



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

**Grwp Llandrillo Menai Consortium
Llandudno Road
Rhos-on-Sea
Colwyn Bay
LL28 4HZ**

Date of inspection: November 2013

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:

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

The Llandrillo consortium was established in 2010 and consisted of Coleg Llandrillo, Arfon Dwyfor Training (ADT) and North Wales Training (NWT). Following the merger of Coleg Llandrillo and Coleg Menai, Coleg Menai joined the consortium in 2012. The consortium was thereafter called Grwp Llandrillo Menai Consortium. The first full year of data for the new consortium was 2012-2013. All constituent organisations have equal status in the consortium and have representation on all management groups.

The three organisations, Grwp Llandrillo Menai, ADT and NWT remain as separate bodies but work together mainly across North West Wales. However, the consortium also has substantial provision in Mid and South Wales. The current contract for the delivery of work-based learning (WBL) has a value of £10.9m.

The consortium delivers apprenticeships training in the following areas:

- Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
- Arts, Media & Publishing
- Business, Administration and Law
- Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
- Education and Training
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
- Hair and Beauty
- Health, Public Services and Care
- Hospitality and Catering
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Retailing and Customer Service
- Information and Communication Technology

The consortium also offers traineeships training in the following areas:

- Health / Child Care
- Princes Trust
- Hairdressing
- Hospitality & Retail
- Sports
- Engineering

At the time of the inspection, the consortium has approximately 3,000 work-based learners undertaking training on Welsh Government (WG) funded programmes.

Summary

The provider's current performance	Good
The provider's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

Overall, the rates at which learners attain their full qualification frameworks are good. Unverified data shows that attainment rates are continuing to improve across almost all programme areas. Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe in their training environments.

The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good overall with a few examples of excellent practice. Overall, the quality of care support and guidance is good and learners are supported well to help them develop their education and employability skills.

Learners have access to a very wide range of training programmes and good to excellent training resources and facilities for both on and off-the-job training.

Senior managers provide effective strategic direction and set clear targets for the delivery of work-based learning (WBL).

Prospects for improvement

The Consortium's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- strategic leaders and managers have a clear focus and comprehensive strategy for effective consortium working;
- the consortium's senior management team has a clear vision and fully understands what it takes to become an excellent deliverer of training;
- there are excellent and effective working relationships with consortium partners, employers and the wider community;
- there is a high degree of openness, trust and equality between partners, which drives the pursuit of continual improvement;
- the rates at which learners attain their training frameworks and other qualifications are continuing to improve and are above national benchmarks in almost all learning programmes;
- there is a very wide curriculum offer that includes innovative programmes for three national employers;
- there are very effective lines of communication across all of the consortium's key partners and its stakeholders; and
- the consortium invests in very high quality learning environments and resources for learners.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the rates at which leavers attain their frameworks and other qualifications
- R2 Include specific short-term literacy and numeracy targets in reviews
- R3 Make sure that quality systems impact fully on the drive for raising standards of all learners
- R4 Extend the excellent practice in bilingual delivery across all provision

What happens next?

Estyn requires the consortium to address the recommendations from the inspection and send the improvement plan to DfES as part of the regular improvement planning cycle.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Overall, the rates at which learners completed their programme and gained their framework qualification in 2011-2012 were just above the national average. The success rates have improved over the last two years, and unverified data for 2012-2013 shows further significant improvement. The rates at which learners on traineeships and preparation for work programmes are generally around the national average. Many learners progress well from one level to the next. Most learners complete their qualifications by their target date. The rates at which learners complete and attain their Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications are generally at, or above, the national average and in line with framework success rates.

Most learners on current programmes make good progress. Most learners observed show consistently good and sometimes excellent practical and theory skills. For example, two learners following a level 2 management programme, working in 'lean manufacturing' (a strategy that seeks to eliminate waste during the manufacturing process), used their newly acquired knowledge and skills very effectively in their new leadership roles to increase production and productivity by reducing waste in all its forms.

Nearly all learners understand the requirements of their individual programmes and take responsibility for their learning. The standard of work in learners' National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) portfolios is good overall and contains a wide range of evidence. Learners' work is generally well presented and accurate with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriate to their level of study. Learners' written work shows many examples of improved grammar and punctuation as a result of the consistent use of a marking scheme, by assessors, which gives them detailed information on errors they make.

Almost all learners demonstrate good speaking and listening skills. They engage in discussion with their training advisers on a variety of topical issues. Generally learners are confident and able to express their opinions well.

Overall, most learners develop their spelling and grammar skills very well.

Most learners use a good range of vocabulary, often specific to their learning area, and express themselves well both orally and in their written work

Most learners' written work is well presented and accurate with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Learners know the value of developing good literacy and numeracy skills. Most learners know the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

Depending on their ability and initial assessment, many learners take the opportunity to achieve a higher level of ESW than is required by their framework. However, a

majority of learners do not develop their numeracy skills well enough within their programmes.

