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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

## **Quality and standards in education and training in Wales**

### **A report on the quality of adult community-based learning**

**in**

**Coleg Harlech Workers' Educational Association (North Wales)**

**May 2009**

**by**

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



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- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ local authority education services (LAES);
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
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## Introduction

Adult community-based learning is defined as educational provision for adults made by:

- local authorities;
- voluntary organisations including the WEAs and YMCA;
- further education colleges; and
- higher education institutions.

The provision is funded by the local authority and/or the National Assembly for Wales. It includes learning, which is funded by the National Assembly for Wales through the local authority, but delivered by a further education institution. It also includes learning, which is funded by the National Assembly for Wales through the further education college, but delivered by the local authority.

Estyn considers provision from a learner's perspective. In line with this approach, the adult community-based learning inspections are conducted on the basis of the learning provision available to learners within a 'travel to learn' area. In most cases, this is a single local authority area. However, in the case of Coleg Harlech Workers' Education Association (North Wales) the provision is spread over a wide area of Powys and North Wales.

The purpose of the inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings of adult community-based learning in order that the provider may improve the quality of education and training offered and raise the standards achieved by learners. The outcomes of the inspection are intended to give learners more information about the quality of providers of adult community-based learning.

All inspections conducted under the arrangements apply the following principles:

- the use of a common inspection framework which is common to all sectors of education and training in Wales;
- an emphasis on the providers' evaluations of their work;
- the involvement of a provider nominee who works with the inspection team; and
- the inspection of a sample of provision.

Adult community-based learning inspections are conducted using an approach largely based on Estyn's area inspection protocols. This approach considers provision from a learner's perspective and also takes into account the network of provision available in an area.

This inspection took place from 11 May 2009 to 20 May 2009. A team led by Her Majesty's Inspectors from Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the Welsh Assembly Government, undertook the inspection. The team also included two additional inspectors and three peer assessors.

The team has reported on standards achieved by learners, the quality of education and training provided, the quality of leadership and management and whether the providers deliver value for money.

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

The adult community-based learning inspection areas include:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE);
- Welsh for Adults;
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- Adult Learning; and
- Community Development.

Adult Learning encompasses all classes for adults delivered in the community. These include information and communications technology, languages and art and design.

Community Development includes community projects such as Communities First and Learning Community Accounts.

Each learning area is awarded an overall grade. Similarly, each of Key Questions 1-7 is awarded an overall grade.

### **Grade descriptors**

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	good with outstanding features
<b>Grade 2</b>	good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Grade 3</b>	good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Grade 4</b>	some good features but shortcomings in important areas
<b>Grade 5</b>	many important shortcomings

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)). The table below shows the terms that Estyn uses and a broad idea of their meaning. The table is for guidance only.

<b>Nearly all</b>	with very few exceptions
<b>Most</b>	90% or more
<b>Many</b>	70% or more
<b>A majority</b>	over 60%
<b>Half/around half</b>	close to 50%
<b>A minority</b>	below 40%
<b>Few</b>	below 20%
<b>Very few</b>	less than 10%

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires the providers to prepare written statements of the actions that they propose to take to address the recommendations in the inspection report and the timescales for completing the proposed actions.



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## Context

- 1 Coleg Harlech Workers' Educational Association (North Wales) (Coleg Harlech WEA(N) or the Association), was formed on 1 August 2001 by the merger of two of Wales' oldest adult education bodies. The Workers' Educational Association (North Wales) established in 1925 as the North Wales District of the Workers' Educational Association and Coleg Harlech, which was established in 1927.
- 2 The Association is organised around four regions and Coleg Harlech:
  - Wrexham, Flintshire and Powys;
  - Conwy and Denbighshire;
  - Gwynedd;
  - Ynys Môn; and
  - Coleg Harlech.
- 3 All regions offer a range of accredited and non-accredited courses at all levels. The Access to Higher Education course at Coleg Harlech is a University of Wales Foundation Certificate and offers courses in Multi Media, Social Studies, Music Technology and the Visual Arts. This is a unique course for the adult community-based learning sector in Wales as it recruits learners from disadvantaged backgrounds enabling these learners to gain the necessary qualifications to progress to higher education.
- 4 Currently each region has a full-time learning manager, development staff and tutors. Coleg Harlech has two co-ordinators. One is responsible for the short courses at the college, whilst the second is responsible for the Access to Higher Education course and is the Academic Site manager. The college also deploys a team of tutors to each of the four courses.
- 5 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) increased its learner numbers by 1% between the academic years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007<sup>1</sup>. It delivered more than 14,200 learning activities in the academic year 2006-2007, an increase of 9% from 2005-2006.
- 6 The Association provided data to the inspection team which demonstrates the curriculum it delivered in the academic years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
Information and Communications Technology	22%	20%
Art and Design	25%	28%
Welsh for Adults	7%	9%
Adult Basic Education	1%	1%
English for Speakers of Other Languages	12%	10%
Other Adult Learning	34%	32%

<sup>1</sup> Data taken from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

