



**Standards Council
Scotland**

**CLD Standards Council Scotland
Five Year Impact Report
2020–2025**

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Foreword

It has been my privilege to Chair the CLD Standards Council during the period covered by this report and to have had oversight of the key developments outlined within it.

There have been a number of substantial improvements across all areas of work. In particular there has been an increase in the approval of CLD qualifications in a range of settings which has provided access to professional qualifications across Scotland.

The professional learning offer of regular Member Meet-Ups and the development of the Professional Induction programme have been key developments. The revision of membership criteria following the publication of the Still Report has provided further focus on the pathway to full registration. During the period of the report membership of the Standards Council continued to grow as practitioners value the support offered to them.

This is no mean feat, considering the disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic caused from 2020-2021. I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with the CLD Standards Council staff team and the membership during this challenging period and beyond.

As we move further into the 21st Century, the need for well supported and qualified CLD practitioners and volunteers becomes more apparent and essential if Scotland is to develop a comprehensive Lifelong Learning system. As Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work all continue to serve the young people, learners families and communities so the CLD Standards Council continues to cohere and develop the core competencies, ethics, values, and standards needed by all practitioners no matter the setting.

My sincere thanks goes to the members who continue to champion and deliver key services every day for the benefit of individuals and Scotland's communities.

Alan Sherry O.B.E., F.R.S.A.

Chair

CLD Standards Council



Welcome

This five-year impact report is published at a particularly important juncture for the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council and the wider CLD sector. As we share the effects of our work, we do so within the context of reform and change.

Whilst CLD Standards Council members continue to work with passion and have a clear and positive impact with multiple individuals and groups of young people, adult learners and communities; wicked issues of workforce status, funding and career pathways persist.

As we look forward to the implementation of the recommendations from the Still Review (Learning for All for Life 2024, Scottish Government), wider Education Reform and of course the Scottish Elections in 2026, it is our role as the Professional Standards and Registration Body to ensure that we represent accurately our members' professionalism, resilience, agility and significance.

I am confident that this report demonstrates the clear and unique impact of the CLD Standards Council's work over the last five years and underlines why young people, communities and learners need access to supported, trained and competent CLD practitioners.

#BecauseOfCLD

Dr Marion Allison

Director

CLD Standards Council



ABIGAIL MILLER

A CLD star is born



Abigail Miller has always been community-minded. At the age of 11, she started volunteering at her local church's breakfast club with her mum and hasn't stopped!

Abigail is now 20 and studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Community Education at the University of the West of Scotland. Her direction is clear – she has her vision set on building a flourishing career in community learning and development (CLD).

Whilst at school, Abigail had a love of music, English and the arts, but struggled academically. It took until she was 16 to find out that she is dyslexic. Now in the 2nd year of her degree, Abigail feels that she has found her calling. She loves the course and has had great experiences with other students who come from all walks of life.

"I came across the community education course by accident, I didn't know it was a 'thing'! I wanted to do psychology, but after studying that for a year I realised it wasn't for me, so I moved courses and absolutely love community education!"

Abigail is no slouch, she's earned A's in most of her subjects, something she never felt she could have achieved during her school years. As a recognition of her efforts, Abigail received a court medal for being the top student in her course at university last year – not bad for a young woman who struggled at school and was told by some people she would be better applying to colleges instead of university!

Abigail also spends a few nights a week working with youth on the streets in East Dunbartonshire with ConnectED – an Includem project while also volunteering at her local church.

"I'm a people orientated person – I love hearing people's stories and listening without judgement. Everything I'm doing is building on my learning. I also love being out and about – I could never work in an office!" she says.

Whilst Abigail is adamant that she will keep her options in CLD open, she feels a calling to continue her journey in youth work.

"Before uni, I had written off youth work, but I did a placement in first year with St James' – a youth club – and I absolutely loved it! Now I can't see myself going away from youth work. But I'm keen to look at doing a placement in drug and alcohol services too."

She joined the CLD Standards Council in 2022 as a student member and has already seen loads of benefits and looks forward to building more networks over the years as her career takes off.

"Last year, I took part in an online forum run by the CLD Standards Council and felt really good about being involved. It's great to find out through my study and the resources of the CLD Standards Council that a lot of what I've been doing in practice is theoretically 'right'!"

When it comes to anyone thinking about choosing CLD as a career, Abigail can't rate it highly enough.

"Definitely do it! Keep your options open and try and get as much experience volunteering in the sector to find out what you like doing."

SECTION ONE

Introduction

The **CLD** Standards Council is the professional association for people who work or volunteer in **Community Learning and Development** across Scotland.

A unique aspect of the Scottish Education System's approach to lifelong learning; CLD is understood as the educational activities that happen in, between and beyond traditional learning institutions such as nurseries, schools, colleges and universities. Subsequently our three thousand plus members work with and for adult learners, community groups, families, and young people to identify their goals, learning needs, plans and actions to bring about positive change for individuals and their communities.

CLD is a profession unique to Scotland that educates and connects people, places, and shared interests; particularly those most excluded from opportunity. It is truly unique as the CLD values, competences and ethics coheres people working in community-based adult learning, community development, and youth work. Accordingly, our members have a distinctive set of skills that make them essential to the achievement of core public policy goals as they play a pivotal role in challenging, supporting, creating, and delivering new and radical outcomes and interventions.

Socio-economic and technological changes are having clear effect on Scottish society in respect of education, economic, health and well-being. To respond to current needs and be future ready, there is a growing demand for CLD practitioners in a wide variety of job roles in the public, private and third sectors. This is reflected in the growth of the CLD Standards Council with sixteen new members joining every month.

Overall, this report summarises the impact of our work from 2020–2025 and provides insights and reviews from our members. Section One depicts our work at a glance and reiterates our vision, mission and defining features. Section Two focuses on planning and reporting procedures whilst Section Three illustrates our key achievements across the key functions of Approvals, Registration, Professional Learning, Policy, and Organisational Capacity. Section Four reviews the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic and other unplanned events that affected our work before Section Five concludes by outlining the direction of travel for the next stage of the CLD Standards Council's evolution.

Our Vision and Mission

Over the last five years the CLD Standards Council's ambitions were as follows:



Our vision – To deliver positive lifelong learning outcomes for Scotland's community-based adult learners, community development groups and young people by driving high quality standards of professional CLD practice.



Our mission – to maintain the integrity of professional community learning and development practice by driving high standards of professional practice, 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**.

Strategic Objectives

The explicit vision and mission statements set the direction of travel that supported the development of our organisation's strategic objectives, functions and modes of delivery. Over the last five years these objectives formed the spine of the CLD Standards Council as an organisation.

- Deliver, maintain and further develop a professional **Approvals** structure for qualifications, courses and development opportunities for everyone involved in CLD.
- Maintain and develop the **Registration** system and establish members' services for practitioners delivering and active in CLD.
- Maintain and develop models of **Professional Learning** and training opportunities for CLD practitioners.
- Improve and develop our organisational capability.
- Lead and contribute to relevant CLD policy and workforce information services.

Our Unique Role and Defining Features

The lifelong learning system in Scotland encompasses a multitude of organisations and institutions. From early years, schools, colleges, universities, employers and voluntary organisations each area is founded on learning, citizenship and change. The CLD Standards Council has a unique role within this system, and its key unique role and features are noted below:

- The CLD Standards Council is the **Professional Standards and Registration Body (PSRB)** for people who **work or volunteer** in CLD in Scotland, encompassing adult learning, community development and youth work.

