

## Response ID ANON-FN13-SJVA-C

Submitted to Independent Review of Community Learning and Development: Call for Evidence - Practitioners  
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### Questions

**Awareness and visibility** How visible is CLD, and the positive outcomes it can deliver? (please consider learners/potential learners, decision-makers, and other relevant service providers)

Please give us your views:

Visibility of CLD is very good however there is a lack of understanding of the profession. CLD is a professional undertaking with qualification levels up to post-graduate for practitioners. CLD provision and the positive outcomes that it can deliver is visible through Committee reporting cycles, public facing reports and understood by decision makers, however the visibility and status of CLD in Scotland is different across local authority areas. CLD is delivered through differing structures from authority to authority even though driven by statutory duty under the Regulations for CLD (2013). As a result, comparing authorities' capacities in achieving positive outcomes delivered under CLD is a difficult task.

As defined through the CLD Standards Council Scotland's Values for CLD, through voluntary engagement of learners, CLD supports learners direct their growth through programmes, activities and awards that are age, stage and pace of learning appropriate. As the beneficiary in the process, the learner is central to developing the offer through their identification of need and engagement with CLD staff to guide provision.

CLD is highly visible to learners who are engaging with CLD provision and are recognising their learning journey because of their participation. In all engagement with learners, the goal is to assist them to fully reach the stage of decision maker/budget holder but recognising also that this is part of the learning process. Learners are increasingly engaging with decision making processes such as participatory budgeting, understanding the impact they can make through their learning, and the learning of others through increased opportunities within their community as a result of funding decisions. There are concerns in the CLD sector over organisations who claim to be youth work providers but are in fact only working with young people without the CLD professional principles and values driving their work. As a result of this, such organisations are accessing funding that should be directing the professional delivery of youth work.

The impact of CLD and the positive outcomes it achieves visibly resonates with partners and organisations seeking to work with harder to reach communities, groups and individuals but struggling to engage with them. CLD provision is often the vehicle to work with these groups and is requested to do so through partnership work.

Since the wider development of accredited learning within CLD to include youth work, there has been greater interest around the work of CLD in supporting a learner's journey, especially for those who find school-based curriculums an ill fit with the challenges they face at that key time of their lives. Younger learners recognise the opportunities that CLD offers them to progress and direct their passage towards adulthood and life beyond school.

**Awareness and visibility** If you work in CLD or are a local decision-maker, please tell us how you go about making people aware of CLD learning opportunities?

Please give us your views:

Through a partnership approach within CLD, we seek to plan and provide information on opportunities for learners to engage in activity in their communities. A wide range of partners within the Council and external to the Council engage in dialogue to ensure that the offer to learners is joined up and understood. Within the Council, CLD is represented at many strategic and planning meetings helping ensure that opportunities and referral routes are understood. Examples of themed partnerships include Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Implementation, Early and Effective Intervention, Whole Family Wellbeing Approach, Safeguarding and much more.

Through digital media, information is presented routinely and shared amongst partners to provide up-to-date information on opportunities, and this process allows for fast sharing of information. Posters and newspaper articles are used, particularly when a completely new authority wide offer/resource is being introduced. The traditional process of placing posters in prominent areas is still utilised and in addition to this, word of mouth presents an effective way of engaging learners who may be interested in taking up opportunities available. Events and open days to meet with members of the public and partners to promote activity and opportunities are effective in providing all the relevant information to new and potential learners.

Referrals from other agencies have improved through their understanding of the offer and the professional standing and agency of the CLD staff. This has helped to reduce learners being sent to the wrong activity at the wrong time and a mismatch with their needs. Internal events such as a Service Conference bringing existing and new partners together, has served to explore and improve understanding of the CLD offer, from which effective referrals are made. A lot of work has been done over the years to clarify youth work being a different process to working with young people, and through this work, the national development of the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work.

