

# Report

Report to:	<b>Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>12 February 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Project Manager, Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group</b>

Subject:	<b>Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project – Progress and Activity of the e-Learning Group</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide the Joint Committee with a summary and overview of the key activities and outcomes achieved by the e-Learning Group over the past year

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Joint Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that it be noted that the e-Learning Group continues to function as an effective and productive network with high levels of participation and commitment;
- (2) that it be noted that Group members from six different councils have delivered a programme of skills development and best practice sharing. These have contributed to capacity building in the field of e-Learning development for the Group;
- (3) that it be noted that the e-Learning Group has identified making improvements to the delivery of Mandatory Training and reducing the impact of Digital Exclusion as priority topics for development; and
- (4) that it be noted that good progress has been achieved in addressing both of these complex issues and that this work will continue.

## 3. Background

3.1. The Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group (CVLDG) e-Learning Group is one of the longest established and most productive networks within the Clyde Valley Group. It meets regularly on a six-weekly cycle via MS Teams.

3.2. Since the pandemic and lockdown the meetings have been hosted exclusively online and are now regularly attended by between 15 and 18 members. It is a good example of adapting to the requirements of lockdown and creating a sustainable and productive working environment.

3.3. The purpose of the Group is to:-

- provide a forum for shared learning and skills development
- share content development techniques and courses
- minimise and resolve common problems relating to online learning
- explore and develop best practice
- provide guidance and plans to improve e-learning delivery for all

#### **4. The Agenda for 2023-2024**

4.1. At the start of 2023, a survey was conducted amongst all the members of the Group seeking opinions, views and suggestions for the development agenda. The survey results provided many suggestions which were consistent with the Group's overall objectives and as a result the following was agreed:-

- presentations from Group members focused on developing skills through demonstrating techniques, showcasing products and exploring new concepts
- investigating opportunities for a common approach to delivering mandatory training online
- seeking solutions to the widespread problem of engaging with hard-to-reach groups of employees and the digitally excluded

4.2. The presentations from the members of the Group have been very well received and have come from a broad range of council representatives. The subjects covered to date were:-

- Adobe Character Animator (creating animations) - Renfrewshire Council
- VLOOKUP (improving Excel e-learning report summaries) - Perth and Kinross Council
- Adapt and Page Tiger (content authoring and graphics) - North Lanarkshire Council
- Vyond (animated video content) - South Lanarkshire Council
- Tips and techniques to manage e-learning support calls - Scottish Borders Council
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (smart content development) - Renfrewshire Council

4.3. The presentations were all well received and have led to further use of the products and improved ways of working. Some of these topics, such as the application of AI to e-learning which is moving very quickly, are still in their infancy. As a result, this topic will be revisited for further exploration during 2024.

4.4. To address the other topics identified, two short life sub-groups were established led by volunteers from the main group. Clackmannanshire Council took the lead on the Mandatory Training, and Renfrewshire Council for the investigation into Digital Exclusion. Other members of the e-Learning Group self-nominated to join one or other of the sub-groups.

4.5. Common access and storage areas were established using Scottish Borders Council's (SBC) MS Teams channels. This allows members of the groups to access documents, spreadsheets, presentations and meeting notes, as well as hosting meetings and sharing communications.

4.5. Whilst still a work in progress the following outputs have been achieved:-

##### **4.5.1. Mandatory Training**

- Survey conducted to establish how each council manages this task
- Collated results to look for commonality (topics common to each council)
- Identified subject areas for content analysis (with a view to sharing courses and updates)
- Production of a Guidance Framework for use by councils to address standards, approvals, governance, accountability and monitoring

#### 4.5.2. Hard to Reach Groups and Digital Exclusion

- Benchmarking exercise completed to establish the nature and complexity of this issue
- Compile information on approaches that have been tried or currently in place to address the problem
- Identify the barriers of access and collate these under themes
- Allocate tasks to investigate means of overcoming these barriers either through sharing existing practice or developing innovative ideas
- Conduct online and desktop research on how other councils, private sector, government and third sector have addressed the topic and identify successes and best practice
- Gather information on UK legislation and accessibility standards, and share these on the SBC Teams channel
- Developing new materials for multiple channel approach to induction, aimed at audiences with low levels of digital skills
- Compile a library of case studies and digital inclusion reports from within and outside the CVLDG where positive examples can guide the sub-groups' recommendations
- Produce a generic paper for internal use by the e-Learning Group members to seek senior management support and commitment to addressing the problem and introduce some of the approaches that have been successful elsewhere
- Focus on the business case for making progress with this issue

4.6. The analysis carried out by both sub-groups has confirmed that both are complex issues with multiple factors to be considered. Neither therefore has a trivial solution nor a "silver bullet" to resolve them, rather a series of tactics and strategies to make an impact.

4.7. The work will continue over the next few months culminating in both sub-groups presenting their conclusions and outputs with the wider e-Learning Group. Thereafter the output reports and guidance will be shared with colleagues and managers in each council to seek endorsement for the recommendations.

### 5. Conclusions

- 5.1. The e-Learning Group has successfully changed its modus operandi as a result of Covid lockdown restrictions. However, this has proved to be a blessing in disguise as the shift to online meetings has created a legacy of high attendances and enthusiastic participation in the Group from Member Councils all over the country.
- 5.2. Feedback from the e-Learning Group members survey provides evidence of how much each council values the networking and support that the Group provides. This is exemplified by the consistently strong attendance and high degree of interaction and participation at meetings. It is further demonstrated by the willingness of members of the Group to take ownership of tasks and contribute to achieving results.
- 5.3. The skills development activities provide opportunities to share the skills and knowledge that members of the Group possess. It is encouraging that as many as six different council representatives have made presentations so far and that these sessions will continue over the next tranche of meetings.
- 5.4. Further priorities will be identified for the e-Learning Group to progress after the current activities are concluded. Already it is planned to start the process of scoping the procurement of the next Learning Management System to be ready for the conclusion of the current contract (31 July 2025).

## **6 Employee Implications**

- 6.1. The work of the e-Learning Group is dependent on the continued active participation of its members. It is recognised that this often involves additional commitments of time alongside day-to-day tasks. Achieving meaningful outcomes is therefore a function of each member council's commitment to the Project.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. None

## **8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 8.1. Hosting meetings online has had a significant impact in reducing travelling for the member councils to attend meetings, especially for the many Participating Members from outside the Clyde Valley area.
- 8.2. Successfully addressing the issues of digital exclusion and delivering mandatory training to all staff groups through the use of technology has the potential to reduce travelling, use of training rooms and the costs of delivering training for all member councils.

## **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1. No specific risks have been identified beyond maintaining the commitment and application of members of the Group.
- 9.2. The sustainability of the programme is contingent on the continuation of the CVLDG and the ongoing commitment of its members.

## **10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 10.2. Consultation with all members of the e-Learning group has been fundamental to identifying the critical issues to be addressed and sustaining commitment to the Project's objectives and ideals.

**Gerry Farrell**

**Project Manager, Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group**

23 January 2024

## **Previous References**

None

## **List of Background Papers**

None

## **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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