



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Report of visit

Level of follow-up: link inspector monitoring

Rhondda Cynon Taff Adult Community Learning Partnership

**Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale
Tonypany
CF40 2XX**

Date of visit: October 2012

by

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



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The monitoring team

Liam Kealy	Reporting Inspector
Lin Howells	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

The monitoring visit team judged that Rhondda Cynon Taff Adult Community Learning Partnership has made good progress in relation to the recommendations following the inspection in October 2012.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is reducing the level of follow-up activity.

The sector lead inspector for adult community learning will maintain contact with the partnership and visit the partnership 12 months' time to inspect progress against the those aspects of recommendations in the October 2010 inspection report not fully completed.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve joint planning between corporate and senior managers to secure the future of adult community learning in the county borough

This recommendation has been largely addressed

The partnership has improved its strategic and operational management processes. The strategic management team includes the local authority's Director of Education, the principal of Coleg Morgannwg and the Chief Executive of the County Voluntary Council and Workers Educational Association (South Wales). These strategic managers provide a good strategic steer to the partnership and a strong link to the local service board and the single planning process. As a result the partnership has been able to make good progress to improve joint planning and secure the future of adult community learning in the county borough.

The council has appointed a head of community learning to manage and co-ordinate the partnership and the partnership has recently established an information management post. This has improved the partnerships capacity to manage and plan its work. The Community Learning portfolio also includes library services and museums and heritage. As a result a wide range of different learning opportunities and venues are now available to learners.

Coleg Morgannwg has recently agreed a three year franchise arrangement with the local authority. This means that the partnership is able to make sustainable plans for its curriculum and staffing.

The local authority has reviewed how it employs tutors and has moved a substantial number of staff to 25 hour per week contracts. This enables tutors to more effectively carry out the professional aspects of their role, such as curriculum development and assessment for learning.

The partnership has reviewed its management costs to make sure that more resources are available for provision. The partnership has also undertaken a good analysis of its curriculum provision, progression opportunities and which providers are best able to deliver aspects of provision. As a result the partnership has been able to introduce new learning opportunities and reduce duplication. The partnership has made good use of data to plan and organise provision. However, it has not made enough use of data to improve standards.

The partnership has prepared a draft plan which the strategic management team will consider at its next meeting. The plan sets out clear aims and describes a range of priorities. The partnership makes good links to a range of other strategic objectives including improving literacy and numeracy, economic regeneration and tackling poverty. However, the plan does not set strategic targets to help the partnership measure progress against its aims and priorities.

Recommendation 2: Complete actions necessary to address those recommendations not addressed from the last inspection

This recommendation has been fully addressed

The partnership has worked well to complete actions necessary to address those recommendations from the 2005 inspection. The partnership now provides a good, appropriate range of courses across the borough. The partnership's links with Coleg Morgannwg and good relationships with other partners ensures better access to resources and has improved value for money. The provision has appropriate focus on Welsh Government priorities.

Strong partnership working has led to improvements in quality management and quality assurance across the provision. The partnership has improved Induction for both tutors and learners and an online course search facility helps learners find appropriate courses.

The partnership works well with a range of partner agencies including community first partnerships and the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership. This helps the partnership to tailor its provision to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. As a result learners are able to access a range of opportunities not usually available, such as astronomy, robotics, psychology and heritage events.

The partnership works with Menter Iaith and the Welsh language centre has increased the number of Welsh medium classes.

Increased partnership working with community first groups and other council departments has strengthened the provision of learning in the community. The partnership has established good work with the Genesis project, Bridges into Work, family learning programmes and programmes for learners with additional learning needs. As a result the partnership is able to address a wide range of local and national priorities and the needs of a wide range of learners. However, in a few

instances learners from deprived areas are unable to access affordable childcare and this prevents them from accessing learning.

The council's integrated approach to services means that a wider range of provision and support is available to adult learners. The involvement of the Library service has opened up provision to a wider age range of learners and is encouraging younger learners to participate in lifelong learning activities.

The partnership has made good progress in the use of individual learning plans and systems for recording achievement and progression to track learner progress and achievement. Learners appreciate the evaluative feedback provided by tutors. However, in a few cases tutors are still not making effective use of individual learning plans.

Recommendation 3: Develop systems to ensure that all staff understand how to identify adults who may be vulnerable and how to apply safeguarding policies consistently

This recommendation has been largely addressed

Recent changes to national advice and guidance regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable adults has made this recommendation redundant for the time being. The partnership is currently interpreting how the new guidance applies to its activities. However, in the meantime partners are continuing to apply their current safeguarding procedures which exceed the new expectations.

Recommendation 4: Improve learners' access to and use of independent careers guidance

This recommendation has been partly addressed

The partnership and Careers Wales have worked well to agree an information sharing protocol. However, recent changes to the strategic direction and structure of Careers Wales have prevented the implementation of the protocol.

Learners express concern about how to find out about progression opportunities to higher levels of learning and funding for this. The partnerships online course search facility helps learners to identify progression opportunities. However, not all learners are aware of this source of guidance.

The partnership is currently considering how it can upskill and offer qualifications for its own staff, particularly those within the library service, to offer advice and guidance to learners regarding progression to other education, employment or training.

Recommendation 5: Make sure that the examples of excellent project work are disseminated across the partnership

This recommendation has been fully addressed

Partners have worked together well to learn from each other's good practice and to extend this across the provision. There are several examples of providers adopting good systems developed by another provider.

All partners follow the principles of Coleg Morgannwg's quality management system for tutor observation. In one good example, the local authority and its franchise provision has adopted the WEA good practice of including tutor targets for learner attainment in course registers.

The local authority is working with Communities First projects to encourage the use of the council's data base to record enrolment and attainment in a uniform way for learners across the county. This is a potentially useful piece of work which will help partners track achievement and progression as learners move between providers.

Overall, the partnership has worked well to address the recommendations from the inspection report. It has improved its arrangements for strategic management and planning. It has made substantial progress to improve the co-ordination and management of the partnership. The partnership makes good links to a range of other strategic priorities including improving literacy and economic regeneration. It has put good arrangements in place to deliver and resource the curriculum. It makes good links to partner agencies to increase the range of resources and opportunities available to adult learners. It has fully addressed the recommendations from the 2005 inspection report.