Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Responsive, supportive and resilient communities

A review of community development during the pandemic

September 2022

Contents

Foreword

This report examines the range of community development approaches being used to support learners and communities across Scotland.

Throughout the country, local authorities and their partners, including the third sector and an increasing number of volunteers collaborate to support and develop communities. Community learning and development (CLD) partners are working hard to ensure shared resources reach the most marginalised or socially isolated. They continue to adapt to a very challenging environment to support their learners and communities. CLD partners also responded positively to new guidance and safety measures in response to COVID-19.

I am encouraged that HM Inspectors have identified several key strengths and examples of strong practice across the CLD sector. However, I know there remains more to be done across CLD partnerships.

Central to local decision-making is meaningful engagement and joint working with learners and communities. This report highlights how CLD partnerships are meeting the needs of learners and communities through strong community development practice. I know that Scotland's CLD sector, its learners, and communities will benefit from the findings of this thematic review and use these findings as they take forward their work.

Gayle Gorman
HM Chief Inspector of Education

Background

The Scottish Government's 'Education Recovery: Key Actions and Next Steps' publication outlines the role of HM Inspectors of Education in undertaking evaluative activity to support Scotland's education system to recover from the pandemic.

This report is one of a series of national thematic reviews by HM Inspectors highlighting current practice through the pandemic. The scope of the activities undertaken as part of this review provides evidence, gathered through observing practice first hand across the country. This has enabled HM Inspectors to highlight what is working well and what needs to improve in community development. The challenges facing the CLD sector and how these challenges are beginning to be addressed are also highlighted.

As well as sharing key messages about current community development practice, this report includes case studies from across a wide range of settings that highlight effective practice.

Introduction

HM Inspectors engaged with the CLD sector between April and June 2022. They visited 23 CLD settings and engaged with learners, volunteers, practitioners, local authorities and national third sector organisations to gather evidence. The settings visited covered a wide variety of urban and rural areas across Scotland and included national and third sector organisations.

- Appendix 1 provides details of the local authorities and organisations who participated.
- Appendix 2 provides definitions of community development and a link to a glossary of terms.
- Appendix 3 provides case studies outlining examples of strong practice gathered during the visits.

During this thematic review, HM Inspectors focused on how well CLD partners are supporting recovery from the pandemic. They examined how the work of community members, practitioners and partners is supporting communities. HM Inspectors considered how well CLD partners prioritise and use effective community development approaches to support those who are marginalised or at risk of being isolated in their communities. The report also identifies how the pandemic has affected the CLD landscape, including changes to the ways in which CLD is accessed and delivered.
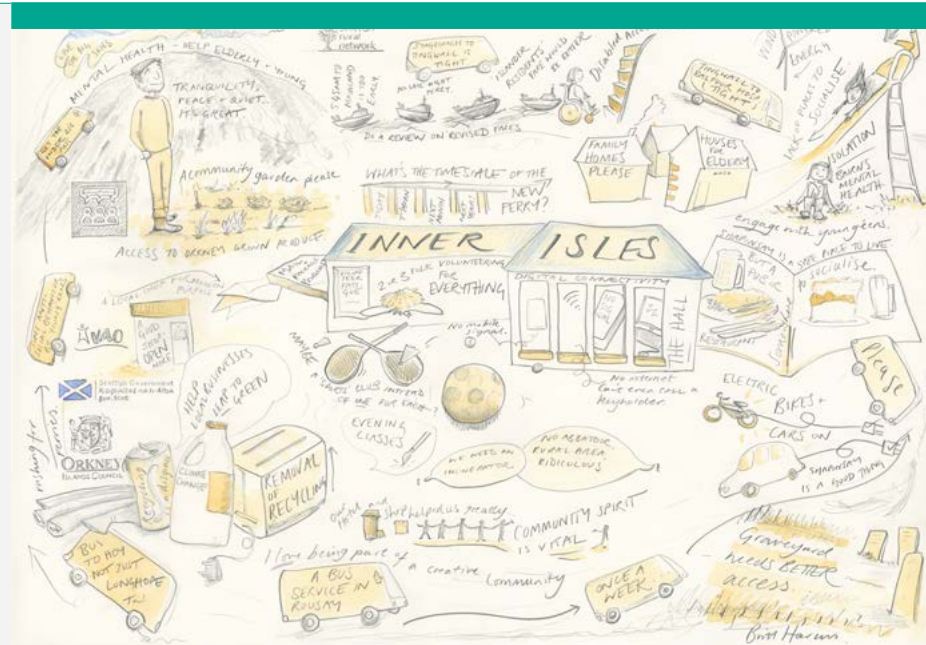
Key Findings

HM Inspectors gathered evidence of how high-quality community development in a CLD context is helping to secure better outcomes for children, young people, families and communities. The findings focus on the key themes of:

- Community response
- Volunteering
- Partnership working
- Digital access and workforce development
- Planning for the future and next steps

1. Community response

"We really reach those most in need, the most vulnerable and excluded…we are really important to the health of communities."

