

# **GROWING EXCELLENCE: A Programme to Support the Upskilling of the Community Learning and Development Workforce**

## **Introduction**

The Scottish Government and CoSLA recognise that Community Learning and Development (CLD) can play a vital role in relation to a range of national and local outcomes. They also recognise that delivering this role creates a challenging agenda for CLD and that as a result, “we must collectively make sure that those who deliver CLD... have the skills, attitudes and confidence to deliver the best outcomes to the highest standards”.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, the CLD workforce “requires modern, appropriate training...to ensure the delivery of excellence”, particularly as “previous investment in CLD training has been insubstantial when compared with that of other allied professions”<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the Scottish Government has identified investment in 2009-10 and 2010-2011 to fund a programme of activity to support the upskilling of the CLD workforce.

A cornerstone of the programme will be a National CLD Workforce Development Strategy. This paper provides an initial step towards putting this strategy in place.

## **Background**

In identifying resources for the programme, the Scottish Government also identified priority areas for attention, set within the context of *Skills for Scotland: a lifelong skills strategy*. These priorities involve raising the skills of the CLD workforce to:

- Facilitate learner journeys through use of the SCQF and outcome-focussed recognition of learning.
- Target and work with the most disadvantaged learners.
- Lead and manage in collaborative contexts.

A Position Statement in November 2008 outlined the parameters for the programme and provided an initial outline of the principles that should guide it and the approaches to be adopted. It stated the overall aim of the programme as: “to improve outcomes for individuals and communities in Scotland, through more effective and higher quality community learning and development practice”.

To provide evidence and analysis to shape the development of the programme, Learning Connections commissioned work to:

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<sup>1</sup> *Building on “Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities”*: the role of CLD in delivering change. A joint statement by the Scottish Government and CoSLA, November 2008

<sup>2</sup> *Scoping Exercise for a Programme to Upskill the CLD Workforce: Key findings*: a report by Blake Stevenson for Learning Connections, Scottish Government, April 2009

- Investigate current approaches within and beyond the sector to training and development (with particular reference to the three priority areas outlined above)
- Provide an analysis of existing approaches to addressing these areas and of gaps where further development of content and approaches should be focused.
- Make recommendations for next steps for developing the programme, applying a critical knowledge of current policy and practice in community learning and development.

Blake Stevenson were appointed to carry out this work and produced a report, *Scoping Exercise for a Programme to Upskill the CLD Workforce: Key findings*, which has informed the planning of the programme.

## Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles for the upskilling programme, and for the range of activities that will be included in it, are proposed:

- It should be a coherent national programme with a clear focus on agreed strategic priorities for the development of the CLD workforce.
- The programme should be owned by the CLD sector.
- The “CLD workforce“ is defined for the purpose of the upskilling programme as consisting of those staff whose primary work role focuses on utilising the competences for CLD<sup>3</sup>, irrespective of employer.
- In supporting access to learning opportunities in 2009-11, clear priorities should be set. While recognising the vital role that volunteers play in delivering CLD, the initial programme of activity will focus on the paid CLD workforce, including their ability to effectively support volunteers.
- The “CLD sector” is defined for the purpose of the upskilling programme as consisting of those organisations (including in particular employers of the CLD workforce) whose role, or a significant element of it consists of:
  - delivery of one or more of the national priorities for CLD, or
  - functions essential to the delivery of CLD
- Access to appropriate training within the new framework should be on the basis of identified need not prior qualifications. The focus should be on equipping people for their job tasks and on understanding the current working context, whether or not an initial CLD degree or other qualification is held.
- Both practitioners and their employers have key responsibilities for ensuring that those who deliver CLD have the skills, attitudes and confidence to deliver to the highest standards.

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<sup>3</sup> The competences for CLD were refreshed by the CLD Standards Council for Scotland in 2009 and may be found at <http://www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/cld/202.html>

