

Issue 6: February 2015

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Some challenges for the coming year...

As a hopefully more productive alternative to forgotten New Year resolutions, we’re offering some questions for 2015 for all of us as CLD practitioners and Standards Council members to challenge ourselves with. ***Could you take a responsibility for responding to one or more of these?***

⇒ As a Standards Council, we’ve committed ourselves to “growing a learning culture” in CLD. **How can we all make sure that professional development – our own, and CLD practitioners’ collectively – is part of our core business in the year ahead?**

⇒ We have a national youth work strategy and an adult learning statement of ambition, both with ample positive statements about what should be happening. **How can we use these as a licence for creative action?**

⇒ The statutory requirements on local authorities to make sure that communities have access to CLD support are stronger than ever before. **What part can we play in making sure that these requirements are widely known about and respected?**

⇒ Community empowerment legislation is progressing through the Scottish Parliament and the need to develop the capacity of disadvantaged communities so that they are in a position to take advantage of its provisions is clear. **How can we all play a part in ensuring that CLD demonstrates how to do this?**

⇒ The Scottish Government has launched a Youth Employment Strategy, which includes a commitment to “enabling everyone to participate fully in the workforce, especially groups that are currently under-represented”. **What’s our role and how can we influence the delivery of the Strategy to the benefit of young people least likely to engage?**

⇒ The Standards Council is working on a way forward that gives us the autonomy we need to be a strong professional body, a structure that enables members to maximise their involvement and as much financial sustainability as possible. **What can each of us do to help build the capacity that’s needed for this?**

*At the Standards Council we are also looking forward to meeting our own internal challenge in the next few months. With Rory Macleod, Head of the Standards Council, retiring in April, we are recruiting for a successor – all vacancy details are being circulated and advertised in the national press as well as Scottish Government sites. **The closing date is 17th March.** Exciting times!*

The Approvals function: paper exercise or engine for change?

The Standards Council's "approvals" function is sometimes seen as an administrative task, with a necessary but very limited role in relation to the expectations of many members. Yet members of the Standards Council have direct interests in assuring and improving standards of learning for CLD practice in a whole range of ways: some members are current or prospective students or members of teaching staff on CLD courses; some have colleagues who are newly qualified, or seeking to gain a qualification; some are fieldwork supervisors for students on placement, others could benefit from the opportunity to take on this role; some are current or potential participants in postgraduate programmes.



What this tells us is that the learning opportunities that providers seek Standards Council approval for – whether at degree or developmental level - are not simply “entry tickets” to recognition as a CLD practitioner that we can forget about once gained. They are integral to the development of CLD as a profession as well as the development of individual practitioners.

Through the approval processes, members of the Approvals Committee engage with providers on behalf of the wider CLD field. Visits provide the opportunity for rigorous, in depth discussion that helps shape provision in ways that reflect current practice experience.

The Committee monitors issues highlighted in new approvals, re-approvals and mid-term visits. An example is a shift that is apparent to Universities seeking approval for Honours degrees and not for BAs, which is raising questions about the best way for degree-level qualifications to support and develop practice.

With the establishment of the Standards Council Standards Mark, the Approvals Committee now has a key role in relation to the professional development opportunities that employers offer to practitioners. The quality assurance process provides the means to engage with employers and assist them to improve processes and practices in professional development.

Influencing learning providers through quality assurance based on the CLD values, Code of Ethics and competence framework, and a peer-led process: this is a key aspect of developing the voice of the CLD profession.

How could you be more involved in taking ownership, as part of the CLD practitioner body, of the quality of our professional learning?

See the Approvals page on the Standards Council website for more information. Contact the Approvals officer Susie Bisset (Susan.Bisset@cldstandardcouncil.org.uk) if you're interested in getting more involved.

Reshuffled responsibilities – getting our message across

A Scottish Government reshuffle inevitably followed the resignation of the First Minister, and the election of his Deputy to succeed to the post. What are the implications for CLD?

Firstly there is a new Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Angela Constance MSP. Her portfolio includes **Youth Work**; Fiona McLeod MSP, covering Aileen Campbell's maternity leave as Minister for Children and Young People, will continue with the lead role on this while the new Cabinet Secretary continues with the lead role on **adult learning** taken by her predecessor and Alistair Allan, the other Minister in the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio team, with the lead on **adult literacy and ESOL**.

Alex Neil MSP as Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights, has a range of responsibilities that includes **community empowerment**, democratic renewal, community planning, local government, the third sector and the social economy, measures against poverty and homelessness, equality, social and human rights. Marco Biagi is the Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment.

Other remits that relate more or less directly to CLD appear here and there in other portfolios -

* *Youth and women's employment* and the implementation of the Wood Commission's recommendations: part of the Fair Work, Skills and Training portfolio (Roseanna Cunningham MSP).

* Jamie Hepburn MSP is the Minister for *Sport and Health Improvement* within Shona Robison's Health, Wellbeing and Sport portfolio, which also includes *public health, child and maternal health, sexual health, problem alcohol use and recovery*.

* Paul Wheelhouse has responsibility for *Community Safety* within the Justice portfolio that includes *youth justice* among its remits.

* And the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, has cross government implementation of *Scotland's Digital Future* among his.

So Ministerial responsibilities related to CLD, perhaps in part at least inevitably, are fragmented. This level of complexity poses a challenge for us, the more so when service responsibilities in local government may be similarly complex and configured in ways different both from Scottish Government and each other. There's a temptation to present CLD practice solely in terms of its "contribution" to an assortment of policy or service areas, with the risk of missing out the distinctive nature of CLD practice and its particular impact.