Volunteer running a small community organisation

Community groups and local organisations responded quickly to the challenges of COVID-19. The number of community groups and organisations being established has increased over the past two years. In many cases, this was in response to challenges emerging from the pandemic. These groups continue to deliver a wide range of social, educational, and economic services that enhance opportunities in their communities. In order to support people to find local solutions, the Scottish Government, CLD services and their partners enabled access to financial support by adjusting funding criteria. This helped to ensure funds were accessible to groups for use in areas most in need. The reduction in bureaucracy helped groups to ensure that existing and new resources were targeted timeously by those best placed to deliver services. This enabled grass roots organisations to receive grants which they might

"If the pandemic has taught us anything, somebody has got a big pair of scissors and cut through the red tape."

CLD Worker

> "We spotted the need to change and then changed. We are now much more of the community rather than just in the community. All round it is a win win, a win for the club and the community."

Volunteer leader speaking about opening a sports club for community use

not otherwise have accessed. As a result, these organisations used their local knowledge to create solutions to support more marginalised members of their communities. For example, personal protective equipment for staff and volunteers were distributed at the height of the pandemic. In addition, vital food, medical supplies and digital devices were supplied to individuals and families.

Many community councils reacted swiftly to emerging needs, whilst strengthening their relationships with other community groups and local councils. Most communities responded well during the pandemic to improve their local environment and greater community ownership and responsibility is now evident. As a result, many local green spaces and parks are now more accessible and widely used by community members, including older adults, families and young people.

Community groups and CLD providers experienced difficulty in gaining access to buildings for the delivery of face-to-face and hybrid activity. In part this was due to physical distancing restrictions throughout the pandemic. This is still a challenge for a few CLD providers. In particular, third sector organisations who do not have their own premises were negatively impacted by the closure or re-purposing of venues. As venues re-open for community access, increasing rent and energy costs are a growing concern. This is affecting the capacity of organisations to deliver CLD services in suitable and affordable buildings.

National organisations, third sector interfaces (TSIs) and local authorities continue to manage their safeguarding responsibilities in line with legislation. CLD partners increasingly used local intelligence to help identify those most in need. They worked flexibly and collaboratively to provide targeted and proportionate interventions. CLD services are well represented and integrated into local authority safeguarding structures. These services are making a significant contribution to multi-agency responses for vulnerable families.

> "COVID-19 has brought an empathy, and it brought more needs to our attention, both in our jobs and in the volunteering we all do."

Senior leader

2. Volunteering

"Came to a cooking class, and the worker (CLD worker) gave me support that really helped me. Now I volunteer every week. I feel part of my community more now, now I am a volunteer."

Volunteer in a community café

In response to the pandemic, volunteering increased substantially throughout Scotland in most local authorities and national organisations. The majority of existing volunteers adapted their approaches to meet the changing needs of their communities. This response resulted in a shift in the focus of many CLD practitioners and an emerging need to support and train volunteers quickly. For example, access to appropriate training and support to fulfil their role efficiently and safely. As a result, almost all new volunteers received safeguarding training. Most organisations completed risk assessments to ensure safe ways of working. National organisations and TSIs moved their processes online to undertake necessary checks to inform recruitment of suitable volunteers. This is helping to ensure that volunteers are equipped to best respond to changing individual and community needs. Across Scotland, committed, confident and skilled volunteers are helping their communities survive and thrive. Most volunteers are supported well by CLD partners.

A few TSIs reprioritised their work to take on responsibility for the recruitment and coordination of the increasing number of volunteers. Overall, additional volunteers increased the capacity of the CLD sector to respond to new and growing needs within communities. In one Scottish city, a well-developed database of volunteers helped organisations and practitioners to manage and allocate resources to the most appropriate opportunities. For example, the NHS vaccination programme. Other volunteers provided vital community support such as online befriending, or food and medicine delivery to more vulnerable people. They also distributed digital devices to community members experiencing digital poverty.

