and pleasant;
- I accessed the counselling service and benefited tremendously;
- The level of information on finding full time or part time employment was very good; and
- I had a back problem. I was given exercises and joined the walking group to get my confidence back.

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgements mean.

| | | |
|----------------|-------|---|
| excellent | means | outstanding, sector leading |
| very good | means | major strengths |
| good | means | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| satisfactory | means | strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| weak | means | important weaknesses |
| unsatisfactory | means | major weaknesses |

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