



**CLD Standards Council  
CLD Response to COVID-19 Survey  
Wave 1: Period from 17<sup>th</sup> March – 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## **1. Introduction**

The CLD Standards Council (CLDSC) are conducting a labour market survey for practitioners to complete monthly in order to track the CLD response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the UK and Scottish Government have responded by issuing guidance that has drastically altered the way we live our lives in order to keep people safe. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, workplaces, schools and shops have closed and movement is severely restricted. Individuals and organisations are seeking ways to deliver services to the most vulnerable under new and difficult circumstances.

For many CLD practitioners this has meant assuming a key worker role. From working in learning hubs and supporting communities to deliver vital services, to developing and delivering online learning resources for young people, adults and community groups; CLD is playing an important part.

This survey has been designed to:

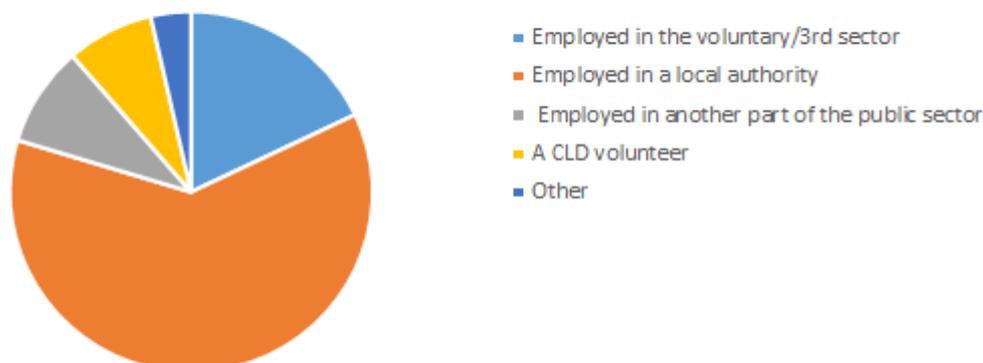
- follow up on the CLD workforce survey that was conducted in partnership with Education Scotland in 2018;
- provide CLDSC Members' with an overall picture of how CLD practice has been applied to services aimed at responding to the pandemic;
- gain an overview of professional learning challenges and opportunities and the implications for practice placements for CLD students; and
- inform Scottish Ministers and partners of the CLD impact and role.

The following report provides the key themes emerging from the analysis of the data received for Wave 1: 17<sup>th</sup> March – 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in respect of the:

- Respondents;
- CLD service delivery; and
- Resources used and required.

## 2. Respondents

### Breakdown of responders



### Where respondents are from and make up of CLD practice.

There was a total of 163 responses received with the majority of respondents being employed by a local authority. The data shows that CLD practitioners are applying their knowledge, skills and experience across all aspects of CLD i.e. youth work, family, adult and community learning, ESOL and community development (of the 163 responses, 119 people identified with youth work, 130 with adult learning and 122 with Community Development). There has been a blended approach to service delivery with a mixture of online / digital programmes and physical responses to community needs. CLD practitioners are working across 7 days per week including evenings. The workforce has been resilient, agile and quick to respond to young people, learners' and community needs. Practitioners are an essential link between people and Council, College, Community and Government, and are delivering, enabling or co-ordinating services such as digital skills, health advice, utilities access, community resources, welfare / employment rights, governance, befriending, food / medicine distribution, mental health support, community cohesion, education and learning. Key to this role has been CLD practitioners' access and knowledge of local communities and networks. Data showed that services are being directed towards at risk and / or vulnerable young people, families and community members with examples of people working with addictions, homeless, BAME, refugees / asylum seekers and disabled communities.

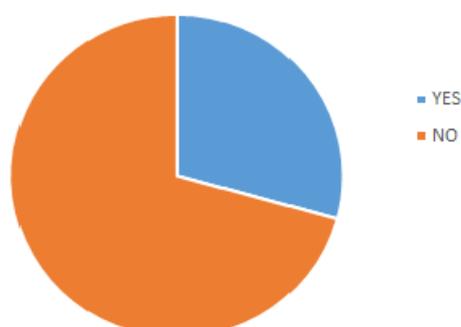
A significant minority of responses suggest that some employers lack clarity over the role of their CLD practitioner employees, and crucially its value in the current circumstances, with respondents indicating that they have been, or are concerned that they may be, re-allocated to what appear to be inappropriate roles; or have been given no support or guidance.

Data from the 2018 workforce research suggests that the predominance of responses from practitioners employed by local authorities reflects not the overall balance of the

workforces, but the greater difficulty in reaching CLD practitioners employed in the third sector.

