

Community Learning and Development

in the Formartine Area of Aberdeenshire

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2012/13

Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff in Aberdeenshire work to deliver positive change in communities and in the personal lives of those living and working in our council area through informal learning. You will typically find us:

- in school settings working with young people to overcome challenges, building youth representation through local forums and the Aberdeenshire Youth Council, delivering tailored learning programmes and offering accreditation through Youth Achievement Awards and other routes and developing skills for employability for those young people who need that extra support to make their way in life;
- supporting adults through informal family learning groups, improving skills in English as a second language, delivering ICT learning programmes to enhance employability and quality of life and providing particular support through improved reading, writing and numeracy in small groups or one to one learning; and
- supporting volunteers to make contributions in their community but also to enrich their own lives, working with community groups so that they operate effectively, delivering training programmes for individuals and groups which lead to inclusive approaches in community settings and assisting with advice and guidance on managing and delivering local services.

The national guidance for community learning and development asks us to work with partners and to focus on:

- **improving life chances for people of all ages through learning, personal development and active citizenship; and**
- **building stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities.**

Making a difference...

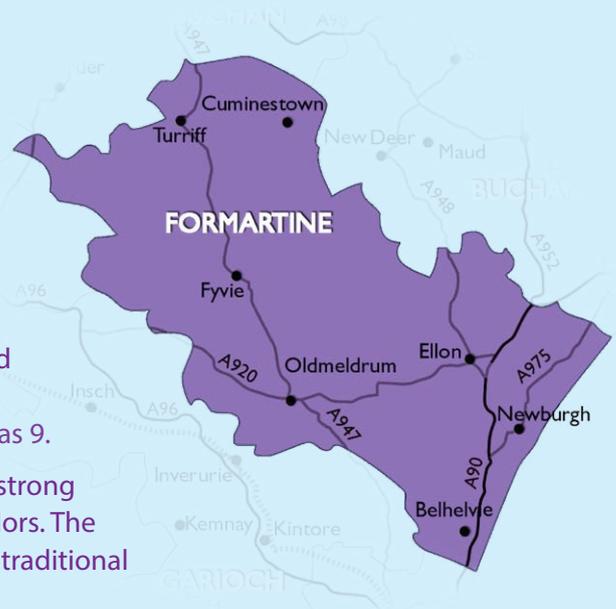
CLD work in Aberdeenshire

Across Aberdeenshire CLD work has led to some important achievements and outcomes for the people we work with. The following picture captures some of the results of our approach in the last year:

- 1,474 young people have been involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Over 500 young people achieved an award in that period. There have been 186 expeditions supported by 86 volunteers.
- 8,892 adults have been involved in CLD supported activities developing confidence, increasing well being, gaining accreditation and improving employability.
- 71 volunteer tutors helped 416 learners improve their literacy skills building confidence and lifeskills to improve quality of life
- 897 adults were supported to improve their English as a Second Language skills leading to increased confidence and access to training and employment opportunities.
- Adults were involved in 117 family learning activities particularly focusing on positive early years child development and parental involvement.
- 690 young people were involved in youth representation activity, strengthening youth citizenship and participation.
- 341 volunteers gave 3123 hours of their time in the past six months contributing to stronger and more active communities often managing services themselves.
- Learning in Aberdeenshire's communities has been delivered by CLD staff in over 1,500 projects, involving 15,351 sessions and 26,864 hours of contact time.

CLD staff use a national framework called *How good is our community learning and development?* to measure the quality and impact of their work. The following section uses quality indicators to report on some of the success stories and what we aim to do next.

- ☺ Formartine has a population of 39,419 people and has 5 main settlements including Ellon, Turriff, Oldmeldrum, Balmedie and Pitmedden. Formartine has experienced rapid population growth, particularly around Ellon and Oldmeldrum and in the south east where development has spread from Aberdeen City. The population is getting older and the population of children has also increased.
- ☺ The Formartine area in Aberdeenshire is served by three CLD Networks based around the larger settlements of Ellon, Meldrum and Turriff. Each Network is based around a secondary school and its feeder primary schools. Ellon Academy has 11 primaries, Meldrum has 12 and Turriff has 9.
- ☺ Employment remains high throughout Formartine with strong transport links to Aberdeen along major transport corridors. The area around Turriff retains its strong dependency on the traditional agricultural economy.
- ☺ Education attainment in Formartine continues to remain high and the number of school leavers going on to a positive destination is above the national average at 91.7%.



The Formartine area...

how well are we doing?

Overall, CLD work in Formartine shows good progression towards the high level outcomes from Aberdeenshire's Communities and Partnerships Strategy around the themes of Learning, Life and Work. Staff work in positive and productive partnerships to improve learning, increase life chances and increase well being for families, individuals and groups across Formartine. Partners have been involved in the process of evaluating our work and in identifying ongoing improvement actions.

How well do we support young people to achieve through learning? (Q1 2.1)

Young people are gaining increased accreditation through a range of opportunities such as Dynamic Youth Awards, Youth Achievement Awards, Saltire Awards and Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Young people are continuing to develop skills which allow them to be effective learners and contributors. Young people have been supported into volunteering and peer leadership opportunities.

Young people are feeling more included and valued in their communities through attending local meetings, consultations and participating in various youth action projects. Some young people further develop their leadership skills through attendance at residential training programmes.

Young people are supported through a range of transition stages in their lives – with good partnership working to provide targeted support which maintains school attendance levels and motivation to continue learning.

How well do we support adults to achieve through learning? (Q1 2.1)

A wide range of targeted adult learning opportunities have been delivered by CLD staff and by supported volunteer tutors.

Through targeted family learning projects, parents have been developing the confidence, resilience and knowledge to improve future outcomes for their families.

Adult learners have been supported to improve their confidence and skills around IT to enhance their employability levels. Changes to welfare benefits have seen an increased emphasis on on-line claims and job searching.

Learners report a reduction in social isolation as a result of their involvement in adult learning. There is regular attendance by older and more isolated members of the community (including those with disabilities/ASN/mental health) in community learning activities.

Targeted work in Meldrum has led to increased confidence, health and well being outcomes for women who have experienced domestic abuse. The Parents Plus Coffee group has created a safe and nurturing space for women which has enhanced their individual resilience through peer support.

Meldrum – Da Drama Queens

Work was done with a group of 9 S2 girls in a partnership between CLD staff and the school Pupil Support Worker.

The focus of the work was to improve self-awareness and tolerance levels amongst the group.

The programme had a positive impact on the girls health and well-being – they reported feeling better about themselves, being happier in school and more able to resolve problems.

Their achievement was recognised by all 9 attaining Dynamic Youth Awards.



Photo by Phil Harman

Ellon – Life through a Lens

This partnership project used photography to look at the issue of social inclusion and stigma around the issue of mental health. 40 people participated in the project and took part in workshops led by artist Colin Tennant.

The artwork has been exhibited locally and a booklet of the photographs is planned for publication during 2013. Photos can be viewed online at www.flickr.com/photos/lifethroughalens2012

How well do we support communities to develop through learning? (Q1 4.1)

Communities have been actively involved in action research projects to look at local issues and to identify ways to meet local needs – this has led to the development of new local groups and more integrated communities.

Local people have been supported to take ownership of groups which were previously led by CLD staff resulting in stronger and more resilient communities. Developmental work has continued around communities of interest such as a parent led autism support group and young mums Facebook pages in Ellon.

Work has continued to ensure community groups and learning activities are attended by more marginalised learners who report enjoyment, improved health and wellbeing and better involvement with the community as a result.

CLD have continued to support partnership working to raise awareness of safety and to reduce youth accidents on rural roads.

Community Action Research

CLD supported a community action research project in the village of Newburgh. This has led to the formation of a number of local groups which are working together to enhance the quality of life for local residents.

Groups such as the Newburgh Improvement Group (working on enhancing the local environment), the local gala committee and other small scale groups such as the Jubilee picnic group all contribute to bringing the wider community together.

Work continues in Balmedie from a 2009 community led research project – the most recent examples example being a community funding workshop.

Life through a Lens is another example of using the arts (photography) for wider community engagement.

How well are the Service and partners working together and improving the quality of services and provision? (combination of Q1's 1.1 / 5.10 and 8.1)

Through joint working on a digital inclusion project in Turriff partners are more aware of the emerging issues with the new benefit system. The need for a partnership approach is evidenced by the 50% increase in those seeking information on employment and support allowances through the local CAB.

Additional spin off activities such as the creation of a local food bank has been progressed by local church volunteers demonstrating partnership between the public, voluntary and community sectors.

Development of clear aims and direction of the Ellon Early Years Forum has provided a focus for family and early years work and activities.

Informal lunchtime agency networking meetings in Meldrum have been successful in bringing partners together to discuss current work and emerging needs. Partners across Formartine have been involved in evaluating current CLD provision through the increased use of shared planning sessions using the LEAP model.

Child Protection training

In the last year CLD have delivered child protection training to 88 adults from 17 different community organisations in the Turriff network.

What do we want to do next? (improvement priorities)

Partners who participated in an improvement planning session with CLD reported positive experiences of partnership working and a willingness to further strengthen these links. Examples which were agreed as partnership projects were:

- A community profile in the growing town of Ellon to ensure that the "DNA" of the community is well understood by CLD and other partners such as the Local Community Planning Group.
- Developing a job club in collaboration with SDS, Working for Families and Job Centre+ in Ellon.
- Increased prevalence of joint planning and evaluation of work with partners – including the identification of where CLD is delivering Curriculum for Excellence outcomes relating to health and well-being.
- Continue to recruit and support volunteers to widen and enhance provision, particularly around key areas such as ESOL, core skills and youth work.
- CLD staff will also be developing further targeted learning opportunities as outlined in the Communities and Partnerships CLD Strategy endorsed by the Education Committee in February 2013.

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