

Community learning and development in Perth and Kinross Council

17 December 2018

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1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within Perth and Kinross Council and the area of Perth City and South Perth area were inspected by Education Scotland during August and September 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 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?

At a strategic and political level there is increased recognition of the role CLD has to play in taking forward both local and national priorities. Elected members recognise and increasingly value the facilitation role CLD partners play in improving outcomes for individuals and communities. The Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) 2017-2027 is providing clear strategic direction. It is informing decisions at a corporate and service level and shaping CLD resource allocation. CLD work is now more targeted and based on thematic outcomes as outlined in the Community Plan. As a result, better use is being made of shared resources. Although at an early stage, the establishment of a CLD and Stronger Communities Leadership Group that oversees CLD has potential to reduce duplication and ensure more joined up working across partners. This group reports regularly on progress to the council's Corporate Management Group. However, the development of a new three year CLD plan in line with legislative requirements is at a very early stage. As a matter of urgency the authority now need to progress its development. A dedicated CLD partnership may also be beneficial in helping improve governance of a new CLD plan.

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has a strong commitment to improving relationships with communities. This is demonstrated through increased resources, responsibility, accountability and decision making through the establishment of five Local Action Partnerships (LAPs). The Perth City LAP is chaired by a community representative and reports on progress to the CPP Board. All LAPs have set local priorities and a few are undertaking further research to inform the development of their locality plans. However, there is scope to broaden membership of the LAPs to better represent local communities. There is a strong emphasis on partners taking a lead role and an increasing focus on community engagement. Participatory budgeting, whilst only a small part of LAPs responsibilities, is an effective vehicle for encouraging closer partnership working. Eighty-nine thousand pounds has been disbursed to local communities to address key areas of local concern through participatory budgeting processes.

During a period of change middle managers are leading implementation well and a devolved leadership culture is enabling local CLD practitioners to lead. Going forward staff would benefit from more formal forums to help plan, share, shape learning and seek support. Self-evaluation is strong in individual programmes and in a few joint areas of work. Learning and achievement visits are beginning to help support self-evaluation. However, self-evaluation is not yet systematic or structured and not all partners are using recognised evaluative frameworks. As a result, improved approaches to joint self-evaluation across partners is required.

Access to training by CLD services and by wider partners is strong. CLD approaches are being adopted by non CLD staff such as housing. This includes housing staff and activists benefitting from access to a wide range of accredited and non-accredited training up to postgraduate level. They are applying their learning in communities resulting in very strong impacts. Professional learning is being applied to practice, which is increasing awareness, improving understanding of issues and potential solutions. For example, community activists including members of the Service User Review and Evaluation (SURE) team were well supported to undertake Activate training. Progression includes activists engaging in Higher National Certificate in Working with Communities. As a result, individuals are increasing in confidence, awareness of CLD approaches and how these might relate to their own role within their community. CLD staff benefit from being part of the Tayside and Fife Professional Learning Alliance. Ideas and work practice are regularly being exchanged. This includes enhancing the knowledge and skills of the Parenting and Family Learning team through shared training and support with partners. As a result, there is a strong shared understanding and language being consistently applied by providers.

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

A few partners are performing well against aims, outcomes and targets. The Education and Children's Service annual performance report 2017-18 outlines CLD performance at an authority wide level. CLD targets have been revised to help improve impact. The Community Link Worker draft Annual Report 2018 shares progress with stakeholders. However, team plans and individual work plans lack quantifiable, measureable and challenging targets. There is scope to move to a more outcome based planning and evaluation format to inform reporting of progress against actions and outputs. Stories of Places are informing staff of up to date information about communities. Although at an early stage the Perth City LAP is making improved use of data to identify and tackle inequalities such as the increasing numbers of health related issues and hospital admissions. Partners are increasingly using data to inform how services will be resourced and delivered. Services for Children, Young People and Families use data well to inform service delivery. Good use is made of Activity Agreements to assist those young people most in need to progress to sustainable positive destinations. Access to 16+ data is helping CLD staff to target and tailor responses to assist young people in progressing to positive destinations. Trends are identified and responded to. However, the use of awards to recognise achievement is low and there is scope to review and increase opportunities for accreditation across all learning opportunities. The Parenting and Family Learning team are effectively using data to target their resources at schools and parents. There is scope to build on joint planning for continuous improvement as it is not yet systematic across partners.

