



Gweithio gyda'n gilydd i ddod â manteision dysgu i gymunedau Sir Gaerfyrddin

Partneriaeth DOG Sir Gaerfyrddin

Carmarthenshire ACL Partnership

Working together to bring the benefits of learning to Carmarthenshire communities

A self assessment report on Carmarthenshire Adult Community Learning Partnership

Date of completion: July 2018

Background

Carmarthenshire partnership delivery of adult and community learning is co-ordinated by the Carmarthenshire Adult and Community Learning Group (CACLG). This group comprises of the local providers and facilitators of Welsh Government funded adult community learning within the unitary authority area.

Estyn last conducted a full inspection of ACL learning provision and the work of the partnership in December 2010. The overall judgement on partnership performance was adequate with good prospects for improvement. Monitoring visits by Estyn staff in 2012 and 2013 followed this inspection. Estyn identified good progress in delivering the inspection recommendations during these visits.

Context

Carmarthenshire is the third largest county in Wales by land area with a total population of 185,123 (2015) of whom 64,200 are in paid employment. The unitary authority area includes economically prosperous areas and communities with the problems typically associated with urban and rural deprivation in Wales. Detailed labour market information can be found at http://www.rlp.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/Carmarthenshire_LMI_Report_Completed.pdf

Summary

The partnership's current performance	Adequate
The partnership's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The partnership's current performance is adequate because:

- Learners from deprived areas succeed at rates around the national averages for learners from similar areas;
- The partnership is responsive to community needs;
- Many tutors plan their lessons effectively and set clear objectives for learners;
- Tutors establish productive working relationships with learners;
- Learners with additional learning needs receive support to help them overcome barriers to learning.

However:

- Standards on ESOL programmes are below national comparators;
- Learners' targets are not always reviewed to improve their most urgent development needs;
- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not challenge learners to achieve highly;
- Some learners have remained on programmes and have not progressed sufficiently;
- The partnership has not developed the use of the Welsh language by staff and learners sufficiently.

Prospects for improvement

The partnership's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The partnership has been effective in refocusing provision on key priority areas based upon the staff and financial resources available;
- The partnership's links with the community are strong and have a positive impact on learning opportunities;
- The partnership manages its limited finances well to support learning in key areas;
- Changes to Welsh Government ACL funding arrangements are likely to impact positively on the partnership.

Recommendations

R1 Improve retention, standards and outcomes on ESOL courses

R2 Make sure that teaching and learning strategies engage and challenge all learners

R3 Make sure that all tutors support learners to develop their digital literacy skills

R4 Increase the use of the Welsh language by learners and staff

The partnership will incorporate these actions into the partnership development plan to show how we will address the recommendations made in this report.

Main findings

Inspection Area 1: Standards - Adequate

Most learners make sound progress in their studies. A few learners make strong progress relative to their starting points. For example, WEST evidence shows the progress of learners at the CCC Ammanford Centre from Entry 3 Level to GCSE Maths.

However, a minority of learners on literacy and numeracy programmes do not make the progress of which they are capable. These learners remain on their chosen programmes too long.

Encouraged by their tutors, learners progress appropriately to higher-level courses within the partnership. However, some learners do not wish to progress once they have reached their required level. For example, some ESOL learners improve their English language skills sufficiently to gain work and do not wish to gain further qualifications.

Within the partnership, 73% of learners come from areas of economic or geographic deprivation. Learners from deprived areas succeed at rates comparable to other learners within the partnership. They achieve at around or slightly below the national averages for learners from similar areas. Learners with additional learning needs, learners from different ethnic groups, female and male learners successfully achieve their qualifications in line with the overall partnership performance.

Most learners complete initial and diagnostic assessments via WEST at the start of their course. They have relevant targets in their individual learning plans to develop literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

Many learners apply and develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills appropriately within their studies. A minority of learners study a slower pace in order to fit their learning around work, family or community needs. Providers provide responsive support for learners who are experiencing the effects of chaotic lives.

The majority of learners complete suitable written work and use appropriate spelling, punctuation and grammar, according to their level of ability. However, a minority of learners produce written work with spelling, punctuation or grammar errors that are not later corrected. Learners use and develop their numeracy skills appropriately as part of their routine work.

Learners in some classes use their digital literacy skills well to enhance their learning. For example, adults with learning disabilities develop their digital literacy skills using iPads and apps. However, the majority of learners do not learn, practise or develop a wide enough range of digital literacy skills.

Across the partnership, the nature of the curriculum is such that very few Welsh-speaking learners choose to undertake their learning bilingually or in Welsh. Very few learners choose to undertake their assessments in Welsh. Good use is made of staff and volunteers who can deliver bilingually in literacy and numeracy classes.

