

Inspection of Community Learning and Development in Angus Council

30 May 2017

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1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within Angus Council and the area of Arbroath were inspected by Education Scotland during March 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?

Leadership of CLD within the authority is improving. Across the council the commitment to the CLD approach is becoming more embedded. Council staff and partners are generally aware of visions, values and aims of CLD. CLD staff are working well with a range of partners including housing, the Drugs and Alcohol Partnership and Community Safety. Third sector priorities are aligned to Angus-wide priorities although there is scope for improving connections across council departments. Self-evaluation could also be conducted jointly. There are improving links to the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) that should assist with the development of the Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Planning. The council has used Charettes, a method of local consultation to effectively gather the views of local communities. This is helping to shape the development of new services and developments. The Communities Team Operational Plan clearly outlines the CLD contribution to council priorities. Progress and risk are monitored effectively and assigned to senior CLD workers. Reporting on outcomes in the Community Plan and the SOA are clear and well-presented. The development of locality profiles is helping to highlight issues for local communities and challenge perceptions. CLD staff and partners are starting to use the information available to plan more effectively. The draft CLD Performance Framework now needs to be implemented to further embed planning and evaluation.

The recent introduction of a 'CLD learning offer' is much clearer than in the past. Partners including schools now have a better understanding of the potential contribution of CLD to a wider range of priorities. Community Housing Assistants working across the four localities are using a CLD approach to designing new housing stock. Partnership working between Housing and CLD is assisting with the integration of Syrian refugees. Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) staff are enhancing community capacity across the council and support locality planning. However, there is a need to have stronger oversight of service level agreements to ensure that impact is appropriately captured. Further work is required with VAA in particular to ensure there is clarity about what their offer is. This should further enhance collaborative working and maximise the allocation of resources. Employability programmes are meeting the needs of most learners. A greater focus on partnership working and joint planning would help improve this further.

CLD staff are well supported to deliver on council priorities. They are well supported by managers to develop as individuals and extend their skills and knowledge. The bespoke leadership programme developed by the council is developing knowledge, understanding and

relationships across departments. A Workforce Development Survey is identifying priorities for staff development. Visits to other local authorities is helping extend this practice. Some staff also benefit from attending events organised by the Tayside and Fife Professional Learning Alliance. CLD staff are encouraged to lead sessions at training events and staff seminars. This is also helpfully extended to part time staff. More joined up approaches to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and staff development would be beneficial. For example, VAA delivers a varied training programme for the third sector and it could be extended to wider partners. Similarly, wider access to the council's leadership programme may also encourage joined up working and enhance skills for managing change. Staff and volunteers at the Café Project in Arbroath would benefit from greater exposure to youth work approaches and CPD opportunities.

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

Learning and development across the Arbroath area is leading to improved outcomes for learners. More learners are achieving and progressing. CLD priorities are informed by the use and analysis of data such as the Dartington research. This is starting to drive improvement. Community profiles are presented simply and are being well used at locality and Open Space events to inform discussions with local people. The Communities team gathers and interprets data for targeting and focusing their work with young people, adults and community groups. The results of a survey in Arbroath in 2015 were used to inform CLD priorities. CLD staff target learners well across the Arbroath area and focus appropriately on improving life chances and reducing inequalities, for example in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) group. Tracking and monitoring is conducted through the use of Project Implementation Plans leading to the re-prioritising of resources. A focus on work with schools is leading to better outcomes for young people experiencing challenges. Employability and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) groups are increasing although other adult learning numbers remain static. A focused approach to 'pride in place' is resulting in increases in the numbers of community groups being supported. However, targets in pride in place activities could be clearer so that they can be better tracked and reviewed. The numbers of Youth Awards are decreasing significantly and partners need to ensure that young people, particularly from areas of disadvantage are given opportunities to achieve. There is also scope for partners to work together to measure progress against outcomes and targets.

Most community groups and organisations in Arbroath are confident, skilled and active. Many deliver high quality services. The *Men's Shed* helps older retired men gain new skills and increase social contact. The Friockheim Community hub are successfully securing finance to realise their ambition for a community facility in their village. The Inverkeilor Village Shop committee are engaging the wider community and improving community connections. However, the group could do more if they had a timebound business plan to help them move forward. Volunteers at *Keptie Friends* are making significant improvements to a public pond and the Arbilot Community Trust members are now more confident and skilled. A good range of local people are involved in volunteering. Angus Care Centre volunteers are well supported, benefitting from training to help them develop their roles. VAA supports volunteers well and numbers are increasing. Newly-formed groups such as the Arbroath Community Council receive good support from CLD staff. However, further support to help them develop and identify their intended outcomes would be desirable. A few community groups are engaging with the council and others to address inequality. *The Poverty and Inequality Research*

supports learners who require additional support to creatively capture and share their story. Volunteers at *Community Connectors* are taking ownership of actions emerging from the Arbroath Charette and are well linked into local and strategic networks. Groups such as *Havilah* and *Tayside Council on Alcohol* are addressing issues for marginalised people and groups. Overall, CLD staff need now to establish a 'learning offer' that outlines support community groups similar to that developed by youth work and adult learning staff.

Across Arbroath learners are well supported to progress to further learning, volunteering and employment. Young people engaged in *#Destination* are increasing in confidence and moving on to volunteering. The Arbroath High School 'Step up to volunteering' programme is well planned, supporting young people towards gaining Youth Achievement Awards. Most learning opportunities are well planned and appropriate to need. The LGBT group builds well on young people's experiences helping them to become more active and less isolated. The pupil council at Arbroath Academy are influencing decisions in the school whilst gaining leadership and communication skills. Most are gaining Saltire awards. Parents participating in family learning at Warddykes Primary are gaining new skills to support their children's learning. An important next step could be to link family learning more clearly to raising attainment. ESOL participants benefit from a positive learning environment leading to improved social skills with a few progressing to college or employment. Literacy learners feel well-supported and work at a pace that suits them. Additional recruitment of volunteers would help develop the quality of provision further. Employability programmes would benefit from a forum where they could share resources and training.

Opportunities for progression and achievement are well planned. Adult learners with additional support needs at the Job Club benefit from a flexible curriculum tailored to their needs. The *House of Dun* gardening project and *Cooking Together* programmes are helping to improve independent living skills and address mental health issues. *Angus Gold* members are improving access to learning for the 50+ age group. The group has capacity to do more and a plan for developing their programme would assist this. Partnership working is improving through The *Arbroath Children and Learning Partnership*. However, an action plan would improve approaches to evaluation. Overall, joint planning and self-evaluation across partners could be improved.

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

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

- Improving life chances for those most disadvantaged.
- CLD Learning Offer for young people and adults that is improving the lives of learners.

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

- Develop a shared understanding of vision, values and aims across the partnership.
- Improve joint planning and self-evaluation across partners.

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

There are some improvements needed, but because partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and communities are achieving well, we have ended the inspection process at this stage. We will monitor progress through our regular contact with the local authority. Our Area Lead Officer along with the CLD Managers will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress.

Sheila Brown
HM Inspector
30 May 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	good
Impact on the local community	good
Delivering the learning offer with learners	good
Leadership and direction	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

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