

CLD and Scottish policy priorities – extracts from forthcoming report on CLD Plans by Education Scotland and partners

National Improvement Framework

The recently launched National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education states:

We continue to value and strengthen Community Learning and Development provision. These vital services improve the life chances of communities across Scotland, and in particular, can help to empower and improve learning and resilience for our most disadvantaged communities. (p4)

It specifically recognises the value of the National Youth Work Strategy for Scotland “*through which a wide range of partners in the public and third sector are contributing to improving outcomes for young people, either in direct partnership with schools or in other community settings.*” (p4)

In the ‘Next Steps’:

- *‘We will work with colleagues in a range of sectors, including Early Years and in Community Learning and Development to ensure that the Framework fully reflects the activity and evidence that significantly impacts on outcomes for all children. We will also work with partners to develop a thorough evidence base for improvements to children’s health and wellbeing.’ p24*
- *A commitment for 2016 to consider ‘a wider range of awards and achievements including those gained from Community Learning and Development’*

OECD review of Scottish education

A review of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has included some important messages for the youth work and CLD sector.

The review highlights the positive contribution that youth work and CLD are making to fully realise the aims of CfE. In particular, the OECD review recognises the role that youth work and CLD play in:

- Connecting schooling with learning in the community and out of school life in general;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle health inequalities; and
- Engaging families and communities in our education system.

Specific quotes in the OECD report referring to CLD:

Interdisciplinarity and connectedness in CfE

‘Scottish young people work increasingly towards recognised awards such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Youth Achievement Award and the John Muir Award. There is thus recognition of young people’s personal achievements within and beyond school, including through partnerships which support learning, e.g. with business, arts and community organisations. Since 2013, the Scottish Government requires every local authority to publish a three-year Community Learning Development (CLD) plan [...]. Hence, a further aspect of the connectedness of CfE lies through drawing schooling, learning in the community, and out-of-school life in general more closely together.’ (p42)

Promoting healthy lifestyles and tackling health inequalities

'Community learning and development (CLD): working with families and partners to address health inequalities in communities. Each LA works with partners and communities and publishes a CLD plan every three years.' (p74)

Engaging families and communities

'In CfE, parental involvement is critical in developing the four capacities, skills, health and social and emotional wellbeing. The Raising Attainment Programme and "Play, Talk, Read" and the forthcoming "Read, Write, Count" programmes all focus on parental engagement in children's learning and development. "Parentzone Scotland", "Engaging with Families" and the Scottish Qualifications websites give support and advice to teachers and parents. The Community Learning and Development work is often done with parents through family learning programmes to enable local initiatives and parental engagement. Many LAs are reaching out and are involving parents who are more difficult to engage.' (p98)

Programme for Government 2015-16

A Stronger Scotland, highlights a commitment to realising the aspirations of the Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning to ensure that Scotland becomes the best place to learn for all.

"In 2014 the Scottish Government launched the Scotland Adult Learning Statement of Ambition which aims to ensure that Scotland becomes recognised globally as the most creative and engaged learning society and that every adult in Scotland will have the right to access learning to meet their educational needs and their aspirations.

The National Strategic Forum for Adult Learning is taking forward an implementation plan that will have a focus on literacy and numeracy, family learning, adult achievement. (p36)"

When, launching the Programme for Government the First Minister emphasized her commitment to empowering communities and recognised the need to invest in supporting communities to drive local change.

"I have chosen to end with the issue of community empowerment because it's an important signal of how we want to govern now and in the future. It is now almost exactly one year since the referendum, when we saw the benefits and the sense of engagement that occurs when people have a real say on issues that matter.

I am determined that we harness the passion and energy shown in the referendum and use it to tackle the big social and economic issues of our times. The referendum debate also revealed a deep yearning, on both sides, for a fairer society, as well as a more prosperous economy.

