Foreword

The Scottish Government is committed to empowering people, individually and collectively to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities, through learning. The Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development (2012) set this out clearly. The Regulations for Community Learning and Development (Scotland), Regulations 2013, placed increased statutory duties on local authorities in Scotland to work with partners and to engage with communities to identify need and plan community learning and development (CLD) in their area. The first three-year plans required by this duty were published by local authorities in 2015 and then again in 2018.

The findings from inspection evidence 2016-2019 are detailed in this report and span the first and second iterations of three-year CLD plans as outlined above. I am delighted to see in this report, that CLD partners are improving the life chances for people in their communities through building capacity and supporting young people and adults in their learning. It is also great to see the strength of volunteering.

Education Scotland is committed to working closely and collaboratively with all involved in improving Scotland’s education system. We are clear that our vision of excellence and equity cannot be achieved by one part of the system alone and that partners must continue to work together to achieve this goal. I recognise and value the role of CLD in this partnership and especially the strength of CLD in its contribution to addressing poverty and disadvantage in our society. Therefore it is heartening to see that this report highlights that targeted CLD provision is helping to reduce social isolation and improving wellbeing for those overcoming social and economic difficulties.

I am encouraged by the strengths of CLD outlined in this report. As you will see there are some examples of outstanding practice which is making a difference for learners and communities. It is also clear that there is further work to do, such as strengthening CLD partnerships in terms of self-evaluation for improvement and using data and other information to measure and improve performance.

I would encourage local authorities and CLD practitioners and partners to use this report to reflect on their own practice and help to improve the quality of CLD provision across Scotland for the benefit of our learners of all ages and the communities in which they live.

Gayle Gorman

HM Chief Inspector of Education
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Introduction

HM Inspectors evaluate and report on the quality of CLD provision within local authorities in line with the The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013: Guidance for Local Authorities. The guidance refers to the legislative and policy areas for local authorities that impact on the planning and provision of CLD. This includes responsibilities for Community Planning under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003.

From September 2016 to June 2019, HM Inspectors of Education carried out inspections of community learning and development (CLD) provision in all 32 local authorities, using a model of scrutiny comprising two phases:

• a strategic phase which evaluated the leadership and governance of CLD across the local authority and with its community planning partners; and
• a ‘place-based’ phase which focused on the quality of CLD provision and delivery in a local context.

HM Inspectors used the quality improvement framework, How good is the learning and development in our community? (2016) to evaluate the quality of:

• strategic leadership of community learning and development; and
• learning and development in this community

They provided grades for the following quality indicators using the six-point scale (See Appendix 1):

• 1.1 Improvements in performance
• 4.1 Impact on the local community
• 5.1 Delivering the learning offer with learners
• 9.2 Leadership and direction (including aspects of 3.1 Impact on staff and volunteers)

This report summarises the main findings following completion of the scrutiny programme of local authority CLD services and their partners. It contains the professional view of HM Inspectors on what is working well, as well as important areas for further development.

The report is intended to help local authorities, local and national CLD providers, policy makers and CLD partners reflect on their practice and to engage in professional dialogue in order to bring about further improvements to CLD provision.
1. How good is the strategic leadership of community learning and development?

Key messages

Targeted CLD provision is making a strong contribution to addressing poverty and disadvantage for individuals and groups in local communities. The impact of professional learning across CLD nationally is strong. The leadership of CLD is strong in the majority of local authorities and this is helping to drive forward improvement. CLD approaches are increasingly valued by senior leaders and elected members and the quality of CLD three-year plans is improving. However, there is a need for the vision, values and aims for CLD to be more consistently owned and understood by partners and wider stakeholders. Joint self-evaluation for improvement within and across CLD partnerships should be strengthened.
Leadership and direction

In the majority of local authorities strategic leadership of CLD is good or better and this is driving continuous improvement. Overall, strategic leaders in CLD motivate others and encourage devolved leadership to support the management of change. Strategic leadership of CLD provision takes clear account of a range of national policy drivers, such as addressing the poverty-related attainment gap. In most local authorities CLD approaches are valued by senior officers and elected members. Senior leaders demonstrate clear vision, values and aims for CLD across most local authorities. In the majority of local authorities these inform strategic planning and partnership working. However, further work is needed to ensure that the vision, values and aims for CLD are shared and clearly understood by all partners. This will help to strengthen the collective focus on meeting strategic needs and priorities.

