



*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

**A report on**

**t2 Group  
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CF3 0EG**

**Date of inspection: April 2015**

**by**

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the provider's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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

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## Context

T2 Group is a large work-based learning provider, holding a work-based learning contract in Wales since 1996. The company delivers training programmes throughout Wales. T2 Group's administrative office is in Cardiff, with most staff being home-based.

In Wales, T2 Group is currently working with approximately 1,500 learners.

The provider delivers the following work-based learning programmes across Wales:

- Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs)
- Apprenticeships (MAs)
- Higher Apprenticeships

It offers the following training routes:

- Health and Social Care
- Childrens Care
- Healthcare Support Services
- Information Technology
- Management
- Customer Service
- Business Administration

## Summary

<b>The provider's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The provider's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

Overall, the rates at which learners attain their training frameworks are similar to those of other training providers. Many current learners make appropriate and sometime good progress. However, a few learners make slower progress. Learners are generally clear about what they need to do to improve. However, a few learners are not sufficiently challenged to develop higher level practical competence and theory knowledge. Many learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. However, a few are not sufficiently challenged to develop their literacy and numeracy skills to high enough levels. Very few learners develop their abilities in the Welsh language through their training programmes. Many learners do not sufficiently develop their understanding of the culture of Wales.

The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good. Personal Development Managers (PDMs) develop good relationships with learners and employers. They carry out regular reviews to plan work and set targets for the next visit. However, in a few cases, target-setting is inconsistent and targets are not regularly reviewed or revised.

Most learners receive good advice and initial assessment when joining training programmes. However, in launching its higher apprenticeship provision in 2013, sales staff recruited too many learners who dropped out of the programme before completing their training. The provider has reviewed its recruitment policy as a result. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.

The provider's managers provide effective strategic direction. They set clear and robust targets for improvement and have comprehensive quality improvement systems and strategies in place to monitor performance. However, systems monitoring the interpretation and presentation of data are not sufficiently robust.

### Prospects for improvement

The provider's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- Overall, learner attainment rates are around the sector average
- The drop-out rate on the higher apprenticeship programme is high
- Systems monitoring the interpretation and presentation of data are not sufficiently robust
- Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are not developed consistently
- Learners are not consistently challenged to reach their full potential in practical competence and theory knowledge
- Initial advice and guidance processes have not been robust enough

- Welsh speaking learners do not have sufficient opportunities to undertake training or assessment in Welsh
- Learners do not develop their understanding of the culture of Wales well enough

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve success rates of learners, especially higher apprentices
- R2 Improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills
- R3 Effectively challenge learners to develop their full potential in practical competence and theory knowledge
- R4 Ensure that Welsh speaking learners have appropriate opportunities to undertake learning and assessment in Welsh
- R5 Make sure that learners access comprehensive advice and guidance when joining training programmes

### **What happens next?**

Given the adequate judgements three inspectors will undertake a monitoring visit over three days in approximately one year after the inspection. This visit will be to assess the progress made by the provider with the issues identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

**Adequate**

#### **Standards: Adequate**

In the period 2013 to 2014, learners on Foundation Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship programmes successfully completed their programmes at rates around or slightly above the national averages.

Performance data for 2013 to 2014 shows that learners on Higher Apprenticeship programmes achieved at rates well below national averages.

Overall, many current learners make appropriate and sometimes good progress. Learners demonstrate appropriate practical competence and theory knowledge. They benefit from regular progress reviews with their Personal Development Managers (PDMs) and receive good support from their employers. However, a few learners make slower progress than expected due to staffing changes and the lack of assessor continuity.

Learners regularly discuss progress targets with their PDMs and are generally clear about what they need to do to improve. However, a few learners are not sufficiently challenged to develop their practical competence and theory knowledge to their full potential or to complete their framework in a shorter time when appropriate.

The majority of learners are aware of their strengths and areas for improvement in literacy and numeracy. The majority of learners produce work with correct spelling and punctuation and grammar, appropriate to their level. Many learners practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively, through assignments and projects relevant to their job roles. However, a few learners are not sufficiently challenged to develop their literacy and numeracy skills to high enough levels and a few complete assessments in literacy and numeracy which have little relevance to their job role.

Although approximately 8% of the provider's learners speak Welsh as a first language, very few of these carry out learning or assessment through the medium of Welsh. Very few learners develop their abilities in the Welsh language through their training programmes. Many learners do not sufficiently develop their understanding of the culture of Wales.

#### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most learners feel safe in their workplaces and learning environments. Overall, they enjoy their learning programmes and have productive and beneficial relationships with their tutors and employers.

Most learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities and have a good understanding of the health and safety requirements in the workplace. Most know whom to contact if they have a problem with their training or have a concern about their welfare.

