



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: Re-Inspection**

**Torfaen Training
Unit 25
Springvale Industrial Estate
Cwmbran
NP44 5BA**

Date of visit: May 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

The provider is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the provider from the list of providers requiring re-inspection.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve the rates at which learners successfully achieve their programmes and by the scheduled completion date

The overall rates at which learners successfully complete their frameworks for foundation apprenticeships, apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships have improved steadily over the last three years, and in 2017-2018 are close to or above the national averages. These rates show a considerable improvement since the core inspection of January 2017.

However, there has been less improvement in the rates at which learners complete their programmes by the expected end date. The provider's own data shows that in the period 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 the proportion of learners completing their programmes by the scheduled completion date has declined. The provider has increased their focus on monitoring learners' progress through their programmes. Managers, training officers and learners now use progress gauges in the electronic portfolio system and this has helped identify and monitor learners who are making slower than expected progress through their programmes. These changes are beginning to have a positive impact. In the current academic year, the proportion of learners who complete their programmes by the expected end date has increased substantially.

The most recent published data for the relatively few traineeship learners show that, in the case of traineeship engagement learners, both the rates of learning activity success and positive progressions are below the national averages. In the case of traineeship level 1 learners, learning activity success rates have improved and are above national averages, but the rates of positive progressions are below the national averages. The provider has developed a range of appropriate actions to improve outcomes for traineeship learners. However, it is too early to see their impact.

R2. Develop strategies to improve learners' literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills

Following the core inspection of January 2017, the provider successfully addressed the backlog of learners who were late to start their Essential Skills Wales qualifications through a targeted programme and increased the capacity of its team of essential skills tutors.

This is now a well-established team of specialist tutors. The team reviews each learner's initial Wales Essential Skills Toolkit assessment and develops a bespoke individual learning plan to address the weaknesses identified in the initial

assessment. Learners who need to attain Essential Skills Wales qualifications for their framework attend carefully timetabled sessions which allow them to prepare appropriately for the controlled assessments. Learners, employers and training advisers jointly complete an essential skills learning agreement which sets out clear expectations for all parties. As a result, learners and employers understand how and why learners need to complete their Essential Skills Wales qualifications. The trend in the proportion of learners attaining Essential Skills Wales qualifications shows a substantial increase over the last three years. Sixteen per cent of learners attain Essential Skills Wales qualifications higher than their framework requirements.

In portfolio review sessions and in their training activities, training officers pay appropriate attention to supporting learners in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. The Essential Skills Wales specialist team provide training officers with helpful advice and support.

R3. Ensure that assessors challenge learners of all abilities to reach their full potential

The provider has continued to address the key actions in relation to assessors identified in the post inspection action plan. This is beginning to have a positive impact throughout the provider. The management re-structure has been completed and the quality of teaching, training and assessment is starting to improve.

The provider has put in place a programme of professional development activities to improve training officers' and assessors' teaching methods and questioning techniques. A majority of training officers and assessors question learners effectively to check their understanding and extend their knowledge.

The provider has increased the number of staff observations in the work place to monitor the quality of teaching, assessment and learner progress review activities. These observations are appropriately risk-based, with new or inexperienced staff having more frequent visits.

Many training officers encourage their learners to progress onto higher level qualifications where appropriate, for example, in progressing from a level 3 to level 5 qualification in health and social care.

Most training officers set realistic and measurable short, medium and long-term targets for their learners. This is starting to make sure learners achieve their qualifications in a timely manner. However, in a few cases employers are not involved in agreeing these targets.

The provider has completed the roll-out of the electronic portfolio system. The system is an effective tool for managers and training officers to better track and monitor learner progress. As a result, slow progress is identified and addressed at an early stage and this is beginning to have an impact on learners' timely completion of their programmes.

R4. Address the safeguarding issues raised with the provider during the inspection

The provider has carried out all necessary actions to meet the recommendations of the core inspection report and Estyn's wellbeing letter in regard to safeguarding. The provider has strengthened its procedures to undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks of appropriate staff. It updates these checks every three years and it requires staff to submit an annual, written statement affirming that there are no changes in the circumstances identified within their previous Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Appropriate training is in place for all staff regarding safeguarding and the Prevent duty. The provider has effective systems to monitor that staff undertake annual update training in these topics. They also use subcontractors who have clear expertise in these areas to deliver useful training to staff.

The provider uses an appropriate range of policies regarding safeguarding that are reviewed annually.

Staff are clear about safeguarding reporting procedures. They regularly discuss safeguarding matters with learners during reviews. Nearly all learners who work with children understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

R5. Strengthen the provider's leadership and management of sub-contractors

The provider has strengthened its procedures to manage and monitor the performance of its sub-contractors. The provider has sought out examples of good practice in managing sub-contractor performance amongst other training providers and used these to review, benchmark and improve its own practices. It has brought in external expertise to provide useful challenge and scrutiny of its planning, systems and procedures. It has revised its contract management framework to give better focus to the monitoring of performance at individual sub-contractor level.

The provider has improved the rigour of monthly monitoring meetings and regular system audits of sub-contractor provision. Through these meetings, it has strengthened subcontractors' focus on their performance against contract targets and challenged the rates at which learners complete their training programme by the scheduled end date. The provider takes appropriate action to investigate the causes of poor or inconsistent sub-contractor performance and takes suitable action as a result.

The provider supports its sub-contractors well. It is responsive to their development needs by providing appropriate training and advice when it identifies a need. It makes effective use of sub-contractors' expert knowledge to identify and share good practice amongst its own and other sub-contractors' staff.

R6. Develop rigorous quality assurance systems and procedures to enable the provider and its sub-contractors to review all aspects of its contract effectively

Since the core inspection, staff have put in place sound quality assurance processes across the provision, including provision delivered by sub-contractors. A team of quality performance managers, one with dedicated responsibility for sub-contractors,

monitors the progress of learners closely. The performance managers provide support for sub-contractor staff, and the provider's own staff, to improve practice. The provider's quality management framework includes appropriate performance indicators that set clear expectations for all sub-contractors. Managers hold monthly meetings with representatives from each sub-contractor in order to monitor their progress. These meetings focus on performance against a suitable range of indicators and culminate in a risk rating for the provision at each sub-contractor.

Senior managers have implemented a clear and structured series of escalating actions to address any underperformance by subcontractors. This involves assigning appropriate remedial measures as part of a clear action plan. Progress is monitored closely, leading to a formal contract review if necessary. This process has recently resulted in significant improvements in learner outcomes for one sub-contractor. The provider's rigorous application of these processes also enabled them to identify poor practice at another sub-contractor and take appropriate action to safeguard learners' interests.

The provider has developed valuable opportunities for staff across sub-contractor partners to work collaboratively to improve their practice. For example, training officers observe their counterparts working with learners and representatives from across the partners work together on improvement projects as part of the recently formed task and finish group.

The provider's self-assessment judgements are realistic appraisals of the provider's current performance. However, the self-evaluation processes and the self-evaluation report do not consider a number of important inputs such as data, learner voice or observation evidence enough. The self-evaluation document is too focused on the processes that the provider carries out, rather than providing a concise evaluation of current performance.