



CLD Standards Council Scotland

Response
to

Proposed changes to SSSC registration requirements

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About Us

The CLD Standards Council Scotland, as the Professional Registration and Standards Body (PRSB), is a place where Community Learning and Development professionals, students and volunteers can share information and learn from each other. We are a membership-based organisation, a Scotland-wide community of people committed to improving lives and supporting communities.

We believe that the work done by our members across the country really matters. We always aim to nurture their personal and professional development. That, in turn, helps them support and strengthen the communities they work in.

A further strand of our work is to set and maintain standards for what is expected from people working or volunteering in CLD across Scotland. We do that by approving college and university courses, supporting qualification pathways development, and by bringing our members together to share knowledge, learning and good practice, and to uphold collectively agreed standards from those working in our sector.

As a Scotland-wide organisation supporting those who are delivering essential work across the country's diverse communities, we are committed to using our collective voice to influence and inform those who lead, manage and fund CLD. As a member-led organisation we have a growing membership of over 3500 members, an executive committee and three functional committees which are made up of members from across the CLD sector in Scotland. Our approach and work plans to deliver our core responsibilities are defined by our member committees and based on feedback from the wider membership.

Our ministerially set core responsibilities are:

- Ensure the learning offered across our approved learning institutions is fit for the future needs of the profession.
- Develop and implement an inclusive and progressive tiered practitioner registration system.
- Establish baseline Professional Learning (PL) requirements for registered practitioners.
- Consolidate a sector-wide leadership role in relation to CLD workforce learning, practice standards, and qualifications.
- Develop our organisational governance and capability to transition towards a revised governance, funding, and operating model.

Vision

"Our vision is that the communities and people of Scotland are served by CLD practitioners that are recognised as competent, confident and committed to equality, empowerment and life-wide learning for all."

Mission

"Our mission is to drive high standards of professional practice in the CLD sector by the approval of professional learning, the registration of practitioners and the enabling of professional development, working with our members to be a voice for the profession."

The CLD Standards Council works with a wide range of organisations across CLD and education sectors, nationally and internationally. We are members of a number of organisations, some we have specific partnership or framework agreements with, and we engage and work with many others.

Organisations we have formal agreements with:

- AIEB (All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training)
- COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)

- Education Scotland
- GTCS (General Teaching Council Scotland)
- JETS (Joint Education and Training Standards – UK & Republic of Ireland)
- SCURL (Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries)
- Volunteer Scotland

Organisations we have membership of:

- BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland)
- CDAS (Community Development Alliance)
- Human Rights Consortium Scotland
- IACD (International Association for Community Development)
- Inclusion Scotland
- PARN (Professional Association of Research Networks)
- SCDI (Scottish Council for Development & Industry)
- SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)
- SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)
- TAG:PALYCW (The Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work)

Key Stakeholders and Partner Organisations:

- Alliance of Commonwealth Youth Work Associations (ACWYA)
- CLD Managers Scotland
- CLD Professional Learning Networks
- College Development Network
- CWA (Community Work Australia)
- LEAD Scotland (Linking Education and Disability Scotland)
- Learning Link Scotland
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Open University
- SCDC (Scottish Community Development Centre)
- SCDN (Scottish Community Development Network)
- Scotland's Learning Partnership
- The Young Women's Movement
- WEA (Workers' Educational Association)
- YMCA Scotland
- Youth Scotland
- YouthLink Scotland
- Youth 1st (Fife)
- Youth Highland
- Young Scot

For further information on the CLD Standards Council please visit our [website](#) and view our social media [cldstandards](#) | [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) | [Linktree](#). If you would like to discuss this response further, please email us on contact@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

About Community Learning and Development in Scotland

Community Learning and Development is a strategic and essential field of professional practice within Scotland's education system. It is critical to the successful implementation of education, equality and community focused policy and legislation, particularly where these aim to reduce inequality, improve life chances and remove barriers to learning. CLD supports lifelong learning, empowerment, social justice, and participation, while also strengthening families, communities and the delivery of wider public services.

The CLD sector is a unification of the three professional practice disciplines of Adult Learning (Including ESOL), Community Development and Youth Work, and was recently reviewed and reported on in [Learning: For All. For Life. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development \(CLD\)](#), which was undertaken by Ms Kate Still, as part of Education Reform, and commissioned by Mr Graeme Dey MSP, the then Minister for Higher and Further Education, and Veterans. It clearly evidences how CLD plays a vital role in meeting the diverse and often complex educational needs of people of all ages across Scotland, including children, young people and adults with additional support needs (ASN) and those affected by poverty, trauma, disability, health needs, caring responsibilities, language barriers or social exclusion. Through accessible, inclusive and community-based approaches, CLD responds directly to individual circumstances, lived experience and local priorities, ensuring that learning opportunities are flexible, relational, needs led, and rooted in trust.

Supporting Children, Young People and Families

For children and young people, CLD through CLD youth work, provides early intervention, prevention and targeted support for those who may struggle to engage with formal education or require additional or alternative non-traditional pathways to thrive. CLD creates safe, supportive and relationship-based environments where learners with ASN can access education, and develop confidence, communication skills, resilience and wellbeing at their own pace.

CLD youth work supports learning for life, learning, and work by:

- Building social, emotional and interpersonal skills
- Strengthening voice, agency and participation in decision making
- Supporting transitions into adulthood, training, education or employment
- Promoting inclusion, anti-discriminatory practice and positive identity

Importantly, CLD works with families as empathetic partners in learning, recognising that supporting parents, carers and siblings is crucial to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people with ASN. This whole family and community-based approach helps reduce isolation, increase understanding of support systems and strengthen relationships between learners, families, educational settings, services and communities.

Supporting Adults with Additional Support Needs

For adults, CLD plays a critical role in supporting those with additional support needs to re-engage with learning, particularly where previous experiences of formal education have been negative or inaccessible. CLD adult learning addresses core areas such as literacy, numeracy, digital inclusion, employability, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), health and wellbeing, parenting and independent living skills. These learning opportunities are especially vital for adults who:

- Experience disability or long-term health conditions
- Face poverty, unemployment or financial insecurity
- Have caring responsibilities or experience social isolation
- Require additional support to access education, services or work

Through strengths based, trauma informed and person-centred practice, CLD enables adults to build confidence, develop transferable skills and progress towards further learning, training, volunteering or employment, thereby improving outcomes not only for individuals, but also for their families and communities.

A Holistic, Community Based Approach

Across all age groups, CLD adopts a flexible, learner centred and inclusive approach, combining informal and non-formal learning with community engagement and development practice. Learning is codesigned with learners to ensure it is relevant, levelled, empowering and responsive to individual and collective need, including any additional support needs. By supporting people to identify personal and shared goals, CLD strengthens community capacity, enhances democratic participation and contributes to wider social, economic and environmental outcomes, including improved health, wellbeing, inclusion and sustainability. This community-based infrastructure is particularly important for reducing inequality and ensuring that learners with ASN and their families are not left behind.

An Integrated Professional Discipline

The three interconnected domains of CLD (Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work) work together as a single, unified professional discipline to contribute to Scotland's National Outcomes. The impact of CLD is greatest when these domains operate in unison, enabling whole family and whole community approaches to change. For example, CLD youth work supporting young people with additional support needs around confidence, employability or equality is significantly strengthened when complemented by community-based adult learning and community development that engage parents, carers and local communities to lead inclusive change. Guided by the National Performance Framework, along with the Competencies, Values and Ethics for the sector, CLD is a vital educative force that should be strengthened through focused legislation, recognition and investment.

Values-Based Practice

Fundamental to CLD practice across all settings are the values identified by the CLD Standards Council:

- **Self-determination** – Respecting individuals and valuing the right of people to make their own choices, including how they access learning and support.
- **Inclusion** – Valuing equality of opportunity and outcome, and actively challenging discriminatory practice, particularly for those with additional support needs.
- **Empowerment** – Increasing the ability of individuals, families and communities to influence decisions that affect their lives through individual and collective action.
- **Working collaboratively** – Maximising partnership working across services, sectors and communities, including meaningful collaboration with learners and families.
- **Promotion of lifelong learning** – Ensuring that learning is accessible at any stage of life and adaptable to changing needs and circumstances.

Legislative Context

In Scotland, CLD is underpinned by legislation through [the Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#), located within Section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. These Regulations require each local authority to publish a three year CLD plan setting out how CLD activity, including support for learners with additional support needs and their communities, will be delivered locally, as outlined in the [Community Learning and Development Plans Guidance 2024–2027](#). HMIE also produced the [Evaluation of Community Learning and Development in Scotland](#), alongside the wider piece around [Education Reform](#) in Scotland.

CLD has its origins in the period of change that swept through society in the 18th and 19th centuries. New industries, and changes in science, technology, land use and education dislocated or smashed traditional forms of family and community life, with the history of youth work starting with voluntary action through faith organisations. Over time, we saw the further development of adult and young people's education with development of the [Workers Educational Association](#) and the National Council of Labour Colleges, and then

the growth of community development as a response to the “rediscovery of poverty” in the 1960’s. The Alexander Report – [Adult Education: the challenge of change](#) (HMSO 1975) was a response to the persistent issues of disadvantage and advocated that “*Adult education should be regarded as an aspect of community education and should with the youth and community service, be incorporated into a community education service*”. In 1998, Mr Brian Wilson MP established a working group to “*consider a national strategy for community based adult education, youth work and educational support for community development in the light of Government priorities in relation to social inclusion and lifelong learning*” ([Communities: Change Through Learning. P14](#)). In 2004, the Scottish Executive published [Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities](#), stating “*Community learning and development should incorporate the best of practice undertaken in the fields of ‘community education’ and ‘community development’*. It should enable individuals and communities to make real changes to their lives through community action and community-based learning. CLD is an approach which enables agencies to work with communities and provide access to their involvement in learning, action, and decision-making.” These advancements were fundamental in bringing about the birth of CLD in the form it has grown into in the 21st century.

The following diagram was used in the 2012 Strategic Guidance on CLD for Community Planning Partnerships to illustrate the policy context for CLD in Scotland and continues to provide a useful picture of the pivotal role of CLD.



This response was compiled on behalf of the members of the CLD Standards Council.

Assumptions:

It is important to note that this CLD Standards Council response reflects insights gathered from previous online engagement with members through a variety of consultation activities and online professional learning opportunities. As such, it provides an indication of member views and experiences but should not be considered fully representative of the entire CLD sector in Scotland or the full CLD Standards Council membership.

Our Response to Proposed changes to SSSC Registration Requirements

The CLD Standards Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on proposed changes to Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements.

As the professional body for Community Learning and Development (CLD) in Scotland, the CLD Standards Council has responsibilities relating to professional standards, approval of qualifications, registration and membership, and the promotion of continuing professional learning across the CLD workforce.

While the consultation focuses on registration within the social services workforce, the proposals raise wider questions regarding professional recognition, public confidence, workforce assurance, qualification pathways, continuing professional learning and workforce mobility across related sectors. These are issues of direct relevance to the CLD Standards Council and its membership, particularly at a time when the CLD sector is considering its future workforce requirements through the Scottish Government's response to the [Independent Review of CLD \(Still Report\)](#) and the ongoing work of the [Strategic Leadership Group](#) on the CLD workforce.

We support approaches that strengthen professional practice, public confidence and opportunities for workforce development. We also encourage consideration of proportionality, workforce accessibility and the implications for CLD and social work practitioners who may be subject to multiple professional registration and membership arrangements.

Consultation Questions

Question 1

Do you agree that support workers, practitioners and supervisors employed within an adult day care service in Scotland should be subject to registration with the SSSC?

Response: Yes.

The CLD Standards Council supports the principle of registration for workforce groups delivering services to vulnerable adults where registration can contribute to public confidence, professional accountability and consistent standards of practice.

Registration has the potential to strengthen recognition of professional roles, support continuing professional learning and provide assurance regarding workforce competence. However, any future qualification requirements, learning expectations and registration arrangements should be proportionate and accessible. Consideration should be given to recognising prior learning, existing qualifications and professional experience to avoid creating unnecessary barriers to recruitment, retention and progression.

Question 2

Do you agree that practitioners, supervisors and managers employed within an offender accommodation service in Scotland should be subject to registration with the SSSC?

Response: Yes.

The CLD Standards Council supports the extension of registration to this workforce group. Many practitioner roles within offender accommodation services contribute to outcomes relating to inclusion, rehabilitation, employability, community integration and personal development. These activities often intersect with wider community-based services including Community Learning and Development. Registration may help provide consistent expectations regarding professional conduct, learning and accountability.

We would encourage SSSC to ensure that future registration requirements recognise the diversity of professional backgrounds represented within this workforce and support multiple qualification pathways into professional practice.

Question 3

Do you agree that social work assistants working in Scotland should be subject to registration with the SSSC?

Response: Yes.

The CLD Standards Council supports the proposal in principle. The introduction of registration may strengthen consistency, professional recognition and public assurance regarding the important contribution made by social work assistants.

As registration requirements are developed, we encourage consideration of flexible qualification routes, recognition of prior learning and recognition of professional experience. This is particularly important for experienced practitioners whose competence has been developed through substantial practice-based experience.

The CLD Standards Council is currently reviewing aspects of its own registration pathways and membership categories, including consideration of how professional experience can be appropriately recognised alongside formal qualifications. We therefore recognise the importance of balancing professional standards with accessible routes into professional recognition.

Question 4

Do you agree that all social workers who are employed in Scotland should be required to register with the SSSC?

Response: Yes.

The CLD Standards Council supports the principle that all social workers practising in Scotland should be subject to a consistent registration framework. A single registration requirement may strengthen public confidence, improve consistency of professional standards and create greater clarity for employers, practitioners and members of the public.

However, we would encourage consideration of the implications for professionals whose work spans multiple sectors and professional frameworks. Across Scotland's community-based workforce there are increasing overlaps between social work, social care, youth work, community justice, employability, family learning and wider Community Learning and Development practice. As a result, some practitioners may hold registration or membership with more than one professional body. We therefore encourage continued dialogue between SSSC and other professional organisations regarding:

- Recognition of professional learning across registration systems.
- Reduction of unnecessary duplication.
- Alignment of professional development expectations where appropriate.
- Workforce mobility between related professions.
- Administrative and financial implications for dual registrants.

The experience of implementing registration requirements across an entire profession may also generate useful learning for wider discussions taking place across the CLD sector regarding professional recognition, workforce assurance and future registration arrangements.

Question 5

Do you agree that references made within the Regulation of Care (Social Service Workers) (Scotland) Order 2024 to the 'General Teaching Council for England' and the 'General Teaching Council for Wales' are removed and updated respectively, to reflect the current position?

Response: Yes.

The CLD Standards Council supports updating legislative references to ensure they accurately reflect current regulatory arrangements. Maintaining clear and accurate regulatory frameworks supports transparency, consistency and public understanding of professional registration requirements.

Additional Comments

Areas of Shared Interest Between CLD STANDARDS COUNCIL and SSSC

We consider this consultation an important opportunity to reflect on wider questions concerning professional registration, standards and workforce development across Scotland's public services.

There are significant areas of shared interest between our organisations, including:

- Professional standards and ethical practice.
- Public confidence and accountability.
- Qualification recognition and approval.
- Continuing professional learning.
- Workforce development and progression.
- Professional recognition and identity.

While our organisations serve distinct professions, both share a commitment to supporting high-quality professional practice through standards, learning, registration and professional recognition.

Workforce Mobility and Dual Registration

Many practitioners work at the boundaries between CLD, social care, social work, community justice, youth work, adult learning, and employability services. As professional registration arrangements evolve, consideration should be given to practitioners who may be required to engage with multiple professional bodies and registration systems.

We would welcome further exploration of:

- Mutual recognition of professional learning where appropriate.
- Improved alignment of professional development expectations.
- Shared approaches to workforce progression.
- Opportunities to reduce duplication for dual registrants.
- Collaboration on workforce intelligence and sector development.
- Future Professional Recognition

The proposals within this consultation are being considered at a time when Scotland is actively discussing the future of workforce recognition across several professions, including CLD. The Independent Review of Community Learning and Development highlighted questions relating to the future recognition and status of the CLD profession, while the CLD Strategic Leadership Group continues to consider workforce development and sustainability.

Although the CLD Standards Council has not yet adopted a position regarding mandatory registration for the CLD workforce, we recognise the value of learning from developments elsewhere in the professional landscape. The experience of SSSC in extending registration requirements may provide useful insights for future discussions regarding professional recognition, workforce assurance and public confidence within CLD.

Conclusion

The CLD Standards Council supports the overall direction of the proposals and the aim of strengthening public confidence, professional accountability and workforce standards. We encourage continued dialogue between SSSC and professional bodies, such as ourselves, across related sectors to support coherent approaches to professional learning, workforce mobility and professional recognition, while maintaining the distinct identities and contributions of different professions.

We believe this consultation presents an opportunity to strengthen mutual understanding between SSSC and the CLD Standards Council as organisations with complementary interests in professional standards, registration, qualifications and workforce development. As Scotland considers the future shape of its professional workforces, including ongoing discussions relating to the CLD profession, there is clear value in closer collaboration between our organisations. We would welcome the opportunity to explore more formal mechanisms for partnership and cooperation, helping to ensure that practitioners working across community learning, social care, community justice and related fields experience coherent and supportive professional frameworks. Such collaboration could enhance workforce mobility, reduce unnecessary duplication, strengthen professional recognition and contribute to a more connected and confident workforce across Scotland.