

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Condover College
Date of visit: 18 December 2007

Context

Condover College Limited (CCL) is registered as an Industrial and Provident Society and has charitable status. It is a small independent specialist residential college providing for learners aged eighteen years and over, with severe learning difficulties. Most have additional complex needs including visual impairment, profound physical disabilities, hearing loss, communication and challenging behaviour. There are currently 15 residential and two day learners funded by the Learning Skills Council.

Learners undertake a pre-entry programme of education for two or three years. Most residential learners are resident for 52 weeks a year, with 14 weeks funded by social services. The majority of learners who complete their programmes remain within the organisation as permanent residents.

Education programmes are based at Grafton within a new purpose adapted facility opened in November 2007. Residential accommodation is provided in small community based homes at Condover and Pontesbury which are few miles away.

Achievement and standards

Is the progress made by learners effectively captured?	Insufficient progress
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Baseline assessments are being developed but do not yet inform target setting effectively. Achievements of targets are recorded, but are insufficiently collated and analysed to give an overview of how well learners are making progress towards long term goals. The college acknowledge this as an area for improvement. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are not updated systematically or revised to ensure information contained within reports, such as those devised by speech and language therapists, are used effectively to inform learning.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in the development of basic skills provision?	Reasonable progress
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The college has an appropriate basic skills policy and implementation plan. The use of assessments to identify individual needs in relation to basic skills and communication is underway. A member of staff has been appointed with effect from January 2008 to drive forward further improvements required in implementing the basic skills policy. Literacy and numeracy targets are embedded across college provision but are not yet fully integrated within the learning activities taking place within learners' residences.

Do learners now have sufficient opportunities to develop work related skills through projects and activities?	Reasonable progress
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Work opportunities have increased and all learners have accessed some form of work related activity in the previous academic year. The college has developed links with local voluntary organisations to provide more varied work place opportunities for learners. The college plans to provide more curriculum based work activities matched to individual learner needs and long term goals.

Are there sufficient specialist services involved in initial assessment processes and ongoing support for learners?	Reasonable progress
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Specialist input into the initial assessment process has increased since the last Annual Assessment Visit (AAV). All learners have an initial assessment undertaken by a speech and language therapist. Reports are produced and contain very useful information on which to base learning targets in relation to the development of learners' communication skills. From January 2008, the college has identified an experienced member of staff to oversee the recommendations and implementation of these reports. The college has yet to develop a formalised system to monitor the effectiveness of the specialist support provided to ensure learners' make good progress.

Leadership and management

Has the rigor of self assessment and quality assurance processes improved since the last AAV?	Insufficient progress
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Self assessment processes involve all staff, learners and stakeholders. The self assessment report is appropriately evaluative and identifies key areas for improvement well. However, evidence to support some of the judgements contained within the report is insufficiently robust and some strengths are overstated. Quality assurance processes are still in the early stages of development. There are now detailed teaching observation guidelines and procedures with a clear focus on learning outcomes. Steps have been taken to ensure consistency of judgments in teaching and learning. However, there have been delays in implementing the observation scheme fully. Although quality assurance checks and monitoring systems have been identified, there is no clear quality improvement cycle to ensure these are carried out in a timely manner so that areas for improvement can be identified effectively and acted upon quickly.

Is the college now fully compliant with equalities legislation?	No discernable progress
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The college has been slow to respond to the new regulations in relation to equalities legislation. There is a policy in place in relation to equal opportunities. However, there is no action plan in relation to disability, gender or race to ensure its effective implementation.