In East Ayrshire Council, CLD methodologies are used well to address a range of strategic priorities. The Vibrant Communities initiative is driving the empowerment of communities. Over many years CLD practitioners have provided effective capacity building support to communities helping community members to deliver services which address local issues. Across the community planning partnership leaders recognise how important community organisations and activists are in changing lives and improving local outcomes. Planning with communities is transforming how services are delivered. Community action plans which drive change are developed and owned by communities. They are based on comprehensive consultation across communities. The ambitious target of a minimum of 40% of residents being consulted about the contents of these plans is successfully reached and in many locations exceeded. This is changing communities for the better, empowering local people to address issues, improve their local infrastructure and environment and deliver learning and social opportunities.

The current CLD Regulations 2013¹ require local authorities to produce three-year plans setting out how their CLD provision will meet legislative duties. Most local authorities work well with their partners to ensure that legislative duties regarding the CLD Regulations, including the production of a three-year CLD plan, are met. As is to be expected, HM Inspectors found that the quality of plans in the second phase (2018-21) was better than many in the first phase (2015-18). In particular, we are starting to see local authorities make their plans more specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMARTer). In most local authorities governance arrangements for CLD are clear. In local authorities that manage risk effectively, planning for change is robust. However, a minority of local authorities need to be more proactive in their approaches to managing risk in order to address issues earlier.

¹ The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 which is subordinate legislation under section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.
A requirement of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, is that a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) is produced to outline how community planning partners will work with communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. This should take into account the needs of communities. Staff in CLD partnerships increasingly use local demographic and socio-economic data well to identify need and set priorities in line with their LOIP. CLD, as a service and as an approach, is featuring more consistently in LOIPs and is recognised as contributing to key council priorities. In a few local authorities approaches to addressing inequality is well-embedded and being led by CLD practitioners. This focused approach to improving outcomes for individuals and families in targeted communities, and the quality of provision, is helping to improve life chances.

The number of local authority CLD staff is declining and this can limit the capacity of CLD services to meet local needs and priorities. For example, there has been a noticeable reduction in community-based adult learning.

In a minority of local authorities, leadership and direction for CLD requires improvement. On occasion there is a disconnect between leadership at a strategic level and how this is reflected in local communities. For example, there can be clear objectives or strategy agreed by central teams and partners but these are not evident in operational thinking or practice in the local community. Whilst self-evaluation for CLD is improving within local authority CLD services and some key partner organisations, joint self-evaluation within and across CLD partnerships as a whole requires to be further developed.
Impact on staff and volunteers

The impact of professional learning across CLD nationally is strong. Almost all staff working in a CLD role are well supported to improve their practice through a wide range of career-long professional learning opportunities. The majority of local authorities and their partners provide effective line management of staff and support to volunteers. As a result, staff and volunteers benefit from opportunities to build capacity for leadership and develop their roles. In most local authorities training and development for CLD staff and volunteers is well coordinated and effective. In the strongest examples, planning for continuous improvement is underpinned by joint planning and workforce development across the partnership. In a few local authorities, a lack of coordination and the sharing of resources across partners can result in the duplication of training or staff and volunteer development needs not being met. Workforce development programme topics are relevant, current and wide ranging, resulting in increased knowledge and capacity to better meet the needs of individuals and communities.

North Ayrshire Council runs comprehensive development programmes which enable teams to extend the learning offer. Training a number of staff to be Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Internal Verifiers as well as having tutors qualified to deliver SQA courses is increasing the number of accredited courses that they can offer. Similarly their effective partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (DofE) is enhancing their capacity to provide professional learning so that teachers can become award leaders. This is beginning to increase the DofE learning offer.
2. How good is the learning and development in our community?

Key messages

CLD provision is well-targeted towards identified need and priority groups. Community groups and organisations across Scotland are providing high quality services to local communities. There is a wide-range of provision focused on improving lives through reducing social isolation, tackling addictions and supporting mental health and wellbeing. Volunteers and community activists are strongly committed to improving their local communities. The majority of learners participating in CLD provision are well supported to progress to other learning, volunteering or employment.

There is an increased focus on addressing inequalities. The numbers of young people achieving a range of youth awards and achieving recognition through participation in youth work, sports, arts and culture is growing. Community groups are contributing to decision-making, planning services and influencing policy more often as equal partners. There is also a growth in the number of family learning and parenting programmes on offer.

