



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Response to the Estyn thematic review on  
the quality of education and training in  
adult health and social care**

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.



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**Report title:**

Subject Review: Care – The quality of education and training in adult health and social care.

**Report details**

The purpose of the thematic report is to provide the Welsh Government with advice on the current standards and quality of education and training in adult social care delivered by further education institutions (FEIs) and work-based learning (WBL) providers across Wales. The report also considers the quality of teaching, provision and leadership and management in adult social care training programmes. The report focuses primarily on training for care workers in residential care homes and other adult social care settings. Although the issues are similar the report does not focus on domiciliary care. The report does not comment on the relevance or suitability of qualifications as this is a matter for Qualifications Wales who, independently, have recently carried out a review of Health & Social Care qualifications.

**Summary of main findings.**

Increasing numbers of learners are undertaking training for working in the adult health and social care sector in the WBL and FE sectors. However, there is a variable picture of completion, attainment and success rates across the diploma levels in both types of provider.

Learners' progression through the levels of qualification is dependent on the nature of job roles and the willingness of an employer to provide opportunities for learners to gain experience, receive training and coaching, and be assessed for a higher qualification. As the role of a care worker is busy and demanding, circumstances at work are often not conducive to extra training and, as a result, progression is often difficult.

The teaching of person-centred approaches at all levels is ineffective in the majority of cases. About half of learners are unable to give a knowledgeable definition of person centred approaches, in their portfolios or when questioned, although assessors had still signed off the unit as acceptable.

Staff working in care settings need a good level of literacy and numeracy skills in order to understand and convey instructions, write reports and give medication. They also need to communicate effectively both orally and in writing with colleagues and people receiving care. In a few cases, assessors do not have good enough levels of literacy and numeracy skills themselves.

Employers are generally happy with the knowledge and ability of trainers and assessors from FEI and WBL providers when they are delivering level 2 and level 3 qualifications. However, in a few of the care homes visited, managers complained that the poor level of knowledge of trainers and assessors was contributing to an acceptance of low standards when observing and assessing learners' work.

Caseloads for assessors vary greatly and this can result in infrequent

meetings with learners meaning that some learners do not get the support they need to progress in their learning. A significant number of assessors believe that their caseloads are too large and that they are under pressure from providers to complete qualifications with their learners in as short a time as possible.

Service level agreements between the learner, assessor and employer are not always effective and providers do not take advantage of the skills and experience of employers or involve employers closely enough with the on-the-job learning and assessment.

#### **Recommendation 1 to 5.**

##### **Providers should:**

**R1** Improve learners' understanding of person-centred approaches and the teaching and assessment of these approaches

**R2** Improve learners' literacy and numeracy and the support, assessment and action plans for these skills

**R3** Ensure that assessors have manageable workloads so that their visits to trainees are frequent and long enough

**R4** Make sure that assessors have knowledge and skills at suitable levels to support learners fully

**R5** Improve service level agreements with employers and involve employers more in the training and assessment of learners

##### **Welsh Government Response:**

These recommendations are for further education colleges and work-based learning providers in Wales. There are some parallels with the findings of Qualifications Wales' recent review of Health and Social Care qualifications, which also identified some issues regarding assessment practices.

We will set up a working group with Estyn, Colleges Wales, the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW) and the Care Council for Wales to review the report's findings and devise an action plan.

#### **Recommendation 6**

##### **The Welsh Government should:**

**R6** Support providers to improve assessment practices and the training and competency of assessors by working with employers, the Education Workforce Council, Colleges Wales and the National Training Federation for Wales to provide professional development events.

##### **Welsh Government Response:**

Estyn's report highlights a number of concerns about the quality of teaching and assessment in both further education and work-based learning. There are some parallels with the findings of Qualifications Wales' recent review of Health & Social Care qualifications, which also identified some issues regarding assessment practices.

We will set up a working group with Estyn, Colleges Wales, the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW) and the Care Council for Wales to review the report's findings and devise an action plan. Some of the recommendations need to be addressed by individual work-based learning providers, and we will work with the NTfW's newly appointed Head of Quality to ensure that these are addressed. However, the review also indicates a

need for an all-Wales programme of continuing professional development for practitioners. We will consider this with the working group and will submit further advice to Ministers before the summer recess.

**Recommendation 7**

**The Welsh Government should:**

**R7** Improve the collection of data on the destination of learners

**Welsh Government Response:**

We recognise the need to improve data on learner destinations across all sectors, and have made a commitment to develop performance measures reflecting the Welsh Government's priority for skills and growth. We have obtained 'in principle' agreement to take part in the UK Government's comprehensive data linking programme, known as the Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study. This programme links data on learners in all phases to earnings and benefits data, allowing for the calculation of destinations measures as well as information to inform wider research on learners' progress and outcomes. We are currently discussing a timetable with the UK Government and hope to undertake a pilot matching exercise with Welsh learner data later this year. Further advice will be submitted to Ministers once the timetable is agreed.

**Publication details**

The report was published on 19 May 2016 and may be accessed on Estyn's website [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)