



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

**A report on the adult learning in the community provision
of**

**Pembrokeshire Adult Learning in the Community
Partnership**

**County Hall
Haverfordwest
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by

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This report is also available in Welsh.

About Pembrokeshire Adult Learning in the Community Partnership

The provision for adult learning in the community in Pembrokeshire is known as Learning Pembrokeshire. The main adult learning in the community providers funded by the Welsh Government are: Pembrokeshire County Council (Learning Pembrokeshire) and Adult Learning Wales. However, a wide range of organisations are involved in the Pembrokeshire Learning Network, including Pembrokeshire College, Bloomfield Community Centre Narberth, Job Centre and Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services. In addition, other Pembrokeshire County Council departments contribute, such as Workways, Future Works and the Youth Service. Pembrokeshire County Council also works with social services to support Syrian refugees on the Home Office funded Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). Learning Pembrokeshire offers classes in council-owned community learning centres in Haverfordwest, Tenby, Pembroke Dock and Fishguard and at community centres and other venues across rural Pembrokeshire.

Around 125,000 people live in Pembrokeshire. According to data available, the population of Pembrokeshire grew between the 2001 and 2011 censuses by 8.2%. Of the current population of around 125,000, about 21,300 (17%) are aged under 16, and 31,500 (25%) are aged 65 and over.

In September 2021, the employment rate in Pembrokeshire was 75%, which is slightly higher than the Wales figure of 73.8%. In 2021, average (median) gross weekly earnings in Pembrokeshire stood at £532. This was the fifth lowest amongst the 22 Welsh local authorities. The Welsh index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 show areas of deprivation to be in Haverfordwest, Milford Haven, Pembroke and Pembroke Dock.

Nearly all of Pembrokeshire's residents are of a white ethnic background. The Annual Population Survey of 2021 indicates that the percentage of people aged three and over who speak Welsh in Pembrokeshire is 32%, a 10% rise in 10 years.

Around 83% of adults in Pembrokeshire are qualified to level 2, which is slightly above the Welsh average. However, the proportion of adults qualified to level 3 is equal to the Welsh average (62%) and fewer are qualified to level 4 (37%) than the Welsh average of 41%.

In 2019/2020, 1,832 adults took part in adult learning in the community courses. Many of these learners (89%) identified themselves as White – British. They were supported by seven full-time staff, 32 part-time staff and 111 tutors.¹ In 2020/2021, the numbers of adults who took part in adult learning in the community courses reduced to 750 adults due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were supported by eight full-time staff and 31 part-time staff and 91 tutors. In 2021/2022 the number of staff remains at the level of the previous year.

¹ The numbers referring to full-time, part-time staff and the pool of tutors in both academic years include Welsh for Adult tutors who are within Learning Pembrokeshire's provision, but are inspected separately by Estyn.

Summary

Learning Pembrokeshire delivers an appropriate range of Welsh Government funded literacy, numeracy, digital skills and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. It also delivers a good range of full cost recovery health and well-being courses to meet learners' personal interests. It facilitates a number of clubs where members socialise while continuing with learning at their own pace. Working with local primary schools, the Springboard project provides a good range of family learning activities. However, despite the growth in those who report themselves as speaking Welsh, there is a lack of classes for learners to develop their Welsh literacy skills or to learn through the medium of Welsh.

Learners feel well supported by their tutors, especially during the pandemic. Learning Pembrokeshire worked hard during the pandemic to support learners to continue their studies online. This included supplying those learners who did not have the appropriate equipment or resources with digital equipment and software that would enable them to continue their learning. They also provided training for tutors in the use of appropriate software and online teaching techniques. Many learners and tutors appreciated being able to continue working together and being a part of a community. In a very few cases, learners from other parts of the United Kingdom and further afield joined classes, bringing with them new perspectives.

Overall, learners make good progress in their studies, and they enjoy learning. Most learners are comfortable with returning to face-to-face learning. However, in a minority of cases, learners prefer to continue with online classes as they fit better with personal commitments and lifestyle.

