



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Torfaen Training
Unit 25
Springvale Industrial Estate
Cwmbran
NP44 5BA

Date of inspection: January 2017

by

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

Summary

In Torfaen training, the majority of learners make appropriate progress towards completing their training programmes and qualifications. However, over the past few years, too many learners make slow progress towards completing their apprenticeships. On and off-the-job learners make appropriate progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Most learners are confident, enthusiastic and positively engaged in their training programmes.

The quality of teaching, training and assessment is too variable. Training officers and assessors do not always challenge learners enough to make the progress they are capable of, or set clear enough targets to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

The provider has reviewed its management structure, lines of accountability and responsibilities. However, current procedures and practices are not sufficiently developed to lead to consistent improvements in key aspects of the provider's work. Managers have not done enough to improve key aspects of the provider's work since the last inspection. Leadership and management have important shortcomings. The provider's safeguarding arrangements do not meet requirements and give cause for concern.

Re-inspection

The provider will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the provider's post inspection action plan in the summer of 2017. A re-inspection will take place approximately 12 – 18 months after this date.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the rates at which learners successfully achieve their programmes and by the scheduled completion date
- R2 Develop strategies to improve learners' literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills
- R3 Ensure that assessors challenge learners of all abilities to reach their full potential
- R4 Address the safeguarding issues raised with the provider during the inspection
- R5 Strengthen the provider's leadership and management of sub-contractors
- R6 Develop rigorous quality assurance systems and procedures to enable the provider and its sub-contractors to review all aspects of its contract effectively

Main findings

1: Standards

Adequate, needs improvement

During their time on training programmes, a majority of apprentices make suitable progress in developing their practical competence, theory knowledge and skills. As a result, they develop industry-related skills in their workplace well. A few learners make slow progress and do not develop their work-related skills well enough or complete their apprenticeships by the scheduled completion date.

Most apprenticeship and foundation apprenticeship learners develop their practical skills well and apply them purposefully in the workplace. A learner working on a community farm demonstrated good understanding and knowledge by giving detailed explanations about animal husbandry. The learner was able to explain clearly what preparations have been made for lambing, kidding and calving to their employer.

Most apprentices develop their theory knowledge appropriately and recall previous learning well. They speak fluently about their job roles and apply their knowledge to their work appropriately. A foundation apprentice working in customer service demonstrated strong work-related skills dealing with confidential customer information with care and sensitivity.

Nearly all learners complete an initial literacy and numeracy assessment to identify their strengths and areas for development. However, very few learners are aware of what they need to do to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace. As a result, many apprenticeship learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Most learners produce written work of a suitable standard given their starting points. They structure their work well and use spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately. However, very few learners develop and apply their numeracy skills in a variety of contexts within their workplaces.

Nearly all learners attend useful off-the-job essential skills lessons. They develop appropriate literacy and numeracy skills within these lessons and achieve Essential Skills Wales qualifications. However, for many learners, these timetabled sessions take place too late in the programme. As a result, they do not benefit from the improvement of their skills throughout their programmes.

In a majority of theory sessions, learners have suitable recall of previous learning and make appropriate progress. A few learners make strong progress and apply their learning to new scenarios well. A minority of learners speak confidently and use correct technical terms and phrases to describe their work.

Learners who are not Welsh speaking do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough. Few Welsh speaking learners continue to use or improve their Welsh language skills while training.

The rates at which learners achieve their apprenticeship frameworks have been above the sector average in two of the last three years. However, in 2014-2015

success rates significantly declined in both apprenticeship and foundation apprenticeship programmes. Success rates in higher apprenticeship programmes declined the most in 2014-2015 and are substantially below the sector average. Success rates across other programmes, including flexible learning and traineeships, have been around the sector average over the last three years. Framework success rates across the provider, sub-contractors and vocational routes vary too much. Across the provision, too many learners complete their frameworks significantly beyond their scheduled completion date.

Learners from different ethnic groups, of different ages, and male and female learners perform at around the same level as that of other learners. Learners with disabilities perform slightly better than expected.

2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
---	-------------

Many learners display a positive attitude to healthy living and most know what to do to keep themselves healthy and fit. Learners apply this knowledge well in their workplace. For example, learners in childcare organise activities that promote physical fitness and activity. Nearly all learners develop tolerance and respect for their peers, tutors and employers. Apprentices work particularly well with their employers. As a result, many quickly establish themselves and become valued members of staff.

Nearly all learners feel safe in their workplace and when undertaking off-the-job training. They know how to report any incidents, both in the workplace and their training environment and most feel that their provider works well to keep them safe. Currently, very few learners have developed their knowledge about how to recognise the signs of radicalisation or extremism.

Most learners are confident, enthusiastic and positively engaged in their training programmes. However, in a very few traineeship sessions, learners lack resilience do not engage well in learning sessions. As a result, they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Many learners are enthusiastic and motivated to achieve their apprenticeship or other qualifications. Nearly all learners work effectively in a range of settings, both independently and in small teams.