- 7 Other adult learning encompasses a range of courses including trade union studies, community development courses, counselling, a range of adult education classes and a number of classes delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.
- 8 The Association delivers many classes in partnership with a wide range of community-based organisations. These include the Caia Park Partnership in Wrexham and Dyfed Powys Probation Service. The Association also works with a few providers in the care sector such as Cil De Gwynedd, a charity that helps disabled people living in Gwynedd to play a full role in their communities. Coleg Harlech WEA(N) also works with employers to deliver courses in the workplace.
- 9 The Association owns its headquarters in Bangor and at Coleg Harlech. It has no central campus. It delivers its provision through a network of well-established community venues, across North Wales and Powys, and through its partner organisations.
- 10 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) works in partnership with other important organisations in adult community-based learning to organise its provision. These include the Basic Skills Agency, the Regional Support Centre, Careers Wales, fforwm, local authorities and other further education Institutions.
- 11 The Association receives two-thirds of its income from the Welsh Assembly Government. The organisation raises the other third from a variety of sources, including education contracts, fees, and European funds.
- 12 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has been included as part of the area inspections of adult community-based learning undertaken in North Wales and Powys since February 2005. These were Wrexham (February 2005), Conwy (November 2005), Denbighshire (February 2006), Powys (March 2008), and Flintshire (May 2008).
- 13 For the purposes of the current inspection, inspectors took account of all the Associations classes observed since the Wrexham inspection carried out in February 2005. The total number of classroom observations carried forward from these inspections was 48.
- 14 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) achieved the following institutional grades in these inspections.

	<b>Adult Learning</b>	<b>Community Development</b>
<b>Conwy</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Denbighshire</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>

- 15 A further 43 classroom observation were carried out during the current inspection.
- 16 We inspected provision in the following learning areas during this inspection:
  - Adult Basic Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
  - Access to Higher Education;
  - Adult Learning; and
  - Community Development.

## Summary

### Table of grades awarded

17 The inspection team judged the providers' work as follows:

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

### Summary of overall grades by learning areas

Learning area inspected	Inspection grade
Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	2
Access to Higher Education	2
Adult Learning	2
Community Development	1

### Standards

- 18 Many learners make good or very good progress in all learning areas. Most learners concentrate very well and make good use of their time in class. Nearly all learners are enthusiastic about their learning and a minority use their skills outside of the classroom to good effect. Learners' attendance is good in all the learning areas.
- 19 However, learners' completion and attainment rates vary too much across the learning areas. A few learners in ESOL, Adult Learning and Community Development do not challenge themselves enough to make sure they achieve very good standards in their work. A few learners do not use opportunities to practise their Welsh language skills in class.

### The quality of education and training

- 20 Overall, the quality of teaching, training and assessment is good. Most tutors have good subject knowledge and relevant skills, which they use well to help learners to make progress. Most tutors deliver sessions well and use a range of activities to

help all learners take part in their learning. However, many tutors do not use individual learning plans well enough to set challenging, learning targets or to monitor learners' progress regularly enough.

- 21 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides a very good range of learning opportunities for adults. It successfully recruits and delivers courses to learners from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds. It works very well with a range of partner organisations to recruit learners, plan, and deliver learning. These include health agencies, trade unions, community organisations and employers. In the majority of courses, there are good progression routes available for learners. In ABE, however, only a few learners can gain qualifications at pre-entry level. The Association has made good use of the Welsh Assembly Government's Cynllun Cymraeg, to increase its Welsh-medium and bilingual delivery in Gwynedd.
- 22 Coleg Harlech WEA (N) provides a very good level of care, support and guidance to all its learners, especially those in the workplace and on the University of Wales Foundation Certificate. The Association provides very good financial support to learners on community courses and at Coleg Harlech. Nevertheless, managers have not fully embedded induction in courses for community learners. There is a good range of information on courses in English and Welsh.
- 23 Many learners receive good support to meet their additional learning needs. The level of support for learners taking the University of Wales Foundation Certificate who have dyslexia or mental health problems is very good. Staff work well with partners to enable learners with disabilities in the community and the workplace to benefit from courses. However, tutors do not make use of support workers who accompany learners to classes well enough to help learners learn.

### **Leadership and management**

- 24 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has a clear mission statement, and a very good vision to engage learners. The Association gives a good lead to a wide range of strategic and operational partnerships. The governing body govern well. However, governors do not always have enough information to help them develop the Association's strategic vision.
- 25 Senior managers provide strong leadership and support to staff and most staff have a good awareness of national and local priorities and targets. However, managers are not always aware of the impact of plans. As a result, a few tutors are not fully aware of their role in delivering against the Association's plans and targets.
- 26 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has a sound self-assessment process, which involves staff at all levels. Leaders and managers know how well areas of work they are responsible for are performing and take good account of the views of learners. Managers observe tutors at least once a year. Most tutors are involved in an annual appraisal of their work. However, many tutors in the community are unsure of targets set for their course. Overall, there is a very good match between the finding of the Association's self-assessment and the judgements of the inspection team.
- 27 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has good arrangements in place to promote the professional development of staff. The standard of accommodation is good overall. Nevertheless, in a few cases, classrooms do not provide a good learning

environment. The Association makes course material and resources available to tutors via the internet. However, the resources available to tutors are limited in a few classes. The Association has good arrangements in place for managing its financial resources. It has developed a good electronic planning tool that monitors the deployment of resources to the curriculum very well. It compares its costs with similar organisations well. Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides good value for money.

