

# Robert Owen Communities

## Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 139246

**Name of lead inspector:** Margaret Swift HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 25 March 2015

**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Robert Owen Communities (ROC) is a registered charity which works to provide the care and support needs of approximately 400 adults with learning disabilities across Devon and Cornwall. ROC gained independent specialist provider status in June 2012 and opened its independent specialist college of further education for people aged 19 to 25 in September 2012. All learners have mild to severe learning disabilities and complex medical needs.

Learners are working at or below level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework. The vast majority of learning takes place in the community using resources such as leisure centres, libraries, other community venues and a wide range of work experience placements, as well as ROC's own specialist provision.

College learners mainly come from the Torbay area. All are day learners living at home with their parents or in supported living accommodation. All learners have access to respite services provided by ROC.

### Themes

#### Outcomes

#### **How successful is the college in enabling all learners to achieve their learning goals and progress on to appropriate and sustainable destinations?**

Learners make good progress towards achieving their learning goals on individual study programmes. For example, three learners successfully completed their programmes with ROC in July 2014, achieving all their learning goals and progressing successfully to their preferred destinations. Effective work experience helped one of these learners gain paid employment. Another learner went on to a local GFE college to take part in a one-year project which involves working across a wide range of roles in a local hospital. The third learner successfully moved into adult care with ROC, which was his intended destination. He is still engaged in education through a lifelong learning programme.

#### **How effective are staff in enabling learners to develop the skills and independence required for the next stage of their lives?**

Staff create integrated and individualised learning programmes with clearly defined goals, based on the needs and aspirations of each learner. All learners engage in a broad range of work experience linked to their interests and employment choices. One learner, who wants to work with animals, was so successful in his work placement in a dog-grooming shop that the owner of the business offered him part-time paid employment while he continued his studies with ROC.

Staff are particularly effective in helping learners develop their independence skills. Where required, staff work in the family home with the learners to help them develop the skills required to be able to live more independently. One learner, who started at the college in September 2014, has made such rapid progress in his travel training that he has already been able to use public transport independently.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

#### **How effective are staff in identifying learners' starting points and how well is the information used to create challenging and individualised learning plans?**

Staff carry out detailed and thorough initial assessments of learners' skills and educational standards, including assessments for numeracy and literacy. Staff use the information to create accurate individualised learning plans with clear goals and targets. The targets are clearly written and measurable. Staff and learners use the learning plans regularly and well to review individuals' progress towards achieving targets, but it is not always clear from the written records when the learners have achieved these targets.

#### **How effective is the recording, reviewing and planning of learning?**

Staff and managers collect a wealth of appropriate data and information for each learner. However, staff do not collate this information well enough and there is no clear overview of the progress each learner is making or which goals and targets each learner has achieved.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

#### **How well do leaders and managers plan the curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of all learners?**

Leaders and managers have high expectations of all learners. They develop and plan the curriculum well to meet the individual needs, interests and aspirations of each learner. The delivery of the curriculum, in which learners do most of their learning in the community, is particularly innovative.

The performance management of staff is strong. Managers have linked outcomes for each learner to individual members of staff so they can see how well staff help learners to achieve their goals.

#### **How well do leaders and managers ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment?**

Managers have fully implemented effective arrangements for observing teaching, learning and assessment. Coordinators carry out observations of the staff they manage and give graded feedback in frequent supervision sessions. Staff are set individual targets for improvement, which managers monitor carefully. More generally, common areas identified for improvement provide the focus for the training and development of all staff.

### **How effective are the arrangements to safeguard all learners?**

Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Staff record in detail all safeguarding incidents and concerns in the incident log and inform the appropriate agencies when required. Managers handled a recent incident, which involved the police, particularly well; a full review of the incident took place subsequently and protocols were changed to reduce the possibility of a similar incident occurring again. Electronic records are excellent, but paper-based records are not numbered or indexed. This makes it harder for staff to identify quickly how many incidents have occurred and whether there has been an increase in the number and type of incidents.

E-safety awareness training for learners is appropriate. All staff and trustees have regular training in safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults. Staff also have training in behaviour management, which is essential in helping to protect learners and keeping them safe.

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