

Quality and Standards in Post-16 Education and Training in Wales

A Re-inspection Report on the Quality of Work-Based Learning

in

Torfaen Training

September 2006

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ LEAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

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Introduction

In March 2005 Estyn inspected Torfaen Training. At that time, the grade awarded for Health, Public Services and Care fell below the quality threshold (Grade 3).

The arrangements for re-inspection of learning areas (Key Question 1) and/or leadership and management (Key Question 5) are set out in the 'Handbook of Guidance on the Inspection of Providers of Work-based Learning and Jobcentre Plus Programmes' which can be found on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk). Key Questions 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are not re-inspected or re-graded. However, inspectors evaluate and comment on the provider's progress in meeting the recommendations from the previous inspection.

The re-inspection took place from 18 to 20 September 2006. A team of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the Welsh Assembly Government, undertook the inspection.

Grade descriptors

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires the provider to prepare a written statement of the action that it proposes to take to address the recommendations in the inspection report and the timescales for completing the proposed actions.

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Torfaen Training is located on the outskirts of Cwmbran. The company is part of Torfaen County Borough Council and provides training for residents and employers in South East Wales.
- 2 Torfaen Training is contracted with the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to deliver training in the following inspection areas:
 - Health, Public Services and Care;
 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies;
 - Construction and the Built Environment;
 - Information and Communications Technology;
 - Leisure, Travel and Tourism;
 - Retail and Customer Service;
 - Hospitality and Catering;
 - Preparation for Life and Work; and
 - Business, Administration and Law.
- 3 The company has some facilities in its premises for training in Information Communications Technology, Construction and Hospitality. However, its aim is to move all learners directly into the workplace so that their training takes place in real work situations.
- 4 At the time of the last inspection in March 2005, there were 64 learners in training in Health, Public Services and Care. Since then, the company has introduced effective strategies to make sure that these learners have successfully completed their programmes.
- 5 The table below shows the number of learners in the inspection area re-inspected.

	Health, Public Services and Care
Number of learners	20

Outcomes of the March 2005 inspection
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Inspection areas	Inspection grade
Health, Public Services and Care	4
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	2
Construction and the Built Environment	2
Retail and Customer Services	3
Preparation for Life and Work	2
Business, Administration and Law	3

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	3
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	3
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	3

Recommendations from the previous inspection in March 2005:

- 6 In order to improve the areas inspected, Torfaen Training needed to:
- R1 improve retention and the completion of full qualification framework awards in all areas;
 - R2 ensure that arrangements for pre-entry guidance and initial assessment effectively identify the full range of learning support overall, so that learners at all levels receive suitable support at the time they need it;
 - R3 improve the delivery and assessment of key skills;
 - R4 introduce peer observation to identify and share good practice in all aspects of training;
 - R5 make targets in learners' action plans more specific and time bound;
 - R6 encourage internal verifiers to provide assessors with more evaluative assessment on the quality and suitability of tasks used to generate evidence;

- R7 make self-assessment reports more evaluative and use data and other performance information to identify trends and support judgements;
- R8 devise a strategy to promote learners' bilingual awareness and skills;
- R9 improve the promotion of sustainable development and entrepreneurial skills;
- R10 raise staff awareness and understanding of policies and procedures; and
- R11 improve health and safety procedures, particularly in relation to the vetting and monitoring of work placements.

Summary

- 7 The training provided by the company in the area re-inspected is now above the quality threshold. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the percentage of leavers who attain full qualification frameworks, NVQs (National Vocational Qualification) or achieve the goals in their individual learning plans.
- 8 The company has introduced many new systems and procedures and improved existing systems. These changes have helped to raise learners' standards in all the learning areas delivered by the company. The company has a strong focus on raising standards and improving the quality of training.

Summary of grades in re-inspected area

Health, Care and Public services	
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	2

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

- 9 There has been significant improvement in learners' attainment. During the period between September 2005 and July 2006 all of the learners who left their programmes gained the full qualification framework, an NVQ or achieved the goals set out in their individual learning plans.
- 10 All learners have good occupational knowledge and skills. They have a good understanding of care principles.
- 11 All learners are highly motivated and develop both personal and professional confidence.
- 12 Many learners progress to higher level programmes or take on additional responsibilities in their workplace.

Progress report on the recommendations from the previous inspection in March 2005

- 13 Overall, the company has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection.