- ⇒ **How aware of the distinctive role of CLD across different issues and services are the politicians and senior managers who make decisions about CLD in your area?**
- ⇒ **How could you help them to be more aware? Could you make more use of the CLD Competences and Code of Ethics to help do this?**
- ⇒ **Do CLD providers and partnerships have the leadership and influencing skills needed? What could be done to develop these further?**
- ⇒ **Could you make better links with other CLD practitioners in your own and other organisations to show the distinctive role and impact of CLD practice?**

A seven year plan for youth employment

The Scottish government has launched a youth employment strategy as a response to “changing economic conditions” as well as to the publication of the report of the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (the “Wood Commission”). It targets a **40% reduction in youth unemployment by 2021**. The Strategy can be accessed at <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Seven-year-plan-for-youth-employment-137b.aspx>

The Strategy emphasises the government’s commitment to tackling inequality and identifies measures to address barriers relating to: gender stereotyping; more restricted opportunities for young people from black and minority ethnic communities and young people with disabilities; and the experiences of young people leaving care.

The potential for CLD practitioners to help shape the delivery of the strategy and use their skills to increase its inclusiveness seems to have been given little consideration; and nor do the barriers resulting from poverty both for young people who are part of the groups mentioned above and those who are not.

The Strategy makes overall commitments to equal opportunities for all and emphasises that a message “that all careers can be open to our young people” should be delivered in all activity involving young people. Yet the question arises - assuming that the 40% reduction is achieved, how much of it can be expected to benefit the young people who are most affected by poverty?

- **What’s the role of CLD practitioners in a strategy for youth employment? Are there professional development issues that need to be addressed?**
- **Do you know who’s responsible for leading or co-ordinating implementation of the strategy in your area? Are there ways of influencing it?**

Short-term posts – long-term professional development?

Comments on previous Policy Commentaries have highlighted the wide differences in the contracts and conditions of employment that CLD practitioners work under. We’ve been asking ourselves about the implications of this for the Standards Council, in particular in terms of how relevant membership of the Standards Council appears to people to be.

Is registration as a member of the Standards Council seen by some as being more or even solely relevant to practitioners in permanent CLD posts? If the Standards Council were seeking to create a traditional professional body then those in paid, permanent posts would probably be the focus.

But the Standards Council’s ambition is to be inclusive and to focus on ethical, competent practice rather than on the setting in which it takes place or the employment status of the practitioner. Registering as a member can be the first step in becoming part of a community of practice reaching across organisational boundaries, making it doubly relevant to practitioners in short-term, insecure contracts.

The challenge for us is to make Standards Council communications and activities relevant to practitioners working in very varied circumstance.

What can we all do in our various roles to develop opportunities to share practice that are relevant and accessible to all CLD practitioners, including those in posts with short-term contracts (or whose CLD practice is unpaid)?

Community Empowerment Bill debates

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee launched its report on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill on 26 January, saying that ***“Changes are needed to ensure legislation designed to empower communities delivers on its promise... For communities to be truly empowered there needs to be a change in the mind set of public authorities. They have to be more open to communities setting the agenda and this must be coupled with support to communities to help them access these new powers”***.

The Committee fully supported the general principles of the Bill and seems to have been impressed by “communities across the country who said time and again that they wanted to be more involved in the decisions being made about them”. Among the report's recommendations was that ***“There should be an explicit requirement on all CPPs to include community capacity building in local plans”***.



Issues raised in the parliamentary debate on 3rd February included questions about the practicality of the provisions for community right to buy, about the lack of estimates of costs (and the potential impact of this on how local authorities approach implementation) and about the need for support to communities to build their capacity if the legislation is not to increase inequality.



The Scottish Government has welcomed the report and signalled that it may be ready to accept some amendments to the Bill. Marco Biagi (Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment) emphasised that the Scottish Government wants the legislation to have an even greater focus on reducing inequality.

Following the debate and vote on 3rd February, the Bill has gone on to Stage 2 of the parliamentary process at which point MSPs can propose amendments.

More information at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/77926.aspx>



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About us:

The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland is the body responsible for the registration of CLD Practitioners, the approval of training courses and the continuing professional development of the sector workforce.

Help shape our future, today

This policy commentary has been developed for members of the CLD Standards Council for Scotland. To receive the commentary direct to your mailbox, register with us today.

The registration scheme is open now for all practitioners including volunteers. True to our collaborative approach, the scheme has been developed for the sector, by the sector.

Shaped by the views and experiences of a wide range of CLD practitioners, the CLD registration scheme will continue the culture of dialogue and debate, championing a shared sense of identity amongst practitioners, providing a national voice for the sector, and reaffirming the importance of CLD in Scotland.

Become a member and you can:

- Engage in professional dialogue, nationally and locally
- Drive forward new developments in our sector
- Support and evolve peer-led learning opportunities
- Be involved in Standards Council events and activities
- Play a lead role in shaping the future of the Standards Council
- Have a key influence on policy initiatives and responses

The Register is open to all CLD practitioners who demonstrate the values, principles, competences, Code of Ethics and commitment to CPD that underpin the sector, with two types of membership, based on qualifications and experience: Registered associate members and Registered members.



*Help Shape
our Future,
Today*

*Join the CLD
Standards Council
and make your
voice heard*