Around half of learners undertake training and assessment in Welsh when appropriate. Many learners converse in Welsh during on and off-the-job activities. In a few cases learners complete their e-portfolios (electronic) in Welsh. In many of the sessions observed, learners demonstrated good bilingual skills. Learners develop and make good use of vocationally relevant words and phrases. Learners with Welsh language skills within the learning group help to support learners with limited bilingual competence. Learners whose first language is Welsh also improve their English oral and written skills in bilingual sessions.

Overall, learners show good levels of enthusiasm and are well motivated to develop their learning, achieve their qualifications and improve their career prospects.

Wellbeing: Good

All learners feel safe, both in the workplace and within their training environment. All learners are aware of consortium procedures for reporting any personal issues or issues related to their training. However, when questioned, a very few learners quoted the procedures operated in their workplace.

Almost all learners have a good knowledge of health and safety and healthy eating and routinely confirm their level of knowledge and understanding of these areas in discussions with trainers and employers during their reviews.

Almost all learners are happy with their training programme and feel that they are using their time effectively. They develop the skills they need for employment and future personal development well.

Most learners participate enthusiastically in their learning sessions. They are highly focused and keen to learn, and behave in a professional manner. They tackle practical tasks with enthusiasm and support each other well. Many learners often take ownership of their learning and negotiate their own targets with their teachers and assessors.

Most learners enjoy their training programme and demonstrate very high levels of motivation and enthusiasm both on and off-the-job. In most cases their learning experience has a positive impact on their workplace skills. Nearly all learners develop and maintain good working relationships with their training staff and peers. Overall, learners' attendance rates are good.

Many learners are involved in fundraising and local community events. For example, apprentices at the Welsh Government have been involved in a litter picking voluntary scheme in partnership with a local drug and alcohol rehabilitation service.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Excellent

The consortium delivers a wide range of training programmes that meet the needs of learners, employers and the community well over a large geographical area. It offers good progression opportunities to higher levels of training, with levels 4 and 5 training available in the majority of learning areas. The consortium has increased the number of learning routes available and includes some specialist training for the energy industry. These innovative programmes are delivered for three leading national employers. The additional training provided by employers provides learners with greater opportunities for career development during their time with the consortium.

The consortium has a comprehensive literacy and numeracy strategy, and procedures that set a clear agenda for the improvement of the skills of all learners. It uses a wide range of high quality resources across the consortium partners. Very good electronic learning resources are available for both staff and learners. These include a literacy skills target ladder, frequently asked questions and a common marking scheme. The consortium has trained many tutors and assessors in delivering literacy and numeracy training.

Assessors and tutors use the outcomes of initial assessment effectively to plan training and identify additional support. They integrate the delivery of essential skills very well into reviews and training. The learning materials have a very strong focus on the vocational area.

The consortium is very proactive in the promotion of the Welsh language and the culture of Wales. It promotes bilingual training and assessment very well across all learning areas. Training staff provide learners with very good opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills. Many training staff across the consortium use their Welsh language skills well to give learners effective support. The consortium has developed a comprehensive range of teaching, training and assessment materials in Welsh. These materials are used in all learning areas and, as a result, many learners make good progress in achieving their training frameworks. Many learners make good use of the consortium's Moodle site to access comprehensive resources for Welsh language materials.

The consortium has a strong commitment to Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) and has recently published a strategic ESDGC statement. An ESDGC group is very active in supporting the effective embedding of ESDGC into training programmes. All consortium partners have appointed ESDGC champions.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the standard of teaching, training and assessment is good, and in a few cases excellent. Training advisers across the consortium have a wealth of up-to-date knowledge and occupational experience. They use their expertise and professional knowledge well to challenge learners to achieve high standards of practical skills

appropriate to the job role. They have very high expectations of their learners and are committed to improving learners' practical and knowledge based skills.

Training advisers and tutors plan and prepare on and off-the-job training sessions well. Training advisers use a variety of effective teaching and training methods at on and off-the-job sessions. They use a wide range of questioning techniques and sessions have a good mix of learner activity and tutor input.

Almost all trainers integrate literacy and numeracy skills into vocational training sessions well. Where learners are not keen to participate in these sessions, assessors are very skilful at encouraging and explaining to learners why these skills are important.

In learners' NVQ portfolios and assignment work, training advisers correct spelling and grammatical errors. They give constructive oral and written feedback to show learners how they can improve.

Training staff assess learners' work frequently and robustly, using a good range of assessment strategies in the workplace. They provide learners with good verbal and written feedback. Training staff have appropriate and up to date vocational knowledge and experience. They plan future assessments well to take account of learners' work patterns and shifts.

Training advisers review learners' progress regularly. Assessors and learners effectively agree and set targets to meet learners' qualification aims. However, targets are not always specific enough for literacy and numeracy. Nearly all assessors ensure that learners make good progress and are on target to achieve.

Assessors have very good relationships with their learners and employers. They understand and respond well to their learners' differing needs.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Overall the consortium supports, cares and guides learners well. It shares good practice across all members of the consortium effectively.

All partners promote health and wellbeing to a high standard. Most tutors and assessors know their learners well and provide them with very good levels of individual support. Training staff and learners routinely discuss important issues such as life work balance, health and safety and emotional health well in training sessions and reviews.

The consortium provides good quality resources, providing general advice on topics such as healthy eating and stopping smoking to support learners well. The consortium has also developed useful vocationally specific guidance sheets, such as 'working with asbestos' for construction apprentices or 'dermatitis awareness' for hairdressers, which provide useful advice and guidance.

Partners provide learners with appropriate advice and guidance before they start their training. They make sure that programmes are well matched to learners' career

aspirations and needs. The induction process provides a structured introduction to learning.

The consortium has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The consortium has effective support mechanisms in place to support learners with a range of additional learning needs. It employs a motivational tutor who provides very good levels of support for learners with additional needs, for example anger control and substance misuse. Training staff invite learners to identify any wider additional needs during the recruitment and induction process and refer those learners with identified needs to specialists for screening and support. The consortium provides specific training to a few training advisers to enable them to support learners with additional learning needs. The consortium liaises well with external agencies to supplement this support when learners require additional specialist intervention to ensure their wellbeing.

Learning environment: Excellent

The consortium actively promotes and re-enforces an ethos of inclusivity, equality and diversity for all learners regardless of their prior learning, personal circumstances or background. The consortium has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place that support its aims and confirm its commitment to prevent all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Training staff promote social inclusivity well and the consortium provides open access to the curriculum for learners from all backgrounds. The consortium has a very strong commitment to equality and challenges all forms of discrimination effectively.

Overall, off-the-job practical workshops and classrooms across the consortium are of a very high standard and meet the needs of learners well. All of the consortium's off-the-job training accommodation is at least good and very often excellent. For example, many hairdressing learners have access to a commercially operated salon and electrical power engineering learners and many catering learners have access to training resources of particularly high quality.

The consortium has made significant improvements to its accommodation, in particular on the consortium's site in Llangefni. On this site, the consortium has replaced the majority of the old buildings with excellent, up-to-date industry standard learning facilities. These new resources include a technology and construction centre, heavy plant facilities, light and heavy automobile training, and an electronics room with telecommunication facilities to allow remote off-site teaching. Consortium partners ensure that WBL learners have good access to these excellent facilities.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Excellent
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Leadership: Excellent

Since the formation of the consortium, senior managers have provided strong leadership and very clear strategic direction. Senior managers have made excellent

progress in developing and establishing a set of clear values and strategic goals for the delivery of its WBL contract. Communication across the consortium, by all managers, is excellent. As a result, staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the central role they have in improving the experience of learners.

Senior managers work well together to make sure that all consortium members are equal partners and are able to work together co-operatively. They have a shared ethos of trust and support, collaboration and partnership working. As a result of the strong partnership working, the consortium has increased the number of training routes available and improved progression opportunities for learners.

Grwp Llandrillo Menai's senior staff report regularly to the Grwp Llandrillo Menai governing body on WBL performance.

The consortium makes effective use of a range of benchmarking data and sets challenging performance targets for all programmes, based upon historical performance, national benchmarks and overall consortium targets. Senior managers monitor and review performance against these targets and compare it against national benchmarks and the performance of other training consortia. This has helped to improve outcomes, and to establish a greater breadth in curriculum and higher levels of engagement with employers.

All partners use the consortium's robust performance management strategy and procedures well to review the performance of teachers, trainers and assessors. They give staff very good levels of support to help them to improve their performance.

The consortium's managers and staff attend a comprehensive range of regular meetings. These meetings are effective in sharing information between partners and updating staff on a wide range of practices and developments.

The consortium is active in meeting the Welsh Government's agenda for the transformation of education and training. Managers and staff across the consortium are involved in local and national activities that include the local 14-19 network and the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW). The consortium contributes well to reducing the level of learners not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in the local area.

Improving quality: Good

The consortium has an effective approach to self-assessment. Following the mergers, self-assessment processes have been re-structured and refined to standardise and improve systems and procedures. These new processes have brought about improvement in learners' attainment and increased consistency in the performance of learning programmes across the consortium.

The self-assessment process involves all consortium partners, sub-contractors and their staff. The latest self-assessment report uses evidence from a wide range of sources, including the views of learners and internal inspection processes, and contributes effectively to the consortium's quality development plan.