**a. Respondents - Health and Well-being: concerns and challenges**

Q8. Do you have any concerns about your well-being at work in the current situation?



Whilst the majority of respondents (116 people) reported no issues with health and well-being, a number of concerns and challenges emerged from the data analysis. Some respondents reported increased workloads due to the overwhelming demand for CLD services. Concerns were noted about future CLD service reviews, budget allocations, uncertainty of future CLD roles and possible redeployment of CLD practitioners to social care and /or children’s services.

Some respondents raised concerns about their ability to access PPE equipment. Others noted that office buildings and resources being unavailable was problematic and that the lack of proper office furniture and equipment at home was impacting upon their physical wellbeing.

The data highlighted wide-spread challenges faced by practitioners personally, such as dealing with separation anxiety, family mental health issues, home-schooling, child-care, being in shielded categories due to age and / or underlying health conditions. Respondents reported stress and anxiety caused by these issues in addition to concerns for their families, staff teams, colleagues and volunteers.

Some respondents reported that working from home increased their stress and anxiety due to feelings of constantly being “on-call”, loneliness / isolation, too much screen time, technology glitches and the lack of instant, informal discussions and connections with colleagues.

Some respondents reported difficulties in staying motivated, establishing a daily routine and feeling useless. The data also highlighted the pressure associated with being the interface between individuals, local authorities and community groups and practitioners feeling emotional listening to vulnerable young people and adults.

## b. Respondents - Health and Well-being: support

Analysis of the data presented in Appendix A, highlighted a number of factors that are supporting CLD practice. Most practitioners responded positively to working from home due to flexible working hours and reduced or no daily commute to work. Some respondents reported that they felt supported by management, good risk assessments and access to PPE equipment. Some respondents shared that they would not be able to function without online technology. Practitioners recognised the support afforded by access to digital equipment and platforms that help them to engage and maintain links with colleagues, students, young people, families, learners and community groups. For example:

- Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facebook, Emails, Instagram, Skype
- Google classrooms
- I-develop
- Smartboards

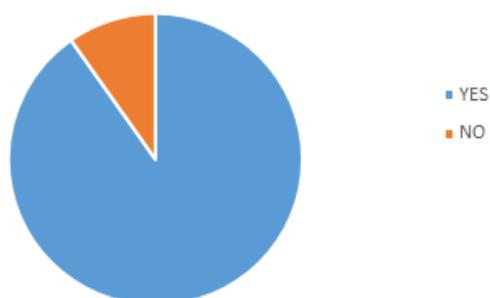
Respondents noted that daily walks were essential for mental health with some catching up on long-term pieces of work and reports on renewed focus on their own professional learning.

Respondents reported that the CLD sector was flexible, proactive and agile in its quick response to community needs. The data highlighted the pivotal importance of practitioners links to and knowledge of their local community. Emergency funding streams are proving helpful and evidence of cross-sectoral partnership work and communications.

Respondents highlighted the learning hubs as a support mechanism and reported that social distancing was helpful in physical working environments. Some respondents praised dedicated staff and volunteers and noted improved team relations at this time.

## c. Respondents - Access to Information

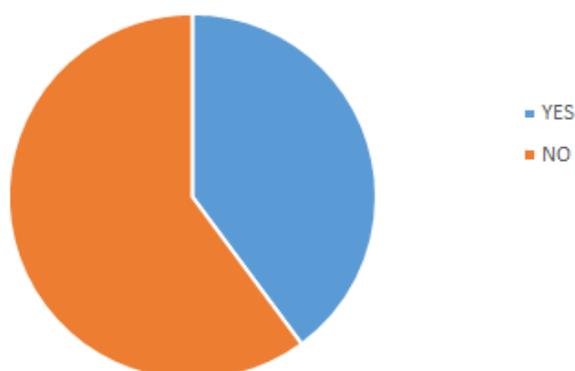
Q5. Do you have access to information that you need to enable you to work safely and in ways that meet the needs of communities in the current situation?



In addition to the support mechanisms previously discussed, 148 respondents have access to the information needed to enable them to work safely and in ways that meet the needs of communities. The majority of respondents noted that they benefited from regular briefings and updates from employers, digital coffee breaks and good information from national organisations such as YouthLink, Young Scot and the Scottish Government and felt that the pace and rate of communications and information was good. Some practitioners noted the use and application of risk assessments and highlighted good quality information, particularly for the third 3<sup>rd</sup> sector with regards to safeguarding, governance, finance and health and safety. Some practitioners reported that they had benefitted from online training tutorials and webinars.

#### d. Respondents - Technology

Q6. Do you have any issues over access to technology needed to work effectively in current circumstances?



