

Community learning – council must do better

Edinburgh Council has been told to make “urgent” improvements to its community learning and development services following a visit by inspectors.

They said the local authority and its partners are failing to meet “legislative duties” to adequately coordinate and deliver adult education and youth work .

The community learning and development (CLD) team is “not providing the required leadership and governance” and progress toward meeting priorities is “not being monitored or reported on,” an Education Scotland report stated.

Inspectors, who spoke to learners, community representatives, staff and volunteers during their visit in February, said programmes being delivered with schools, community centres and local organisations through the scheme were nevertheless still “enhancing the life chances for participants”.

However as the council and its partners were “not making sufficient progress with their CLD plan” Education Scotland said a follow-up inspection would be carried out within 12 months to ensure its findings are acted upon.

Led by the council – whose partners include the NHS, Edinburgh College, Edinburgh University and others – CLD aims to tackle poverty and inequality by offering educational and personal development opportunities to disadvantaged people of all

ages.

HM Inspector Andrea McMillan said: “The CLD Partnership is not providing the required leadership and governance for the delivery of the CLD Plan.

“The majority of the priorities in the CLD 2021-24 plan focus on recovery from the pandemic and require to be refreshed and updated.

“The current plan does not yet inform sufficiently council CLD services or partners’ priorities.

“As a result, the local authority is not meeting its legislative duties as set out in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 to coordinate provision of and provide CLD, to identify unmet need, and to specify what action partners intend to take over the period of the plan.

“Progress towards CLD priorities is not being monitored or reported on.”

Other issues highlighted by Ms McMillan were a “disconnect” between community learning and the delivery of community development due to a reorganisation of CLD within the local authority, and those responsible for community development not recognising “how their work contributes to outcomes set out in the current CLD plan”.

She added: “CLD partners do not yet understand and evaluate fully the impact of their work. This area requires significant improvement.

“Learners would benefit from a consistent learning offer that is targeted to those most in need that includes clear progression pathways and opportunities for accreditation.”

She called on the local authority to and its partners to strengthen the leadership and governance of CLD in line with

legislative requirements “as a matter of urgency”.

However highlighting positive aspects of the service she said the Community Sports Hub programme was bringing about “positive changes for under-represented groups using sport and physical activity”.

She also praised Screen Education Edinburgh for providing opportunities for young people and adults who live in Edinburgh’s areas of multiple deprivation “to access and engage in film making and film education training programmes”.

The City of Edinburgh Council has been contacted for comment.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter



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