Many learners show perseverance and resilience in completing their learning programmes, and many overcome significant challenges to achieve successful outcomes. A minority work flexibly with assessors to complete assessments outside of formal working hours.

Most learners enjoy their training programmes and improve their self-esteem and confidence. They develop their communication, practical skills and theory knowledge. Many higher level apprentices develop their independent working skills well. They manage their work and time well and are ambitious and motivated to succeed. Nearly all learners attend assessment and training sessions regularly.

Nearly all learners work productively with their peers, tutors, assessors and employers. Learners present their views on their learning experiences to the

provider in a variety of ways. For example, they respond to a useful range of satisfaction surveys and raise issues and give feedback during their regular progress reviews. However, learners are not clear how this feedback is used to make changes and improve training.

Traineeship learners have participated in beneficial events such as canal restoration, bike repair, food banks, fundraising and donations to local charities. As a result of involvement in these activities, learners have a better understanding of the local community and the role they play within it.

3: Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate, needs improvement
---	------------------------------------

Overall, the quality of teaching, training and assessment is adequate and needs improvement.

Most assessors and training officers develop positive relationships with their learners and employers. As a result, learners and employers benefit from worthwhile personal support that encourages learning. Almost all training officers and assessors have suitable qualifications and a wide range of industry knowledge and experience relevant to their learning area. Generally, training officers plan taught sessions well. Schemes of work and session plans are comprehensive and contain clear objectives. Most use an appropriate range of teaching methods and styles to engage learners in classroom activities. For example, they use individual and group work as well as a wide range of resources well. However, in a few sessions, training officers do not always challenge learners enough, and the pace of learning is too slow.

A majority of assessors use a wide variety of practical tasks and theory knowledge assessments to ensure that a majority of learners make good progress. In these cases, assessors plan assessments to match learner progress and practical skills development well. When assessing in the workplace they take advantage of opportunities to undertake further assessments when learners demonstrate higher levels of competence and knowledge.

Most assessors and training officers mark learners' written work appropriately and, in the best cases, provide useful written feedback. However, in a few cases, assessors do not correct spelling and grammar errors or give constructive oral or written feedback to help learners improve. In many activities, assessors do not use questioning as a means to test learners' understanding of tasks or concepts. For example, they do not question individual learners or use questioning skilfully to develop learners' higher level knowledge and understanding.

Nearly all assessors carry out regular progress reviews with their learners. A very few set and monitor appropriate targets for learners to work towards. However, in a majority of cases, target setting is ineffective and many learners do not know how much progress they have made, what they need to do or when they will complete their training.

Most training officers and assessors take reasonable account of individual learners' needs and support learners appropriately. They identify most learners with additional learning needs. However, the provider does not have a clear strategy to analysis how learners' needs are met and how well learners progress and achieve compared

to other groups. A minority of training officers and assessors do not have high enough expectations for those learners with advanced vocational skills and theory knowledge.

Essential Skills tutors and assessors do not always plan well enough to ensure that all learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills from the start of their training programme. As a result, many learners make slow progress developing these skills at the start of their training programmes.

Training officers and assessors do not consistently ensure that learners who are fluent in Welsh are sufficiently challenged to present more evidence in Welsh in their portfolios.

4: Care, support and guidance	Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement
--------------------------------------	---

The provider gives beneficial personalised support to vulnerable groups. This includes providing a wide range of intervention strategies, such as coaching and mentoring for learners on engagement programmes. These learners make particularly good progress in developing the skills and qualities that will make them more employable. The provider tracks learners needing support through their regular learner progress reviews. However, the provider and its sub-contractors do not monitor this support consistently enough. As a result, the provider is unable to analyse or evaluate clearly how well learners have made progress from their starting points.

The provider works well in partnership with Careers Wales to improve learners' awareness of the opportunities available to them to engage in further training or employment. Staff liaise well with local schools and take an active role in co-ordination meetings, which the local authority leads, to help learners who are not in employment and training to make progress. The provider plays an important role in offering places to learners who are most at risk of becoming, or remaining not in employment or training, giving beneficial support to learners with multiple barriers to learning. They support young people on an individual basis to find opportunities for employment or training that best meets their needs. .

The provider and its sub-contractors promote healthy and safe lifestyle choices well. Tutors ensure that learners develop an appropriate understanding of health and safety in their workplaces. Tutors develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity appropriately. However, they do not routinely check, during reviews, that learners have not been subject to harassment, safeguarding issues or extremism. The approach to monitoring this aspect is not systematic or rigorous enough. The provider and its sub-contractors access useful training on safeguarding and preventing radicalisation. Nearly all staff demonstrate an appropriate understanding about safeguarding procedures. However, a few were not clear enough about how to respond to concerns about potential extremist influences on learners.