Overall, the consortium makes good use of Learner Voice (LV) results. Managers use a wide range of methods to gather information about learner views, including the DfES Learner Voice questionnaire, a more detailed internal survey and feedback from learner representatives and individual learners. However, not all learners are aware of any improvements made or actions taken as a result of the LV survey.

The consortium has an effective quality group with senior representatives from each of the partners. The group meets regularly, considers a range of standing items and follows an annual quality cycle.

The quality group has developed a common approach to observing teaching, training and assessment, which all partners follow. This includes the use of a standard proforma, focusing observers on standards, training and cross-cutting themes. Each partner carries out their own observations, which peers across the partnership then moderate.

The quality group leads on an annual internal quality inspection using the outcomes of observations to establish lines of enquiry. This approach has, for example, been effective in identifying literacy as an area for development, which has in turn led to a focus on essential skills in the annual staff development conference, leading to an increase in the confidence and ability of staff to develop trainees' literacy skills.

The quality group monitors each partner's performance data as part of its regular meetings and carries out a rigorous analysis of completion statistics.

Underperforming programmes are identified and supported by a 'health check' quality audit. The health check is an effective method for providing purposeful support for programme teams. All of the programmes identified in March 2013 for health checks have shown improved performance.

The consortium has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspections of each individual training consortium.

Partnership working: Excellent

Overall, the consortium has excellent partnership working with a wide range of key partners and stakeholders. There is a culture of openness and transparency in the relationships with its members and sub-contractors. Together with a clear focus on the learner, this has laid an excellent foundation for the delivery of high quality training.

The impact of the consortium on learners has been significant. It offers a wide range of opportunities for learners and has improved learners' local access to training through the use of consortium members' premises and facilities. The transfer of learners between consortia members enables them to complete all elements of their training.

The consortium has excellent relationships with local and national organisations such as Community First, Youth Justice, the NTfW, the Welsh Government, employers

and schools. These relationships help in the development of the consortium's curriculum and in providing additional opportunities for learners.

The consortium has very effective relationships with a wide range of employers, including very large companies and small to medium enterprises (SMEs). These companies give learners excellent opportunities to develop their practical competence and theory knowledge, particularly in the workplace.

All training delivered by the consortium meets the employers' businesses well. There are excellent examples of bespoke training for national companies within the power and tourism industries, for example 'Linesman training', which is the maintenance of electrical power lines for a National Power company, and wind turbine maintenance for a National renewable energy company.

Resource management: Excellent

Overall, the consortium manages and deploys its staff and resources very well. All trainers and assessors have high levels of vocational competence and many have relevant and often up-to-date industrial experience. Most staff have formal teaching, training, assessing and verification qualifications.

The consortium is very effective in identifying the continuous professional development (CPD) needs of its staff. Managers prioritise training opportunities very well to meet the consortium's strategic objectives.

Staff training places a clear focus on achieving excellence in teaching and learning. As part of the consortia's well-developed continuous professional development activities, four members of the WBL team have participated in the Welsh sabbatical training scheme to further develop their language skills.

The consortium manages its available resources very well in developing the use of technology, and there are a number of pilot projects currently under way such as the development of e-portfolios and the use of electronic tablets. Nearly all learners and staff have access to a wide range of excellent resources for teaching and training.

Financial management and planning are strong and managers have delegated budgets that they use appropriately to support the delivery of the curriculum. Senior managers monitor financial performance against contract delivery targets and re-allocate resources effectively to meet the needs of learners and provide value for money.

The allocation of the consortium's training budget is shared effectively between partners. This is well developed over time and is based on recognition of historical performance, national priorities and continued review of current performance.

The consortium has a well-defined estates strategy for extending and improving its accommodation and resources. Senior managers carefully consider the future uses of training campuses and the needs of WBL programmes when developing future plans.

The consortium partners have used their capital budgets very well to develop very good accommodation and facilities for learners and staff. Developments at Llangefni, Dolgellau, and refurbished facilities at Penrallt and Llanaelhearn for traineeships are of a particularly high professional standard. Work-based learners make very good use of these resources on a weekly basis. Most employer premises provide learners with good access to high quality facilities and equipment to develop their vocational skills and good accommodation for training, assessment and reviews.

The consortium provides good education and training for its learners. The consortium provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Learner satisfaction

Overall, the consortium makes effective use of Learner Voice (LV) results. The consortium performs higher than the WBL benchmark relating to both 'overall satisfaction of consortium' and in learners' perceptions relating to 'training expectations.' The consortium also performs better than the WBL benchmark in all of the key demographics (gender, age ranges, ethnic mix and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD)) and by programme type.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Stephen Davies	Reporting Inspector
Sandra Barnard	Team Inspector
Mark Evans	Team Inspector
Bernard Hayward	Team Inspector
Bernard O'Reilly	Team Inspector
Steve Bell	Team Inspector
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