



THE ROLE OF FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN IMPROVING CAREER PATHWAYS FOR CLD PRACTITIONERS

This report collates the contributions and outcomes from a series of four discussions which took place in February and March 2021.

Contents		Page
Introduction		1
SESSION 1	College based learning opportunities for CLD Practitioners	2
SESSION 2	Improving Career Pathways for CLD practitioners	6
SESSION 3	Supporting Practice Placements	9
SESSION 4	CLD Standards Council Approval	13
Annexe 1	Membership of the Planning Group	15

INTRODUCTION

In June 2020 the CLD Standards Council (CLDSC) published a 'Review of Career Pathways in Community Learning and Development (CLD)' [Available on the CLD Standards Council for Scotland website](#). This looked at the extent to which pathway/s already exist and how can they be more effective/efficient.

In Autumn 2020, following discussions with Community Learning colleagues within the College Development Network (CDN), CLDSC convened a Planning Group (see Annexe 1) to develop, support and promote college-based Professional Learning Opportunities for CLD Practitioners across adult learning, community development and youth work.

This resulted in the provision of four workshop sessions:

College-based Learning Opportunities for CLD Practitioners	5 February 2021
Improving Career Pathways for CLD practitioners	19 February 2021
Supporting Placements	11 March 2021
CLDSC Approval	22 March 2021

This report brings together the input, ideas and discussions which took place during these sessions. It includes:

- an overview of the various contributions with links to elements of their content for reference
- a collation of the ideas and proposals for development and improvement
- information about progress already being made to take these ideas forward.

In addition to being a record of inputs and discussions for those who attended the sessions, it is hoped that this report will be a useful point of reference going forward. An update on progress made on the issues and ideas raised is provided *in italics* after each cluster of discussions, along with contact information for those who wish to become/stay involved in various initiatives.

Key contacts for further information:

CLD Standards Council: contact@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

CDN Community Learning Network: Ann.Kirkwood@cdn.ac.uk

SESSION 1 College based learning opportunities for CLD Practitioners

The purpose of this session was to:

- Promote awareness of a range of accredited programmes for CLD practitioners
- Explore issues regarding current provision and accessibility of these programmes and the extent of unmet need/demand.
- Identify action to address the issues identified.

Accredited programmes for CLD Practitioners

Earlier work by the CLDSC, in collaboration with SQA had identified a range of accredited programmes for CLD practitioners.

While this should not be regarded as definitive, the 25 programmes identified confirm there is a good range of qualifications for CLD practitioners at SCQF levels 5-8.

Accredited provision – availability and access

However, further investigation into where these courses were available, raised significant concerns in terms of the limited number of centres currently providing programmes and the geographic concentration of provision in the central belt. See ['live centres' \(Word Document\)](#) For example, as at November 21, there were only 5 'live centres' providing HNC Working with Communities, while approximately 11 have been approved to do so. When the geographic location of these 'live centres' is factored in, we see that the bulk of accredited provision for CLD practitioners is in the Central Belt.

Concern about the reduction in the provision of programmes was echoed by the contributors to the session and by participations during the breakout discussions.

Accredited programmes - demand for CLD practitioner qualifications

As a former provider of CLD practitioner programmes, Mark Ladyka of Fife College spoke about the difficulties associated with struggling to recruit to these programmes.

Maggie Murphy, Glasgow Kelvin College, spoke of their experiences as a current provider of a number of CLD practitioner programmes.

Graham MacLellan Senior CLD Worker: Adult Literacies, Inverclyde Council shared experiences from an employer perspective. He spoke about the professional pathways developed in Inverclyde which allow staff and volunteers to build their skills gaining qualifications such as PDA SALL, PDA Youth Work and SQA Outreach and Engagement Award. The Council's good track record for supporting volunteers underpins their success in 'growing their own' CLD practitioners.

Opportunities to pursue an HNC or degree qualifications are more limited. This is partly due to funding issues. In the past staff were given time and fees to study. This is no longer the case and staff and volunteers struggle to fund themselves. There is also a geographical gap for CLD practitioners from Inverclyde who wish to study for a CLD qualification. The closest college offering CLD qualifications being Glasgow Kelvin College and the closest generic CLD degree being available at University of the West of Scotland in Motherwell which is a significant distance from Inverclyde. There is, however, good local involvement with Glasgow University Community Development team and the Activate programme with 5 practitioners joining the degree programme at both year 1 and 2 levels based on experience.

In Inverclyde, a CLD qualification is now a desirable recruitment criteria rather than an essential. A decreasing level of those applying for vacancies are CLD qualified staff which is a concern. Lack of new funding and local cuts have made recruitment of 'new blood' difficult.

Graham also spoke about the need for a collaborative approach to working with employers to stimulate demand for HNC and degree courses. This should include:

- Building training in CLD into funding bids locally
- Promoting understanding across the sector of 'what CLD is'
- Flexible part time courses so people can work and study at the same time.

He emphasised that this needs to be driven at a strategic level to make it happen, noting that increasingly many third sector jobs do not require or mention a CLD qualification and that there is a reluctance among employers, identified at recent events and meetings, to use the term CLD as it 'confuses applicants'.

In general, contributors spoke of programmes being discontinued because of low numbers, a lack of understanding of the value and impact of CLD and the need for professional recognition for CLD practitioners and their qualifications. Funding for these programmes and for the students who wish to take them is clearly also an issue.

On a more positive note, participants referred to the increased interest and participation in community activity during the pandemic and widespread support for the idea of 'building back better'. There was consensus on the importance of CLD programmes that offer accreditation and on the impact they have on the individual and the community. The number of colleges looking to commence or restart accredited programmes was also very encouraging.

In the course of the session participants brought forward a number of ideas to address the issues raised. These are collated below.

See next page.

Issues and ideas – Session 1

Raising awareness of CLD as a career

- Collaborative action to promote as worthwhile qualifications leading to a career
- have CLD qualification as a mandatory requirement for employment -CLD workers are key workers and need to be qualified
- Discussion around levy for modern apprenticeships of 5k- could there be incentive for CLD organisations to take students to promote CLD workforce
- people don't seem to know what HNC WwC can do for them or where it can take them
- is the title fit for purpose? Do we need to modernise it?
- Branding seemed to be a problem with NC – putting CLD/YW in the title might attract more people.
- terminology of programmes varies, suggestion CLDSC lead on action to have CLD in title
- engage with Skills Development Scotland to raise profile of CLD as career e.g. through My World of Work
- promotion of CLDSC as professional body
- more emphasis on CPD, recording and sharing
(compulsory for registration and re-registration with CLDSC)

Progress and plans

- (1) *CLDSC has initiated a piece of work to enhance profile of CLD as a career within My World of Work and other SDS activities. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.*
- (2) *CLDSC is working with partners to progress recommendations regarding qualifications. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.*
- (3) *Taking a collaborative approach to branding/promotion initiatives and including CLD in title of programmes will be taken forward through the CDN CL Network*

Identify demand and support recruitment

- Need to develop tasters/ short thematic programmes for volunteers/ sessional staff in communities to promote and recruit interest and to ensure there is a pathway beyond this
 - need for clear mapping of courses
 - needs to be easier to find out about courses
 - more joined up approach across sectors to promote opportunities for those employed in CLD
 - make more use of YW Guarantee e.g. offering community worker assistant posts.
- (4) *Collaboration in taking forward work around entry level and taster courses. Contact fiona.mckenzie@wcs.ac.uk.*
 - (5) *CLDSC is working with partners to map programmes for CLD practitioners. See Career Pathways Working Group report [CPWG Report](#). Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.*

Improving access and availability

- important to think about entry level pathways
- developing remote learning options will improve access
- above particular important to address gaps in rural areas
- need to do more to overcome digital poverty, inequality
- need to improve digital agility for CLD workforce
- review funding approaches
- working with regional boards to highlight importance of these kind of courses is essential (possible role for CLDSC to help with this)

- (6) *There are a number of existing activities around digital access, poverty, inequality. Poverty Inquiry Report anticipated. To be taken forward by the CDN CL Network.*
- (7) *How best to take forward issues of funding and gaps in rural areas to be discussed at next Meeting of CDN CL Network.*
- (8) *CLDSC is working with partners to look at taking forward blended learning approaches to help address geographic gaps and barriers to attending full-time college. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.*

SESSION 2 Improving Career Pathways for CLD practitioners

The purpose of this session was to look at:

- pathways between courses for CLD practitioners within the college sector
- articulation between colleges courses and degree programmes (with a particular focus on the HNC Working with Communities)

The Developmental Pathway

The first part of the session considered the ‘stepping stones’ along the developmental pathway leading up to degree level course and issues of access and support. It is important to recognise that while we talk about stepping stones, students will not necessarily take a step at each level, but we do want to make sure they don’t have to make too big a leap at any point. It was noted that the pathway includes accredited programmes provided by SQA approved centres. [Qualifications Developmental Pathway](#)

Stewart Ritchie, Forth Valley College, spoke about improving the pathway within a college and gave an example of the Newstart Care and Community Programme, [NewStart \(PowerPoint\)](#) leading potentially to the NC and subsequently the HNC Working with Communities and thereafter to a degree course at university with an articulation agreement in place.

In the breakout discussions following these contributions, ideas and issues included the following:

Issues and ideas - Session 2 part 1
Movement along the developmental pathway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there could/should be more movement between centres and colleges - need for better partnership working - Look at supporting study skills if we are taking direct entry into the HNC - Learner development workers attached to HNC programme to take strain off lecturers - Encourage peer support and culture of cooperative learning
<p>(9) <i>CDN CL Network to lead on promoting cross-college partnership working and facilitate collaboration with centres. Links to 6 & 7.9</i></p> <p>(10) <i>CLDSC Working with partners to ‘get behind’ vulnerable qualifications. HNC is one of these. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.</i></p> <p>(11) <i>interest in guidance qualifications, identifying what’s there/what could be developed being taken forward by the CDN CL Network.</i></p>

Course content
- courses have varying amounts of hours, but how different is the content? - how clearly is the content mapped against other level 6 courses to enable students to make informed decisions about best qualification to undertake
<i>(12) A sub-group of CDN CL Network is to be established to look into this.</i>
Entry level programmes
- Could be a step even before even the newstart courses at college e.g. - community skills leadership course be developed? <i>See action 4 above.</i>

‘articulation is the process by which one institution matches its courses or requirements to coursework completed at another institution’

The second part of the session focussed on articulation between college courses and university, again with a particular focus on the HNC Working with Communities.

Participants heard from Annette Coburn about articulation routes with the University of the West of Scotland and college outreach. She also demonstrated ‘Making Your Experience Count’ which offers a means of direct entry for experienced practitioners and for people with no formal qualifications. Full-Time and Part-Time routes to achieving a BA (Hons) Degree in Community Education at UWS utilise portfolio based methods to recognise and assess prior learning. Credit is achieved through presentation of a personal portfolio, including reflective consideration of prior learning. Credit is awarded to applicants who provide evidence of academic and/or experiential learning. Annette also shared information about second year entry to the degree qualification. <https://sway.office.com/LlIxaYrV75VQKuU7?ref=Link>

This was followed by an input from Mark Ladyka of Fife College, talking about the experiences of students entering into second year of a CLD Degree having completed the HNC Working with Communities. Acknowledging that each is different, he noted that students entering in second year:

- Miss out on the social aspects associated with first year – no freshers week for them!
- Are joining a group where relationships are already formed
- May struggle with academic writing

The following ideas and issues were raised in the second set of breakout discussions:

Issues and ideas - Session 2 part 2
Current positions/concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Varying arrangements in place for articulation with degree courses - Concern that universities don't accept students with HNC if they are 17/18 as they don't have highers. <p>The repetition of work in Year 1 of BA and HNC WWC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - need to look at articulation routes and what units we teach and how they align with units at university
<i>(13) CLDSC have established a collaborative with HE and FE providers of HNC. It is intended that this should help address the issues around articulation above. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.</i>
Making the case for articulation into CLD degree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - important to have a collective voice. - important to understand expectations of stakeholders e.g. CLDSC, FE, HE - Role for CLDSC as Professional Body which approves CLD programmes - would make it less onerous for individual colleges - Articulation should be on a basis of CLDSC Approval for HNC/Degree courses.
<i>See 13 above</i>
Supporting students with second year entry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - generic issues are probably with self-study skills - problem can be the mindset of universities. - a lot of input given to students at college, then very different experience at university with much more independent study required. - positive from Covid is the shift to blended and more independent learning/study. - Admin of Forth Valley working on alumni Facebook page to help create support network. - College's to support students especially in terms of academic writing <p>sway on academic writing: https://sway.office.com/Wtdtq1brHyTRcgPA?ref=Link</p>
<i>See 13 above.</i>
How universities can help? (guaranteed interviews, second year entry etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having a good relationship with central admissions - Specific criteria outside of SQA qualifications- Experience of CLD - Collaborative working, building communities of professionals with common interests - A pre course (1 week long) for students with direct entry to support socialisation, academic writing, submitting work etc. - Academic departments of colleges and universities working together to support students.
<i>See 13 above</i>

SESSION 3 Supporting Practice Placements

The purpose of this session was to:

- Affirm the value of the placement experience for CLD practitioners
- Consider the benefits of taking a placement
- Review the impact of COVID 19 on placement provision
- Explore and address issues around CLD Practice placements

Importance and value of the placement experience

As a two-way learning process, the benefits for the placement provider agency include that it encourages reflection and a re-visiting of principles and practices within their organisation and creates a space for everyone to learn and reflect in a collaborative way.

For CLD practitioners and Practice Supervisors, the placement experience offers:

- development of their professional education, supervision and leadership skills
- being prompted to critically reflect on their own practice
- being kept up to date with current theories and evidence
- increasing employability of the Student CLD Practitioner
- increasing organisational provision

Supporting the provision and quality of placements

From a CLDSC perspective placement students are the future of CLD and considerable emphasis is given to the placement in our Approval Standards. CLDSC is currently converting the Practice Placement Guidance to Practice Placement Standards and a training course for Practice Placement Supervisors is in development with plans for a pilot to commence in the Autumn.

Historically local authorities have been a reliable source of placement opportunities but contacts in local authorities advise that staffing cutbacks experienced over the years have decreased their capacity to take students and the pandemic has exacerbated this situation.

The accessibility of placements is vital to the profession and this is emphasised by Scottish Government in their [CLD Plans Guidance Note \(2021-24\)](#) which requires these plans to include providing practice placements for CLD students. Linked to this there has been some discussion about the potential to develop a placement directory. The availability of appropriately qualified and experienced staff is also an issue and the creation of a bank of CLD Supervisors has also been proposed. CLDSC also recognised that some of their requirements with regard to placements are more

demanding than those of SQA and are keen to use this discussion series to better understand the implications and issues.

Maggie Murphy, Glasgow Kelvin College, shared her experience of placements from a college perspective. Her input re-iterated the impact of the practice placement experience for students and the importance of supporting them to have a meaningful and enjoyable experience which boosted their confidence to practice.

Darran Gillan, Youth & Programme Development Manager, Paisley YMCA re-iterated the importance of the placement and spoke about his organisation's experience as a placement provider, illustrating how new technologies can play a useful role in creating opportunities for CLD students in a placement context.

In the second part of the session, Kirsty Gemmell, Development Officer with the CLD Standards Council spoke about the guidance and support available with regard to the impact of COVID 19 on placements. See [Guidance for CLD students and programme providers for academic year 2020/21 | CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#) . Kirsty summarised the key mitigations in place to support students to continue to access quality placement experiences e.g. optional flexible reduction in placement hours; access to supported professional learning from national organisations; and how to include volunteering/other work experience within placement hours.

Maggie Murphy (Kelvin College) and Stewart Ritchie (Forth Valley College) then shared good practice in adapting their placements in response to the pandemic and issues regarding meeting placement requirements from a college perspective.

Kate Sangster, (Adult Literacies/ESOL South Ayrshire Council) shared her experience from a placement provider perspective. South Ayrshire Council have always supported placements for students volunteering with them. With lockdown restrictions in place, the service had to first consider whether this was realistic and set about liaising with both students and academic staff in order to address the challenges, including:

- Move to online delivery - guidelines restricted/barred face to face activities
- Digital access as well as being able to access the skills of service users
- Access issues such as limited or no broadband
- Council restrictions for email addresses only for employees

Managing these challenges within a “can do” mindset led to students engaging in a new context. For example, a student was able to take on group delivery and support for some ESOL learners on line. This interface opened up a new and very different focus for them going forward in their professional work. Another student acted as a Digital champion for those who were given devices through the Connecting Scotland initiative.

The fact that students were already volunteers with the CLD service and had established relationships with staff and a working knowledge of systems and processes, contributed to the success of these new approaches.

How placements were supported

To address the challenge of engaging students fully in their placements, twice weekly meetings were established. On Fridays, supervisor and student would discuss work undertaken over the week, then plan for the following week. This was complemented by a mid-week check in to discuss progress, successes and challenges. Discussions around how the different tasks, sessions, etc fit with CLD, putting learners at the heart of provision, why we do what we do, what is the need, what are the barriers, what difference does it make, so what? which would more normally be natural conversations as part of delivery became part of a discussion plan.

In addition to this the student would engage with group tutors re session plans and undertake reflection at the end of each session, looking at how learners engaged, what worked well, what could have been done differently and what didn't go well – why didn't it go well and what needs to or could be changed? Do the online sessions work for the learners? Do the online sessions work for the tutors? Notes from these discussions were retained by students in their placement portfolio. While it had been challenging, a lot was learned about delivering our service in such a changing environment, including that it is possible to deliver high quality engagement and learning regardless of face-to-face or remote methodology.

Discussion in the break out groups which followed focussed on the practice placement challenges in lockdown, how we ensure quality and standardisation of the placement experience and the associated challenges for students and supervisors.

Issues and ideas – Session 3
Availability of placements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issue with the field in terms of getting placements - important to identify placements as soon as possible - previously offered a set amount of placements per year, that's changed recently - partnership working important for placements, particularly LA's - need for connectedness to understand each other's perspectives - need to look at workforce planning through taking more students on placement might encourage students to work for the placement provider post qualifying. - good practice historically with greater options for wider geographic spread of placement experience (especially in HE courses). - long time for FE students to be with one placement provider, but poses logistical challenges to try to encourage different experiences. - Use of college classes as placement working well
<i>(14) CLDSC are planning to work with partners to develop a placement directory and a supervisor training resource. Also supporting local authorities with regard to</i>

<p><i>3 year plan expectation around placements. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.</i></p>
<p>Availability of placement supervisors</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessing required amount of qualified supervisors is an issue - training for placement supervisors might encourage buy-in from supervisors
<p><i>See (14) above.</i></p>
<p>Meeting the standards</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - placement guidance can be unattainable for some of the HNC students e.g. one student moving from women's refuge to refuge who would have struggled. - should we do an equality impact assessment re placements? - teaching hours at Forth Valley are greater than at Kelvin – does this mean the placement commitment is greater? - significance of standardisation across placement hours across FE institutions. Parity of esteem for students entering higher education or employment - Hard to get cross strand placements - Placements mostly youth work
<p><i>(15) Review of Developmental Approval process is being linked to 10 above. Contact CLDSC for more information. Will update through CDN CL Network.</i></p>
<p>Supporting students on placement</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - customised support needed for each student. - if placements work well can make a marked difference - many students thriving on placement – turning point for them - some issues of accessibility - adaptations - 3 way support should be in place if needed to resolve issues - new technology can be effective and efficient - Work through challenges - different views on how quickly students should go on placement - important to have focused conversations with supervisor - beware exploitation of students
<p><i>See (9) and (10) above.</i></p>
<p>COVID related issues</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no placements in some LA's offered due to Covid. - recognise now that more could be offered as staff have learned and grown comfortable with use of technology and activities they are able to offer.

SESSION 4: CLDSC Approval

The first part of this session focused on the CLDSC Approval for programmes on the Developmental Route [Developmental Approval Process | CLD Standards Council for Scotland](#) and how we can support each other to develop submissions.

This process is scheduled for review later this year and in the second part of the session, experiences were shared from an applicant's perspective and from that of a member of the CLDSC Approval Committee.

CLDSC Approval Process

Susie Bisset, Development Officer (Approvals), CLDSC outlined the Approval Process for the /Developmental Route [Developmental Approval route information Presentation on Google](#).

Supporting each other through the Approval Process

Support from CLDSC

- Development Officer support
- Ongoing provision of information
- Ongoing feedback on submission
- Continuing engagement with colleges

Steward Ritchie Forth Valley College and Mark Ladyka, Fife College introduced a discussion on ways we can support each other.

Issues and ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to work together - for developmental approvals support set up teams site channel or CLDSC members SLACK - Exercise in best practice - Online supervisor course - Guidance document - Order of events – - Central point of contact - Good to have these connections and be able to support each other. - Critical friend is good. - Need to have a place where we can connect with colleagues across other institutions. - Keep connected
<p><i>See (9) and (10) above.</i></p>

Review of the Approvals Process for the Developmental Route

The review of the Approval Process for the Professional Route (CLD Degree Programmes) is nearing completion. This has introduced a transition from a process based on guidance to one based on standards. CLDSC welcomed the recent enhanced engagement with the college sector and proposed that the review process should be integrated into the process of upcoming submissions for Approval for the HNC Working with Communities

Maggie Murphy, Glasgow Kelvin College shared reflections from a college experience.

Sheila White, Glasgow Clyde College, spoke about her experiences as a member of the CLDSC Approval Panel and about the excellent training and support given to Approval Panel Members.

Being part of the Edinburgh University Approval Panel for their degree programme involved a considerable volume of reading prior to visit; detailed programme planning and meetings during the 2 day visit. The visit also provided an opportunity to engage with Edinburgh colleagues, students and critical friends. A full on but positive experience. Not a jolly!

Sheila also shared her experience of being a Panel Member for the Approval of the HNC Working with Communities at Glasgow Kelvin College and referred to some of the points made by Maggie Murphy in the previous input, agreeing that there is a need to simplify the process but maintain the quality and rigour of the standards.

This would involve discussion of the different options/types of approval and how CLDSC could encourage and support colleges to put forward their programmes for approval. Suggestions included peer mentoring; simplifying the paperwork; getting back to basics and talking to applicants to iron out queries. Recognising that the process isn't working as effectively as we want, CLDSC will wish to work with colleges in this way to identify what needs to change and to feed developments into the proposed review of the Developmental Approval Process.

The following issues and ideas were identified as important to factor into the review.

Issues and ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - issue of single strand programmes - not been working – will to make work - need to meet criteria - set up sessions to support submissions for NC/HNC
<i>See (15) above</i>

Annexe 1

Membership of the Planning Group

Eva Milroy	Dumfries and Galloway College
Maggie Murphy	Glasgow Kelvin College
John Begbie	West Lothian College
Jackie Howie	Learning Link
Fiona McKenzie	West College Scotland
Fraser Lennox	Ayrshire College
Stuart Ritchie	Forth Valley College
Sandra Grieve	Newbattle Abbey College
Mark Ladyka	Fife College
Fiona Herron	Dumfries and Galloway College
Ann Kirkwood	College Development Network
Julia McDonald	Dumfries and Galloway College
Ann McShane	Dumfries and Galloway College