Learners in Welsh for Adults provision make good progress developing their Welsh language skills. They appreciate the value of these skills in improving their employability.

In 2016-2017, the majority of learners successfully completed their qualifications at rates above the national comparator. Overall, the success rates in ESOL provision show a downward trend from 96% in 2014-2015 to 79% in 2016-2017.

Standards on ESOL programmes have areas for improvement. The rate at which learners successfully complete these qualifications remains below the national comparator of 84%. However, partnership delivery is designed to be flexible to individual learner needs. It enables learners to start courses when they need to. Where learners progress well from ESOL courses to work, the course completion rates fall below the national comparator.

Good local pathways exist between ACL, FE and HE provision to enable opportunities for learner progression. Coleg Sir Gar's place within the Trinity Saint David group structure enables local HE progression pathways for learners.

Inspection Area 2: Wellbeing & attitudes to learning - Good

All learners feel safe in partnership provision enjoy their learning and value the support they receive from staff. They develop skills in perseverance and resilience to continue and complete their courses successfully when they encounter difficulties. While many learners attend well, a few do not attend regularly enough due to their need to maintain an effective work-life balance.

All learners are courteous to each other, staff and visitors. They value and respect partnership facilities and behave well in communal areas. Users of the Carmarthen Centre work well with managers to identify and address aspects of partnership delivery and support that can be improved to better meet their needs.

There are two Adult Learning Wales (ALW) arts and craft courses for the Stroke Society in Carmarthenshire. Learners attending these classes lack confidence when going out into the community due to the physical effect of strokes. Attending these classes helps the recuperation of these learners. Arts Gofal Cymru work closely with learners at the Carmarthen Centre to plan courses to meet their needs.

The ALW Llanelli branch offers classes in subjects including art, history, philosophy, politics, music and creative writing. They are generally attended by people who have retired and who participate to develop new knowledge and skills and for well-being reasons. These classes have a good gender balance. They are attended regularly by people aged from fifty to ninety.

Inspection Area 3: Teaching and learning experiences – Good

The quality of teaching

The partnership undertook an internal review of teaching and learning in May 2018. The review highlights 93% of sessions observed as being good or excellent. Most tutors demonstrate relevant subject knowledge. Many tutors plan their lessons well and set clear objectives for learners. However, a minority of tutors do not plan or structure lessons well enough.

In the majority of lessons, tutors have appropriate expectations. In a few sessions, tutors have high expectations of all learners and challenge learners well. However, the levels

of challenge in a minority of sessions are too low. Most schemes of work include an appropriate focus on skills development.

A majority of tutors use a variety of suitable teaching and training strategies well. Most use a wide and useful range of resources to motivate and engage learners. In a majority of lessons, the pace of learning is appropriate for learners to make sound progress.

A majority of tutors use questioning skills appropriately. Nearly all tutors question effectively, probing learners in order to deepen their understanding and encourage discussion. Nearly all tutors have productive working relationships with their learners that foster learning.

Most tutors provide supportive verbal feedback that helps learners to improve their work. The majority of tutors mark learners' written work paying appropriate attention to accuracy and skills development. In the best cases, written feedback on higher level courses is useful and constructive. Feedback makes clear to learners how to improve their work. Most tutors are aware of the individual needs of learners. They tailor their written feedback accordingly. In some cases, learners play an active and valuable role in setting and reviewing their targets.

The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the provision

The partnership uses a range of labour market and regional information to inform the curriculum. Learners access a range of provision with the key focus on literacy, numeracy, Welsh for Adults, ESOL and digital literacy. The democratic structure of local Adult Learning Wales groups enables learners to identify and develop the classes they want.

Most learners complete WEST assessments and have relevant targets and use these as their individual learning plans to develop literacy, numeracy, language and digital literacy skills. ESOL learners use their learning to complete the Driving Theory test.

The partnership has increased its provision to enable English-speaking learners to gain Welsh language skills. Tutors use a range of activities to promote Wales and the use of Welsh. However, the targeted nature of the current curriculum is such that there is limited demand for Welsh medium provision within the partnership from learners who are Welsh speakers.

There are beneficial opportunities for learners with all providers to engage with environmental, sustainability and citizenship issues across the curriculum and in partnership. Providers actively engage with charitable organisations on projects. This work includes support for homeless people and Syria Sir Gar. Carmarthen Community Education Centre has an exemplary recycling scheme and uses a variety of Fair Trade products. CAVS runs a range of courses to support local voluntary organisations and volunteers.

Provision for skills

CCC and CSG franchise provision is informed by local, regional and national priorities, including the regional Learning and Skills Plan.