Community-based adult learning needs to be strengthened to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities available for adults to learn, achieve and progress. Local authorities can sometimes find it challenging to benchmark their performance across their CLD services and partnerships and this impacts on their ability to set themselves challenging targets. The totality of young people’s wider achievements and skills development, both in and out of school, should be more fully recognised.

Improvements in performance

Improvements in performance is good or better in the majority of local authorities. CLD provision is well targeted towards identified need and priority groups. Many partnerships make effective use of local knowledge and wider information to inform their planning of CLD provision. As a result, there is an increasing focus on addressing inequality which benefits marginalised groups and individuals. For example, adult learners are improving their skills through a range of groups such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and literacy and numeracy classes. This contributes to meeting the needs of many who are at risk of being marginalised in society through improved literacy, numeracy and language skills. This enables them to better participate in the democratic, social and economic aspects of their communities.
Increasing numbers of schools are using Pupil Equity Funding to employ youth or family learning workers to help improve attainment and achievement. This is helping to remove perceived barriers between home and school and is beginning to increase the engagement of parents in their child’s learning. In the most effective practice, robust tracking and monitoring of participation in CLD provision is helping to demonstrate CLD’s contribution to young people’s learning. As a result, partners are better able to recognise and build on progression in young peoples’ learning.

Whilst most local authorities gather demographic and socio-economic data and look at some trends over time, these are not always analysed or shared sufficiently across partners and communities. A few are not yet using data systematically to inform or drive improvement. While we have seen improvements to CLD plans, in the majority of local authorities there is more work to do to ensure that targets for CLD are sufficiently measurable. This would make it easier for CLD staff and their partners to demonstrate their collective impact.

Local authorities can sometimes find it challenging to benchmark their performance across their CLD services and partnerships. Some local authorities do use quality indicator evaluations from inspection for comparison but they, along with local and national partners, may benefit from a nationally agreed set of key performance indicators (KPIs) for CLD.
In Fife Council, partners increasingly share data and other information to inform planning of CLD provision. This includes the use of research to identify both the needs of current and potential learners and of communities. Research also forms part of identifying and disseminating effective CLD practice. Local information alongside demographic, social, health and economic data informed the ‘Plan For Fife’ and the Fife wide area strategic assessments, which in turn influenced the seven local plans. Many partners share participation statistics alongside other data such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to gain an overall picture and inform planning. For example, statistical information provided by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) influences the targeting of opportunities such as digital programmes. Staff make use of participant and community surveys to ensure they are meeting needs and help to inform targeting of resources. CLD provision is successful in reaching participants with experience of living in poverty, including residents living in areas of high multiple deprivation. The CLD service staff meet or exceed nearly all of their annual targets in relation to participation and achievement. Targets are reviewed quarterly to enable staff to assess and report on progress. In the majority of CLD activity, trend information rates shows steady or increasing rates in participation. This includes, an increasing three-year trend in the number of recognised awards young people gained through CLD service programmes in the Glenrothes area.
Impact on the local community

Impact on the local community of CLD is good or better in almost all local authorities. Overall, the quality of services delivered by community groups, social enterprises, development trusts and land trusts is of a high standard with examples of sector-leading practice. The contribution of local community activists and volunteers is also very strong. In almost all local authorities, partners provide effective capacity building support to communities. This helps communities to develop structures, groups and provision to address local needs. Across the country, community groups are characterised by confident, skilled and active members. Many communities, particularly those facing poverty and disadvantage, are now more active, empowered and engaged as a result of the support they receive from CLD and their partners. In the most effective practice community groups are equal partners with the council and other services contributing to a range of local decision-making and influencing policy. There remains scope for strengthening community and youth participation in some local authorities. This would help to further enhance the contribution of local people in identifying priorities and in planning for improvement.
CLD staff focus appropriately on improving life chances and reducing inequalities of marginalised groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) and minority ethnic groups. Increasingly CLD staff are helping to establish and support minority groups to influence local and national policy. For example, in Alloa South East, the LGBTI group contribute to the work of LGBTI Youth Commission for Scotland.

In Dumfries and Galloway Council, work to address poverty is well developed and ambitious. CLD officers provide very effective support to the highly regarded and influential Tackling Poverty Reference Group. The group is made up of members of local communities with lived experience of poverty. Representatives from this group sit on and chair the multi-agency Community Planning Partnership sub group ‘Tackling Poverty Coordination Group’. Their opinions are valued and they have a direct influence on the development of services to address poverty and in wider service planning which affects those living in poverty across the local authority area. They are increasingly consulted on wider developments. For example, their opinions and expertise was used to ensure the LOIP is written in plain English with easily understood priorities. They have also helped council services to identify both good practice and areas for improvement by acting as ‘mystery shoppers’ at council service points. This supports the council to know how well they are listening and responding to residents approaching them for support.

In most local authorities, community organisations are proactive in helping to improve the local economy. In the strongest examples, community organisations share a strong sense of commitment to ‘place’, which is a key driver towards delivering improvements. Examples include creating employment opportunities, improving local infrastructure and generating funding through renewables projects. In most local authorities, community organisations receive highly effective, appropriate and consistent support from CLD staff to achieve their ambitions. They network very effectively with each other to improve practice. Similarly, groups that support those suffering from addiction or experiencing social isolation have a positive impact on communities and peoples’ lives. For example, volunteering and buddy initiatives help provide support to address older people’s issues, such as social isolation and preventive primary care interventions. The emergence of an increasing number of ‘Men’s Sheds’ across Scotland, community spaces for men to connect, converse and create, is having a very positive impact on mental wellbeing in local communities. All of these different programmes and other activities are contributing to improved health and wellbeing.
In most local authorities the impact of volunteering is strong. Many volunteers, including young people receive recognition and formal accreditation for their volunteering work. They are skilled and enthusiastic about running activities in their local area. Volunteering is celebrated and valued by CLD services and their partners. However, in a few local authorities volunteering requires better coordination by CLD partners to strengthen the offer and ensure that volunteers receive appropriate support. For example, greater clarity on the available volunteering opportunities across the area and improvement to the coordination of training and development for volunteers. This would help to maximise the use of resources through the sharing of best practice and approaches to building volunteering capacity. More effective analysis and planning would help local authorities to better understand and demonstrate the impact of volunteering.

**Delivering the learning offer with learners**

CLD partners across Scotland are appropriately focused on addressing key Scottish Government legislation and policy priorities, including the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Many learning opportunities provided by CLD partners help tackle social isolation and empower individuals. Overall, delivering the learning offer with learners is good or better in most local authorities.

In Motherwell West (North Lanarkshire Council) the learning services delivered by CLD partners are having a very positive impact on learners and are improving lives and communities. CLD staff play an important and valued role in the council’s approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Home School Partnership Officers (HSPOs) provide a key link between schools, families and CLD partners. The learning offer delivered by them is needs-led, flexible, well-planned and is achieving positive change. For example, the Can-Can (Challenge Attainment North Lanarkshire/Care and Nurture) approach in Muir Street Primary School is improving parental engagement. The range of learning opportunities delivered have improved attendance, reduced anxiety, improved mental health and social and emotional awareness in children. HSPOs and CLD staff also support the development of skills such as literacy in children and young people. The ‘This Is Me’ programme run by HSPOs, schools and Scottish Autism helped improve the attendance of autistic young people.

In most local authorities learning programmes for adults are of good quality. Programmes are often tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups. In the most effective practice programmes take account of prior learning and achievements to ensure that the learning offer is appropriate. The majority of learners are well supported to progress to other learning, volunteering or employment. In most local authorities, there is a good range of provision to improve adult skills in literacy and numeracy. Whilst there is an increasing focus on supporting basic skills, it is important that consideration is given to progression pathways into community-based adult learning where there has been a noticeable reduction in provision. By contrast, there is an increasing number of family learning and parenting programmes with some highly-effective practice emerging.
Kings Oak Primary School family hub provides a high quality programme of family learning that is improving outcomes for children and their families. The school employed a full-time, qualified CLD worker to support a Family Hub within the school. Within a year, the Family Hub was offering a range of learning opportunities under three strands: family learning, pupil wider achievement and adult/community learning. At the same time, Inverclyde Academy in Greenock employed a full-time CLD Youth Worker to offer an alternative timetabled programme to pupils, with a focus on wider achievement accredited learning.

This sketchnote provides more information.

CLD activities in the majority of local authorities contribute to helping young people progress to sustained positive destinations on leaving school. Across the country, many young people achieve local and national recognition through participation in sports, arts and culture activities. In and out of school, young people are now achieving a wider range of youth awards including the DofE award, Saltire, John Muir Award and Sports Leaders awards. However, across partners, the tracking of the skills and attributes that young people are developing through these achievements are not yet systematic or sufficiently robust.

Enhanced partnership working and better information sharing between CLD partners, local authorities and schools will help to ensure that the totality of young people’s learning is recognised.
In Highland Council, the community based, voluntary organisation Moo Food works very well with Tarradale Primary School to extend the range of learning experiences children and their families have. The close partnership between the school and Moo Food extends the learning opportunities of children and their families both during the school day and in holiday periods.

This sketchnote provides more information.

In the most effective examples, young people and adult learners in CLD provision are aware of what other opportunities are available to them and are well supported to progress in their learning. However, this is not yet consistent. There are instances where improvement is required in the coordination of provision across CLD partnerships, to avoid duplication of effort amongst partner agencies who may are trying to engage and support the same learners.
Summary of findings

Key strengths

• CLD is contributing strongly to local communities in almost all local authorities.

• CLD partners across Scotland demonstrate major strengths in improving life chances through building community capacity and delivering the learning offer for young people and adults.

• Volunteering is providing important opportunities for people to progress their learning.

• Targeted provision is improving basic skills, reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing for those overcoming social and economic disadvantage.

• The CLD approach is increasingly valued by senior leaders, schools and other education providers. Strong strategic leadership of CLD is driving improvement across the majority of local authorities.

Key aspects for improvement

• The measurement of performance against aims, outcomes and targets and the use of appropriate data to drive improvement and inform progress needs to be improved in around half of local authorities.

• Joint self-evaluation for improvement within and across CLD partnerships should be strengthened.

• Community-based adult learning needs to be strengthened to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities available for adults across Scotland to learn, achieve and progress.

• In a few local authorities, aspects of the leadership and governance of CLD, and planning for change, requires significant improvement.

• In a few local authorities, the tracking and monitoring of young people’s achievement is not sufficiently systematic and CLD progression routes for learners are not always sufficiently planned or clear.
Appendix 1: The six-point scale and a summary of quality indicator evaluations

- **excellent**: outstanding or sector leading
- **very good**: major strengths
- **good**: important strengths with areas for improvement
- **satisfactory**: strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- **weak**: important weaknesses
- **unsatisfactory**: major weaknesses

Summary of quality indicator evaluations

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Improving life chances and empowering communities
### Appendix 2: Evaluations for each local authority

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Appendix 3: Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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<th>All</th>
<th>Almost all</th>
<th>Most</th>
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<td>Majority</td>
<td>Minority/less than half</td>
<td>A few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%-74%</td>
<td>15%-49%</td>
<td>&lt; 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Improving life chances and empowering communities
Appendix 4: Glossary of frequently used terms

CLD provision

This term covers all areas of CLD work delivered by CLD staff, CLD volunteers and their partners. It covers community learning provision including; family learning, youth work, community-based adult learning, literacies learning and wider adult learning linked to key areas such as employability. It also covers community development areas of provision which support individuals, groups and communities. Community development enables community members to participate in decision making, take on responsibility for developing and delivering services to meet their community’s needs and to be equal partners with services in addressing priority issues. It includes aspects of community engagement, participation and empowerment.

Learners

In the context of this report this term covers any recipient of the community learning provision. Learners can be children, young people or adults. It can include families, volunteers, community activists and community members who take part in CLD activities which support their learning as well those who are registered on classes and courses.

Partners and partnerships

In the context of this report this includes both those organisations and groups delivering learning and development in the community and other services and organisations who contribute to partnerships which cover CLD provision. This may include but is not limited to: CLD services; schools; culture and sport; NHS; colleges; emergency services; third sector organisations; community groups and organisations; libraries; and employers.

CLD staff

This term is used to cover all those who contribute to a CLD area of work. It covers all those who are paid to provide CLD support to learners and communities. It can include those whose main work remit is as a CLD worker and those who use CLD methodologies in their jobs. Alongside the term workforce the term staff is often used to include volunteers, however in this document the term staff is used to refer only to those paid for their CLD work. Where we are referring to volunteers as well as paid staff the term ‘staff and volunteers’ is used.

Volunteers

This term is used to cover all those who contribute to CLD areas of work but are not paid to do so. This includes all those who are normally called volunteers but can also include others such as board members, trustees, management committee members, those on advisory groups, unpaid interns, those on work placements, those undertaking community service, volunteer fundraisers, helpers and those on secondment from other organisations.
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