Volunteers with a variety of experience are continuing to provide high quality support to those most in need. The onset of the pandemic saw not only a change in the number of volunteers but also in the backgrounds and ages of those volunteering. Many younger adults began volunteering during periods of furlough and lockdown. In order to capitalise on this growth in volunteering, a national approach to volunteer retention would be of value.

National third sector organisations supported young people, adults and communities to be resilient and responsive during the pandemic. The majority of volunteers have been enabled and encouraged to explore new types of volunteering. This includes taking up leadership roles, volunteering elsewhere or becoming more

> "I suppose the pandemic gave us an opportunity, gave us permission to think differently. We are not going to let the connections with partners stop, we need to still do this to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and families."

Partner

involved in community planning. As a result, the membership of a few organisations is increasing in recognition of the value of their role. The number of board members is also increasing. A few organisations highlight that whilst the overall number of volunteers has grown, many experienced volunteers have stepped down. Often this is due to health and caring concerns or work demands. This has created gaps in volunteer knowledge and skills. For a few organisations, this made it more difficult to recruit volunteers to more specialist roles.

CLD partners continue to promote creative ways to recognise and value the work of volunteers. For example, many adults and young people gained accreditation for their volunteering through Saltire or the Duke of Edinburgh's awards. In a few cases, volunteers have used the knowledge and skills they have developed to secure employment.

Organisations use award ceremonies and records of achievement to recognise volunteer contributions. In one local authority, volunteers produced a short film about their experiences which was shared with the Community Planning Partnership. However, there would be value in ensuring the role that new and existing volunteers play in supporting learning and communities across Scotland is more routinely recognised and celebrated.

Although many aspects of need created by the pandemic have now reduced, CLD practitioners and volunteers are aware of new demands that have emerged. For example, in supporting communities to deal with the cost-of-living crisis or support the increasing numbers of refugees arriving in the country. In responding to any new or increasing demands, care must be taken to ensure that volunteers are not overused and continue to be supported well in their roles. Those organisations supporting more vulnerable volunteers should consider carefully how they balance the needs of community members and the wellbeing and capacity of volunteers over the longer term.

3. Partnership working

"Egos disappeared, we all worked together, from youth clubs to church groups to public services, to do what was needed. To make sure we could support those that really needed it. It was amazing to experience this level of collaboration. We need to never go back to our silos, allow barriers between us to go back up."

CLD practitioner, third sector organisation

Local authority internal and external partnerships have strengthened and in almost all local authorities, new partnerships have emerged, increasing community development capacity. Unfortunately, in a few areas, previously well-established partners are no longer operating due to the impact of the pandemic on their viability. Nevertheless, across current partnerships, increased trust, mutual respect and awareness of each other's roles and remit is evident. This includes partnerships between public and third sector providers. Silo working has reduced, and partners now work collectively and creatively to deliver services to those most marginalised or socially isolated. As a result, joint working arrangements and increased sharing of resources is enabling services to reach those most in need.

Local authorities are increasing their partnership working with residents in the communities they serve. In North East Scotland, building on their experience of the impact of severe weather conditions, services are working with local volunteers to jointly plan for future emergencies. For example, Burghhead and Cummingston Community Council are working with public services to develop both local and household resilience plans to support residents when emergency situations occur.

CLD organisations and practitioners continue to focus on supporting increasing numbers of those who are marginalised in their communities. Over the last two years, community needs have changed. Both the level of need and the range

"I feel the third sector voice is stronger due to COVID-19. Services saw what we could do, understand more how and what we deliver."

Practitioner, TSI

of people in need of support have increased. For example, the accessibility of support services as many have moved to digital delivery. There is also increased use of food banks and food larders for working families.

The way in which practitioners engaged with communities changed in response to the pandemic. For example, in Aberdeenshire, CLD practitioners were allocated to work in care homes and developed innovative and positive learning projects with residents. As a result, the CLD service is continuing to expand its work with older and less able members of their communities.

Improved collaborative working between local authorities and third sector partners is helping to ensure quick and appropriate responses to safeguarding concerns. A few local authorities experienced an increase in the reporting of concerns, including mental health issues and domestic violence. In many cases, approaches to communication and structures established during the pandemic continue to support vulnerable people and families.

