

Section 1: Introduction

Why does the Code of Ethics matter?

As CLD practitioners we see ourselves as part of a value-based profession and what we do as underpinned by a set of principles. And we see this as a distinctive feature of CLD practice, central to its effective operations and delivery. The values have been articulated by the CLD Standards Council and in a variety of statements from the Scottish Government and others.

The Values:

- Self-determination
- Inclusion
- Empowerment
- Working collaboratively
- Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity

Full statements on the [Values of CLD on the CLD Standards council website](#)

The Code of Ethics provides a structure for systematically relating the values to practice. It is a clear statement about the standards of professional behaviour that CLD practitioners, wherever and by whoever they are employed or deployed as volunteers, should expect of themselves, and that others should expect of them. The CLD Code of Ethics, together with the Competences and Key Attributes, forms the [CLD Competent Practitioner Framework](#) which supports practitioners to think about how the values should impact on what they do on a day-to-day basis.

The Code then first and most fundamentally matters because it is a key means of ensuring that the impact of CLD in the lives of the communities, young people and adult learners that we work with is positive and the quality of practice is of the best. Wide and effective use of the Code of Ethics, in conjunction with the CLD Competences, is also essential if we aspire to CLD as a professional grouping having a central role in governing our own practice. Without an agreed and recognised reference point for the behaviour and competence of practitioners there is no means for this to happen.

Consideration of the Code of Ethics does not provide an alternative to practitioners' accountability to their employers; it does provide a means of ensuring that this accountability is governed in a way that is appropriate to the nature of CLD, and acts as a point of reference for practitioners and managers in ensuring that employers recognise and understand the ethical basis of CLD practice.

The Code is also a point of reference for CLD learners and communities.

Underpinning all of this, the Code is designed to encourage practitioners to consider their own position in daily and ongoing practice contexts.



Points for reflection and discussion

- In what ways could it be viewed as important that there is a recognised statement of standards of professional behaviour for CLD practitioners?
- To what extent should CLD practitioners as a professional grouping have a central role in governing their own practice?
- What issues, concerns and advantages are raised if we consider that the statement of ethics for CLD practitioners should be at the core of our practice?
- Consider situations you've been involved in or have observed – when would it have been useful to be able to reflect on recognised standards of professional behaviour for CLD practitioners?

The purposes and uses of the Code of Ethics

Ethics are often described as the standards of behaviour that govern the conduct of an individual or the members of a profession. Within the context of the Competent Practitioner Framework, the Code has a central role in defining and communicating what CLD work is, providing the foundation for improving standards in CLD and for strengthening the identity of CLD as a profession. One of the criteria for registration as a member of the CLD Standards Council is a commitment to the Code. The Code does not seek to provide a set of rules for the conduct of CLD practitioners. It sets out ethical principles and is deliberately expressed in positive terms to describe what we do. Of course, this does also provide some strong indications of what we shouldn't do, but the Code has a strong emphasis on the responsibility of practitioners to make their own judgements on conduct guided by the principles of the Code.

The Code can be used to:

- Express the distinctiveness or identity of CLD;
- Articulate the shared value base that we have;
- Challenge, examine and reflect on our practice;
- Promote professional dialogue and understanding;
- Support and inform accountability;

- Offer reassurance and protection, within an informed perspective, for practitioners and for the people we work with;
- Help deal with tensions with other partners and define our limits in partnership work; and
- Support learning for students, new entrants, practitioners and managers.

The Code is intended to be useful to everyone involved in the delivery of CLD: to practitioners; to the young people; adult learners and communities we work with; and to all those with a role in managing CLD.



Points for reflection and discussion

- What do you think are the most important implications of the Code of Ethics (in your own context, and more generally)?
- Do you think the consideration and application of the Code of Ethics would be problematic in any of the areas outlined above?
- Do you have ideas about what other purposes and uses the Code can be put to?
- Can you identify any “health warnings” that should accompany use and application of the Code?

How the Code of Ethics was developed

The Code was developed using an inclusive, participatory process, designed to ensure that it reflects the reality of our contexts and practice. A draft Code was presented to CLD Standards Council Committees in 2010. An amended version drawing on comments from these meetings formed the basis for a wider consultation that involved eight events across Scotland, giving opportunities for practitioners with a specific focus on youth work, adult learning or community development to participate in a discussion relating the Code to that context. In addition there was an online discussion. You can download the report on the consultation process [from the CLD Standards Council website](#). The Code was amended to take account of comments received through the consultation and the final version was approved by the CLD Standards Council in 2011.

Following experience of applying the principles, a working group including practitioners was established to review and refresh the Code of Ethics. This was published in Autumn 2017 and it is the revised Code which this resource relates to.

Ethical Practice – Competent Practitioners

As noted above, the Code of Ethics does not provide a set of rules for conduct. Not only are the circumstances and issues that CLD practitioners (probably in common with any professional grouping) encounter too varied and complex for this to be feasible; it is also essential to ethical decision making that the individual takes responsibility for applying a set of principles to their own situation. The purpose of this learning resource is to assist CLD practitioners and everyone with an interest in CLD practice to do this. It also supports practitioners to use of the Code of Ethics to inform, develop and challenge practice and to promote the use of the Code in their organisation (and with partners). Following on from this introduction, the material is presented in sections as follows:

[Section 2](#) - What do we mean by “ethics”? Theories, frameworks and professionalism;

[Section 3](#) - Ethics in CLD – boundaries, accountability and professional identity;

[Section 4](#) - Using the Code of Ethics in developing competent CLD practice; and

[Section 5](#) - Embedding the Code of Ethics in practice.

This learning resource provides material that can be used in a variety of ways. It provides information that should be helpful in thinking through how to use the Code of Ethics. There is a range of material from which you can select: to stimulate individual reflection; to promote discussion as part of a team, partnership or other meeting; or to provide the focus and content for a Professional Learning session.



Key Learning

- What do you see as the main reasons for having a Code of Ethics for CLD practitioners?
- In what ways is a statement of professional behaviours for CLD practitioners expressed though a Code of Ethics useful and important for you and your colleagues?
- Do you have areas of concern in relation to the Code of Ethics for CLD? What are they, and how do you think they could be addressed?

Points you record at this stage can form a point of reference as you use other sections of this resource.