Most learners have a sound understanding of healthy living and wellbeing. They discuss these issues with their tutors during their regular review meetings. Learners have good access to a helpful range of information on the provider's website.

Learners on higher Apprenticeship programmes value the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other learners at regular workshop events. However, learners on Apprenticeship and Foundation Apprenticeship programmes have no forum where they can discuss their experiences with one another.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Good**

The provider delivers a range of programmes that meet the needs of learners and employers well. They deliver training in learning areas where they have long standing experience. The provider works well with a wide range of employers across Wales. They offer appropriate progression opportunities to learners with many programmes available at Foundation, Apprenticeship and Higher Apprenticeship level. The provider uses the results of initial assessment appropriately to plan learners' training and support. However, in a few cases PDMs do not take learners' prior achievement into account, resulting in learners entering training at too low a level.

The provider makes sure that all learners have an initial diagnostic assessment to determine their literacy and numeracy level. They make good use of the results to identify learners' support needs. The provider uses a useful range of literacy and numeracy resources, including learner booklets and internet based teaching and learning materials. The provider has developed a useful literacy marking guide. However, PDMs do not use the guide consistently when marking learners' written work. PDMs are trained to at least level two essential skills.

The provider has a clear focus on improving the use of the Welsh language of learners and other staff. It uses an appropriate Welsh language policy and promotes this well through regular newsletters and on its good quality web site. The provider has recently appointed a Welsh speaking PDM to support these developments. However, these initiatives have yet to impact fully on learners in their development of the Welsh language and their understanding of the culture of Wales.

The provider has a clear policy for the delivery of education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC). It provides a comprehensive range of strategies and teaching and learning resources for PDMs and learners. The provider routinely reviews and monitors learners' understanding and development of ESDGC through assessment and progress review documentation. They do this by asking learners questions relating to ESDGC during progress reviews and during the majority of assessments.



## **Teaching: Good**

PDMs have a wide range of suitable occupational and industry knowledge. They use these skills well to plan one-to-one and group training sessions. Generally, PDMs have high expectations of their learners and challenge them to do their best. However, in a few cases, learners do not progress at a pace suitable to their ability. Management Coaches and PDMs deliver off and on-the job training sessions for a variety of National Vocational Qualifications from level 2 to level 5. Almost all training staff use their skills well to ensure they tailor training sessions to the correct pace and style that is most suitable for the learner. Management Training Staff who deliver a range of level 5 business development workshops plan their sessions well. They deliver high quality workshops that support and enhance learning.

PDMs have an appropriate focus on developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills. They give learners feedback from the results of their literacy and numeracy assessments sensitively, and offer constructive support to help them improve these skills. However, PDMs do not always fully correct literacy and numeracy errors in learners' written work. They do not use the literacy marking guide consistently.

PDMs have good relationships with the learners and their employers. They carry out regular reviews to plan work and set targets for the next visit. However, in a few cases, target-setting is inconsistent and targets are not regularly reviewed or revised.

PDMs engage learners in a variety of assessment activities, such as question and answer sessions and practical tasks. Generally, learners understand how they will be assessed and what to do if they are not happy with the outcome of the assessment. PDMs take appropriate account of learning styles to plan assessments. Many use good questioning techniques to test and check the knowledge of their learners and give learners constructive verbal feedback following assessment activity.

PDMs track learners' progress appropriately through the planning and review document. They then feed this information back to head office to a central tracking system using electronic pens. . The provider is currently developing a learner progress tracking report, which will enable all learners to access and view their own progress towards their qualification.

## **Care, support and guidance: Adequate**

The provider's Health and Wellbeing committee meets monthly to monitor the action plan for promoting wellbeing. Staff seek to promote wellbeing through a wide range of methods, including training events, surveys and webinars.

The provider has developed a good quality website, which contains stimulating learning materials that encourage learners to improve their awareness of health and wellbeing. The material is updated regularly and covers a broad range of topics, including mental health in the workplace, healthy diet and physical fitness. The handbook issued to new learners also contains useful information about health and wellbeing. Many learners find the material informative and interesting.

Learners in the workplace pay good regard to health and safety. They regularly demonstrate their clear understanding of safe working practice with tutors during reviews.

Nearly all tutors have good experience of the sectors they are assessing. They use their occupational knowledge well to advise and guide learners to develop their career planning. They ensure that learners remain focused on the benefits that learning can bring to their career development. They also ensure that learners fully appreciate the occupational value of essential skills.

The provider recruits most learners through its call centre, whose staff contact learners and employers initially through targeted telesales activities. Most learners who are interested in starting the programme receive advice and initial assessment that helps them to choose whether the provider can meet their needs. However, in launching its higher apprenticeship provision in 2013, sales staff recruited too many learners who dropped out of the programme before completing their training. The provider identified this as unacceptable and redesigned its recruitment methods. Higher apprenticeship learners now undertake a more comprehensive interview that is followed by a six week taster programme before they commit to the training programme. However, It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.

The provider has appropriate policies and procedures that relate to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, which it updates annually. Staff learn about these issues in induction. The provider monitors this, and ensures that staff receive updates to this training every year. Most staff are clear about safeguarding procedures and have a good understanding of the subject. There are good measures in place to ensure that the provider checks the backgrounds of new staff thoroughly.

There are good examples of the provider catering well for learners with additional learning needs. For example one tutor sought and received advice that helped to structure sessions more effectively for a learner with Asperger's Syndrome. The provider has suitable resources, such as coloured page filters, to support learners with specific learning difficulties.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The provider promotes equality and diversity well. Managers use a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, which are promoted well to staff, learners and employers. Learners are briefed well on equality and diversity when they join their training programme. The provider offers well thought out resources and strategies to help PDMs support learners and employers. The provider generates quarterly action plans with challenging targets. For example, the provider has set targets to develop a new Apprenticeship programme for women in leadership and for members of the traveller community. Managers regularly conduct impact assessments on the action plans and use the findings from these to inform future target-setting.

PDMs discuss aspects of equality and diversity well during reviews and assessments using open and probing questions. The provider has developed and uses a good range of meaningful resources and materials to support minority ethnic groups.

Issues raised during learner progress reviews are monitored carefully by the provider and fed into a series of hints and tips booklets, action plans and quarterly newsletter. PDMs work well with employers to make sure that learners feel safe and well supported in their workplaces.

The provider is careful to ensure the health and safety of learners and clients. For example, in care homes, employers make good efforts to provide space for PDMs and learners to work so that they do not intrude into the lives of residents.

In most workplaces, learners have good opportunities to develop their skills and undertake assessments.

Most employers allow learners time off-the-job to complete assessments and many take an active part in learners' progress. Learning resources, including on-line materials, meet the needs of learners well.

The provider uses good quality commercial conference facilities and support resources for the delivery of the higher apprenticeship programme.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The provider's four directors are responsible for the strategic direction and management of the work based learning contract. They provide a clear strategic direction for the group. The provider has established a clear management and reporting structure, which the directors review regularly. This structure clearly defines the responsibility and accountability of staff at all levels. The provider undertakes annual strategic planning that informs its business planning. The business plan contains detailed targets for the year, including learner recruitment, attainment and income generation and expenditure. The provider has developed and uses appropriately a wide range of procedures to deliver key aspects of the business. These procedures include the recently introduced learning and development strategy and the partnership and resource strategy.

The provider uses comprehensive procedures for the collection, analysis and review of management information. Managers use this information and data to measure and challenge performance against an appropriate set of key performance indicators. Managers collect and analyse performance data regularly and know how well they are performing in comparison to their targets. The provider has developed a wide range of documents and reports to evaluate its performance. These documents are shared by the directors and managers during regular meetings. However, the reports are often driven by targets for recruitment, retention and the achievement of company aims rather than for learner progress. The provider uses comprehensive procedures for the collection, analysis and review of management information. Managers use this information and data to measure and challenge performance against an appropriate set of key performance indicators. Managers collect and analyse performance data regularly and know how well they are performing in comparison to their targets. However, in 2013 to 2014 the number of learners who left the newly introduced higher apprenticeship programme early was excessively high.

The directors and managers hold a wide range of regular daily, weekly and monthly meetings. Recruitment of learners against targets and learner outcome data are a key agenda item. The range of meetings includes one to one meetings between managers and assessors, and regular management and board meetings.

Communication across the provider is good. As a result, managers and staff are well informed about their roles and responsibilities. PDMs are home-based and receive detailed information about their performance targets, which includes learner progress.

The provider has strengthened its staff performance management procedures to evaluate and review the performance of its assessors. Managers undertake a monthly review of assessors using a detailed 'scorecard' system that measures performance against a list of twelve key performance indicators. These include the number of learners who achieved their frameworks against targets and the quality of training and assessment. These performance reviews are linked appropriately to the provider's continual professional development activities.

The provider responds appropriately to local and national priorities for education and training.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Overall, the provider has an appropriate range of quality systems to monitor its performance. The Board of Directors and senior managers make good use of data to evaluate the performance of their teams and inform action planning for improvement. Most systems and procedures are systematic and provide appropriate support for learners through their training programme. However, systems monitoring the interpretation and presentation of data are not sufficiently robust.

The provider's system for self-assessment is good and is used across the provider's operational and strategic activities. The self-assessment report (SAR) is comprehensive, and links well to the Quality Improvement Plan. It addresses the requirements of the Estyn common inspection framework and identifies areas for improvement well. However, the SAR is too descriptive and not evaluative enough in a minority of sections. It does not always clearly identify shortcomings and areas for improvement.

