



CLD Standards Council Scotland

Response
to
Consultation

New Scots Integration Strategy

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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. As member led organisation we have a growing membership of over 3000 members, an executive committee and 3 functional committees which are made up of members from across the 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 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

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.”

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

Introduction

CLD is a field of professional practice that is critical in the achievement of any policy or legislation that requires community engagement, development and learning as it supports the learning, growth and empowerment of individuals and communities, as well as supporting the delivery of other services. CLD practice includes examples such as 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, citizen assemblies, community participatory budgeting initiatives and supporting capacity building of community developments such as foodbanks and credit unions.

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 Government's National Performance Framework sets out the strategic objectives for all public services, including those delivering CLD. We would like to make the most of this opportunity to raise and promote the lifelong learning, empowerment and inclusion principles surrounding community based learning including Adult Learning, ESOL, Family Learning and Youth Work. We also would like to highlight the role and agility of Community Learning and Development practitioners and organisations who support and offer learning opportunities to Scotland's learners and communities throughout the year. CLD practitioners work within the CLD [competences](#), [values](#) and [ethics](#) to support change for others.

CLD's specific focus is:

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 development;
- Learning support and guidance in the community.

CLD enables 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 programmes and activities are

developed in dialogue with communities and participants, working particularly with those excluded from participation in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. Through working in these ways, CLD practice extends the reach of democracy and widens its scope.

CLD offers learning and development opportunities to ensure communities are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe. CLD tackles poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally. CLD works collaboratively to make all of Scotland's National Outcomes become reality. However, CLD is not widely recognised or acknowledged for its critical role across Scotland and we would like this to change.

Assumptions:

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. Data gathered provided a valuable insight into the experiences based on the views of the member participants, staff and partner organisations. This response is not representative of the entire CLD sector across Scotland or the full CLD Standards Council membership.

Response from the CLD Standards Council to New Scots Integration Strategy

We fully welcome and support the development of this reviewed strategy for integration of New Scots. The following are our recommendations regarding areas we would like to see incorporated or further enhanced in this strategy and its supporting documentation.

ESOL and English Acquisition: Without Language We Cannot Achieve Integration

Human rights and dignity should be at the core of this entire strategy. We strongly affirm the universality of human rights and feel they should be significant to all across Scotland, including individuals who are not currently recognised as citizens, awaiting immigration paperwork, within the judicial systems and our prisons. For anyone to understand their rights and be able ask for and access the support available, they need to have access to learning the English language.

The current draft strategy references education in both its principles and outcomes however there is no mention of accessing ESOL as a critical part of integration. We assume that the right to access learning opportunities to develop an individual's English language skills will come under the banner of education, however we strongly urge that this strategy separates education and language acquisition, and specifies the right to English tuition for all ages. Without these specified principles and outcomes the achievement of an "education outcome" may only be recognised through provision for young people in schools. If this is the case, the vital need for community and college based ESOL for older aged refugees and asylum seekers will not be recognised and therefore not funded.

ESOL classes are typically delivered in the community by CLD teams or third sector providers. These can be both accredited or non-accredited, and classes often lead to an ESOL SQA qualification or progression to employment or volunteering. CLD community based learning opportunities for ESOL are often structured around individual learners' goals and aspirations, acknowledging that adult learners bring a range of skills, experience and assets to build on, therefore following a Social Practice model. CLD ESOL provision generally supports learners at the lower range of levels, from SCQF Level 1 up to SCQF Level 4 (broadly comparable to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels A1 – B1), and delivers the majority of literacy level provision in community based adult learning classes. As well as ESOL classes, community provision also includes a range of community projects and initiatives not branded as ESOL, but broadly related to community based language learning and socio-cultural integration, recognising and addressing the importance for refugee and asylum seekers to understand the communities they live in, local dialect and cultural differences.

The importance of ESOL provision across Scotland should be stipulated clearly within the New Scots Integration Strategy, with a call for improved policy and funding and workforce planning/development. In a recent report on [Language Learning and Migrant Integration in Scotland](#), Glasgow University states that *"A funding strategy should be a key part of a long-term vision for the ESOL sector: adequate funding is essential to enable the sector to cope with continuing change, to deliver high quality ESOL and to avoid an overreliance on unpaid volunteers"*

There is no longer a specific ESOL Strategy for Scotland. This has caused the understanding of the impact of ESOL learning to be under recognised and provision for adult learners is gravely underfunded. Scottish Government had previously made a commitment through its [Language policies](#) to Refugees and Asylum seekers, stating "ESOL forms a vital part of our work to support

refugees and asylum seekers through the [New Scots refugee integration strategy](#)", however ESOL is not visible in this revised strategy.

In 2010, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service carried out a [research project](#) which explored learners experiences of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and their perceptions of how learning the English language is supporting their integration and community cohesion in the UK.

