



CLD Standards Council

Local Authority CLD Budget Allocation

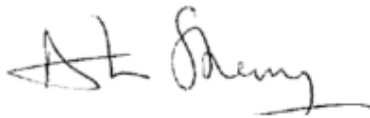
Financial Year 2025-26

1. FOREWORD

As a member-led organisation, the mission of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council is to support the development of high standards of professional practice and work with our members to be a voice for the CLD profession. This report is intended to present a data informed overview of CLD Local Authority budgets in Scotland for financial year 2025/26. It is anticipated that the findings will inform discussions with Scottish Ministers in the development of CLD policy and support Local Authority planning and decision making for CLD.

On behalf the CLD Standards Council I would wish to offer my sincere thanks to the Local Authority Officers who gathered and willingly shared their information. This report would have been impossible without their support. The CLD Standards Council would welcome feedback on the findings as we work collaboratively towards achieving a Fairer Scotland supported by confident and effective CLD practitioners who are committed to equality, empowerment and life-wide learning for all.

#BecauseOfCLD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Sherry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan Sherry O.B.E.
Chair of the CLD Standards Council

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3. ABOUT THE CLD STANDARDS COUNCIL

The **Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council** is the professional standards and registration body for people who work or volunteer in CLD throughout Scotland. The areas of CLD practice are widely understood and accepted as being community-based adult learning, community development and youth work. These three areas of CLD practice are united in the use and application of the CLD ethics, values, and competency framework. CLD practitioners operate in a wide range of contexts; from local authority and third sector organisations to further and higher education institutions and national agencies. As a members led organisation our mission is to drive high standards of professional practice and work with our members to be a voice for the CLD profession. Further information regarding the CLD Standards Council can be found via the following link [CLD Standards Council for Scotland | Professional Learning](#).

4. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the third annual review of local authority budget allocation for CLD services for financial year 2025-26. The aim of the annual review is to collate a data set of Local Authority budget allocations aligned to the statutory CLD planning requirements.

Key points set out in the report are as follows:

- **31 of 32** local authorities have responded to the request for data. The majority of local authorities have responded to almost all questions. The returning authorities have been consistent since the review began.
- The final spend for the local authority CLD budget for financial year 2024/25 was reported as **£83,281,476.73**. This is a reduction of **£3,749,514.30** from the estimated 2024/25 spend from June 2024. 17 out of 31 respondents to this question have shown a significant reduction in their budget in-year.
- The total estimated CLD budget allocation for thirty-one local authorities for financial year 2025-26 is **£81,826,157.26**. This is a reduction of **£1,455,319.47** from the 2024/25 final reported spend. This is a total reduction of **£10,379,000.92** since 2023/24 final report spend.
- In the last year, eleven local authorities have reported an increase to their core CLD budgets, seventeen are reporting a decreased budget and three remain the same which is in effect a real reduction in budget allocation.
- Twenty-seven Local Authorities have estimated that they will provide **£17,880,739.00** in voluntary sector support to organisations to deliver CLD programmes. This is a reduction of **£1,426,336.85** from the 2024/25 final spend. Only seven local authorities have reported an increase in this budget,

nine have reported no change which is a real term cut in resources to support third sector organisations.

- Twenty-nine Local Authorities have estimated that external funding secured to deliver CLD programmes totals **£21,521,473.12** for financial year 2025/26. This is a reduction of **£5,019,656.66** from 2024/25 final spend.

5. INTRODUCTION

In Scotland, local authorities are statutorily responsible for the provision of CLD as per the *Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013*. These regulations are provided for in Section 2 of the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980*. Subsequently, it is incumbent on local authorities to initiate, maintain and facilitate a process by which CLD is secured within the area of the education authority. It was in this context that the CLD Standards Council sought to engage with Local Authority Chief Executive Officers as the senior officer responsible, by statute, for CLD provision.

