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Professional Development: luxury or necessity in hard times?

As some CLD practitioners see their services facing further severe cuts and others brace themselves for the latest rounds of re-structuring, it's inevitable that investment of time or other resources in professional development will be under pressure. Some of your colleagues may see the Standards Council's approach as well-meaning but a bit out of touch: we would say professional development is important, wouldn't we?

Nonetheless we do say it's important, and intend to go on saying so. This is not because we think cuts in CLD provision don't matter, or because we're careless of the impact on communities or of the difficult situations that individual practitioners are faced with.

We think that CLD matters more than ever. If provision is reduced in quantity, all the more important to ensure that the quality is high. This is firstly the case because of the severity of the issues that many of the people we work with are facing; in addition, effective, committed practice in the face of adversity can also provide some of the most powerful arguments for the future of CLD.

So the Standards Council believes that commitment to professional development is at the essential core of what CLD practitioners and their agencies need to do in difficult times, which is why one of our main priorities in the coming months is refreshing the content, role and impact of A Learning Culture for the CLD Sector in Scotland. While getting work on this under way, we've written to CLD Managers in all the 32 local authorities highlighting the need for the CLD Plans that are to be published by September to have a strong focus on professional development.

The Learning Culture was the first CPD Strategy for CLD when it appeared in January 2011. The new version will include a refreshed strategy statement and a framework for action, and because the distinction between "initial training" and "CPD" no longer fits with reality, we are using the term "professional development" rather than CPD.

The Standards Council's Committee members are leading the development of the refreshed strategy; by June we aim to have the final version ready to take out to the field. We will be engaging with practitioners and partners across the country to plan the actions needed to "grow the learning culture".

We want the strategy and framework to be a focus for action and change. As a starting point for this, we're offering for your consideration some of the shared challenges that we've identified.

Professional development challenges

- **How has your professional learning over the last year improved your practice?**
- **What are your ideas and priorities for your own professional development over the next year?**
- **How are you supporting the professional development of your staff team?**

- **How are you developing your own capacity for leadership of CLD practice?**
- **What more can we do to embed learning in the way our organisations seek to achieve their goals?**
- **How do we ensure that the views of communities & participants on the quality & impact of practice inform our professional development?**

The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland:
Policy Commentary (Issue 7: April '15)

Community Empowerment Bill Update

The Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Bill has completed Stage 2 of the Parliamentary process, and the Scottish Parliament Information Centre's latest briefing on the progress of the Bill indicates that Stage 3 consideration will take place in late April/early May.

A large number of amendments were submitted and considered in committee at Stage 2. Among the subjects for significant debate was strengthening the Bill's provisions for community participation in Community Planning, in particular by "bodies [that] represent the interests of persons who experience inequalities of outcome that result from socio-economic disadvantage".

Amendments were accepted in relation to participation requests and asset transfer requests that similarly aim to ensure that the Bill does not only "empower those who are already empowered". A number of other amendments on issues that are relevant to CLD, such as the requirements for a group (or possibly an individual) to be eligible to submit a participation request, were withdrawn with the Government offering to put forward or consider similar amendments at Stage 3.

Opportunities for amendments at stage 3, which involves the Parliament as a whole, are more limited. It does appear though that some decisions that are important from a CLD perspective have still to be made. Stage 3 concludes with a decision on whether to pass the Bill as amended.

It looks certain that the Community Empowerment Bill will be passed in a few months' time.

What are the implications for the communities you work with?

How aware are the people you work with of what it may mean for them?

What more can you do to raise awareness and assist people to be prepared to take advantage of any opportunities arising from the legislation?

Information on the Bill, amendments and committee reports is available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/77926.aspx>

The Revised version of the Bill for consideration at Stage 3 is available at:

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Community%20Empowerment%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/b52as4-stage2-rev.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Community%20Empowerment%20(Scotland)%20Bill/b52as4-stage2-rev.pdf)

Community Development National Occupational Standards

The newly revised community development national occupational standards (CDNOS) have now been formally approved by UKCES (the UK Commission for Employment and Skills) and are available for use.

The Standards Council was the lead in Scotland for the refresh process, working alongside the Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL), Community Development Cymru (CDC), and the Community Work Education and Training Network in Northern Ireland (CWETN).



You can [access the Standards here](http://www.fcdl.org.uk/) and further information at <http://www.fcdl.org.uk/>.

There was strong participation from practitioners in Scotland in the review. We'll be talking to our partners at Scottish Community Development Centre and Scottish Community Development Network, and colleagues from the University of Glasgow who hosted the Scottish consultation event, about how we can make best use of the Standards to support and enhance practice in Scotland. In particular we'll want to look at how they can be used in conjunction with and to complement the CLD Competences and Code of Ethics.

Do you see yourself as using community development methods in the particular context of your work (for example as a youth worker or an ESOL practitioner) even if you're not a specialist community development worker?

Could the recognised standards for community development help you to enhance your practice?



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About us:

The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland is the body responsible for the registration of CLD Practitioners, the approval of training courses and the continuing professional development of the sector workforce.

Help shape our future, today

This policy commentary has been developed for members of the CLD Standards Council for Scotland. To receive the commentary direct to your mailbox, register with us today.

The registration scheme is open now for all practitioners including volunteers. True to our collaborative approach, the scheme has been developed for the sector, by the sector.

Shaped by the views and experiences of a wide range of CLD practitioners, the CLD registration scheme will continue the culture of dialogue and debate, championing a shared sense of identity amongst practitioners, providing a national voice for the sector, and reaffirming the importance of CLD in Scotland.

Become a member and you can:

- Engage in professional dialogue, nationally and locally
- Drive forward new developments in our sector
- Support and evolve peer-led learning opportunities
- Be involved in Standards Council events and activities
- Play a lead role in shaping the future of the Standards Council
- Have a key influence on policy initiatives and responses

The Register is open to all CLD practitioners who demonstrate the values, principles, competences, Code of Ethics and commitment to CPD that underpin the sector, with two types of membership, based on qualifications and experience: Registered associate members and Registered members.

