

Community Learning and Development Progress Visit Report

Perth and Kinross Council

11 June 2024

1. Context

HM Inspectors visited Perth and Kinross Council to undertake a community learning and development (CLD) progress visit during April and May 2024. During the visit, we talked to learners and community representatives, CLD leaders, managers, staff, and volunteers, and other key stakeholders. HM Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of local authority CLD partnerships' approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and considered progress made against identified priorities in their CLD plans.

2. Findings from the progress visit

How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?

Areas of positive progress

The current CLD Plan reflects well the council's key priorities aimed at improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged learners and communities. This is helping to demonstrate progress towards the requirements of the CLD regulations. Progress of the outcomes in the CLD Plan are reported regularly to the Learning and Families Committee. Recent changes at Perth and Kinross Council means that all CLD services are now managed within the directorate of Economy, Place and Learning. Although at an early stage, this should help to further strengthen the governance and leadership of CLD moving forward. Perth and Kinross Council have seven corporate priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan. Key achievements are identified by officers and actions agreed. This is enabling elected members and senior leaders across the council to understand where CLD is contributing to the council's ambitions. The CLD approach is valued by the Chief Executive of the council and senior leaders. A few stakeholders understand where their work aligns with CLD priorities and plans.

Most CLD partners use self-evaluation for improvement as part of their practice. CLD leaders ensure that a good range of policies and systems, such as safeguarding, are in place to support staff. CLD staff are well connected to the Tayside and Fife CLD Alliance, engaging regularly in the learning and development opportunities offered. This includes sessions to keep up to date with CLD related policy and associated guidance. CLD staff are supported well to take responsibility for developing their work and leading change. The Parenting and Family Learning team use a range of methods to deliver a high quality of provision including coaching, peer assisted support and supervision. This helps ensure staff learn from each other's approaches. Similarly, through the Universal Youth Work Partnership, there is a clear vision and commitment to providing high quality services for young people. In partnership with Edinburgh College and the Gannochy Trust, CLD staff support youth workers effectively to progress towards a personal development award in youth work. In addition, a few staff are achieving a Scottish Vocational Qualification in community development. Both qualifications are increasing staff knowledge and skills.

Areas for development

Outcomes and targets in the current CLD Plan are not measurable. Improving these in the next iteration of the CLD Plan for 2024-27 will assist CLD partners to assess progress against their key priorities more effectively. Whilst a few stakeholders are clear about where their work contributes to the CLD Plan, this is not consistent across council services or partners. Engagement with a wide range of partners as the new CLD Plan develops, may help to better

embed partner involvement. Community members and young people are not yet active participants in CLD planning. Workforce development opportunities are not yet fully extended to CLD partners. The CLD partnership would benefit from establishing a workforce development plan, which should include how opportunities will be extended to partner organisations.

How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?

Areas of positive progress

CLD services gather and analyse data systematically. Community profiles gathered by CLD and endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership help inform the targeting of resources to those facing significant challenges. In a few communities, local CLD staff are now using this data well/effectively to develop new provision and target those facing barriers to learning. The council is focusing appropriately on collecting and using data to address child poverty and disadvantage. Family learning and early years programmes are starting to make a difference to attainment levels, attendance and engagement in schools and nurseries. The Corporate Annual Performance Report for 2022-23 outlines the progress of CLD activity. The number of adult learners achieving outcomes is improving with 2022-23 figures showing a return to pre-pandemic levels. Support to community groups is increasing, as are the number of groups supported to improve their capacity. The council's investment in addressing food insecurity is leading to positive outcomes through the Good Food and Warm Welcome Funds. Increasing numbers of groups are being supported, leading to improved local services. Since 2019, the Universal Youth Work Partnership developed a collaborative approach to gathering participation and accreditation data. Participation figures show an upward trend since 2020-21, doubling the number of young people participating in 2022-23. Feedback from learners is gathered routinely by most CLD partners. For example, youth work staff gather the views of young people regularly and use the intelligence collated to develop new programmes. A few CLD programmes are making good use of case studies to illustrate practice.

Almost all CLD programmes are tackling barriers to participation. As a result, people living in poverty are supported well to improve their life chances. Programmes and classes are free of charge and many provide free access to food, childcare, school uniforms and transport. This is helping to increase the number of learners accessing provision. The partnership between Perth and Kinross Council and Saints Community Trust is tackling successfully mental health and wellbeing. The Social Prescribing approach is leading to very positive outcomes for individuals. Referrals from a range of agencies including GP surgeries, schools, and third sector organisations ensures that an individual package of support is in place. Since November 2021, 369 individuals have benefited from this initiative. The English as an additional language team is reducing barriers to participation for New Scot families and those for whom English is not their first language. They are building supportive relationships with parents and providing a range of practical support. The Good Food and Warm Welcome Funds are starting to address poverty and disadvantage. Thirty one projects were supported by the funds with £300,000 being distributed to community groups and organisations. The intergenerational Peep (Peers Early Education Partnership) learning together programme delivered within sheltered housing is leading to very positive benefits for participants. Older adults are increasingly motivated to attend and get involved in all Peep activities. Through social interaction, older people are learning about play and how to interact with children and their parents.

Almost all participants in CLD programmes are gaining skills and knowledge that meet their needs. Learners seeking to improve their lives are gaining skills, knowledge and confidence. Many adult learners are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. A range of

well-developed pathways ensure that almost all learners achieve their goals. The council's partnership between the housing department and LEAD Scotland's Digital Inclusion project is reaching a few older adult learners to deliver one to one digital tuition in their own homes. As a result, learners are more confident in using digital technology. Similarly, English for speakers of other language learners are progressing well in their learning. Most are improving their English whilst gaining new skills. Churches Action For The Homeless adult learning programmes are having positive impacts on learners. A 12-month personal development programme is resulting in all learners increasing their literacy, digital and employability skills. Unaccompanied minors being supported by CLD staff are improving their English and gaining important life skills for the future. Almost all are gaining accreditation, for example through the Duke of Edinburgh's or Dynamic Youth awards. The Construction Skills Academy is providing a bespoke curriculum offer for young people with complex barriers to learning. Sixty eight percent of participants are moving on to positive destinations since the programme began in 2018.

Areas for development

The majority of the data gathered and analysed by the council does not yet include CLD partners. There is scope to progress this with CLD partners as part of the consultation for the new CLD Plan due in September 2024. The digital inclusion project does not yet have systematic processes in place to support progression. A few older adults would benefit from learning in a group setting to meet their needs and interests.

3. Practice worth sharing more widely

The intergenerational Peep learning together programme delivered within sheltered housing is leading to positive benefits for all participants. Older adults are increasingly motivated to attend and get involved in all Peep activities. They are benefiting from the social interaction with children and their parents. Older adults recognise the positive development of the children, including increases in their confidence levels. They look forward to the weekly social interaction and are using what they have learned with their own grandchildren. Parents are learning new ways to interact with their children and are less anxious being amongst older adults. All parents recognise their children's increase in confidence, their use of fine motor skills and their positive engagement in rhyme time.

4. What happens next?

The local authority and their CLD partners are making sufficient progress with their CLD plan and have the capacity to continue to improve. As a result, HM Inspectors will take no further action in relation to this progress visit. During the inspection, we identified an aspect of highly effective practice which we would like to explore further.

Sheila Brown
HM Inspector
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