

# Inspection of Community Learning and Development in South Lanarkshire Council

**23 July 2018**

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# 1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within South Lanarkshire Council and the areas of Rutherglen, Springhall and Whitlawburn were inspected by Education Scotland during March and April 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?

Across South Lanarkshire strategic leadership of CLD is strong. Leaders demonstrate effective governance and the skill set of CLD is valued. Political support is also strong. Elected members have a very good understanding of the role that CLD plays particularly in relation to work with young people. CLD staff take responsibility for key areas of work resulting in a clear CLD offer across South Lanarkshire. Senior leaders ensure that visions, values and aims are well understood by staff and stakeholders. The Council Plan, Connect 2017-22 is shared with partners through the Community Planning Partnership and the 'Strategy on a Page' document clearly outlines CLD's contribution across a range of priorities. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the voice of young people is heard and valued, for example, through the recent launch of The Year of Young People (YOYP). Third sector partners such as Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASLan) contribute well to the aims and priorities of the council. Overall, partnership working is well embedded although there is scope to clarify the relationships between the various strategic and community partnerships. Reducing inequality and tackling poverty is at the heart of the council's agenda for improvement. CLD play a crucial role in terms of tackling social isolation and in addressing mental health issues. Senior leaders are committed to seeking the views of communities, for example, through the 100 Voices event. How community voice influences decision-making at a strategic level could be further developed.

Staff across South Lanarkshire enjoy a good range of professional development opportunities. There is a strong culture of 'growing your own' and learning from others. The Council's Strategic Learning and Development Plan (2018-19) drives the training and development strategy. Youth workers are well supported to carry out their roles and learning is enhanced through Youth Work training levels 1 and 2. The Home/School Partnership Service has robust arrangements in place to support, train and develop volunteers. Similarly, Active Schools staff support a range of volunteers to deliver a wide range of sports activities. However, volunteer contributions could be better recognised by improving access to accreditation and awards. Across the council and its partners, there are very good opportunities for developing leadership. CLD staff are actively encouraged by managers to progress their learning. Many are becoming members of the CLD Standards Council and South Lanarkshire staff are active members of the West CPD Alliance. Healthy n Happy provide comprehensive support to volunteers through a

well-structured induction programme and volunteers guide. Clear progression pathways are leading to employment for some volunteers.

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

Partners are using a good range of data to inform learning programmes. These are well targeted at those experiencing poverty and deprivation. Partners report on progress against targets through the Cambuslang and Rutherglen Locality Plan. The majority demonstrate improvement. Increasing numbers of young people are completing modules in sports coaching and youth work training academy through RegenFX. Partners are working well to improve life chances for young people. Increasing numbers of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are gaining The Duke of Edinburgh's award and Active Schools staff are helping children to be more active. Participation by girls has almost doubled in the last three years. Positive destinations for young people leaving school is improving. South Lanarkshire shows an improving trend over the past three years. CLD staff contribute to this through a range of support programmes in schools and improved tracking is leading to more targeted interventions.

The *Our Place* project is making good progress towards addressing the key priorities set out in its vision statement. Re: Volve Recycle demonstrate strong performance against targets. Customers using their shops demonstrate greater awareness of climate change and volunteering is increasing year on year. VASLAN are improving their use of data and is focusing on the themes in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. There is scope for partners to develop shared targets and performance measures at a locality level. This will assist them to fully assess progress in terms of the CLD Plan. Outcomes for adult learners show a positive trend in the past three years. More learners with a disability are participating and more learners are achieving at least one outcome. English speakers of other languages numbers are increasing and more learners are achieving their goals.

