

Report following monitoring

of

**Ceredigion County Council Adult Community Education
Partnership**

**Penmorfa,
Aberaeron,
Ceredigion,
SA46 0PA**

Date of visit: March 2025

by

**Estyn, His 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, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the provider from the list of providers in follow-up.

Progress against recommendations from the core inspection

R1. Develop a strategic plan for the partnership, underpinned by a shared vision

Following inspection in February 2024, the adult learning in the community partnership in Ceredigion has worked together effectively to review its membership and its working practices.

The partnership has expanded its membership and now includes the Youth Service, Denmark Farm Conservation Centre, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the Barcud Housing Association, the language policy officer from Ceredigion County Council, Cered (Menter Iaith) and the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership in addition to existing members from Ceredigion County Council, Coleg Ceredigion/Coleg Sir Gar, Aberystwyth University Lifelong Learning, Learn Welsh, Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations, Working Wales, Wales TUC and the Department for Work and Pensions. However, for their own operational reasons, Adult Learning Wales and the University of Wales Trinity St David's have withdrawn from the partnership. Links with organisations, such as the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership, Working Wales, and partners internal to the local authority, such as the corporate manager for lifelong learning and skills, enable the partnership to understand the employability learning needs of a wide range of adults.

The new partnership has worked together well to develop a shared vision for adult learning in the community. Its vision is to provide all adults in Ceredigion with opportunities to achieve and it is linked appropriately to the aspirations stated in the local authority's corporate strategy.

The partnership has given careful consideration to its structure, and it has chosen to develop a 'strategic alliance' with the adult learning in the community partnership in Carmarthenshire. The adult learning in the community partnership in Ceredigion has recently appointed its team manager for post-16 learning and skills to chair the partnership, while the vice-principal of Coleg Ceredigion/Coleg Sir Gar acts as vice-chair of the partnership. The chair of the Ceredigion partnership is a member of the operational group in the Carmarthenshire partnership, while the vice-principal of Coleg Ceredigion/Coleg Sir Gar is the vice-chair of both the Ceredigion and the Carmarthenshire partnerships. These roles strengthen the links between the neighbouring partnerships, and they allow for sharing of effective practice and classes along the Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion border. This helps to assure the quality of teaching and learning and to increase the offer to learners while preventing unnecessary duplication.

The adult learning in the community partnership in Ceredigion has developed clear and suitable terms of reference and governance arrangements. Partnership members meet at least once a term. There are clear agendas for meetings and minutes record key points, actions, timescales and who is responsible for delivering actions. To carry out the actions the partnership has set itself, the partnership operates 'task and finish' groups, the progress of which it monitors carefully.

R2. Develop a partnership approach to self-evaluation and structured quality monitoring in order to meet targets and capture impact

Following their inspection, the partnership produced an action plan to respond to the six recommendations in an appropriate order. Having initially established a shared vision and a strategic plan, the partnership began work to develop a partnership approach to self-evaluation underpinned by a structured quality and monitoring process in the autumn term 2024.

The partnership has set up a 'task and finish' group to explore how it can develop effective methods of evaluating learners' progress and their learning experiences across the partnership. As a first step, and in consultation with Gwynedd and Môn's partnership who have used the tool to support their own partnership evaluation, it was agreed that each partner would use the Adult Learning in the Community Partnership Tool for Effective Practice and Delivery to evaluate partner collaboration from each of their perspectives. This tool was developed in conjunction with adult learning partnerships across Wales and the Learning and Work Institute.

At the same time, partners have begun to share the methods they use to carry out different aspects of evaluation. For example, Carmarthenshire adult learning in the community partnership has shared the self-evaluation template that it uses, while Aberystwyth University's Lifelong Learning department has shared its learner evaluation templates. Additionally, Coleg Ceredigion/Coleg Sir Gar has shared the system it uses to quality assure teaching and learning. To date, each partnership member has carried out and analysed observations of learning and teaching using the methods they normally apply. Where leaders have identified ineffective practice, they have provided tutors with support and the tutors' practice has improved.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the partnership is awaiting the return of verified data to complete an analysis of the past year's work and to produce a quality development plan for the whole partnership with appropriate targets for the year 2025-2026.

R3. Ensure that potential and existing learners can easily access an overview of the full partnership's course offer and progression pathways

The partnership recruits learners through a wide variety of events, such as Adult Learners' week, college open days, and county-wide events such as agricultural shows. Providers currently operate individual provider stalls at events, but they also signpost learners to other partner provision where appropriate. Additionally, courses are promoted through local businesses' social media platforms and through the innovative practice of using learner ambassadors who link with learners to share experiences and to publicise courses. Well-known local artists, photographers and poets run courses in a variety of venues which are very popular and they promote lifelong learning across the community. Aberystwyth University's marketing department has produced useful leaflets about accessible and affordable short courses they offer covering the arts, languages and professional development.