Confident, knowledgeable and skilled community members make a significant contribution to a culturally diverse community. They are leading the work of the Perth City LAP with an action plan that links well to wider CLD priorities. Local decision making is improving services and facilities in the Perth City area. However, there is potential to strengthen wider understanding amongst partners and community groups of the added value of the Perth City LAP. The South Perth Community Partnership is a highly skilled and proactive community group. They have a strong sense of place and strive to make a positive contribution to a socially diverse community. They are well established, represented and supported by CLD staff to work towards five clear key priorities that reflect community need. A successful campaign resulted in traffic calming measures being installed. Their partnership newsletter which shares up to date information is delivered to over 3,000 households by volunteers. A strong partnership between Live Active Leisure and the NHS Tayside resulted in the development of an All Ability Cycling project. Supported by volunteers, this

project is enabling cycling to be accessible to all. For a few, access to cycling has been life changing. The Health and Wellbeing Network is proactive in identifying and responding to community need such as the provision of podiatry services.

A joint approach between housing, CLD and the Health and Social Care Partnership has resulted in well informed priorities. Participant voices are influencing change and shaping their communities. Members of the SURE team are confident, skilled and active within their local community. Good access to high quality training is enhancing skills which are being effectively applied and bringing about local improvements and building community capacity. The 'making where we live better' project is improving the lives of tenants with learning disabilities across the authority. @Scott Street is a very effective one stop hub where a wide range of agencies and services for young people is housed under the one roof. As a result, targeted work with young people is taking place in safe and engaging space. Overall, there remains potential for improved joint planning and communication across all strategic partners. This will further assist in mitigating the risk of duplication of effort and targeting of resources.

High quality learning programmes are supported well by a skilled workforce. All programmes are well planned and tailored to identified need with learners actively engaged in all stages of the planning process. A joint service level agreement between partners supports a multi-partner approach to addressing literacy issues. This could be further improved through establishing clearer learner referral systems. Learners have strong relationships with staff and are confident in negotiating their learning and influencing pace. They are appropriately challenged and supported by the staff to reach their goals. As a result, learners are gaining in confidence and skills. Young sports ambassadors and volunteer leaders benefit from a range of leadership opportunities across Perth High School. Programmes for care experienced young people are increasingly tailored to the needs of individuals. This includes the corporate parenting initiative 'Fun Young Individuals' which is increasing young people's engagement in wider activities.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners are influencing the programme content and are improving their English and their confidence. A strong partnership between CLD and Fife College is enabling prisoner access to ESOL and family learning within HM Prison Perth. This is improving the life chances of learners within the prison and as a consequence they are engaging in other learning activities. In almost all provision, progression routes support learners to move on to other learning. Services such as NHS Tayside, local authority and third sector partners which work with parents and families are networking well with each other and referring across provision. As a result, parents and families benefit from provision that best meets their needs. Childcare provision is enhancing the learning offer. Parents accessing Incredible Years provision are developing new skills, knowledge and confidence that are transferable to home life. Across partners targets are set and recorded in individual learning plans which are reviewed regularly. Good use of evaluation is helping participants reflect on their experience and identify next steps. Success is recognised in a variety of ways, including supporting reflection by learners, appropriate use of accreditation and events to celebrate learners' attainment and achievements. There is potential to further improve access to a more structured referral pathways across partners and local authority learning opportunities.

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

This inspection of CLD in Perth and Kinross Council found the following key strengths.

- Highly skilled workforce delivering high quality learning programmes.
- Well planned learning opportunities tailored to identified needs.
- Confident, skilled, active and influential community organisations.

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

- Produce a CLD three year plan, in line with legislative requirements.
- Improve the overall leadership and governance of CLD.

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.

Ann Kivlin
HM Inspector
17 December 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.

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| Improvements in performance | good |
| Impact on the local community | very good |
| Delivering the learning offer with learners | very good |
| Leadership and direction | satisfactory |

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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