Accessibility of suitable buildings can present a challenge to convincing learners to engage either through location and transport links, or by negative emotions from previous experiences with the building, or a centre being seen as only for young people and not a place for adults to go and learn. For some learners it is their first return to any kind of learning in many years and the thought of the formal process from school can be a barrier. The opportunities created and developed for learners are designed to introduce the learning in a non-threatening way to gain acceptance from learners, towards developing the opportunity to potentially more formalised activity that can lead to qualifications to assist them make real changes in their lives.

**Awareness and visibility** Do you think there are clear career progression pathways in CLD for practitioners or volunteers?

Please give us your views:

There are many different ways that people enter the CLD profession. Often practitioners will start as volunteers in youth or adult learning or as community activists. These volunteers receive training and may be happy to remain as volunteers or might wish to progress into the CLD workforce, starting as sessional or part time staff and progressing into full time employment. Qualifications are often undertaken by staff such as these through SVQs and Modern Apprenticeships (SCQF 5, 6, and 7) in areas such as youth work or Community Development, PDAs in youth work or community development etc. The advantage of these qualifications is that staff can undertake them in the workplace as they are vocational. Some colleges offer HNC Working in Communities, while Universities offer the following to enable staff to qualify as professionals:

Dundee University

- Post Graduate Diploma in Community Education
- BA (Hons) in Community Education
- BA (Hons) Community Education work based route

Edinburgh University

- BA (Ord) Learning in Communities

University of West of Scotland

- BA (Hons) Community Education

Glasgow University

- - BA (Ord) Community Development

Dundee University

- Post graduate Community Education

Some of the CLD workforce undertake a degree qualification prior to entering the profession and work in a placement capacity within the profession in order to qualify.

The CLD Standards Council has worked on mapping the pathways for individuals entering the CLD profession both as volunteers/ sessional part time staff and also through the University system.

Although the ways that people initially come into the profession may vary there is a clear pathway to progress in terms of qualification and the advancement of career opportunities.

However, continued financial pressures on local authorities and the current strength of the CLD Regulations, places CLD funding in a precarious position within local authority budgets. Reduction in spending across local authorities is resulting in volunteers and learners through the 'grow your own' process, central to the values and principles of CLD, going to other authority areas or simply not being able to enter the CLD profession.

In short, there may be clear progression routes within CLD but the opportunities to enter CLD are decreasing.

**Accessibility and availability** If someone wants to do CLD learning, how likely are they to find the learning they need or want?

Please give us your views:

Community learning and development activities in South Lanarkshire can be accessed via a universal and targeted offer. Services are accessible to all in our communities but aim to specifically provide services that support learners who are at risk of achieving the poorest outcomes. Each geographic area of the authority has its own learning and support offer, this depends on available resources, geographical location, programme funding, community interest and response to immediate need within our communities. Whilst the majority of programmes are planned in advance with service users/learners, the service is responsive and flexible when dealing with pertinent issues that need to be addressed. Each geographic team is accessible to the community they serve, offering a range of activities and programs tailored to different age groups, interests and needs.

In local authorities, partnership work is driven at a strategic level through membership of CLD Partnerships. These partnerships will often include services such as NHS, Colleges and Universities, Social Work, Third Sector partners, Police, employability services, Department of Work and Pensions, leisure services, schools etc.

This Partnership is replicated in localities and at a local level - Locality Action Planning Groups (LAPGs) - with the partnership groups being made up of practitioners and local managers across a full range of services and 3rd sector partnerships. This ensures that the local needs are being identified and met. The partners work together to ensure appropriate referrals are in place and to develop local joint working initiatives to meet the needs of the community and learners. The LAPG and CLD partnership groups contribute to the development of the Community Learning and Development plan. The LAPGs translate this at a local level, reporting progression and actions to the CLD Partnership Group who in turn report to the Community Planning Partnership.

CLD staff engage 'at the coal face' in communities with those that we are targeting for specific programmes. This can include but is not limited to efforts such as visits into community spaces to talk directly with learners, speaking to parents at school gates, and detached street work targeting young people. CLD staff widely publicise offers on social media as each centre has a Facebook page. These are shared on a wide scale, and posters and flyers are created to advertise opportunities.

