

Inspection of Community Learning and Development in Orkney Islands Council

15 January 2018

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1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within Orkney Islands Council (OIC) and the area of Stromness, West Mainland, Sanday and Hoy were inspected by Education Scotland during October and November 2017. 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 paid 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?

Leadership of CLD is provided by Education, Leisure and Housing (ELH). Governance of the CLD plan is devolved to the Strategic Community Learning Group (SCLG), which is made of a wide range of partners. The SCLG is providing a forum for sharing information, resources and planning. A few partners report individually on progress to stakeholders, particularly those with partnership agreements in place. However, joint reporting by the SCLG on progress against the CLD plan is less evident and requires strengthening. The SCLG engage in regular joint self-evaluation for continuous improvement. This is identifying strengths and areas for action. However, momentum is required to progress identified actions. This includes strengthening the CLD plan to ensure it is smarter, reflects shared priorities and partners' ownership of actions. This will assist in demonstrating CLD's collective contribution to strategic priorities. ELH would also benefit from reviewing the role and function of the SCLG, as currently it does not meet its aims and objectives as outlined in its terms of reference. As a result governance of CLD requires significant improvements to ensure the delivery of priorities.

There is a strong 'connectedness' across partners. This enables them to work towards a shared vision. Many partners are represented on strategic groups. For example, CLD is represented in the Orkney Childcare and Young People's Partnership community planning group. CLD is beginning to influence the use of and targeting of resources such as Pupil Equity Funding. However, there is an over reliance on 'connectedness' for partnership working. This now needs strengthened to ensure there is clarity and formal ownership of key priorities and responsibilities for reporting on progress. This will enable OIC strategic plans to clearly identify the contribution of CLD and help demonstrate CLD partners contribution to strategic priorities.

In a few organisations such as Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) self-evaluation, planning for improvement and monitoring progress are robust. Quantitative and qualitative information is used effectively to demonstrate progress to stakeholders and support continuous improvement. The recent restructure of the third sector forums to include operations and themed groups is improving engagement. There is good use of the Place Standard tool by partners to identify community views, perceptions and priorities that is reflected in the *Your Island, Your Choice* community planning document. A CLD newsletter and annual report shares good news stories of the impact of CLD amongst partners and elected members. A recent young person's debate in the council chambers enhanced understanding of improving life chances through engagement in CLD activities such as youth awards.

At a local level individuals and groups demonstrate well developed leadership skills. Young leaders develop capacity through participation in additional learning experiences such as Active schools, Young Ambassador and Sport Leader programmes. As a result young people are leading a range of youth provision and community activities. Young peoples' networking out with Orkney, through attendance at conferences and events is also enhancing their skills and knowledge. The Developing the Young Workforce Orkney Regional Group provide good leadership. A coherent plan with a clear set of key performance indicators is in place. The development of 'Orkney Offer', which illustrates senior phase pathways is informed by analysis of destinations and progression routes. This is enhancing partners understanding of available opportunities and transition routes.

There are many opportunities for sharing learning across partners. For example, joint training opportunities between CLD, Stromness Academy and Kirkwall Grammar School is providing staff with the knowledge to address identified issues such as mental health and wellbeing. Leadership programmes are made available to young leaders and Development Trust staff. A detailed programme of volunteer training is also in place. CLD staff utilise 'illuminating practice' methodology to share methods and approaches that lead to positive impacts. Monitoring the use of this approach would be beneficial in demonstrating its impact. Flexible methods of learning for CLD staff, partners and volunteers include online, face to face and bespoke programmes. Effective use of information computing technology through OIC's I-Learn ensures CLD staff have access to a range of continuous learning opportunities, enabling them to deliver their role. Learning Link staff and volunteers benefit from appropriate and relevant training to support their roles, including compulsory safeguarding training. There is good use of review meetings to identify training needs. However, OIC and its partners would benefit from improved coordination and targeting of appropriate training across the range of providers.

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

CLD and wider partners use local knowledge and statistical data to inform priorities and set targets. This is reflected in the CLD Service Plan 2017-2019 linking to OIC priorities. CLD staff regularly review the plan and identify highlights and trends. This shows a positive five year trend for CLD adult learning provision. Young people engaging in a range of youth awards is also showing a steadily improving trend. For example, uptake of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is the highest in Scotland. Active schools use historical trend data to set new and appropriately challenging targets. A few targeted programmes are reaching those most vulnerable and excluded. Performance data from development trusts is used well to improve life chances. For example, the use of housing data to identify local priorities for further developing the islands economy. Some trend information also demonstrates improved outcomes for individuals, groups and communities. VAO's systems and procedures to demonstrate performance against aims, outcomes and targets is strong. A positive three year trend from their services survey demonstrate consistently high levels of satisfaction amongst users. However, improvements are required in the way that CLD and partners collect and share data to ensure priority needs are understood. Improved methods to capture and share performance information across the CLD partnership is also required.