Almost all CLD practitioners highlight that there is now a greater understanding of CLD approaches across partners. This has strengthened ongoing multi-disciplinary partnership working. In addition, there are examples of more partners now using CLD methodologies in their practice. This is
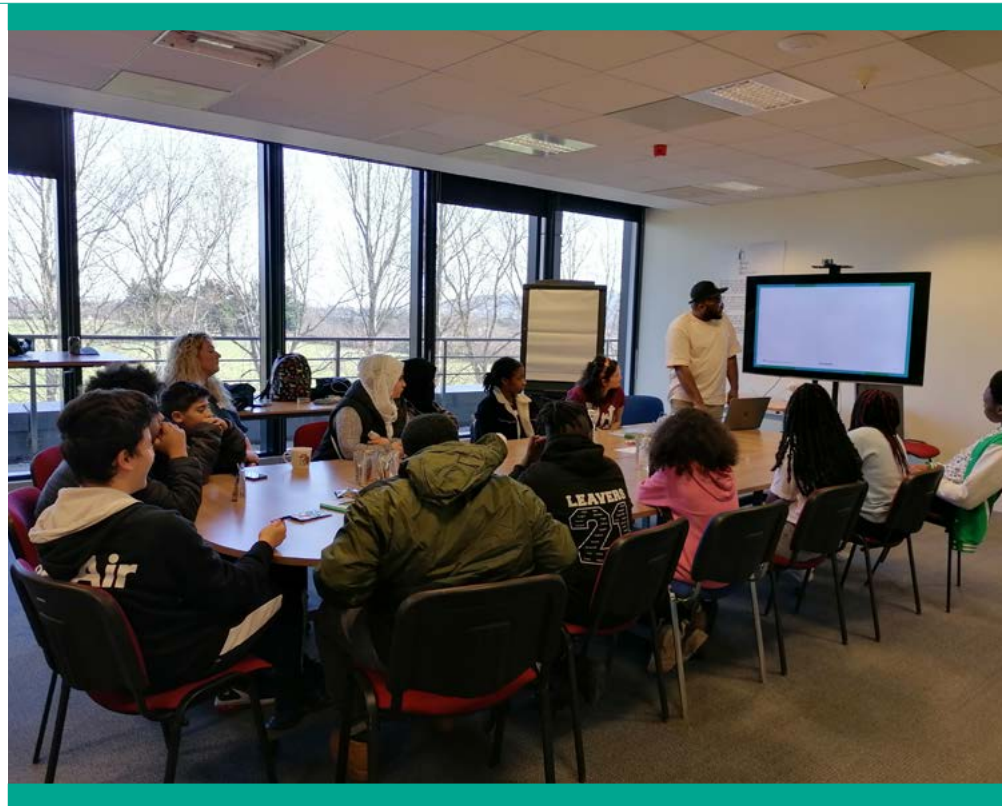
increasing community development capacity to identify and respond need. Services also continue to collaborate in order to deliver provision that reaches those most marginalised. To build on these strong examples, local authorities, national and third sector organisations now need to increase community involvement in local decision making. This will help ensure they best meet the needs of learners and communities.

"If COVID-19 had not happened, would our partnership with the council have happened, I suspect it would have but taken much, much longer."

Volunteer, community organisation

4. Digital access and workforce development

"It's been great seeing the creativity and perseverance to engage people despite the major practical limitations."

Partner

The move to blended or hybrid delivery of CLD services is helping to remove barriers to participation such as travel or caring responsibilities. For example, social media platforms, online surveys and video calls are now used regularly for participatory budgeting and other community engagement activities. Generally, the online hosting of community engagement and planning meetings at the start of the pandemic resulted in increased attendance from community members and partners. As a result, more local people are now participating in decision making about their community. National and regional organisations have also increased their levels of engagement with smaller partner organisations using digital platforms.

Blended learning: Blended learning describes models of delivery which allow learners to participate in both onsite and digital learning activities within a programme of learning. For example, coming to weekly group learning on-site activities and undertaking online activities between these weekly sessions.

Hybrid learning: Hybrid learning is designed to be delivered both onsite and remotely at the same time, allowing students to move between the two methods of delivery seamlessly. This means within any learning activity some learners will be in-person and some will be online. Hybrid learning is often used to provide learners with a greater degree of choice and to improve access to learning opportunities.

Access to a range of funding streams, including the Connecting Scotland Fund, is helping facilitate young people's access to online youth services. Almost all adult learning delivery across Scotland moved online and almost all organisations continue to provide a blended approach of face-to-face and remote learning. As a result, small volunteer-led organisations delivering adult learning are now offering a wider range of opportunities to vulnerable people, including older people, veterans and those from black and minority ethnic communities.

In addition, the use of funding has enabled the distribution of digital devices and data packages. Support for the upskilling of staff and volunteers has ensured that they are equipped to help learners and activists use their devices when required. This is having a significant, positive impact on both digital access and workforce development. As a result, digital platforms are used well to enable the continued participation of learners and community groups in learning activities. This approach also helped tackle social

"Strategic partners are providing the map, we (practitioners) are covering the territory."

Staff member

isolation and enabled people to reconnect in communities. However, not all practitioners are using the preferred digital platforms of community members and learners. In many cases, this is due to resource implications or access restrictions of organisations in response to concerns around online safety and confidentiality.

During the pandemic, almost all professional learning on safeguarding moved to remote delivery. In addition, the content of courses was adapted for online access, ensuring that practitioners knew how to keep themselves and learners safe. A few training providers highlighted that offering courses online extended their reach, encouraging smaller organisations to participate who previously had not engaged. A few organisations offered safeguarding officers one-to-one support. This helped to build their confidence and knowledge of safeguarding and blended ways of working. A few smaller organisations continue to need support to build their capacity to apply safeguarding processes appropriately. Local authorities, national bodies and other training providers will need to take a planned approach to meet the continuing demand for safeguarding training.

Island and rural communities have experienced particular challenges over the past two years. To help address issues such as geographical and social isolation, online meetings were introduced.
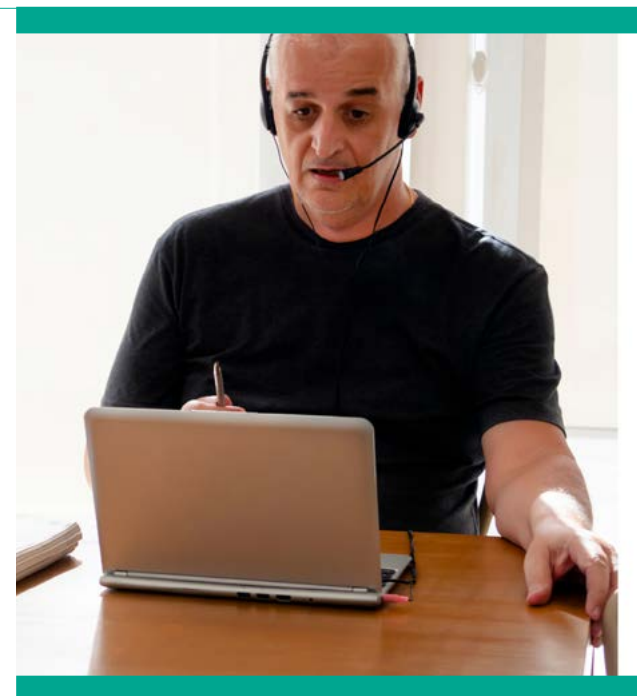
"This is helping to tackle social isolation and help 'reconnect learners' to their communities."

CLD staff member

This made accessing learning and support easier for those staff, volunteers and learners. The use of funding to provide digital devices and data packages was key to keeping communities connected. Befriending schemes moved to online delivery, continuing to support island residents suffering from loneliness and isolation. A few community trusts produced podcasts or newsletters to keep people up to date with local information.

Although increased access to digital devices and connectivity has had a significant positive impact in reducing social isolation and provided a vital lifeline, there is more to be done to sustain this support. This area now requires focused attention to ensure, over time, that the impact continues to be realised. Online approaches do not meet the needs of all groups. For example, young people described how much they value face-to-face working. Organisations who support learners and communities must ensure that they have the capacity and capability to continue to offer both remote and face-to-face services. The ongoing professional learning and development needs of staff and volunteers need to be considered as the CLD workforce returns to previous roles or where the blended delivery of learning is now the norm. Similarly, current context and new ways of working now need to be considered when planning improved approaches to the self-evaluation of CLD.