Highlighting the power of community based ESOL, it states *"The managers from two different community centres agreed that community based ESOL provides a stepping-stone for most learners which was crucial in engaging hard to reach learners. As they developed their confidence, their participation in other activities at the centres increased and some also progressed onto college based courses or into work."*

It also highlighted that the lack of language acquisition is a barrier to social integration and said *"data demonstrates that women's lack of ability to speak and understand English has a detrimental effect on their confidence levels and ability to integrate within wider society. Even where there is an ability and willingness to connect within the wider community, some respondents encountered problems in relation to sections of the community"*.

In a recent [College Development Network Blog](#), Alan Sherry, Chair of the CLD Standards Council, recognised the role of CLD and community based learning for adults and the impact it offers learners for integration and progression into the workplace when he said *" The CLD sector has a long-standing and effective track record of delivering community-based adult learning which enables individuals to acquire the meta-skills identified by Skills Development Scotland as central to employer needs for Industry 4.0. Community-based learning, including literacy and ESOL provision, is often the most effective means of engaging successfully with those who have had a previous negative experience of education and/or have held job roles where there has been no formal training. In addition, local access to learning removes the need to travel, the cost of which is often a major barrier to individuals in the most deprived urban and rural communities."*

The Importance of Volunteering and CLD

In the publication [Evaluation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022](#) it specifies *"Factors which contributed to refugees and people seeking asylum understanding and exercising their rights, responsibilities and entitlements:*

- *Receiving support from local authorities, third sector support organisations and community groups in a wide range of areas, including: the asylum process; housing; welfare; employment; and education."*

Examples of this include paid and volunteer CLD workers supporting language development through ESOL, from a social practice model ensuring that individuals' learning needs are taken into account to enable integration into the community. A number of refugee and asylum seekers, with support from CLD practitioners, have moved into volunteering roles which further assists with language development, confidence building and integration. This also enables the communities themselves to welcome the new families, break down barriers, understand cultural differences, build relations and offer acceptance, therefore enabling refugees and people seeking asylum to feel as welcomed and accepted as possible, keeping their dignity, culture and worth.

The CLD profession supports the most vulnerable individuals and communities to learn, grow and develop through a range of engagement activities, including assisting those far from the workplace to access [volunteering](#) as a way to increase self-esteem, diminish social isolation and raise self-worth whilst learning new skills to take with them into the workplace when ready. Volunteering within communities supports Scotland's [national performance framework and outcomes](#). A recent review of community development during the pandemic was carried out by HM Inspectors ([Responsive, supportive and resilient communities](#)) and shows the range of work and support offered through the CLD profession and its approaches, including training and supporting volunteers in supporting communities to deal with the cost-of-living crisis or support the increasing numbers of refugees arriving in the country.

In order to ensure meaningful engagement from those most vulnerable, the language used within this Bill and its guidance must be accessible and understandable to all who may be impacted by it and want to use it. The [Adult learning strategy](#) was published by Scottish Government in 2022 and informs us that over 324,000 adults in Scotland have low or no qualifications, and the [National Literacy Trust](#) report that 1 in 4 adults in Scotland experience challenges due to their lack of literacy skills, with Scotland having the highest percentage across all of the four nations.

We propose that the draft Bill and any guidance should be taken to focus groups of community members across the protected characteristics who are perhaps not normally involved in these stages of legislation and policy development to check its accessibility and levels of language. This would enable Scottish Government to see how well it is understood and that there is no misinterpretation of words, phrases or intent. We all have a duty of responsibility to ensure we get it right in terms of communities' involvement within these processes. It is essential that language being used is understandable in order that people are not overwhelmed by jargon and therefore disengage with discussions are unable to access information on their rights.

Strategic Links

We believe the proposals around the model of integration could be much clearer, more detailed and overall stronger, to enhance accountability of all involved. Linking this strategy with others is critical to embed it into our Scottish systems and raise its profile. We suggest you look at

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ([ICESCR](#))
- Adult Learning Strategy ([ALS](#))
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([CRPD](#))
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination ([CERD](#))
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ([CEDAW](#))
- The Promise Scotland ([SG](#)) and ([The Promise](#))
- [The Human Rights Act 1998 duties and rights](#)
- [UNCRC](#) Scotland
- [Scottish Government Policies on Languages](#)
- Health and Social Care ([Integration](#))
- [National Plan for Scotland's Islands](#)
- [National Improvement Framework](#)
- [Wellbeing Economy](#)

Empowerment

Participation is a fundamental human rights principle and therefore intrinsic to this strategy. It is crucial that key stakeholders who can facilitate and support meaningful participation, such as CLD,

are recognised and stated. CLD practice is based on providing learning and development opportunities that are accessible and responsive to individual and community priorities, listening to learners and communities voices and being led by them. It is based on a set of values including inclusion, empowerment, self-determination and lifelong learning. From our professional experience, participation is about people's voices and experiences being heard and taken into account. Transparency and follow through is essential to show how their voices have informed change. Participation and voice needs to be shown as valued and transparent throughout this strategy and should be clearly stipulated throughout the principles, outcomes and actions.

Identification, understanding and mitigation of barriers to participation is also essential and the CLD workforce is well-placed to support this. Meaningful and inclusive participation requires a fully funded and committed resource to enable capacity building and support. Currently, the CLD workforce both in local authority and within the third sector are constantly facing funding cuts. To safeguard a skilled, professional workforce, as well as ensure inclusive and meaningful engagement, commitment to CLD and its workforce development is required. The CLD workforce across Scotland are trained in co-production, community engagement and development so would be best placed as a sector to support integration. We would also welcome more detail in the strategy and following guidance advocating the use of innovative and creative methods to support engagement, and ultimately support a real power shift with regards to rights of individuals within systems.

Capacity and Funding

As previously mentioned there are concerns around capacity, funding and resources required to assist the actions which will support this strategy. We would urge Scottish Government to consider the additional workload this creates at a time of economic fragility for many, with budgets cut, decreased staffing and reduced capacity for many organisations. Strong guidance and detailed support will also be required for public, private and voluntary organisations to make sustainable organisational cultural changes in order that they embed approaches to integration, support human rights and further community empowerment support within their services.

Suggestions were made by third sector CLD organisations and their practitioners that if Scottish Government were to commit to incorporating Fair Funding as part of the initial procedural duty it would create a funding landscape that offered security and stability. This would facilitate those third sector organisations to ensure they took a rights based approach to delivery of the actions for this strategy, embedding human rights in decision-making and offering true support for integration for the individuals and communities they serve. These organisations may include community based ESOL, Employability, Advocacy Agencies, Social Housing etc.

While it is recognised that many other public and voluntary sector staff contribute to the type of engagement required to support understanding of the strategy, individuals' rights and supporting integration through an advocacy/advisory role, CLD practitioners both paid and voluntary, are best placed in terms of their practice, skills and relationships with communities to co-ordinate activities and demonstrate good practice. It is essential to acknowledge that CLD practitioners already play a crucial role in supporting Refugees, Asylum Seekers and vulnerable people to gain and access the information, skills and learning needed to integrate into their communities, realise individual potential in the country and respond to emerging and often challenging needs. This was highly evident in these reports showcasing the CLD approach in practice during the [Covid 19 Pandemic, Community, COVID-19, challenge and change – Policy Scotland](#), [Engage, Educate, Connect](#),

[Empower: CLD, Resilience and Recovery - July 2020](#) . CLD practitioners are qualified in and implement all of the tools and techniques of good community education and development work. It is essential we all understand each other's strengths and collaborate. There will be a requirement to build capacity within the delivery landscape ensuring that those who deliver language acquisition and English language learning are appropriately trained, supported and qualified in both the public and third sector. We would argue as CLD is a main provider of community based ESOL across Scotland's diverse local communities that investment in local Community Learning and Development workforce and provision will further aid in the development of New Scots Integration.

We strongly believe that the CLD sector and CLD as a practice needs to be given a legitimate place and role in this process of integration, community development, language acquisition and skills development.

Moving Forward

We have been disappointed in the lack of information around the development of the revised strategy, which we feel requires considerable involvement from stakeholders, alongside further development and resource. Given the expert skills and knowledge that the CLD profession offers regarding community learning and development, we would expect the CLD Standards Council to be part of any further working groups, not only to represent the CLD sector but to offer critical experience based evidence on effective information and community engagement which will inform and shape the strategy and supporting documents moving forward.

The opportunity to have simple and informative info graphics and visuals as a PDF or PPT would also be a useful tool throughout this strategy, action plans and any further guidance. They are a good introduction to engagement and support those initial conversations with individuals, communities and groups. Having more visual mapping of the strategy can help bring the topic alive and is proven to be good for stimulating discussion and for understanding.

Conclusion

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

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

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

We fully welcome the development of this New Scots Integration Strategy and the guidance alongside it, and feel strongly that the CLD sector as a profession should be reflected throughout this guidance as a one of the key stakeholders to support and implement it.

Finally, we feel the information offered in this proposal does not go far enough in its detail regarding the full physical and psychological resource requirements needed to realise the aspirations of this Strategy in improving lives across Scotland's communities. The Strategy must closely align with the Human Rights Bill Scotland. Human rights include freedoms and rights that Scottish Government needs to respect and protect, and basic essentials that we all need to live a decent life. If done correctly people should be able to name and claim all their human rights, and because of this we feel that the information being presented around this Strategy needs to go much further in offering detailed guidance to the importance of valuing rights bearers' voice throughout all processes, as well as fully acknowledging the funding, resource and commitment required from individuals, communities and supporting professions, such as CLD. We strongly feel that CLD as profession and a domain of practice, as well as a sector, should be recognised and included throughout all processes.