Recommendations

- 14 In order to further improve, Torfaen Training needs to:
- R1 further develop the use of data analysis and benchmarking to measure performance;
 - R2 make sure that statements in the self-assessment report are consistently evaluative;
 - R3 increase opportunities for training officers to observe each other in training and assessment situations;
 - R4 make sure that all assessors use the training needs analysis more effectively to set specific time bound targets for learners; and
 - R5 further develop learning experiences so that all Health, Public Services and Care learners are fully challenged to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Standards achieved by learners in the area re-inspected

Health, Public Services and Care

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

Summary of provision

- 15 At the time of the re-inspection, 20 learners were following programmes in Health, Public Services and Care. Sixteen learners were Foundation Modern Apprentices and four learners were Modern Apprentices.
- 16 All of the Foundation Modern Apprentices were following NVQ level 2 in Health and Social Care. Two Modern Apprentices were undertaking NVQ level 3 in Health and Social Care. Two were undertaking NVQ level 3 in Care.
- 17 All learners were employed in a range of health and social care settings.

Number of learners in training	Modern Apprenticeship	Foundation Modern Apprenticeship
Health, Public Services and Care	4	16

- 18 The qualification frameworks for the Foundation Modern Apprenticeship and Modern Apprenticeship include NVQ level 2 and NVQ level 3 respectively. The frameworks also include the completion of an appropriate technical certificate and key skills at the levels indicated below.

Framework	Application of number	Communication
Foundation Modern Apprenticeship	1	1
Modern Apprenticeship	2	2

Standards achieved in the sessions observed are as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Learners Standards of Achievement	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%

Success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 19 All learners achieve well. Their standards of written and oral work are good. Their portfolios are well organised and neatly presented. Many learners achieve the technical certificate and key skills qualifications that they need to attain their full qualification framework.
- 20 A few learners are starting to work towards the wider key skill qualifications of Improving Own Learning and Working With Others. A few learners also use information communications technology to present their work. However, not enough learners are encouraged to work towards a key skill qualification in Information Communications Technology, where this is appropriate to their needs.
- 21 All learners achieve additional qualifications and certificates that help them in their work roles. These include qualifications such as food hygiene and certificates in manual handling and the protection of vulnerable adults.
- 22 Nearly all learners have clear short and long term targets to help them complete their work in a suitable time. Current learners are on target to achieve their qualification frameworks within the time set out in their individual learning plans.
- 23 Learners' attainment has improved considerably since the last inspection. During the period September 2005 to August 2006 all of the leavers achieved their full qualification frameworks, an NVQ, or the goals set out in their individual learning plans. Of these, 81% of learners gained their full qualification framework. At the time of the last inspection only 32% of leavers gained their full qualification framework, or an NVQ.

Leavers/Completers 01/09/2005 to 30/08/2006								
	New Starters during this period	Total Leavers this period	Leavers gaining full NVQ and no key skills	Leavers gaining full ILP	Leavers gaining part NVQ	Destinations of Leavers who did not gain an NVQ, part NVQ or any key skills.		
						Related Employment	Other Employment	Unemployed
Modern Apprenticeship	3	15	5	10	0	0	0	0
Foundation Modern Apprenticeship	7	49	8	41	0	0	0	0
Skillbuild	4	4	0	4	0	0	0	0

Progress in learning

- 24 All learners progress well in their workplaces and develop good, and sometimes very good, occupational knowledge and skills. All learners have a good understanding of the core principles that are important in all care professions. A very few learners are not challenged enough to further increase and improve their understanding and skills.
- 25 All learners understand their programme and what they need to do to achieve their qualification frameworks. Nearly all of the learners have very good guidance from their training officers on how they can progress further.

- 26 Many learners progress to higher level programmes. For example Skillbuild learners progress to level 2 care qualifications. Level 2 learners progress to level 3 programmes where their work role is appropriate. A few learners progress to higher education or further professional training when they have completed their Modern Apprenticeship.

Development of personal, social and learning skills

- 27 Nearly all learners are enthusiastic and highly motivated. Generally, they plan their work well with effective support from their assessors. Many work closely with their training officer and employer to agree and set their own targets.
- 28 All learners develop confidence both in their workplace roles and in their personal skills. The few learners for whom English is a second language benefit greatly from the support training officers give them to improve their communication skills.
- 29 Many learners take on more responsible roles in their workplace when they have successfully completed their training programme. A few are mentors for more junior or new employees. Others become team leaders or supervisors. A few learners who have completed their care qualification are undertaking the NVQ 2 Team Leading qualification. Many learners continue to work to improve their professional practice in the workplace after they have completed their formal training. In one workplace, learners have taken on the responsibility for encouraging other staff to learn 'a phrase a month' in the Welsh language.