- We are a member-led organisation who define the standards for entry and continued practice in the CLD workforce with a lead role in quality assurance processes.
- The CLD Standards Council is led by a ministerially approved Chair and is hosted by Education Scotland which is an agency of the Scottish Government.
- Our role is to drive high standards of professional practice across the CLD sector by approving programmes of study including professional qualifications, maintaining the public register of practitioners, supporting CLD career pathways and professional development.
- Collaborating with our members, we use our insights to advocate for high standards of practice to instil trust and enhance the status of the CLD profession.
- We ensure standards are maintained by asking CLD Standards Council members to confirm their commitment to cohesive CLD wide and inclusive ethics, competences and professional learning to improve the quality of CLD practice.
- We are governed by a Council of **46** members who participate in the Executive, Approvals, Professional Learning and Registration Committees.
- Our work is set out in a Framework Agreement with Scottish Ministers, and we are fully funded by the Scottish Government.
- Furthermore, the CLD Standards Council is governed by Standing Orders and the Members' Charter which sit alongside the Framework Agreement, setting out the CLD Standards Council's purpose, role, operating principles and aspirations.

- A key role in curating the history and development of CLD as unique contributor to Scotland's Lifelong Learning system.

More information regarding these points can be found via the web links noted in Appendix 1.

Tracking Our Progress

To ensure that members, partners and stakeholders have a clear understanding of our work and how well we are delivering against our vision, mission and strategic objectives, the CLD Standards Council developed a Theory of Change Logic Model to track its progress from 2020–2025 ([CLD Standards Council PowerPoint Presentation](#)).

This visual framework focuses on “why” we do our work (vision statement) and “how” we do our work (mission statement). It details how the CLD Standards Council's resources and activities create intended outputs and outcomes for our members. By illustrating the pathways from inputs and activities to short, medium, and long-term outcomes, the Theory of Change Logic Model has helped the CLD Standards Council to plan, evaluate and communicate its work more effectively.

Between 2020–2025 the CLD Standards Council achieved its ten short-term outcomes and can demonstrate impact in some of the medium and long-term aspects.

The following snapshot section illustrates a few of our key achievements.

The CLD Standards Council at a glance – snapshot in numbers



On average, 16 new members join CLD Standards Council every month



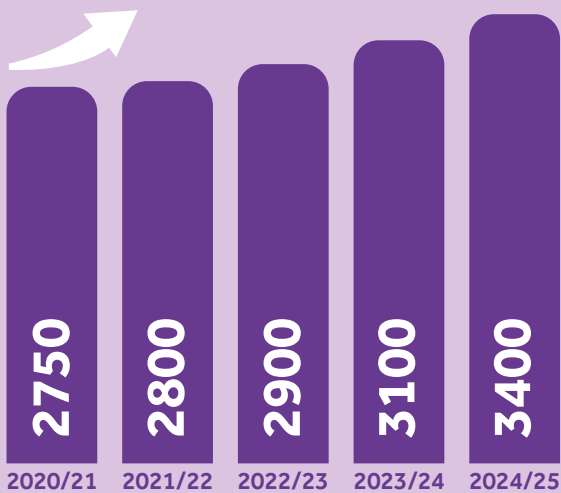
Jointly hosted or participated in 129 partners events, with a combined total attendance of 5,565 individuals



Hosted 104 events with 2,550 members

CLD Membership Growth

Our membership has increased 19% since 2020/21



Raising our Voices

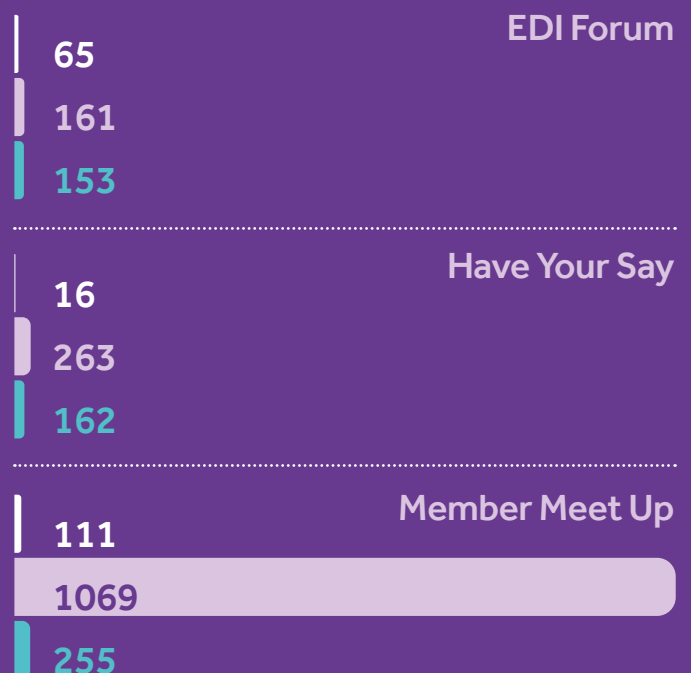
Since 2020, the CLD Standards Council has submitted 33 responses to consultations on policy and legislation, spanning all three thematic areas of Community Learning and Development



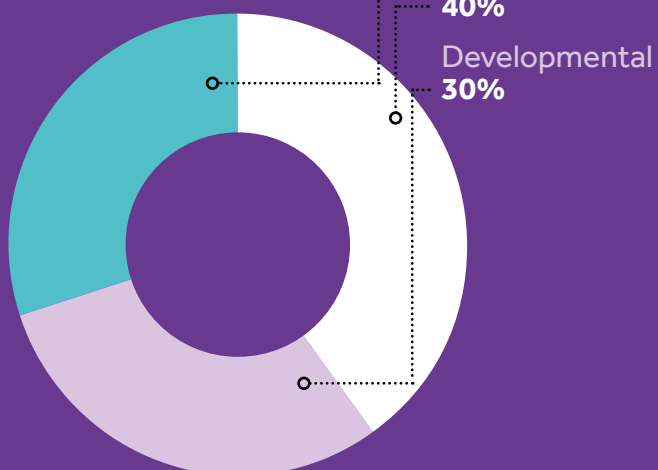
Attendance

at EDI Forum, HYS & MMU by year

● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25



Approved programmes, Qualifications and Standard Marks 2020–25



The CLD Standards Council at a Glance



Member Engagement

Responding to member requests, over the last five years we have developed and delivered:

- The Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Forum
- Have Your Say / Policy consultation and engagement events
- Member Meet Up – led by members to focus on specific areas of practice.

This work has contributed to members reporting an effective voice, and a shared sense of influence and visibility across the Lifelong Learning System.



Standards

As illustrated on page 9, there has been a rise in the volume of approvals requested and delivered over the last five years which indicates an increase in the number of professionally qualified CLD practitioners accessing the labour market.



Additional University Provision

With a high number of associate members and members living in the North, Highlands and Islands of Scotland the CLD Standards Council collaborated with partners to improve CLD course provision. As a result, the University of the Highlands and Islands now offer CLD Standards Council approved courses.

SARAH LATTO

CLD empowering volunteer communities



Sarah Latto is a real community champion.

She has worked with communities for years, from managing teams of volunteers in her home council of Fife, to tackling homelessness with the charity Shelter Scotland, and now with her job at Volunteer Scotland, she works to make sure that the voices of volunteers are reflected in government policies.

Sarah has a passion for people, and working meaningfully with communities to help them achieve their own ambitions is one of the core pillars of her work, always supported by best practice gleaned from the community, learning and development (CLD) profession.