### **Standards achieved by learners in the learning areas inspected**

- 28 In **Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**, learners' completion rates are below national comparators but are improving. Attainment in ESOL is well above national comparator. Most learners work diligently towards qualifications and many learners attain their learning goals. Most learners progress well in sessions. However, many learners do not use individual learning plans effectively enough to track their own progress. A very few ESOL learners do not challenge themselves well enough. All learners interact well together and show enthusiasm for their learning. In all classes, learners support each other well. Learner attendance in ABE classes is good.
- 29 In **Access to Higher Education**, most learners attain well in course work and pass most of their assignments. However, completion, attainment and successful completion rates vary too much between subjects. Most learners have developed a good understanding of their subject. They make good progress on individual projects and produce a good standard of work. Most learners make effective use of previous knowledge. They have a good awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Many learners apply themselves well in class. Most learners have good personal skills. They have high confidence levels and work well together. Many learners make good oral presentations and contribute well to class discussion.
- 30 In **Adult Learning**, attainment rates are good but completion rates vary too much between courses. The standard of most learners' knowledge and skills is good and appropriate to the learning programme although only a few learners achieve excellence. Most learners attend well. Most learners make good progress and use their new skills and knowledge very well in their jobs, at home and in the community.
- 31 In **Community Development**, nearly all learners work well or very well in their classes. Nearly all learners with mental health and learning difficulties make outstanding progress and concentrate well in class. Most learners produce very good levels of work and aspire to create high quality work. Nearly all learners improve their confidence and group work skills. Most learners use their new skills very well outside of class to good effect. Attendance levels are very good.

## Recommendations

- 32 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) should:
- R1 make sure that all learners strive to achieve excellence in their work;
  - R2 improve completion, attainment and successful completion in all learning areas and subjects;
  - R3 make sure that all tutors communicate learning objectives clearly to learners and use them to evaluate learners' progress;
  - R4 make sure that all tutors and learners make good use of individual learning plans to improve learning;
  - R5 increase Welsh-medium and bilingual provision across the Powys and North Wales region to reflect the linguistic profile of each area and make sure that all Welsh-speakers have the opportunity to speak Welsh in classes;
  - R6 review the ABE and ESOL provision to make sure that it reflects learner needs;
  - R7 ensure that aspects of sustainable development, global citizenship and Cwriciwlwm Cymreig are embedded in all learning areas,
  - R8 make sure that all learners have access to good induction, support and guidance;
  - R9 make sure that tutors make good use of support workers in community classes;
  - R10 make sure that governors have enough opportunity to consult with learners to help them develop the work of the Association;
  - R11 review the structure of management meetings to make the best use of resources;
  - R12 improve planning for improvement to make sure that:
    - all plans for improvements contain targets that are measurable;
    - all tutors understand the relevance of performance data to their work with learners;
    - all staff understand how national priorities, the vision and strategic priorities of the Association and target setting influences their role; and
    - put in place formal structures for disseminating good practice; and
  - R13 increase the resources and materials for teaching in all learning areas and make sure that all learners have access to good learning environments.

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

33 Overall learner's standards of achievement in sessions inspected are as follows:

Learners' standards of achievement				
Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
16%	67%	15%	1%	1%

34 The standards achieved in each of the learning areas inspected are as follows:

Learning areas inspected	Inspection grades
ABE and ESOL	2
Access to Higher Education	2
Adult Learning	2
Community Development	1

### Success in attaining agreed learning goals

35 In Adult Learning, Community Development and ESOL attainment rates are above the national comparator. However, completion and attainment rates are variable across the learning areas. In ABE, completion rates are improving but they are below national comparators. Eighty-one per cent of learners completed the Access to Higher Education course in 2007-2008 with a full or partial qualification, compared to 85% in 2006-2007.

### Progress in learning

36 Many learners in all learning areas make good or very good progress. Most learners concentrate very well and make good use of their time in class. Nearly all learners are enthusiastic about their learning and a minority use their skills outside of the classroom to good effect. A majority of learners do not use their individual learning plans well enough to measure the progress they make.

### Development of personal, social and learning skills

37 Learners' attendance is good across all the learning areas. In ABE, a few learners from the Probation Service, continue to attend classes beyond the terms of their probation orders. Many learners have good teamwork skills and contribute well in class.

38 However, a few learners in ESOL, Adult Learning and Community Development do not challenge themselves enough to make sure they achieve excellence in their work. A few learners in Community Development do not take opportunities to speak Welsh in class.