Progress report on the recommendations from the last inspection

- 30 The following evaluation gives an update on the provider's progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection.

R1 Improve retention and the completion of full qualification framework awards in all areas

- 31 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 32 The percentage of learners completing their full qualification framework is now good in all inspection areas. In most areas it is very good.
- 33 Overall, the percentage of learners on Modern Apprenticeship frameworks who complete their full qualification framework has increased from 38% at the time of the last inspection to 67%. The percentage of learners on Foundation Modern Apprenticeship frameworks who complete their full qualification framework has increased from 45% to 84%.
- 34 The provider has achieved this improvement through a number of effective strategies. These include learners completing a six-week trial period before registering on a programme. This gives the provider a chance to assess both the learner's and their employer's commitment and suitability for the programme. Other strategies include the improved initial assessment, improved delivery and assessment of key skills and more emphasis on learners completing their technical certificates.

R2 Ensure that arrangements for pre-entry guidance and initial assessment effectively identify the full range of learning support overall, so that learners at all levels receive suitable support at the time they need it

- 35 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 36 All learners undertake a basic skills initial assessment to help training officers determine the training programme best suited to a learner's needs. If learners do not reach the level of competence that they need for the Foundation Modern Apprenticeship, they join the Skillbuild Plus programme. This enables them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills whilst at work. Specialist basic skills tutors meet the learners' needs effectively. They offer help and support to all learners in both the provider's training centre and in the learner's work place.
- 37 The provider has designed a new initial assessment for learners who want to join Health, Public Services and Care programmes. The assessment includes psychometric testing to determine the style of learning best suited to individual learners. Training officers then adapt their method of teaching to suit learners' needs. This has significantly reduced the number of learners leaving their programme early. The provider is gradually introducing this assessment tool across the organisation.

R3 Improve the delivery and assessment of key skills

- 38 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 39 Training officers introduce all learners to key skills at the start of their training programme. Well delivered off-the-job key skills training sessions include theory and practical tasks. All staff have undertaken key skill awareness training. Specialist key skill tutors work closely with occupational assessors. This helps them to identify opportunities for gathering evidence and sharing best practice. Learners are clear about the link between key skills and their qualification frameworks.
- 40 Training officers deliver and assess key skills in the workplace well. In many cases, assessors offer learners the opportunity to attain key skills qualifications over and above those required for their qualification framework.

R4 Introduce peer observation to identify and share good practice in all aspects of training

- 41 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 42 Managers and internal verifiers observe assessors in the work place. They also observe training officers delivering sessions in the training centre. They link these observations to the staff appraisal system well. This means managers can make sure they meet assessors' training and development needs.
- 43 The provider has developed effective systems to share good practice across the organisation. For example, staff are involved in a practical learning initiative that enables them to visit other departments within the council to see how they operate. All new staff have a mentor, and there are many opportunities to shadow assessors at work. However, training officers do not observe each other at work.
- 44 Managers and internal verifiers hold monthly meetings to check the quality of learners' portfolios and track their progress. They also make sure that learners have enough suitable evidence in their files to meet awarding body requirements. Staff across all learning areas share this information well with each other to improve the provision of training.

R5 Make targets in learners' action plans more specific and time bound

- 45 The provider has made reasonable progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 46 Training officers carry out a useful training needs analysis for each learner. This identifies how much training a learner needs to complete each unit of the qualification.
- 47 They set long-term targets with learners and employers when they draw up individual learning plans and they also set and review short-term targets during assessment planning visits. However, target setting is still not consistently good across all training routes.

- 48 A few learners' individual learning plans still do not have specific time bound targets for learners to complete individual units of the NVQ.

R6 Encourage internal verifiers to provide assessors with more evaluative assessment on the quality and suitability of tasks used to generate evidence

- 49 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 50 Internal verifiers' feedback to assessors is more detailed and helps them to improve assessment practices. Internal verifiers hold monthly standardisation meetings with assessors in each occupational route. They discuss and address action points following external verifier visits. Assessors identify examples of good practice in the work place. They share this information with staff in all learning areas to help them improve their practice.

R7 Make self-assessment reports more evaluative and use data and other performance information to identify trends and support judgements

- 51 The provider has made reasonable progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 52 The provider's January 2006 self-assessment report makes better use of data to support evaluative judgements than the self-assessment report supplied prior to the previous inspection.
- 53 However, the provider is still not using data to look at long term trends in the inspection areas. Data included in the most recent self-assessment report is only for the last two years. The provider still does not benchmark data from other sources enough. Many of the statements in the self-assessment report are still too descriptive. The provider does not always evaluate how well they perform the activities described in the report.