- Local CLD partnerships should have a key role in the delivery of the programme, in particular in identifying needs for CPD and developing local strategies for meeting these.
- CLD partnerships should be encouraged to ensure that these local strategies build on partners' existing CPD initiatives, staff development practices and corporate training programmes.
- The programme should build the learning and development infrastructure, supporting the future development of the CLD workforce on a sustainable basis.
- It should support the development of CLD skills as detailed in the competences for CLD, applicable across adult learning, youth work and community capacity building contexts.
- It should focus on the ensuring that skills are effectively utilised as well as on supporting the development of skills.
- It should support the development of a framework for continuous learning within CLD built on the competences and linked to the relevant National Occupational Standards.
- A portfolio approach and recognition of prior learning will be essential aspects of the continuous learning framework.
- The National Workforce Development Strategy and the framework for continuous learning within CLD should focus clearly and specifically on both the "CLD workforce" as defined above and those volunteering in CLD. It should recognise the needs of CLD staff at all levels, across all employers and include managers, volunteers, paid full-time, part-time and sessional staff.
- The programme should support collaborative work with other sectors and opportunities for cross-sectoral learning in order to assist the development of the skills of the CLD workforce in collaborative, partnership-based practice.
- It should include support for a variety of methods of training and approaches to learning, designed to meet the range of identified needs and to support innovation.
- Formal courses developed through the programme (and approved as part of the continuous learning framework) should be working towards or already be SCQF credit rated. There should also be less formal opportunities, for example for task-based local learning/ action learning sets and one-off events that may not be credit rated or SCQF levelled.
- The programme should support the development of quality assurance for training and learning opportunities, designed in ways that are appropriate to particular types of course, programme or event.

## Delivery Arrangements

The role of the Scottish Government in the programme is to set the strategic direction and to ensure accountability to Ministers for the investment made. Robust programme management arrangements are being established which will aim to support the development of the CLD sector's infrastructure. The CLD Standards Council, through its Executive Committee, will provide a means for the CLD sector to input to the strategic direction of the programme, and through its CPD Committee, act as the key point of reference and advice on development and delivery.

## Outcomes 2009-11

### Outcome 1:

***A national CLD workforce development strategy is in place and supports local planning and delivery.***

#### Deliverables 2009-11

Produce a national workforce development strategy on the basis of engagement with employers and practitioners.

Use the strategy to inform support for local planning and delivery of workforce development activity.

### Outcome 2:

***All CLD Partnerships have been supported to develop local strategies for workforce development and improved access to CPD for CLD practitioners across sectors.***

#### Deliverables 2009-11

Provide support for CLD Partnerships<sup>4</sup> to:

- Analyse needs and potential for development of their CLD workforce;
- Develop sustainable workforce development programmes to meet these needs;
- Improve opportunities for CPD for their CLD workforce;
- Review progress and plan for continuing workforce development.

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<sup>4</sup> Community Planning Partnerships have responsibility for CLD; all local authority areas have a partnership body that leads on CLD within the overall community planning process; many but not all of these are called CLD Partnerships. The term is used here as shorthand for "the partnership body that leads on CLD".

Support development of regional and interest-based groupings where these can assist CLD Partnerships to develop their workforces.

Work with CLD Partnerships to feed evidence from local development into development of CPD opportunities (outcome 3).

### **Outcome 3**

***A coherent system of CPD opportunities to support development of the CLD workforce has been established.***

#### Deliverables 2009-11

Analyse needs for learning materials, courses, qualifications and improved provision of information to support development of the CLD workforce, making use of feedback from local workforce development.

Secure development of CPD opportunities and other actions in line with identified needs.

Ensure that a framework for CPD for CLD practitioners is put in place, clarifying pathways for professional development.

Develop links with programmes in related disciplines and sectors, explore synergies and identify scope for collaboration.

Secure delivery of collaborative CPD initiatives that meet identified needs of the CLD workforce and establish processes for continuing collaboration

Secure the active engagement of the Community Learning and Development sector in the CPD process, for example through delivery of a programme of national and/or regionally based seminars.

Secure delivery of a programme of collaborative leadership and management learning opportunities.

Respond to initiatives from partners that contribute effectively to achieving the identified purpose of the upskilling programme

### **Outcome 4**

***Resources and tools to support continuing workforce development have been created***

#### Deliverables 2009-11

Produce a working draft continuous learning framework (CLF) which supports practitioners and employers to improve outcomes for people who engage in CLD activities.

Provide a framework and guidance for development and use of Personal Learning Plans

Provide support for CLD partners to develop models, methods and approaches to CPD.

## **Outcome 5**

***Evidence on the outcomes of the programme, and on the inputs, processes and outputs leading to these, has been gathered and analysed; the experience of the programme has been evaluated to inform future development, identify future needs and assess any resource requirements arising from these.***

### Deliverables 2009-11

Put in place and deliver an evaluation and research strategy, which includes consideration of the impact of programme activities on CLD practice and delivery and may include the use of action-research methods.

Ensure production and dissemination of reports at appropriate points in the programme to inform future policy and practice.