Same difference

This guidance is for people working in community learning and development (CLD) in Scotland. It provides advice and support on how to work with people experiencing disadvantage.

Transforming lives through learning

Please note - The contents of this document were originally prepared and published in 2010.

Contents

1. About CLD and equality

Community learning and development can benefit people who are disadvantaged because of their personal characteristics – such as age, gender, gender identity, disability, ethnic origin, faith or sexual orientation.

What is equality?

Equality is about making sure that people are not disadvantaged because of personal characteristics or life experience. Equality is not about treating everyone the same.

Sometimes people who experience barriers and discrimination will need more support or different types of support, to get over these barriers.

People can experience inequality for lots of reasons. Often, it is because of personal characteristics, like:

- age
- disability
- gender
- race or ethnicity
- language
- faith, religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity.

These factors do not cover all of the reasons for people experiencing discrimination and exclusion, but are a guide to identifying some of the most excluded groups.

People can also experience disadvantage because of life experience – such as income, wealth, employment, education or the area people live in. This can be known as socio-economic disadvantage.

Note on socio-economic disadvantage

This guidance does not specifically cover working with people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. However, many people who are disadvantaged because of personal characteristics will also experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Note on young people

This guidance does not focus specifically on CLD activity with young people, as there is already a wide range of other resources available to assist you in undertaking this. However, many aspects of this resource will apply to work with this group. Other useful resources include:

- Youth Scotland has a bank of resources to help people working with young people http://www.youthscotland.org.uk
- Youthlink Scotland supports the development of CLD activity with young people, and has a useful website http://www.youthlinkscotland.org/

- The Scottish Government has produced an Advice Note on Involving Children and Young People in Community Planning
  http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/11/17164834/48351

Why focus on equality?

The community learning and development approach has equality at its centre. The 'Working and Learning Together' guidance sets out five main principles that should underpin community learning and development:

- empowerment
- participation
- inclusion, equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination
- self-determination
- partnership.

The Scottish Government has stressed that CLD activity should be targeted towards those communities that are socially excluded, vulnerable or disadvantaged.

"We want to increase opportunities for individuals and communities who are excluded, improve public services where it will make most difference and create a more socially just Scotland."[1]

This focus on working with disadvantaged communities and equalities groups fits with the legal context. The law places responsibilities and expectations on those working in the CLD field to ensure that equality is central to their activities.

How can CLD help to promote equality?

The aim of promoting equality is to make sure that people deal with one another in an equal and fair way that does not lead to certain communities experiencing disadvantage. At the moment, this does not always happen. There are some shocking differences in quality of life between different communities. For example:

- It is estimated that gypsies/travellers live between 10 and 12 years less than the rest of the UK population.
- Older people in Scotland tend to live in poorer housing than the rest of the population, are more likely to experience poor health, live on lower incomes and experience age discrimination.
- Older people who are from minority ethnic communities, or who have disabilities, are doubly disadvantaged.
- The Equal Opportunities Commission believes it will be 200 years before women become as influential as men in politics.
- Research undertaken in 2004 found that disabled people on benefits needed an extra £200 to £230 a week to achieve the same quality of life as able-bodied people.
- Men and women in the highest socio-economic group can expect to live up to seven years longer than those in the lowest socio-economic groups.

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[1] Working and Learning Together, page 11

These differences clearly show that it is important to work towards equality at a faster pace than we have been doing so far. Community learning and development activity can play a key role in doing this.

Building stronger communities, where people can develop the skills and experiences that they need in their life, can help through:

- **Understanding needs and experiences** – CLD activity involves working closely with equalities groups. This is extremely valuable in helping us to understand the disadvantages and inequalities faced by different communities. This can help raise awareness and encourage action to address inequality.

- **Developing skills and confidence** – CLD activity help to develop knowledge, skills, experiences and confidence of people experiencing disadvantage. This can in turn lead to more opportunities in life.

- **Developing skills and awareness of all communities** – CLD activity can provide a valuable setting for working with all communities to tackle stereotypes, prejudice and negative attitudes.

- **Involvement and engagement** – CLD activity plays a critical role in encouraging active citizenship. It can support people to become actively involved in their community, and influence decisions that affect their own communities.

Develop your practice

Consider the CLD work you are involved in.

- *What inequalities are most obvious in your area and how do you think your current CLD activity is seeking to address these issues?*

Using appropriate language

The words used when working with equalities groups can be very important. The way in which terminology is used changes over time, and it can be difficult to work out which phrases most appropriately describe the client groups that you are targeting and working with.

One of the main difficulties is that no-one likes being put into a certain category that is supposed to define who they are. Everyone has multiple characteristics and identities, and defining people using one phrase or term can be off-putting to many.

Phrases such as 'minority ethnic communities' or 'older people' can be seen as crude ways of describing the many different identities and characteristics of people within these communities. If terminology is not properly explained, it can lead to confusion about who is included within these equalities groups, and who is not.

However, in order to ensure that your CLD activities target socially excluded or disadvantaged communities, you do need to define different communities in some way. You will therefore need to consider how you wish to define and describe the various equalities groups and communities with whom you are working.

There are three things that you can do to make this easier:

- **Please do not panic or be put off** – Although people do often have strong views about which terminology should be used, they will generally appreciate that you are not immediately categorising people into one term, but are thinking carefully about how terminology should be used.

- **Start by using the words used in this guidance** – We have tried throughout this guidance to use terms which are generally acceptable to most people. Using these terms may be a starting point, until you can work out whether they suit your area and communities.

- **Speak to the communities you are working with** – Everyone has different ideas about how they prefer to be defined, and people will generally be happy to discuss the best use of terminology. If this is done in a sensitive way, people will appreciate being asked how they would like their services, communities or groups to be described.

You might want to make sure that effective CLD activity is undertaken in your area with people from a range of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and of different nationalities. To do this, you will need to define in some way the kind of communities you wish to target.

A whole range of different phrases has been used to express culture, ethnicity, nationality, skin colour and language, so deciding which terminology is appropriate in your area could be difficult.

Over time, different terminology has been used, including 'black and minority ethnic', 'ethnic minority', 'black', 'visible minorities' and 'minority ethnic'. Many people will feel strongly about which term should be used, but it is likely that people will have different opinions.

Develop your practice

- *How do you decide which terminology is most suitable in your area?*

2. Equality and the law

There is a strong legal framework that supports equality in Scotland. Find out more about the law and what it means for CLD practitioners, services and organisations.

