

Children and Young People Committee

Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour

AB05. Associated Community Training (ACT)



## **Evidence to Children and Young People committee**

### **Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour**

Associated Community Training (ACT) was established in 1988 and has since gained a reputation as one of the most innovative and professional training providers in Wales, delivering World Class Training.

ACT, who trained approximately 5000 apprentices last year have a overall 90% framework achievement rate for its apprenticeship programmes, which is 10% above the national performance.

ACT now employs over 200 members of staff across Wales. Named in the prestigious Sunday Times Top 100 List of Best Small Companies to Work For, the company has three training centres in Cardiff, as well as centres in Caerphilly, Bridgend and Wrexham.

ACT offer a unique, ground-breaking range of accredited training and employment services, which has assisted us to consistently achieve the highest levels in both learner results and their personal development. From this, ACT has become one of the Welsh Government's leading skills training providers.

ACT has developed close relationships with many strategic customers. These employers value both highly trained staff and ACT's ability to offer innovative solutions in-house or through their unique network of strategic partners.

More information can be found on the website: <http://www.acttraining.org.uk/>

## **Ocean Park Academy**

In October 2012, ACT opened a centre to deliver highly engaging learning programmes for young people who are disengaged from pre16 education. The Academy is based in Ocean Park House, East Tyndall Street, Splott, Cardiff.

### **Provision**

Our approach is aimed at;

All Students undertaking work related training and development in the areas that the young people are interested in.

- Personal development in the following
- Financial literacy
- Making choices
- Working collaboratively
- Safe lifestyle
- Positive relationship with food and drink
- Making things happen
- Learning through IOS technology, ipads and macs. Each student has an ipad.
- Personal coaching and support to excel

We are delivering the following qualifications;

- BTEC Work skills and SWEET (Personal and Social Development)

Level 1 Qualifications in,

- Construction
- Motor Vehicle
- Hair
- Animal Care
- Catering
- Music Technology and Media

Key Skills in

- Working with Others
- Improving your own learning
- ICT

From September 2013 we will be delivering the Welsh Baccaulaureate.

All learners have access to the following;

- Fishing
- Fitness coaching
- Residential and activity days and weeks
- Horticulture
- Cooking

We have adopted a new approach to learning by working in smaller groups with young people at the pace that they are comfortable with by using up to date technologies that today's young people are comfortable with to deliver valuable qualifications for the young people and schools.

## **Numbers of learners**

Since opening in September we have successfully engaged 45 young people in years 10 or 11 from across Cardiff and in Newport. These young people were all potential NEETS having been disengaged from mainstream education in the surrounding authorities. The majority of our young people are registered as Educated Otherwise and are no longer on school roll due to lack of attendance or challenging behaviour.

Unfortunately 2 young people have had to leave due to significant behaviour incidents, and 4 were removed by a school for financial reasons.

We have 7 more young people waiting to complete the referral process to join us in the coming weeks.

We are available as a full time provision and provide 5 hours of tuition per day; the majority of our learners attend 3 days a week and have been offered local tutor groups (PACC) by Cardiff Council for 2 hours on each of the other two days working on English and Maths.

## **Attendance**

Our average daily attendance is as follows:

Monday – 75%

Tuesday – 81%

Wednesday – 86%

Thursday – 80%

Friday – 60%

All learners are responsible for getting to Ocean Park independently; we believe that this is an important part of their preparation for the world of work. Few employment opportunities are available in their local areas and a need to travel is likely to be necessary when they move into further education or employment.

In order to improve attendance further we are working closely with families to offer support to them and learners to overcome any barriers that may be preventing their attendance, and looking at our curriculum to entice the young people away from the "long weekend syndrome".

## **Behavioural management**

We ensure that we take a different approach to behaviour management. Positive relationships with our learners and their extended families are very important to their success. We see negative behaviours as a behaviour only rather than a negative aspect of their character as a whole. We acknowledge that young people have outside influences that may be more important to them at the time, and are ever mindful of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

**Ruth Hanson, Academy Manager:**

*“From working within Pastoral roles in secondary schools in the Welsh valleys and Cardiff and subsequently within the 14-19 department of Cardiff Council managing Alternative Curriculum I was aware of the challenges that faced young people and the vast influence that social factors have on their education before taking up the role of Schools' manager for ACT Training.*

*ACT have worked collaboratively with the LEA since the development of Alternative Curriculum in Cardiff and have been providing placements on a day a week basis for three years. When establishing Ocean Park Academy we wanted to cater for the large amount of young people that were no longer receiving a full time education and be proactive to prevent potential NEET figures.*

*We have adopted a new approach to learning by working in smaller groups with young people at the pace that they are comfortable with by using up to date technologies that today's young people are comfortable with to deliver valuable qualifications for the young people and schools.*

*Some of our learners have previously attended PRU's but have left for a variety of reasons. Our approach to behavioural management and the way we work with our learners enables us to have a consistent approach and we have fewer confrontations and their behaviour has improved since being with us. I worked with some of our learners in their previous school settings and see the difference.*

*Young people place a large importance on the qualifications that they are studying. In order to engage the young person must know the relevance of each qualification and what it will allow them to do. This is also important for the schools that the young people came from as they are then able to claim the results against their data in the summer. We find that young people will put the effort in if they are able to understand the long term gain.*

*Being a work based learning provider the learners do not consider us to be part of the 'traditional education system' that they and possibly their families have already disengaged with. We are able to offer them a wide variety of courses to allow them to create a curriculum that includes both academic and vocational qualifications delivered by tutors who are specialists in their field. Establishing positive links with the LEA's, Schools, Careers wales and the surrounding Colleges also allows us to support them with their progression post 16.”*

Andrew Cooksley, Managing Director ACT Training

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