



CLD Standards Council Scotland

Submitted Response
to
Martin Whitfield, MSP for South Scotland Region

Consultation on Proposed Youth Work (Scotland) Bill

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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 the Council has 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 core responsibilities, set out by Scottish Ministers, 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 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 to ensure that professional standards are maintained, 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](#) | [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) | [Linktree](#). If you would like to discuss this response further, please email Dr. Marion Allison, Director of the CLD Standards Council, on marion.allison@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

About Community Learning and Development in Scotland

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) sector, which is a unification of the 3 professional practice disciplines of Adult Learning (Including ESOL), Community Development and Youth Work, is an integral and essential part of Scottish education, as recently recognised 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.

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", which brought about the birth of CLD in the form it has grown into in the 21st century.

As clearly depicted throughout the Still Report, along with the HMIE evaluation report, 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, including CLD: youth work, 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 CLD Standards Council recognise that there is common ground as well as robust partnerships between traditional education establishments such as Schools, Colleges, Universities, and CLD Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work in terms of values, outcomes, and practice methods. We believe it is critical that Scottish education is a leading 21st Century educational system which at its core recognises and supports the needs of learners at all ages and stages in life, emotionally, physically, and academically, driving forward life wide and lifelong skills and learning for all of Scotland's learners.

"Education is a fundamental right, not a privilege: everyone must have the opportunity to succeed. Community learning and development can be a first step along that path, through supporting some of our most vulnerable people ... There is no wrong or less-esteemed path, whether that path is via college, school, work, university, or a community initiative. They are all essential parts of a modern education and skills system."

Graeme Dey MSP,
Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Veterans,
5 December 2023. ([Learning for All for Life](#) P. 3)

The purpose of CLD is to empower people, 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 areas is a critical educative intervention role across Scotland that we would like to see strengthened through stronger focused legislation for all three domains of CLD practice as a unified professional discipline. The Government's National Performance Framework sets out the strategic objectives for all public services, including those delivering CLD: youth work. As set in the Still Report and through the information contained in this response, CLD : youth workers are at the forefront regarding the delivery of critical learning, support and guidance that is described throughout this youth work consultation document. CLD: youth workers work within the professional CLD [competences](#), [values](#) and [ethics](#) to support change for others collaborating routinely with colleges in the two domains of practice.

In Scotland, Community Learning and Development including, youth work, 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 (including youth work) 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.

As a field of professional practice, CLD : youth work is critical in the achievement of any policy or legislation that requires individual and community engagement, partnership working across educational organisations, and development and learning. It supports the learning, growth and empowerment of individuals and communities, as well as supporting the delivery of other services. CLD: youth workers work in partnership with communities, families, teachers, schools,

colleges, and universities to support each young person's journey to increase their opportunities and support the realisation and release of potential.

It is essential to acknowledge that CLD : youth work practitioners already play a crucial role in supporting young people, community groups and vulnerable people 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](#)

CLD: youth work enables young people across Scotland to identify their own individual and collective goals, to take action to bring about change and through this to achieve these goals. Using a range of formal and informal methods of learning and social development, CLD: youth work programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with young people, working particularly with those excluded from participation in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. Through working in these ways, and in partnership with the more traditional educational establishments, CLD: youth work practice extends the reach of education, of democracy and of economic growth.

CLD: youth work offers the learning and development opportunities to ensure individuals can thrive in vibrant communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe, to tackling poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally, working collaboratively to make individual’s needs, goals, and aspirations reality.

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.



This consultation response provides analysis of the feedback on this Bill proposal received from members of the CLD Standards Council and partners including youth workers and volunteers from across the sector. The CLD Standards Council consulted with a selection of its CLD practitioner members as well as its full staff team to form this response, using a variety of differing engagement opportunities to capture key discussion points.

It is important to recognise that this CLD Standards Council response provides an insight into the views and experiences based on the those mentioned above. The data gathered has provided a valuable insight into the experiences based on the views of the member participants.

Response from the CLD Standards Council to Martin Whitfield, MSP, Proposed Youth Work (Scotland) Bill

Q1: Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Fully Opposed: Whilst the CLD Standards Council recognise the need for strengthened strategic support for CLD: Youth Work, members disagreed strongly with the proposal for a Youth Work (Scotland) Bill, in the format this is presented and for reasons that are detailed throughout the following responses to the consultation questions.

Q2: Do you think legislation for Youthwork as set out in this Bill proposal is required, or are there are other ways in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively?

No, legislation for youth work as set out in this Bill proposal is not required. We are confident that the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 provide a legislative framework for CLD: youth work. By reviewing and strengthening these Regulations the aims of this Bill could be achieved effectively.

The CLD : youth work sector is receiving considerable amount of attention at present, with the 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](#), alongside the wider piece around [Education Reform](#).

As recommended in the Still report. *“By 2026: Roles and responsibilities of CLD, including accountability, are clearly established and transparently set out, with the legislative underpinning for CLD supporting this as required.”* [Learning for All for Life](#) P.35

The HMIE report also calls for Scottish Government to *“review national policy and legislation for CLD to ensure that they take account of the current context and support strengthened governance.”* [Evaluation of Community Learning and Development in Scotland](#) P.9.

The consensus from feedback gathered was that the proposed Youth Work Bill has the potential to disrupt and delay progress around the recommendations of the Still report , at a time when CLD : youth work practitioners and organisations should be working collaboratively and collectively towards development of stronger CLD Regulations, and that statutory investment in the CLD sector workforce as a whole, is required to support the best outcomes for individuals and communities we work with and support.

The Council recommends that the emphasis of this Bill proposal be moved from one singular domain of professional CLD practice to the whole unified CLD profession consisting of CLD: adult learning, CLD: community development and CLD: youth work, offering the platform to campaign for the major modification that is required to be made to the current CLD Regulations and governance across Scotland, and call for the required significant investment of CLD as a statutory service as per the recommendations of the Independent Review of CLD, led by Kate Still.

Feedback from our members suggest a call for the existing Regulations of 2013 to provide a clear and robust definition of the CLD sector, setting detailed statutory requirements of CLD including

budget allocation, staffing levels of qualified staff across the three practice domains of CLD: adult learning, CLD: community development and CLD: youth work, in each local authority region, on a population basis. This detailed and substantial development of the CLD Regulations 2013 will secure CLD as a valued and recognised professional educative practice, which uses educational approaches and methodology to champion social justice and transformative community action through the interconnected domains of CLD: adult learning, CLD: community development and CLD: youth work.

Feedback from members also included a call for the CLD Standards Council to be recognised in this legislation as the professional body for CLD (inclusive of CLD: youth work practitioners), with improved regulatory powers that strengthens its current role regarding setting standards, approvals of courses and professional learning, enabling further development towards more rigorous quality assurance of all CLD practitioners. It was also recommended that CLD is located within one Ministerial portfolio of Scottish Government, enabling significant recognition of the sector, and supporting impact across the policy landscape and national performance framework.

Key comments offered during our consultation on the proposed Bill:

“the focus right now because of the UNCRC means that there's more support already around about how we support young people. But what impact does that start to have then on those other CLD services? And if people, particularly local authorities, start to think we need to protect youth work more because this legislation might come through, does that mean to take that budget away now from adult learning and community development. This Bill proposal makes it a really difficult situation given the fiscal framework.”

“It's like shifting sands. It kind of feels almost premature until we know what's coming out of the other reviews.”

“my worry is that its fragmenting CLD.”

“it's concerning that there's this sort of breakaway of youth work at a time when we're really wanting to push, to sort of consolidate CLD as a as a profession.”

“why ask for new legislation when we need to demand the CLD regs to be developed, to secure the sector as a statutory service and give it parity of esteem with other educational and social justice professions”

“one of the main conclusions from the Still report was that we needed to bring the sector together and this just seems to completely ignore that.”

“it says in the consultation document is that it'll prioritise youth work in schools, detached youth work, targeted youth work, universal youth work, I mean is that even realistic?”