Informed by the financial constraints on ACL provision, the key focus of the CCC and CSG franchise provision is the delivery of ABE, ESOL and digital literacy courses. Other

partners, including voluntary sector groups, clubs and individuals offer the wider ACL curriculum in county.

CCC and CSG staff have managed the changed approach to the delivery of ACL effectively. This work includes making very significant changes to the nature of provision due the budget reductions faced by the ACL service. This work has been informed by community consultation and approved through the Carmarthenshire County Council democratic process. Despite the reduction in provision available due to these changes, the work undertaken by officers to redesign the service in difficult circumstances has been sector leading.

Inspection Area 4: Care, support and guidance - Good

Tutors provide good personal support for the health and well-being of learners. This work includes liaison with the Home Office regarding immigration issues and contact with health services on behalf of learners. Tutors also help learners with official documents and enable diagnosis of limiting conditions including ALD. Learners who have had poor previous experiences in compulsory education are supported sensitively. Feedback from learners highlights the responsive and caring approaches taken by the majority of tutors.

Due to Welsh Government changes, adult learners now have limited access to impartial advice and guidance from Careers Wales. However, prospective and current learners receive good support from all providers when planning their next steps in education, training or work. This support is offered in person and via open days and road shows. Guidance includes advice for learners about study pathways and assistance in filling in application forms and related documents. Learners with degrees who need GCSE Maths and English to progress to employment in key local employment sectors are well supported.

Providers have strategies that promote positive approaches to lessons and learning. However, the attendance of some learners means that they do not benefit fully from the courses provided.

The partnership's arrangements for safeguarding and the duty to protect people from radicalisation and extremism meet identified requirements. Staff have received Prevent training in person and via on-line delivery. Coleg Sir Gar's Respect programme has been nationally recognised. CCC staff undertake a range of on-line training including units on equality and dignity at work, Welsh language awareness and domestic violence.

Carmarthenshire County Council staff have supported the development of independent clubs, societies and independent fee paying classes that enable learners to be active citizens and contribute to their communities. Partnership providers implement a range of effective strategies to promote equality and diversity in line with their organisational policies.

Inspection Area 5: Leadership & Management

Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers - Adequate

The strategic managers of Carmarthenshire County Council and Coleg Sir Gar oversee the work of the partnership. Regular meetings of senior staff set the objectives for

learning in Carmarthenshire for learners of all ages. The outcomes of this provision support the actions of the Carmarthenshire Public Service Board and Well-being Plan.

This strategic lead drives the objectives and operational plans of the Carmarthenshire Adult and Community Learning Group.

Partnership plans use good quality information from the local authority and the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership to inform provision. However, reduced budgets and staffing mean that the partnership relies disproportionately on the work of officers from the local authority and FE College. These staff from work effectively to meet the expectations placed upon the partnership by Welsh Government and Estyn. There is adequate representation and attendance on the partnership from a range of relevant partners. However, reduced staff capacity has meant that the focus on improving outcomes in some subject areas has not been maintained.

There is a clear and well-understood management structure for the partnership. Senior officers and managers within the partnership have good working relationships. Elected members are updated on ACL delivery and the financial challenges facing the service via the work of Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. Decisions taken by managers have led to improved financial management of the provision at a time of public sector cuts.

The Corporate Board of Coleg Sir Gar receives updates on all FE provision, including the ACL franchise. This group challenges college managers regarding the need to improve outcomes for learners.

Following the reduction in the number of centres managed by the CCC service, the management committee for the Carmarthen Learning Centre has been restructured. This committee comprises of councillors, service officers and centre users. The views of this group have informed the development of the centre as a learning hub for WG funded and private classes together with clubs and societies.

Partnership strategies help learners improve their essential skills and attract hard to reach groups into learning. Organisational business plans reflect these priorities well. The resulting actions form part of individual officer work plans for the year. Managers from a wide range of organisations work well together. They meet local and regional needs and Welsh Government priorities as limited resources allow.

One example of this work is the partnership approach taken to meeting the needs of Syrian refugees who have settled in Carmarthenshire. The strategic lead for this work is the County Council's Communities department, with ESOL provision delivered by the ACL service. A range of other agencies including EYST, SYRIA Sir Gar and local communities provide good support for this group. Partnership providers also work with a wide range of projects including Hope House, Drugaid / Barod and carers groups. Trinity Saint David University's Widening Access team are increasingly supporting adults who wish to return to learning.

Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning: Good

The partnership's self-assessment processes are evaluative. Judgements are based on a range of quality sources. Across the partnership, the group has improved the overall

levels of completion, attainment and success achieved by learners. In 2018, the majority of teaching and learning observed across the partnership was good or excellent.

