

Inspection of Community Learning and Development in Dundee City Council

14 March 2017

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1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within Dundee City Council and the ward areas of North East and East End Dundee were inspected by Education Scotland during December 2016 and January 2017. 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?

Strategic leadership is clear and effective. Leaders demonstrate strong governance skills, motivate others and encourage engagement in the management of change. At all levels the strategic vision, values and aims are well understood by partners and staff. Partnership structures support partners to align work with national priorities and focus on clear strategic priorities. There is a strong commitment from leaders to securing additional benefits through shifts in financial budgets and better use of resources. Well established Local Community Planning Partnerships (LCPPs) drive improvement across the city. Services, partner organisations, the voluntary sector, locally elected representatives and local community bodies all have an equal and clear voice on LCPPs. Reporting arrangements between the North East and East End Community Planning Partnerships and the parent Dundee Partnership are regular and effective. This contributes to partners being clear about the impact of CLD programmes. LCPP representatives contribute effectively to City Decentralisation meetings where locality issues are shared and solution focused actions agreed. Decision making at a LCPP level is effective, prompt and tailors key strategic priorities to local circumstances. CLD is at the heart of the delivery of strategic and local priorities. LCPPs are led by a CLD officer and focus on building capacity in local communities.

Partnership working is well established, valued and increases positive outcomes. Partnership working between services and local people is based on mutual respect and a shared ambition to improve the communities in North East and East Dundee. Local people have a clear and strong voice in planning decisions. Their lived experiences together with the effective use of data collated by services ensures that CLD providers have a clear understanding of unmet needs across the North East and East of Dundee. This informs decisions about both attracting and allocating resources to meet these needs. Engage Dundee, a council-wide approach to engagement, is helping to reduce duplication of effort across partner agencies. It is highly effective in identifying key issues and informing community planning at both city wide and local levels. Strong partnership working between CLD and local organisations extends the range of learning opportunities. The CLD service work effectively with voluntary organisations such as with Whitfield Parish Church to run a range of adult and family learning opportunities. Through this partnership local people gain accreditation, have reduced social isolation, improve their health and wellbeing and make positive changes to their lives.

Across the North East and East End areas there is a strong emphasis on co-production of services. There is a strong shared sense of purpose especially around tackling poverty and health inequalities. Local Regeneration Forums, made up of local people, each distribute over £100 thousand annually to target work which will improve their communities. The members recognise and can clearly articulate how their work meets the Vision Values and Aims set out in the Dundee Community Plan. Good use of local knowledge and current data ensures funds are well targeted in response to local need. Local partnerships and networks are effective in developing resource efficient joint work which improves outcomes. For example the 'DD4 Network' North East/East End Integrated Employability Pilot is creating a more integrated approach to employability focused opportunities. This is starting to increase the efficient use of resources around employment services. Although partnership working is strong there is scope for learning focused partners to work more effectively together at a local level. In particular there is a need to further improve communication between youth work providers at community level. The planned systematic development of Local Learning Partnerships in each area will support this work.

Staff are supported effectively and trusted by senior managers to be creative, innovative and take measured risks in order to develop learning programmes which meet the needs of priority groups. This acts as a key motivator for staff and partners allowing them to focus on positive outcomes for participants. Staff and volunteers access to a wide range of shared training opportunities which are improving practice. Training opportunities including 'Promoting Poverty Sensitive Practice Training' are effective in supporting the workforce to understand and respond to priority needs. Staff are encouraged to network with fellow practitioners within and outwith Dundee. This supports practitioners to extend their skills by sharing and learning from effective practice both within and outwith Dundee. CLD staff and volunteers work to, are familiar with and receive regular updates on safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. There is potential to increase opportunities for staff to learn from each other by undertaking professional learning beyond training and networking such as shadowing and mentoring colleagues across the partnership.

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

Learning and development across the North East and East End areas of Dundee is very good with elements of excellence. Learners, volunteers and community members all benefit from the highly effective programmes that partners, including community organisations, provide. Data, research and findings from community consultations are used consistently to inform priorities and planning. This has a very positive impact on how partners work together to identify and then address priority issues. A wide range of partners contributed to the Dundee Fairness Commission published May 2016 which is being used effectively to inform Dundee Partnership's actions to address poverty and close the attainment gap. Research and evaluation is used well to test the effectiveness of locality based partnership working. The 'East End Summer Holiday' programme reached over 600 participants from families with children. Early findings from the *Lochee Pathfinders* evaluation of this project identify improvements in family relationships, reduced isolation and increased interest in participating in family learning. Improved approaches developed through this work have been cascaded and implemented in other parts of the city. LCPPs make highly effective use of data contained in annual community profiles alongside information gained from community consultations and local walkabouts to inform their decision making. In the

Douglas area the *Our Place 2* project has seen an increased level of community consultation which is leading to changes in the services being provided by partners.

Partly as a result of the effective use of data and research to inform work, partners are highly successful in reaching and engaging key priority groups. Analysis of data around high levels of poverty and childhood obesity has led to interventions including the *Eat Well, Play Well, Learn Well* project. Partners work carried out with priority families is helping them to live healthy, active lives and supports them to build their capacity and confidence to tackle health issues. Findings from the Dartington Social Research informed the creation of holiday programmes which address food poverty and improve outcomes for children. In summer 2016, 20,000 meals were accessed across six community regeneration areas in Dundee including the areas under inspection. Limited trend information is available for opportunities delivered by the CLD service in the North East and East End however, data does show strong levels of participation. For example 362 adults took part in steps to learning and employability programmes in the first nine months of 2016/17 and the majority progressed onto further learning, volunteering or employment. In 2015/16 the Youth Work team ran 640 diversionary and 112 employability focused sessions of youth work in the North East and East End areas attracting large numbers of young people. The CLD service should now progress plans to implement a more robust and coherent management information system across all CLD services to provide clearer and more accessible performance, trend and benchmarking information.