The history of equality in the law

The United Kingdom signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights in 1953. This meant that the UK was agreeing to basic civil and political rights for every individual.
Since then, the legal framework supporting equality has developed.

Race, disability and gender

In the 1970s, legislation was introduced to outlaw discrimination on the basis of race and gender. In 1995, similar legislation was introduced to protect the rights of disabled people.

Between 2000 and 2006, further laws were introduced. This meant that all public authorities had general duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality in the fields of race, disability and gender.

Other equality issues

Between 1999 and 2006, a number of existing laws were changed and new laws created to promote equality in terms of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and for transgender people. Although this led to greater protection for people, the legal frameworks were not as well developed as for race, gender and disability.

By the mid 2000s, there was a range of different laws that were important for people working in CLD, and in particular for public authorities. This made it difficult to understand the law and how it affected CLD and public authorities, and complex in terms of holding people accountable for implementing the equalities legislation. And many people felt that progress in some areas had been too slow.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced recently to address these concerns. The new Act brings together and simplifies the existing equality laws in the UK, and strengthens the law to encourage greater progress.

Who is protected?

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors need to follow. Importantly, it affects equality law at work, in delivering all sorts of services and running clubs and societies.

The law protects people:

- who are employed or using a service – the act means that everyone has the right to be treated fairly.
- from discrimination on the basis of certain protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 uses the term 'Protected Characteristics' to describe who is protected by law. Protection varies depending on whether a person is at work or using a service.

There are eight protected characteristics of people who use services. These are:

- disability
- sex (gender)
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- age (over 18s only, and the law will not come into force until 2012)

For employees, there is an additional protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership. In addition, employees are protected on the basis of age (not only over 18s).

Other protection

The Equality Act 2010 does not just protect people who have these characteristics. It also protects people from being discriminated against because:

- someone wrongly perceives them to have one of the protected characteristics.
- they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. For example, this includes the parent of a disabled child or adult or someone else who is caring for a disabled person.

The Act also means it is against the law to treat someone unfavourably because they are supporting someone to take action under the law.

Poverty and disadvantage

The Equality Act 2010 allows for the introduction of a new strategic duty on certain public authorities to address inequality that results from socio-economic disadvantage.

It is up to the Scottish Government to decide whether and how this strategic duty will be applied. The Scottish Government consulted on this issue late in 2009, but the policy and law on this issue has not been finalised, and there is no guidance. This is likely to be developed further in 2011.

A person who experiences socio-economic disadvantage will not necessarily be protected from discrimination in the same way as people who experience disadvantage because of other characteristics, such as race or gender. However, the proposed changes to the law will mean that

public authorities must consider socio-economic disadvantage when planning services and making decisions.

Unlawful discrimination

The law protects people against:

Discrimination – which includes:

- treating a person worse than someone else because of their protected characteristic
- putting in place a rule or way of doing things which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one (and cannot be objectively justified)
- treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability or failing to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person

Harassment – which means:

- unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive

Victimisation – which means:

- treating someone unfavourably because they have taken or might take action under the Equality Act, or are supporting someone else to do this.

(*This information has been adapted from the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act Starter Kit* www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/legislation/equality-act-2010.)

Develop your practice

As someone working in CLD, use the following questions to think about what this means for you:

- **As an employer or manager**, *what do you need to consider in terms of your responsibilities to staff and volunteers?*

- **As a service provider**, *what do you need to consider in terms of your responsibilities when reviewing or developing services and CLD activities?*

- **If you support community organisations, groups and clubs**, *what do you need to consider in terms of how best to support and guide them to meet their legal responsibilities?*

Your responsibilities as a service provider

You must ensure that all aspects of your service, including the information you provide and the way you provide your services – are accessible to all.

The law means you must not discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic. This means that you and the people you work with must not:

- refuse to engage with or take on a community member or service user because of a protected characteristic
- stop serving or working with someone with a particular protected characteristic, if you still serve or work for other service users or clients who do not have the same protected characteristics in the same circumstances
- provide a poorer quality service or worse terms than usual to people with a protected characteristic
- put people at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic.

(Adapted from the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Core Guidance: Voluntary, Charity and Community Organisations www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/what-equality-law-means-your-voluntary-and-community-sector-organisation-including-charities-and .)

You, and those you work with, might be discriminating against people without realising, so it is very important you understand your responsibilities.

Under the law, you are also responsible for making reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This means, you must actively change the way you deliver services, provide extra equipment and/or remove physical barriers to enable people with a range of disabilities to access the service you provide. You need to think about this in advance – it is not enough to wait until someone complains. These issues need to be considered when you are planning and delivering services, and in your day-to-day work with communities.

What might this mean in practice?

Whether you are delivering a service for free or are charging for it, you must make sure you are not unlawfully discriminating against people because of a protected characteristic. You might also be supporting community groups or organisations to develop, and should advise them on their responsibilities too.

All service providers have responsibilities for:

- staff behaviour when planning services and directly dealing with clients, service members or community groups or organisations
- the building or other places they use to deliver services or activities
- how they advertise and promote services or activities
- the way written materials, websites and telephone support are provided.

Each service and community learning and development activity will be different – you need to think carefully about what the law might mean in your work.

Develop your practice

Review your organisation's effectiveness in ensuring no-one is discriminated against in respect of the four responsibilities outlined above:

- *Are you weaker in some areas and stronger in others?*
- *Think about what improvements you could make in these areas as you read the rest of this section on equalities and the law.*

3. Approaches to equality

The basis of equality in CLD is not about treating everyone exactly the same. The Scottish Government emphasises the need to ensure that equalities groups receive particular support in CLD delivery.

In order to meet the needs of different groups, you may sometimes need to invest a higher level of resources in working with certain communities and equalities groups.

Equal treatment

The 'equal treatment' approach focuses on ensuring that everyone is treated in exactly the same way. In some cases, this approach can be a way of getting rid of practices that may directly discriminate against some groups or individuals. For example, the equal treatment approach could be used to ensure that you do not treat particular equalities groups less favourably than others.

However, although this approach would appear to suggest equality, the equal treatment approach could in fact result in indirect discrimination. This is defined by the Scottish Government as:

"When an apparently neutral requirement or condition impacts adversely or has a disproportionate effect on a particular equality group." [2]

For example, if your services are all provided in English this can make it much more difficult for people for whom English is not their first language to access the service. You are not directly discriminating by saying they cannot access the service, but you are making it more difficult for some groups than others.

