



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 following monitoring
Level of follow-up: Estyn monitoring**

**A4e Wales Ltd
The Warehouse
School Lane
Newport
NP20 1LE**

Date of visit: February 2015

by

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

© Crown Copyright 2015: 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.

The monitoring team

Mark Evans	Reporting Inspector
Alun Connick	Team Inspector
Sandra Barnard	Team Inspector
Bernard Hayward	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

A4e Wales Ltd is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales will remove A4e Wales Ltd from the list of providers requiring Estyn monitoring. Estyn will maintain monitoring of the provider's improvement programme through visits by the link inspector.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve the rates at which all learners complete their qualifications successfully

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The provider has improved the rates at which learners achieve their training and qualifications. Learner success rates have improved in the foundation and apprenticeship programmes. Learners on these programmes achieve their qualifications at rates that are similar to the sector average. Since the time of the last inspection, success rates on the traineeship engagement programme have improved significantly and are similar to the sector average. However, the rates for positive progression into employment or the next level of training fell slightly. Learner success rates have improved significantly on the traineeship level 1 programme and are slightly above the sector average. The rate at which learners progress into employment or the next level of training has improved.

The success rate of learners on employability programmes has significantly improved. Learners on these programmes achieve their qualifications and individual learning plans at rates above the sector average.

The provider has significantly reduced the number of learners who take longer than the scheduled time to complete their programmes.

Recommendation 2: Improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The provider has introduced an appropriate range of strategies and procedures to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills. This has resulted in a more systematic approach to developing learners' literacy skills and clearer expectations for staff and learners. These procedures include a useful guide for tutors for marking learners' written work and for regular reviews of portfolios. However, the guide does not give clear guidance on how tutors should give constructive written feedback on learners' work.

Tutors and assessors now have a greater focus on integrating literacy and numeracy into teaching and learning. Learners benefit from literacy and numeracy support in many sessions. The provider's staff are effectively engaged in a comprehensive range of continual professional development activities. This has resulted in many

staff improving their understanding of how to give learners good levels of support. The provider has a sharper focus on identifying and sharing best practice. This has resulted in learners benefiting from improved levels of support that helps them to develop their literacy and numeracy. However, currently not all tutors are consistently marking learners' work and giving clear and constructive written feedback on how they can improve their performance.

Tutors challenge learners to achieve a higher level essential skill when appropriate. The number of learners achieving ESW qualifications has increased significantly from the time of the last inspection. The provider has developed a useful ESW procedure document that is used by tutors and assessors to refer learners to the most appropriate level of support. Tutors have improved lesson planning and widened the range of teaching and learning resources available. This has resulted in raising learners' skills in literacy and numeracy and improving outcomes.

Recommendation 3: Provide more opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The provider has significantly strengthened the ways it provides opportunities and supports learners to develop their Welsh language skills.

The provider has formed a Welsh development group. This group has a key aim to develop the strategy for improving learners' Welsh language skills and to ensure that all Welsh language activities have a positive impact on learners. The provider now has a stronger focus on the importance of developing learners' Welsh language skills. The provider has allocated a budget to support the development of Welsh training and assessment materials and continual professional development for tutors and assessors. The provider effectively records learners' Welsh language qualification attainment in its management information system. The provider uses this information well to monitor and review learner performance.

The provider puts a much stronger focus on the importance of Welsh language skills during learner induction. Through this, the provider has significantly strengthened the promotion of the Welsh language. Learners now demonstrate a greater understanding of the benefit of being bilingual and the potential benefit this can bring to the workplace.

The provider has effectively used a questionnaire to review the Welsh language needs of employers. Following comprehensive analysis, the provider has matched employers' Welsh language needs to the most appropriate learners for placements. It has identified bilingual staff to support these employers and learners and provided Welsh language training for all staff.

Following re-organisation of training and assessment in north Wales, learners have the opportunity to undertake their training bilingually or in Welsh. This has resulted in an increase in the number of learners training and being assessed bilingually. All learners have Welsh language skills as a mandatory part of their programme.

Around a quarter of learners on the traineeship engagement programme are undertaking the Welsh in the Workplace qualification.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching, training and assessment

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Overall, good progress has been made to improve the quality of teaching, training and assessment. The provider has implemented a number of strategies to improve teaching and training across the organisation. These strategies have started to have a positive impact and improve the rates at which learners achieve their qualifications.

Tutors use comprehensive, standardised lesson plans. They plan their sessions well and use a good variety of teaching and learning resources, for example using food diaries and healthy eating plates to encourage learners to change their diet and eating habits to be healthier. The provider has started to use on-line resources, including computer learning applications in a number of subject areas, such as business administration and motor vehicle. In a few taught sessions, learners have access to tablet computers to use in the class.

Almost all learners are engaged in classroom activities and work well together in pairs or small groups. Tutors challenge learners well and effectively adjust the pace of taught sessions to make sure that learners progress. Tutors often work together in pairs to deliver taught sessions. This enables them to take good account of the range of learners' varying skill levels. They provide good support for the learners whose differing needs may require more consideration in class. Tutors and assessors have improved their focus on developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills. They incorporate the development of numeracy and literacy well into taught sessions.

The assessment of learners' practical skills is good. Assessors plan the assessment of vocational tasks well and give learners clear action plans to prepare for their next assessment. Where appropriate, assessors work with learners to complete NVQ units at a higher level to add to their portfolio of qualifications.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that all staff and sub-contractors apply its operational procedures consistently across the provision

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The provider has strengthened its partnership working and management of its subcontractors. Across the provider and its sub-contractors, operational procedures are shared clearly and used with greater consistency by managers and tutors.

The provider has developed improved quality assurance procedures that are consistently used across sub-contractors. This has resulted in an increase in the rates that learners achieve their qualifications and improved learner progression to the next level of training or employment.

The two partner sub-contractors are fully engaged in a comprehensive range of the provider's strategic and operational developments. This includes the use of standardised documentation, joint staff teaching and assessment observations, the identification and sharing of best practice and joint staff development training. There is regular contact and an appropriate range of scheduled meetings between the provider and its sub-contractors. These meetings are effective in sharing information and developments, the setting and monitoring of performance targets and the sharing of best practice.

Managers from the provider undertake a programme of regular reviews of its own and sub-contractors' trainers and assessors. These reviews are a key part of its strategy to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning. During these reviews there is a key focus on ensuring that the provider's literacy and numeracy strategy and policy is being consistently used by all staff to support learners.

Recommendation 6: Make sure that all tutors and learners have access to online learning resources

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the inspection, the provider has installed WIFI connectivity in the Swansea, Port Talbot, Porth and Aberdare training centres. This has enabled learners and staff to access on-line teaching and learning materials.

The provider has set up a project group to review and develop a strategy to make sure that its information and communication technology need is met. It has developed a detailed project plan for the development and roll-out of a virtual learning environment (VLE). This development is supported well by the A4e management team at Head Office. The plan is on target and the VLE is scheduled to go "live" at the end of February 2015.

The provider has invested in the purchase of tablet computers for tutors and learners to use in their taught sessions.