Almost all community groups are well-organised and influential. They are run by confident, skilled and active members. Almost all groups deliver high quality services based on community need. Consultation with local people is regular and well established. As a result, groups such as Springhall Community Resource Centre attract good numbers of local people to community events. The draft plan for Springhall and Whitlawburn sets out a vision for the local area. However, partners need to ensure that local people are fully engaged as it develops. Partners successfully attract considerable sums of money to support community projects. This includes £1.5 million of *Our Place* funding. Re: Volve Recycle engage local people and volunteers, developing awareness about climate change and re-cycling. Volunteers develop new skills and demonstrate increased awareness of their carbon footprint. *Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust* provide a range of effective services. They are successful in gaining recognition through *The UK Charity Governance Award* and *The Kings Fund*. *Camglen Bike Town* is improving health and wellbeing through providing a range of cycling activities. Community heritage and culture groups contribute to a sense of place. *People's Past, People's Future* is successfully increasing local knowledge about social and political history. A few local activists are gaining valuable knowledge and experience through involvement with *The National Parents Forum* and *Scottish Adult Learning Forum*. Community infrastructure is improving. Whitlawburn Community Centre Management Committee successfully secured funding to improve their building and a local mother and toddler group established a play facility. Levels of community participation are improving as a direct result of the *People and Places Participate*

initiative. Moving forward, reviewing community networks would help to ensure that communication is maximised.

*South Lanarkshire Youth Council* is influential and is regularly consulted on issues affecting communities. Young people are active and enthusiastic contributors to strategic decision making. Their views are valued by senior officers and elected members. Their actions are leading to positive change, for example, through recent work with Scotrail. The work of YOYP Ambassadors is leading to good levels of involvement in YOYP events with over 900 attending the recent launch.

Almost all learners are supported to progress to further learning or other opportunities. Partners collaborate to deliver learning pathways for young people facing challenges, for example, through the *RISE* and *Chance to Change* Programmes. Almost all young people from Cathkin High School's parent-led The Duke of Edinburgh's award group are gaining awards. Young people are involved in shaping their learning and programmes are adapted based on feedback from participants. Young men attending the *Stop Frame Animation Group* are learning new and creative skills. There is a culture of learning from each other and many progress to other opportunities. A range of well-designed programmes such as *The Gee Gees Group*, *The Bridges Project* and *Reach Forward* are assisting young people to achieve positive outcomes. Across these programmes, a learner-centred approach is well-embedded. Through the *Bazinga* programme, young people on the autistic spectrum are achieving well. Young Carers actively design learning programmes to suit their needs. A safe and supportive environment helps them to progress to other learning and volunteering. Almost all young people involved in the award winning programme *The Street* are reducing risk taking behaviours and are making more positive life choices. There would be merit in partners systematically sharing approaches to tracking achievement for young people both in and out of school. This would help to identify and target non-participants.

Adults are well supported by partners to progress their learning. Almost all learners are progressing to volunteering and in some cases, employment. Many organisations are adept at using social media and community events to engage new participants. A variety of learner celebrations are used well to promote and recognise achievement. Effective use is made of *Discovery Awards* that support adult learners to achieve and progress. Participants in *STEPS*, *Discovery Awards* and *The Core* experience life changing and in some cases, life-saving impacts. CLD staff are skilled at empowering adults to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Almost all learners are motivated to develop further. Adults attending the *CV-IT group* benefit from a tailored learning offer to help improve employability skills. Partners need to ensure that all learners have appropriate access to accredited awards.

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

This inspection of CLD in South Lanarkshire Council found the following key strengths.

- Work with young people that is improving the learning offer across South Lanarkshire.
- Effective targeting and inclusion of people facing additional barriers.
- Learners accessing clear progression pathways.
- Stakeholders with a positive approach to learning.
- Creative and ambitious Community and Third Sector organisations.

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

- Strengthen the coordination between Strategic, Locality and Local Planning.
- Improved use of target setting and shared evaluation to capture wider impacts.

## 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.

Sheila Brown  
**HM Inspector**  
23 July 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.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Impact on the local community</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Delivering the learning offer with learners</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Leadership and direction</b>	<b>very good</b>

**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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