Across Scotland, almost all practitioners are now using a mixture of online, face-to-face and hybrid meetings to engage successfully and work with communities. Prior to the pandemic, a few CLD providers and organisations had been increasing their use of digital tools to support community engagement and capacity building. However, the pandemic has accelerated the pace and broadened the scope of this change. As a result, almost all partners are working together more effectively to ensure that training and development is available to practitioners, including volunteers,

remotely. National organisations responded quickly to the needs of their members and new resources and online training were delivered at pace. Practitioners and volunteers report feeling very well supported. However, there is now a need to ensure practitioners can continue to build their skills in delivering both blended and hybrid community development and learning opportunities. This includes ways in which to evaluate the quality of provision and measure its impact on learners and communities.

5. Planning for the future and next steps

"Now CLD is the first ask and not the last ask"

Practitioner

The improved resilience, increased confidence and strength of partnership working of CLD partners from the onset of the pandemic should not be underestimated. CLD partners mobilised quickly to ensure services, and an increased number of volunteers, reached and supported the most vulnerable in communities. Across Scotland, there have been significant and ongoing changes to the community development landscape. In almost all areas, the onset of the pandemic resulted in the redeployment of local authority CLD staff to COVID-19 response and recovery roles. The shift in emphasis to areas of greatest need continues to be important. Partnership working continues to make a substantial impact on the lives of individuals and communities most in need. However, CLD partners now need to identify ways in which to galvanise these approaches. This is vital to retaining CLD approaches that have, and continue to make, a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

"We have really had to put vulnerability at the heart of what we do. Our overarching priority was reaching the most vulnerable."

Senior local authority leader

There is now a need to move from a reactive to a more proactive approach to community development. This should build on the experience of the pandemic and embedding the good practice that has improved the life chances of many in communities. Local authorities and partners should revisit their CLD plans to help ensure that priorities are consistent with the changing needs of communities, for example, in response to the cost of living crisis. This will help to inform reporting on progress and wider recognition of the key role that CLD has had during the pandemic and throughout recovery and beyond. Opportunities to reflect on and discuss the findings from this report with key stakeholders would be beneficial. This will help to secure a shared understanding of the strengths of approach and how the CLD sector can continue to improve.

Appendix 1

Settings visited

National, regional, third sector organisations:

- Engage Renfrewshire
- Learning Link Scotland
- Lothian Association of Youth Clubs – City of Edinburgh, East, West and Midlothian
- Youth Scotland
- YouthLink Scotland

Further stakeholder engagement:

- Stirling Council
- ACVO, Aberdeen's Third Sector Interface
- Scottish Community Development Centre
- Thriving Places, Govanhill

Local authority/ partnerships:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Angus Council
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Council + associated CLD Partners
- Dundee City Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Dunbartonshire Council
- Falkirk Council/Falkirk CLD Partnership
- Midlothian Council
- The Highland Council
- Moray Council / Moray CLD Strategic Partnership
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Shetland Islands Council

Appendix 2

Definitions and glossary of terms

The following definitions offer clarity on the purpose of community development (Extracts from 'How good is our CLD' (4th edition):

"Community development is a process where people come together to take action on what's important to them. It helps communities to organise, and to identify the issues they want to address, or the opportunities they want to explore. This can be done by communities of place or communities of shared identity. Community development is about making a fairer, just and more inclusive society."

(Scottish Community Development Centre)

"The Scottish Government defines community empowerment as a process where people work together to make changes happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them. Communities may be geographically located, or they may share common interests, concerns or identities."

How good is our CLD? 4th edition - link to a glossary of terms

Appendix 3

Pals of Privies, Renfrewshire

The Pals of the Privies group based in Ferguslie Park are successfully improving their local environment. Having secured over £100,000 funding from Renfrewshire Council's Green Spaces, they are transforming their local park, whilst securing involvement from a cross-section of the community. Volunteers have been involved in a range of gardening activities including edging and litter picking. The park is a hub of community activity, with provision for all age groups, including a play park, areas for teenagers, outdoor gym and a memorial garden. Impressively, the area is litter free and has not suffered from vandalism.

Strathmore Cricket Club and community café

Strathmore Cricket Club, Forfar, run popular cricket teams and activities for all ages and abilities. Over the last few years, they have chosen to expand their aims and approaches from a sports club to a key support organisation. The volunteer leaders are proactive in working with partners to open their buildings for wider community use. They have reached out to those more marginalised in the area, including young people and older adults, to identify what support they could provide. As a result, the club are expanding what they offer including opening a meeting centre for people living with dementia and their carers in their buildings three days a week.

The club has around 40 volunteers who come from a wide range of backgrounds. They volunteer on the committee, run the bar, special events and a busy, welcoming community café, where customers pay what they can afford. This is particularly valuable in destigmatising poverty for many of the families and individuals who live in the area. Several of the volunteers have themselves faced challenges such as long-term unemployment, disability and poor mental health. The volunteers are more confident, they enjoy being part of a team and highly value having an opportunity to contribute to their communities. In partnership with Council staff, the café provides a range of support, including one to one digital support for customers and volunteers.

North Ayrshire Food Larders

With support from CLD practitioners, volunteers have set up 12 food larders across North Ayrshire, some larders have over 160 members. The demand for services continues to increase as the cost-of-living crisis deepens. For a small fee, food larder customers can select around £15-£20 worth of food. This helps reduce food waste as users can select the items they need and that they have the facilities to cook. These larders help alleviate food poverty, whilst enabling users to maintain their dignity through the shopping process they create. Increasingly, food larders are signposting users to other services and expanding their activities to meet the needs of their users. For example, the Food Larder in Ardrossan now takes a mini larder to local sheltered housing. Several users of food larders have become volunteers, this helps to sustain their service, while offering developmental opportunities, access to adult learning programmes and employability opportunities. A Food Network for those organisations helping to address food poverty runs well and helps disseminate ideas and creative approaches to problem solving. The food larders in the Food Network are now working together to look at a group buyer process to reduce costs.
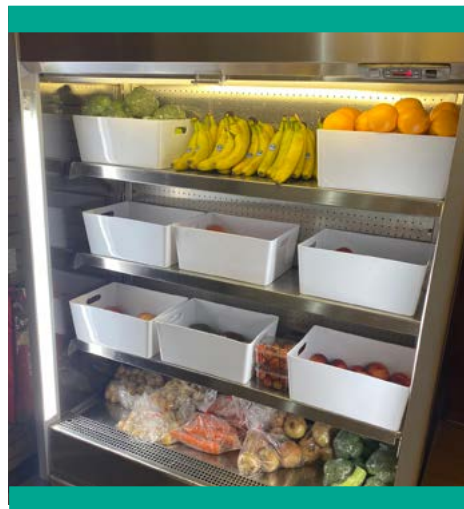

3

CASE STUDY

FC Sonas

Two men involved in professional football who had completed their education through the medium of Gaelic set up FC Sonas. The club's purpose is to develop skills in football and Gaelic language. Their motto is #Gàidhlig is our Goal. FC Sonas received charitable status during the pandemic, with support from The Highland Council and Bòrd na Gàidhlig funding. The joint aim was to increase equity and reduce fluency gaps for learners in Gaelic Medium Education (GME), using football as a context.

During the pandemic FC Sonas worked online to reach out to GME learners. This helped promote the project and gave Gaelic a higher profile. Learners received an immersion experience, which was a gap in learning at home for too many in GME. Learners accessed sports camps, like their peers in English Medium Education. Parents' and carers' confidence and wellbeing was promoted. Particularly, if they themselves were not speakers of Gaelic, or could readily access a language buddy.