There is a strong and diverse range of community groups and arts organisations making a significant contribution to communities across the area inspected. A culture of volunteering is facilitating a thriving sense of place and substantially contributing to services and opportunities across the islands. VAO and CLD's support and training to individual and community groups is

strong. Partnership working between community organisations, OIC and the business community is supporting vulnerable individuals and families. St Magnus 900 and Stromness 200 celebrations provide opportunities for local communities to celebrate significant historical and cultural anniversaries. This is having a positive impact on social interaction and integration within their community. Young people are developing leadership capacity through engaging in a range of leadership awards. This is enhancing their skills and capacity to engage in community activities. An arts forum helps facilitate planning and the coordination of arts activities. An annual community halls meeting is providing opportunities for networking and identifying support needs. However, there is scope to improve the coordination of support, training and feedback to community groups.

Activities and programmes focussing on retaining the islands heritage is positively impacting on the local community and economy. For example, the Scapa Flow Visitors Centre and Museum on Hoy benefit from community support and substantial external funding for the centre and museum to be restored and extended. This will allow the islands heritage to remain on display and attract visitors to the island. The Orkney Historic Boat Society sustain boat heritage through the restoration of boats and securing external funding from Heritage Environmental Scotland for a boat building apprenticeship. This is enabling these skills to be retained on the island. Development Trusts are active and well run by skilled and knowledgeable board members, who cooperate for the common good. Profits from wind farms are used to secure resources. For example, in Hoy and Sanday the purchase of minibuses provide vital transport to and from ferry terminals. Well used community run buildings have been sustained for local use. The provision of grants support individual and group learning and development needs. Many activities are offered free of charge to remove barriers to participation. A Community Interest Company on Sanday provides local employment and creates the opportunity for members of the public to invest. The Skills for Sanday initiative is encouraging local people to develop and share their skills. Collectively capturing the extent of volunteering across the partnership would be beneficial in demonstrating its impact on the community. Recognising and celebrating volunteering could also be strengthened.

Learners' are supported to progress in well planned and tailored programmes some of which meet identified needs. However, formal processes for the sharing of intelligence would further improve the targeting of learning opportunities based on identified needs. Nurturing approaches at The Orchard in Stromness Primary School supports children with emotional and social needs to better engage with their learning. Early Years partners are collaborating well to address speech and language issues in young children. For example, the established of an Early Years Chatters group is mitigating waiting times for speech and language support to families. Pathways for youth achievement is used effectively to enable young people to progress within the Youth Achievement award scheme. The Orkney Offer provides Senior Phase learners pathways beyond school. The annual Orkney Youth Awards celebration event is recognising and celebrating young peoples' achievements. One to one and group work in the Connect project is enabling young people to progress to local employment, volunteering, further learning and training. A strong partnership between Hoy's Outdoor Learning Centre, CLD and schools is maximising the sharing of skills and resources. As a result, young people are attaining and achieving within an outdoor environment. Learning Link learners' are achieving well and gaining Scottish Qualification Awards. Their individual learning plans take account of prior learning and aspirations. The pace and challenge is appropriate to learner's abilities and exit interviews support learners to progress. CLD adult learning classes are well planned, organised and take account of identified needs. Learners benefit from strong subject knowledge and skills of tutors. Programme evaluation processes are in place which involve learners, this is

improving learning experiences. However, adult learner pathways need strengthened to ensure progression opportunities are clearer.

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

This inspection of CLD in Orkney Islands Council found the following key strengths.

- Strong and diverse range of community groups, arts organisations and targeted programmes improving life chances of young people and adults.
- Culture of volunteering making a significant contribution to the community.

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

- Improve governance of CLD in line with legislation.
- Further develop joint self-evaluation and monitoring to include shared ownership of actions.

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

OIC and partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and communities are achieving well, however, there are some improvements needed. We will monitor progress through regular contact with the local authority. The local authority has been asked to submit a progress report one year from the inspection, this will be followed by a two day monitoring visit. Our Area Lead Officer along with the education authority will discuss the most appropriate support in order to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress.

Ann Kivlin
HM Inspector
15 January 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?*

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk4hgiocommunitylearning.aspx>

Education Scotland evaluates four important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of CLD across Scotland. Here are the results for this inspection.

Improvements in performance	good
Impact on the local community	very good
Delivering the learning offer with learners	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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