

**Standards Council response ADULT LEARNING IN SCOTLAND: DRAFT STATEMENT OF AMBITION**  
**Feedback Questions**

**Does the draft Statement cover all the key elements to be considered?**

From a Standards Council perspective, the draft provides a very useful and positive statement of principles to inform the development of adult learning. The next step needed for this to become the driver for the transformational change that is sought is to set out in concrete terms what are the existing strengths of adult learning in Scotland to be built on, what needs to change and what the practical milestones for transformation are.

In addition, there are a number of areas within the Statement where we think that the existing positive messages could be further strengthened:

1. A greater emphasis on the policy and practice framework for CLD as the key context for community-based adult learning.
2. In particular, reference to the CLD Competence Framework, and Code of Ethics, as underpinning practice in community-based adult learning (for example in outlining the “social practice approach” [6.7]).
3. A clearer emphasis on the development of a learning culture, in communities, across wider society and among practitioners. Paragraph 7.1 makes positive statements in relation to this but introduces them by saying that “the hallmark of a genuine learning society is the availability of learning facilities within easy reach of where people live and work”, which gives the impression of placing the emphasis on buildings rather than on values, practices and relationships.
4. By more clearly and explicitly:
  - a. Recognising learners and communities as partners who can increasingly take on lead roles, rather than simply being “consulted” or “engaged with”;
  - b. Emphasising that learning opportunities should be designed with people rather than for them.
5. Stronger recognition of the collective dimension of learning, and the importance of developing learning opportunities around issues of concern to communities (both of place and interest) and supporting community groups as they engage with these issues.
6. Taking the opportunity to reconsider the idea of a “learning community” from a perspective that starts with a focus on the assets of communities and the role of learning in all contexts in developing these.
7. Clarification of what is meant by an “adult learning support framework” (4.2).

**What are the benefits and opportunities in setting out the ambitious Statement?**

The development of the Statement provides a very welcome (and long awaited) opportunity to establish a more coherent and dynamic framework for adult learning, and in particular community-based adult learning.

We are sure that the broad commitments set out in the Statement will be welcomed by those active in community-based adult learning and across the wider CLD field. The recognition that learning should be “life-wide” as well as lifelong and that its role in personal, family and community life should be valued alongside its contribution to working life steer the statement away from an exclusive, reductive emphasis on the economy and employment, and provides the opportunity to develop adult learning in a way that builds on and develops the assets of individuals and communities.

From a Standards Council perspective, we particularly welcome the recognition given to the importance of developing the workforce and of “skilled adult learning practitioners who are themselves lifelong learners”.

A further opportunity offered by the development of the Statement is for the Strategic Forum to consider the current roles of the main partner organisations so that these can be refreshed in line with the requirements of the Statement, in the context of a recognition that, welcome as the Statement is, its value depends entirely on the actions that flow from it.

**What key priority would you wish to see within an Action Plan for the final Statement?**

We would wish to see workforce development given a central place within the Action Plan and the development of a learning culture among practitioners, across sectors, as a key priority in taking this forward through the use and further development of the CPD Strategy for CLD.

Within that overall context, we would want actions on workforce development to include:

1. Continued development of the content and use of the i-develop platform as a key means through which practitioners can take an active role in their own CPD;
2. Support for employers to use of the Standards Council Standards Mark as a means of developing a learning culture and ensuring quality CPD opportunities;
3. Continued development of CLD CPD partnerships, across sectors and local authority boundaries, with community-based adult learning as an integral part of their agenda;
4. Dialogue with training providers to ensure that developmental and degree level programmes support the development of workforce capacity;
5. Dialogue with training providers and other partners to support standards and quality in fieldwork placements;
6. Consideration for development of a CPD programme for adult learning practice built on the foundations of the CLD competences and Code of Ethics. ES could potentially take the lead, working with the Standards Council and partners including the existing CLD CPD partnerships.

Planning of the programme should be carried out in a way that ensures its relevance to practitioners across sectors. It should consider and explore how the process of developing learning opportunities through dialogue with learners and communities based on their concerns and aspirations and as part of a process of empowerment can provide the framework in which policy priorities including employability, literacy, numeracy, ESOL and family learning are addressed.

We would also want the implementation plan to include establishment of **a profile of the workforce**, as part of work on this across all aspects of CLD; the profile should be based on reliable data, across sectors and settings, including numbers of practitioners, where they are located, who employs them, the scope of their remits, where there are gaps and shortages, and initial training and CPD needs. The profile may need to be developed incrementally but with realistic plans for comprehensive coverage and maintenance.

**How might your organisation play a key role in implementing the final Statement?**

With Education Scotland further develop the National Strategy for CPD (including a refresh of the strategy document) and the i-develop framework tool; and increase the use and application of these.

Engage with the CLD sector to promote the principles and benefits of membership and registration for practitioners.

With partners, establish an approach to further develop CPD opportunities for practitioners, linked to the national CPD strategy.