The Scottish Government stresses that the equal treatment approach does not always result in equality, and indeed can have a negative impact on equality.

"Ignoring relevant differences to provide policies and practices that are the same for everyone can lead to inequality." [2]

Develop your practice

- *Are there any situations where your approach to providing equal treatment might be resulting in indirect discrimination?*

Mainstreaming

'Mainstreaming' equality means that the diverse needs of communities in Scotland should be taken account of and reflected in all service planning and delivery activities.

It means that all those planning and delivering services should do so based on the understanding that different groups and communities can face particular inequalities, barriers and difficulties.

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[2] *Equality Strategy, Scottish Government*

Using a mainstreaming approach, equality is not something extra, to be considered separately, but is embedded in all activities of each organisation and individual staff member.

> *"The concept of 'mainstreaming' is based on the philosophy that the achievement of equality should inform all aspects of the work of all the individuals within an organisation as they go about their business. The mainstreaming of equality is the route to achieving an equality based culture throughout an organisation."[3]*

Mainstreaming can be an extremely powerful way of ensuring that equality is embedded into every aspect of your organisation's activities. But, it works most effectively when there is a clear organisational commitment to equality, and staff are supported to develop their skills in this field, share experiences and monitor their achievements.

Without regular reviews of progress, and reminders that equality should be central to activities, there is a danger that the focus on equality can get lost.

Develop your practice

- *To what extent do you feel the mainstreaming of equalities is evident in your organisation?*

Positive action

The positive action approach to equality involves taking particular action to support certain groups or communities to overcome disadvantage and make the most of the opportunities available to them.

Positive action can be a way of actively addressing the barriers faced by some communities, and tackling imbalances in opportunities.

It can involve targeted work specifically with certain communities, or offering more support to certain groups to overcome disadvantage.

Positive action is often used to address the impact of practices or structures which have historically – or currently – discriminated against certain groups.

An example of when positive action might be appropriate

One way in which positive action might be used is if you identify that young LGBT people are not using mainstream youth services and are therefore not receiving the same opportunities as other communities. In this case, you may wish to launch a specific project that aims to help young LGBT people to access the services they need.

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[3] *Mainstreaming Equality in the Work of the Scottish Parliament, Equal Opportunities Committee, Scotland (2003)*

This might involve working with people to explore what their needs are, developing new services to meet these needs, facilitating access to existing services or supporting LGBT young people to develop their own groups and services.

Case study: Making new connections (Perth and Kinross Council)

Perth and Kinross Council worked with people with learning disabilities to review and improve local services.
www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/practice/m/makingnewconnections/introduction.asp

Develop your practice

- *Identify an example from your own practice where you might be able to take some positive action in a particular situation to ensure greater equality.*

4. Developing CLD work with equality in mind

CLD activity plays a key role in creating strong communities and promoting equality in Scotland. When developing your activities, it is important to understand the needs and issues affecting different groups and to plan, deliver and promote this work accordingly.

Understanding local needs

To make sure that you think about equality and appropriate CLD provision in your area, it is important to understand the needs of different communities. All CLD activity should be underpinned by a clear understanding of the needs that you are trying to meet. This applies whether you are planning at a local authority level or delivering front-line services.

Approaches to needs assessment

There are two main approaches to undertaking a needs assessment with equalities groups in your area: mainstreaming equality in your needs assessment or conducting a targeted needs assessment.

- **Mainstreaming equality in your needs assessment** – this approach is appropriate if you are interested in the CLD needs of all communities in your area. It focuses on ensuring that the needs of equalities groups are taken into account when undertaking a general needs assessment.

- **Targeted needs assessment** – this approach is useful if you feel that you do not know enough about the needs of all equalities groups, or a particular equality group, in terms of CLD provision. It would involve a targeted approach focusing on one or more equalities group, and assessing the needs of these communities in more detail.

Develop your practice

Identify an equalities group you are currently working with and consider:

- *Might targeted action be an appropriate approach to ensure greater equality?*
- *What would that targeted action look like?*

Example: A targeted CLD needs assessment (Argyll and Bute)

The South Kintyre Community Learning Partnership brings together key CLD partners in this part of Argyll and Bute. The Partnership recognised that people with additional support needs were not well represented in community planning structures in the area. This included people with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and substance abuse issues.

In order to find out more about the way in which people with additional support needs could become involved in community planning activity, they:

- identified all local groups involving people with additional support needs
- met with each group to discuss their experiences and needs
- discussed needs with service providers working with this client group
- evaluated existing community planning structures
- developed options for how people with additional support needs could be more effectively involved in the future.

The Partnership considered how to take forward the options to ensure that people with additional support needs could be involved in community planning in South Kintyre.

Gathering information for your CLD needs assessment

Background research

As you are beginning to assess needs, it is often useful to have a quick look at what background information, data or research might be available already.

Basic information on the population of various equalities groups in your area might be available from sources such as the Census and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics. Data from the 2011 Census will be available from autumn 2012.

The Census provides information on equalities groups at various geographical levels. This includes information on minority ethnic communities, age, religion and disability/long-term illness. The 2001 Census did not record information on sexual orientation and neither will the 2011 Census.

In some areas, you might be able to draw on existing research studies undertaken either in the CLD field or elsewhere. For example, in many areas there may have been research, undertaken in the fields of health or housing, into the needs of different communities. Having a brief look over this type of local research can be valuable in providing an understanding of the profile of different communities and some evidence of experiences in accessing other services in the area.

Gathering information from the community

An essential stage in any needs assessment involves speaking to and involving the communities whose needs you are trying to assess. It is often useful to do this once you have had a brief look at any background statistics, research and service provision information. This means that by the time you come to find out people's views and experiences you have an idea of the kind of issues you would like to explore.

There are numerous ways in which you can involve equalities groups in needs assessment. Potential methods include:

- surveys (including satisfaction surveys for those already using your service)
- discussion groups
- drop-in sessions
- training communities as researchers (supporting people from equalities groups in undertaking research themselves).

Focus on developing trust and building relationships, so that people understand why you are gathering information.

Offer lots of different opportunities to participate, so that people can take part in a way that suits their needs.

In areas where there are well-established equalities organisations, it can be easier to tap into these structures and find out people's views, with assistance from relevant organisations.

Think about the practicalities: timing, childcare, access, transport, interpretation, communication and any other factors that could affect how people can participate.