There is a presence on the South Lanarkshire website which has contact information for CLD opportunities. Various programmes are also targeted and are accessed on a referral basis and are publicised to the relevant partners. Targeted (closed group) provision reflects specific needs and can be influenced by available funding criteria and/or restrictions.

**Accessibility and availability** Do you have any concerns or hopes about the CLD learning offer in the future?

Please give us your views:

Securing adequate funding to staff, sustain and expand the CLD offer is currently an immediate concern. There is hope that following this review, conclusions will include a marked increase in investment for the sector to enable CLD provision to reach more individuals within communities and schools, to meet increasing demands on the sector. CLD staff engage well and have established trusted relationships with those users that other services can have difficulty engaging. There is a clear opportunity for CLD staff to begin work on supporting the early interventions and pathways to these services as appropriate. Any reductions in CLD provision will likely lead to an increase in statutory interventions. While the scope of this review is focused on the learning element of CLD, the purpose of CLD is further reaching. In addition to offering formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities, CLD also offers people pro-social spaces where they can exist free of charge with their peers and the wider community. The benefits of CLD are greater than the sum of its parts.

Attempts to meet people where they are and build pathways to enable them to grow, develop, build resilience and working with partners can create opportunities for social mobility. People are often referred to as 'hard to reach'; CLD are committed to making services 'easy to access'. The CLD sector creates a service with people, and not for them, built upon co-design and positive relationships.

A concern is that funding streams will dictate the CLD offer, and result in seeking funding from unconventional sources in order to keep a service for communities that we may not usually engage with. There is a risk of becoming entrenched in short-term funding outcomes dictating the offer rather than being responsive to need.

A major concern for the sector, is the shrinking of funds allocated with specific regards to the ability to continue to support those most in need. This will have a detrimental effect and will continue to have an impact on our communities for years after the funding decisions are made. Less funding threatens the vital resources necessary for early intervention programmes, which facilitate a critical response from our staff in addressing concealed issues before they intensify. The CLD offer not only demonstrates that more positive outcomes are apparent with relation to healthier and safer communities, but also shows considerable returns in investment by the use of early intervention work, mitigating the costs associated with managing escalated issues.

A further concern is that we move towards a quantitative data gathering structure in order to show a return for investment. Whilst this can offer beneficial insights into trends and outcomes/outputs, it does not capture the nuanced intricacies and experiences that are absolutely essential for a holistic understanding of community needs, which enables us to create bespoke packages and programmes of support.

CLD relies on the relationships that are developed with communities and service users over time; this must be safeguarded or we will damage relationships by parachuting in, and out of communities. Respecting the autonomy of learners must be prioritised to maintain their motivation, and sense of achievement and ownership. There is a growing concern that imposing mandatory participation would be detrimental to potential outcomes. CLD is built on a solid foundation of learner's voluntary participation.

A hope of the CLD sector is that through strengthened local partnerships and networks will contribute to combined efforts to leverage resources, share best practices, and maximise impact.

**Accessibility and availability** To what extent do you feel that CLD learning is available at a time and location that works for the learner?

Please give us your views:

Efforts are made across CLD services to provide a range of programmes and activities that cater to the diverse needs of our learners across different communities. The CLD offer is delivered during the daytime, evenings and weekends (8am and 10pm), Monday to Sunday to accommodate young people, parents, families and individuals. In addition, venues are situated in accessible locations, within the community. However, due to the diverse and geographic locations within authorities, it is extremely difficult to have an offer in each town/village. Therefore, learning opportunities are sometimes moveable in certain areas and this is due to some of our communities being rural or remote. However, access to transport to service rural communities is crucial to engage in opportunities, as is access to appropriate community venues (let costs are often prohibitive), and outreach work, or services must be centralised.