## The quality of education and training

### Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

The quality of teaching in the learning areas inspected				
Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade5
15%	61%	16%	7%	1%

- 39 Overall, the quality of teaching, training and assessment is good.
- 40 Most tutors have good subject knowledge and relevant skills that they use well to help learners to make progress.
- 41 All tutors show commitment to their learners and nearly all tutors have appropriate working relationships with learners that help learners to learn. Many tutors inspire learners to carry out additional learning in their own time and a very few tutors challenge learners well to achieve excellence. In the best cases, tutors have high expectations of their learners and set independent work regularly for learners to complete in their own time.
- 42 Most tutors give good verbal feedback to their learners during sessions. This feedback encourages learners to continue with their learning. A few tutors give prompt, written feedback to learners, either via email or in their files. This helps learners understand how to improve the standards of their work. In the best cases, tutors ask learners to evaluate their own work to develop their thinking skills.
- 43 However, a minority of tutors do not give written feedback in enough detail, or early enough in the course, to help learners to identify what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Many tutors do not use individual learning plans well enough to set challenging learning targets or to monitor learners' progress regularly enough.
- 44 Most tutors involve learners well in discussions. In a few sessions, tutors use questions well to check learners' understanding and progress.
- 45 Most tutors deliver sessions well and use a range of learning activities to help learners take an active part in their learning. In a few sessions, tutors do not explain the nature and purpose of the learning to the learners well enough. This means that the tutor and the learners are not able to evaluate progress in learning well enough.
- 46 A few tutors use Information Learning Technology (ILT) well to engage learners. However, many tutors miss opportunities to use learning technologies to vary the pace of sessions and to help learners to make better progress. In ABE, most tutors make good use of a range of real life materials, such as job application forms from employers, to increase the relevance of the learning.

**Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?**

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

- 47 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides a very good range of learning opportunities for adults across the North Wales area. It successfully recruits and delivers courses to learners from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, ethnic minority and disadvantaged communities, learners with dyslexia, ex-offenders and unemployed learners.
- 48 The Association works very well with a range of partner organisations to recruit learners, plan and deliver learning. It has very good partnerships with specialist agencies to provide opportunities for learners with mental health and multiple disabilities. The Association engages these learners well in activities that improve their self-esteem, employability and quality of life. These learners play a fuller role in community life as a result.
- 49 The Association works well with trade unions to provide a range of courses for their members. These include health and safety, bullying and harassment and the role of union representatives. As a result, learners improve their understanding of trade union policies and confidence as union representatives. Trade unions value this partnership. Coleg Harlech WEA(N) won a TUC Quality Award in 2008 for good practice in working with unions.
- 50 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) also works very well with a wide range of employers to deliver learning in the workplace. These include Tesco, RAF Valley, Sharp Manufacturing UK, Littlewoods Direct, and North Wales Fire and Rescue. These courses include ICT and flower arranging. Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides good online support for these learners. The majority of these courses are accredited and run in conjunction with trade unions. The Association has increased the enrolments on this provision from 316 learners in 2006-2007 to 661 learners in the current academic year.
- 51 The Association works well with migrant workers in targeted areas and makes sure that provision is organised around the needs of learners.
- 52 In the majority of courses, there are good progression routes available for learners from entry to level 3, and in a few courses to level 4. Most learners on the Access to Higher Education courses at Coleg Harlech successfully move on to either university provision or employment.
- 53 The Association has recently entered into partnership with the University of Bolton to deliver the first year of a degree in Special Effects at Coleg Harlech. Three learners have successfully progressed from the University of Wales Foundation Certificate to this course. They are preparing to continue their studies at the University of Bolton in the next academic year.
- 54 The Association has recently introduced pre-entry qualifications for learners taking ABE courses. It is currently piloting these qualifications with learners on Welsh-medium Basic Skills courses.

- 55 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides very good opportunities for learners to develop entrepreneurial skills. A retail enterprise zone in Coleg Harlech sells locally produced items and works of art. The Dynamo project, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, uses its social networking site well to help enterprises to get advice and share good practice.
- 56 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has good systems in place to consult with learners, employers, voluntary organisations and community groups to identify learning needs. It works well with its local learners' branches, learners' forums, and partnership networks to make sure that learners contribute well to course planning.
- 57 The Association actively supports many Communities First partnerships which encourages people back into learning. For example a drop-in centre run by Rhyl Youth Action Group; support for local bands in Blaenau Ffestiniog and the creation of a community website in Barmouth.
- 58 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has made good use of the Welsh Assembly Government's Cynllun Cymraeg, to increase its Welsh medium and bilingual delivery. It has substantially increased this provision in Gwynedd and offers a range of courses in Welsh or bilingually. These include art, local studies, basic skills, email, and digital photography, introduction to computers, music and publishing magazines. However, Welsh-medium and bilingual delivery is underdeveloped in other parts of North Wales.
- 59 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) actively promotes Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship and celebrates Welsh culture, history and heritage. However, the Association has yet to embed these aspects of the curriculum in all courses.
- 60 The Association provides many opportunities for learners to take part in activities outside of the classroom and celebrate their achievements. These include art and crafts exhibitions, award ceremonies and the publication of music magazines, poetry compilations and cookery books.

**Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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- 61 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides a very good level of care, support and guidance to its learners.
- 62 Friendly and helpful staff put new learners at their ease in almost all cases. Many tutors across the Association run taster sessions to help learners decide which courses will meet their learning needs.
- 63 Learners taking the University of Wales Foundation Certificate at Coleg Harlech, value the range of support they receive before and during the course. This includes help with study skills and with personal issues if needed. The Association has improved how it monitors drop-out rates from this course. As a result, it is able to provide more effective support to vulnerable learners in the first few months of the course to help them remain on the course. Many learners in the workplace access a good level of support from trained union learning representatives.