Learners can progress within individual provider provision or into other providers in a variety of ways. Learners on employability courses within the council provision are referred for literacy, numeracy and digital skills classes provided by the partnership. Learners can progress to the college to follow GCSE courses. However, a recent funding reduction to further education part-time provision presents a challenge in widening the offer to community and part-time learners. A few college part-time learners progress to access higher education routes, mainly for art courses and the health professions.

The partnership is working with tutors across providers to ensure that they are aware of progression opportunities so that they can advise and recommend them to learners.

Progression is currently recorded by individual providers. It is intended that the new Dysgu Bro management information system (MIS) will enable the partnership to have a more strategic view of learner progress from basic provision to other providers in the future. The local authority has demonstrated its commitment to adult learning in the community by providing extra funding to develop additional features to the MIS to facilitate data collection and quality management that is bespoke to adult learning in the community.

R4. Implement effective systems and processes across the partnership to support and track the progress of learners with additional learning needs (ALN)

All partners now have designated additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCos).

Partners have discussed their individual ALN policies and systems. Adult learning in the community leaders in the local authority have consulted, and built strong links with, the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team who oversee the wider ALN provision in the local authority.

The local authority has produced a summary of their inclusive practice standard in respect of supporting adult learners with ALN, which is available to learners on the local authority website. Tutors have access to copies of the full and summarised inclusive practice standard.

Partners capture information about learner's disclosed ALN from their enrolment forms. Partners collate the information in their individual organisations to understand the extent and nature of the support needed.

Partners have a good range of resources with which they can help learners with ALN access their classes and work more easily. Where learners self-identify their ALN, tutors are made aware of learners' needs and track their progress. Tutors are asked to be alert to those learners who may not self-identify and to discuss the matter sensitively with the learner to help them take advantage of additional support should the learner wish to take up the offer.

Tutors across the partnership receive training in supporting learners with ALN. For example, the partnership organised training for tutors focused on neurodiversity to which they invited tutors from the Carmarthenshire adult learning in the community partnership. The training took place on two occasions at different times so that as many tutors as possible could attend.

Reviewing the partnership's overall response to ALN is now a part of regular discussion at partnership meetings.

R5. Ensure that learners are given opportunities to work towards accreditation or qualifications where appropriate

Coleg Ceredigion/Coleg Sir Gar's vice principal acted swiftly on this recommendation and now all English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners work towards an appropriate qualification.

Adult learning in the community learners often follow Agored units. The partnership used Multiply funding effectively to develop a range of courses into which are embedded small units of numeracy and ICT accreditation. Tutors have trained and risen to the challenge of delivering multiple and different units to groups of learners. They offer personalised learning, whereby learners often achieve three different units during one course, as once learners have improved their confidence and self-esteem through community learning, they are keen to receive accreditation for the skills they are developing. Learners build up banks of units so that they can progress to Essential Skills Wales qualifications. There are opportunities for learners to progress into the college for GCSE English and mathematics qualifications. Additionally, the university offers English and mathematics equivalent qualifications to support learners' access onto higher education courses.

Learners following employability courses undertake work-related qualifications, such as the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL). The partnership works to provide access to specific qualifications in response to learner demand. For example, the Denmark Farm conservation centre offers learners LANTRA agricultural qualifications.

All learners on Aberystwyth University lifelong learning courses have opportunities to gain credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) points on completion of a module that can lead to a Certificate of Higher Education if they choose.

R6. Increase opportunities for Welsh speakers and Welsh learners to access adult learning in the community programmes through the medium of Welsh

The partnership has made significant progress towards this recommendation. Nonetheless, encouraging learners to learn bilingually or through the medium of Welsh remains an ongoing challenge.

The partnership has strengthened links with Welsh language organisations, such as the Urdd, Menter Iaith and Young Farmers to widen the provision offer to enable more learners to learn bilingually or through the medium of Welsh. Coleg Ceredigion is a bilingual college and offers GCSE English and mathematics through the medium of Welsh, while Aberystwyth University Lifelong Learning department currently provides Welsh-medium courses that are free to Welsh speakers.

Dysgu Bro made positive efforts to increase the Welsh-medium offer by providing a series of taster events in various venues across the county, including Christmas cake making at which there were four attendees. The partnership has run bilingual courses successfully, such as 'Introduction to iPad' which has now become a weekly IT course in Llandysul, and a numeracy and craft course run in collaboration with Menter Iaith who provided the bilingual support. A flower arranging course provided in conjunction with Merched y Wawr was very successful.

The partnership has responded positively to learners' requests for provision bilingually or through the medium of Welsh. Learners said that they would like a course about online safety through the medium of Welsh, but no-one enrolled. Learners requested a bilingual numeracy course to train treasurers of organisations and the partnership planned to provide this course in three locations across the county, but only one learner enrolled.

Partnership members have discussed the reasons why learners are reluctant to attend bilingual classes or classes through the medium of Welsh. They feel that many learners are happy to speak in Welsh, but reluctant to use their Welsh language writing skills. The partnership plans to continue to explore possibilities with their wider partners and to develop the Welsh language skills of existing staff through continuing professional development.