Effort to make the CLD offer available at times and locations that meet learners' needs is ongoing, and our evaluation and engagement is central to understanding requirements and need. The ability to carry out outreach work is resource dependent, and the reality is that often activity is offered in a centralised location, but every attempt is made to overcome barriers.

**Accessibility and availability** Are you aware of any financial costs for learners in accessing CLD learning?

Please give us your views:

Traditionally, CLD services do not charge learners to access opportunities and ensure that people have fair accessibility to services, providing food and support to those who may find it more difficult to participate. In South Lanarkshire, most activity is free at point of contact, other than sometimes, heavily subsidised access to trips and excursions. Staff are extremely adept at creative ways of overcoming barriers, fundraising, and establishing relationships with local businesses where we access end of day food, that enables us to feed learners.

**Support and learning** Are CLD staff and volunteers trained/qualified to support a learner's journey towards achieving high-quality positive outcomes?

Please give us your views:

A range of volunteer training courses exist throughout CLD services in Scotland. Volunteers may be happy to remain as volunteers or might wish to progress into the CLD workforce, starting as sessional or part time staff and progressing into full time employment.

Qualifications are often undertaken by staff such as these through SVQ's and Modern Apprenticeships (SCQF 5, 6, and 7) in areas such as Youth Work or Community Development, PDAs in Youth Work or Community Development etc. The advantage of these vocational qualifications is that staff can

undertake them in the workplace using their work as evidence.

Staff also come into the profession with a degree (post or undergraduate) qualification in CLD and some undertake these courses whilst in employment as they have a large work placement content.

CLD staff receive training on an ongoing basis in areas such as new policy, new funded initiatives, inclusion, adult and child protection and health and safety. Free access to training is provided by bodies such as employers, CLD Standards Council, Education Scotland, NHS, Youth Scotland, Youth Link Scotland, other 3rd Sector organisations etc. Many of these training opportunities are run on a national basis and are available to all practitioners.

The nature of Community Learning and Development work relies heavily on the inter-personal skills of the practitioner to deal with challenging people and situations. It is often better for a practitioner possessing these skills to qualify once they have experience and are working, than for a practitioner to go through a degree qualification and then enter the profession without the necessary communication, empathetic and inter-personal skills. The CLD Standards Council Professional Development Strategy is the national framework/ guidance for the continuous professional development of CLD staff and volunteers. This requires each member to undertake a minimum of 35 hours dedicated CPD annually and to evidence that this has been undertaken.

**Support and learning** From your experiences, is learning taking place in a safe and welcoming environment?

Please give us your views:

Community Learning and Development takes place in a variety of environments including schools and other educational establishments, dedicated buildings and, most importantly, community centres and spaces in the heart of communities. CLD staff are PVG disclosed and trained in child and adult protection to assist in the safeguarding of vulnerable learners. School settings can pose issues for vulnerable people such as school refusers, parents who are afraid of school and adults who have had a negative experience in the past. For CLD to be a positive experience, it should take place in an environment where learners can engage, are comfortable and feel safe enough to openly express themselves.

**Support and learning** Are learners encouraged to give and receive regular feedback on their learning, and if it is meeting their goals?

Please give us your views:

In line with the reflective practice in CLD, planning and evaluation with learners is carried out to ensure that their needs are being met throughout the sector. Learner experience and outcomes are also subject to scrutiny through the HMIE inspection process.

Planning may be carried out with learners as individuals through Individual Learning Plans and recorded discussion and with groups through consultation and joint planning exercises. Need for CLD interventions is identified through learners, communities and partnership agencies such as Social Work, schools, police and the justice system.

Evaluation is carried out by practitioners on a regular basis- often after each learning session through discussion, and the use of group and individual feedback processes. This feedback is then used to forward plan interventions and programmes for individuals and groups. Practitioners use this information to reflect on what has gone before and to continuously improve delivery and content of learning sessions ensuring this is tailored to the needs of the learners. Recording of regular learner feedback is necessary to meet the key indicators of the 'How Good is Our Community Learning and Development' framework and can take many forms including paper based, ITC, Video, recorded meetings and review sessions on individual and group training plans.