This ambitious and reforming Programme for Government speaks to those aspirations. It sets out how this Government will work - now and in the long term - to achieve our vision for Scotland's future. And it demonstrates how enduring values - a belief in enterprise, a faith in the value of education, a commitment to fairness and solidarity, and a passion for democratic engagement - can be applied to make Scotland a fairer and more prosperous country. "

Ministerial quotes

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People Oct 2015

- *CLD makes a very important contribution to many of the priorities outlined in our current Programme for Government. CLD is an important and respected part of our education system.*
- *200 learning community inspections over the past seven years have shown us that the impact on participants and communities is good or better in over 80% of learning communities. That is a very strong evidence base which is unique in the UK.*
- *I know CLD plays an important role in tackling these attainment and employability challenges ... Inequality is not just in education and employment though. We need to harness the potential of all of our citizens if we want to tackle entrenched inequalities. That's why community empowerment and democratic renewal, particularly for the most disadvantaged, are at the heart of our Programme for Government.*

Possibly also of note, although don't mention CLD explicitly

Health and social care integration, Audit Scotland

The recent report by Audit Scotland reviewing the progress made to establish new integration authorities (IAs) included among others the following recommendations:

"Integration authorities should:

- *develop strategic plans that do more than set out the local context for the reforms; this includes [...] making clear links between the work of the IA and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act and Children and Young People (Scotland) Act*
- *shift resources, including the workforce, towards a more preventative and community-based approach; it is important that the IA also has plans that set out how, in practical terms, they will achieve this shift over time."* pages 40-41

Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality | Shifting the Curve | A report to the First Minister

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492430.pdf> Of interest in areas with a poverty focus – although the Scottish Government response is not due until March:

- *The challenge is now to [...] make sure that the social infrastructure to build successful communities is also adequately funded.*
- *Area-based open access services represents a third option between universal and targeted services – this is in place in a limited way in the UK but could be expanded; again more debate on this would be useful. It makes sense to put services in areas where people need them the most, and have most difficulty taking up the services. While education is for all, we should be putting family support services into schools in the poorest areas.*

- *Over the last twenty years, a significant shift has occurred in how we view early childhood. It is now widely accepted that the first five years of life lay down the foundations for future success. However, this important emphasis on early years has not been matched with a similar narrative on older children, particularly the period from mid-teens to early adulthood. While Sarah Jane Blakemore's ground-breaking work has established that brain plasticity lasts well into early adulthood, and other research has looked at risk and resilience in this group, there has been no comprehensive examination of the evidence about 'what works' for adolescents and young adults.*

Young adulthood is probably one of the most challenging periods in the life cycle. It is a period when parents have less influence on their children's behaviour as peers become increasingly important, and when the likelihood of risky behaviour is high. Increasing dependence on financial support from parents at this age increases the likelihood of intergenerational poverty. Some parents simply cannot afford the support offered to children that is increasingly common in better off families: private tuition, culturally enriching holidays, and deposits for a first home. With this in mind, this next section of my report looks at young people's life chances.

RECOMMENDATION 10 - Carry out a comprehensive review of policies and services relevant to the life chances of older children and young adults, with particular emphasis on young people from poorer backgrounds.

The Scottish Government should commission a wide ranging literature review of the research concerning young people's life chances, and carry out a comprehensive internal review of policies, interventions, and mainstream services for young people, from secondary school age through to young adulthood: physical and mental health, access to sports and leisure, education, employability and training. Does the effort and expenditure on the less advantaged match that on the most advantaged?

A developed understanding of what constitutes well-being is essential for this group who are often physically healthy and therefore not likely to come into contact with health services, but often have high levels of mental illness including depression, self-harm, and anti-social behaviour. This issue was recognised in the Draft Budget, with additional funding made available for child and adolescent mental health services. However, an overarching review would try to establish how to reduce the incidence of mental health problems in young people, and look more broadly at the relative contribution that family support, leisure and sports provision can make to improving well-being.

As in earlier reviews by the UK Government on under 5s, the Scottish Government has a chance to rethink the way we approach young adulthood, with particular reference to those less likely to go to university and enter lucrative careers. Action is already in hand on employment matters raised in the next three recommendations, as a result of the Wood Commission and Developing the Young Workforce, Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy. However, they need a stronger sense of urgency while the above suggested overarching review is in train.'