CLD Standards Council Scotland

Response
to

The Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion

Phase 1: Call for Evidence

13th March 2025

Prepared by Vikki Carpenter
Development Officer: Policy

About Us

The CLD Standards Council Scotland is the professional body for people who work or volunteer in community learning and development (CLD) across Scotland. CLD is a field of professional practice which has three integral domains of practice; adult learning, community development and youth work. As a member-led organisation we have a growing membership of over 3325 members (inclusive of CLD: Youth Work practitioners), 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:

- Deliver a professional approvals structure for qualifications, courses, and development opportunities for everyone involved in CLD
- Maintain a registration system available to practitioners delivering and active in CLD practice
- Develop and establish a model of supported induction, professional learning, and training opportunities
- Improve and develop our organisational capability; and
- Collaborate and contribute to relevant CLD policy and workforce development information.

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 CLD and other sector organisations 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
- 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 (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 CLD sector, which is a unification of the three professional practice disciplines of Adult Learning (Including ESOL), Community Development and Youth Work, is an integral and essential part of Scottish education, as recently reported 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 Minister for Higher and Further Education, and Veterans.

Across Scotland, CLD is receiving considerable amount of attention at present, with the aforementioned recent Independent Review of CLD publishing the Still report Learning: For All. For Life, (June 2024) and the HMIE producing the Evaluation of Community Learning and Development in Scotland, and alongside the wider piece around Education Reform, as well as the significant progresses across community development policy including Effective Community Engagement Guidance "*planning authorities should work together with other council departments and key local partners who are also involved with communities, including community learning and development practitioners*" (p4) and Democracy Matters 2 "*To better support communities, a variety of participants called either for public bodies to be given more resources or suggested they should shift their resources to community decision-making bodies. This may mean diverting money away from historic decision making centres in large towns and cities, allocating resources to infrastructure bodies such as Third Sector Interfaces and Community Learning Development*" (p57).

CLD continues to play a central role in ensuring individuals of all ages, families and communities across Scotland reach their potential through lifelong learning, mutual self-help, and community organisation, as well as supporting the delivery of other services. Examples of high quality,

professionally delivered CLD practice are evidenced through improving opportunities for learning and development in rural areas, supporting learners of all ages to develop confidence, autonomy and skills, literacy, and numeracy support through to community art projects, Scottish Youth Parliament, community participatory budgeting initiatives, such as the national Youth Bank project, and supporting capacity building of community developments such as foodbanks and credit unions.

The purpose of CLD is still to support people to become empowered, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities, through learning. The three domains of professional practice which together make up the CLD sector (Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work), work collaboratively to make all of Scotland's National Outcomes a reality. CLD as a single professional practice area is a critical educative intervention role across Scotland that we would like to see strengthened through stronger focused legislation for CLD as a unified professional discipline. The Government's National Performance Framework sets out the strategic objectives for all public services. The three practice domains of CLD do not operate in a vacuum, but are intrinsically connected and interwoven, reliant on each other to ensure the long-term impact and change for the people and communities they are working with and supporting. For example, CLD: youth work interventions around employability or equalities will not be sustainable or as impactful, if the young people are returning to a home environment where those same interventions are not being had with their parents, grandparents or siblings through community-based adult education programmes and community development actions.

In Scotland, Community Learning and Development has a legislative underpinning through the implementation of the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, which are located as part of Section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. These Regulations require each local authority to publish a 3-year plan that details the delivery of CLD activity in the local authority area, as stipulated in the community-learning-development-plans-guidance-2024-2027.pdf.

The specific policy priorities for community learning and development as determined by the Scottish Government are:

1. Improved life chances for people of all ages, through learning, personal development, and active citizenship.
2. Stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential, and inclusive communities.

CLD is delivered in diverse settings and sectors, by practitioners with a wide variety of job titles and volunteer roles, working with people of all ages. This includes (but is not necessarily limited to) –

- Community Development (building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging with, and influencing decision makers).
- Youth Work, family learning and other early intervention work with children, young people, and families.
- Community-based Adult Learning, including adult literacies and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community, for example, people with disabilities, care leavers or offenders.

- Working with individuals and communities to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Volunteer support and development.
- Learning support and guidance in the community.

It is essential to further acknowledge that CLD plays a crucial role in supporting young people, adults, community groups and vulnerable people across Scotland to gain and access the information, skills and learning needed to respond to emerging and often challenging need. This was highly evident during the Covid 19 Pandemic, Community, COVID-19, challenge and change – Policy Scotland, Engage, Educate, Connect, Empower: CLD, Resilience and Recovery - July 2020 and as mentioned previously, most recently evidenced in the Scottish Governments Independent Review of CLD by Kate Still: Learning: For All. For Life. And in the HMIE report evaluation-of-community-learning-and-development-in-scotland-dec24.docx

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 and CLD: youth work.

Call For Evidence

As detailed in the previous sections of this response, we have robust partnerships with a substantial number of organisations delivering or supporting community learning and development across Scotland, as well as a strong and growing membership of over three thousand two hundred CLD practitioners. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can further support The Independent Commission on Community & Cohesion. Following are some initial areas for your consideration.

Governments Policy Role in Scotland

Scottish Government have a wealth of policies, strategies and guidance supporting community engagement, development and empowerment but often these are deficient in connection, approaches and aims and therefore producing barriers to supporting communities to grow and develop together. We also find that these documents often have a considerable lack of attention and detail regarding the people, human resource and skills required to achieve these community based aims. CLD, as the professional sector working across communities in Scotland know firsthand that to create a better understanding of community need, along with how human aspects of location and infrastructure interrelate and interact, you need the engagement, knowledge and drive of people from within those communities, and offering them provision from the CLD sector to support skills development enables meaningful engagement and truthful data gathering of needs from the ground up perspective.

As well as what is detailed in previous sections of this response, we would like to offer some additional links to policy and documentation we feel would be beneficial to be reviewed and considered by the commission:

- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- Community Wealth Building
- Democracy Matters 2
- Community-led regeneration - Regeneration - gov.scot
- Empowering Communities Programme - Community empowerment - gov.scot
- The Place Standard tool is a way of assessing places. | Our Place
- Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026 - gov.scot
- Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Plans: Summary of responses to the consultation
- Community benefits from net zero energy developments: consultation - gov.scot
- Social capital and community wellbeing in Scotland - gov.scot
- National strategy for community justice: delivery plan and updates - gov.scot
- Participation handbook - gov.scot
- Just Transition: draft plan for transport in Scotland - gov.scot

We welcome this commission and its clear recognition that some of the people in our communities are more vulnerable and therefore may find engagement in their communities challenging but that these are voices that need to be heard and should be given equitable opportunity to engage and have an influence in community development. We would suggest consideration be given to how this would look in reality, across Scotland's vastly differing urban and rural landscapes and communities, and suggest that specific thought be given to strategies such as Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, Rural Delivery Plan, and The National Plan for Scotland's Islands - gov.scot

Community Strength, Engagement and Cohesion

It is important to recognise that a growing number of CLD practitioners are volunteers within our communities and play a vital role in supporting individuals, communities and therefore positively impacting Scotland's wellbeing economy by fostering positive community relations and enhancing community voice.

The Improvement Service Model for the Future of Scottish Local Authorities references CIPFA's (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) recent report, Investing in regional equality – which draws a number of conclusions over what works. offering some key lessons learned such as "*Adequate and responsive funding: recognising where and when finance is available is important. Successful cities in this study redistributed funding and tax systems within their region to address regional and urban inequalities, making sure not to devolve power without appropriate funding*." And "*Diversification: avoiding focusing only on economic development, instead widening scope to cultural, social or spatial improvements."*

Due to the fiscal environment across Scotland over the past decade, local authorities are often increasingly reliant on the third sector and volunteers to fulfil their statutory obligations. However, this raises concerns as third sector organisations and volunteers are facing significant challenges. The latest SCVO Third Sector Tracker report (Autumn 2024) reveals that 76% of organisations have encountered financial difficulties, with inflation and rising costs affecting service delivery. *'CLD employers were also noting that the size of their workforce had changed, with a greater proportion stating that the number of paid workers in their organisation had decreased. Public sector employers noted that they were combatting reducing staff numbers by recruiting more volunteers. This suggests that employers in this area are having to mitigate the effects of diminishing budgets and staff numbers through recruiting a larger volunteer element to their workforce.'*

Additionally, Scottish Household Survey 2023 reports that volunteer participation has declined by eight percent between 2018 and 2023, reflecting the difficulties volunteers have faced in recent years. Worryingly, volunteers are often not recognised regarding the role they carry out and the impact that has on our communities. The Volunteer Charter provides ten principles for the sustainable and legitimate involvement of volunteers, including that volunteers 'should not carry out duties formerly carried out by paid workers, nor should they be used to disguise the effects of non-filled vacancies or cuts in services.' Volunteer Scotland report that the Scottish Government is signed up as a Charter Champion – pledging support and making a commitment to promote and adhere to the principles of the Charter.

Approaches and Interventions to Building Communities

National Standards for Community Engagement and International Association for Public Participation (IAP) are both important and useful in this context as there is a genuine need for robust and equitable capacity building support for our communities. It is not something that communities often have the knowledge and skills to do from a standing start themselves, so it is imperative that the national standards and IAP are embedded. The CLD Standards Council worked on the international standards for community development practice with the International Association for Community Development, and the IACD launched them at their AGM as part of the World Community Development Conference at the end of June 2018. The full standards guidance, and recommendations on how it can be used can be found on the IACD

website. Also, CLD Council has recently undertaken the review and creation of a range of National Occupational Standards (NOS) relevant to CLD practice, including the National Occupation Standards (NOS) for Community Development, which outline clearly the skills, values and processes required for effective and appropriate community development practice across six functional areas. This involved consulting with industry experts across the four nations within the UK, amending existing NOS where appropriate and developing new NOS according to the roles the sector representatives identify. We feel these would be useful for reference in this research. The National Occupational Standards can also be used alongside the CLD Competences.

We would like to see some assurance and a commitment from Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities that the significant investment and resources required by the CLD sector, individuals and communities will be made available to all involved. Ultimately this will enable the processes to be both a positive and a meaningful collaborative experience with the best outcomes for all.

The CLD sector is professional qualified in community development and therefore fully understands that co-production is an essential approach to ensuring fair and equitable commitment from all involved. Planning With People - Community engagement and participation guidance (www.gov.scot) states "*Co-production is defined by the Scottish Co Production Network as the process of active dialogue and engagement between people who use services and those who provide them. Co-production requires people to act together on an equal basis, contributing their lived experience, skills and ideas about what works to make our communities better. CLD practice offers that by supporting a Co-production approach, ensuring decisions affecting people are made with them, not for them*."

In Scottish Governments Planning with People guidance published by the Scottish Government on the 21st April 2023, it clearly states "Effective services must be designed with and for people and communities – not delivered, top down for administrative convenience. In order to be effective, community engagement must be relevant, meaningful and have a clearly defined focus." For this to happen this guidance must show commitment to this clearly throughout and requires the necessary commitment, funding and resources to be made available. Currently there are three strategic interventions (SI's) which Scottish Government hope will ensure Scotland's communities are healthy and sustainable places to work and live (Ensuring our communities are healthy and sustainable - European Structural and Investment Funds - gov.scot), and they focus on Green Infrastructure SI, Smart City SI and Natural and Cultural heritage SI.

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process where community members decide how to allocate part of a public budget. It started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989 and has since expanded to over 3,000 instances worldwide, mostly at the municipal level, giving people significant influence over financial decisions. In Scotland, we have a PB charter , which sets out what the process should look like at all levels.

Asset transfer, under the Community Empowerment Act in Scotland, allows community organizations to take control of land or buildings owned by local authorities, Scottish Ministers, or other public bodies. If a community group's plan benefits the people, they can buy, lease, or use the property. Scottish Government offer detailed guidance for public bodies and community transfer bodies to support this process across Scotland however reports vary on the success of

these transfers and you can access some case studies on the Community Ownership Support Service website.

Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Plans People and planning. There are some case studies to evidence this in action on the Improvement Service website.

Future Proofing: Roles and Responsibilities

As evidenced, there are a substantial number of plans, guidance and legislation which impact community empowerment, development and engagement. This guidance and authorities using it must ensure there is rigor around about these and that they align with each other, so communities and the CLD sector who works to support them are not stretched due to the level of duplication and replication. This could negatively impact the quality of engagement as well as the capacity of communities and supporting agencies.

Ultimately there is a requirement for change, and an acknowledgment that community voices are valued and respected and can impact on planning and guiding the development that is required for their local community. We welcome support for emphasising the importance of the community voice throughout all processes, and the critical role communities play, however there is an apprehension that control, and influence is never truly with, and part of, a community's power (e.g. local authorities can deny planning, developments can be overturned by the Scottish reporter etc). Historically and culturally decision-making power often lies out with the community so a considerable amount of work around these new approaches, the flow of communication, as well as developing trust and understanding from all parties will be needed. Without these community members may feel contempt, frustration and disempowerment, with engagement being seen as another tokenistic and "being done to" initiative by community planning and ultimately the local authority. We would like this commission to consider what assurances will communities be offered on the completion of this research and its findings?

We call for a strong and clear pledge from the UK and Scottish Government, as well as the thirty-two local authorities across Scotland, to commit to the principles of Fair Funding, which includes longer term funding models for community groups and organisations, around all community development activity. It is critical that there is an assurance and a guarantee from public bodies, as this will assist in developing relationships, continued support and meaningful engagement from individuals and communities. Fair Funding is needed to help communities, charities, voluntary groups, and social enterprises to thrive and provide greater security for our people. As stated by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) on Fair Funding, to support Scotland's vital voluntary sector to adapt to current and future societal and economic challenges, and to address years of poor funding practices, fair funding that incorporates the following is urgently needed:

- Longer-term funding of three years or more
- Flexible, unrestricted core funding, which enables organisations to provide security, plan effectively, and fulfil good governance requirements.
- Sustainable funding that includes inflation-based uplifts and full costs, including core operating costs
- Funding that accommodates paying staff at least the Real Living Wage

- Accessible, streamlined, proportionate, and consistent approaches to applications and reporting, timely process and payments, and partnership between the funders and fundees

Fundamental to the practice of CLD across all settings are these values which have been identified by the CLD Standards Council:

- **Self-determination** – respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.
- **Inclusion** – valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome and challenging discriminatory practice.
- **Empowerment** – increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/ or collective action.
- **Working collaboratively** – maximising collaborative working relationships in partnerships between the many agencies which contribute to CLD, including collaborative work with participants, learners, and communities.
- **Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity** – ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.

Community Development, an inter-woven discipline within professional CLD (Community Learning and Development) practice, is an approach to achieving transformative social change. It is action taken through building organisation, learning and power within communities in order to promote democracy, sustainable development, equality, and social justice. It builds community capacity and influence by enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery.

Finally, we would like to offer some further links to relevant and useful references:

Responsive, supportive and resilient communities: A review of community development during the pandemic (education.gov.scot)

CLD Stories | CLD Standards Council for Scotland

Competent Practitioner Framework | CLD Standards Council for Scotland

National Standards for Community Engagement

Community Engagement and Participation Guidance | COSLA

How to do a community audit: building profiles using neighbourhood statistics – infed.org:

Community-Profiling-in-West-Dunbartonshire.pdf (gcph.co.uk)

https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-guidance-community-planning-partnerships-community-learning-development/

https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/about/2022-census/

Council Area Profiles | National Records of Scotland (nrscotland.gov.uk)

Rural Scotland Key Facts 2021 (www.gov.scot)

Community Learning and Development in Scotland and internationally: literature review - gov.scot

Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation - families and communities: thematic evaluation report 2024 - gov.scot

The People's Panel: Community Resilience - Research findings from People's Panel members on community resilience