**Support and learning** How 'joined-up' are CLD services to other related services, such as schools, mental health support, benefits/money advice, employability services, etc?

Please give us your views:

Partnership and joint delivery of CLD and other services are the key part of the 'How Good is Our Community Learning and Development' framework and all HMIE inspections look at the wider partnership working rather than one service.

In local authorities, partnership work is driven at a high level through membership of CLD Partnerships. These partnerships will often include services such as NHS, Colleges and Universities, Social Work, 3rd sector partners, police, employability services, Department of Work and Pensions, leisure services, schools etc.

This Partnership is replicated in localities and at a local level - Locality Action Planning Groups (LAPGs)- with the partnership groups being made up of practitioners and local managers across a full range of services and 3rd sector partnerships. This ensures that the local needs are being identified and met. The partners work together to ensure appropriate referrals are in place and to develop local joint working initiatives to meet the needs of the community and learners. The LAPG and CLD partnership groups contribute to the development of the Community Learning and Development plan. The LAPG's translate this at a local level, reporting progression and actions to the CLD Partnership Group who in turn report to the Community Planning Partnership.

**Support and Learning** What role do Colleges and Universities play in CLD?

Please give us your views:

Colleges and Universities deliver courses in CLD for people wishing to enter the CLD profession. These courses are approved by the CLD Standards council. Some colleges offer courses such as HNC Working in Communities, PDA youth work and Modern Apprenticeships for those organisations that do not have the infrastructure to deliver in-house or are not SQA centres.

Universities offer the following to enable staff to qualify as professionals:

- Dundee University- Post Graduate Community Education; BA (Hons) in Community Education; BA (Hons) Community Education work-based route.
- Edinburgh University- BA (Ord) Learning in Communities
- University of West of Scotland- BA (Hons) Community Education
- Glasgow University- BA (Ord) Community Development

CLD providers are duty bound to support student placement activities for these courses.

Some colleges deliver qualifications to learners that are also delivered by CLD services such as English Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), SQA employability etc. and CLD services will often signpost learners to colleges to move on to the next step of learning and receive a higher qualification than CLD services deliver. Colleges may not be the right environment for all learners however and personal barriers to attendance at college may exist e.g. family commitments, transport, mental health issues, disability, work commitments. CLD delivers to learners at a time and way that they can engage and flexibility of CLD delivery is key to their wellbeing and progression.

ESOL provision across Scotland is reliant on appropriate and purposeful relationships being established across CLD and College providers to ensure the learning pathway is clear for learners. Historic and current funding arrangements for ESOL, including Scottish Funding Council guidance, can sometimes make this difficult to navigate.

**Pathways and progression** How are learners made aware of opportunities to take their learning to the next stage e.g. volunteering, more advanced learning, employability support, etc?

Please give us your views:

Learning is planned, delivered, and reviewed through methods such as Individual or Group Learning Plans. Progression pathways are identified through these processes, and learners are encouraged to take ownership of their own learning and identify their next steps and are supported to do so by well-informed professionals.

Most CLD providers will have up to date knowledge of progression pathways that learners may choose to take. A range of partnership networks across CLD (formal and informal) ensure that CLD staff are aware of and can help learners access opportunities; this also avoids issues with duplication. Staff will regularly take learners to job fairs and open days and refer across services.

**Pathways and progression** How are learners supported with their learning to transition to the next stage?

Please give us your views:

A variety of methods are utilised to ensure that learners understand their options for progression. Fundamental to this is the relationship and trust that is developed between CLD Workers and learners (relationship-based practice). At the start of a learning programme there will ordinarily be discussions with learners as individuals and as a group to discuss the learning outcomes / impacts they will seek to achieve during the programme. This will include a discussion about learning pathway options, and fundamental to this is the ability of CLD staff to support learners to understand their own progress and help them set stretch targets for themselves. CLD staff will also recognise that everyone learns at a different pace and will work to ensure that improved learner confidence is fundamental to this process, as this is the gateway to learning. In South Lanarkshire there are agreed CLD Impact Measures and practitioners focus and prioritise progression routes for learners.