The CLD Standards Council forwarded a request in April 2025 for the following financial information to be made available:

- The **total core budget**, External funding, and Voluntary grant allocation to support CLD activities within the Local Authority for financial year 2025/26.
- **Comparable budget** information for financial year 2024/25.
- **The budget (core, external & voluntary) to support Community-Based Adult Learning**. This should include resources to support adult literacy and numeracy programmes, English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) and family learning programmes designed for adults.
- **The budget (core, external & voluntary) to support Community Development** including community empowerment and community capacity building.
- **The budget (core, external & voluntary) to support Youth Work programmes** including those specifically designed to support raising attainment and budget allocated to CLD provision available for children aged 8-10 years old.

Over the summer of 2025 the CLD Standards Council prompted for replies and undertook analysis of the information received. At the time of publication, thirty-one of the thirty-two local authorities had responded to the request for financial information.

6. REPORT DISSEMINATION

In addition to informing our Members and stakeholders, the CLD Standards Council continues to contend, as evidenced in the [Learning for All for Life](#) (Scottish Government 2024), that the information contained within this report will also be of use to Scottish Ministers, Scottish Government, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), CLD Managers Scotland, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Scottish Organisation of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), Education Scotland, His Majesty's Inspectors of Education, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and all CLD related groups and agencies. This list of interested parties is not exclusive as the information within this report may inform decision makers in other policy areas such as Health and Economy.

7. DATA LIMITATIONS

When analysing the collated data, there are differences in how each Local Authority had responded to the questions asked. Local Authorities do not allocate their budgets in the same way, local authorities have indicated that they have overall CLD core budgets that are not broken down in to different budget lines for the practice areas of Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work. This meant that not all local authorities were able to answer every question and the final figure shown in the data reflects the information provided by each local authority.

For many local authorities it was difficult to provide precise information as they could only provide approximate amounts due to internal financial procedures. It is not obvious from the responses if budget allocations had been adjusted to reflect the implications of inflation as this information was not provided by respondents.

The data presented provides the only overview of the fiscal landscape in which CLD services are operated and supported via Scotland's Local Authorities.

8. BUDGET ALLOCATIONS: FINANCIAL YEAR (FY) 2025/26

The following graph indicates the total core budget allocation to support CLD activities for each Local Authority. As detailed in the summary section, the total core budget allocation for thirty-one Local Authorities for financial year 2025/26 is **£8,826,157.26**. This is a reduction of **£1,455,319.47** from the 2024/25 final reported spend. This recorded reduction for the third financial year of conducting this exercise demonstrates the continued downward trend in the availability of resource for the sector.