A well-structured internal quality assurance process supports the review and evaluation of staff performance well. Quality assurance staff observe the performance of assessors regularly. The assessor's strengths and areas for improvement are clearly identified in detailed reports, which managers use well to develop action plans that provide good development support and appropriate training for staff. However, in a very few cases observation records do not contain clear actions and targets for improvement. The provider uses information from this process effectively to support the staff performance review process.

The provider uses an appropriate range of methods to gather information from learners including the Learner Voice (LV) questionnaire and an internal questionnaire. Overall, the provider makes effective use of the results of these surveys. Higher level learners receive feedback through the provider's intranet forums, newsletters and the learner portal.

The provider uses a good range of meetings systematically to review, evaluate and improve the quality of provision. Meetings include board meetings, management team meetings, quality team meetings, staff team meetings, and standardisation meetings. Overall, the range and structure of meetings are appropriate for the organisation and the meetings provide effective lines of communication within the organisation.

In response to very low achievement rates in the Higher Apprenticeship programme in 2013 to 2014 the provider has revised and improved its learner selection and advice and guidance procedures and modified its delivery model for this programme.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The provider has a clear partnerships and resources strategy, which outlines its commitment to developing a wide range of partnerships and resources, in order to raise the standards of its learners. The provider views its work with employers as key to this strategy, and these partnerships include regional and national employers ranging from large organisations to small to medium enterprises.

Account managers work effectively with each employer to plan and arrange the delivery of framework training appropriate to their individual organisations, which has improved opportunities for learners. There is a good degree of trust between staff and these key partners, with a high level of employer satisfaction. Account managers make regular contact with employers and gather up-to-date specialist knowledge and examples of good practice during their discussions. All employers and other partners have access to an online help section and knowledge bank via the T2 website, where they can ask questions to the provider's staff and access good quality training resources.

The provider also participates in a few networks across Wales and is an active member of the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW). There are good links with external agencies and the provider makes good use of these relationships for the benefit of learners. The provider works with the Race Equality Commission in order to develop an Equality and Diversity Action Plan, for the delivery of staff training on equality and diversity. Work with Awarding Organisations has led to accreditation of Level 5 units and the translation of other units into Welsh. These translations are now available for use by all ILM accredited centres.

### **Resource management: Good**

The provider manages its resources effectively and has robust financial controls in place. Managers monitor financial processes well through regular contractual meetings. The provider uses the quality management reporting system well to monitor contract delivery against targets during monthly meetings.

There are comprehensive systems in place to recruit and deploy staff with strong links between sales and operational management staff. The provider has a comprehensive recruitment programme for all new staff. New staff undertake wide ranging training with thorough induction and mentoring support.

Managers deploy staff appropriately across locations and occupations routes across Wales, meeting the needs of the learners, employers and the work-based learning (WBL) contract well. PDMs have appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver the training and qualifications to their learners. The provider has recently appointed a Welsh speaking member of staff. However, it does not have enough Welsh-speaking staff to provide learners with Welsh language support when required.

The provider supports and encourages its staff to undertake continuous professional development. Managers prioritise these activities and staff respond positively to the opportunities available. The provider has designed a range of in-house courses for staff to support their CPD needs.

The provider has developed an informative internet site with portals for staff, learners and employers to access resources on line. It contains, for example, sections on literacy, numeracy, ESDGC and Welsh phrases.

Learning environments are good and learners generally work in settings that offer them good opportunities to collect portfolio evidence and undertake assessments.

Overall, learner outcomes are adequate, and therefore the provider offers adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Learner satisfaction

We use the outcomes of the Welsh Government Learner Voice survey to inform all our inspections of post 16 education and training. Learner Voice is a learner satisfaction survey conducted by the Welsh Government between January and February each year.

The survey asks learners a range of questions about the following key themes:

- the information, advice and support provided to them
- provider responsiveness, learning environment and student wellbeing
- the quality of teaching and training
- overall satisfaction

Each theme contains a range of questions requiring learners to rate their provider's performance. There are 28 questions overall. Eight hundred and nine learners completed the survey. Sixty-three per cent of respondents rated the provider as very good overall. This is one percentage point higher than the sector average of 62%. A further 28% rated the provider as good overall. Thirty-eight per cent of respondents thought that their course was better than they expected. This is below the sector average.

The provider achieved higher scores than the sector average for very good ratings in four of the five themes of the survey. In relation to the theme of advice and guidance learners rated the provider to be three percentage points below the sector average of 48%.

The provider achieves scores for 'very good' that are above the sector average across the majority of the 28 questions in the survey. Overall, 91% of respondents considered teaching and training to be 'very good' or 'good'. The survey also analyses learners' responses by demographic information, gender, age, ethnicity and disability.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mark Evans	Reporting Inspector
Steve Bell	Team Inspector
Stephen Davies	Team Inspector
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