Sarah is also passionate about volunteering and how it can give communities power to create their own identity and culture and bring about change. However, it was during Sarah's time managing more than 100 volunteers at Shelter Scotland, a charity that helps people struggling with bad housing or homelessness, that Sarah introduced a 'relationship based' approach to volunteering.

"Shelter Scotland works with a lot of volunteers who have experienced homelessness and bad housing themselves, so a big part of my job as volunteer manager was to make sure that the volunteering programme reflected their needs," Sarah explained.

"The 'relationship based' approach was focused on building very strong relationships with the volunteers and working with them to identify how they could benefit from participating in the programme to grow and develop."

Sarah strongly believes that organisational ambitions and objectives should reflect the community's own objectives, and this was the way it worked at Shelter Scotland, where many local priorities were developed with the community, not by management 'up top'.

"It's all about bringing people along on the journey, and it's through CLD where that happens best – that's when people are able to contribute to decisions that affect them," she said.

Whilst Sarah has developed and honed many skills in CLD over the years, it wasn't until 2020 that she realised the benefits of becoming a member of the CLD Standards Council for Scotland. What's more, she thinks there are a lot of people working in Scotland's community sector who may be in the same boat, **"Unless people are doing a role specifically called 'community learning' or 'community engagement' or 'youth work', they may not see themselves as being a CLD practitioner, but they are!"** she said.

Through the CLD Standards Council Sarah has become well equipped with knowledge about the national standards especially around community engagement, and she draws on this for how she engages with the community.

"CLD has absolutely influenced how I meaningfully engage people on a range of issues, and the approaches developed and championed by the CLD Standards Council are the best way to make sure that you're being as inclusive as you possibly can. That's CLD in a nutshell," she said.

"It's so rewarding to work with people and know that because of the techniques you're using, they are able to be their best selves and help create more resilient communities. I think that CLD is the glue that brings communities together, and it helps to generate capacity and ability within communities. It's brilliant to watch people and communities flourish and grow and be the best they can be, it's amazing."

SECTION TWO

Realising our objectives

As noted in section one, over the last five years the CLD Standards Council have developed and refined a planning and delivery framework. This focuses on our organisation's ambitions and functions, supports good governance and allows us to deliver, monitor and report effectively on our work with members and stakeholders.

The following diagram shows each stage of the planning process and illustrates where each aspect contributes to the overall framework.

This system accounts for potential organisational risks / barriers and has allowed us to consider and monitor the conditions, actions and resources necessary for achieving our aim; whilst enabling **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART)** targets and measures to be established. Each stage in this process considers how activities impact and create intended outputs and outcomes for members.

Diagram 1 – Planning and Reporting Framework



Resources and Data

The CLD Standards Council’s planning and delivery framework takes cognisance of the resources available which include:

Table 1 – Resources and Changes 2020–2025

Resource / Organisational Input	Summary Changes over the last 5 Years
Staff Team	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Estate: including website, i-develop and social media channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to host the web site and i-develop. • Engagement over new social media channels – From continuing with X to expanding to LinkedIn and Facebook.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Register 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework Agreement with Education Scotland 	Refreshed in 2021
Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair re-appointed 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual review in line with Governance arrangements. • The overall trend for total committee membership numbers from 2020/21 to 2025/26 shows a pattern of initial stability, followed by growth and redistribution, and ending with a decline and levelling out. • Total committee membership remained fairly consistent in the first three years, peaked in 2023/24 due to increases to the Professional Learning committee, declined in 2024/25, and by 2025/26, membership numbers had levelled out across all committees. • One student has been a member of the Approval Committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the CLD Standards Council Committees work on a voluntary basis, contributing hundreds of hours per annum on behalf of the membership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships extended and expanded

Table 2 – Qualitative and Quantitative Data Sources

Qualitative Data	Quantitative Data
	Membership Statistics
Membership Case Studies	
Membership Surveys	Membership Surveys
	Number of Events and Attendance Statistics
Event Evaluation	
	Service Demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approvals • Professional Learning • Registration
	Committee Attendance
Committee Meetings	
Focus Groups	
	Number and spread of policy consultations and responses
	IRP data
Partnership and Project Groups	Partnership and Project Groups
	Website Engagement
Social Media Engagement	Social Media Engagement
	Number of reports issued
	Member Events
	Budget Allocation to CLD Networks

Attention is also paid to key issues and recommendations emerging from other sources of information such as:

- HMle
- Education Scotland
- Audit Scotland Reports
- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Government Report

Reporting

To comply with governance arrangements, monitor resources and service delivery, demonstrate impact and communicate effectively with members a number of engagement and reporting procedures are in place. For example:

- Annual Reports
- Minutes of Meetings
- Member Meet Ups
- Policy Consultation
- Evaluation and Impact Reports
- Newsletters and Social Media Updates

PAUL HUMPHREYS

FARE Scotland: CLD – community, not competition



When Paul Humphreys was a boy in the 1980s, he grew up in Glasgow's east end. Times were tough for local families and life wasn't easy. But when Paul was about 8 years old he went along to a local youth club in Easterhouse for the first time, never dreaming that it would lead him on a path to a successful career in community, learning and development (CLD), and even become his future workplace.

Without knowing it at the time, Paul was exposed to how communities can be supported and connected through the practice of CLD.

Years later, in 2007, Paul joined FARE Scotland as a sessional youth worker. FARE is an organisation dedicated to helping communities thrive and free people from the effects of poverty. This is where his journey in CLD really began – there was lots of learning whilst working to support families and young people who were struggling, tackling poverty and looking at the inequalities of families in Glasgow's east end area.

A few years later, Paul went on to study Community Education at university and gained an honours degree in 2016 – an achievement he would never have thought possible as a young lad.

Paul's story is like many others' in the youth work field. His own experience of what it's like to grow up in an area of deprivation, seeing first-hand the struggles disadvantaged communities face, helps him understand and support the young people he works with.

These days, Paul is the Attainment and Skills Manager and Depute CEO at FARE Scotland. His main role is managing the schools' team which provides youth workers in 22 secondary schools in Glasgow and two in East Renfrewshire. He says that the best part of his job is seeing the impact youth work has made on so many young people over the years.

"When you can see communities flourish and have a voice for themselves, that's what makes the job worthwhile," he said.

Over the last 2 years, Paul and his team have seen more than 1500 positive outcomes – that is, young people and community members doing well as a direct result of the work of CLD. After Paul gained his university qualifications, he became a member of CLD Standards Council Scotland. He is now also a member of the CLD Standards Approvals Committee, approving qualifications and training for the CLD sector.

"CLD is about collaboration. We collaborate with many other organisations, because no one organisation can tackle everything by themselves," Paul explains.

This is one of the reasons Paul encourages anyone working in the CLD sector to register as a member of the CLD Standards Council.

"Being a community worker, you become a voice for the community and you have to use it. We want to make sure that CLD practitioners keep learning and growing, are ahead of the curve to see what's coming up and how you can best support communities," he said.

Paul is clear that this is a collaborative process, **"It's about shared practice too. We are all pulling in the same direction, but we shouldn't be competing. Sharing knowledge to support other communities and to help ensure that CLD is embedded across every community is so important."**

SECTION THREE

Activity and Impact

This section considers illustrates key activities and outcomes from service delivery in the following categories:

- **Approvals**
- **Professional Learning**
- **Registration**
- **Organisational Capability**
- **CLD Policy and Workforce Information**

Approvals: The Approvals Suite

Over the past five years, the CLD Standards Council Scotland has consistently upheld and enhanced the quality of CLD professional education and training through its suite of Approval programmes. The purpose of this function is as follows:

Diagram 2 – The Purpose of Approvals



There are three aspects of the Approvals Suite.