Current safeguarding arrangements do not meet requirements and give cause for concern. In monthly meetings with sub-contractors, the provider does not monitor this aspect of their work effectively enough.

5: Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement
-------------------------------------	---

In early 2016, the provider carried out a major review, which resulted in revisions to staff roles and responsibilities. A new centre manager was appointed in December 2015 and took up full responsibilities in summer 2016.

The provider has developed a clear vision and strategic objectives to meet learner needs. The revised management structure has resulted in clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff at all levels. There is an enhanced focus on setting high expectations and improving standards. However, procedures and practices are not sufficiently developed to lead to consistent improvements in key aspects of the provider's work, such as learners' progress, attainment and the development of their skills.

The centre manager and other managers at Torfaen Training are well supported by the senior local authority managers for community services and employability and skills. As a result, the provider has a clear focus on the national priorities including the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The centre manager has developed a contract management framework, which is designed to measure the performance and quality for the provider and all sub-contractors. The framework is being trialled internally and is due for roll-out to the sub-contractor partners later in 2017. However, leaders and managers do not focus sufficiently on improving weak aspects of provision across all sub-contractors. The provider has been slow in implementing actions to improve key aspects of training, in particular in reducing the number of late completing learners.

The provider collects a wide range of information relating to key aspects of training and assessment. However, this is not analysed in a way that enables leaders and managers to track learner progress effectively and systematically.

The provider has long-established as well as new partnership arrangements with a wide range of sub-contractors. Communication with partners is regular and is undertaken by a range of scheduled meetings. The meetings do not focus sufficiently on performance improvement, learner training and the quality of assessment. This has resulted in inconsistency in the quality of training and assessment across sub-contractors. Currently, the management of sub-contractors is not robust enough.

In 2014-2015 the provider had to transfer a significant number of learners due to contractual issues with two sub-contractors. These learners were placed with existing sub-contractors to continue their training programmes. However, a significant number either made slow progress and achieved their frameworks late or left the programme.

The provider has introduced a useful calendar of quality assurance activities. The provider has a suitable self-evaluation process that has useful input from its sub-contractors. However, the document is not sufficiently evaluative and does not contain clear action points and targets for improvement. The downturn in

performance in 2014-2015 is not clearly identified in the self-evaluation report nor the variations between learning area and provider performance. The provider's quality development plan is not linked well to the self-assessment report. Action points for improvement are not robust and challenging enough to inform planning and secure improvement.

Key recommendations from the last inspection report have not been addressed and are still current areas for improvement.

The provider has a clear continuous professional development policy. As a result, staff access the training they need. Activities are linked appropriately to current strategic and operational priorities for work-based learning. Continuous professional development needs are also identified at staff performance reviews and one-to-one meetings. However, the provider does not undertake a full review of the impact of training activities. This means that the organisation does not have a clear understanding of what activities are having the most beneficial impact.

The provider has an improved focus on staff performance management. This has resulted in greater robustness in the challenge to underperformance and the accountability of staff.

The provider manages its resources appropriately. It does not access any subsidies from the local authority and any surplus generated is re-invested into local community projects and activities. The provider and its sub-contractors demonstrate an appropriate understanding of costing training programmes and use effective resource management systems to review costs. This has resulted in appropriate levels of staff and resourcing to meet the needs of learners. Most learners benefit from suitable accommodation and resources at the provider's, sub-contractors' and employers' premises.

About the provider

Torfaen Training is part of Torfaen County Borough Council Community Services and was formed in June 1990. Torfaen Training employs 54 full and part-time staff. The current contract value of Torfaen Training is approximately £4.35M. At the time of the inspection there were approximately 980 learners on Welsh Government funded programmes. They deliver training programmes in a wide range of vocational subjects from traineeship to level 5.

Torfaen Training works with the following sub-contractors:

- Assessment and Training Ltd
- Cwmbran Centre for Young People (CCYP)
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs Wales
- Coleg QS
- Haddon Training Ltd
- LMJ Training Ltd
- Monmouthshire County Council Youth Service
- Sirius Skills and Consulting
- Vocations Ltd
- WS Training Ltd

Torfaen Training and its sub-contractors deliver training in the following learning areas:

- Agriculture (Animal Care, Equine, and Sustainable Resource Management)
- Business Administration
- Construction, Fenestration and Electro Technical
- Health Care and Public Services (Early Years Care and Education, Health & Social Care, Youth Work, Play Work and Information Advice and Guidance)
- Management and Professional Management
- Manufacturing and Food Manufacturing
- Leisure, Sport & Travel
- Retail, Warehousing and Customer Service
- Education and Training (Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools)

Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

Standards	Adequate, needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate, needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate, needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

We used this inspection to pilot developments to the common inspection framework, the inspection process and the inspection report format. We will review these arrangements and make any changes required before introducing them nationally in September 2017.

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2017: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 12/05/2017