Whilst 60% of respondents reported no issues with technology, a number of challenges were evident in the data. The data demonstrated that lockdown required practitioners to quickly learn and apply new skills and knowledge of various communication platforms with some respondents reporting a lack of confidence in using these resources.

The data also highlights variance in practitioners' access to technology. Responses suggest that some part time staff do not have access to IT resources, that some equipment is out of date and that the lack of printing facilities is problematic. Some respondents noted that IT equipment had not been provided by their employer and that they were therefore using their personal devices to keep in touch with learners and colleagues.

The data also highlighted a gap between employees' and learners' access to IT and digital equipment. Some respondents reported difficulties in linking and enacting local and national information for volunteers. The data indicates that some practitioners are



frustrated due to corporate firewalls that prevent them from accessing online systems and social media commonly used by learners and other partner organisations.

The data suggests that some CLD practitioners are working staggered and / or irregular hours in order to alleviate the pressure on IT systems that are slow. Poor WI-FI connectivity is also problematic in some areas.

### **3. CLD Services**

The data gathered in Wave 1 highlighted a wide spread of CLD activity ranging from direct engagement addressing community needs such as food and medical distribution, including organisation and co-ordination of community hubs, supporting communities to organise in response to new needs, working in learning hubs; to digital engagement addressing on-line learning needs and information sharing.

#### **a. CLD Strategic Leadership and Co-ordination**

Many respondents highlighted their leadership and strategic roles in the co-ordination of partnerships and services including directing resources and volunteers, implementing procedures and evaluations and supporting young people, learners, families and multiple organisations and networks. Examples include:

- on line discussion fora and virtual cafes for up to 300 residents across Housing Association Areas.
- information sharing networks at local level
- Individual organisations who support:
  - 115 community based groups and multiple community hubs
  - 427 learner led organisations,
  - 793 provider organisations to deliver adult learning in disadvantaged communities.
  - 220 learner organisations to train the volunteers to support more vulnerable adults who have been advised to stay at home.
  - Co-ordination and implementing local authority food resilience plans
- Surveys, engagement and policy work to support disability groups.
- Establishing and administering small community grants.

#### **b. CLD Services - Health and Well-being**

Many respondents reported being involved with aspects of health and wellbeing services for young people, adult learners and parents. The data shows wide-spread forms of support through regular text messages, telephone calls, social media platforms. Some respondents referred to providing counselling and mental health support through listening services, discussion groups and sign-posting to other bespoke organisations.

### c. CLD Services - Education & Learning

A large number of respondents were involved in delivering online learning programmes and webinars including: quizzes, challenges, arts and crafts, music, cooking, photography, literacies, ESOL, board and strategy games. The data shows that digital support included ICT tutorials and support for people and parents to get online, access GLOW and other platforms to support family learning and home-schooling. Some respondents were teaching and co-ordinating BA/BA(HONS) programmes for CLD students and the data shows that practitioners are involved in assessment and accreditation advice and support for learners. Digital engagement to support personal development and employability skills for young people and school leavers was also highlighted in the data.

Furthermore, the data shows that Adult Learning Tutors and Youth Workers were engaged in maintaining and offering one-to-one needs assessments and digital support for Dynamic Youth Awards, ESOL, Literacies, Gaelic, REHIS, SQA portfolios and other assessments. The data shows that practitioners were also signposting and supporting learners onto certified vocational courses.

### d. CLD Services - Local Authority Hubs / Services

Q4. Are you involved, or do you expect to be involved, in the work of the local authority learning hubs that have been established following the closure of schools?



Approximately 45% of respondents were deployed to local authority learning hubs with evidence of both Education and CLD colleagues being responsible for co-ordinating programmes and service delivery. The data shows that CLD practitioners of all specialisms are being deployed to the hubs and that practitioners are also supporting young people through the schools online offer in partnership with local, voluntary youth organisations.

The data demonstrates that CLD practitioners were working in the learning hubs over the Easter holidays and are working in the evenings until 8.00 pm, and weekends. Tasks include safeguarding / child-protection, youth work, family learning and the



development and implementation of learning activities and on-line learning programmes. Some practitioners were engaged in making and delivering school meals and medical prescriptions to families and the wider community.

The data also shows that some CLD practitioners were waiting to be deployed to the hubs and are unclear what their role is. Some respondents note that they have completed online training in order to be safely deployed to the hubs nearest their homes and were waiting on confirmation of their posting.