FC Sonas produced training videos and material for use by schools and junior football coaches, providing additional resources for teachers of GME. They also published and delivered live interactive weekly physical exercise sessions online for learners and set football challenges that involved the whole family. This reached 22 schools and their families during the
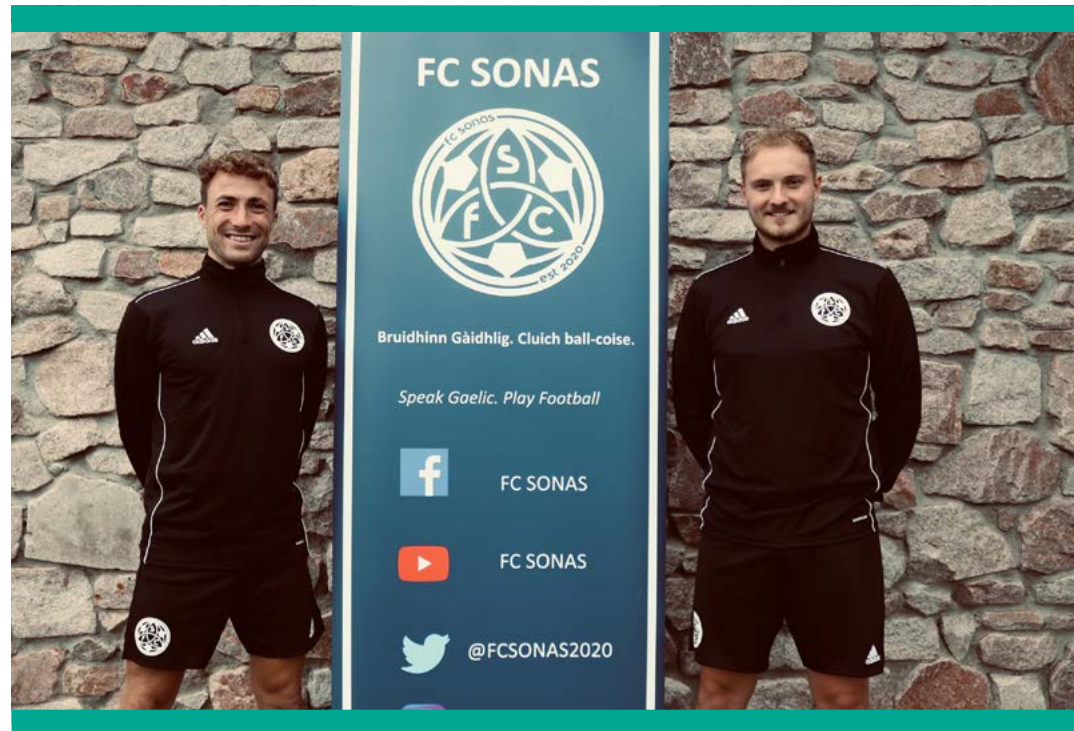
height of COVID-19 restrictions. Families' participation was encouraged by using basic household and football items to help reduce barriers. They are actively engaging young people and their families, promoting physical health, emotional wellbeing, diet and nutrition and football skills through the medium of Gaelic.

FC Sonas continue to deliver holiday camps for learners in GME. Many of their coaches who speak Gaelic support these. This approach models leadership, and achievement of curriculum capacities for current learners in GME.

Lothian Association of Youth Clubs (LAYC)

LAYC's approach to supporting both member organisations and wider CLD practice and planning is an interesting example of what can be done at a regional level by an umbrella support organisation. They adapted their practice quickly at the start of the pandemic, increasing one to one support, network meetings, and moving training to online delivery. They continue to change their practice based on feedback from their members. For example, introducing more trauma informed sessions into their comprehensive training offer. Many leads of their member organisations confirm that this support has been a lifeline. It has supported their wellbeing and capacity to cope with rapid and continuing change. This support is an important element in many of the organisations continuing to run and support community members, including their main learners, children and young people, but also support their volunteers and staff.

Heids Together, YouthLink Scotland

Heids Together is a co-production with black and minority ethnic young people, delivered in partnership with Passion4Fusion. Young people created their own resource to support mental health that was reflective of their experience of being a young black person. For example, they reported that they are under more pressure to achieve academically than white peers. In the first phase, they created a book for young people. This helped participants with the vocabulary to describe their feelings as they were not familiar with medical terms such as 'depression' or 'low mood.' Creating the book gave them new skills and a better understanding of mental health. However, while the creation of the book was a positive learning experience, it was not the right medium to connect with other young people.

The second phase involved the creation of a digital application by working with a designer and mental health professional to create content. As a result, the application designers recognised that their own skills to engage with young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds was enhanced. Young people engaged in this process have increased their skills, confidence, knowledge of mental health and capacity to support other young people. For example, through the creation of meaningful resources for their peers, regular discussions on mental health issues as a group and continuing to design solutions and coping strategies that work for them.

Orkney Matters, Orkney Islands

Orkney Matters, a strategy for consulting with communities, employed three methods to gather views about moving on from the pandemic. These were questionnaires, virtual meetings with communities and 'Lesser Heard Voices.' Feedback from 1,200 questionnaires found that local people were suffering from 'consultation fatigue'. Island communities indicated that they want to see less talking and more action. Virtual meetings provided a platform for communities to express their views and ask senior officials questions directly.

Lesser Heard Voices engaged local people who were more hesitant in putting their views forward. Input from the Pier Art Centre, local artists and Orkney Islands Council helped groups and individuals to use art as a method to explore their thoughts and ideas. A toolkit was developed to engage specifically with young people in school settings. Orkney Matters commissioned a local artist to complete a series of visual minutes to record the outcome of meetings. A rich variety of themes emerged from the consultations including climate change, the importance of community spirit and the value of engaging with the outdoors.