



28 November 2008

To: Chairs of Community Planning Partnerships

Copied to: Local authority Council Leaders
Local authority Chief Executives
Local authority community learning and development managers
Community learning and development partnership lead officers.
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
National third sector intermediaries for community learning and development
Scotland's Colleges

Colleagues

Building on “Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities”: the role of community learning and development (CLD) in delivering change

Over the last year the Scottish Government and COSLA have been working together to build a new relationship, based on trust and mutual respect, that we believe can play a fundamental part in transforming Scotland and achieving our joint purpose of *a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth*. The statement which accompanies this letter is one of the fruits of that new relationship.

It sets out our vision for an area of work that we both see as being of growing importance – community learning and development (CLD). CLD can play a vital role in relation to a range of national and local outcomes:

- Through youth work it can support all our young people (and in particular those who need more choices and chances to achieve their full potential) to become confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners.
- It can offer routes into and through lifelong learning in communities, enabling the development of skills (including, for example, literacy and numeracy) that people can use in employment, their community, further learning or as parents and family members to support their children in their important early years.
- By building community capacity it can contribute to community empowerment through people working together to achieve lasting change in their communities, for example by further strengthening and improving local public services.

One of the strengths of this area of work is the way that partnership working has flourished over the last few years. A range of partners, including local authorities, Scotland's colleges, health boards and (crucially in this field of work) the third sector have been able, in a number of areas, to bring together their respective strengths and focus on delivering change for the individuals and communities they work with.

The key way of focusing that change has now become the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) that each local authority agrees with the Scottish Government and which from next year will comprehensively include community planning partners.

This statement is not intended to pre-empt that process but rather to offer a helpful resource prompting those developing SOAs to reflect on and maximise the contribution that CLD can make to achieving outcomes and ultimately making the most of its potential to play a part in transforming the lives of all Scotland's people.



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Building on “Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities”

A joint statement on community learning and development (CLD), including adult literacy and numeracy (ALN), by the Scottish Government and COSLA.

OUR SHARED VISION

Building a smarter Scotland has never been more important. A range of challenges face us as a nation and our response to nearly every one of them must have learning at its heart. All our citizens need to be supported to gain skills and confidence that allow them to grasp the opportunities that are around us.

This includes opportunities for individuals, young and old, who want to get involved in learning around something that’s important to them and their life chances. It can also include opportunities that develop more empowered communities, that can build their collective ability and support them to become more confident and self-reliant.

The challenges involved in enabling people to take those steps are ones that the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) jointly acknowledge. We have to work together to enhance Scotland’s reputation as a learning nation, where individuals and communities can achieve their full potential.

Together we recognise that community learning and development (CLD) can play an important and distinctive role in the single lifelong learning system that the Scottish Government’s skills strategy, *Skills for Scotland*¹, suggested we must build in Scotland. For young people and adults who have, or might, miss out on opportunities it can provide an essential lifeline – building on their aspirations to really make a difference to their lives. However individual development is just one part of the picture. Often it is mirrored by aspirations that people have for their family and for their wider community.

Increasingly we recognise the contribution that community learning and development can make to giving our children the best start in life, in particular through work with their parents, others who care for them and the wider community that contribute to children’s earliest experiences.

Similarly we recognise that our most disadvantaged communities can particularly benefit from support to build the capacity of community groups – empowering them to make things

¹ *Skills for Scotland: a lifelong skills strategy*, Scottish Government, 2007

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happen on their own terms and to influence the decisions that affect them. This can in turn lead to more effective services, as these become more responsive to those who benefit from them.

So we recognise that CLD covers a broad spectrum of activity that has developed up and down the country to reflect local needs. In most areas of the country this is the umbrella under which much adult literacy and numeracy (ALN), community development and youth work takes place. It also plays a significant role in provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). This statement addresses that broad spectrum of community learning and development activity.

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) has confirmed that where CLD is delivered to a high standard, through genuine partnership working, and linked into wider planning arrangements the impact is significant². However this is not achieved consistently enough and we need to build on those strengths, through rigorous self-evaluation and quality improvement, while making sure that CLD is firmly rooted in Community Planning.

Local authorities, leading and working with their community planning partners, are key partners with the Scottish Government in making that happen. This statement sets out several challenges in relation to CLD that, with joint effort, we believe can be met. It will take leadership from across sectors but together we can build on the successes to date and go on to make sure that across the country CLD consistently plays its part in delivering change with our communities.

WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

In working towards our vision, we are able to build on effective guidance on CLD for Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) issued in 2004, *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities*³.

It asked each Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to produce a Community Learning and Development Strategy and highlighted how CLD could support the responsibility of CPPs to engage communities as partners. All local organisations with an interest in CLD were encouraged to take part. This reinforced the proposal in *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland*⁴ that an increased focus on ALN should be directed through Community Learning (now CLD) strategies and partnerships.

These partnership approaches recognised that though local authorities are major providers of CLD they are by no means the only ones – Scotland’s third sector organisations, colleges, health providers and many others can and do deliver CLD. The leading role of local authorities to facilitate partnership working, so that it meets local needs effectively, is as important as its role in delivery.

That is particularly important in relation to the third sector, which, with its roots in communities and contacts with the most disadvantaged groups, has traditionally played a vital part in CLD. *Working and Learning Together* urged partnerships to make the most of this contribution.

² *Making a difference in Scotland’s communities: a five year review of CLD in Scotland*: HMIE, 2007.

³ *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities*: Scottish Executive, 2003.

⁴ *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland*: Scottish Executive, 2001.

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Working and Learning Together also set three national priorities for CLD:

Achievement through learning for adults

Raising standards of achievement in learning for adults through community-based lifelong learning opportunities incorporating the core skills of literacy, numeracy, communications, working with others, problem-solving and information communications technology (ICT).

Achievement through learning for young people

Engaging with young people to facilitate their personal, social and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and a place in society⁵.

Achievement through building community capacity

Building community capacity and influence by enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery.

These have provided a broad national framework that has allowed CPPs to work with communities in ways that suit local circumstances. In the most effective partnerships work has creatively bridged these priorities and has contributed to the delivery of other key strategies.

Working and Learning Together is complemented by specific national strategies in terms of adult literacy and numeracy (*Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland*); youth work (*Moving Forward: a strategy for improving young people’s chances through youth work⁶*) and ESOL (*Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland⁷*).

⁵ This priority is usefully complemented by reference to the Statement on the nature and purpose of youth work, developed by the youth work sector in Scotland and published by YouthLink Scotland in 2007.

⁶ *Moving Forward: a strategy for improving young people’s chances through youth work*: Scottish Executive, 2007.

⁷ *Adult ESOL (English For Speakers of Other Languages) Strategy for Scotland*; Scottish Executive, 2007.

THE CHALLENGES

Where *Working and Learning Together* has been taken up with enthusiasm by CPPs we can see the difference it makes. A framework has been developed within which CLD partnerships can develop effective partnership approaches across the range of their areas of interest (as set out in *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* and *Moving Forward: a strategy for improving young people’s chances through youth work*). We therefore see no need to change the general direction set. However we need to make sure that the impact of CLD is maximised across the country.

We therefore want to work in partnership with local authorities and their community planning partners, and with all organisations with an interest in CLD, to rise to the following challenges.

Recognising the contribution of CLD to national outcomes

Working and Learning Together recognised that CLD could play a vital role in achieving a fairer society by ensuring that opportunities are particularly open to those who need them most⁸.

Since then we have become much better at understanding and explaining the outcomes that CLD can achieve in the short to medium term. *Delivering Change*⁹ set out a widely welcomed framework of the intermediate outcomes of this work.

It highlighted the ways that CLD could achieve personal development outcomes so that people become confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners. It also set out the outcomes that could be expected from community capacity building, in relation to more active and influential communities.

However none of this sets a top-down approach to how resources should be directed. This approach is consistent with COSLA and the Scottish Government’s recently agreed Concordat, which sets out the terms of a new relationship between us, based on mutual respect and partnership. Local decision-makers, working with the people that they serve, should decide how to meet locally identified need.

The Scottish Government’s main funding route for CLD and ALN has been through local authorities. Funding for these areas of work is now included within the scope of the Concordat. As such the route for demonstrating the impact of CLD, as with other services, will be through its contribution to each local authority’s Single Outcome Agreement (which from 2009 are expected to be agreed with Community Planning Partners).

Local authorities already deliver these services in a variety of ways in their specific contexts, often working with other organisations through fruitful partnerships, and it is of course for them to decide how best to do this.

In making these decisions it would be useful for local authorities to consider how delivery in these areas contributes to many of the outcomes that have been published in the new

⁸ This might be communities that are challenged by geographical factors (such as concentrations of poverty and worklessness or rural isolation) or by discrimination (on the grounds of race or ethnicity; age; gender; disability; sexual orientation; or faith or belief).

⁹ *Delivering Change: understanding the outcomes of community learning and development*, Communities Scotland, 2007.

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National Performance Framework¹⁰. For example it can play a part in achieving the following outcomes:

3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

In addition, we recognise the contribution that CLD can make in relation to other outcomes – for example in relation to health, community safety and the environment.

The importance of adult literacy and numeracy skills in underpinning a number of the national outcomes is recognised by the fact that one of 45 indicators in the National Performance Framework is to “Reduce the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems”. However this is by no means the only indicator that we would expect effective delivery of CLD to influence.

We urge local decision-makers to consider the potential contribution of CLD, including ALN, delivery to achieving nationally and locally agreed outcomes, particularly for those who can benefit most.

Embedding the links to Community Planning

Partnership working in CLD has achieved demonstrable success where CPPs have invested effort to make sure that it fits within wider structures for partnership working. In each local authority area this has included ALN partnerships, set up under the umbrella of CLD partnerships.

In some areas that has meant sound links have been developed between CLD partnerships and strategic working in relation to, for example, health improvement, employability, children’s services, regeneration, community safety and work to offer our young people more choices and more chances. Such links will become increasingly important as the Scottish Government, COSLA and other partners increasingly focus on joined-up solutions – as has happened, for example in relation to the Early Years Framework.

We therefore now want to see **all** the potential partners across the country, in both statutory and third sectors, enabled to get involved and play roles that utilise their particular strengths. Partnership working remains key to successful planning and delivery in these areas of work and it is important that local authorities in particular are aware of, and able to draw in, the potential contributions of a range of partners.

Alongside that, we also need to learn from the experience in some areas of streamlining structures and focussing partnership on action, feeding this into mainstream practices across the board.

As we do that, maintaining and building the involvement of communities themselves in decision-making (both in relation to CLD and more widely) should remain a priority.

¹⁰ *Scottish Budget Spending Review 2007*: The Scottish Government, 2007: pages 46 and 47.

Building on the work of the last three years, COSLA and the Scottish Government want to engage in a dialogue with Community Planning Partnerships about:

- **Taking an effective strategic approach to CLD in their area.**
- **Developing effective and inclusive partnerships, with leadership from across sectors, to support planning and delivery, with particular emphasis on including colleges and community-based learning providers¹¹, such as those from the third sector.**
- **Reviewing and refreshing arrangements so that CLD planning and partnership working (including ALN partnerships under that umbrella) is nested appropriately within Community Planning structures.**
- **Working towards community empowerment by putting in place appropriate arrangements to build the capacity of communities to take a greater role in shaping their own future.**

Ensuring that partners are skilled up to deliver

The challenges in this letter add to the demanding agenda for CLD that has been set out in Scotland. We are aware that this will not be met through good intentions alone. We must collectively make sure that those who deliver CLD (whether full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer) have the skills, attitudes and confidence to deliver the best outcomes to the highest standards.

It is of course a matter for providers to ensure that, through self-evaluation and quality improvement, they identify and put in place appropriate training and development opportunities. It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to take up those opportunities where they can.

We urge organisations, individually and working in partnership, to evaluate their investment in training and development and maximising its value by co-ordinating resources with others, so making sure that they are able to contribute to a sustainable transformation in the ability of CLD to deliver.

¹¹ As set out in *Skills for Scotland* (page 49). The need to ensure that Scotland's colleges are appropriately linked in to Community Planning is reinforced in *Promoting Excellence*, the Scottish Government's response to the Review of Scotland's Colleges. Community-based learning providers includes all those providing learning in community settings – including in youth work, adult learning and through community capacity building.

ACTION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

While we encourage partners locally to take these steps, we recognise that in taking forward these challenges there of course remains a national role.

This statement sets out the case for a concerted effort to embed and share more widely the effective work that has developed across Scotland. This effort will be supported by HMIE through the development and application of clear quality frameworks, support for effective self-evaluation and a programme of inspection linked to schools and education authorities.

COSLA and the Scottish Government recognise that we need to continue to develop national networking and input to policy making in relation to CLD. Organisations such as the local authority CLD Managers Scotland, national intermediaries in the third sector and a range of other bodies are an important part of this. We believe that we need to build on links with and between these organisations, rather than establishing new networks.

COSLA and the Scottish Government will work with existing networks of organisations with an interest in CLD at national level to build their ability to influence policy and, in turn, influence improved delivery at local level.

One example of the effective inclusion of a range of national organisations is the well advanced work to set up a Standards Council for CLD, building on CeVe¹², within Skills Development Scotland. The Scottish Government and COSLA will look to work closely together to ensure that this is a success.

COSLA and the Scottish Government will work with other partners to ensure that the new Standards Council for CLD is able to fulfil its role to drive up standards in CLD.

We can also look to do more to share models of planning and delivery which have played a key role in delivering outcomes. We will therefore work to produce a range of illustrative case studies to support local partners in looking at how they can rise to the challenges we have set out in this statement.

In addition we will work to support continued common formats for performance information, for example in relation to ALN, where that is helpful to local partners.

COSLA and the Scottish Government will produce a set of case studies illustrating how CLD contributes to the delivery of outcomes.

COSLA and the Scottish Government will work with ALN partners to explore the usefulness of continued common forms of information gathering, where that is useful to local partners.

What we are looking for is nothing less than a transformation in the focus on the difference that CLD can make. The Scottish Government is therefore pleased to confirm that in, its budget for the spending review period 2007 – 2011, investment has been identified of £4 million over the next three years, to be focussed on training and development infrastructure for CLD (including adult literacy and numeracy).

With that investment, and with the renewed energy and joint effort of a range of agencies nationally and locally, we can make a reality of the vision that we all share – of a Scotland where communities are stronger and all our people can play a full and fulfilling part.

¹² Community Education Validation and Endorsement (CeVe) is the body that endorses professional training in the field of community learning and development.