“to encourage that lifespan of volunteering, young people need to see volunteering in action with adults and in their communities. So, they need to be part of that next stage to realise that it's beyond schools or beyond the school curriculum and then if your money's being just put into youth work, then to the detriment of any

community development and those opportunities to do that are going to be lessened as well"

Q3: What financial impact will this Youth Work Bill have on funding for Youthwork, and for the other parts of CLD?

There were several concerns raised regarding the financial aspects of this proposed Bill.

There are many references to the sustained budget and funding challenges faced by the CLD sector throughout the Still report [Learning for All for Life](#), with this report offering recommendations regarding requirement of adequate funding across all dimensions of education and learning in Scotland to address the immediate needs including youth work. The report also recommends that funding for CLD should be part of core Local Authority budgets rather than based on short-term project funding.

We recognise that this proposal also references budgets, however if references a central allocation into which organisations need to bid into which is contradictory to recommendations of the Independent Review of CLD.

Whilst in agreement with the statements, there are challenges in evidencing the full impact of CLD interventions due to service variation and data collection across the country. We would argue for an agreed CLD performance framework that allows service providers, young people, learners, and communities to have access to clear information that supports decision making for all.

In Scotland there is a professional practice framework for all CLD practitioners (including youth workers). There are, however, many organisations who access funding sources for CLD to support young people but do not apply the professional practice framework to developing staff and volunteers. We believe that a coherent CLD wide, workforce framework would enhance further the quality of provision for young people and offer public assurance, similar to teaching and social work.

To avoid duplication of resource, and utilise economies of scale, we would anticipate that if this consultation leads to a draft Bill for debate in Parliament, that a definition of youth work that fully adopts the existing CLD professional practice framework and clearly aligns with CLD as the acknowledged and recognised professional, educative intervention concerned with social justice.

In addition, the HMIE report [Evaluation of community learning and development in Scotland | National thematic inspections | HM Chief Inspector reports and guidance | Inspection and review | Education Scotland](#) also raises concerns regarding current CLD funding, stating *"The funding of CLD is also complex. Local authorities use a varying mix of core funding (which is diminishing year on year), short-term grants and, particularly for third sector organisations, local fundraising."* It was opined that there is no clear evidence or connection to how this Bill would improve this financial status quo and secure the investment needed to meet its aims.

Concerns were raised by our members, about where the extensive financial investment needed to support this Bill would come from. CLD funding, and ultimately the CLD workforce, across the public and voluntary sectors has been significantly eroded for more than a decade due to continual fiscal challenges, efficiency savings and budget cuts. It was contended that to start to work towards obtaining the financial investment needed to achieve this Bill proposal, other elements of professional CLD practice would be diminished, or removed entirely, from local

authority budgets, with CLD: adult learning and CLD: community development services bearing the brunt of the budget cuts as funding for these services is inevitably redirected to enable providers to meet these proposed new legislative requirements for CLD: youth work provision. The consequences and negative impact are therefore a lack of professional CLD service delivery to families, adults, and communities, which in turn has the potential to have a detrimental effect to the long term and sustainable impact that working with young people will have and may have the unintended consequence of further reinforcing educational inequality in Scotland's most deprived communities.

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. Concerns were raised that this could cause more damage in the longer term, as well as ultimately costing more money and demand on public services.

Funding, like the legislation, should be focusing on developing the CLD sector as a singular professional practice area, and not one standalone part of the discipline. There was agreement from our members who participated in the consultation exercise that there is a vast benefit and strength in CLD being the sum of the three strands of practice which are interlinked and stronger together, and weaker when standing alone. It was felt that to support sustainable change there needs to be equity of CLD opportunities available across all ages, stages, and communities for it to be deeply embedded and have a positive impact on Scotland's economy and wellbeing.

Feedback from members also stated challenges regarding the proposal to have Youth Work in all areas and every young person have access to all Youth Work provision. This was reasoned as not only unachievable but also wholly unnecessary, moving away from core CLD Youth Work ethics and values regarding a needs based approach, led by the learners, (individual and communities of interest) to identify their own individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities. It was agreed that the focus should be about quality and equity of provision, rather than equality of provision across Scotland, enabling local authority areas to work together with local communities to deliver the service across all ages and communities to ensure those more vulnerable, in need, or at risk were able to access, and benefit from, high quality CLD professional engagement. This approach allows for greater access to the skills and development opportunities they require, and that this means the CLD practice domains working together as a unified professional practice discipline and not through individual practice silos.