Professional Approval

This function is designed for courses levelled within the **Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF)** [The Framework – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework] at Level 9 and above that lead to the Professional Qualification. Typically used for degree and postgraduate programmes offered by universities and / or colleges.

Developmental Approval

This function is designed for courses externally verified by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) or another awarding body, which are typically levelled between SCQF Levels 3-11 that do not lead to the Professional Qualification. Typically used by colleges, training providers and employers.

CLD Standards Council Standards Mark

The CLD Standards Mark recognises the quality of CLD learning opportunities provided by employers, for their staff and volunteers. This aspect considers the organisations overall learning culture and the quality and range of activities on offer. Typically used by voluntary organisations, local authorities and CLD partnerships groups.

Approved programmes, qualifications, and standard marks 2020–25

Year	Professional Approvals
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of the West of Scotland: BA (Hons) Community Education • University of Edinburgh: BA (Ord) Learning in Communities
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Glasgow: BA / BA (Hons) Community Development
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Glasgow: MEd Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work • University of Glasgow: Post Graduate Diploma Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of the Highlands and Islands: BA (Hons) Child and Youth Studies with Community Learning and Development

Year	Developmental Approvals
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayrshire College: HNC Working with Communities
2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fife College: HNC Working With Communities • Sports Academy of Scotland: SVQ Youth Work (SCQF Level 7) • Highland Council: NPA Theory and approaches to Youth Work • Highland Council: PDA Introduction to Tutoring ESOL • Queen Margaret University: SCQF 11 – Module – Leading and Enhancing Community Learning Outdoors

Year	Standards Marks Awarded
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jack Kane Community Centre
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dundee and Angus College Learner Engagement & Community Partnerships Team • West Dunbartonshire Council • Aberdeenshire Council CLD Service
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Scotland CLD Team • Youth Highland • Youth Link Scotland • Fife Council – Communities and Neighbourhoods service

Supported by one member of staff, there have been a total of 29 members contributing to the Approvals Committee over the last five years. Each member has already joined the CLD Standards Council, attends as an individual practitioner and offers their time voluntarily. Examples of key duties and activities over the last five years are as follows:

Diagram 3 – Approvals Committee Activity



Joint Education and Training Standards (JETS)

The CLD Standards Council works with its contemporary PSRBs from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to represent and uphold Scotland's CLD approach and to monitor / review qualification and practice placement standards to ensure the portability of Scottish CLD qualifications with colleges, universities and employers across the United Kingdom.

The primary responsibilities of the ETS committees are to validate and endorse courses leading to qualification in professional and pre-professional youth work (and for CLD in Scotland) in their respective jurisdictions. This workforce development function, alongside a broader commitment to continuous professional development (CPD) for all staff, is at the heart of the profession's obligation to ensure that youth workers are fit to practice. The Joint ETS meets to share good practice, to develop commonality of approach, and to take joint action on any issues and concerns.

Together with the data shared in Section One, the cumulative effects of these activities are as follows:

- Increase demand for approval activity across all approval routes.
- Increased HE / FE CLD course provision across Scotland.
- Improved Standards and Guidelines.
- Increased number of Approvals and CLD Standards Mark promotion and training events.
- Strengthened CLD Higher Education / Further Education Group which has improved and enhanced student practice placement experience.

Professional Learning

Similar to the Approvals function the CLD Standards Council's professional learning work is supported by one member of staff. Over the last five years there have been a total of 20 members of the Professional Learning Committee and again; members are already registered with the CLD Standards Council, attend as an individual basis and practitioner and offer their time voluntarily.

The requirement to undertake professional learning and development is a key requirement of registration as a Registered or Associate member of the CLD Standards Council. It is incumbent on members to maintain and develop their practice through critical reflection on their Professional Learning and Development.

Applicants are required to confirm they have adhered to this when they submit or renew their membership.

To support the professional learning requirements and provide induction for new members the Professional Learning Committee undertakes a range of activities. Some of the highlights and outcomes are noted in the table below.

Table 3 – Professional Learning Committee Activity and Engagement Activity

Activity

Good practice exemplars, for example the case studies used in this report.

Competency and Ethics Reviews – to ensure currency and validity.

Professional Learning Resources:

- Leading CLD Programme – Since 2021, there have been 3 cohorts with 42 members completing the programme.
 - Professional Induction Programme – Since 2022, there have been 3 cohorts with 39 members completing the programme.
-

Growing the Learning Culture: a professional learning strategy

- The Buddy and Mentor Programme was developed and implemented in this time programme with 13 participants to date.
-

Promotional Presentations

- Students
 - Employers
 - Colleges / Universities
 - Members
 - PSRBs
 - Stakeholders
-

Members Conferences

- Five national CLD Lecture and Members Conferences, with the 2020 conference being delivered online.
-

cont/

Professional Learning Grants

- Professional Learning Grants awarded to networks across the country resulting in events across the country. For example, Tayside’s CLD Winterfest.

CLD Standards have awarded **£32,900** in Professional Learning grants that have supported **1665** CLD practitioners over **90** events. Below is a breakdown of this by year.

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2024/24	2024/25
Amount Awarded	£6000	£7300	£6000	£4000	£9600
Participants Supported	438	125	215	361	526
Professional Learning Events held	21	24	21	17	7

National Occupational Standards (NOS)

CLD Standards Council were contracted to undertake the review and refresh of three suites of National Occupational Standards (NOS) relevant to CLD practice across the country, ensuring that they were up to date and fit for purpose for CLD practitioners. NOS are detailed descriptions of the skills, knowledge, and understanding required to perform a job role effectively.

Review NOS:

- [Community Development](#)
- [Family Learning](#)
- [Youth Work](#)

The CLD Standards Council was also tasked with the development of a new NOS for [Adult Learning](#). This initiative enabled the alignment of Adult Learning with other areas of practice within the sector. Several components of the newly developed NOS were incorporated in the Adult Learning in Scotland: An Introduction SCQF level 6 Professional Development Award (PDA).

Some comments and reflections from members who participated in the Leading CLD Programme are noted on the next page:

Leading CLD programme participant reflections

"This programme really helped me look outward more. It has impacted my own reflective practice especially regards connecting "on the floor" delivery through to the context of policy."

"Despite being from another professional background, it helped me recognise that I had transferable skills and actually knew more than I realised."

"The coaching aspect really helped me to tame my advice monster and to actively listen and give others the space to explore their issues and solutions."

"I have particularly enjoyed building my professional network. The home group activities were a really valuable way of building connections and sharing practice across different areas."

Registration

Registration Activity

Setting Registration Requirements

Code of Ethics

Standard of Registration

Competent Practitioner Framework

Registration Process

Qualifications List

Public Register

Membership Stats

Certificates / Cards

Responses to Enquiries

Promotion of Registration

Highlights

- Alumni Category
- IRP refresh
- Increased membership across all areas
- On average, 16 new people join the CLD Standards Council each month

Central to our role as the PSRB for the CLD sector in Scotland, is the CLD Standards Council's Registration System.