#### **e. Information and Advice for Young People and Communities**

The survey results indicate that CLD practitioners were heavily engaged in providing information and advice for young people, learners, families and communities via social media and regular emails to voluntary organisations and networks. Examples of digital signposting to other places of information included Young Scot, and Youth Space Fife, Scottish Government. Types of information required by people and community groups included employment rights, furlough and redundancy information, signposting to grants, welfare, finance, budgets, utility services and support and advice for groups regarding constitutional and governance matters. Survey respondents were also involved in supporting ESOL learners and tutors to translate COVID-19 information, literacy support for learners on how to stay safe online and information and support for family learning for home schooling.

In addition to a digital response, the data shows that CLD practitioners are also engaged in home and neighbourhood visits to vulnerable families and young people and are delivering learning packs and leaflet drops detailing service provision.

#### **f. CLD Services - Community and Community Group Support**

The data demonstrates that CLD practitioners are engaged in responding to community needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The data shows that respondents are offering staff support, advice and guidance to emerging community groups and creating digital spaces for community group leaders to meet virtually once a week to share information, good practice and identify needs and gaps. The data shows that CLD practitioners have been providing organisation support and advice to Community Councils and Centre Management Committees to helping them to support their community of residents.

CLD practitioners have been supporting foodbanks and involved in the co-ordination and distribution donations of food, cleaning and medical supplies. Some respondents are visiting vulnerable families and community members, conducting needs assessments. Some respondents have been deployed to children and young people's residential care homes and residential care homes for older people.

## 4. Resources

The data shows that the current resources used and required by CLD practitioners include:

- digital equipment, knowledge and skills.
- transport
- PPE
- mobile phones, top-up cards, dongles
- knowledge of and access to networks, communities, families and learners
- Learning packs
- budgets

### a. Resources - Key Organisations and Partnerships

Respondents highlighted partnership work across all areas of CLD service delivery including community, local and national organisations including but not limited to:

- Social Care Providers
- Scottish Government
- Young Scot / YouthLink Scotland / Youth Scotland / Volunteer Scotland
- Food-share initiatives / Foodbanks
- Crisis Support Teams
- Welfare Advice and Support
- Third Sector Interface Organisations
- Community Councils
- NHS / NHS Inform
- Social Work
- Housing Associations
- Schools
- Local 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Voluntary Organisations – youth work, community, adult learning
- Local Authorities
- Colleges

### b. Resources - Technology

Respondents raised the challenge of supporting learners with inadequate access to IT devices and the internet. The data also highlights that the current closure of libraries and community centres is an issue for learners, as these are the places where people usually access IT equipment and support.



## 5. Conclusions

Overall, the survey results highlight that CLD practitioners have been deployed to and utilise their professional, transferable skills and knowledge and that they are best placed to identify, engage and support people, learners and communities who are most in need. The data showed that practitioners and learners are conquering their fears to develop their digital skills and confidence. Some respondents reported feeling better connected with learners, groups, colleagues and the wider public.

However, the data suggests that practitioners would benefit from wider recognition of CLD and greater clarity about its role, with some respondents sharing concerns regarding long term funding and anxiety regarding the positioning of CLD. While the flexibility of CLD in responding to the needs of communities is a vital asset that is being amply demonstrated, some responses indicate grounds for concern that some CLD practitioners are being re-deployed in ways that fail to make use of their skills or to use this asset effectively. One respondent shared that paid CLD practitioners had been furloughed and that volunteers are being deployed in an effort to plug the gap. The data also highlighted issues regarding Pupil Equity Funding in respect of CLD staff employment and service priorities for learners and communities.

## 6. Recommendations

Drawing from the data, it would be reasonable to suggest that future CLD services should incorporate a better mix of face to face and digital engagement. Furthermore, respondents recognised the need to incorporate the impact of mental health on practitioners and service users when drafting post COVID-19 services. The following recommendations be considered and implemented by CLD partnerships and strategic fora.

- Quality assurance:
  - Ensure that CLD practitioners are utilised in appropriate roles that make use of their skills and their knowledge of communities.
  - Enhance and support CLD professional learning and CLD standards
  - Continue to promote Membership of CLD Standards Council
  - Encourage CLD Standards Mark for CLD professional learning programmes
- Technology:
  - Improve the quality and accessibility of the tech for CLD practitioners and consider developing a new or re-drafting i-develop into a single access IT platform for CLD.
- Communications:
  - Implement a full media and communications strategy to highlight and demonstrate the unique role and impact of CLD services and practitioners



- Evaluation of impact
  - Monitor and review the impact and demand for CLD services throughout this period of time.
- Finance
  - Monitor and review the impact of budgets and grants on CLD services and professional learning.

## **7. Examples of Practice**

- Community Media and Radio – Aberdeen
- Digital Engagement – South Lanarkshire Council
- Community Hubs – North Ayrshire Council