

Community Learning and Development Progress Visit Report

The City of Edinburgh Council

2 April 2024

1. Context

HM Inspectors visited The City of Edinburgh Council to undertake a community learning and development (CLD) progress visit during February 2024. During the visit, we talked to learners and community representatives, CLD leaders, managers, staff, volunteers, and other key stakeholders. HM Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of local authority CLD partnerships' approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and considered progress made against identified priorities in their CLD plans.

The leadership and delivery of CLD is situated within two City of Edinburgh Council directorates. Community learning is led by the newly established Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning Team (WALLT). Community development is aligned to Community Empowerment in the council's directorate of Place.

2. Findings from the progress visit

How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?

Areas of positive progress

The newly established WALLT staffing structure has the potential to support staff to realise the ambitions for CLD. Staff are clearer about new roles and their individual areas of work. The majority of CLD partnership members are now committed to the partnership. A few CLD partners have well established working relationships with each other. The focus of CLD programmes on tackling poverty and inequality is understood well by the majority of local authority staff and partners.

WALLT managers and practitioners value the opportunity to engage in newly established in-service days. These are providing staff with helpful opportunities to share practice and work towards improved consistency in the delivery of CLD. A few staff delivering learning programmes gather learner feedback and data on participant numbers. For example, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) tutors use a range of self-evaluation arrangements to ensure that there is a continued focus on improving outcomes for learners. As a result, tutors who gather and use this feedback regularly adapt the focus of lessons, including for those seeking employment. A few tutors involved in the Multiply programme connect with colleagues across the wider Multiply network. This is helping them to share practice to enhance the delivery of numeracy programmes and to better meet learner needs.

Areas for development

The CLD Partnership is not providing the required leadership and governance for the delivery of the CLD Plan. The majority of the priorities in the CLD 2021-24 plan focus on recovery from the pandemic and require to be refreshed and updated. The current plan does not yet inform sufficiently council CLD services or partners' priorities. As a result, the local authority is not meeting its legislative duties as set out in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 to coordinate provision of and provide CLD, to identify unmet need, and to specify what action partners intend to take over the period of the plan. Progress towards CLD priorities is not being monitored or reported on. The reorganisation of CLD within the local authority is not yet sufficiently well embedded to demonstrate its

effectiveness. In particular, the relocation of community development has resulted in a disconnect between community learning and the delivery of community development.

Community engagement and empowerment leaders with responsibility for community development do not yet recognise how their work contributes to outcomes set out in the current CLD plan. Senior leaders now need to accelerate efforts to strengthen the governance and leadership across all aspects of CLD practice. This includes publishing a new plan by 1 September 2024 in line with legislative requirements. Plans to engage with communities on the development of the new plan are incomplete. Senior leaders now need to develop further their plan to gather the views of learners and communities. This should help to ensure that the priorities for the new plan reflect learner and community needs.

The use of self-evaluation to inform continuous improvement is inconsistent across CLD partners. Similarly, there is no systematic reporting by partners of progress towards achievement of the outcomes set out in the CLD plan. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that CLD provision is being targeted to those most in need. This is limiting the ability of senior leaders and their partners to accurately assess the impact of CLD and ensure that resources are targeted to those most in need. CLD leaders now need to develop further their approach to self-evaluation and ensure that arrangements are in place to monitor and report on progress made against CLD priorities.

How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?

Areas of positive progress

In a few programmes, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), Multiply and ESOL classes staff use data and learner feedback to report on progress. Performance information for DofE shows improvement in uptake of the award. Questionnaire feedback from ESOL learners and informal discussions with learners are helping CLD staff to understand how they are meeting learners needs. Multiply leaders are beginning to use a management information system to monitor and track progress. Although at an early stage, the partnership approach to grant funding through Connected Communities has the potential to be a useful resource to fund, monitor and evaluate a range of CLD interventions.

Delivered in partnership with local organisations and schools, a wide range of flexibly delivered programmes in local communities are enhancing the life chances for participants. Staff use the Community Sports Hub programme to bring about positive changes for underrepresented groups using sport and physical activity. A strong partnership with local organisations including the Young Men's Christian Association is helping with the co-design and co-delivery of projects such as 'The Welcoming' for New Scots and a women and girls only group. The WALLT youth work staff are now working more directly with local schools. Although at an early stage, this is helping to develop a more consistent approach to meeting young people's needs, including support for mental health. The Chill and Chat project is helping to alleviate poverty in an area of high deprivation through the provision of family meals and signposting families to appropriate support.

A few learning programmes offer accredited learning pathways. For example, young people involved in the Scottish Youth Parliament gained a Participative Democracy Certificate. A few parents working with the WALLT family learning team have successfully completed the Scottish Qualifications Authority Childcare course. Screen Education Edinburgh provides helpful opportunities for young people and adults who live in areas of multiple deprivation within

Edinburgh to access and engage in film making and film education training programmes. A very well-developed learner pathway is meeting the needs and aspirations of all learners and increasing their confidence, wellbeing, attainment. The majority of learners are progressing to further and higher education or into employment in media.

Areas for development

CLD partners do not yet understand and evaluate fully the impact of their work. This area requires significant improvement. There is no systematic approach to collating or using data to inform planning for improvement. Similarly, arrangements to monitor, track and report on progress towards achievement of the CLD plan are not systematic or consistent. As a result, there is the potential for duplication of effort by CLD partners. Strategic leaders now need to work with partners to address these aspects to ensure that best use is made of shared resources.

CLD programmes do not link sufficiently to CLD planned priorities. As a result, CLD staff and partners are not clear about how their work contributes to strategic outcomes or meets learner needs. Learners would benefit from a consistent learning offer that is targeted to those most in need that includes clear progression pathways and opportunities for accreditation. Whilst existing learners are asked about their preferences within classes, such as topics they wish to cover, there is no consistent approach to measuring the impact of learning programmes on learners and their aspirations. There is scope to expand further learner negotiated programmes to develop opportunities for learners to become co-producers and co-deliverers of provision.

3. Main points for action

The following main points for action are required.

- As a matter of urgency, the local authority and its partners should strengthen the leadership and governance of CLD in line with legislative requirements.
- Senior leaders should engage further with communities and stakeholders to help inform priorities for the new CLD plan.
- The approach to community development needs to lead to the identification of clear outcomes, which are embedded within the future CLD plan.
- The local authority and its partners should strengthen approaches to the systematic tracking, monitoring and reporting of progress against CLD priorities.

4. What happens next?

The local authority and their CLD partners are not making sufficient progress with their CLD plan. HM Inspectors have identified important areas requiring improvement. As a result, we will visit the local authority again within one year of the publication of this report to evaluate progress made by the local authority and their CLD partners in addressing these areas.

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2 April 2024