Individual centres and services gather the views of learners well. Views are collected by questionnaires and by group meetings of centre users. Learner's suggestions improve the quality of the service. The WG Learner Voice Wales survey for 2015 evidences that the partnership is responsive to needs with 90% of learners identifying this area as Good or Very Good. This survey also evidenced 93% of learners expressing the view that their course was as or better than expected.

The quality development plan includes challenging targets for improving standards further. Tutors identified as being adequate or unsatisfactory will receive follow-up support to help them improve.

The CACL group comprises of a range of organisations delivering Welsh Government funded adult community learning. These organisations include Carmarthenshire County Council Education and Regeneration departments, Coleg Sir Gar, Adult Learning Wales, Trinity St David, Aberystwyth University, Swansea University, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, Carmarthenshire Older People's Partnership and the Communities at Work programme. Partners have key roles in making sure that delivery is relevant, effective and benefits learners. The partnership works in a joined-up way with other agencies to improve the standards and well-being of individual learners. Partnership members are clear about their roles and responsibilities. There is good liaison, trust and clear communication between partners.

The partnership engages with the broader community, including third sector and other statutory and specialist agencies to benefit learners.

The County Council and Coleg Sir Gar deliver the majority of the provision. The partnership between these providers is very strong. Partnership members contribute well to the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership and the Learning and Skills Plan.

Partners work together to ensure learners have access to a range of targeted courses within the available resources. Following the restructure of the CCC service, some general education courses have become private classes run by ex CCC tutors, or have evolved into clubs and societies. These arrangements have retained provision locally and better meet the needs of local people. All external users of CCC facilities are required to have public liability insurance. The partnership has worked well to ensure the best use of available resources at a time of on-going budget cuts.

Professional Learning: Good

Partnership managers support a culture and ethos that promotes professional knowledge, understanding and skills. All staff have the appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver their courses. Tutors take part in appropriate staff development including regular training meetings and sharing good practice in teaching and learning. Staff have completed Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Prevent training. Staff at all levels in all CACLG linked organisations are well supported to develop their Welsh language skills.

The partnership has effective appraisal and performance management systems to identify the development needs of staff. Where under-performance is identified, it is

addressed appropriately. Support staff ensure that provision operates effectively in well-maintained buildings.

Based upon the strategic priorities identified, CCC has trained 4 tutors to be Digital Literacy practitioners in line with WG priorities. CPD plans for all tutors include required attendance at 3 training sessions per annum. These training sessions are based upon identified CPD needs and sharing of best practice. Coleg Sir Gar have provided Prevent training for CCC staff. CCC tutors have also completed on-line training in a range. ALW has regular regional tutor training meetings that focus on key themes including digital literacy and supporting the Welsh language.

Partnership staff are involved in networks of professional practice including WEST, Essential Skills Panel for Wales, Welsh for Adults, Colegau Cymru, the RLSP and Community Learning Wales groups.

Use of resources: Good

The partnership makes very good use of all grant of income streams, including Welsh Government franchise arrangements. The County Council's ACL provision does not receive any core Revenue Support Grant subsidy from the authority.

The local authority ACL service has reduced the number of buildings it runs directly from 10 in 2010 to 2 in 2018. Services are also co-located in two other buildings for reasons of cost efficiency. Providers use a range of buildings to offer courses. Where these are managed directly by the providers, they offer a welcoming and friendly environment in which most learners feel safe and respected. Where third party venues are used, these are chosen to enable classes to run in venues across the county. These arrangements reduce the need for travel to the centres of population.

Carmarthen Learning Centre has recently been upgraded to improve the environment for learners. Significant investment has been made in new ICT equipment (March 2018) to enable the CCC Service to meet the needs of the Digital Literacy curriculum.

The partnership delivers a focussed range of adult community provision at appropriate locations across the county. Officers are very aware of the challenging costs and priorities in delivering adult community learning in a county with both rural and urban areas. Managers use the available resources well to provide appropriate accommodation and resources for learning. Support for learning delivery in other CCC departments and externally is a source of income for the ABE service.

Managers monitor expenditure carefully and review the costs associated with their provision. There has been significant service restructuring to focus resources on priority frontline delivery. The move to private classes and clubs has ensured those learners in most need continue to receive provision while those able to pay for their delivery do so directly.

Overall, the partnership provides good value for money. Through harsh necessity, it has reduced its' dependence on the public purse. Partnership provision now better reflects community wants, needs and the ability of some leisure learners to pay for their classes. Given this context and possible changes to Welsh Government funding arrangements, the prospects for the partnership to improve further are rated as good.