
Section 2

Sector summaries: Adult community learning

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Context

Adult learning is delivered by 15 partnerships across Wales and Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales. The partnerships receive funding from the Welsh Government through the local authority, except Adult Learning Wales, which receives funding for adult learning through the Welsh Government as a further education college. Membership of the partnerships differs from area to area, but most will include provision offered by the local authority, further education college and voluntary organisations.

In July 2019, the Minister for Education made a statement setting out the Welsh Government's formal response to the consultation on proposals for restructuring the delivery and funding of community-based adult learning in Wales and on the next steps for the sector.

This year, Estyn undertook a pilot inspection of Addysg Oedolion Cymru / Adult Learning Wales.

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Standards

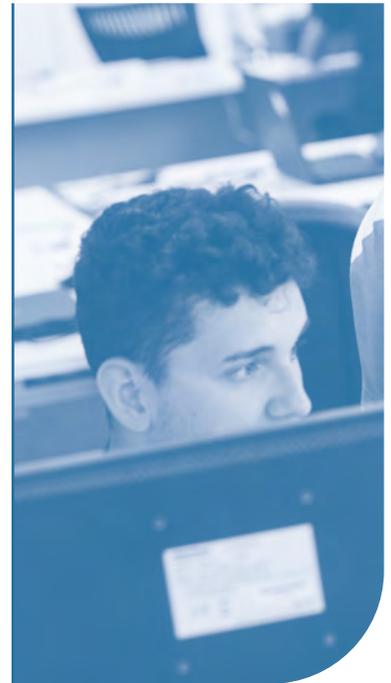
Overall, adult learners make sound progress in their studies both in the shorter and longer term and they successfully complete their courses and qualifications at good rates. Many adult learners gain accreditation through their studies.

On literacy courses, most adult learners make strong progress towards their personal goals. Learners on more advanced literacy courses research areas of interest and talk in detail about topics that are important to them in their daily lives and work. On numeracy courses, many learners show that they have a good understanding of basic numeracy, such as simple addition and household budgeting. In entry level classes for ESOL, learners speak simple English confidently and understand sentences written in simple English. More advanced learners speak English relatively fluently with accurate pronunciation and intonation. They can write complex sentences correctly and write well in different genres for different audiences. Less advanced learners in digital skills make sound progress in basic file management and developing their understanding of a range of operating systems. More advanced learners develop skills in word processing, in using spreadsheets and in creating simple databases. A few learners do not make quick enough progress in digital skills because the teaching approaches do not stretch higher ability learners appropriately. A few Welsh speakers use Welsh in class with their peers and exchange simple greetings and pleasantries with their tutors and peers. However, overall, adult learners do not develop, or extend, their existing Welsh language skills enough through their learning programmes.

Many adult learners come to their courses from disadvantaged areas and face challenging personal circumstances. Nearly all learners are proactive and enthusiastic about their learning. They attend regularly and they often travel long distances to take part in class. Many learners gain valuable life and employment skills. They increase their confidence and enjoyment of life through learning, with many learners progressing to further study, gaining promotion in work or going into employment. As a result of their engagement with learning, many others take on active roles in their communities, for example joining local groups and serving on committees.

Teaching and learning

Most tutors plan lessons effectively to take good account of the varied levels of learning and experience found in adult learning classes. They balance an appropriate amount of introduction to new aspects of the subject with a range of opportunities with which learners of differing abilities and interests can engage. Most support assistants work effectively with tutors and support learning well. In most cases, tutors use questioning techniques carefully to engage learners in discussion and problem solving. This helps learners to develop good employment and social skills, such as active listening, and it often helps less confident learners to voice their appropriately argued opinions in a supportive atmosphere. In most cases, tutors use teaching approaches that help learners to develop independent learning skills, such as research and



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review skills, which lead to well-argued assignments. Most tutors use an interesting range of materials to support learning, although very few materials are available bilingually.

In a very few cases, tutors' planning does not take good enough account of learners' individual learning needs. They spend too long presenting material. This slows the pace of the lesson and more able learners become distracted.

Many tutors embed literacy, numeracy and digital skills activities well into lessons. These activities are most useful when they reflect everyday problems that learners might encounter at work or in their family and social lives. For example, tutors encourage ESOL learners practising to pass the driving theory test to work with a partner to read the handbook aloud and decide upon an answer.

Leadership and management

Most senior leaders have worked effectively with stakeholders to produce a clear vision for the partnership with well-articulated strategies and appropriately high expectations. Most governors have a good understanding of the work of the partnership. They offer robust challenge and support. They take good account of national, regional and local priorities. Most middle leadership staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders and middle leaders monitor and track learners' progress effectively and they hold regular meetings, which helps to ensure consistency across the partnership. The partnership offers staff regular opportunities to further their professional learning. However, it does not offer tutors enough opportunities to share practice and resources across the partnership to improve teaching and learning. The partnership's self-evaluation processes lack rigour and do not draw on a wide enough range of evidence, nor do the self-evaluation processes focus enough on the impact of actions. Quality development plans set out the areas for improvement clearly, but in many cases targets are too generic. Senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the budget. They take appropriate measures to ensure that the budget is well matched to the partnership's needs and to maintain a small surplus.

Adult Learning Wales

Learners at Adult Learning Wales were encouraged to enhance their awareness of cultural differences and the diversity of different areas of Wales. Learners took the opportunity to extend their vocabulary and understand other cultures through organised trips. These extra activities have helped to increase learners' self-esteem and confidence to integrate with communities other than their own.

For more information, please read our [case study](#)