1. The CLD Standards Council Registration System

- Consolidates CLD as a clear and distinct professional area
- Strengthens a shared professional identity within this diverse area of practice
- Defines and maintains high standards within CLD practice

2. Why join?

Become a member and you can:

- Engage in professional dialogue, nationally and locally
- Be part of a recognised professional body
- Take part in learning opportunities
- Drive forward new developments in our sector
- Be involved in Standards Council events and activities

- Have a key influence on policy initiatives and responses
- Play a lead role in shaping the future of the Standards Council

3. Who can become a member?

Membership is open to CLD practitioners who demonstrate commitment to the values, principles, Code of ethics, and Continuing Professional Learning that underpin the sector. [Find out more about the commitment.](#)

There are 2 categories of membership depending on your qualifications and CLD Practice and Experience: Associate membership or Registered membership.

Registration Renewal

CLD Registered and Associate members are required to renew their membership every three years. This is to ensure the credibility of the registration system and ensuring that all members continue to practice according to the values and ethics of CLD.

In 2022, the Renewal process was largely suspended due to COVID-19 as well as changes to the CLD staff and administration support. The process resumed in 2025 with the team clearing the backlog earlier this year.

Alumni Membership

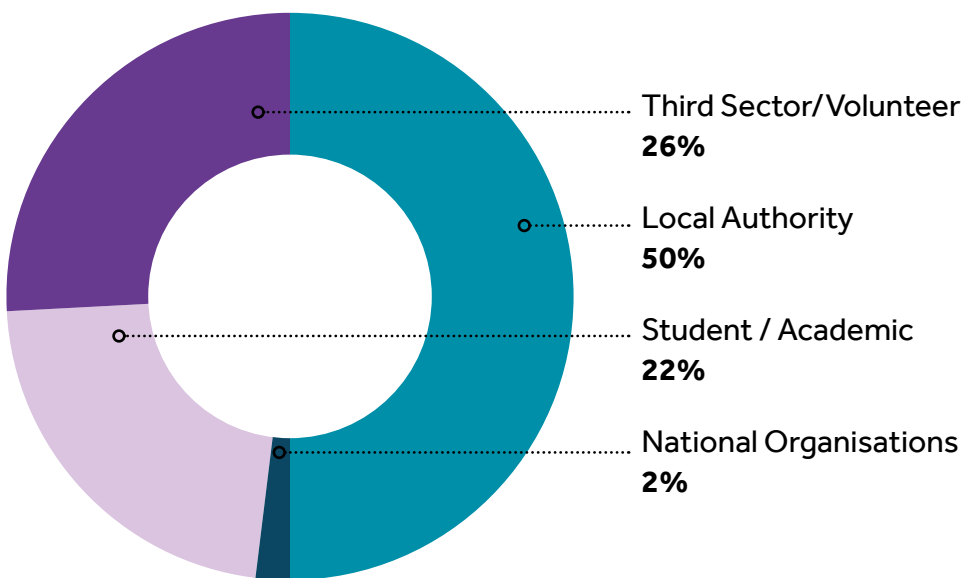
In 2021, the CLD Standards Council has offered members the opportunity to join our Alumni network should they choose to end their professional membership, for example, due to retirement or a career change.

Alumni members:

- Continue to receive our monthly e-bulletin
- Be welcome to attend CLDSC meet-up sessions
- Retain access to their i-develop account

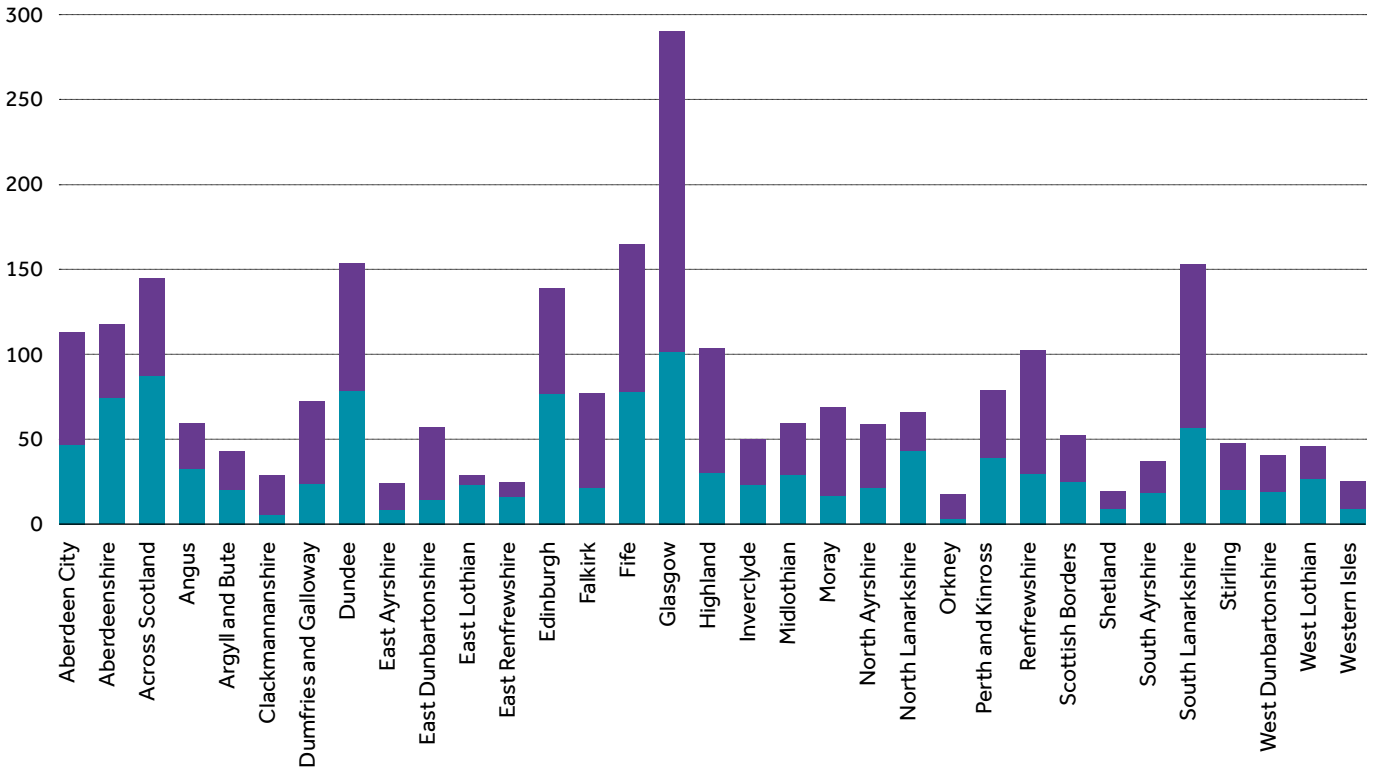
In addition, alumni members may choose to volunteer as a CLD Buddy, offering support to newer members by sharing their knowledge and experience. They may also be invited to participate in working groups or to provide feedback on CLD Standards Council policy papers, particularly where they hold relevant expertise.

CLD Standards Council membership by sector

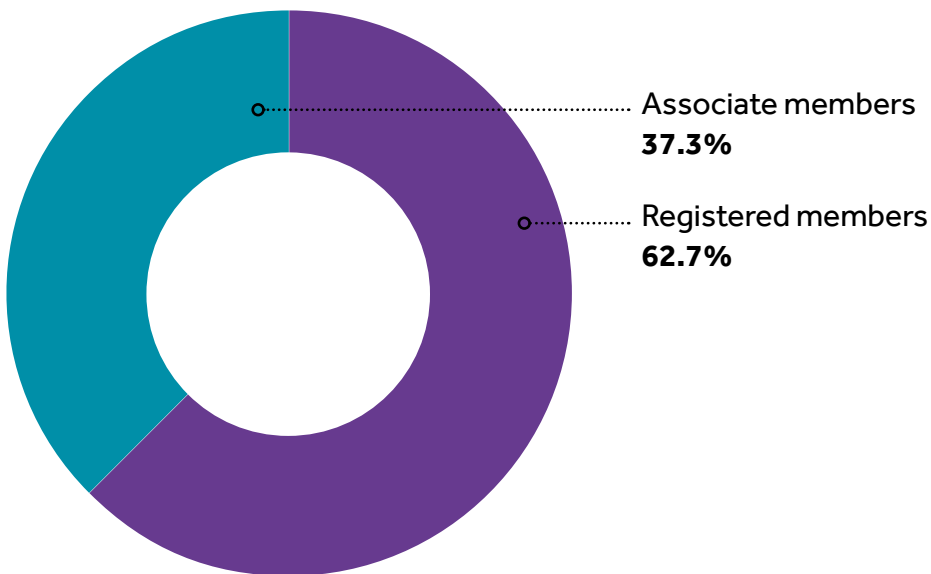


Membership by region

Registered members Associate members



CLD Standards Council membership by type



Policy and CLD Workforce Information

Policy Activity

Intelligence Gathering & Research
Member Consultations
Research Projects
Advocacy
Influencing Policy
Policy Groups & Networks
Formal Consultations

Highlights

- CLD Career Pathways and Qualification Report
- Engage, Educate, Connect and Empower Report
- Consultations / responses to all CLD related work for example, from Net Zero to the Accounts Commission
- Equalities Reference Group / EDI forum
- Webinars i.e. New Scots
- CLD Plans (2021–2024) Support with and for sector
- Adult Learning Strategy
- SDS Career Development Strategy
- Youth Work Strategy
- Local Authority Budget Reports

Over the last five years the CLD Standards Council has played a more notable role in national policy drivers and developments. Much of this work has centred on strengthening the visibility, credibility, and influence of the CLD sector across Scotland's wider education, skills, and community empowerment landscape. During this period, the Standards Council has contributed consistently to national consultations, strategic working groups, and cross-sector partnerships, ensuring that the perspectives and needs of the CLD workforce are reflected in emerging policy and delivery frameworks. This has included a strong focus on representing the voice of our membership, using member views and experiences to shape our contributions to national discussions and policy.

Diversity Monitoring of CLD Standards Council Membership

There is currently limited research specifically focused on workforce diversity within the CLD sector. In response to this gap, and to understand our membership better, the CLD Standards Council Scotland conducted a large-scale diversity monitoring survey of its membership during January and February 2024. This marked the first dedicated exercise in diversity monitoring conducted by the organisation, beyond the basic demographic data (such as gender, age, and ethnicity) previously gathered through the membership application process.

This initiative aligns directly with the CLD Standards Council's Equality Strategy, which is underpinned by a comprehensive set of Equality Outcomes for 2022–2025. In particular, the monitoring survey supports outcomes related to:

- Enhancing the organisation's capacity to collect robust and comprehensive equalities data.
- Enabling targeted actions to increase the diversity of the membership, ensuring it more accurately reflects Scotland's demographics and individuals with protected characteristics.

The response to this pilot survey was positive, with **465** members participating, representing just over **15%** of the total membership at the time. Importantly, responses were received from practitioners in all 32 local authority areas, offering confidence in the geographic reach and representativeness of the data.

Findings from this monitoring exercise will inform and support the work of staff and committees across a range of areas, including:

- Promotional and membership development activity.
- Workforce support and professional learning.
- Marketing and communications, including the development of materials and digital platforms.

This 2024 survey provides a baseline dataset, and the next full-scale diversity monitoring exercise is scheduled to take place in 2029. In the interim, the Registration and Membership Committee will continue to progress equalities work by reviewing the current data collected through the membership application process, as well as from new member engagement evaluations, with a view to improving and

standardising equality data collection across the organisation.

Policy Engagement and Member Voice

CLD plays a significant role in contributing to a wide range of public policy objectives. Equally, various policies and legislation influence the context within which CLD practitioners operate. One of the CLD Standards Council's core strategic objectives is to:

- **Lead and contribute to relevant CLD policy and workforce information services.**

In alignment with this objective, the CLD Standards Council remains committed to fostering strong and collaborative partnerships. We continue to engage proactively with the Scottish Government, COSLA, and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), in order to strengthen the alignment between the CLD sector and key policy areas.

Since 2020, the CLD Standards Council has submitted **33 responses** to consultations on policy and legislation, spanning all three thematic areas of Community Learning and Development (CLD). These responses aim to raise the profile of the sector and influence the development of policy in ways that support and strengthen both the **identity of CLD** and the **development of the CLD workforce**.

Our proactive involvement in these processes has frequently resulted in invitations to participate in expert panels and advisory groups. We are regularly called upon to support wider sector engagement, offering insight and experiential evidence that directly informs the work of policy teams developing new strategies and legislation.

The CLD Standards Council is an active core member and part of the steering group for the Policy Champions Network (PCN), established

in 2023 to enhance the visibility and influence of volunteering within local and national policy across all relevant sectors. Since its inception, we have collaborated on and supported all PCN consultation events and contributed to policy responses on key issues including community wealth building, human rights, local democracy, and the independent review of CLD. Additionally, we contributed to the development of a briefing to accompany the Programme for Government.

In addition to our engagement with Cross-Party Groups (CPGs) – including those focused on Skills, Children and Young People, Poverty, and Volunteering – the CLD Standards Council is currently represented on the Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill, Practitioner Panel. This panel includes professionals from Social Work Scotland, Education Scotland, NHS Scotland, the Mental Welfare Commission, Police Scotland, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Law Society of Scotland, and other key stakeholders. We are proud to contribute to the development of this significant legislation, which seeks to improve the lives of individuals with learning disabilities and to enhance the quality, accessibility, and integration of the services they rely upon.

All consultation responses and related commentary are publicly accessible on our website:

[Policy Responses and Commentary | CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#)

Local Authority CLD Budget Reporting

As a member-led organisation, the CLD Standards Council is committed to promoting high standards in professional practice and serving as a voice for the CLD profession. In 2023, the Council initiated an annual research exercise to collect data on CLD budget allocations across Scotland's 32 local authorities, particularly in relation to workforce planning and the statutory CLD planning requirements.

The analysis for the 2023/24 financial year aimed to identify trends in resource allocation. However, the exercise revealed a lack of centrally held or accessible data on budgets for CLD adult learning, community development, youth work, staffing levels, professional learning, and voluntary sector support. This gap in information continues to exist.

As a result, the CLD Standards Council will maintain its commitment to annually request financial and workforce data directly from Local Authority Chief Executives to support better planning and decision-making across the sector.

You can access these reports below:

- [CLD Budget report 2023/24](#)
- [CLD Budget report 2024/25](#)

Organisational Capacity

Actions

- Communications & Branding
- Website
- Communication Tools
- Committee Recruitment / Support
- Governance
- MOUs
- Documentation

Highlights

- Members Bulletins and Updates (weekly/monthly)
- Comms Strategy and Action Plan
- Social Media engagement
- i-develop
- Increased website activity
- Members Profiles
- Increased volume of effective partnerships

Annual Reports

Over the past five years, the CLD Standards Council annual reports have documented the Council's role in strengthening the CLD profession across Scotland. These reports provide a year by year account of strategic priorities, sector engagement, and the Council's contributions to national policy and professional practice. They serve not only as a record of activity but also as a reflection of the Council's impact on communities, learners, and practitioners.