Local community organisations across the North East and East End share a strong sense of and exceptional commitment to 'place'. This is a key driver in delivering improvement. The North East and East Dundee communities have high levels of deprivation and face many challenges. However, the communities are thriving with local people creating positive changes and delivering an impressive range of high quality CLD activities. Highly skilled and ambitious community members are securing solutions to community issues. Recent asset transfers in the East End are moving forward substantial infrastructure projects including the development of a specialist centre for children with additional needs. Across the North East and East End local people are actively engaged in the planning, design and delivery of local environmental and community space projects including several ambitious park developments. Activists on the Douglas Community Space group were successful in securing land zoned for housing as new park development. The volunteer run East Dundee Environmental Network delivers a range of impressive environmental education programmes around the 'Dighty' burn. These include a local heritage trail, programmes aimed at dog walkers and successful work with Dundee International Women's Centre to engage minority ethnic women in environmental projects.

Enthusiastic, skilled and capable volunteers of all ages run activities across the North East and East of Dundee. Young volunteers extend learning opportunities in their community by contributing to running groups for younger children and young people. The 'Braeview Academy Peer Educators' enable children in P7 to be relaxed and confident about moving to secondary school. Young volunteers at the *Rock Solid* Project raise funds through small scale enterprises activities. Young people, community groups and services would all benefit from partners working together to enable more young people to take on leadership roles and have their voices heard both at local and city level. Local centre management members volunteer for many hours to deliver a wide range of high quality learning opportunities. For example, 23 volunteers at Brooksbank Centre contribute over 900 volunteer hours per quarter to run their centre. Community members influence local, City and national plans and policy. The North East LCPP successfully lobbied to gain community access to local primary school grounds at evenings and weekends which opened up play areas for children across the city. Community groups network

very effectively with each other to improve practice. Community organisations receive highly effective, appropriate and consistent support to achieve their ambitions. Groups such as the 'Health Inequalities Positive Action' (HIPA) are empowered to develop structures and new ways of operating in order to progress their aims. HIPA have become a constituted group and are now successfully addressing community problems, such as anti-social behaviour and littering by working with other local bodies and challenging services to take action. Community groups would welcome further support to enhance their succession planning.

Across learning opportunities learners voices are consistently heard and programmes adapted in response. Through being actively involved in their learning plans and able to voice their opinions 96% of the children at the P7 Drop In are eating more fruit and have increased confidence, wellbeing and social skills. *Rock Solid* used Dartington Social Research data effectively to target and engage young people experiencing mental health issues. The flexible programme supports participants to talk about issues which builds their resilience. Adult learning programmes are life changing and in some cases life saving for participants. Learners are nurtured with tutors and workers taking a person centred approach to develop a holistic view of the learner. High levels of respect exist between learners and those who support them. As a result participants are encouraged to feel confident to try new activities and challenge themselves. Programmes such as Health Issues in the Community, Adult Guidance, Job Shops and the Royal Environmental Health Institute Scotland training programme are run at an appropriate pace to enable learners to reflect on their progress, build their skills and challenge themselves. Learners address significant issues in their lives including mental illness and bereavement through these well planned and delivered courses. Participants have greater self-esteem and are empowered to make improvements in their own lives and in their communities. For some these programmes enable them to undertake lifelong ambitions such as studying at college or university. All are enabled to take control of their futures and fulfil their potential. Free childcare provision is a critical factor in enabling people to participate.

Nearly all learning opportunities have well planned and flexible curriculums. Digital inclusion, Literacies and English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) learning is tailored to the needs of each learner and takes account of prior learning. Learners are actively involved in identifying and regularly reviewing their learning goals through individual or group learning plans. Learners can easily articulate their learning and the positive impact it has had on them and their families. A range of well-paced and fun family learning opportunities increase the confidence of parents as the first educators of their children. Effective partnership work between Family Learning, Speech and Language Therapists and Culture and Leisure workers provide additional learning experiences and improves the speech and language development of children. Messy Play for ESOL learners increases parents confidence to take part in family learning activities in their local communities. Well planned and delivered initiatives focused on health are significantly improving the lives of residents. The Sources of Support social prescribing scheme successfully engages patients who have been referred to the scheme by general practitioners. Through on-going support from link workers and volunteers participants are able to address challenges in their lives resulting in reduced medical interventions for many who take part. The scheme currently supports 200 participants each year. Adults are accessing both learning and health and wellbeing opportunities at the adult learning allotment in Murrayfield. Participants gain skills, knowledge and confidence and this is improving their wellbeing. Learning is celebrated through local and city wide events. There is scope to increase the pace, challenge and consistency of the learning offer across providers for some young people. Partners should now work together to increase opportunities for more young people to gain accreditation and to jointly track young people's achievements.

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

This inspection of CLD in Dundee City Council found the following key strengths:

- Strong leadership at all levels.
- Intelligence led targeting to reach key priority groups.
- Outstanding community groups making a significant positive impact on the community.
- High quality learning programmes having life changing impacts.

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

- Improve performance reporting so it more fully captures and reflects the impact of CLD in North East and East End Dundee.

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

The inspection team was able to rely on the high quality self-evaluation provided by the local authority. Partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and communities are achieving very well. As a result we have ended the inspection process at this stage.

Alona Murray
HM Inspector
14 March 2017

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?*

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk4hgiocommunitylearning.aspx>

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	very good
Impact on the local community	excellent
Delivering the learning offer with learners	very good
Leadership and direction	very good

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

Education Scotland

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330
E enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk

www.education.gov.scot

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