

Scottish Government Programme 2017-18 - What are the Issues for CLD?

Much of the media coverage of the Scottish Government's programme for 2017-18 has focused on the volume of legislation – 16 new bills for introduction in 2017-18, adding to those already on their way through the parliamentary process. But what does it all mean for CLD practitioners?

While hard-pressed community workers may hope that the Safe Staffing Bill will create obligations on their employers to fill long-standing vacancies in their teams (it won't) there's a lot in the legislative programme that will be of little or no significance for CLD.

However, the programme is about the full range of actions the Scottish Government plans to take over the coming year, not just legislation; and some of the proposed bills definitely do have provisions that will matter for community workers.

Education – more than schools?

The First Minister re-states her “personal commitment” to “raise the bar and close the gap in education”. The proposals for putting this in to practice, including those for the “education workforce”, focus heavily on teachers. *Is the role of CLD practitioners as educators recognised where you work? Can you do more to make sure that it is?*

The Standards Council is working to ensure that the proposed Education Workforce Council is set up in a way that maintains and develops the distinctive identity and role of CLD. *We urge you to engage with this debate. - come along if you can to one of our roadshow events to find out more.*

If you can't join us at an event, **why not take part in the discussion on i-develop** (<http://www.i-develop-cld.org.uk/course/view.php?id=107>) or participate in our online survey <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CLDSCNextSteps> However you do it, make sure your views are heard by those making decisions.

Parental Engagement and Family Learning

The Programme makes a number of commitments about strengthening the role of parents in schools. For example, there's to be “a National Action Plan on Parental Engagement and Family Learning covering early years and schools and focusing on family learning in the home, parental representation and effective communication with parents”. *How do you see the role of CLD in this?*

After-school and holiday childcare

The Programme recognises “that it is not just activities during the school day that contribute to the success of our young people,” and commits to “develop a strategic framework for after-school and holiday childcare”. *CLD practitioners will be needed in the assessment of existing provision and exploring how to meet families’ needs better.*

Community empowerment

As might be expected, “empowering our communities” has its place in the programme. There are commitments to continue “to support Community Choices to encourage the spread of participatory budgeting”, decentralisation of power to a more local level and a “comprehensive review of how local decisions are made and how local democracy is working”, in preparation for a Local Democracy Bill to follow later.

Community development support?

Alongside the Community Choices programme, funding for the Empowering Communities and Climate Challenge Funds is reaffirmed. There is much less on how communities will get access to the support they need to take advantage of opportunities available – *we all need to keep highlighting the role of CLD practitioners in this and the need to increase the availability of this.*

“Community wealth-building”

One aspect of support that is highlighted is work with anchor institutions on how procurement activity can be better used to support local economic activity, and helping local enterprises to supply goods and services to these anchor institutions – “keeping money within communities”. *Do you see a role for CLD in this?*

Poverty, Human Rights, Culture

Building a Fairer Scotland

Commitments to use social security powers to ensure that people receive a service “based on dignity and respect”, “challenge” the rise of child poverty and defend “our social, economic, democratic and human rights” sit alongside policy for community empowerment, although connections are not spelt out.

What part can CLD practitioners play in empowering communities in ways that impact on this wider “fairness” agenda? How do we make sure the role of CLD in doing this is recognised and valued?

Dignity, equality and human rights for all

There’s to be an expert advisory group that will make recommendations on “how Scotland can continue to lead by example in human rights, including economic, social, cultural and environmental rights”. *Look out for opportunities to take part in the “participatory process” to develop the recommendations.*

The Scottish Government will publish and implement a Race Equality Action Plan and “press on with implementing our delivery plan ‘Fairer Scotland for Disabled People’ (including a section on “Active Participation)”.

“Culture for all”

There’ll be a Cultural Youth Experience fund, and the Scottish Government will continue developing a Culture Strategy for Scotland that is to tackle the inequalities in the cultural sector and in participation. An engagement phase this year will be followed by formal consultation in 2018.

Making Sure CLD is Part of the Bigger Picture

We should be confident that practice based on the CLD Competence Framework and Code of Ethics will impact on key areas of the Programme for Government for the coming year. *How can you contribute to ensuring that decision-makers at all levels know and understand this?*

As well as our own professional identity and role, another point of reference that continues to be important is the **Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services** – the “Christie Report”. It’s worth reminding ourselves of its core messages and priorities, which include:

- Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.
- Public service providers must be required to work much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision and thus improve the outcomes they achieve.
- Recognising that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities – not delivered ‘top down’ for administrative convenience.

- Working closely with individuals and communities to understand their needs, maximise talents and resources, support self-reliance, and build resilience.

These issues have been well-recognised, and yet can be easily pushed into the background as policy makers and service providers focus on their own particular responsibilities. *CLD practitioners focus on them day in, day out and we need to keep reminding colleagues that they are among the essential keys to success.*