Each annual report highlights a range of initiatives, from supporting professional learning and workforce development to influencing national strategies. The Council's work has included developing guidance, hosting sector wide events, and collaborating with Scottish Government and other stakeholders to ensure CLD remains central to policy discussions.

A key theme throughout the reports is the active involvement of CLD Standards Council members. Their contributions have shaped the Council's direction and ensured that its work remains grounded in the realities of practice.

These annual reports demonstrate the Council's sustained commitment to advancing the CLD profession, supporting practitioners, and ensuring that CLD continues to play a vital role in Scotland's social and educational landscape.

All reports can be found on our [website](#).

Partnerships

The Standards Council work with a wide range of organisations across the CLD and education sector. In the past five years we have formalised agreements with the following organisations:

- [All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training \(AIEB\)](#)
- [Joint ETS for Youth Work](#)
- [Volunteer Scotland](#)

Further agreements and organisations we are members of can be found on our website.

Membership Engagement

The CLD Standards Council communicates with our members through a variety of channels.

We regularly email our members with updates on sector news, policy consultations, new initiatives, and upcoming events. Our email subscription list has grown to over **2,000 members**, and we currently maintain an impressive **average open rate of 39%**. Over the past year, we've sent **58 email communications** to our members.

We also use social media to keep our members informed and engaged. As of now, we have:

- **1,308 followers** on Facebook
- **818 followers** on LinkedIn
- **4,351 followers** on X (formerly Twitter), an increase of **840 followers since 2020**

Our Presence on X (formerly Twitter)

Recent changes on the X platform have led us to reflect on whether it continues to align with our core values of equality, inclusion, empowerment and honesty.

After careful consideration, we have concluded that fully leaving the platform could risk reducing our visibility and ability to support the CLD sector. However, we will **no longer actively post content on X**.

We will continue to focus our energy on platforms and spaces that better reflect our values and ethics, and support more meaningful engagement with our community.

To keep up to date with the latest news from CLD Standards Council please visit our linktree.

SECTION FOUR

Changing Landscape and Unplanned Work

Over the last five years there have been major developments that were unprecedented that affected the work of the CLD Standards Council. From the pandemic that resulted in major changes to service provision, relied on digital platforms to the development and major national education reform.

COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CLD Standards Council for Scotland played a pivotal role in supporting the CLD sector through a period of significant disruption and transformation. Below are some of the activities the Council was involved in.

1. Sectoral Guidance and Safety Protocols

In July 2020, the Council published detailed sectoral guidance to help CLD practitioners safely resume face-to-face services. This included:

- Risk assessments
- Physical distancing and hygiene protocols
- Use of PPE
- Home working and travel considerations
- Support for staff and service users' health and wellbeing.
- [Covid-19-Restarting-CLD-Sector-Guidance-CLDSC.pdf](#)

2. CLD Standards Council Outreach and Activity During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CLD Standards Council for Scotland led a coordinated effort to support practitioners, gather evidence of impact, and advocate for the sector's role in national recovery. A key

part of this was a four-wave survey series conducted between March and July 2020.

- [The CLD Response to COVID-19 – seeking your views – CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#)

3. Thought Pieces

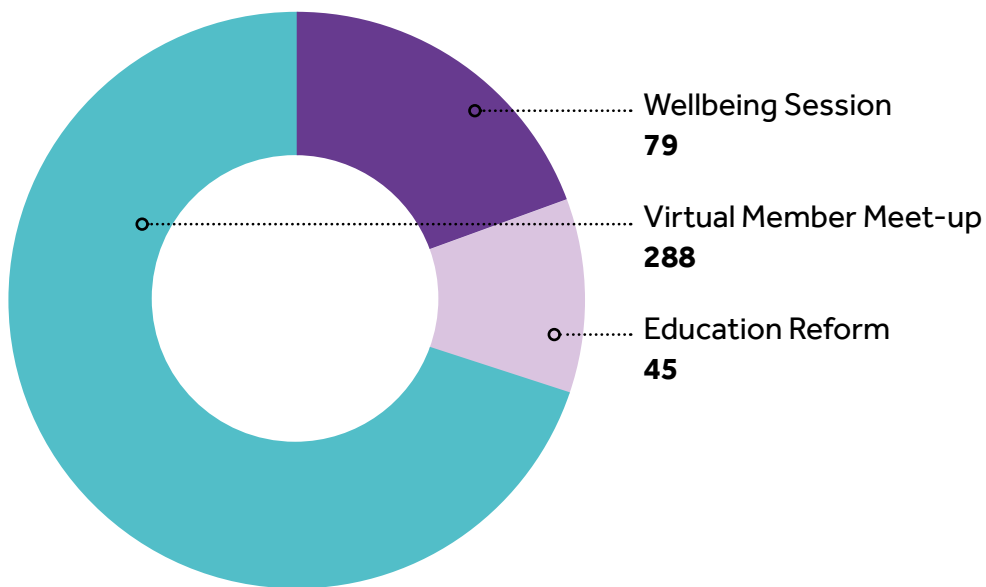
Drawing on the findings of the pandemic workforce surveys, the CLD Standards Council released the *Engage, Educate, Connect, Empower* paper in August 2020, outlining how CLD contributes to national recovery. It emphasised:

- The cross-cutting role of adult learning, youth work, and community development
- The importance of resilience and reconstruction in policy planning
- The need for a coherent, value-driven approach to public investment in CLD
- [Engage, Educate, Connect Empower: CLD, Resilience and Recovery – CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#)

4. Online Events

The Standards Council hosted events online to bring members together to discuss changes in working and share good practice through Wellbeing sessions, Virtual Member Meet-ups. From 2020 to 2022, we hosted 21 online events with over 412 cumulative members joining. We had 16 Member Meet-ups and 4 Wellbeing sessions.

COVID-19 Events – 2022–22 Attendee Numbers



The CLD Standards Council also hosted the first online membership Conference in December 2020. Across two days, 140 members attended the conference. In December 2021, the conference was held online again with the focus being on COVID-19 Recovery.