- 64 The student support centre at Coleg Harlech works well with development staff at regional level to provide support to learners in the community. This includes advice on funding for higher education and support for individual needs identified in individual learning plans. For example, the provider employs ancillary staff to help learners with communication difficulties or visual impairment. Nevertheless, managers have not fully embedded induction in courses for community learners.
- 65 Learners can access information on courses in English and Welsh through a choice of media. This includes a website that is appealing and easy to use. Brochures give useful information on ESOL classes in a range of other languages. The Association publishes an attractive newsletter that informs learners about opportunities and celebrates learner achievements. Learners taking the University of Wales Foundation Certificate make use of a handbook that provides detailed information on support services at the Coleg Harlech site.
- 66 Ninety-three per cent of teaching staff have current CRB checks. This figure compares well to provision in other regions. Almost all staff manage attendance and behaviour issues well. Tutors contact learners who miss sessions in order to offer support in overcoming barriers to taking part. In many cases, the Association consults with learners before fixing times for classes.
- 67 Many learners receive good additional support to meet their needs. The level of support for learners taking the University of Wales Foundation Certificate who have dyslexia or mental health problems is very good. Dyslexic learners access one-to-one support from skilled specialist tutors. Learners also have use of specialist equipment, including laptops, support software and voice recorders to help them learn.
- 68 Learners with mental health issues, taking the University of Wales Foundation Certificate, benefit from receiving 'Mental Health first aid' and counselling. However, many community development tutors do not make use of individual learning plans well enough to record and follow up on learners' support needs. A few tutors in the community do not use the support workers who accompany learners to classes well enough to help people learn.
- 69 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides very good financial support to learners on community courses and at Coleg Harlech. It has increased its financial contingency fund by £6,000, between 2004-2005 and 2007-2008. The Association uses this fund well to provide financial support for learners for books, equipment, accommodation, transport and medical treatment. The number of learners benefitting from this support has grown from 422 to 1,159 between 2004 and 2008.
- 70 The Association has also improved the support it gives to learners in the community to secure funding for their courses via Individual Learning Accounts (ILA's)<sup>2</sup>. Development workers have helped 125 learners to secure funds in the current academic year. This compares to eight learners gaining similar funding in 2005-2006.

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<sup>2</sup> The ILA Wales programme is targeted at individuals to provide an incentive, in the form of a discount on the cost of learning, especially those who are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, Job Seekers Allowance (Income based), Income Support, Pension Credit Guarantee/Savings or even Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

- 71 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) works well with Careers Wales to make sure that good careers advice and information is available to learners at Coleg Harlech and community-based learners. Careers Wales provided advice to 1,283 learners between 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 as part of Stepping Stones, a European funded project to provide progression routes to help learners access mainstream FE provision. Careers Wales have continued to provide this advice since the end of the project. In addition, members of the community also access careers advice at Coleg Harlech.
- 72 The Association works very well with its partners to provide specialist help for learners in the community. Dialysis patients at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd Renal Unit receive a good level of support when they attend art classes at the hospital. Learners with mental health problems in the Conwy area gain from the good level of care they receive through the Cam Ymlaen project<sup>3</sup>. This provision includes courses and support to ease learners back into learning and employment. The Association helps learners with disabilities in the Conwy area to access the support resources that AbilityNet<sup>4</sup> provides. The Association also uses links with the North Wales Deaf Association to provide good support for deaf and severely disabled learners studying ICT.

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<sup>3</sup> Cam Ymlaen is a project funded by the E.S.F. / E.R.D.F. to help people with Mental Health problems back into employment and/or training.

<sup>4</sup> AbilityNet is a registered national charity that helps people adapt and adjust their information and communications technology (ICT) to their individual needs.

## Leadership and management

### Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

#### Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

- 73 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has a clear mission statement, and a very good vision to engage learners. It works well across two Spatial Plan areas, seven local economic regeneration partnerships, and several Communities First and local action groups. The provider's vision ensures that provision meets learners' needs and means that the Association provides a good range of learning opportunities. The range of provision helps to engage learners from hard-to-reach areas, to improve social cohesion and break down barriers to work.
- 74 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) gives a good lead to a wide range of partnerships to support widening participation strategies. For example, they prepare joint bids for funding on behalf of a number of partnerships.
- 75 The highly experienced and professional governing body understands its role well, and governs the Association effectively. Governors work well with the senior managers to set the vision for the Association. Governors have put a good strategy in place to make sure there is a good mix of expertise and skills on the governing body. This has a positive impact on their work.
- 76 There are good systems and controls in place to make sure that governors can challenge leaders and managers and to consider the detail of the Association's work. As a result, governors are able to resolve any issues quickly.
- 77 Governors monitor the effectiveness of their own work regularly and make good use of the information gained to improve processes. However, the governing body does not have enough opportunity to consult with learners to help them develop the work of the Association. This is particularly the case for learners on classes run in the community.
- 78 Senior managers provide strong leadership and support to staff at all levels. The senior management team meet staff regularly. The newly established operational management team puts the vision of the Association into practice.
- 79 Managers have put in place good internal planning systems. They use these well to help them plan their work internally and with partners. This has helped to remove duplication of courses and to reduce the number of internal meetings that staff attend.
- 80 Managers have put good programmes in place to develop the skills and expertise of middle managers. This helps middle managers play a greater strategic role at regional level.
- 81 Most staff at all levels and many tutors have a good awareness of the Association's mission statement and its strategic plan, and many staff are aware of national issues. However, managers are not always aware of the impact of plans. As a result, there

is not enough emphasis on aspiring to excellence in delivering against these plans and a few tutors are not fully aware of their role in the organisation as a whole.

- 82 Tutors in most learning areas do not always have ownership of their targets. For example, targets include the national drive to improve tutor qualifications, essential skills and education for sustainable development. Managers suggest course targets and consult tutor teams on their feasibility. However, many tutors do not fully understand how they contribute to meeting these targets.

**Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?**

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 83 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has a sound and inclusive self-assessment process. It involves staff at all levels of the organisation. It draws on a wide range of evidence including classroom observations, performance data, learner evaluations and staff appraisals. Tutors receive a draft copy of the self-assessment report at regional tutor meetings. These reports result in quality development plans at geographical and Association level which clearly identify areas for development. However, action plans are not always measurable enough.
- 84 The Association works well with partner organisations including further education institutions and local authorities to run joint mock inspections. Leaders and managers have used the information they have gained well to improve the standard of provision in targeted areas.
- 85 There are good self-evaluation procedures in place for functional areas. Managers evaluate the performance of their areas well to support the Association in meeting the aims of its strategic plan. Leaders and managers have a good understanding about the performance of their areas of responsibility. They use a good colour coded 'traffic lights' system to identify good, adequate and poor performance at learning area and at course level. They use this information well to bring about improvements.
- 86 Managers observe all tutors at least once a year. There is a good strategy in place to provide support for tutors graded at or below the quality threshold. This includes additional support from line managers and peers. However, the Association has not yet fully developed its plans for disseminating good practice. This means that staff miss opportunities to benefit from the strengths of others.
- 87 Most tutors, including those who work for only a few hours a week are involved in annual appraisal of their work. These development reviews take good account of a range of performance information including session observations, learner evaluations and completion and attainment data linked to national and Association benchmarks. However, in many cases within community provision, tutors are unsure of targets set for their courses. They do not always recognise the relationship between the data discussed at performance reviews and their work in class. As a result, they do not use this information well enough to improve their work.

- 88 There are good systems in place to take account of the views of learners. There are regular opportunities for all learners to provide feedback through course evaluations. Managers review the outcomes of evaluations each term by geographical area, by course and by tutor. They use this information appropriately to improve courses. Learners on the University of Wales Foundation Certificate meet termly with staff to discuss issues that affect their work. These learners are confident that they influence the Association's policy and practice through their feedback.
- 89 There is a very good match between the findings of the Association's self-assessment report and the judgements of the Estyn inspection team. Overall, the Association has made adequate progress against the recommendations made in the last Association inspection report in 2003. However, it has made better progress in relation to areas for development identified in more recent inspection reports of adult community-based learning in which it has been involved.

**Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?**

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 90 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has good arrangements in place to promote the professional development of staff. The Association has a good staff development policy and processes that help managers identify staff development needs through performance management or professional development reviews. The Association provides a good range of training opportunities for its staff. These include, assessor training, participation in a masters degree course in leadership and management, ICT, Welsh, PGCE, Basic Skills teaching, use of whiteboards and tutor training. Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides good internal training to help staff improve their teaching and classroom management skills including, e-learning, blended learning, and health and safety.
- 91 Nearly all staff teaching on the University of Wales Foundation Certificate have teaching qualifications. Eighty-eight per cent of part time tutors have teaching qualifications compared to 81% across all inspections to date;
- 92 The Association monitors staff involvement in professional development activities well. It reviews the benefits of training as part of performance reviews. Many staff take advantage of professional development opportunities.
- 93 The standard of accommodation is good overall and very good in a few cases. Coleg Harlech WEA(N) makes good use of a wide range of venues across its geographical area. These include, schools, care homes, cricket pavilions, community centres and libraries. The Association achieves this range of venues through well-planned partnership arrangements.
- 94 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has begun to make course material and resources available to tutors via First Class and Moodle<sup>5</sup>. It currently has a limited range of material available. The Association has made sure that all tutors can access these resources, either at home or in the Association's premises. It provides regular training for tutors in the use of First Class and Moodle.

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<sup>5</sup> Moodle is a Course Management System (CMS), also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is a free web application that educators can use to create effective online learning sites.

- 95 The standard of ICT resources and equipment is very good in the Association's own buildings at Coleg Harlech and the Bangor centre.
- 96 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has good arrangements in place for managing its financial resources and setting budgets. The finance and general purposes committee monitors the use of finances well and provides good reports to the governing body to help it make decisions about expenditure. The Association appoints external auditors for both internal and external audit processes. The Association responds well to the recommendations of audit reports.
- 97 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) has developed a very good electronic planning tool that monitors the deployment of resources to the curriculum effectively. The tool has been set up using a database that captures information about programme areas, venue costs, funding targets, and classroom resources. The electronic planner enables the Association to report on progress against strategic priorities and themes, Weighted Credit Equivalent Units (WCEU) costs per region, course and tutor. Thus, the Association is able to benchmark the benefits and costs of courses. The Association makes good use of the benchmarks for further education institutions to compare their costs with similar organisations.
- 98 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) devolves budgets to appropriate levels well. Learning managers are able to build the curriculum at regional level within allocated budgets and provide a good steer to the Association. They work well with tutors to identify material and resource costs at course level.
- 99 The Association makes good use of its partnerships to increase the resources available to learners. For example, it has worked well with organisations working with adults with mental health issues to secure lottery funding to deliver learning to these adults. It has a good tradition of working well with other further education institutions across the North Wales area to lead and manage provision financed by European funds. The Association delivers many courses in venues provided by its partners, for example with the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Connahs Quay and with Cil de Gwynedd in Porthmadog.
- 100 Coleg Harlech WEA(N) provides good value for money. It uses its resources well to ensure that learners achieve good standards in their work; it has improved how it monitors the deployment of resources to curriculum provision and it works well with partners to increase the resources available to learners.

## **Standards achieved by learners in learning areas inspected**

### **Learning area: Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

#### **Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?**

#### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

##### **Success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 101 Attainment in ESOL is well above national comparator. Completion rates in ABE and ESOL are below national comparator. However, these are improving.
- 102 Many learners in ABE and ESOL attain their learning goals. Pre-entry learners work well with the tutor to set realistic short-term targets. However, a few learners in ABE and ESOL do not have SMART learning goals. This means learners are not able to measure attainment of these goals easily. In a few ESOL classes, learners do not identify learning goals that reflect the skills they feel they need to improve.

##### **Progress in learning**

- 103 Most learners progress well in sessions. In the best cases, learners identify clearly the progress they have made towards session objectives. In one ABE class, learners were able to identify the characteristics of a variety of exotic fruits. However, many learners do not use their individual learning plans well enough to track their progress effectively. A very few ESOL learners do not challenge their own learning well enough to make good progress in a session.
- 104 Most learners work well towards qualifications. One learner in an ABE class has made outstanding progress from beginner reader to entry three. This learner is a nominee for a learner achievement award. Learners attend well in ABE classes. A few learners in probation classes continue to attend beyond the terms of their probation order.

##### **Development of personal, social and learning skills**

- 105 All learners interact well together. In a pre-entry ABE, class learners work well together to draw up a contract to agree codes of behaviour. In all classes, learners support each other well and benefit from peer learning opportunities.
- 106 Nearly all learners show enthusiasm for their learning. A minority of learners apply the skills they have learnt in class effectively to situations outside of the classroom.

## **Learning area: Access to Higher Education**

### **Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?**

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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#### **Success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 107 Most learners achieve a good level of attainment in course work and pass most of their assignments. They are clear about their goals and know what to do to achieve them. Many learners achieve full or partial attainment. Eighty-one per cent of learners left in 2007-2008 with full or partial attainment, a 4% decrease in comparison to 2006-2007. However, completion, attainment and successful completion rates vary too much between the four subject areas in the University of Wales Foundation Certificate.

#### **Progress in learning**

- 108 Most learners have developed a good understanding of their subject. They make good progress on individual projects and produce a good standard of work. Many learners in music technology have excellent performance skills and a few learners have excellent ICT skills. In visual arts and multi media, learners are confident to experiment with a variety of media. Most learners contribute well to discussion in Social Studies. However, in a few lessons, learners do not make quick enough progress. In other lessons, learners make little use of ICT to present their work.
- 109 Many learners take a mature approach towards their learning and work hard to improve their learning skills. They keep good workbooks, portfolios or records of their work and make good use of them.

#### **Development of personal, social and learning skills**

- 110 Most learners make good use of previous knowledge and they have a good awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Many learners apply themselves well in class. They show good concentration, listen well, respect each other, and show high levels of interest. Most learners have good personal skills. They have good confidence levels and work well together. Many learners make good oral presentations and contribute well to class discussion.

## **Learning area: Adult Learning**

### **Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?**

<b>Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
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#### **Success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 111 Attainment rates are good but completion rates vary too much between courses. The standard of most learners' knowledge and skills is good and appropriate to the learning programme. However, only a few learners achieve excellence in their standards of learning.

### **Progress in learning**

- 112 Most learners enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic about the good progress that they make. Learners in an arts therapy class are able to identify how they can adopt new strategies to improve their work with clients who have health difficulties.
- 113 Most learners take an active part in discussions and many ask relevant questions. In a counselling class, all learners contribute well to agreeing their learning objectives. Most learners attend well. At the time of the inspection, the overall attendance rate was good.

### **Development of personal, social and learning skills**

- 114 Most learners use their new skills and knowledge very well in their jobs, at home and in the community. In one class, learners, who are health and safety officers and trade union representatives, make good use of role-play to improve their understanding of how to manage situations in their workplace.
- 115 Learners in IT classes use their skills outside of the classroom well. One learner carries out research on the internet and sends information about visual mathematics via email to her dyslexic grandchild. Another learner uses the internet for banking. Two learners use their ICT skills to improve the customer care for the family business.
- 116 Most learners develop their confidence and self-esteem. Many learners explain clearly how their learning helps to improve their health, wellbeing and self-belief.
- 117 Most learners learn well together and support each other's learning. In a creative writing class, learners share their writing with assurance. They show a high level of ambition and determination in their plans to continue their learning as an interest group in the community.

### **Learning area: Community Development**

#### **Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?**

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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#### **Success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 118 In Community Development, completion rates are generally good. Attainment rates overall are good and in a few areas very good. Nearly all learners are on track in class to achieve or attain. Learners attendance overall is very good.

### **Progress in learning**

- 119 Nearly all learners make good progress or very good progress. They work very well in class and complete their tasks. Nearly all learners show pride in their work and aspire to create good quality work. In a few cases, learners do not always take opportunities to speak Welsh in class.

120 The majority of learners with mental health and learning difficulties make outstanding progress in overcoming their health issues in their classes. They use opportunities to improve their life skills very well. For example, in IT, learners use a good range of skills such as word processing and digital photography to bring together pamphlets that they write and illustrate themselves. In art and craft, many learners use design, colour and creative skills very well to produce a range of high quality artefacts. Many learners succeed for the first time and are proud of their achievements.

### **Development of personal, social and learning skills**

121 Nearly all learners use their skills with confidence. For example, older learners in cookery sessions cook meals for family and friends. Another learner now cooks vegetarian food for his grandchildren regularly.

122 Most learners work very well together and improve their key skills. Nearly all learners, especially those with mental health issues, make very good progress in learning to work in groups. Learners improve and develop a better understanding of other learners' needs very well.

123 Most learners discuss their work and give each other good feedback. Many learners use opportunities well to join in with activities outside of class. For example, learners contribute their work to exhibitions and use visits to improve their understanding of their subjects well. In a few cases, learners sell their work to members of the public when they exhibit their work.

## **Providers' response to the report findings**

Coleg Harlech Workers Educational Association (North Wales) welcomes this very positive and constructive report on the Association's provision.

The Association is particularly pleased to note the progress made in raising quality standards across its activities in the period following the last institutional inspection in 2003. The progress made is an outcome of the high levels of commitment and the excellent teamwork shown by governors, staff, partner organisations and voluntary members in supporting the Association's mission and its aim to provide outstanding quality provision for its learners. We are delighted that the immense achievements of staff and students are recognised throughout the report.

We welcome the recognition given in the report to the high quality of care, support and guidance that is provided for our learners. The Association places a high priority on working effectively with partners across all sectors and is pleased that the report has seen this as one its strengths. The improvements noted in the delivery of Welsh medium and bilingual provision is also welcomed and we are delighted that the professionalism and experience of the Association's governing body is highlighted in the report.

The Association aims to build on these achievements and attain the highest quality standards across the organisation. The report provides an excellent platform for further improvements. The targets set in the period leading up to inspection were ambitious and our action plan to implement the recommendations in the report will encompass further challenges and high aspirations for the Association's quality profile in the future.

## Appendix 1

The inspection team consisted of HMI, additional inspectors, peer assessors and the nominee.

The team carried out 48 inspection visits and 20 meetings during May 2009.

The team visited:

- teaching sessions;
- a learner's branch;
- community venues; and
- events.

Members of the team held meetings with:

- learners;
- tutors;
- partner organisations;
- finance managers;
- quality managers;
- governors; and
- the Principal of Coleg Harlech Workers' Educational Association (North Wales).

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Liam Kealy	Reporting Inspector
Jo Fowler	Deputy Reporting Inspector
Gill Downer	HMI
Angharad Reed	HMI
Mererid Wyn Williams	HMI
Enid Hankins	HMI
Cefin Campbell	Additional Inspector
Nicola Shellswell	Additional Inspector
Catrin Verral	Peer Assessor
Mary Carter	Peer Assessor
Terrence Summerfield	Peer Assessor
Trefor Fon Owen	Provider Nominee

## Appendix 3

### Data and statistics: explanatory note

The statistics described in the report refer to the **National Comparators for Further Education and Work Based Learning** for 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 are based on **the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)**. These statistics are compiled by DCELLS from data supplied by individual organisations and institutions and provide comparative data for a range of courses across 15 learning areas.

The National Comparators enable inspectors to compare similar data for individual organisations and institutions and to make judgements about the performance of particular courses and learning areas within institutions and organisations. There are three main measures for learner outcomes:

- learning activity completion: the proportion of learning activities commenced which are completed;
- learning activity attainment: the proportion of completed learning activities which lead to the attainment of a qualification; and
- overall learning activity success: the proportion of learning activities commenced which lead to the attainment of a qualification. This combines completion and attainment and was formerly known as 'successful completion'.

Inspectors also use the **LLWR** to determine the size and scale of provision in an area and to compare the scope of each provider's provision.

### Providers' own data

Estyn considers that providers should be monitoring the performance of their ACL provision to assess the quality of courses offered to adult learners and to improve outcomes for learners.

Estyn asks providers to supply a summary of their own data before an inspection about the performance of individual courses and qualifications and report on:

- enrolments;
- completion;
- attainments; and
- trends over time.

Inspectors use the data provided to compare the performance of learning areas and individual courses with national comparators for completion, attainment and successful completion, where possible. Inspectors also use the data, along with first-hand evidence, to make judgements about the standards achieved by learners.