Figure 1: CLD Core Budget allocation Financial Year 2025-26

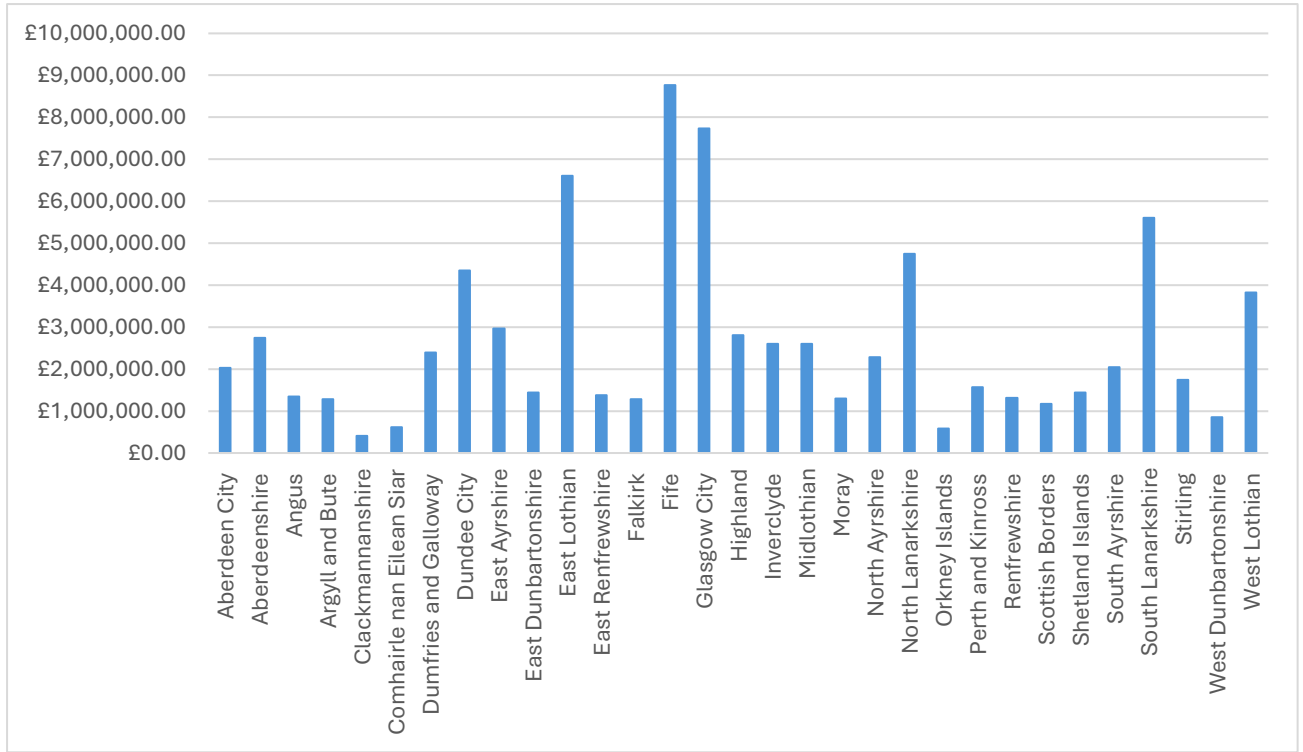
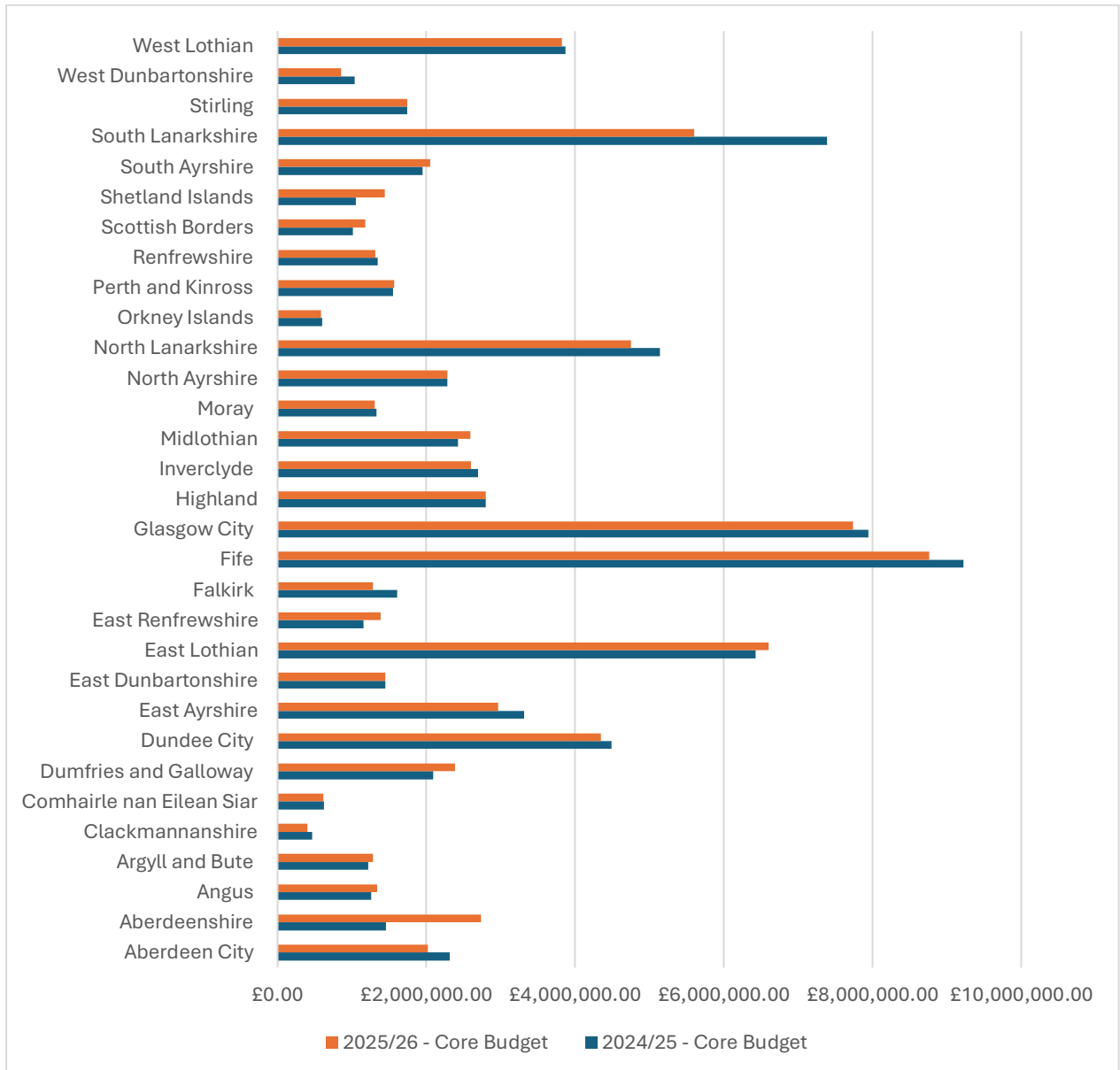


Figure 2: CLD Core Budget allocation Financial Year (24-25 Final Spend and 25-26 Comparison)

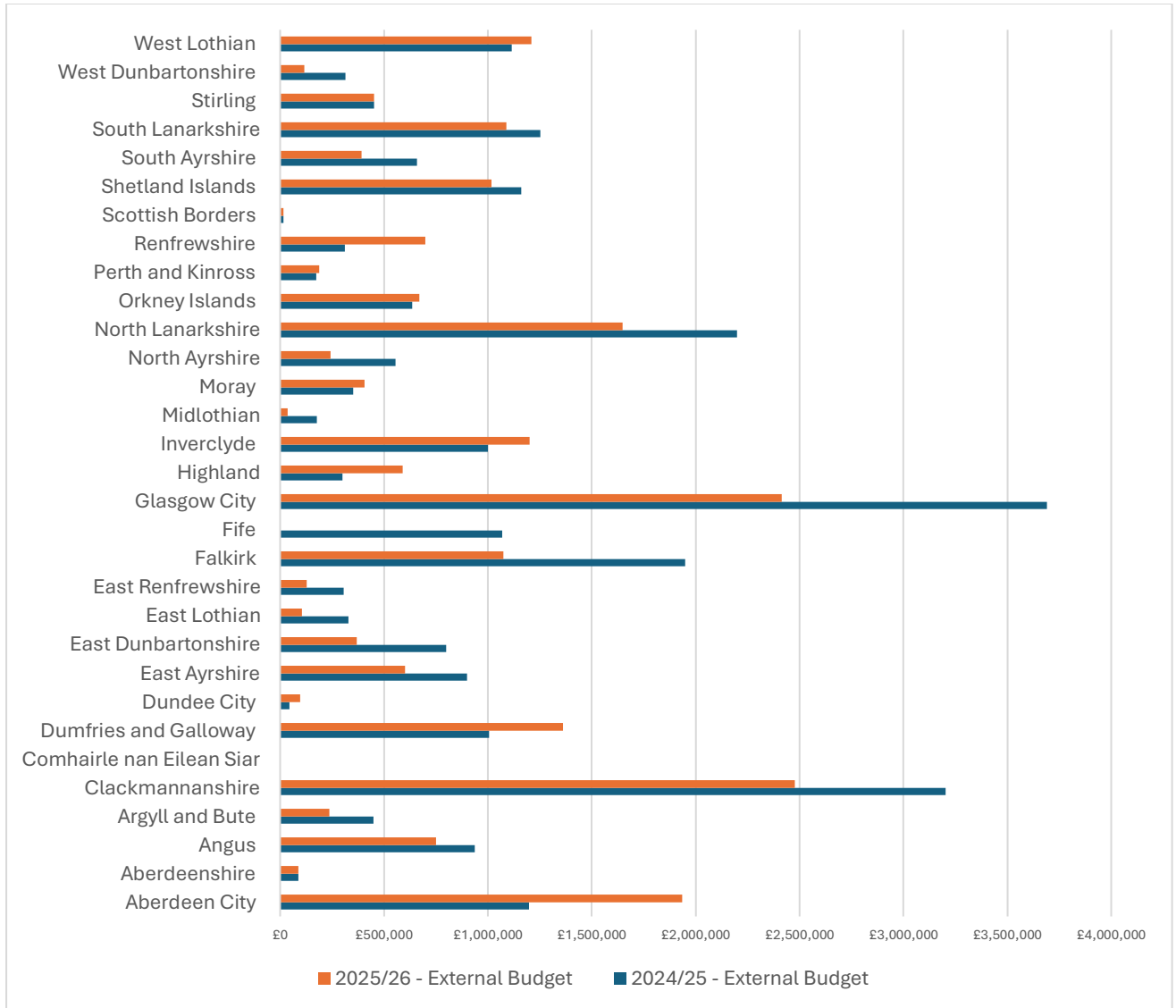


9. EXTERNAL FUNDING

In the 2025/26 survey we asked Local Authorities to provide the amount of External funding they will receive for CLD provision. The total external funding received by Local Authorities for financial Year 2025/26 is **£21,607,760.12**, this is a reduction of **£5,019,656.66** from the previous financial year final spend. Local Authorities have noted that the *UK Shared Prosperity Fund* (UKSPF) ending has meant that there is a significant decrease in external CLD funding for the current financial year. Seventeen out of Twenty-nine Local Authorities which provided information have said there will be a decrease in external funding. It should be noted that in the 2024/25 financial

year overview report the CLD Standards Council highlighted this dependency on *Shared Prosperity* funding particular in the resourcing of adult learning.

Figure 3: CLD External Funding to Local Authorities Financial Year (24-25 Final Spend and 25-26 Comparison)



10. CLD DOMAIN OF PRACTICE SPEND

The three areas of CLD practice are widely understood as being within and across the practice areas of Community Based Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work. From the data collated from the survey, the following table shows the reported spend across the key areas of CLD.

Figure 4: Budget Support for CLD Domains of Practice

Budget support for CLD Domains of Practice	Total Amount – 2025/26 (Core, External & Voluntary)
Budget to support community-based Adult Learning (including resources to support adult literacy / numeracy / ESOL / family learning programmes.	£22,242,019.95
Budget to support Community Development (including community empowerment and community capacity building)	£19,734,324.52
Budget to support Youth Work programmes (including those specifically designed to support raising attainment)	£30,634,793.67
Total	£72,611,138.14

Figure 5: Core Budget Support for CLD Domains of Practice

Budget support for CLD Domains of Practice	Total Amount – 2025/26 (Core only)
Budget to support community-based Adult Learning (including resources to support adult literacy / numeracy / ESOL / family learning programmes.	£16,427,649.41
Budget to support Community Development (including community empowerment and community capacity building)	£13,159,074.47
Budget to support Youth Work programmes (including those specifically designed to support raising attainment)	£23,370,252.67
Total	£52,956,976.55

This year Local Authorities were requested to breakdown the funding of the key practice areas by core funding, external funding, and voluntary grants. Figure 4 confirms that local authorities concentrate their funding on youth work programmes.

Figure 5 highlights that External and Voluntary grant funding makes up a significant amount of the total CLD Budget that supports CLD activities in Scottish Local Authorities.

It should be noted that the total amount in Figure 4 and Figure 5 is less than the total allocation for this financial year. From the notes and data provided in the responses, this can be explained by many Local Authorities not being able to provide a breakdown of budgets by practice area due to having the provisions funded through

one core CLD budget and the significant reduction in external funding the 2025/26 financial year. This shows that funding for the CLD sector is vulnerable to a range of budgetary challenges and is over reliant on external, non-core resourcing to deliver the CLD commitments of Local Authorities.

11. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT ALLOCATION

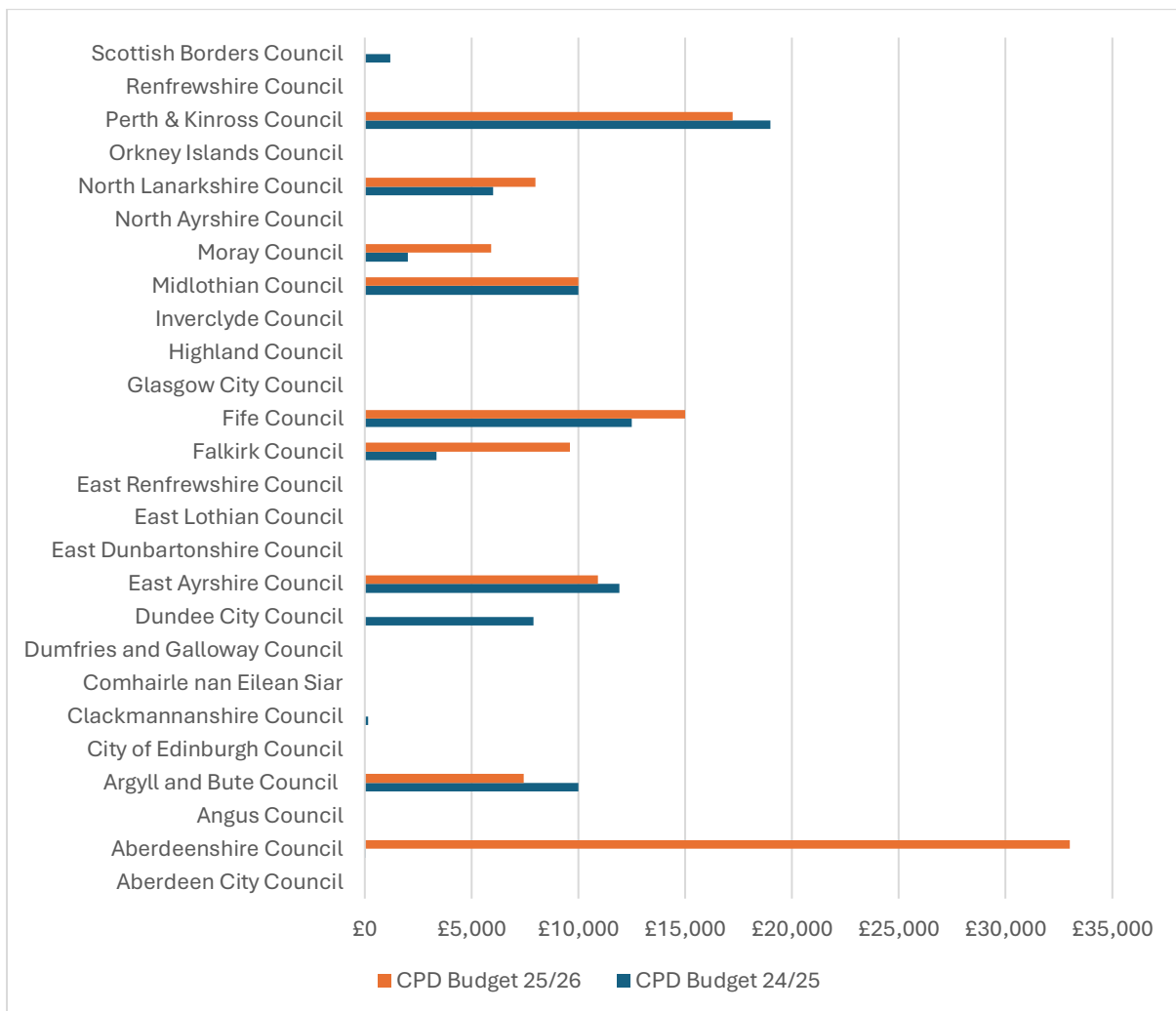
This year information was requested from Local Authorities about their total grant budget allocation to support voluntary sector organisations to provide CLD activities, and if possible to break it down to funding for each CLD domain of practice. The following figure illustrates that a total of **twenty-seven local authorities provided £17,880,739.00** of voluntary grant funding to voluntary sector organisations. This is a reduction of **£1,426,336.85** from financial year 2024/25. Local Authorities noted that this reduction is due to no more funding from the UKSPF.

Not all Local Authorities were able to breakdown the voluntary grant information by CLD domain due to granting it to organisations as one total amount and not by area. For Community Development activities, Local Authorities granted organisations **£4,491,355**. For Youth Work activities, organisations received **£1,416,012**.

12. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION

In a follow-up survey, Local Authorities were requested to confirm their total core budget expenditure and the amount allocated for CPD activities for CLD practitioners during the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26. The responses are noted in the following graph.

Figure 6: Local Authority CPD budget figures



The survey received **sixteen** responses from **thirty-two** local authorities. The cumulative total of core budgets spent in the 2024/25 financial year was **£84,046.00**, while the planned allocation for CPD activities in 2025/26 is **£117,092.00**.

Although these figures suggest an increase in CPD budgets, they do not fully reflect the challenges local authorities face or the learning opportunities available to CLD practitioners. Many authorities reported that most CPD opportunities offered to staff are free or delivered internally. Several noted that they do not have a dedicated CLD CPD budget; instead, CPD funding is drawn from overarching organisational budgets, which CLD teams can bid for when paid opportunities arise.

Authorities highlighted that the severe budget pressures in financial year 2024/25 led to significant restrictions, resulting in reduced CPD spending for CLD practitioners. While the planned budget for financial year 2025/26 appears higher, similar restrictions could still apply later in the current financial year.

Local authorities also emphasised their efforts to encourage practitioners to attend free CPD events facilitated by the CLD Standards Council, Education Scotland, and other providers. They further reported using their strong partnerships with local colleges to enable CLD practitioners to earn CLD qualifications like the Personal Development Award (PDA) An Introduction to Community Involvement via the college credit system at no cost to the authority.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

To support a coherent and effective CLD service for Scotland's learners the national lead and umbrella bodies across the CLD sector should work collaboratively with Scottish Government, COSLA and individual Local Authorities to:

- develop an agreed methodology on the national collection of budgetary information on the delivery of services to support the implementation of Local Authority CLD Strategic Plans;
- publish annually a Scotland wide overview of the funding to support the implementation of the CLD Strategic Plans; and
- explore how best to provide Professional Learning for CLD workers employed by Local Authorities in a manner similar to that afforded to other professionals in the Scottish Education sector.

14. FURTHER INFORMATION

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