Education Reform – from 2021

Emerging from the pandemic the CLD Standards Council was included and involved in the national education reform programme. This work was extensive and included the independent reviews of:

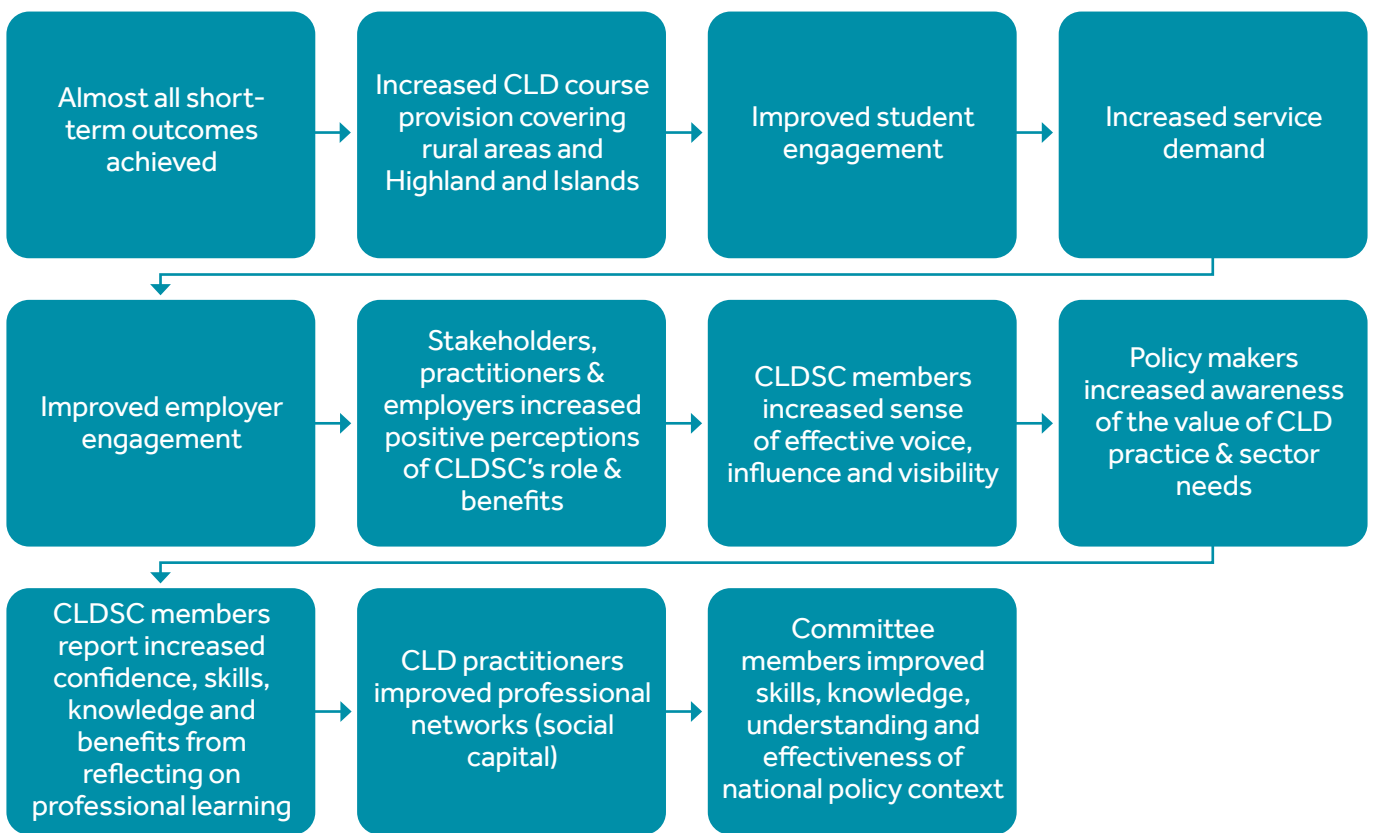
- curriculum, qualifications and assessments
- post-school education and training
- national agencies

In 2025 published *Learning: For All. For Life*. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) [Learning for All for Life](#). With the CLD workforce mentioned throughout, the recommendations noted in this report set the future agenda for CLD in Scotland.

SECTION FIVE

So What?

Reviewing the CLD Standards Council's plans, service delivery, response to the pandemic and its central role in education it's clear that there has been improvement across almost all aspects of its work.



Some further examples:

Improved student engagement

"Last year, I took part in an online forum run by the CLD Standards Council and felt really good about being involved. It's great to find out through my study and the resources of the CLD Standards Council that a lot of what I've been doing in practice is theoretically 'right!'"

Abigail Miller, CLD Stories

Student Engagement Events

FY	Number of Events	Student Attendee Numbers
2023/2024	7	157
2024/2025	11	179
2025/2026	1	42
Grand Total	19	378

Effective voice, influence and visibility

"Being a member gives those working in communities as volunteers or CLD practitioners a sense of identity; it gives us a place to engage with other people working in the field both local and nationally. You're part of a recognised professional body."

Laura Sutherland, CLD Stories

"Having an agency that advocates for CLD is really important; in times where public finances are stretched more than ever, the case for the value of the partnerships that CLD so effectively bring together has never been stronger."

Stuart Mason, CLD Stories

Professional Learning Benefits

"It's about shared practice too. We are all pulling in the same direction, but we shouldn't be competing. Sharing knowledge to support other communities and to help ensure that CLD is embedded across every community is so important."

Paul Humphreys, CLD Stories

"CLD has absolutely influenced how I meaningfully engage people on a range of issues, and the approaches developed and championed by the CLD Standards Council are the best way to make sure that you're being as inclusive as you possibly can. That's CLD in a nutshell."

Sarah Latto

"I've been to a couple of CLD conferences and it's great to be part of a network of like-minded people. I'm hungry to learn, and who else better to learn from than other people working in this field?"

CLD Standards Council Member

"With CLD, it's about working alongside each other and collectively learning and creating change. So for me, I'm in the right place. I truly believe I will make a difference."

Thomas Delaney, CLD Stories

SECTION SIX

Next Steps

There are a number of connecting matters that will influence the next steps for the CLD Standards Council. These include the following:

- **Review of national education agencies.**
What does a reformed Education Scotland mean for the operational support and location of the CLD Standards Council?
 - Framework Agreement
 - Fit for Purpose Organisation
- **Review of curriculum, qualifications, assessment and post-16 education.**
What will the impact be on workforce development, standards and career pathways?
- **Implementation of the Learning for Life; Learning for all.**

There is the perennial challenge of funding and resources CLD amidst public sector reform and reduced public sector finances. Once more, the CLD Standards Council will evolve, look forward and continue to champion the work of its members on behalf of Scotland's adult learners, community groups and young people.

#BecauseOfCLD

APPENDICES

CLD Standards Council Charter

<https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CharterforCLDSC2020.pdf>

CLD Standards Council Standing orders and Operational guidance

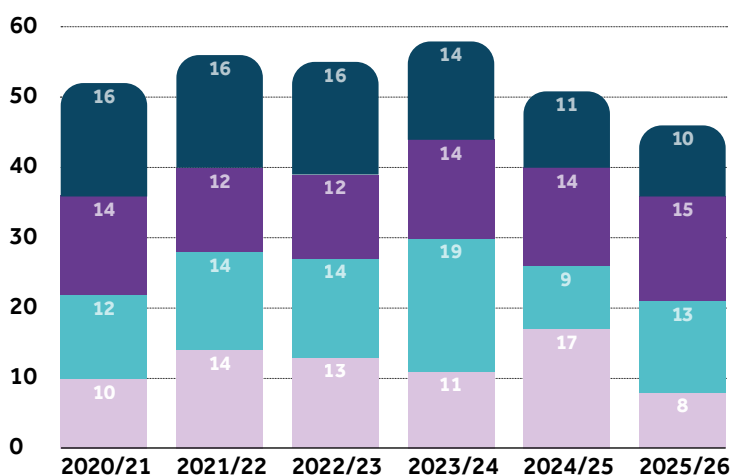
<https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CLDSC-Standing-Orders-Revised-2024.pdf>

CLD Standards Council & Education Scotland Framework Agreement

<https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/the-standards-council/partnership-working/es-framework-agreement/>

Table 4 - Committee Membership Trends 2020–2025

● Approval ● Executive ● Professional Learning ● Membership & Registration



Policy – Further information regarding Approvals, consultation responses and related commentary are publicly accessible on our website:

[Policy Responses and Commentary | CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#)



Education Scotland

The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ

Email: contact@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk