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Shaping an inclusive and empowering profession

The Standards Council is responsible for approval of training courses across the CLD field, for registration of practitioners and for creating a framework that enables practitioners to take charge of their own continuing professional development. All these specific responsibilities contribute to the shaping of an inclusive and empowering profession.

Any profession needs a voice. And this is all the more true for one like Community Learning and Development (CLD) that seeks to re-define what is meant by a “profession”, balancing rigour and inclusiveness, while striving to establish itself as a necessary part of public services.

The Standards Council is starting this Policy Commentary as a way of strengthening the voice of CLD. Its standpoint will reflect our core concern with high standards in CLD practice. We are looking for it to promote fresh thinking about how policy impacts on practice, and how policy can be shaped by the experience of practice.



Public Service Reform?

The Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Regeneration Committee concluded in a report earlier in the year on progress with public service reform that “the speed, scale and nature of the response to the Christie Commission is not adequate... We are clear that community-led changes are generally more successful than top-down initiatives...

We conclude public bodies must change their approach... At a community level we see a need for a major effort to achieve the Christie Commission’s aspiration of real community engagement”.

Plenty of support here for the case that colleagues will be putting forward across Scotland. Do we also need to think about how we’re

tackling these types of issues in our own organisations and practices?

While the Scottish Government is consulting on community empowerment, CoSLA has set up a Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy and the Commission is seeking views to inform its proposals. So it’s clear that there is a sense of urgency

in the search for the “new partnership” between government and communities called for by Christie.

Everyone involved in CLD has a part to play in showing ways to build this partnership - and in making sure our practice keeps up with the changing opportunities.

The New Legislation for CLD: an opportunity for developing practice?

The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1st September 2013.

This new legislation is a significant development. We think it is vital that the CLD field actively explores the challenges for practice and how we can meet these.

What exactly is the new legislation for CLD? It takes the form of a Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI). SSIs are a type of “subordinate legislation”, made by Ministers under the powers of an existing Act of Parliament, in this case the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

The SSI makes clear that local authorities are required to:

- Secure adequate and efficient provision of community learning and development in their area.
- Initiate, maintain and facilitate a process for securing CLD.
- In doing this, identify “target individuals and groups” for CLD, taking account of the needs of communities.
- Involve and consult with representatives of the target individuals and groups, and of other providers of CLD.
- Publish 3 year plans for the coordinated provision of CLD, the first one no later than 1 September 2015.



The legislation does not place requirements on anyone other than local authorities (the Education [Scotland] Act 1980 only gives Ministers the power to place duties on local authorities.) The legislation makes clear that local authorities must work with partners to “secure” adequate and efficient provision of CLD.

So what are the issues this legislation raises and what do we need to do?

Do we have the skills needed to take on the roles required by the legislation?

The new legislation sets out a more explicit statutory framework for CLD and it will raise the expectations placed on CLD. The impact of this will depend on how the framework is used; CLD practitioners need to play an active part in shaping the process. Are we ready to do this?

Do we have the skills needed to take on the roles required by the legislation?

As employers and managers, how well are we preparing

staff to understand and use the opportunities presented by the legislation?

Are we learning from previous experiences, for instance making sure that the CLD colleagues taking part in partnership decision making have the skills and experience to be effective in that environment?

How can we ensure that an understanding of competent CLD practice is at the core of deciding what is “adequate” and “efficient”?

How can we influence whether the involvement and consultation that the legislation requires is a token process of justifying what already exists, or a driver for real community engagement and empowerment?

How can we help communities and learners use the new legislation to make the provision of CLD more accountable to them?

What can we do to ensure that elected members, board members, Community Planning partners and senior managers are fully aware of the new legislation?

Make your voice heard

The Standards Council sees it as essential that we address these and other challenges positively and honestly; where there is evidence of gaps in skills or that similar issues have not been dealt with successfully in the past, we should acknowledge this and use it as the starting point for improvement. Education Scotland is issuing guidance on what the legislation means and explaining the Scottish Government’s expectations. The Standards Council is keen to learn how its core business can help to address the challenges and opportunities for practice. Let us hear your views!



Leadership issues

There is a huge amount of work going on to develop leadership in school education. The General Teaching Council for Scotland has put a strong emphasis on leadership in its Standards for Teachers at all levels and at all stages of their careers. Education Scotland has developed a Framework for Educational Leadership in Scotland. And work to establish a Scottish College for Educational

Leadership is well under way.

So where is CLD, and lifelong learning, in all of this?

The intention is that the initial focus of the College will be on leadership in schools, although positive statements are being made about widening this after the first two years of operation. The Standards Council sees developing leadership as a key issue for CLD – we are

looking at how we can usefully focus on this and we want this to be the starting point for leadership in CLD being given equal priority with the excellent work being done to support leadership in schools.



Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill

Another piece of legislation with major implications for CLD is on its way: the Scottish Government has now issued a draft bill and other consultation materials on its proposals for supporting community empowerment.

Once again, the skills needed to make change real have to be a part of the discussion. We're sure that Standards Council members will want to be part of this debate!

Colin Ross, Policy and Practice Development Officer, will contact members soon to start creating the Standards Council response.

Closing date for responses to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill consultation: 24th January 2014

What next?

We hope you've found this first issue of the Standards Council's Policy Commentary of interest. Let us know what you think and share any suggestions on areas to focus on in future issues...





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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.