There will be an inherent cost in ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and managers are trained, qualified and competent practitioners if there is an extended right to youth work, due to the increase required to fund adequately and train the workforce. In Scotland, with the support and approval of the CLD Standards Council, we have five Universities delivering professional CLD qualifications, and we know from the research undertaken by the CLD Standards Council that only **9 out of the 32** local authorities fund professional development for CLD staff, amounting to £142,324.50 for CLD practitioners (including CLD: youth workers) .

To be able to reach the size and professional standard of workforce required to achieve the aims of this Bill, there would require to be a commitment from Scottish Government similar to the commitments made to the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector and the FE/HE Sector, in ensuring that CLD: youth workers are trained and qualified at the right level to ensure the effective and safe delivery of the Bill. As previously stated, this again can only be to the detriment of the remaining funding and training provision being made available to the other domains of practice within CLD.

Key comments offered during our consultation on the proposed Bill:

“... it (Bill Proposal) reinforces schisms, and I think there might be real negative implications for the workforce around funding and training.”

“I have real concerns about what sort of hoops youth work organisations will need to jump through to get this money, and how much freedom they'll have to make their own decisions about how to use it because of the targets being attached to activities. This looks like project-based funding model rather than organisational staff funding, so where is the professional requirements and standards.”

“For me, there is real concern actually about funding, who holds it and how its administered. There's talk about everyone being able to access youth work and everyone has that right through UNCRC but then if it's a bidding war, and only for youthwork then that doesn't support that consistency across all three CLD thematics and totally dismisses Human Rights Bill.”

“It very well may reduce the amount of money available to the other domains of practice, there is also an underlying cost in ensuring that staff, volunteers and managers are trained, qualified and competent practitioners if there is an extended right to youth work.”

Q4: What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? (equalities)

Whilst it was felt this Bill may have a positive impact for young people, members raised deepening concerns about the increasing use of volunteers within CLD including youth work due to the consistent cuts to CLD staffing budgets, recruitment issues of professionally qualified practitioners specifically in rural areas, and cuts to CLD provision as previously mentioned. [The Volunteer Scotland's analysis of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations \(NCVO\) – Time Well Spent](#) highlights not only a 9% increase in volunteering within public sector but also a 5% decrease in Scots volunteering in the third sector. It was agreed the CLD Standards Council plays a significant role in leading and enforcing standards on recruitment and volunteer roles, along with expected support and guidance, and working in partnership with key stakeholders such as Volunteer Scotland and its volunteer charter, but has no regulatory power regarding organisations increasing

use of volunteers to what practitioners report as “*plug the gaps*”. The CLD sector has always worked closely and relied on volunteering, not only as a valued part of its delivery workforce across all three domains of practice, but as an entry route into the profession and as part of the skills and learning opportunities for those we support. Because of this, it was strongly felt that careful consideration needs to be given to the continuing decline in volunteering across Scotland. The Scottish Household Survey reports a decrease from 30% of people in 2011 to 18% in 2023. The Volunteer Scotland Young People in Scotland Survey reports a marked decline in young people volunteering but indicates an unprecedented demand on volunteers to deliver youth work services.

Questions were asked regarding how, if this Bill became law, it would influence and positively impact on the increased provision of improved youth work opportunities for young people with additional support needs. How could there be capacity of a skilled CLD: youth work workforce to ensure every young person with a disability or additional need had the same access to youth work in schools, in communities, detached, targeted and universal services, as those without additional needs unless considerable investment was made into increasing the CLD: youth work workforce in both capacity across the 32 local authority areas. In addition, substantial investment in professional learning would be required to deliver these specialised youth work opportunities. Concerns were raised around the safeguarding of young people with additional needs, and if skilled provision was not available would they be directed towards mainstream youth work opportunities which may not be suitable or safe.

In depth discussions with members and stakeholders were had around the necessity for this proposed Bill to connect with other key legislation and strategies connected to equalities and human rights. Whilst it extensively mentions [UNCRC](#), concerns were raised regarding its lack of reference to other critical strategies such as [Human Rights \(Scotland\) Bill](#), [Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill](#), [Mental Health Strategy](#), [Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy](#), [New Scots Integration Strategy](#), and others. There is a fear that this Bill proposal could make CLD: youth work very isolated, disconnecting youth work from CLD and therefore not supporting Lifelong and Life Wide Learning for all.

There was positive feedback on how this proposed Bill clearly set out the different types of CLD: Youth Work, giving clarity of detail on why they are all necessary and required by young people. It was felt this information is vitally needed due to increasing number of local authority areas focusing on a youth work approach in a school setting, due to multiply and PEF money, with workers reporting the cutting of the level of provision on community or detached youthwork as there are currently not enough CLD: youth workers to offer all youth work provision or cover all geographical areas. Practitioners reported CLD: youth work being moved routinely between city and rural elements of a region as a reaction to incidents of antisocial behaviour, meaning CLD: youth work is becoming a reactionary provision and not the planned educative intervention it should be.

Key comments offered during our consultation on the proposed Bill:

“Per Population worker allocation/ Local authority allocation – how do we ensure that all communities have access to competent and qualified staff across Scotland including the Highlands and Islands and what impact this may have through the lens of an Islands Impact assessment?”

“ How does this link with the 3rd sector as one of the main providers of youth work?”

“How can this Bill ensuring fair pay and conditions for those undertaking youth work delivery especially if they are in receipt of public funds and how this will be inspected in more informal settings – the Welsh inspectorate inspect 3rd sector youth work provision alongside and separately to local authority youth work?”

“What is the scope of being a “ Youth Worker” and are we including those in the Uniformed Youth Organisations, i.e. Scouts, Guides, Boys and Girls Brigade, Sea Cadets etc. I cannot see how standards can be maintained across Youth Clubs and these settings across Scotland?”

“if that's their enshrined in law, that there is a legal requirement to provide all youth work. Some of those young people who have like particular difficulties or additional support needs, then we have to start to make provision for them and ensure that they are included more. How we fund those opportunities, do you know, how can we fund that additional support and make sure that those particular people who are suffering, who are living with those protected characteristics are supported to access and the provision? ”

“There's some particularly massive potential pitfalls there with this focus on universality and the impact that I'll have on young people who need youth work most, who are probably all the people when you look at the protected characteristics and thinking about like mental health and people from different ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ groups like that, they're the people who probably need that youth work more than any others.”

“how much will this legislation then connect with or impact on other pieces of equality work which are going through at the moment..... around mental health strategy, mainstreaming equalities and human rights, and there's also learning disabilities, autism and neurodivergence Bill that's still ongoing?”

“...having that protected and acknowledged that youth work in school is maybe an option. But in my opinion anyway out with schools where you get the more kind of impactful work and often that best feedback and young people performing their best as well.”

Q5: What is needed for the proposed legislative plans and policy for youth work workforce development to work and how would it support and impact the development of the CLD Workforce?

Members were extremely disappointed to note that the CLD Standards Council, the professional body for youth workers in Scotland has been omitted from this proposed Bill.

The proposed Bill states that by prioritising professional development and building on current national standards it will ensure high standards across all CLD: youth work services, and that the proposed Youth Work (Scotland) Bill will strengthen the existing National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework for youth work and build on the current National Occupational Standards for Youth Work, CLD Competences and HMIE Self Evaluation Framework. Questions were asked as to

how this would happen without the involvement of the standard setting professional body? We hope this is an oversight and therefore will be rectified in all future documentation pertaining to this proposed Bill.

Currently CLD: youth work qualifications, at para-professional level (SCQF levels 5 – 8) are approved by the CLD Standards Council, as part of the CLD family of qualifications. Members contended that if this proposal for youth work legislation was realised, the continuation of the role and responsibilities currently held by the CLD Standards Council in relation to workforce qualifications and practice standards within CLD: youth work, requires to continue. Professional level qualifications at SCQF levels 9+ do not focus on a single practice domain, but to focus on the interdisciplinary theories, learning and professional delivery approaches of CLD as a unified professional discipline. This ensures that emerging practitioners are skilled, competent, and confident to plan, deliver and review educative interventions with young people, families, adults, and communities. This provides them with the skills to work in each of the three domains of practice and supports their career development.

There is the potential that if this proposed legislation is passed that it means development and focus becomes solely on the national occupational for standards for CLD: youth work, and on CLD: youth work qualifications, dropping the other components and competencies of CLD. This would also lead to Youth Work becoming a single domain of practice, which would require a different professional approval and qualifications framework, requiring further legislation to amend the existing statutory framework. This would appear to be a potential duplication of existing work and resource, and meaning qualified Youth Workers would not be able to practice in CLD: community development or CLD: adult learning roles, limiting career progression and skills development and potentially limiting their ability to support individuals and communities. Whilst the focus on youth work is included as youth and community work practice across the devolved nations of the United Kingdom; Members opined that Scotland benefits from its inclusive CLD youth work approach.

Concerns were also raised regarding this becoming a barrier for the CLD profession, with many people coming into the sector as a volunteer or learner first and then progressing through training and qualifications. Being Youth work only limits the scope for their career, as well as limits to volunteering opportunities for the learners, creating an additional barrier into CLD as a career choice.

The proposed Bill mentions mandatory CPD for Youth workers, and members were concerned as to how this would, and could, be implemented and managed appropriately, especially with mention of the added requirement for specialised training. There are already considerable workforce challenges regarding training and appropriate supervision for volunteers and part time workers, with training, and supervision sessions, often set on days or at times when volunteers and part time contracted workers are not working and may have commitments to another job. As we know, because of short term funding and lack of budgets, many CLD youth workers have multiple contracts to make up their hours and be in a position to gain the equivalent of a full time income, meaning very little capacity for flexibility, as well as often unacceptable demands on volunteers' time, asking them to give more to attend training over and above their volunteer hours. It was suggested that more emphasis and focus on joint training, across CLD and other professions such as teaching and social work be looked at to cut down on duplication and cost.

The Council proposes, as per the recommendations of the Still report, that development of improved legislation for CLD should include a requirement across the public and voluntary sector for consistency of job roles, job titles, salary scales and qualification titles to improve visibility and

understanding of the CLD profession. In addition, the CLD Standards Council should have a strengthened role to monitor and challenge to include strengthened recognition of the role of volunteers in CLD, including statutory inductions, guidance on job roles and responsibilities, and the requirement for all volunteers to be supervised by a fully qualified CLD practitioner, registered with the CLD Standards Council.

Members reinforced that the three domains of professional practice are interlinked and cannot be separated as it would have a detrimental impact on young people, families, communities, and the workforce. Evidence to support this was offered from the lens that CLD Professional Qualifications are Undergraduate & Postgraduate Degrees in Community Learning and Development /Education, and there are no professional qualifications for the single domains of practice in Scotland. There is strong evidence from policy and research in Scotland on how the field of Community Learning and Development is stronger together both professionally, and in delivery, as well as ensuring that the CLD professional qualifications ensure CLD practitioners are skilled, confident, and competent to work across the multiple domains of practice.

Discussions were had regarding the capacity currently to develop the required CLD; youth work workforce, as well as developing a system that is adhered to across all CLD: Youth Work service providers to ensure workers are appropriately registered, trained and supervised, adhering to the [CLD Competencies Values and Ethics](#) as agreed by the CLD sector. This Bill has the potential to increase pressure on the CLD workforce and will have an unfavourable impact on volunteers and paid practitioners across all three domains of practice.

Key comments offered during our consultation on the proposed Bill:

"I cannot see how we can ensure that those who engage with young people are qualified and competent at the appropriate level for the role that they are undertaking, as there is going to be such a demand on the workforce to meet the aims of the proposed Bill"

"may lead to a rise in complaints and concerns from members of the public via the public register if staff are not professionally qualified, competent practitioners or adequately trained."

"it is just going to put a schism in the whole sector and will have implications for the university programmes and the whole CPD pathway."

"We all want mandated CPD professional development framework, new courses, but with this Bill proposing just Youth Work what does that mean for people actually. So, 80% of the time I do youth work, but 20% of the time I work with the parents or community groups. What does that look like in practise? Do we get into that mess? I think it's got to be wider than just that youth work workforce bit."

"The workforce, what about those that already have qualifications and the qualifications that we've been working towards and approving over all these years. And you know, the Standards Council has been set up to do that so that those are the approved standards and qualifications for the sector..... Yes, let's have investment in professional learning, but the qualifications would be CLD qualifications and that would be the thing that threads through all. The standards for those qualifications and approvals would come through the Standards Council"

and then through the awarding body, and the impact of it all would be assessed and evaluated by HMI, as is currently the purpose. “

Q6: Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations. Do you think the Youth Work Bill proposal could impact in any of these areas?

Yes, but it would have a stronger and more sustainable impact if the focus was on revising and strengthening the current CLD Regulations 2013. Considerations should also be given to projected demographics that highlight an ageing population across Scotland.

Members reiterated the importance of Youth Work being part of the CLD profession, and it was strongly felt that significantly less long-term impact would be made on achieving a sustainable economy, and creating a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations if this Bill is passed unamended and Youth Work becomes a separate profession in legislation. This was mainly due to the perceived negative impact this legislation and required funding would have on CLD: adult learning and CLD: community development. It was felt that lack of funding, workforce, and provision of the other two domain areas would then ultimately decrease the positive and sustainable impact on our economy and on a just society.

During the consultation period for the Independent review of CLD, throughout our consultation with members, stakeholders and with practitioners who no longer practice in CLD, it was consistently made clear that CLD is about social justice, and that educational social justice is the common inter-linking core across all three domains of CLD professional practice. Evidence of this was offered from both the findings in the [Still report](#) and the [HMIE evaluation](#). Both reports clearly show social justice aspect in all of our work.

Key comments offered during our consultation on the proposed Bill:

“What needs also to happen alongside this and other legislation, consideration to other support that is required, maybe perhaps in practise for this to actually to come to fruition?”

“Can the youth work legislation then really being able to support the kind of the sustainable national economy needed. It's also about healthy communities, our society and linking into national performance framework outcomes, which we need adult learning and community development for as well as youth work, so how that will help and support that.”

“if you don't invest in community development and the spaces where volunteering takes place these will cease to exist as well. So, there's an existential reliance of youth work on community development.”

Conclusion

Overall, the CLD Standards Council cannot endorse the proposals of this Bill as it is contradictory to the focus and recommendations of both the [Independent Review of CLD](#) and the [HMIE evaluation of CLD in Scotland](#).

We strongly recommend that future legal developments provide a focus on all domains of Community Learning and Development, and suggest the following:

- Revision and strengthening of the [Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#) to include a clear definition of CLD as a profession, with recognition of the three domains of practice, and legal requirements for CLD service equitable across the 32 local authorities.
- Workforce Strategy: Led by CLD Standards Council (as recommended in the *Still Report*), supported by investment and fair work for the workforce, including statutory guidelines on job title, job roles, qualification requirements, and salary scales linked to SCQF qualification levels.
- As stated in recommendation 6.2 in the [Still report](#) and a recommendation for Scottish Government on page 8 of the [HMIE evaluation](#), there is an urgent need for the development of CLD KPIs for Scotland: Including investment in a single data management system and clear reporting processes to the Strategic Leadership Group for CLD.
- Investment into CLD Qualification Pathways: Including increased work-based qualifications at degree level, investment into funded modern and graduate apprenticeships, a work based CLD qualification at post graduate level, and clear guidelines on FE/HE providers regarding qualification titles, statutory requirement for approval of all CLD qualifications with the CLD Standards Council.
- Mandatory registration of degree qualified practitioners to the CLD Standards Council to strengthen the workforce and the profession, as well as statutory requirement for professional qualified and registered practitioners on par with professions such as teaching and social work.
- One Scottish Government Directorate for CLD policy developments, supporting the call from the [Still report](#) for CoSLA and the Scottish Government to reconsider current arrangements supporting CLD policy and delivery.