Learning Pembrokeshire has a clear mission statement, which is supported by strategic aims and objectives. However, the targets set to improve the service are not specific enough for leaders to analyse outcomes and impact of strategies effectively. While Learning Pembrokeshire has many links with other organisations in the area, these links are not formalised enough to reap the benefits of a sustained partnership in terms of the clarity of progression routes for learners and cost effectiveness.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen the quality of evaluation and analysis to improve the precision of planning for improvement, ensuring that national, regional and local priorities are taken into account
- R2 Explore making formal links with other adult learning providers to develop a wider and sustained partnership for the mutual benefit of providers, to reduce unnecessary duplication in provision and to share resources, and for learners to have access to diagnostic resources and clearly articulated progression routes
- R3 Increase the opportunities for Welsh speakers, and advanced Welsh language learners, to learn through the medium of Welsh and to improve their literacy skills in Welsh

What happens next

The provider will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the provider's progress.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study for dissemination on Estyn's website about the provision made by Springboard. This provision is aimed at family learning in the more disadvantaged areas of Pembrokeshire. The provision is delivered in conjunction with seven primary schools. It focuses on helping parents to spend quality time with their children and to improve their parenting skills and understanding of literacy, numeracy and digital skills with which to support their children's education.

Main findings

Learning

Many learners progress well in their learning. They acquire, develop and apply new skills and produce work of a good standard.

In English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes, most learners contribute positively and interact well with their tutors and other learners. They develop their listening, reading, writing and speaking skills well according to their level. Many learners read aloud with increasing accuracy and pronounce English words correctly. Many beginners understand simple questions about where they live and topics, such as the weather, and they can answer direct questions appropriately. A few learners show limited understanding when the tutor extends questioning outside of the teaching topic. A minority extend their answers and acquire and apply new specific vocabulary well. A few tend to answer with only limited answers and phrases.

In ESOL classes there is a clear progression route for learners through the levels. For example, tutors introduce the conditional tense and learners use it in more simple or complex constructions according to their fluency and level of learning. They develop this well in practical contexts, such as when studying for driving tests. In the best examples at the higher levels, learners demonstrate strong levels of understanding and linguistic flexibility, including the application of nuance and humour. They combine literacy skills very effectively and they develop an appreciation of plurilingualism when comparing the similarities between English, other languages and their first language.

In a few lessons across the provision, learners develop their ability to use Welsh language in the form of basic greetings and phrases. However, overall learners do not improve their standards of literacy in Welsh.

Most learners attending courses to improve their numeracy make solid progress, moving from entry level to level 2 qualifications where appropriate. They are highly motivated, interact well with each other and their tutors and gain in confidence. Most learners focus on improving their qualifications and their ability to use numeracy in their personal lives, for example in helping their children with schoolwork or improving their career prospects. In a few notable examples, learners who work as learning support assistants in primary schools succeed in using graphs and charts effectively. This improves their ability to apply their knowledge practically with school pupils, thereby enriching these pupils' educational experiences and boosting their own professional learning and self-esteem.

Most learners attending classes to improve their digital skills make suitable progress from their varied starting points. In sessions such as Digital First Steps and courses on using computer tablets to access social media, most learners increase their knowledge about the use and functions of digital devices and software packages. Most learners apply this newly acquired knowledge successfully in a range of activities, such as using the internet to apply for employment or playing games and keeping in touch with family and friends.

Literacy and numeracy classes catering for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) ensure that these learners improve these skills at a pace appropriate to them. They also provide the learners with valuable opportunities to develop their social skills and to revive personal relationships following periods of lockdown when this was not possible.

Most learners progress successfully within and across levels of learning in skills for life and work programmes. They recall and build upon previous learning appropriately. A significant number of learners on these programmes attend further courses to improve their employability or progress in their current employment. However, the focus on employability is learner-led rather than being determined by provider-led targeted learning outcomes.

In 'Springboard' family learning projects, learners make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy, reading, artistic skills, social skills and general knowledge at the same time as developing their understanding of their children's learning. They develop effective strategies to support their children's behaviour both in and out of school. Nearly all learners in 'Springboard' art and craft classes work enthusiastically on developing their practical and creative skills. They communicate well with their children and they support their children to complete their own work.

In well-being and personal interest classes, such as pilates, many learners build upon prior learning effectively and improve their health and fitness. In glass staining classes, learners make solid progress and learn to design, prepare and create their own stained-glass pieces. They work well independently, adhere to health and safety practice, and develop their creative and artistic abilities.

In local history lessons, learners improve their awareness of Welsh history and culture. They learn about the historically significant medieval pilgrim routes across the county and the religious institutions connected with them, in addition to key historical figures and Welsh mythology. In art and craft classes, learners are introduced to the work of local artists and authors thereby deepening their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all learners demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy the classes they attend. Most learners feel well supported by their tutors and the administrators at the learning centres who play key roles in developing learners' confidence to engage fully in learning, for example by helping learners to arrange transport and finance. Learners benefit from ongoing pastoral support from their tutors and centre administrators, which helps them sustain attendance and motivation. For example, learners value 'pause and review' meetings with their tutors and regular telephone calls from course administrators. Learners are appreciative of the care tutors have taken to support them throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, such as through loaning digital equipment and regular contact by phone and email.

Nearly all learners speak positively about the benefits that their learning experiences bring. For example, learners in GCSE and Essential Skills classes recognise the benefits for their future employment prospects and promotion at work. Learners with ALN in a supported employment social enterprise develop their literacy, numeracy

and other life skills to help them with living independently. Many learners say that their mental health and well-being has improved as a result of their learning. In health and fitness classes, learners report feeling energised and less stressed after their classes. In 'Springboard' classes, nearly all learners enjoy opportunities to try new activities with their children, such as bushcraft, robotics and mosaic craft. They report that this is having a positive impact on their parenting skills and enhancing opportunities for their children.

Most learners engage well in their learning in both face-to-face and online sessions. Learners are respectful of the views of others. They listen attentively to tutors and other learners and contribute readily to class discussions when they have the opportunities to do so. In online sessions, nearly all learners follow online etiquette such as using the hands up and chat functions when they wish to contribute.

Nearly all learners in face-to-face learning settings feel safe and comfortable in their learning environments and they are reassured by the measures taken to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19. Nearly all learners comply with the safety measures such as wearing masks, personal hygiene measures and social distancing.

A few learners continue to access provision remotely. They value the flexibility this allows them. It helps them to access provision that they might not otherwise be able to do.

Attendance in face-to-face sessions is good overall. Most learners contact their tutor or course administrators if they are unable to attend which reinforces behaviours expected in employment.

Across the provision, many courses have learner representatives who are invited to attend course meetings to share the views of the learners' experiences. The meetings are usually held in person, but they have been interrupted by the pandemic restrictions.

Many learners complete end of course evaluations and outcomes are reported in the self-evaluation report. However, this information is not sufficiently developed and analysed to plan meaningful ways of improving the provision at course, centre or partnership level.

Teaching and learning experiences

The Learning Pembrokeshire curriculum offer provides a varied range of valuable opportunities for learners to re-enter or progress their education, through targeted provision, clubs, and creative and performance activities. These activities take place in a range of suitable venues, located in communities throughout the county. Venues are welcoming, often dedicated to adult learning, and many learners feel a sense of ownership of the provision because of where it is located.

There is a clear rationale for offering a variety of classes face-to-face, or through online, hybrid or blended learning. The rationale for the different types of provision is built on learners' needs and preferences. For example, a few courses are provided online because learners' home locations are spread across the county.

A range of full cost recovery classes such as languages, art, traditional crafts and mind and body exercise classes support learners' personal interests and well-being. These classes provide new experiences to learners, improve their knowledge and skills and broaden horizons.

Many classes support learners to return to learning. Essential skills provision and GCSE classes develop learners' personal skills and improve their prospects for employment. Skills for life and ESOL provision improve learners' communication skills, develop their learning skills and help them to integrate into the community. However, generally the provision to meet employment needs is not reviewed regularly enough to link it effectively to local employment needs.

The well-established 'Springboard' family learning programme works effectively in partnership with primary schools to support parents and children. The programme offers a wide range of stimulating educational, artistic and cultural activities that helps foster positive attitudes to learning, to develop a learning culture within the family and to help both parents and children to play an active role in school and community life.

Provision for learners with ALN is appropriate to their needs. This provision supports a variety of individual needs, including learners' literacy and numeracy. It also develops their communication and social skills.

Generally, the provision meets Welsh Government priorities for adult learning in the community and it serves the needs of the community, often on a demand-led basis. However, there is a lack of strategic approach to planning the curriculum. There is sketchy matching of provision to national and regional policy drivers, such as Cymraeg 2050. There is no Welsh-medium and minimal bilingual provision available to learners and, as a result, a lack of opportunity for Welsh speakers to improve their literacy skills.

Although many individual learners are well advised and supported, there are very few planned strategies or opportunities to help learners to progress to higher levels of learning or to other providers.

Nearly all tutors are experienced and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They know their learners well and they provide appropriate support and encouragement to learners to help them to make sustained progress in learning. In around half of cases, tutors use their knowledge and understanding of learners to contextualise learning and assessment activities appropriately.

Tutors do not plan well enough to embed literacy, numeracy, digital skills and Welsh language across all provision and very few tutors plan to embed the development of these skills across non-essential skills and ESOL provision.

Most tutors provide a range of level-appropriate learning activities and useful resources, which maintain learners' interest and provide them with sufficient challenge. As a result, most learners are engaged throughout their sessions and they make good progress in learning. Nearly all sessions progress at a pace appropriate to the levels of the learners.

Many tutors work flexibly and adapt their plans in response to the emerging needs of learners. In family learning sessions, tutors skilfully adapt their teaching approaches to meet the immediate and often changing needs of the adult family learners and their children.

In most cases, tutors maintain well focused records to track and monitor learners' progress. Many tutors use individual learning plans well to capture learners' starting points, short-term goals and reviews of progress. Through the individual learning plans, they provide timely and purposeful feedback to learners. Many tutors question effectively and, in the best examples, they extend learners' understanding well through their questioning and feedback.

Many learners make good use of individual learning plans to reflect on their own performance and they respond to tutor feedback and guidance.

Care, support and guidance

Learning Pembrokeshire has a useful website, which provides learners with information about courses funded by the Welsh Government and full cost recovery courses. The website provides a 'one stop shop', which allows learners to apply, enrol and pay online. Additionally, Learning Pembrokeshire promotes its provision via posters and leaflets, as well as through its primary school partners to enable access for those without digital means. Learning Pembrokeshire facilitates self-funded clubs to help learners to explore interests such as local history, crafts and creative writing, and it provides a few bursaries to learners to continue with full cost recovery courses. Many learners welcome the choice of provision and particularly the provision of online courses during the pandemic.

Tutors know their learners well and support their well-being needs as they arise through their interactions in classroom and learning environment. Centre administrators, tutors and 'Springboard' advisers make regular contacts with learners and follow up non-attendance and well-being with pastoral calls to help keep learners engaged.

Many tutors provide helpful advice and guidance to learners on how they can progress on to the next level or on to suitable courses at the same level. There are good examples of where learners have made significant progress in their personal lives and where learners are making positive contributions to their local community. However, Learning Pembrokeshire does not plan for learners' progression strategically enough and it does not work closely enough with local partners to establish clear progression routes for learners. Learning Pembrokeshire has good relationships with a wide range of providers in the area, but these associations rely too much on personal contacts and are not formalised well enough to ensure sustained benefits for learners.

Learning Pembrokeshire does not evaluate the progression of learners or groups of learners effectively enough. This means that it does not have an overview of how many learners move on to the next level of learning, training or employment. A few learners spend too long repeating courses at the same level and do not advance their learning.

Most tutors tailor learning support to meet the learners' needs. Learning Pembrokeshire does not have specialist additional learning needs support or diagnostic services, and it does not draw on other local providers to help supplement this. Tutors make appropriate use of individual learning plans to agree targets for learners, especially those with additional learning needs. However, Learning Pembrokeshire does not monitor or evaluate the progress of this group of learners closely enough to ensure learners' sustained progression.

Learning Pembrokeshire and the local authority ensured that learners could take part in online learning during the pandemic and, where necessary, provided the appropriate equipment and software through which the learners could access online learning.

During the pandemic there has been a clear focus on keeping learners safe online and a range of useful resources have been deployed to help learners and staff stay safe. All centres have provided a COVID-19-secure learning environment to which learners can return confidently.

Learning Pembrokeshire's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The service is well connected to local and regional safeguarding boards. It has safe recruitment practices that ensure all staff and volunteers have enhanced pre-employment checks. All staff have completed the mandatory Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults eLearning module and nearly all staff have completed training on how to prevent individuals being radicalised.

Learning Pembrokeshire provides a small bursary fund for learners who wish to follow accredited provision, but they are unable to contribute fully to the course and exam fees. Information about this is available to all learners through the learner handbook and online.

Leadership and management

There is a clear leadership and management structure for Learning Pembrokeshire. The adult learning in the community provision is led by the Head of Youth and Community who took up his post in January 2022. He is supported by four lifelong learning co-ordinators and an essential skills co-ordinator. Between them, the co-ordinators share oversight of areas of the curriculum and learning centres. They work effectively together to deliver adult learning in the community provision throughout Pembrokeshire. Overall, they concentrate well on local priorities, such as essential skills and ESOL, as well as delivering courses that promote the wider education and health-agenda, and courses aimed at improving family interactions and well-being. However, there is less focus on other national and regional priorities relating to Cymraeg 2050, the employability and skills plan, the Well-being of Future Generations Act and regional skills plans.

Learning Pembrokeshire has a clear mission statement, which is supported by appropriate strategic aims and objectives. The self-evaluation processes enable leaders to provide a comprehensive overview of notable achievements and areas for development. The lifelong learning co-ordinators and the essential skills co-ordinator review the learner outcomes and areas for development on a regular basis. However,

while the targets in the quality improvement plan match well to the areas for development, they are not framed precisely enough to ensure an effective analysis of outcomes and the impact on improving performance. There is a programme to monitor tutors' performance. However, the process is not systematic enough to pick up issues or overall performance, for example the lack of Welsh being used during sessions to bilingualism.

The tutors working for Learning Pembrokeshire are well qualified in their subject areas. Learning Pembrokeshire has supported tutors' health and well-being well throughout the pandemic. The provider provides both a core and wide range of optional training modules for tutors to help improve their teaching and learning. Tutors complete compulsory core modules of professional development linked to such issues as safeguarding. They are also offered three courses of their choice free of charge to meet individual professional development needs. Most tutors have taken advantage of the training during the pandemic period. Many have improved their digital learning and teaching skills. On occasions, Learning Pembrokeshire partners join with neighbouring adult learning in the community partnerships to deliver professional training given by external providers. This has the beneficial effect of sharing costs and of providing co-ordinators and tutors with opportunities to share experiences.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the financial issues surrounding the provision of adult learning in the community. They review the budget at regular intervals and they forward plan to mitigate decreasing funding. Senior leaders and co-ordinators have formed strategic alliances and collaborations with many external organisations across Pembrokeshire with which they work well on an informal basis. However, these links are not formalised sufficiently to provide the benefits of a sustained partnership, such as clear progression routes for learners and the opportunity to build capacity for continuous improvement for learners that links effectively with changing employment and personal learning needs.

Learning Pembrokeshire has a good range of well-appointed learning centres. Most rooms have furniture appropriate for adult learners. Many have electronic white boards, which help tutors to enhance presentations. Most learning centres are clustered appropriately in central and south Pembrokeshire with fewer learning venues in the north of the county to match the population. Learning Pembrokeshire has put into place additional appropriate health and safety procedures, which have helped learners feel confident about returning to face-to-face learning.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the learner and staff questionnaires

During the inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet the chair of the partnership, senior and middle leaders and individual tutors to evaluate the impact of the partnership's work
- meet learners to discuss their work, to listen to their views about various aspects of their provider
- visit a broad sample of sessions
- observe and speak to learners outside of sessions
- look closely at the partnership's self-evaluation processes
- consider the partnership's quality improvement planning and looked at evidence to show how well the partnership had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a wide range of partnership documents, including information on learner assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), information on learners' well-being, including the safeguarding of learners, and records of staff training and professional learning

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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