

Inspection of Community Learning and Development in The Moray Council

30 April 2018

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1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within The Moray Council and the area of Buckie and to a lesser extent Portknockie, Cullen, Findochty and Portgordon were inspected by Education Scotland during January and February 2018. During the visit, Education Scotland staff talked to children, young people, adults and community organisations. We worked closely with local CLD managers, CLD providers, partners, paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to find out the quality of the strategic leadership of CLD and the quality of CLD provision in the area. We also looked at how well paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and building capacity. We looked at how partners are contributing to current and evolving national policy objectives such as closing the poverty-related attainment gap; prevention; reducing social isolation; tackling health inequalities; and empowering communities.

2. How good is the strategic leadership of community learning and development?

The Moray Council's leadership, governance and planning for change is not yet robust. There has been no formal CLD Service following the creation of the Education and Social Care department and a decision to adopt a CLD approach across partners. In recognition, governance functions have recently been devolved by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to the Community and Lifelong Learning Forum (CLLF). This group reports directly to Employability Moray, a subgroup of the CPP. With a newly extended remit, the CLLF group membership has been reviewed to reflect these changes. Since late 2017, this group has been chaired by the Corporate Director of Education and Social Care. Although at an early stage, these changes reflect the need for a focus on improvement within CLD at all levels and across partners. However, initial plans for the Corporate Director taking on the role as chair of the CLLF have been superseded. This coupled with changes in governance proposed by the CPP creates uncertainties regarding on-going governance of CLD. This now needs resolved to ensure CLD across Moray has effective governance arrangements in line with legislative requirements.

The authority is beginning to make use of approaches such the Place Standard and participatory budgeting (PB). There are good examples of local people leading Planning For Real and PB. Community Council members led on PB, resulting in over a 100 local people attending training and many new groups becoming engaged and involved. This is beginning to improve the quality of community engagement. Partnership events coordinated by the local authority are bringing partners together to focus on key themes such as family learning and the needs of older adults. Moray Third Sector Interface (TSi Moray), Joining the Dots event helped to facilitate the sharing of skills, knowledge and partnership working. Although at an early stage there is potential for these events to inform strategic and local priorities. At a local level, devolved leadership is facilitating strong partnerships between CLD youth workers and Buckie High School. This is underpinned by strong professional values amongst CLD practitioners, resulting in positive impacts on young people.

The current CLD plan (2015-18) is weak. The CPP devolved responsibility for the development of the plan to the local Third Sector Interface. There is a lack of measurable and quantifiable targets to demonstrate that CLD provision is adequate and effective. There are few areas where progress can be evaluated effectively. Monitoring and reporting of progress against CLD

priorities is not well developed. It is difficult at this stage to assess what CLD is achieving and how this is being measured. The recent update of the plan (December 2017) does not sufficiently demonstrate progress against priorities. This needs to be addressed as a priority and inform the development of the next three year plan. The effective use of high level data and local intelligence will also assist in informing priorities and target those most in need. Stronger alignment to Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities would be beneficial. Vision, values and aims across partners are not yet clearly understood or embedded. Partners are not always able to articulate their work to the overall priorities for CLD. Many partners do not yet see their work as contributing to the CLD Plan. There is no overall coordination of the CLD offer. As a result, there is potential for duplication. Resources are not being targeted at those most in need and there is a lack of understanding about who is delivering the CLD offer.

A few partners are using frameworks to self-evaluate for continuous improvement. This includes the use of improvement methodology in Health and Social Care. A few partners make use of learner voice and case studies as a way of demonstrating qualitative impacts on individuals. This includes testimonials from older people engaged in the Health and Social Care for Older People's project. However, this is not systematic and there are few examples of any joint self-evaluation across partners. This now needs addressed to ensure all impacts are recognised and informing planning for continuous improvement.

Staff and volunteers from across the partnership benefit from rich and diverse continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities. Examples include Moray Council Community Training Calendar, Moray Food Network and Grampian Health Improvement Training Programme. This is developing knowledge, skills, confidence and improving the learning offer. CLD staff have individual CPD records linked to the CLD competences. Youth workers across Moray benefit from training and development to help them deliver a range of youth awards such as Youth Achievement, Dynamic Youth and Hi5. As a result, the range and take up of awards is improving. However, the CLD partnership would benefit from improving the coordination and alignment of training opportunities to the delivery of strategic priorities.

3. How good is the learning and development in this community?

The Buckie Local Management Group action plan is informed by the outcomes of the Children's Services Inspection. There is no similar partnership grouping coordinating the learning offer to adults and communities. As a result, expectations for the reporting on performance against aims, outcomes and targets is inconsistent and unclear. This negatively impacts on CLD partners being fully recognised for their collective contributions to strategic priorities, such as the improving numbers of young people at Buckie High School gaining wider achievement awards. Information on trends over time is beginning to be collected but this is at an early stage. The proportion of young people from Buckie High School achieving a positive post school destination is amongst the highest across Moray. Increasing numbers of learners are accessing provision such as the library Job Clubs and 'Get Digital sessions'. The Essential Skills Standards and Quality Report demonstrates consistently high participation levels. The Community Support Unit (CSU) support community groups well with asset transfer and the use of community engagement tools is increasing. However, data is not yet being systematically gathered, analysed or shared across partners or used to inform improvement. This now needs addressed to ensure that all stakeholders are clear on shared priorities, accountability and reporting expectations.