Identifying existing service provision

Looking at patterns of current service delivery and demand

To inform your needs assessment, it can be useful to look at patterns of current service delivery and demand. This will involve looking at:

- monitoring data from service providers on use by equalities groups
- any information your own organisation collects, as well as any partner organisations in your area.

In some cases, where you do not manage to gather useful information from your monitoring figures, it might prove a catalyst for introducing new monitoring systems. This will ensure that you have this kind of information in the future.

If you do manage to gather information on service use by different equalities groups, this can give you a very interesting insight into how accessible or appropriate your services are to different groups. For example, you may want to compare service uptake levels between communities. This can give you a rough indication of whether your services are used more by certain equalities groups than other communities.

You could also look at whether certain services or projects have higher levels of usage by people from certain communities and groups. While these figures would not necessarily tell you why this was the case, it would give you a starting point for beginning to speak to people and to find out why certain services are used more than others.

Example: Developing a joint equalities monitoring system in Glasgow

The Community Learning Partnership in Glasgow wanted to be able to assess the needs and experiences of equalities groups accessing CLD activities across the city. It commissioned research that explored the ways that CLD providers in Glasgow currently gather equalities monitoring information.

The research found that each of the CLD organisations gathered information in different ways, using different categories, and at different times.

The CLD providers felt that there would be value in gathering information consistently. By setting up a system for gathering monitoring information:

- the Community Learning Partnership would be able to assess what was happening across the city
- the individual organisations would be able to compare information about who was accessing their services with other organisations in Glasgow.

In June 2007, the Partnership published its 'Glasgow's learning about equality' framework equalities.glasgowslearning.org.uk/.

This guidance sets out a common equalities monitoring system for all CLD providers. It provides guidance on what information should be gathered, why equality monitoring is important and how to go about it. The monitoring information gathered will help to inform CLD activity with equalities groups.

Involving equalities organisations and groups

If possible, it is useful to work with organisations that have experience in working with equalities groups. A good first stage can be to scope the organisations working with equalities groups in your area.

In some areas – particularly in urban locations – you will find a wide range of voluntary and community organisations in operation. Contacting these organisations and discussing how they may be able to assist you in assessing needs may help. However, finding out which organisations are in operation can be difficult.

Potential ways of scoping local groups and organisations include:

- **Contacting local umbrella groups** – in some cases, one local organisation may act as a key contact point for a range of different groups in your area.

- **Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)** – many CPPs have thematic sub groups that focus on particular equalities themes.

- **Community Learning and Development Partnerships** – in some cases, CLD Partnerships may already have established structures for involving people from equalities groups in decision making.

- **Contacting national voluntary organisations** – often, national organisations focusing on equalities issues can provide contacts at a local level.

- **Internet searches** – in some cases, a simple online search can provide you with an initial contact. This can often provide a useful basis for 'snowballing'.

- **Snowballing** – if you are only able to identify one or two groups already working with the equality group you are interested in, this does not necessarily mean that these are the only groups in the area. If you make contact with these groups and ask about other key meeting points or groups for certain communities, you can gradually build up a picture of where you may be able to contact people and hear their views.

How organisations can help with your needs assessment

Organisations may be able to help in different ways, for example:

- Staff members or group leaders may be happy to give you their views on the needs of their clients/groups, gaps in service provision, and so on.
- You may be able to organise attendance at one of the group meetings, or staff may organise a discussion group for you.
- Staff or group leaders may help you to gather the views of their clients and members, for example through individual discussion or surveys, with the results fed back to your organisation.
- The group or organisation may be able to point you to other useful contacts – either individuals or organisations.

Recognising the assistance provided by other organisations

If you are asking groups and individuals to assist with a needs assessment, this can place additional requirements on the organisation in terms of time and resources. Local voluntary and community groups often operate on a marginal financial basis, and any offer of funding to recognise their assistance is likely to be welcomed.

As consultation begins to become more and more important in a range of fields, the pressures being placed on local organisations are growing and these kinds of groups are very often asked to participate in consultation. Recognising this through a contribution either to the group as a whole, or to individual members of the group, can help to create good will.

Identifying needs

Analysing the information you have collected

Once you have managed to gather information on the communities in your area, and a range of views on the needs of different equalities groups, you will then need to analyse the information. This is the point at which you try to bring together all the information you have gathered to gain a clear picture of CLD needs.

What information should you be looking for?

Some key information you should be trying to identify includes:

- **Extent of current involvement** – scoping of the size of equalities groups and discussion with groups and individuals about involvement in CLD activity should give you an initial picture of the extent to which different groups are accessing services or becoming involved in activities. Setting out your findings in terms of existing involvement will give you a useful baseline to help you measure the results of future activity.

- **Positive elements of CLD activity** – your needs assessment may have identified certain services/activities that people from equalities groups feel they are able to access easily.

You should analyse the reasons behind positive feedback on existing services with a view to helping you to develop your activities accordingly in the future.

- **Barriers** – your discussions with organisations and individuals may have identified reasons why people do not feel able to access certain activities. This may range from lack of awareness to specific challenges such as language, physical access, organisational culture and so on. Recognition of all of the barriers faced by individuals from different groups and communities will help you plan how to address these.

- **Community infrastructure** – you may be able to get a sense of whether there are effective community groups in operation, and what existing links they have with service providers and other community groups and networks. In addition, you may get a sense of whether there are conflicts within or between these networks.

- **Gaps in service provision** – in some cases, you may identify demand for certain services or activities that are not available in your area.

What to do next

- **Produce key findings** – to make sure that everyone involved is aware of the findings of your needs assessment, it would be useful to draw your findings together into a short document. This should simply explain what you found out about the needs of the equalities group(s) in the CLD field.

- **Develop strategy and action plan** – finally, you will want to ensure that your needs assessment is linked to action. This is a key stage, as the point of assessing needs will normally be so that you can ensure that needs are met more effectively.

Tips

- **Take your time** – Doing a needs assessment takes time – often it can feel like you are not managing to contact many people, or get a clear picture of views and needs.

- **Do not be disheartened** – Often, people will not immediately want to talk about their needs. Or you might find that there are very few groups which you can consult with. If this is the case, you may need to invest time in building the networks and capacity within communities before beginning to speak to people about their needs.

- **Provide feedback** – One of the most important stages in the whole process of needs assessment is to provide feedback to all organisations and individuals who were involved. It recognises the time that people put in, and can be a first step in developing relationships through keeping people informed.

Acting on the findings of your CLD needs assessment

A very important part of assessing needs is having some idea of what scope there is for taking the necessary action. It is not useful to find out about needs without having some means of acting on them.