R8 Devise a strategy to promote learners' bilingual awareness and skills

- 54 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 55 The provider has produced a Welsh Language strategy in conjunction with the County Council's Welsh Language Unit.
- 56 Managers and staff promote a 'Welsh word of the day' initiative for learners and staff. Welsh language courses at different levels are also available for staff. They take advantage of these courses, and two training officers are now in the second year of their courses. The provider has recruited two fluent Welsh speaking assessors. They work closely with bilingual learners whose first language is Welsh. The provider actively promotes bilingual awareness at local careers fairs.
- 57 Bilingual signage is in place throughout the centre.

R9 Improve the promotion of sustainable development and entrepreneurial skills

- 58 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 59 All learners' training programmes cover awareness of sustainable development and entrepreneurial skills well. Most learners complete key skills assignments based on activities designed to develop their understanding of sustainability and their entrepreneurial skills.
- 60 All learners learn about the need for sustainable development as part of their induction. They also learn about how they can contribute to meeting this need. The provider emphasises opportunities for recycling and cutting energy consumption well. There is a good supply of recycling bins in the premises. Most learners are aware of the need to turn off lights and other electrical items when not in use and apply this knowledge in the training centre and their work places.
- 61 A good programme of visiting speakers helps to develop learners' entrepreneurial skills. Learners benefit from presentations from those who are self-employed and speakers from the council's economic development department. Managers have also built good links with a range of other organisations offering advice and support for new businesses. They use these links well to help learners who want to start out in business for themselves.

R10 Raise staff awareness and understanding of policies and procedures

- 62 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 63 All new staff complete a thorough four week induction programme. This includes a good introduction to the provider's policies. All staff have a useful handbook containing the main policies and a checklist of actions to take in a variety of situations. All staff have good access to the full range of policies and procedures on the provider's intranet.
- 64 The provider's quality manager and internal verifiers regularly undertake spot checks on completed documents to make sure these are completed to a high standard. These include documents such as learners' individual learning plans and reviews. They report any issues to line managers. The line managers check that members of staff understand the procedures and their duties at the regular fortnightly one-to-one meetings they hold with all their staff.

R11 Improve health and safety procedures, particularly in relation to the vetting and monitoring of work placements

- 65 The provider has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.
- 66 Managers have implemented new policies and procedures for health and safety. The new procedures include an effective system for making sure that all employers' premises are safe before the provider accepts new learners onto training schemes.

Once learners are on programme, trained assessors review the safety of their workplace at regular intervals.

- 67 The senior training officer monitors the implementation of the procedures. He makes sure all workplace vetting is undertaken correctly. In addition, an official from the local authority has recently undertaken an independent assessment of the systems and the way staff are implementing them. The provider acts quickly on any health and safety issues identified.

The provider's response to re-inspection findings

Torfaen Training welcomed the opportunity to work with the Estyn inspection team and appreciate the constructive and professional approach adopted by the team throughout the inspection process.

The inspectors were complimentary and encouraging in their comments regarding the progress made, not only in the Care sector, but also in the progress made against the recommendations made in March 2005.

The staff have, during the period between the inspection in March 2005 and the re-inspection in September 2006, worked hard to implement the action plan and the result has been a significant improvement in quality.

Torfaen Training will use the inspectors' recommendations as part of the continuous improvement programme within the organisation and will include them within the Quality Development Plan for the Self Assessment Report in January 2007.

The whole team at Torfaen Training are eager to continue to develop the processes already in place to maintain learner achievement rates and to ensure learner satisfaction.

Torfaen Training also wishes to express it's appreciation to all the learners and employers who agreed to participate in the inspection process.

Appendix 1

The evidence base of the re-inspection

A team of inspectors visited the company for three days in September 2006. Members of the inspection team visited the training centre and work placements. They met with and interviewed the Centre Director, company managers, training officers, learners and workplace managers.

Inspectors also observed learners in classroom settings and working with training officers and workplace managers. They scrutinised documentation made available by the company, including policies and operating procedures relating to training and induction, learning plans, learners' portfolios of evidence and data relating to learners' outcomes.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Christine Hooper HMI	Reporting Inspector
Sandra Barnard HMI	Deputy Reporting Inspector
Keith Booker HMI	Team Inspector
Alison Smith	Company Nominee