Learners are encouraged to progress through a variety of accredited awards and are supported to access further opportunities or employment opportunities. CLD has strong links with youth employability, Skills Development Scotland, and the Department of Work and Pensions.

In terms of volunteering, for most CLD organisations (public and Third Sector) there is a strong culture of 'grow your own' and many CLD employees start off as learners and or volunteers and have progressed to employment or further education, both within and outwith the sector. This is in large part due to the trust they have in CLD staff to support them in this direction, and the strong CPD opportunities that volunteers and staff have access to.

**Pathways and progression** How do we know if CLD learning is delivering positive/good outcomes for the learners?

Please give us your views:

The CLD sector is accountable to demonstrate the impacts and outcomes for learners.

From a third sector perspective there will be agreed, deliverable outcomes from funding providers and will be asked to submit funding reports that include the difference this has made to learners. Ordinarily this will be supplemented by evidence that includes learner testimony and case studies. Third sector organisations are part of CLD Partnerships, and shared data sets are often used and reported on through Community Learning and Development Plans to Community Planning Partnerships.

Similarly, from a local authority perspective CLD services report on data sets through CLD Partnerships (which are coordinated through the local authority) and will report outcomes and progress through their own resource. For example, in South Lanarkshire targets are set and reported on through the Education Resources Plan, into the Council Plan 'Connect' and the South Lanarkshire Partnership Plan. CLD outcomes are collated on a yearly basis and trend data across a number of years can be analysed to indicate areas of strength and areas for improvement. This data is captured at local level and aggregated to inform local planning as well as authority wide service development.

Nationally there are Key Performance Indicators that were developed by the national CLD Managers in consultation with the wider field that have reported on a yearly basis for the past three years from every local authority (for the first two years 32 local authorities submitted, last year 31 submitted). This information has been compiled and an analysis report written.

In addition, a revised 'How good is our community learning and development?' (HGIOCLD?4) framework was developed and published in 2021. The Quality Indicators allow CLD providers to (either individually or collectively) self-evaluate the impact of their work, and this is a very good tool to analyse strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation seminars are regularly conducted across CLD Partnerships as part of the scrutiny of CLD 3-year strategic plans.

Other methods of self-evaluation include Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE), and last year South Lanarkshire conducted a VSE exercise across the Youth, Family, and Community Learning Service using two Quality Indicators from the HGIOCLD?4 Framework (1.1 Performance against aims and targets & 2.3 Improving life chances). This was conducted by Associate Assessors within the local authority and mirrored a CLD Inspection process. A presentation feedback session was conducted across the four areas outlining strengths and areas for improvement.

As above, the CLD sector is also subject to HMle CLD Inspections that uses the HGIOCLD?4 Quality Improvement framework to analyse performance across a range of themes, and this looks at data collection, understanding of performance trends, and evidence of outcomes to reach judgements and conclusions on strengths and areas for improvement. At the heart of this is ensuring that there is an evidence base to prove that outcomes have been met by learners. Triangulation of this data ensures that the statistics are supported by worker and learner testimony.

A longitudinal study of the impacts and outcomes of CLD activity is required to strengthen the understanding of the difference CLD makes to learners and communities. CLD's early intervention and preventative approach often averts a negative outcome and this can be difficult to evidence.

Please use the space below to provide any further thoughts or evidence about Community Learning & Development.

Please give us your views:

## About you

What is your name?

Name:  
Frank Thomson

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:  
South Lanarkshire Council - Education Resources Youth, Family and Community Learning Service

Further information about your organisation's response

Please add any additional context:

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response only (without name)

Do you consent to Scottish Government contacting you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

What is your email address?

Email:  
frank.thomson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent

## Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Please enter comments here.: