



**Community  
Planning  
Aberdeen**

## **Community Learning and Development Plan 2025-2030**

*Transforming lives by supporting individuals and families to overcome barriers, build skills, and contribute confidently to their communities.*

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# Forward

The Aberdeen City Partnership Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan for 2025-2030 has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including the local authority CLD Service, voluntary organisations, community groups and those who live in our communities. Taking this approach has helped ensure it outlines a cohesive partnership approach to community development over the next few years that maximises the impact of available resources to enhance the educational, social, and economic outcomes of those who face the greatest disadvantage.

In alignment with national legislation and guidance, this plan prioritises the principles of equity, inclusion, and lifelong learning. It is informed by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which emphasises the importance of community participation and empowerment in decision-making processes. Additionally, the plan adheres to the guidance provided by the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, which outlines the key outcomes for improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities across Scotland. Our CLD plan is also guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that rights and needs are at the forefront of our efforts.

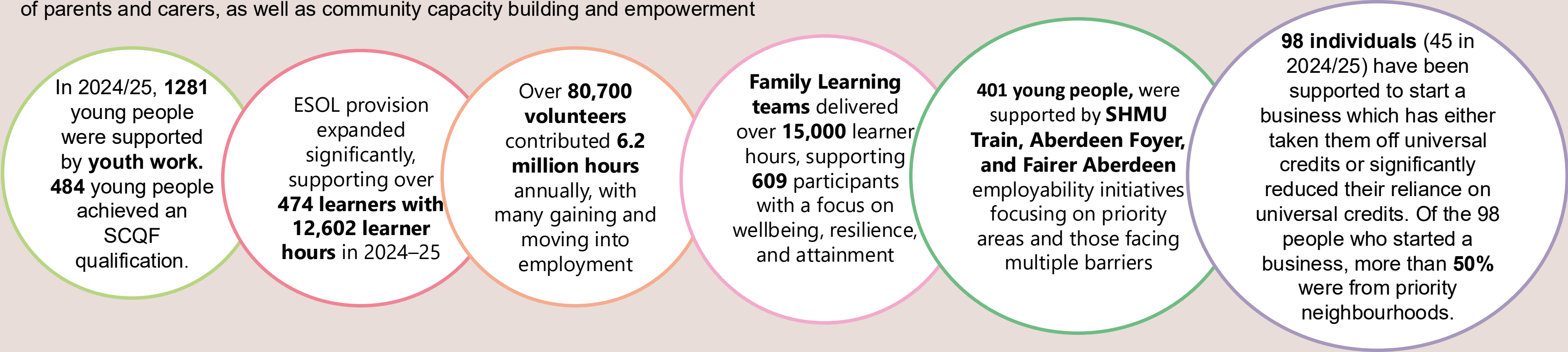
We are committed to taking account of the wider social determinants of health in our work in order to reduce inequalities in the longer term and promote sustainable development. Our plan has benefited from challenge from the Institute of Health Equity to help us better design targeted interventions aligned with the principles of proportionate universalism. We anticipate that this challenge will help us better address the significant inequality felt by some in our city to better level the playing field.

Rather than following the usual 3-year cycle, this Plan has been established to direct our shared work over the next 5 years. Amending timescales has enabled the closer alignment of the CLD Plan with other key strategies and plans that impact on those who face inequality, such as the Local Housing Strategy, the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Plan and the developing Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The environment we are currently operating in is uncertain and constantly changing, with key strategies and plans due to be published over the coming years. As a result, we have only developed a detailed Delivery Plan for 2025-26. Partners have committed to developing a yearly Delivery Plan based on self evaluation evidence and emerging learning from other key strategies. Shared and holistic planning and evaluation by Community Planning and CLD Partners will be central to the success of the Plan.

**Margaret Stewart, Chair of Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership  
and Michelle Crombie, Chair of Community Empowerment Group**

# Current Service Delivery

Community Learning and Development Services, via Community Planning Aberdeen, provide a range of enabling support to individuals of all ages across our communities. This includes the provision of youth work in both the community and in school settings, a range of adult learning programmes including those commissioned to support positive mental health and promote language learning, programmes and events designed to boost the knowledge, understanding and skills of parents and carers, as well as community capacity building and empowerment



## There are however currently several challenges for our service delivery

- The Community Learning and Development partnership do not have a shared self-evaluation framework based on agreed shared measures. This prevents all partners from coming together to assess the strength of the CLD offer.
- Community Learning Partners have not always been consistently represented within governance arrangements. As a result, opportunities have been missed to benefit from the valuable expertise they bring to shared decision-making.
- Many other Strategic Plans detail a desire to move to more participatory decision making and co-design. This presents a significant opportunity to upskill the CLD partnership workforce in best practice.
- Financial resources are finite and in real terms diminishing. There is a need to maximise the use of available resources across the Partnership by being more targeted and aligned in approach in order to remain sustainable.

# Actions carried forward from the 2024 CLD Plan

In addition to considering the presenting needs across our communities to help shape our Partnership CLD Plan for 2025-30, time has been invested undertaking a final evaluation of the last Plan. Undertaking this evaluation has shown the need to continue moving some areas forward. These areas will be included in our 2025/30 Plan.

Youth work themes	Next steps
Across all youth work themes	Improve data collection and analysis to more effectively target resources
Employability & Positive Destinations	Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the St Machar pilot project and establish an evaluation framework for Edge of Care pilots. Scale successful programmes
Mental & Physical Wellbeing:	Collect more consistent quantitative data (e.g. SIMD, ASN, protected characteristics)
Family Wellbeing Hubs	Review resource allocation and working methods to maximise impact
Accreditation	Increase Youth Awards uptake in SIMD 1 & 2 areas and expand training
Adult and Family Learning themes	Next steps
Family Support Model	Further develop city-wide CLD partner contributions and explore commissioned services
Reducing reoffending	Use data analysis to evidence impact and track learner pathways
ESOL demand	Respond to increased demand with diversified offers and increased tutor capacity
Learner Voice	Continue to gather and act on learner feedback to shape provision
Literacy for Life Plan	Promote the plan and test initiatives like joint training and ESOL support for families with early years children

Community Development themes	Next steps
Measuring impact	Better demonstrate the impact of CLD interventions
Workforce development	Co-create a consistent, accessible training offer with partners and communities
Community Enterprises and Asset Transfer	Develop clear pathways and actions to support these initiatives
Inclusive participation	Broaden engagement to include those with lived experience of inequality
Health inequalities	Continue creative, community led approaches to tackle health inequalities
Agency and co-production	Support people with lived experience to shape services and priorities
Governance and planning	Next steps
	Increase learner and community representation in strategic planning  Embed shared self-evaluation and consistent data sharing across partners  Ensure that CLD stakeholder consultation continues to inform the CLD 2025-30 plan

# Aberdeen Context

Our shared ambition is for Aberdeen to be “***a place where all people can prosper regardless of their background.***” At the heart of this is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city’s people to live healthy lives.

Through an understanding of the needs of the city and its people, as well as the services and interventions that are provided, the Council’s suite of strategies and strategic plans aims to identify the things that will bring benefit to people and commit to evidence based and effective future actions.

The focus for our strategies and actions is on improving outcomes across five themes of the social determinants of health:

- Education & Lifelong Learning**
- Economic Stability**
- Communities & Housing**
- Neighbourhood & Environment**
- Health & Social Care**

The population of Aberdeen City is estimated to be 227,750 (4.1% of Scotland’s population). The overall population had been declining from 2015 to 2023, primarily due to a falling birth rate and fluctuating net migration. In the coming years, Aberdeen is projected to have fewer people of working age and will see a rise in the number of older people, particularly those over 75.

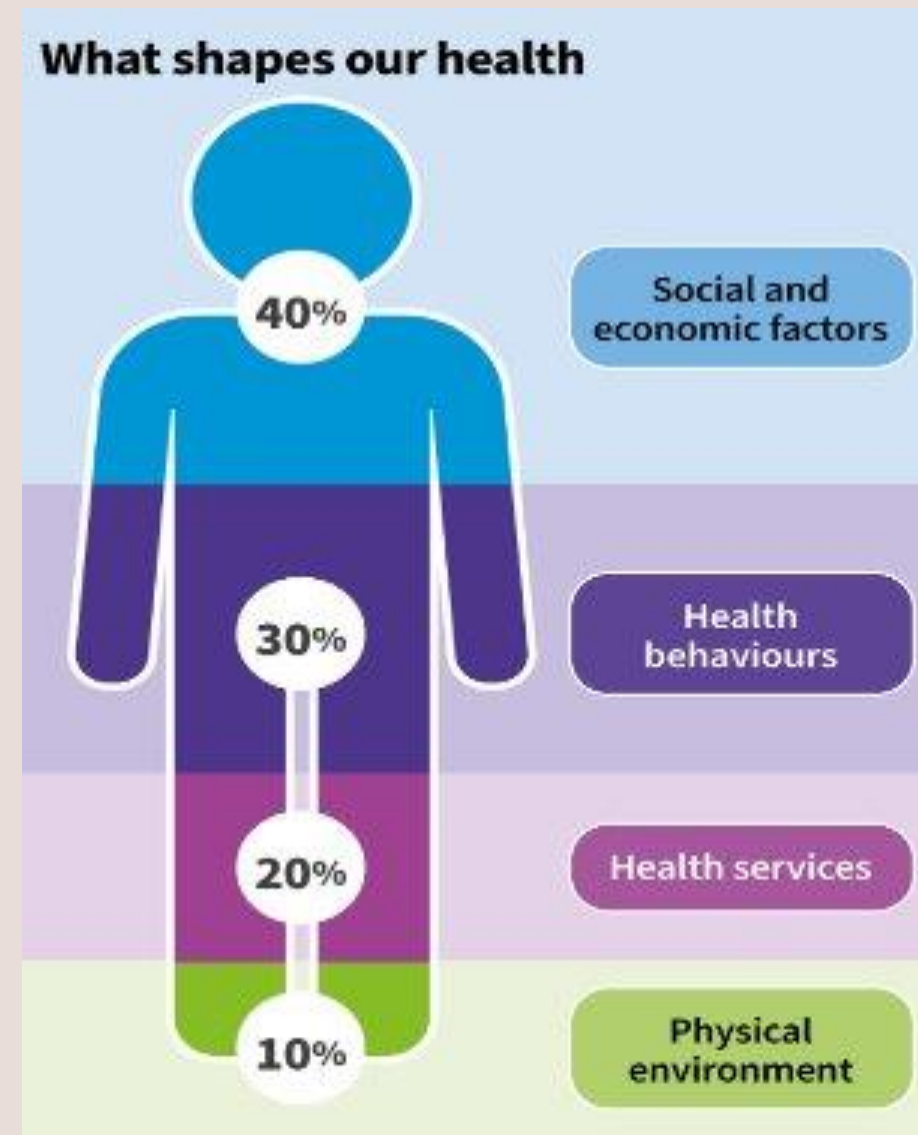
A falling and ageing population poses a number of challenges to an area and can lead to a cycle of economic decline. It can also increase pressure on public services by reducing the overall tax base, whilst increasing the need to provide services and care, specifically for children and older people. Given that the falling birth rate has been a reality for a number of years, if the city’s population is to be sustained, or grow in the short and medium term, this must be driven by migration; by attracting people to and keeping them in the city. Like many other areas, a growing number of people in the city are recorded as having a limitation to work, exacerbating the balance between those in work, and those who are not.

Living healthy lives is also a critical issue for the affordability of services. The Scottish Fiscal Commission highlighted in April 2025 the extent to which population health affects the sustainability of public finances. The Commission anticipate that the Scottish Government will face significant challenges funding devolved public services in the future. However, if improvements in population health can be achieved, pressure on health-related spending may be reduced in the future. Our focus, therefore, must be to ensure Aberdeen is a place where people want to come to live and work, and to support the people who do live here to play a full social and economic part in the city’s future in collaboration with Community Learning and Development partners.



# Wider Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health contribute to the unfair and avoidable differences in outcomes seen across our city. To ensure that Aberdeen Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-30 helps to address health inequalities, we have taken the time to reflect on what we know from published research, including from our published [Population Needs Assessment](#). Taking this approach has helped us identify areas of focus for the Aberdeen CLD Plan to ensure that it is firmly focussed on tackling inequality.



# Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

It is clear that the life circumstances of children affect their educational attainment, and that educational inequality can lead to inequalities of health and wellbeing in early adulthood and beyond. As such, the life circumstances of parents and carers directly impact on children and young people. We must continue to challenge ourselves to take a whole family approach by working closely with others to help swiftly address risks to family wellbeing.

In Aberdeen there is evidence of increased numbers of children living in poverty; having a disability; with additional support needs; and entering school with at least one developmental concern. There are also a small number of young people in our schools who are at risk of disengaging with education due to being trauma experienced. There is a need for us to understand what will make the biggest difference to individuals by co-designing with those most in need of our support.

Whilst attainment and mental health outcomes show a positive trend across a range of measures, the most striking data feature is the impact of family affluence/deprivation on children's experiences and outcomes, including educational attainment, positive destinations and mental and physical health. In 2024, participation rates for 16–19-year-olds in education, employment or training were lower for those in the 20% most deprived areas (83.5%) than for those in the 20% least deprived areas (95.9%) There is a need to develop more impactful approaches to offering multi-agency support to families facing adversity through our [Family Support Model](#). Shared data and planning will be important in order to ensure we maximise the impact of resources.

Aberdeen continues to welcome many families and people from around the world and needs to ensure that they are well placed to access employment opportunities. Those seeking refuge in the city will continue to require essential support, including accommodation, and help into training and employment to enable them to join the labour market. Learning English can help people integrate into their new communities, impact positively on the type of work they will be able to do and their ability to engage with service providers, including health services, teachers, housing officers, employers etc. Access to support to learn English will continue to be important.

**The Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in helping ensure that:

- Families with children can access appropriate learning opportunities and multi-agency whole family support (including financial support and help to address food insecurity).
- Young people at risk of disengaging from education/ at risk of poor outcomes are supported to find a positive pathway into a positive destination.
- People, at every stage in life, have the opportunity and means to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attributes to fulfil their potential and to make a meaningful contribution to society.
- There is adequate provision of accessible and accurate information to help young people and families sustain positive lifestyles.
- Resettled families can access language learning and community integration opportunities and the learning needs of those seeking refuge in the city are planned for.



# Economic Stability

A healthy economy is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of a population. Simply put, people who experience economic inequalities have poorer health and wellbeing. It is essential that there is a local economy that can help people and families maintain the types of financial security to put food on the table, pay their housing costs, and to afford the other necessities of everyday life. To prevent loss of health and wellbeing we must continue to address the economic inequalities evident across the city and support financial security. The accessibility of financial inclusion services will continue to be important, as will the utilisation of initiatives such as Aberdeen City Council's [Rent Assistance Fund](#) and Community Planning Aberdeen's test of change for [Cash First](#).

One in seven households in Aberdeen has no one working within them, which equates to 13,700 workless households, but households with low income, or likely to be experiencing financial instability, are also important. Data highlights that economic inactivity for people from ethnic minorities is more pronounced and this must be addressed. There is a need for CLD Partners to continue to work to identify and support the readiness and skills development required to enable all groups to equally enter the labour market, by utilising co-design approaches with identified vulnerable groups and having a clear understanding of the data.

The estimated unemployment rate in the city in June 2024 was 4.4%, which is above the Scottish level of 3.5%, whilst the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits matched the Scotland figure. It is estimated that 3 out of 5 (57%) households experiencing relative poverty will be within working households. Households with a low income are of considerable concern, not least the 12% of such households where some 3,600 children aged 15 years and under reside given all we know about child poverty outcomes. As a result, supporting these households through employability and wider supports is a key priority for this CLD Plan. Place based approaches to reducing inequalities over time must remain a priority, seeking to reduce both the absolute and relative inequalities across the City.

Aberdeen is experiencing an economic transition toward a low-carbon economy. Energy remains a key component in this but there are other growth and volume sectors. It is important to ensure that employability programmes reflect emerging opportunities and are fully aligned to the [Regional Economic Strategy](#) (RES). There is also a need for CLD Partners to fully understand and target activity around those furthest from the labour market.

The **Aberdeen CLD plan** has a key role in ensuring:

- Those facing financial instability are guided to sustainable food and fuel support, employment training, and financial inclusion services that are based on the lived experience of those who need us most.
- Innovative models such as the Food Ladders are explored and supported to strengthen local food systems and address community wellbeing.
- Young people are supported into positive destination programmes aligned with growth and volume sectors that help them feel more confident, learn new skills and get ready for work.
- People and communities, particularly those furthest from the labour market, are supported to benefit from new jobs outlined in the RES, so no one is left behind.
- That vulnerable groups are known, for example ethnic minorities, individuals living with a disability, people living with trauma, planned for and carefully tracked in order to address child poverty

# Communities & Housing

Feeling safe within your home, your place and your community are important factors in wellbeing, so too are low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. An ability to participate within one's community is a key element in creating and maintaining wellbeing as those with agency tend to have better mental health and wellbeing. Community Learning and Development services will play a significant role in helping develop agency through Community Hub models such as Middlefield Project and the Future Libraries Model in order to strengthen the mental health and resilience of those living in the city.

Along with other local authorities across the UK, Aberdeen has strived to meet the challenges presented by the rapid influx of displaced people seeking support and refuge, and is currently home to around 2,000 displaced people, which is a ten-fold increase in arrivals over the last 3 years. Resettled families can face isolation on arrival to the UK. Such isolation can be reinforced by language barriers and varying cultural perceptions of appropriate interactions. CLD partners play a key role in helping those seeking refuge to develop language skills to enable inclusion and build social connections to support integration into local communities. Partners are also key to helping those seeking refuge to engage and connect with others who share the same language and culture.

Two Community Empowerment editions of the City Voice in June 2023 (City Voice 47) and December 2024 (City Voice 52) asked panellists about current involvement and empowerment in their communities. The mean scores in this section were consistently lower than other sections with concerns raised about the effectiveness of participation and of participation structures leading to some community members reported not feeling listened to. Through our use of the [Scottish Place Standard Tool](#) (SPST), the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future engagement of 2025 highlighted that there are differing feelings about community across the city depending on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ([SIMD](#)). Those living in SIMD 1 identify community as an issue, with scoring also raising concerns about their sense of influence and control, which scored low across all SIMD quintiles but is notably lower in communities in SIMD 1. This suggests that we need a different relationship with communities predominantly housing those living in SIMD1.

Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) reports that there are over 80,700 volunteers in Aberdeen who regularly give their time in support of local communities, contributing an incredible 6.2 million hours of help every year, making a positive difference to all aspects of life, people and communities across our city. Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations logged 10,882 volunteer interactions during the year. Youth volunteering is a great strength in Aberdeen, with 3,129 young people (age 12-25 years) undertaking Saltire Awards for volunteering (locality breakdown: Central: 787, North: 1397 and South: 945 people). There are challenges both locally and nationally in sustaining volunteering levels, particularly due to the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis and additional pressures voluntary and community groups face. CLD partners have a key role in helping to sustain levels of volunteering.

# Communities & Housing cont.

[The Community Safety Partnership](#) (CSP) in Aberdeen City operates through a structured framework of thematic groups, each focusing on specific areas of community safety, in order to help address the feelings of being unsafe felt by members of the community. Thematic groups work collaboratively to address various issues, develop strategies, and implement interventions to enhance safety and well-being in the community.

Every opportunity for joined-up working and for information to be shared is taken, with youth work playing a considerable role in sharing the best approaches and linking individuals into existing youth work provisions.

[Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships \(PNPs\)](#) and [Locality Empowerment Groups \(LEGs\)](#) work collaboratively to develop and implement actions that address community priorities outlined in Aberdeen's three [Locality Plans](#), as well as respond to emerging local issues. These plans are developed following extensive community consultations, including initiatives such as *Your Place*, *Your Plans*, *Your Future*, ensuring that local voices shape the direction of change. The groups consist of local residents and partner organisations, fostering strong partnerships and shared decision-making. PNPs specifically focus on identified Priority Neighbourhoods across the city and are chaired by community members, with agendas set by community representatives. Their work involves creating plans aimed at improving conditions within their communities, with the belief that involving local people in both the development and delivery of these plans offers the greatest potential for meaningful and lasting change.



The **Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in helping build healthy and sustainable places and communities by:

- Helping to shift our relationship with those living in SIMD 1, including by building agency through positive collaboration and co-design with communities, ensuring that the voices of lived experience are heard in service design and delivery
- Ensuring that communities take decisions that affect their lives and communities, and that our participation structures are representative of the communities being served
- Supporting community organisations to effectively respond to and address local issues
- Supporting communities to use the assets in their communities to develop skills and responses to poverty and inequalities, including through the use of volunteers
- Driving multi-agency working to offer more preventative support, and early help with complex issues through the emerging model of Family Support.
- Measuring the impact of our collective work, to help prioritise our allocation of resources and next steps
- Empowering communities through volunteering, participatory budgeting, and local action groups, helping to build stronger, more connected communities.



# Neighbourhood and environment

We know now that where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. The design, development and maintenance of a place is important in promoting good health and sustaining wellbeing for individuals, families, and communities.

For good health and wellbeing, people need to be able to access a green space within 300m of their home, and Aberdeen City Council has a key role in ensuring access to greenspaces and woodland, and in protecting the quality of local blue spaces (water and river sides). CLD can play a key role in helping residents experience the benefits of being in local greenspace.

The natural environment, sustainability and climate change also do, and increasingly will, impact on life in the city. Direct effects associated with climate change include increased mortality and ill-health associated with excess heat and cold, and loss associated with flooding and damage to properties. Climate change is also likely to exacerbate inequalities associated with air pollution, access to greenspaces, fuel, and food poverty. We know, for example, that the number of children hospitalised due to asthma is increasing locally and is at odds with a declining national trend. There is a role for CLD in helping our communities take action to address climate change.

A survey of children and young people, aligned to the Place Standard Tool indicators, asked about the same 14 themes included in the Scottish Place Standard Tool. The themes with the highest proportion of 'Not Good' responses were facilities and services (35.2%), play and recreation (34.7%) and care and maintenance (33.7%) which shows that over a third of respondents chose these options as areas for improvement. In addition, the [Play Sufficiency Assessment](#), compiled to support the development of the next Local Development Plan, shows that play is not equally accessible. There will be key role for CLD partners in shaping how these findings are addressed.

We know that place-based approaches can improve the quality of community and neighbourhoods and support the health and wellbeing of communities. Quality placemaking has been at the core of planning in Aberdeen for a number of years. All developments must ensure high standards of design, with biodiverse open space, sustainable transport options and a distinctive sense of place. there is a key role for Community Development partners in supporting local people in decision making about the places that they live in to allow us to shape communities in a way that people want.

The **Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in ensuring:

- That communities are empowered to address climate change
- Promoting access to green spaces to support learning, physical and mental wellbeing (including play)
- Supporting community members to take ownership and management of green spaces and food growing projects in order to shape their environment.
- A continued focus on improving life chances and developing resilient and influential communities in place planning.

# Health & Social Care (Children and Young People)

Giving every child the best start in life and ensuring they are supported as they grow into adults is essential in creating good population health and wellbeing throughout life. Children who are born into families impacted by deprivation are at a higher risk of suffering from health inequalities. There is a need for our provision to prioritise those who need us most to address this health inequality.

Challenges exist during the period from before birth to the start of school, including maternal drug and alcohol use, and smoking at the beginning of pregnancy which remains around 1 in 8 pregnancies. Premature births in Aberdeen are similar to the levels seen in Scotland and overall, 85% of children are born at a healthy weight. Rates of pre-school immunisation by 24 months remain below the national target. There is a key role for community partners in helping to address this low uptake of immunisations and working with others groups across the city, for example the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, to support our residents to address some of the challenges they face.

As for many other issues, the physical health of school age children, including healthy weight, physical activity, oral health, and early pregnancies varies across communities. Outcomes are largely determined by levels of deprivation signalling a need to review how good health is supported at community level. Community based approaches which focus on health at community level will be important in addressing these issues.

Variation is also clear in the self-reported mental health and wellbeing of school-age children. Of primary 6 & 7 pupils surveyed, whilst, on the whole they feel that they are healthy and that this is improving, affluence within the family is clearly a factor, as the more affluent the family, the more likely the child reported being healthy and self-confident. Resources must be prioritised to help address this inequality wherever possible.

We know that some groups are more likely to experience childhood adversity including those from ethnic minorities, those with a disability, and those who are care experienced. The health outcomes for these groups remain persistently below those of their peers. There is a key role for Community Learning Partners in understanding the groups who face most adversity and working together to address inequality and monitor.





# Health & Social Care (Adults)

For both women and men, healthy life expectancy is declining in the city. People living in more deprived areas have shorter lives and are more likely to live with poorer health for longer. 1 in 4 adults describe themselves as having a limiting, long-term illness. As we get older, we tend to need more health and social care support, and the support of dependants to help us manage long-term conditions or diseases. Preventing disease progression and encouraging the adoption of healthier behaviours are important elements for improving health outcomes and this must be a focus of our shared efforts.

Over half of the deaths in Aberdeen City in 2022 were associated with cancers and circulatory diseases, for which smoking, having obesity or a higher weight, and physical inactivity are known risk factors. It is clear that there is still work to be done in promoting healthier lifestyles, and this will be progressed through initiatives such as our the Fairer Futures pathfinder which focusses on prevention, early intervention and long-term sustainability.

Whilst the rates at which people are being admitted to hospital due to alcohol and the rate of alcohol-related deaths has been declining or has been relatively stable over the last few years, the drug-related death rate has increased substantially. Continuing to reduce the serious consequences of alcohol and drug use remains a priority which will result in improved health outcomes for those affected, meaning that we now need to look far more holistically at how best to support our residents to overcome the many different challenges they face by taking a family centric approach to the delivery of services through close working with others such as the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

Data suggests that more people are being prescribed drugs for anxiety and depression than ten years ago, though the rate of people being in hospital for mental illness has fallen. Deaths from suicides have risen and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis suggest that mental health and wellbeing may further deteriorate in the near future. Early intervention should be a focus, addressing, for example, the number of people feeling socially isolated in our communities. It will be important to integrate our Future Libraries Model with our Aberdeen CLD Plan.

We know that financial, spatial and relational factors are associated with housing insecurity and mental health. We also know that overcrowded homes can be associated with stress, anxiety and the spread of respiratory illness. It would be helpful to ensure that our tenant participation structures, as outlined in our Local Housing Strategy, are able to take advantage of the expertise available from Community Learning and Development staff.

The **Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in ensuring:

- Good quality, community learning and development leads to improved health outcomes for the people of Aberdeen.
- Opportunities for prevention and early intervention are maximised, for example by collaborating to increase uptake of immunisations.
- Aligning work to support healthy behaviours and a sense of community and belonging through our Future Libraries Model and other community-based initiatives.
- Continuing to work with partners to ensure access to education and employment, and opportunities for connection are available for New Aberdonians.
- Knowing our vulnerable groups and working with partners, including the Alcohol and Drugs partnership, to address the issues those groups face
- Prioritising our use of resources to support those who need us most,
- Supporting other services, such as Housing Services, to develop high quality participation structures.



# Learner Stories

Those facing the greatest disadvantage often experience challenges across multiple social factors. The Aberdeen CLD Plan must recognise this complexity, as greater need is often linked to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. To support the plan's development, a range of personas were co-created with CLD learners. While grounded in real lived experiences, these personas have been blended to ensure anonymity. Each persona draws on shared themes from multiple stories, helping to highlight real challenges and support more empathetic, informed planning.

*"I am enjoying finding myself again."*



## Elena is a single parent of 3 children, one of whom has additional support needs

About Elena...

- She experiences depression and anxiety due to her previous experience with domestic abuse and addiction and is currently seeking support for her own experience of neurodivergence.
- She is academic and took a career break to be a mum to her children. She loves them and describes them as being her whole world and feels now she is ready to give some time to herself.
- She has limited family and friendship support but has engaged in some self-care and confidence building courses with Family Learning and this has given her the confidence to engage with counselling sessions.

### What has Elena already achieved?

- She attends groups with Family Learning and engages well with 1-1 support with her worker.
- She has pushed herself out her comfort zone to try new activities and research new opportunities such as volunteering.
- She is managing a difficult co-parenting relationship with her abusive ex.

### What would Elena like to achieve?

- She wants to feel less isolated as she often overthinks when at home alone and when the children go to bed.
- She wants to be able to meet all her children's needs while advocating for her ASN child.
- She would like to meet like-minded people, make new friends and maybe even a new relationship.
- She would like to build new skills to help her support her family. She is looking for a safe non-judgmental space to make positive changes to her life.



## Linda is a mother to children with additional support needs

About Linda...

- She is 42, and a mother of five children aged between 7-24. She lives with her husband and 4 of the youngest children and their dog. She doesn't work due to chronic back pain, but her husband works 2 full jobs.
- Her youngest daughter has recently been diagnosed with ADHD and is struggling in school and at home with behaviour and emotional regulation. Her middle daughter is being assessed for Autism, her youngest son has ADHD traits but has not received a diagnosis and her eldest son is looking into a private diagnosis for ADHD.
- She is struggling to manage the needs of all of her children, which vary massively, with her own chronic daily pain and frustrations of being unable to be a physically fit and active parent. Herself and her husband want to be able to support their children individually and also be able to regain the family time they very much need.

### What has Linda already achieved?

- Through her own research and by taking part in family learning courses she has;
- She has gained a better understanding of ADHD, the nervous system and the impact it has on behaviour.
- She has learnt techniques to deal with challenging behaviour and diffuse situations.
- She has a new awareness of sensory tools that can help regulation.

### What would Linda like to achieve?

- Stability within school for the children to receive the best education they can.
- To be able to reintroduce family days out.
- Establish better routines at home which support the children's needs.



## Adam is a Christmas Leaver looking for a job

### About Adam...

- He is in S4. His education has been disrupted by family bereavement and trauma. His attendance since S1 has been just above 65 per cent, he does not enjoy school and when he does go, he just wants to muck about with his mates.
- He lives with his mother and older sibling. Mum has 2 jobs but they still struggle financially.
- He gets on well with his mum and older sibling. They are a supportive family unit who look out for each other
- He has recently been diagnosed with ADHD.
- He can be easily influenced by older peers and there are concerns for his future when he leaves school.

### What has Adam already achieved?

- Adam is academically capable, but much prefers practical subjects where he can use his hands. He would like a job where he can work outdoors without anyone telling him what to do. He hates the thought of working in an office, and doesn't want to go on to college
- He is engaging well with a youth worker twice a week to find a positive pathway.
- Adam can be caring and thoughtful. He can reflect on his behaviour and explain why he behaves the way he sometimes does. He was involved for a while with AFC community trust which he enjoyed.

### What would Adam like to achieve?

- Adam would like to leave school as soon as he is legally entitled to and start earning money.
- He knows that to earn money and get a good job will be difficult without qualifications, going to college or getting an apprenticeship.
- With the support of his youth worker, Adam is hoping to access a post school community-based employability programme.





## Sara, 13, is struggling with school

### About Sara...

- She lives with her Mum and younger sister. Mum has health issues which sometimes limits what she can do. Sara worries about her Mum.
- Sara didn't attend primary school for the majority of P7. She is now in S1, and her attendance rate is 54%. School is concerned that Sara is losing a lot of learning, and she is beginning to fall behind academically.
- Mum struggles to get Sara up and to school. Mum is concerned that Sara is staying up all night on her phone and is worried who she is communicating with.

### What has Sara already achieved?

- She describes herself as kind and funny. She describes her likes as sleeping and her dislikes as getting up in the morning.
- She loves her dog who she takes on long walks every day. She loves animals and describes herself as being a very caring person. She has thought about volunteering at an animal charity.
- She does not live with her dad, but she has a very good relationship with him. She also has a very good relationship with her grandad whom she visits regularly.

### What would Sara like to achieve?

- She has said that she would like to be a hairdresser when she leaves school.
- She would like her Mum's health to improve.
- She would like to own her own business and be rich.
- She understands that she will need to improve her attendance at school and get the qualifications she needs to go to college.



## Alison, 31, is an Adult Learner

### About Alison...

- She is married with 2 children aged 5 and 7. She is unemployed, but her partner works full-time. The family live in a small 2-bedroom flat.
- She has some additional support needs and has poor literacy skills. She had poor attendance at school. She can use her mobile phone but has a low level of ICT skills. She has very few formal qualifications.
- She would like to return to the workplace now that her children have both started school.

### What is Alison feeling?

- Embarrassed by her level of literacy and ICT when trying to help her children with homework.
- Very low in confidence and self-esteem.
- Concerned about the family income and lack of space in her small flat.

### What would Alison like to achieve?

- Help with literacy and numeracy to support her children in doing well at school.
- Improve literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to help gain employment and increase her employability prospects.
- Improve her confidence and self-esteem by receiving training and gaining qualifications.
- Increase in family income to improve her family's wellbeing and move to a larger property.

*“I want to use my voice to help others find theirs and continue all the activities and learning I enjoy”*



## Jason, 36, has a complex mental health condition

About Jason...

- He has spent some time in a psychiatric hospital.
- He has become a key community member, and takes part in many groups and volunteering, but struggles to see how far he has come on his journey.
- He is trying to get back to work but often feels caught between systems that don't fully understand or support his needs.
- He used to work with the Scottish Woodland Trust.

### What has Jason already achieved?

- Jason has successfully relocated and adapted to a new environment, engaging in structured mental health support and adult learning .
- He has overcome many difficulties to achieve an SQA qualification in Numeracy.
- He has gained confidence and structure through volunteering and peer mentoring which makes him feel he is doing something meaningful .
- He takes part in community campaigns sharing his lived experience with others.

### What would Jason like to achieve?

- To be happy and enjoy things.
- Hopes to meet a life partner and settle down.
- More social opportunities to build his friendship circle.
- More training or structured pathways that are tailored to meet his needs with no tight timescales.
- Eager to find employment and build a stable future.



*“Through my Adult Learning, I feel heard in conversations which has built my confidence”*



## Stephen is a person with lived experience of the justice system

### About Stephen...

- He is in his mid-40s with an ongoing heart condition and is living with his long-term partner.
- He does not have family members living within the city; however, he has siblings who provide emotional support over the phone.
- He has extensive knowledge about horses.
- He is a quiet introvert who has gained confidence over time.
- He has completed a community payback order.

### What has Stephen already achieved?

- He has a sense of achievement having completed his payback order.
- He is more confident about expressing his needs.
- He has started an SVQ in Maths and will continue his learning in the community.
- He has gained confidence and interpersonal skills leading him to better manage situations and relationships that previously caused him anxiety.
- During his time with Adult Learning, he felt heard and valued and is now optimistic about his future.

### What would Stephen like to achieve?

- Continue attending the NHS course for heart disease and become stronger in his health.
- Continue his learning in the community.
- Achieve the right work/health balance which suits his needs.
- Continue to work on his important family relationships with the aim of building closer bonds.



### Mustafa, 27, is a Syrian Asylum Seeker

#### About Mustafa...

- He has fled his country in fear for his life. He came to the UK alone, leaving his wife and young daughter in Syria. He has a brother who lives in Glasgow and an aunt and uncle and two cousins in Manchester.
- In Syria he worked as a tailor and would like to do the same in Scotland. He would like to reunite his family when he can support them.
- He only completed primary school in Syria. He can read and write in Arabic. When he arrived in Scotland, he was able to say a few phrases but was unable to read or write using the roman alphabet.

#### What has Mustafa already achieved?

- He has been attending English classes for 6 months and is becoming more comfortable forming letters in the roman alphabet. In his class they are preparing for the SQA Preparation for Literacy National 2 award.
- He attends the mosque regularly, which helps to connect him to the local community.
- He volunteered with a local bicycle repair centre and once he had completed a few sessions, an anonymous donor provided him and some others who were helping out, with one of the repaired bikes. This means he can get to his English classes more easily, as before it was a 30-minute walk.

#### What would Mustafa like to achieve?

- He would like to continue studying English. He knows he has a lot to learn, but he thinks his speaking is getting better. If he can complete the SQA Preparation for Literacy National 2 award it will be the first qualification he has ever achieved.
- Once his spoken English has improved and he understands more, he would like to do some volunteering, maybe in a charity, until he is able to start working properly.
- Eventually, he would like to open his own clothes alteration shop or business – maybe in Glasgow with his brother, or maybe here if his brother will move.

*“To provide for my children so they can grow up happy, taken care of and have everything they deserve”*



## ***Danny is a single father to a large family experiencing poverty***

### About Danny...

- He is 42, and a single father of 3 children aged between 5 and 19. They live in a three-bedroom council tenancy along with the family dog.
- He is currently not working due to both his parenting responsibilities at home and has a life limiting condition. He receives benefits to support the family, but often finds this doesn't stretch far enough, he relies on a weekly local foodbank to ensure he can maximise the amount of food and products coming into the home.
- He has limited social supports in the local area, with a few close friends nearby who offer him some support, although they also have their own challenges. He has extended family that live outside of Aberdeen but are unable to provide him with direct support.

### **What has Danny already achieved?**

- Danny is a nurturing and supportive father to his three children, and, despite the challenges and financial constraints, he continues to ensure his children are looked after and have their needs met.
- Danny has undertaken training courses to bolster his CV and support him into employment in the future.
- Danny supported his eldest child to find their first job, with a plan to getting their own place.

### **What would Danny like to achieve?**

- *“To see my kids growing up, happy, living a better life”*
- Danny would prefer to work to provide for his family using money he has earned. This is currently challenging for him due to his parental responsibilities and personal health, but he would like to get a job once his younger children are older.



*“I want to improve my opportunities to provide for my children until we can return to our country.”*



## Svitlana, 35, is a Ukrainian refugee

About Svitlana...

- She has been living in Scotland with her two children (7 and 9) since the war started in 2022 and she had to leave her hometown. Her husband is still in Ukraine, fighting in the army.
- In Ukraine, Svitlana had a well-paying job working as a manager in an office. For the first year she lived in a hotel where she was surrounded by other Ukrainian people and families who all helped each other with childcare.
- She now lives in a two-bedroom flat with her children. It is the first time she has lived alone without her parents or husband. She has made friends with other Ukrainian families, but most of them live in other parts of the city. She has a part-time cleaning job, but the hours are irregular and sometimes clash with her English classes. She wants to continue going to classes to help her get a better job and to be able to support her children with their schoolwork.

### What has Svitlana already achieved?

- She completed a Level 2 SQA in Time and Money as part of her ESOL class. She also took part in a basic sewing skills course which allowed her to complete Level 2 SQA in Measuring, she now uses the bag she made.
- In her cleaning job she needs to understand the instructions from her Team Leader. She uses a translation app for this but finds that she is relying on it less than when she started.
- She has got used to living without her husband, and with the initial support of her resettlement worker and the housing team, she has managed to get settled in her flat.

### What would Svitlana like to achieve?

- She would like to continue with her English classes. Her tutor has said the group will start preparing for the ESOL National 2 SQA award. She thinks this would help her to apply for better jobs, but it will be difficult if she must miss class due to work.
- Eventually she would like to find a job that is more like the one she had in Ukraine, in an office.
- She would also like to be able to talk to the doctor without the need for an interpreter, as she finds this embarrassing at times, even though she knows she shouldn't.

# Learners' experiences

It is clear that there are key and recurring vulnerabilities that our CLD Plan needs to take account of.

These include those who are:

- Care experienced.
- Living with a disability.
- Older and frail.
- Living in single parent households.
- Socially isolated, particularly as a result of a long-term health condition.
- Experiencing, or have experienced domestic violence.
- Substance users.
- In need of long-term support for their mental health.
- Fearful as a result of repeated anti-social behaviour.
- Released from prison.
- Fleeing conflict.
- Living with trauma, particularly those who seek refuge in the city.
- Experiencing financial vulnerability.
- Living with obesity and chronic diseases



The **Aberdeen CLD plan** has a key role in:

- Ensuring those most at risk of poorer outcomes (the groups identified above) are prioritised for community learning and the wider support they need to thrive, and checking the adequacy of our current arrangements.
- Working with others to safely share data so that the likes of **Elena and Danny** do not have to repeatedly tell their story and are supported to maximise their benefit entitlements.
- Making sure that community resources delivered in partnership help address the social isolation felt by **Svitlana, Jason, and Mustafa**, and encourages the healthy behaviours they are keen to realise, along with the development of their employability skills.
- Ensuring that our staff and systems recognise that a lack of engagement can be an indication of a lack of trust, as in **Sara's** case, and not a lack of need.
- Commit to changing our relationships with the most vulnerable people to be more person centred to reduce the risk of disengagement.
- Improving our response to domestic violence by working in partnership with initiatives like Homewards Innovative Housing Project to help those like **Elena**.
- Ensuring that there are progression pathways for those who need long term mental health support like **Jason**.
- Working to reduce the prevalence and impact of anti-social behaviour.
- Working with families to fully understand the needs of those supporting disabled children and adults in order to better plan for their long-term needs.
- Improving our communication around the types of support that is available.

# Risks to children

A comprehensive review of data has highlighted the risks most likely to impact our children and young people over the lifetime of this Plan. Mitigation strategies to address the risks will be included in this CLD Plan.

## Individual Level Risks

- Poor behavioural control and emotional regulation
- Mental health issues and prior trauma
- Substance misuse
- Low educational attainment

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Early childhood interventions
- Trauma-informed care
- Education programmes

## Community-Level Risks

- High-crime neighbourhoods and unsafe public spaces
- Digital environments and online harm

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Focussed youth work
- Safe spaces
- Digital literacy campaigns
- Prevent focus

## Relationship-Level Risks

- Family conflict, neglect, and domestic violence
- Poor parental supervision/knowledge
- Peer pressure and gang affiliation

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Parenting programmes
- Family therapy
- Kinship care

## Societal-Level Risks

- Poverty and inequality
- Inadequate multi-agency data sharing
- Workforce capacity issues

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Routine risk updates to multi-agency teams
- Improved service access for those most in need and identified as being particularly vulnerable



# Risks to adults

## Individual-Level Risks

- **Substance misuse:** Chronic and acute risks from drug and alcohol dependency.
- **Mental health and neurodiversity:** Poor mental health and lack of tailored support.
- **Self-neglect and complex needs:** Overlapping vulnerabilities leading to missed interventions.

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Trauma-informed care training for frontline staff.
- Expanded mental health support services.
- Early intervention and recovery programmes

## Community-Level Risks

- **Barriers to treatment and recovery:** Limited access to high-quality services in disadvantaged areas.
- **Digital exclusion and online harm:** Lack of digital literacy and access to safe online environments.

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Accessible and inclusive recovery services.
- Digital inclusion programmes.
- Community outreach and engagement
- Focus on Prevent

## Relationship-Level Risks

- **Domestic abuse and gender-based violence:** Often underreported due to data gaps and workforce limitations.
- **Isolation and lack of support networks:** Increased vulnerability to exploitation and deteriorating wellbeing.

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Multi-agency collaboration and data sharing.
- Collaboration with housing and outreach services.
- Community-based peer support initiatives.

## Societal-Level Risks

- **Workforce capacity and capability:** Gaps in training and resources for adult safeguarding.
- **Data gaps and poor risk assessment:** Inconsistent use of tools and mental capacity frameworks.
- **Inequality and poverty:** Economic hardship and housing instability.

## Mitigation Strategies by CLD:

- Workforce development and supervision.
- Improved data sharing protocols.
- Policy reforms and anti-poverty strategies.

# Our Vision

This Partnership CLD Plan sets out a vision and priorities for the future delivery of Community Learning and Development related services.

Our vision is to:

*Transform lives by supporting individuals and families to overcome barriers, build skills, and contribute confidently to their communities.*

We believe that strong and empowered communities, supported by services from the public, third and private sectors, can work together to reduce the inequality evident at community level. We recognise the range of positive work already taking place across the city, but we also recognise the need to better connect operational work through improved use of data and shared evaluation.

## Recognising the Challenges

Consideration of Aberdeen’s Population Needs Assessment, Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future citizen engagement, CLD partner engagement, consideration of known and emerging risks and exploration of the social determinants of health have helped identify the key challenge and action needed to deliver our vision.

# Our Key Challenge

Many residents of Aberdeen face barriers to learning, don’t feel listened to or able to access local initiatives that they have confidence will help them. This is being exacerbated by the impacts of poverty and inequality contributing to poor health outcomes, particularly for those who are a member of a vulnerable group.

# Our Response

We will break down barriers to learning and foster inclusion by directing partnership support to those most impacted by poverty and inequality. Through integrated services, we will provide tailored assistance that responds to the changing and diverse needs of Aberdeen’s residents, while also promoting healthier, more vibrant communities.

# Our Priorities

**Reducing poverty and tackling inequalities** is an overarching theme across this CLD Plan. CLD partners are committed to working together as partners, with local communities, to improve life chances for people of all ages through the specific lens of learning, personal development and active citizenship. There is recognition given to the disproportionately high levels of poverty and inequalities which exists within some communities across the city, and the need for CLD to be targeted and focussed on communities and individuals experiencing the negative effects of poverty and inequalities.

We also recognise the importance of providing opportunities for **improved Health and Wellbeing**. People living in our disadvantaged communities are at higher risk of poor health, disease, and earlier death than those living in our more affluent areas. They are also more likely to experience barriers to health and wellbeing and difficulties accessing services. Health inequalities are unfair and preventable, often due to adverse social circumstances such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, childhood experiences, and isolation. Partners will tackle these inequalities by targeting support to those who need it most, promoting self-care through prevention and early intervention, making it easier for people to get the support and information they need, and working collectively with others including communities, families, and carers. Our approach will be inclusive and empowering, with a focus on prevention, transformation and building individual and community capacity.

Based on the [evidence base](#) locally and nationally we have identified 6 priorities for action:

## Delivery priorities

1. To support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through **Adult Learning**.
2. To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people ,particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through **Youth Work**
3. To improve the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities through **Family Learning** and whole family support.
4. To supporting **communities** to take to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control.

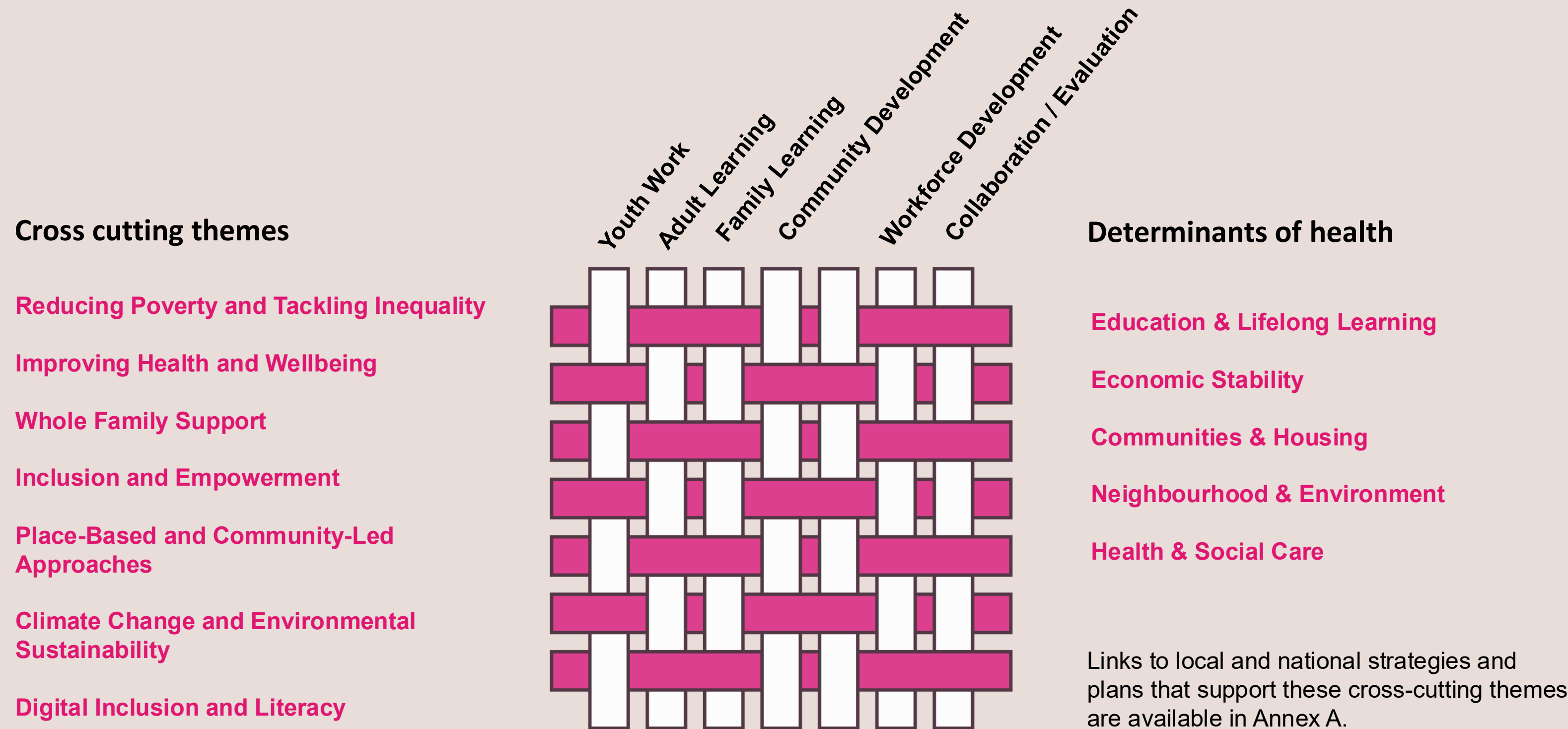
## Organisational priorities

5. To enhance the skills and capabilities of staff and volunteers in CLD
6. Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen’s Community Learning and Development partners



# CLD Priorities and Cross cutting themes

The CLD Plan weaves six delivery priorities with seven interconnected cross-cutting themes shaping how we address inequality, promote wellbeing, and empower communities. This integrated approach ensures targeted, inclusive, and sustainable support for learners and families, aligning lifelong learning with place-based, digital, environmental, and whole-family strategies to improve outcomes across Aberdeen.



# Shared Governance

Effective governance is central to the successful delivery of the CLD Plan 2025–2027. It ensures strategic oversight, shared accountability, and inclusive decision-making across CLD partners. Previous evaluations, including the 2024 HMIE inspection, identified the need for stronger strategic leadership and collective ownership. In response, Aberdeen City Council and its partners have undertaken a comprehensive governance review to address these gaps and enhance the impact and sustainability of CLD across the city.

The Community Empowerment Group (CEG) holds strategic oversight of the CLD Plan, acting as a connector between operational delivery and the broader Community Planning structure. The Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSPP) has been established to lead implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This structure ensures that governance is both strategic and responsive to community needs.

## Operational Delivery

Thematic partnerships covering Youth Work, Adult Learning, Family Learning, Community Development and CLD Workforce Development have been established to support operational delivery. These groups report into the ACLDSPP and are responsible for shaping delivery plans, contributing to shared evaluation, and ensuring that local needs are addressed through place-based approaches.

## Shared Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Governance arrangements embed a culture of shared self-evaluation and performance monitoring. The ACLDSPP is tasked with jointly monitoring shared measures of success, analysing data across partners, and using findings to inform agile, responsive planning. This approach addresses previous gaps in demonstrating impact and supports continuous improvement.

As shared baselines are established over the first year of this plan, progress will be routinely monitored and used to set detailed delivery plans for each year. Taking this approach will afford partners a level of flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities identified across the Community Planning Partnership.



## Next Steps

- Improve learner and community representation in the strategic partnership to ensure equitable decision-making.
- Establish and develop systems for joint monitoring of shared success measures.
- Strengthen the role of thematic partnerships in shaping and delivering shared evaluation.
- Maintain robust engagement with the CEG and wider partners to ensure alignment and responsiveness throughout the plan's lifecycle.

# Logic Model

## Situation

Many residents of Aberdeen face barriers to learning, don't feel listened to or able to access local initiatives that they have confidence will help them. This is being exacerbated by the impacts of poverty and contributing to poor health outcomes, particularly for those who are a member of a vulnerable group.

## Inputs

Partnership Youth work  
Partnership Family Learning  
Partnership Adult learning  
Community capacity building  
Skilled staff and volunteers  
Partnership self evaluation

## Activities What we do

Targeted 1-1 and group youth work  
Skills development and accreditation for young people  
Improve financial security and health knowledge  
Skills development programmes for all ages  
Family Learning programmes  
Community integration opportunities  
Language learning  
Capacity building and empowerment

## Who we reach

All people in Aberdeen City who are marginalised, vulnerable or impacted by poverty

## Outcomes

### Short

Interventions will be more targeted at those who face the greatest disadvantage  
CLD Partners will collect common data measures to help evaluate our collective impact and determine the allocation of resources.  
More multi-agency improvement activity will be shared by the lived experience of those living in our communities

### Medium

Improved partnership understanding of the impact of our collective efforts helps strengthen our offer  
Higher numbers of learners access accredited courses  
More people who engage with CLD access employment or further training

### Long

CLD activity is central to addressing poverty and inequality and building trust and empowerment delivered by highly skilled staff  
Improved outcomes across the determinants of health in our priority neighbourhood

## Assumptions and Influences

- There will continue to be high levels of poverty
- Resources will continue to be constrained

## Measures

- Number of learners being supported
- Impact of CLD on learners
- Social determinants of health data





**Community  
Planning  
Aberdeen**



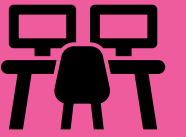
# **Delivery Plan 2025 - 2030**





# Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning



## Why is this a Priority?

Enabling individuals to develop essential skills like literacy, numeracy, language learning, how to remain healthy and digital literacy are crucial for adapting to economic changes and improving the quality of life. Adult Learning provides first step employability skills, supports mental wellbeing, and fosters community engagement. Additionally, it supports integration for refugees and marginalised groups, promoting inclusivity and resilience.

## What does the evidence say about adult literacy?

Literacy levels in Aberdeen reflect broader trends seen across Scotland. According to the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies (SSAL) 2009, about 73.3% of the Scottish working-age population have literacy skills appropriate for modern society. However, around 26.7% face occasional challenges, and 3.6% experience serious difficulties. Factors such as age, gender, education, and income significantly influence literacy levels

The Education Scotland **Adult Learning Strategy 2022-27** underscores the importance of targeted learning for marginalised groups and recommend:

- Closer partnership working to ensure that adult learning is learner-centred, available and accessible
- An increase in access to and support for accredited learning for community-based adult learning to support positive pathways for adult learners.

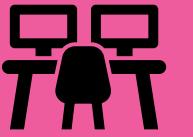
## What does the evidence say about the best approaches?

**Learning: For All. For Life. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development (CLD)** evidenced that the key enablers to participation in CLD include:

- Flexibility and adaptability
- Culturally competent and empathetic practitioners
- Safe, trusting environments
- Localised delivery and proactive outreach
- Partnerships between CLD providers and other services
- Learner-focused delivery

# Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning



## What does the evidence from Your Place Your Plans Your Future say?

Use of the Place Standard Tool with communities (Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future) recently showed us that:

86.2% of people asked agreed with the proposal to **“Work with partners to provide accessible community-based learning opportunities (e.g. skills in digital inclusion, literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages, and financial resilience) for adults, particularly those furthest from inclusion and facing disadvantages, to foster lifelong learning, positive pathways and reduce reoffending”**

92.3% agreed with this proposal **“Provide a range of activity to improve people’s physical and mental health and reduce harm ensuring people can continue to work and make a positive contribution to the economy whilst also improving their own financial wellbeing.”** This engagement also raised some areas for improvement including opportunities for continuous education and skill development and better advertising of volunteering and training opportunities to make them more accessible to everyone, including non-digital users.

## What does the evidence say about the learning needs of New Scots, refugees and asylum seekers ?

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2024 emphasizes the need for provision of accessible learning opportunities to help New Scots develop language skills, gain qualifications, and improve employability. Aberdeen is home to 1/3 of Scotland’s migrants and is one of the biggest dispersal centres for asylum seekers in Scotland. Our own response and associated Delivery Plan.

## What does the evidence say about mental health?

In Aberdeen City, around 25% of the population experiences a mental health problem each year. Specifically, about 12% report symptoms of depression, and 14% report symptoms of anxiety.

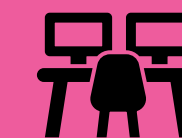
In the last year referrals to the CLD Healthy Minds team has doubled. [Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) 2023 has a focus on promoting mental health and wellbeing through community-based initiatives. This includes providing opportunities for lifelong learning and skill development, which can enhance mental health by fostering a sense of purpose, community connection, and personal growth.

[Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Strategic Plan](#) articulates how mental health will be supported over the next 4 years and this CLD Plan will support the delivery of those agreed actions.



# Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning



## Priority

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning.

## Outcome

More adults from identified marginalised communities will have access to learning and services to become better skilled, better educated, more confident, aware of how to remain healthy and empowered to be part of their community.

## Measures

- No of adults from different marginalised groups who are enrolled in an adult learning programme (baseline across all partners to be determined)
- No of adults undertaking SCQF and wider achievement awards
- No of adults engaged with CLD activity
- % of adults engaged in CLD activity who report improved skills, confidence and improved health and wellbeing.
- Increase first step accreditation across the city by 20% by June 2027
- % of adults engaged in CLD activity who take a direct role in shaping their learning
- No of learner hours

## What we will do:

**Baseline Needs:** Capture learner needs and vulnerabilities across first step providers to guide planning and performance analysis.

**Network Leadership:** Revitalise the Adult Learning Network to coordinate provision and apply a shared evaluation framework.

**Co-Design Pathways:** Develop programmes and volunteering routes with marginalised groups, aligned to the Regional Economic Strategy.

**Trauma-Informed Learning:** Offer community-based learning to build confidence, resilience, and connection for those furthest from education or work.

**Adult Voice** – Keep growing opportunities for adults to shape provision across the city

**Track Impact:** Regularly review how well the offer supports volunteering readiness.

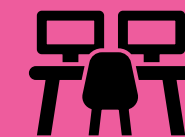
**Future Libraries:** Deliver inclusive, needs-led library services that reduce barriers and support health, digital, information, financial and language literacy and informal learning.

**ESOL Provision:** Maintain flexible ESOL class supply for new Scots and asylum seekers.

**Support Refugees:** Continue offering integration opportunities for people seeking refuge.

# Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning

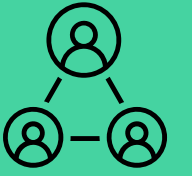


The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups to ensure effective ownership.

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of learners from different marginalised groups enrolled in adult learning programmes	Baseline to be established across all partners.
Progress Adult Learning thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across adult learning provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Co-Design Pathways	Increased engagement of marginalised groups in learning and volunteering	Number of co-designed programmes and volunteering routes created	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Trauma-Informed Learning	Increased confidence, resilience, and connection for adult learner	% of adults reporting improved confidence and mental health	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

## Priority 2: Youth Work

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through Youth Work



### Why is this a Priority?

The life circumstances of young people affect their ability to develop life skills and engage in their schools and communities. Youth work addresses inequality by providing targeted support for young people impacted by poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. Youth Work can support young people to overcome barriers to learning, support physical and mental health improving their life chances.

### What does the evidence say about young people?

#### Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future

- 93.4 % who commented on the proposal that there should be targeted learning opportunities for young people to address key issues, provide opportunities to gain skills, improve mental and physical wellbeing and have their voices heard agreed with it. (Facilities and Services)
- 91.6 % who commented on the proposal that there should be work with young people to promote children's rights and provide targeted support to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap and support employment and positive destinations through relevant and accredited learning opportunities agreed with it. (Work and Local Economy)
- UNCRC principles and youth voice must be embedded throughout planning and delivery (taken from stakeholder consultation on 30/04/2025)
- Co-creation of services with young people, including planning and evaluation, is essential (stakeholder consultation)

- Youth Work provision must extend beyond school environments and work hours (stakeholder consultation)
- More provision is needed for 18–24-year-olds, especially those not in education or employment (stakeholder consultation)

**Scottish Equity Funded school-based youth work** is making a significant difference in the lives of young people. A total of **1,723 young people** have participated in these initiatives, with:

- **89% reporting improved confidence**
- **94% reporting enhanced knowledge and skills**

These programmes are contributing to broader positive outcomes, including:

- Improved **health and wellbeing**
- Increased **engagement** and **attendance**
- Better **attainment in literacy and numeracy**



# Priority 2: Youth Work

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through Youth Work



## Priority

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through **Youth Work**

## Outcome

- More young people from identified vulnerable communities/groups will have greater access to accredited learning and services to become better skilled, better educated, more confident, and ready to participate in education, employment or training
- Young people will directly influence decisions that affect them by engaging in age-appropriate and youth-led opportunities that amplify their voices.

## Measures

- The no of young people at risk of disengaging who are being supported by youth work
- The no of young people at risk of disengaging who successfully re-engage in their school or community
- The no of community-based activities that provide a safe and supportive environment for young people
- % of young people being supported by youth work who report that their physical and mental wellbeing has improved.
- % of young people being supported by youth work who achieve a nationally recognised award
- No of opportunities for young people to directly influence policy decisions
- No of young people being support by youth work who go into a positive destination
- No of with marginalised 18–25-year-olds who engage in youthwork
- Learner hours

## What we will do:

**Map Gaps:** Establish a baseline and evaluation framework to identify missing youthwork pathways and target support to those most at risk.

**Strengthen Leadership:** Expand the Youth Work Network to boost collaboration and strategic oversight.

**Track Destinations:** Implement a school-based evaluation framework focused on long-term positive outcomes.

**Co-Design for Impact:** Develop employment-ready programmes with young people and partners, aligned to growth sectors.

**Safe Spaces:** Increase access to welcoming, partnership-led spaces for young people, promoting connection and having fun.

**Recognise Achievement:** Expand access to awards in schools and communities, including those valued by FE/HE.

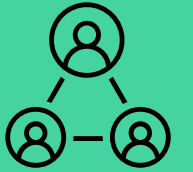
**Reach the Marginalised:** Engage 18–25-year-olds who've left school and are furthest from work or wellbeing to co-design tailored pathways.

**Youth Voice:** Keep growing opportunities for young people to shape decisions.

**Shared Goals:** Collaborate with partners like the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to deliver joined-up support.

## Priority 2: Youth Work

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through Youth Work



The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups.

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of learners from different vulnerable groups enrolled in adult learning programmes	Baseline to be established across all partners
Progress Youth Work thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across youth work provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Focus on engagement with 18–25-year-olds	Increased engagement this age group to support wellbeing and positive destinations	Number of young people from this age group engaged, % of this age group achieving a positive destination	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Creating mechanisms for youth voice and decision making	Increased confidence, resilience, and influence of young people	No of opportunities for young people to directly influence policy decisions	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

# Priority 3: Family Learning

Improving the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities Learning and whole family support.



## Why is this a Priority?

The life circumstances of children, young people and their families affect their educational attainment, their ability to develop life skills and engage in their communities. Family Learning plays a vital role in improving outcomes for children, parents, carers, and the wider community. Family Learning can empower the whole family network to improve children's outcomes. Programmes are flexible, community-based, and tailored to local needs, covering topics such as parenting, health and wellbeing, and confidence building.

## What does the evidence say about family learning?

Research shows that **parental engagement** significantly improves children's educational outcomes. The **National Improvement Framework** highlights the importance of supporting learning at home, encouraging parental involvement in the life and work of schools and early learning settings, and embedding family learning into educational practice.

The strategy aims to **close the poverty-related attainment gap** by building on the strengths of families and communities. It promotes strong, collaborative partnerships between public sector services, early years settings, schools, the NHS, third sector organisations, independent agencies and community groups.

In April 2025, the whole family approach was widely endorsed, particularly in relation to early intervention and building resilience. Through public consultation in 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future', local people echoed a need for partnership working to provide accessible community-based learning opportunities for adults, young people and children, particularly those in priority areas. The results also demonstrated a desire to engage with activities to boost social interaction and well-being with value placed on family-oriented events in community spaces

**Family learning** plays a crucial role in:

- **Raising Attainment:** Evidence shows that children's achievement improves when families are actively involved in their learning.
- **Promoting Equity:** Family learning helps close the attainment gap by supporting the whole family network and addressing inequalities.
- **Empowering Families:** It builds confidence, skills, and engagement, enabling families to support both their children's and their own lifelong learning.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** It fosters collaborative relationships between families and all key stakeholders, aligning with the principles of *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*, *The Promise* and the *UNCRC*.
- **Supporting Policy Goals:** It contributes to the aims of the *Community Empowerment Act*, the *Education (Scotland) Act 2016*, and the *National Improvement Framework* by encouraging inclusive, community-based approaches to lifelong learning.



# Priority 3: Family Learning

Improving the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities Learning and whole family support.



## Priority

Improving the life chances of our children, families and communities through family learning and whole family support

## Outcome

Families and communities will be strengthened through the development of meaningful relationships and helping families access multi-agency family centred support which promotes equality, inclusion and lifelong learning.

## Measures

- Number of adults and children engaging in universal family learning activities
- Number of adults and children engaging in capacity building family learning programmes
- Number of adults and children who engage in one off community events
- % of those who engage with family learning who report improved mental health and wellbeing, confidence and skills
- % of those who engage with family learning who go on to support other families
- % of supports designed and delivered in collaboration with multi-agency partners
- Number of onward referrals to other partners

## What we will do:

- **Create a Family Learning Thematic Partnership** to coordinate efforts, reduce duplication, and apply a shared evaluation framework.
- **Engage** learner voice to identify needs, with emphasis on promoting accessibility for all.
- **Co-design and deliver** universal, targeted and intensive programmes of support for parents and carers to improve their confidence, knowledge and skills in helping with their children's social, emotional, or learning needs
- **Maximise use of community spaces** to build local capacity and resilience
- **Progress cross partner commitment** to support Aberdeen's Whole Family Support Model.
- **Maintain collaborative relationships with partners**, allowing flexible approaches to family support from early intervention to managing risk and challenge.
- **Use family-centred planning** to provide flexible, needs-led support through the most appropriate services



# Priority 3: Family Learning

Improving the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities    Learning and whole family support.

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of learners from different vulnerable groups engaged in family learning programmes	Baseline to be established across all partners
Progress Family Learning thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across adult learning provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Maximise use of community spaces	Improved local capacity and resilience	Number of families engaged in learning programmes	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Cross partner involvement in Family Support Model	Tailored support in homes, schools, and community settings	Number of families receiving targeted support	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

# Priority 4: Community Development

Supporting communities to take action through Community Development to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control



## Why is this a Priority?

Our communities face major challenges from the wider economic outlook, rising cost of living, falling public expenditure and our changing demographics. These challenges are leading to the significant transformation of how public services are delivered, the role of the third sector, and the expectations of and on communities. Communities want and expect more control over their lives, and this has implications for the role of public services, a shift towards supporting and facilitating, rather than delivering and directing. Our communities are in different places in terms of their experiences and capacities to take on the responsibility that more control over resources and decision-making leads to. Therefore, it is essential to develop a strategic approach to supporting this shift to increased power in communities that recognises that individuals most affected by poverty need to be involved in identifying the best solutions. Locality planning continues to play an important role in supporting community development across Priority Neighbourhoods. It has contributed to encouraging community participation, strengthening relationships, and fostering a growing sense of identity and belonging. The model has enabled collective problem-solving, empowered local leadership, and supported self-help and learning. While there has been meaningful progress, further work is needed to ensure these outcomes are consistently realised across all areas.

## What does the evidence say about community development?

Evidence from a range of sources, demonstrates the powerful impact of CLD on the lives of learners and communities. At its best, effective CLD is life changing for people, families, and communities. It inspires people to maximise their own potential and empowers people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities.

Recent Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future and City Voice data show that residents in SIMD 1 areas report significantly lower levels of community connection, influence, and control—highlighting the need for a more responsive and empowering approach to community development in these neighbourhoods.

**Community Development** is an approach to achieving social change. It is action taken through building organisation, learning and power within communities in order to promote democracy, sustainable development, equality and social justice as well as supporting communities to make the most of their assets and using these to make positive change. It builds community capacity and influence by enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery. Community development practitioners may be paid (employed workers) or unpaid (community activists and voluntary workers).

### Local, national, global

There is strong and growing evidence that communities locally, nationally, and globally, must be responsive to the impact of unpredictable world events due to the increasing frequency and severity of crises such as climate change, war and pandemics.



# Priority 4: Community Development

Supporting communities to take action through Community Development to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control



## Priority

Supporting communities to take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control

## Outcome

- Communities benefit from high-quality capacity building and community development support that strengthens and enhances their existing skills and abilities.
- Communities are recognised and supported as equal partners in planning and decision-making processes that affect lives and community.
- Communities are supported to lead on the initiatives which they deem to be priorities within their neighbourhoods.
- Communities are supported to access the resources that they need to meet their ambitions for themselves, their families and neighbours.

## Measures

- Increase the scoring of influence and sense of control(Place Standard tool) from 3.3 to 3.5 for SIMD areas 1&2
- No of grassroots organisations who co-design training content that reflects their priorities and capacity-building needs.
- No of grassroots organisations receiving capacity building support
- No of community groups/individuals who participate in community events
- No of community groups who apply for funding
- Proportion of those who've received support who feel that it has had a positive impact in terms of enhanced capacity, skills, confidence
- Total annual budget allocated to initiatives such as participatory budgeting, community-led planning, and empowerment initiatives

## What we will do:

**Establish a Community Development Partnership** to drive shared ambition and strategic coordination across Aberdeen.

**Test new participation models**, Health Issues in the Community (HIIC), participatory research, alternative funding, to shift power to communities.

**Strengthen service coordination and access to spaces** by building trust and capacity across communities and services.

**Leverage opportunities** like Community Wealth Building, Democracy Matters, and anchor organisations to unlock development potential.

**Identify system-level barriers and risks** to community outcomes and develop a long-term vision and plan for Community development.

**Centre lived experience in all development**, ensuring a holistic, person-led approach.

**Use shared evaluation** to sustain and amplify what works, embedding a learning culture that draws from best practice and proven success elsewhere.

**Promote community development values**, ensuring integrity and duty of care in engagement.

**Collaborate through existing networks**, Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships, Locality Empowerment Groups, Food Poverty Action Aberdeen, taking a community development approach to delivering outcomes within the Locality Plans.

**Support grassroots initiatives** tackling poverty and food insecurity, using tools like Food Ladders.

**Empower communities to engage with Just Transition**, local climate planning, and resilience building.

**Enable agile, community-led responses** to global disruptions to strengthen local resilience and support



# Priority 4: Community Development

Supporting communities to take action through Community Development to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of community members from different vulnerable groups engaged in Community Learning activity	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Establish Community Development thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across community development provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Exploring and test participation models	Increased development of community strengthens and enhances their existing skills and abilities	Number of tested programmes	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Leverage for community focused wealth building	Communities are supported to access the resources that they need to meet their ambitions for themselves, their families and neighbours.	% of community members engaged	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

# Priority 5: Workforce development

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD



## Why is this a Priority?

Community Learning and Development (CLD), as defined by the CLD Standards Council Scotland, is a professional practice that empowers individuals and communities to identify goals, engage in learning, and drive change. It encompasses diverse areas such as community development, youth work, adult learning, health and wellbeing, and volunteer support. A key focus is on staff and volunteer development through tailored training and continuous professional learning, aligned with the CLD Standards Council's strategy, *Growing the Learning Culture*. This commitment is central to Aberdeen's CLD Plan 2025–2027, which prioritises workforce development to strengthen governance, leadership, and service quality. Stakeholder feedback highlighted gaps in capacity and professional development. Addressing these through targeted actions ensures services remain responsive, equitable, and impactful. A skilled and supported workforce enhances collaboration, supports vulnerable groups, and boosts community resilience and engagement.

## What does the evidence say about workforce development?

### Nationally

The Scottish Government's guidance calls for the recruitment of qualified practitioners, supporting CLD Standards Council membership, and ensuring compliance with national occupational standards. The independent review of CLD reinforces this, stating that a strong and suitably professionalised workforce is essential to delivering high-quality outcomes for learners. The review emphasised that CLD staff play a critical role in building trust, delivering person-centred learning, and enabling progression, functions that require skilled, supported professionals. The independent review calls for a national CLD Workforce Plan, improved CPD standards, and parity of esteem with other professions. It also recommends multi-year funding to support workforce stability and development.

### Locally

The formation of the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACL DSP) aims to strengthen strategic leadership and collective ownership by embedding workforce development into thematic delivery and shared evaluation structures. The April 2025 stakeholder consultation highlighted workforce development as a cross-cutting priority. Partners cited staff capacity issues, lack of Continued Professional Development and the need for trauma-informed and inclusive training.

Increased focus on collective workforce development is required to deliver quality services by volunteers and frontline staff while making the most of our collective resource.



# Priority 5: Workforce development

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD



## Priority

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD

## Outcome

The CLD workforce have increased access to the skills, practices and further learning and accreditation to better meet the changing needs of learners and communities.

## Measures

- Increase in CLD Standards Council membership across Aberdeen
- Maintain the number of further and higher education work-based placements
- Increase in shared CLD CPD opportunities across CLD partners

## What we will do:

Create a workforce development thematic partnership to:

**Ensure high-quality, relevant professional learning** by sharing best practice and delivering joint training for staff and volunteers.

**Collaborate across CLD partnerships** to offer accredited courses for those involved in community learning and development.

**Develop a clear, accredited progression pathway** through the workforce development thematic partnership.

**Provide vocational learning opportunities**, including practice placements for CLD university students.

**Promote CLD Standards Council membership** and support workforce engagement with the Standards Council.

**Encourage skill-sharing** through regional and national CLD networks, events, and collaborative training.

**Respond to current and emerging priorities** across CLD workforce development.

**Build digital competence across the CLD workforce** to support others and use new technologies effectively.

**Expand access to sector-specific qualifications** for staff and volunteers.



# Priority 5: Workforce development

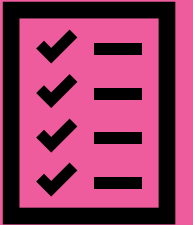
Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Workforce Development Thematic Partnership	Strengthened strategic coordination and shared responsibility for workforce development	Partnership established and active	Operational by end of 2025
Respond to current and emerging priorities across CLD workforce development.	Increased access to skills and practices to meet changing learner and community needs	Number of training sessions delivered	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Collaborate across CLD partnerships	Broader access to accredited courses for CLD practitioners	Number of joint courses offered across CLD partners	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Promote CLD Standards Council membership	Increased professionalisation and recognition of CLD workforce.	Increase in CLD Standards Council membership across Aberdeen	Year-on-year increase

# Priority 6: Collaboration

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development partners.



## Why is this a Priority?

Collaboration among community learning and development (CLD) partners is a powerful vehicle for fostering social inclusion, enhancing skills, and supporting lifelong learning within communities. By working together, organisations can share resources, avoid duplication, achieve economies of scale, and amplify their positive impact.

## What does the evidence say about collaborative working and shared accountability?

HMIE identified the need for a more joined-up approach to self-evaluation and shared data use. This would help avoid duplication, improve resource efficiency, and provide a fuller understanding of CLD's impact.

The Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP) and thematic delivery groups are tasked with shaping delivery plans and contributing to shared evaluation. This structure ensures that governance is not only strategic but also responsive to community realities.

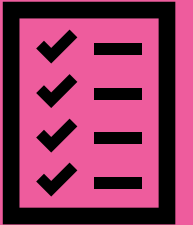
CLD Partners across all CLD strands called for improved shared metrics, and co-produced reporting frameworks. These were seen as essential for transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The [learning-life-report-independent-review-community-learning-development-cld.pdf](#) reinforces that CLD's impact is often under-recognised due to fragmented data and inconsistent outcome measurement. It recommends a national CLD Outcomes and Measurement Framework and highlights the need for consistent data collection and reporting across all providers



# Priority 6: Collaboration

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development partners.



## Priority

**Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development Organisations.**

## Outcome

**Improve the ability of the collective CLD partnership to demonstrate progress made to CLD outcomes**

## Measures

- Shared measures of success set by Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership
- Involvement of CLD partners in designing and implementing shared self-evaluation and data gathering systems.
- Evidence of improvement through governance structures
- Increase the number of CLD partners contributing to shared reporting against the Aberdeen CLD Plan.
- Improved accuracy in reporting the impact of CLD outcomes across the city, and our reporting nationally.
- Increased involvement of partners in strategic and thematic groups

## What we will do:

**Supporting collaboration through the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership and Thematic groups**

**Enabling representation** from new CLD providers, learners and communities as we work collaboratively

**Building capacity across the CLD partnership** by strengthening how we track, measure, and report on progress.

**Create opportunities for regular collaboration** across CLD partnership to progress CLD priorities

**Being accountable and communicating** what has been achieved to communities, stakeholders, and funders.

**Promote shared self-evaluation** across thematic partnerships using How Good is our CLD (HGIOCLD)

**Collect and review CLD impact and performance** data bi-annually and annually against thematic priorities.

**Extend use of national CLD KPIs** across all partners.

**Play a key role in the delivery of the Partnership Prevent Plan to ensure** digital safeguarding, a shared approach to addressing radicalisation, and multi-agency risk management through shared data sets



# Priority 6: Collaboration

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen’s Community Learning and Development partners.

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Supporting collaboration through the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership and Thematic groups	Improve the ability of the collective CLD partnership to demonstrate progress made to CLD outcomes	Shared measures of success set by Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Enabling representation from new CLD providers, learners and communities	Increased involvement of partners in strategic and thematic groups	Involvement of CLD partners in designing and implementing shared self-evaluation and data gathering systems	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Create opportunities for regular collaboration across CLD partnership to progress CLD priorities	Increase the number of CLD partners contributing to shared reporting against the Aberdeen CLD Plan	Number of CLD partners contributing to shared reporting	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Promote shared self-evaluation across thematic partnerships using HGIOCLD	Strengthened shared accountability and continuous improvement	Use of HGIOCLD across thematic partnerships	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Work with the HDRC to design an evaluation of arrangements to commissioning.	Establish an approach to the evaluation of our current arrangements to maximise the impact of sources of funding.	SMART approach in place.	Approach in place for the beginning of session 2025/26.



# Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future

**Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future** engagement, using the Place Standard Tool, revealed strong support for the proposed CLD priorities, with over 90% of participants endorsing actions such as expanding community-based adult learning, targeted youth programmes, and initiatives to improve health, wellbeing, and employability. Respondents also backed inclusive service design and greater community influence in decision-making. Feedback highlighted the need for practical, locally delivered learning opportunities, better use of community spaces, clearer communication, and more support for marginalised groups. These insights have directly informed the CLD Delivery Plan 2025–2030, ensuring it reflects community priorities and addresses the barriers identified through engagement.

You asked for...	We Are Doing
Clear Volunteer Opportunities	Empowering communities through volunteering, participatory budgeting, and local action groups
Basic Lifelong Learning including digital skills, literacy for life	Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning
Use of schools in the evenings, evening classes, business input to run these	Maximise use of community spaces to build local capacity and resilience
Volunteering and Training	Expand access to sector-specific qualifications for staff and volunteers
Community Support	Support grassroots initiatives tackling poverty and food insecurity
Local Job Opportunities and Skill-Building Initiatives	Young people are supported into positive destination programmes aligned with growth and volume sectors
Information Dissemination and Community Engagement	Promote community development values, ensuring integrity and duty of care in engagement
Community-Led Initiatives and Lifelong Learning	Co-design Pathways: Develop programmes and volunteering routes with marginalised groups
Community space and social gatherings	Increase access to welcoming, partnership-led spaces for young people



# A Statement of CLD needs which will not be met within the period of the Plan



This plan reflects the current position in Aberdeen, while recognising that unmet needs in service delivery and support may continue to emerge. Through ongoing community engagement and by listening to the voices of learners, we will identify and record these needs. The Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership will work collaboratively to explore with thematic partnerships how such needs might be addressed and factor this into our yearly planning. A significant proportion of our provision is delivered through the voluntary efforts of active citizens, both individually and within groups, who play an increasingly vital role in identifying and responding to unmet learning needs.

## **Strategic Use of Resources and Future Ambitions**

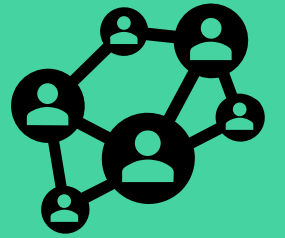
All existing CLD services are currently resourced through a blend of national grants and funding streams, local authority funding, voluntary sector contributions, and the invaluable efforts of volunteers. However, in light of ongoing financial pressures across all sectors, there is a shared recognition of the need to maximise the impact of these resources through more strategic alignment and joint planning. Looking ahead, the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership is committed to exploring new collaborative and consortia-based approaches to service delivery. This includes pooled resources, and co-designed interventions that respond flexibly to emerging needs. By working together in this way, we aim to build a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable CLD offer for all communities across Aberdeen.

# Aberdeen CLD partners

This plan has been shaped by a broad and committed partnership of CLD stakeholders, including learners and communities across Aberdeen. Each partner shown here has played a vital role in its development and will continue to contribute to its delivery, ensuring a collaborative and sustained approach throughout the lifespan of the 2025–2030 plan.







## Annex A: Strategies and plans connected to CLD cross cutting themes

1. Raising Attainment Focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap through the [Scottish Attainment Challenge \(SAC\)](#). Investment in Pupil Equity Funding and Strategic Equity Funding. CLD supports wellbeing and readiness to learn, aligning with local stretch aims.
2. [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](#) Aims to support refugees and asylum seekers from day one of arrival. CLD contributes through partnerships and initiatives that promote integration.
3. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Supports language learning for non-native speakers including refugees and migrants. Delivered through CLD partnerships and other providers, aligned with the [New Scots Strategy](#).
4. [Curriculum for Excellence CLD](#) supports the four capacities of CfE: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors. Promotes skills for learning, life, and work.
5. Community Empowerment CLD supports participation in community planning under the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#). A review of the Act is underway to strengthen community ownership and decision-making.
6. Family Learning CLD delivers impactful family learning opportunities. Supported by refreshed [National Occupational Standards and Education Scotland resources](#).
7. Employment and Skills CLD provides accessible routes into skills development, especially for those excluded from work. Works with partners to support lifelong learning and employability with synergies with the [Regional Economic Strategy 2023](#)
8. Mental Health Support New [national strategy](#) (2023) focuses on wellbeing, prevention, and addressing inequalities. CLD contributes to mental health support through community-based interventions.
9. [Developing the Young Workforce](#) (DYW) CLD supports youth transitions into employment. DYW initiatives include school coordinators and third-sector partnerships targeting disadvantaged youth.
10. [UNCRC and Youth Participation UNCRC Incorporation \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) embeds children's rights in public services. CLD supports youth participation and rights-based approaches.
11. [Getting It Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) CLD supports early intervention and whole-family approaches to wellbeing and development.
12. Tackling Child Poverty CLD is key in supporting families through employment and skills development. Aligns with the Best Start, Bright Futures delivery plan and targets priority families.
13. [Keeping the Promise](#) CLD contributes to transformational change for care-experienced children and young people. Supports delivery of the Promise Implementation Plan.
14. Volunteering CLD promotes inclusive volunteering through the [Volunteering Action Plan \(2022\)](#). Volunteering supports wellbeing, skills development, and community cohesion.
15. Learning for Sustainability (LfS) CLD helps embed sustainability in education. Supports the [Target 2030 goal](#) for all education settings to become Sustainable Learning Settings.
16. [Aberdeen's Anti-Poverty Mapping](#) shows how local services and organisations collaborate to tackle poverty through targeted, localised support across learning, housing, health, and economic stability.