This does not mean that you need to have a pot of resources ready to launch new services. In some cases, you might wish to assess needs so that you can demonstrate that there is a need for new or improved CLD activities, for example in a funding application. However, through assessing needs you will be speaking to local communities, and you need to be honest with people about what action can be taken to meet the needs identified.

You should also make sure that you provide feedback to everyone who took part. This is important because it:

- acknowledges the support people have given
- tackles 'consultation fatigue' and lets people see results from their involvement (making them more likely to get involved again in the future).

Some things to think about:

- Why are we assessing needs?
- What resources do we have to act on needs identified?
- What scope is there to adapt our existing services/strategies based on our findings?
- How will we provide feedback to participants?

Example: Local organisation working with faith communities

"When we first started – 15 years ago – I was just so pleased when anyone wanted to come and hear our views that I always said yes straight away. Now, we receive calls from people all the time asking to come and consult with us. The first thing I always ask is what is it for? …and then, what will it achieve? People get fed up being consulted on things if they don't see the results. Now, I'm also getting better at asking whether the group can have a donation for helping out as well – I always feel a bit cheeky but it's important!"

Planning support

Guidance on planning CLD work with equalities groups, from strategic planning of services across whole areas to planning of day-to-day activities to support communities.

Strategic planning

Strategic planning of CLD activity with equalities groups.

The central framework for planning CLD activity at a strategic level is the Community Learning and Development Strategy that must be produced by each Community Planning Partnership in **each local authority** area.

At some point, you may wish to undertake a review of the strategy to ensure that equalities groups are adequately planned for, based on the results of a needs assessment. This approach would involve mainstreaming service planning for equalities groups within your wider strategic planning activities.

In some areas, you may wish to develop a targeted strategy for equalities groups, or one particular community. This may be appropriate if you have identified particular needs that are not being met by existing service provision (and that require a different or more intensive approach). This targeted approach should link to the overarching CLD strategy.

Regardless of which approach you are taking in the strategic planning of CLD activity with equalities groups, there are a number of key issues to bear in mind:

- **Demonstrating involvement of equalities groups** – communities and equalities groups should be involved in the development of your CLD strategy. This might happen through: involvement in needs assessment; representation at strategy development groups; and information/discussion sessions with equalities groups (as development progresses).

- **Establishing shared principles and commitment** – ensuring that all partners share a joint vision of what they aim to achieve, and have a common commitment to the strategy.

- **Establishing links to operational planning** – It is also important that your CLD strategy sets out the links to operational planning and delivery of CLD activity on the ground. This applies equally to activity with equalities groups, and this can be achieved through linking your strategy to a CLD Action Plan.

Example: Strategic planning activity with equalities groups in Aberdeen

To plan equalities activity at a strategic level across the whole of Aberdeen, an Equalities Action Network has been established. This involves:

- senior staff from Aberdeen City Council
- community planning partners
- elected members.

This Network is responsible for setting clear equality priorities for all community planning partners and council services. Each service has a nominated lead officer on the Network. A range of forums for communities of interest have also been established, and feed into the Equalities Action Network.

An action plan is developed jointly and discussed at an annual planning event. This event involves a wider range of stakeholders, including people from equalities groups. Each year, the planning event is held in advance of the process of developing individual service plans and setting budgets. Once the action plan is agreed, the strategic priorities then feed into the development of service plans – including CLD plans. This ensures that there are linkages between the wider equalities action plan, and the CLD planning process.

Just some of the activities that have been undertaken on a joint basis include:

- targeted promotion of learning opportunities to older and younger people
- events bringing different communities together to discuss experiences of discrimination
- audit of consultation processes available to people from different communities
- developing and supporting equalities forums, to engage in community planning
- funding for voluntary/community events to promote equality and social inclusion.

In Glasgow, eight local Community Learning Partnerships were set up to take forward CLD activity across the city. Each Partnership produced its own action plan. It was recognised that the needs of some communities may not be met through geographically based plans.

As a result, a Themed Community Learning Partnership was set up. The Partnership was chaired by the Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance and focused on improving CLD services for young people from minority ethnic communities.

The Themed Community Learning Partnership developed a themed action plan, which set out eight priorities. These included the provision of training for CLD staff and volunteers; developing outreach work with young people from minority ethnic communities; and gathering accurate information on needs to inform future service planning. In taking the plan forward, a key task was to make links with the local CLD Partnerships, to ensure that equalities work was mainstreamed within Glasgow's CLD activity.

Operational planning

It is important to have a framework for planning CLD activity with equalities groups at an operational level. One option is to develop an organisational strategy and action plan for working with equalities groups. There are several key issues to consider.

It may be obvious, but it is very important that your plans for CLD activity are strongly based on views and experiences of the equalities group(s) you wish to target. This will encourage more ownership of the plans, increase understanding of your activities and ultimately should help you to get people from equalities groups involved in your activities.

You cannot do everything all at once! If you are developing a strategy for working with equalities groups, it will probably be necessary for you to identify groups most in need of CLD activity – through discussion with communities themselves – and to target your resources accordingly.

The Scottish Government is clear that CLD activity should be targeted at vulnerable and excluded groups, so identifying those most in need in your area is the first step. You may wish to have an immediate plan to focus on one or two equalities groups, and a longer-term aim of expanding to meet the needs of other communities over time.

It can take time to develop CLD activity with equalities groups. Your plans should include time for developing relationships and building capacity to participate in CLD activity. Often, you may need to build in time for simply identifying and making contact with equalities groups, before beginning to encourage participation in CLD activity.

Make sure that your service plans link to the activities of other CLD providers and to wider activities in health, community safety, regeneration and other relevant fields. This is important to ensure that there is no duplication of service provision, that services are developed for those most in need, and that added value can be generated through joint working.

Delivering support

When planning how services will be delivered, it is important to address some key aspects to ensure that users are included and engaged in the right way.

Targeted or mainstream services

When developing services for equalities groups, you will need to decide whether you wish to encourage people to use mainstream services, through making these more accessible, or develop targeted services for particular groups.

You should discuss the approach with people from equalities groups themselves. By the time you come to develop new services, you should have a clear idea of what the needs of people from equalities groups are in your area. You should already have gone through a stage of assessing the needs of equalities groups.

For some groups it can be important to have separate services available. This can be for different reasons – for example for some cultures and faiths women-only groups are important ways of ensuring that everyone can get involved. In other cases, it can simply make people feel more comfortable if they are able to attend activities that involve people of the same age or same life experience.

For others, access to targeted services can be less important. This can mean that it is more appropriate to try to find ways in which everyone can attend mainstream activities. This can also be a useful way of promoting equality and raising awareness among all communities of the needs and experiences of equalities groups in the area.

In some cases, you may wish to take an approach that involves both targeted and mainstream activity. This can be a way of supporting equalities groups to access mainstream services, through provision of more intensive support to those who are less confident or who experience more barriers in accessing services.

Improving access to community learning and development

Supporting equalities groups to get involved

The first stage in developing appropriate activities for equalities groups should be to involve the communities themselves. Key things to remember:

- Build on any information you gathered during the needs assessment process when developing services – such as trying to address any barriers identified in accessing CLD activities.
- Try to work with people on an ongoing basis to make sure that the services you develop suit people's needs.

As with all communities, people from equalities groups will often need practical support to enable them to overcome barriers to becoming involved in CLD activity. Key things to think about include:

- suitability of venue – for example for people with disabilities, parents of children etc
- carers/friends – should be able to attend if required

- needs of parents – considering, for example, issues such as availability of childcare and timing of events
- recognising contribution – this could either be financial compensation for people's time, or a gesture of recognition such as provision of (appropriate) food or training and support for participants.

Building the capacity of equalities groups

Offering equalities groups some training and development activity can build capacity and confidence, and help groups become involved in CLD activity.

Capacity building can be particularly important in areas where equalities groups have not traditionally been active in CLD, or where groups and networks for equalities communities are not well developed.

There may be a need for targeted capacity building work with individual equalities groups, for example support in establishing new groups, developing these groups, and linking with wider activity.

Creating innovative, informal services

Creating the right atmosphere

In working with equalities groups, it is important that people feel confident becoming involved in CLD activity. Creating the right atmosphere and building relationships can be very important.

It can be helpful to use innovative or informal methods. Successful examples have included: a café style drop-in service; sports activities; and music and cultural activities.

It is also important to make sure that the atmosphere created by other service users and staff is welcoming. And if any discrimination or prejudice is experienced, attitudes need to be challenged effectively.

Creating a 'hub' for social activities

Many people see the social and informal element of CLD activity as the main reason for becoming involved. Often the learning and capacity development aspect of CLD is something that develops once communities have begun to come together, develop and decide what kind of support or development activity they require.
"The best thing about the centre is just getting the company of other women and getting out of the house."

In addition to developing innovative, informal services, another way of attracting people to attend services can be through creating a hub of activity for socialising and bringing people together. Just getting people through the door – even for a brief visit or social group – can be a key stage in encouraging people to become involved in CLD activity.

"People come in for a cup of tea, and it gets you in and encourages you to use the centre."

Clearly, finding a venue that is accessible, and where everyone feels comfortable, can be very important in creating this kind of hub. This will vary for different communities, and will require consultation with people in your local area.

Examples

Bellsbank Women's Project

The Bellsbank Women's Project began by encouraging women to attend a drop-in café for a cup of tea after they dropped their children off at school. As the project is based in a community wing of a primary school, this approach worked well, with parents being used to the venue and happy to meet with other women socially.

Over time, the staff began to talk to the women about their needs in terms of adult learning. The women gradually became involved in developing ICT classes, adult literacy classes, leisure activities and social groups, based on the services and activities they felt they needed. As concerns were raised about local services, some women also began to get involved in local community forums set up to enable local people to influence the way services are delivered.

The women felt that the main reason that they were involved in the project was because of the relaxed atmosphere, the focus on building relationships gradually, and the way that services and activities are planned entirely based on what the women say they want and need.

The Tapestry Group (Glasgow)

This group was established after consultation showed that many women in the south side of Glasgow shared an interest in arts and crafts. They recognised that this could bring together potentially isolated women in a social setting, and could help to get women involved in other CLD activities. The group was set up in a neighbourhood hall.

The group is well attended by white and Asian women, and has resulted in a range of different activities being developed. The centre is seen as a key contact point for finding out about local services - for example welfare rights officers, health and other local service providers have attended the group. Visits to other local services – such as a local library – have also been arranged.

Classes have also developed within the hall itself – including computing classes, art lessons, Tai Chi and dancing. While not all women join in the activities, the hall is seen as a focal point for local activity for older women.

> *"I can't dance now but I enjoy watching and I like the company."*
>
> *Tapestry Group member*

Staff responsibilities

It can be very important to ensure that your staff and volunteers relate and engage effectively with the equalities groups you are working with.
There are a number of general points to take account of when working with equalities groups:

- There is often a general preference for an informal approach to CLD service provision.
- Employing staff and encouraging volunteers from equalities groups can also play a big part in getting people involved.
- The development of an ongoing relationship between staff/volunteers and participants can be important.

Case study: The Oasis Youth Centre (Dumfries)

The Oasis Youth Centre is based in Dumfries. It began as an informal drop-in venue for young people, based in a local primary school. Over time, it has formalised its activities and has been able to create a welcoming atmosphere for young people, including those from equalities groups.

The centre established a youth management committee and this group lobbied the council to provide funding and support for establishing a more formalised youth centre. They were successful in attracting £300,000 in funding to redevelop the primary school and relaunch it as Oasis Youth Centre in 1999.

The centre is run by the youth management committee, who work in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council. Discussions with local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people identified that the centre was seen as a very accessible resource.

The LGBT young people consulted did not feel that their sexual orientation or identity was an issue or barrier for them in using the youth centre. Importantly, they said they didn't feel they stood out – even though their sexual orientation was 'no secret'. This made people feel comfortable accessing the centre. There were two main reasons for this.

Involvement of young people

Firstly, the fact that young people are very involved in shaping the way the Youth Centre is run was a big attraction. The young LGBT people felt that this meant the activities on offer were very interesting and appropriate for people of their age group. In some cases, particularly interesting classes had encouraged people to begin using the centre. For example, the centre advertised its mixing studio facility which attracted a number of young people to the facility.

Welcoming staff and atmosphere

Secondly, the staff at the centre were seen as very welcoming – 'The staff are really good as they are young too'. In many cases, young people who used the centre had gone on to work for the centre on a part-time or full-time basis. This helped to build an informal atmosphere, where everyone was welcome to use the centre and be involved in planning future activities.

The centre has been successful in attracting a wide range of young people to use its facilities. It runs many different courses and activities, including a music forum, art workshops, drama activities, cookery classes and health and safety courses. As the centre is run by young people

themselves, it can make sure that the needs of young people are central to its activities. The Oasis Youth Centre has been able to create a welcoming atmosphere for young people, including those from equalities groups.

The Centre for Older Persons Agenda was jointly established jointly by Queen Margaret University and the Royal Bank of Scotland and aims to enhance the quality of life for older people in Scotland through research, developing practice and education.

One of the centre's activities is to provide educational opportunities for older people in Scotland. This has been prioritised by the centre, as 'older people as a group are often not considered in the life-long learning agenda', and many higher education courses do not specifically reach out to this group.

As a result, the centre developed a series of courses designed for and with older people. These include:

- **Bolder and Wiser** – a course aimed at listening to older people's agendas, and enabling them to have their voices heard. A central aim was to develop skills to help people to carry out their own research into the needs of older people, and to open up opportunities to become involved in future research projects.

- **Education for Participation** – this course aims to help people aged 50 and over to become involved in helping to influence policy and services for older people. It used a range of innovative methods to help people gain the confidence to speak out in a range of different situations – including surveys, formal meetings, and understanding published documents.

An evaluation of the 'Education for Participation' course found that the course had been highly successful. It had a number of important impacts, including:

- increased confidence in expressing opinions – 'I learnt that I was not the only one who feels 'shy' about putting my points across.'

- increased awareness of social and political issues – 'It awakened an interest in social issues I hadn't recognised before.'

- enthusiasm to go on to do something else – 'It has fired my enthusiasm for research with older people.'

Read the final evaluation of the Education for Participation project, published by Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh:
www.qmu.ac.uk/copa/research/documents/educationparticipation.doc [Word document]

Promoting your support for equalities groups

Raising awareness of the activities and services available amongst equalities groups in your area is critical, regardless of whether you are developing new services or seeking to increase participation of equalities groups.

The first step should be to use the routes already established when you involved people from equalities groups in needs assessment and service development. This can be the single best way of promoting your services, as you will already have a pool of people who need these services and have been involved in developing them.

However, you will also wish to reach out to wider communities. There are many different ways in which you can promote your activities, including:

- **Working with other organisations** – this is generally the most effective way of encouraging involvement by equalities groups in CLD activity. Where there are local organisations working specifically with the equalities groups you are targeting, you should work jointly to promote involvement in your activities. It may also be useful to work with other organisations who have contact with equalities groups – such as social work, health, housing providers, community groups or local employers.

- **Use of appropriate publicity media** – whether you are targeting equalities groups in general or one group in particular, it can be useful to raise awareness of your activities through relevant media. For example, if you wish to attract young LGBT people to use your service, advertising in LGBT newsletters and websites may be one way of raising awareness. Local radio stations broadcasting in community languages may also be a way of attracting minority ethnic communities to your activities. This type of publicity should complement close joint working with other local organisations working with equalities groups.

Whichever method you use to advertise your services, you should remember to pass on key messages of relevance to different equalities groups. For example, information on physical access to venues, interpretation services and childcare should be provided where appropriate.

5. Developing your organisation to support equality

The way in which your organisation is run can have a big impact on your ability to support equality through CLD activity.

You will need to work in a way that ensures that everyone in your organisation recognises the overall importance of equality, and the particular importance of work with equalities groups in the CLD field.

Policies and procedures

Your organisation should have policies in place to ensure equality is central to your activities. It is important to think about how this can be achieved.

Overall aims

It is good practice for all organisations to have a written statement on equality. This could be an equality scheme, policy or strategy, or similar.

The new Equality Act 2010 requires certain public sector organisations to produce a statement on 'equality outcomes'. This means setting out exactly what the organisation aims to achieve in terms of equality. The equality outcomes must be developed taking reasonable steps to involve people who have protected characteristics by law.

These organisations must then regularly report on progress towards these outcomes (every four years).

Develop your practice

- *Review your organisation's policies and procedures statement on equalities.*
- *If the organisation does not have an equalities statement, consider how one could be developed.*

Assessing impact

It is important to think about how your policies and practices impact on equality.
Equality impact assessments involve assessing your organisation's policies and practices to establish how they might impact on different communities. The aim is to ensure that all of your policies promote equality.

From April 2011, all 'public authorities' need to assess the impact of their proposed policies and practices on people who have 'protected characteristics' under the new Equality Act 2010. This means that any public sector organisation undertaking CLD activity needs to do an Equality Impact Assessment which considers impact in relation to:

- age
- disability
- gender
- race or ethnicity

- language
- faith, religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity.

Develop your practice

Your organisation should have a standard format for doing an equalities impact assessment. If not, you may find the NHS Scotland and Scottish Government Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Toolkit useful. This toolkit is targeted at the health sector but outlines a useful framework.

http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/02/20687/52421

- *Try adapting this framework for use within your organisation.*

Voluntary and community organisations do not have this same public sector duty. But you would still find it useful to assess the impact of your policies and practices in relation to equality – and it would be good practice to do so.

In the workplace

Your organisation also has responsibilities as an employer.

Your organisation should be aiming to develop a diverse workforce, which draws on the skills and experiences of a wide range of communities. Your workforce can become a key way of expressing the diversity of your organisation and engaging effectively with different groups.

An important way of demonstrating that you are committed to developing a diverse team – of both staff and volunteers – is through preparation of an equal opportunities policy. This should cover your approach to recruitment, promotion and training, and methods of ensuring equality of opportunity for different equalities groups. Techniques you might use to encourage a diverse workforce include:

- use of flexible working arrangements
- targeted promotion of job advertisements to equalities groups
- developing clear, objective and justifiable criteria within job descriptions
- developing linkages with local organisations to reach a wide pool of applicants.

You should also ensure that all staff and volunteers are able to work for your organisation in a pleasant and safe environment, without experiencing harassment, bullying or discrimination. Having a policy on harassment, bullying and discrimination helps to set out exactly what is expected from staff, and sets out clear procedures if problems are experienced.

This policy should link closely to policies on discipline and grievances, as well as staff training programmes.

Staff and volunteer training

Developing a skilled team of staff and volunteers is a critical step in working effectively with equalities groups.

You may want to consider taking a joint approach to training. Are there other organisations within your CLD Partnership or wider Community Planning Partnership that have the same needs as you? Or can you share skills and experiences with other organisations?

Induction training

For new staff and volunteers, receiving training in work with equalities groups is particularly important. Staff should receive at least basic training which covers working with equalities groups. The type of training provided will vary depending on the role that the staff member plays within the organisation. However, all new staff should as a minimum receive training which enables them to:

- understand the importance of equality within CLD activity – and your organisation in particular
- understand their role in addressing inequality
- adopt a flexible and responsive approach to working with equalities groups.

Links should be made to ongoing training programmes to ensure that staff and volunteers continue to develop in their activity with equalities groups. You may wish to use parts of this resource during your induction training.

Ongoing training programmes

There should also be an ongoing equalities training programme in place for all staff and volunteers. Training should be strongly based on feedback from equalities groups regarding service provision, as well as the views of staff and volunteers. As such, training programmes in each area will be very different. However, a few pointers on the issues which could be covered are highlighted below:

- **Basis of CLD and equality** – This would cover many of the same issues which were suggested as part of induction training.

- **General advice on CLD work with equalities groups** – Practical, hands on training about working with equalities groups. This may involve building on the advice provided in the Developing CLD work with equality in mind section of this document.

- **Training on key activities** – If staff/volunteers are focussing on a particular activity, such as undertaking a needs assessment, you may wish to provide more specific training on this issue.

- **Sharing experiences** – Staff can learn well from one another. Facilitating information sharing events, where staff meet regularly to discuss their experiences – both positive and challenging – can be of great value.

- **External support** – in some cases, you may wish to organise training on a specific issue which you would like facilitated by an organisation or individual with considerable experience in the field. This may involve working jointly with a local organisation with

experience, working with a national voluntary organisation, or commissioning expert trainers in the field of equalities.

- **Learning from communities** – In some cases, it may be beneficial to host learning events where people from equalities groups work with staff to help them to learn from experiences. This could be an important way of building relationships between staff and equalities groups.

Embedding equality

Taking action to ensure that equality is central to your organisation's activities is not a one-off exercise. It is important to continue your work on equality issues on an ongoing basis.

You can do this through:

- **Checking that you meet standards** – How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development?[4] sets clear standards in relation to equality.

- **Setting up monitoring systems** – One of the best ways of ensuring that equality is central to your organisation's work is through setting up a good monitoring and evaluation system. This helps to make sure that you are working towards aims that are important to the communities you are targeting. But remember, your monitoring systems are only useful if you commit to taking action based on what you find out.

- **Regularly assessing needs** – Assessing needs is not a one-off process. Needs, experiences and the profile of communities can change quickly. Understanding your community through regularly asking people about their needs is essential.

Challenging attitudes – including your own

Embedding equality in your organisation's activities will probably mean that you have to challenge the attitudes that people hold about different communities, individuals or groups.

Importantly, you will have to think about your own attitudes. Everyone has their own perceptions, which develop through your everyday life and experiences. Understanding that these attitudes can shape the way that you deal with different situations is a very important first step.

To get you thinking, some of the main issues to consider could include:

- **Raising awareness** – Often perceptions can be formed without people fully understanding different experiences and situations. Working with people to raise awareness of the different experiences and issues facing people from equalities groups can be a very useful, and non-confrontational, way of challenging attitudes.

- **Thinking about terminology** – The words we use say a lot about our attitudes. Giving careful consideration to terminology used when working with equalities groups can be a way of exploring perceptions. It can be a useful way of identifying attitudes and beginning to discuss these.

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[4] www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/hgio2cld_tcm4-684586.pdf

- **Being flexible** – Situations and experiences change over time. People are individuals, and do not all share the same experiences and lifestyles. It is important not to form a rigid view of groups or communities. Make sure that you treat everyone as an individual and don't stereotype communities, even if it is based on what people from these communities have told you.

Example: The changing profile of minority ethnic communities in Highland

Until recently, ethnic minority communities in the Highland area were generally small, diverse and widely dispersed across the local authority area. In 2001, the Census identified that the ethnic minority population in Highland was just over 1,600.

In 2004, ten new countries joined the European Union, of which eight were Eastern European states. This has significantly changed the demographic profile in Highland. In one year (2004/05) over 2,500 people from Eastern European countries registered as workers in the Highland area. The area has therefore gone from having a very small minority ethnic community, to having a substantial Eastern European population.

This change has taken place very quickly, and understanding the needs and experiences of these new communities is a big task for service providers in the Highland area. This example demonstrates just how quickly the profile of communities in your area can change.

Example: Awareness raising for staff in Inverclyde

Inverclyde Council wanted to assess the need for activities and support for young LGBT people. To do this effectively, it first needed to raise awareness of issues around sexual orientation among youth workers.

The Council ran a pilot project which involved awareness raising sessions for 40 sessional staff who provide frontline activities through organised youth clubs. These sessions were delivered jointly by consultants and LGBT Youth Scotland.

Two training events were held as part of the pilot. An introductory session focused on raising awareness of the issues facing LGBT young people and the importance of engaging with LGBT young people in Inverclyde.

The session also explored key issues that should be covered in the second, more detailed, training event. The key issues that staff wished to explore in more detail were:

- how prejudice might be identified
- the use of language – what is appropriate or inappropriate
- confronting and challenging prejudice.

The second event focused on these issues through a number of exercises, which considered:

- representations of LGBT people in society – for example in the media, by government or in a religious context
- homophobia – the extent of homophobia and how it manifests itself, and how to promote a positive environment to counter homophobic bullying
- understanding needs and experiences – how to identify and manage issues impacting on young LGBT people
- planning for future actions – working jointly with young LGBT people to plan services.

Generally, the pilot was successful. It resulted in a longer term relationship between the Council and LGBT Youth Scotland, with more in-depth training developed. But the Council has had to work hard to gain commitment from sessional staff and emphasise the importance of attending training events. Although staff were paid to attend training events, it can be difficult for sessional staff to attend training outwith their contracted hours. In the future, the Council intends to make the most of existing training opportunities – like induction training – to ensure that equalities issues are considered in detail.

6. Useful websites

National Standards for Community Engagement

These standards set out best practice and standards expected of community engagement activity.

www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/94257/0084550.pdf

Scottish Government: community engagement how to guide

Developed to help people who are involved in community engagement, this guide provides information on what community engagement is, how it works and the impact it can have.

www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/HowToGuide

Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities
This guidance sets out the long-term framework for development of community learning and development (CLD) in Scotland.

It identifies three national priorities for CLD:

- achievement through learning for young people
- achievement through learning for adults
- achievement through building community capacity.

The WALT Challenge Fund Projects Evaluation Report collates the findings of the final evaluations from the WALT Challenge Fund projects (2008–11)

www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/02/18793/32157

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