Community groups are well established in the Buckie coastal area with a strong sense of place. They benefit from confident, active, skilled and committed volunteers. Many groups are inclusive and influential in addressing local need. Volunteering and buddy initiatives provide support in addressing older people's issues, such as social isolation and preventive primary care interventions. *Be Active Live Long* and Singing, Exercise and Tea groups provide one to one support and social and recreational activities. This is leading to improved health and wellbeing, confidence and feeling of safety. Connections to the local community is helping to reduce social isolation and loneliness. In Portgordon, the Lampie House is an important social meeting place where older people are well supported through lunch, craft and computing groups. The Health and Social Care's Community Champion volunteering programme engaged over 145 participants in a Buckie Vintage Tea Party event. With the largest attendance compared to other events across Moray, the Buckie area is seeing an increased uptake of local services such as *Buckie Accessible Community Bus Scheme*.

There is a strong focus on targeted and inclusive provision for those with additional support needs (ASN). Young people with ASN are supported in working towards their Duke of Edinburgh's Award or Scouts Award alongside their peers. The new opportunities developed by *Friendly Access* is enabling those with ASN to participate in SurfABLE; autistic-friendly surfing and swimming classes. This programme was a winner at the 2017 Moray Social Impact Awards. Inclusive provision at Buckie Community Theatre is resulting in high levels of participation and public support ensuring sustainability and providing amateur dramatic classes to 125 people a week.

The *Tesco Community Champion* works well with local networks to promote community involvement. Small grants of up to £4,000 for community groups and organisations is leading to improved facilities. Several community groups are also benefiting from Tesco surplus food. This is helping to address issues of food poverty and hunger amongst those living with disadvantage. For example, Millbank Primary School is providing a breakfast club as part of a drive to raise attainment. Although at an early stage, school staff are seeing some positive reductions in late coming and improvements in social skills.

The CSU provide good support to community groups in the transfer of assets and community engagement. Their support is underpinned by a Community Support Agreement, which is reviewed and evaluated regularly. This is an effective model that could be replicated by partners. Groups such as *Portknockie Bowling and Tennis Club* and *Cullen Sea School (CSS)* are well supported through the process of asset transfer. CSS's successful asset transfer resulted in the renovation of a derelict building on the harbour front and the provision of inclusive learning opportunities. Learning traditional boat building skills and a men's shed is accessible to a wide range of community members including young people. The use of community engagement techniques in Portgordon resulted in driving forward a plan for improving the village. Although some good support is available, there is still the need to improve the clarity and understanding of the capacity building offer across Buckie and surrounding communities. For example, some community groups are unclear how they should access support from TSi Moray or the CSU. Further improvement is also required in the communication and coordination of support for community voice and in influencing and driving forward local priorities.

There is a good range of well-planned learning programmes for young people and adults underpinned by strong partnerships. The partnership between CLD and Buckie High School is well-embedded. The School Improvement Plan reflects the work of CLD as does the Senior Phase course choice booklet. Buckie High School's Pupil Equity Fund is being used to secure

a Flexible Curriculum post, providing further opportunities for partnership working. All learning programmes are well-planned and underpinned by strong and supportive relationships between participants and staff that is built on respect and mutual trust. A strong focus on early intervention helps address issues at an early stage. The Buckie High School *SQA Leadership Award* group is building young people's confidence through engaging in a range of leadership opportunities within and outwith school. Good support and flexibility ensures learning meets individual needs with appropriate pace and challenge. Similarly, in the *Developing the Young Workforce* and *Activity Agreement* group learners involved in the planning and organising of activities or volunteer placements are increasing confidence, knowledge and skills. Good use is made of the increasing range of wider achievements awards available across the school to recognise achievement. However, young people's achievements would benefit from more effective tracking and monitoring to demonstrate contribution to raising attainment.

The co-location of CLD staff within libraries is improving formal communication amongst staff and referrals of learners into CLD provision. For example, in response to universal credit, learners are accessing library job clubs and CLD's literacy support. *Essential Skills* provision is well targeted, planned and responds to individual needs. Pace and challenge is appropriate and tailored accordingly. All learners have Individual Learning Plans and goals are negotiated. As a result, learners are improving skills, knowledge, confidence and health. Family, community and work life is also improving. Learners also benefit from supportive, safe and nurturing learning environments. *Buckie Young Parents* engage in interactive play with their children. A small group work approach is helping to tackle social isolation, increase confidence and establish friendship networks. The *Quines* club for young women is well planned and tailored to the needs of participants. Young women are engaged in designing and leading the programme. *Anchor Boys Brigade* offers a high quality programme that takes account of young people's stages of development. This results in high retention rates. Some learner achievements are celebrated, including participation in the Moray-wide annual awards events. Overall, the authority and its partners need to work together to improve the clarity on the learning offer and support available. This includes the development of a clear, planned and coordinated approach to progression pathways.

What is the capacity of the local authority and CLD partners to further improve?

This inspection of CLD in The Moray Council found the following key strengths:

- strong partnership between Buckie High School, youth workers and other partners that is enriching the learning offer for young people; and
- strong culture of volunteering and effective community groups contributing to a strong sense of place.

We discussed with partners how they might continue to improve their work. This is what we agreed with them.

- Improve leadership, governance and planning for change at all levels in line with legislative requirements.
- Improve approaches to the management of risks and meeting CLD standards.
- Improve the systematic gathering, analysis and sharing of performance information across partners.

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

There are significant improvements needed and partners do not yet have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. Our Area Lead Officer along with the education authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will revisit the local authority to discuss progress within six months of the inspection visit and undertake a further inspection visit to evaluate progress one year after the publication of this report.

Ann Kivlin
HM Inspector
30 April 2018

Quality indicators help CLD providers, partners and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved. You can find these quality indicators in the publication [How good is the learning and development in our community?](#)

Education Scotland evaluates four important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of CLD across Scotland. Here are the results for this inspection.

Improvements in performance	weak
Impact on the local community	good
Delivering the learning offer with learners	good
Leadership and direction	weak

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgments made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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