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Ethical Practice – Competent Practitioners

A resource for practitioners using the CLD Code of Ethics to reflect on and improve practice

Who is this resource for?

Ethical Practice – Competent Practitioners is relevant to anyone who does community learning or community development work, whatever sector or context they work in, whatever age groups they work with, and however they describe what they do.

A commitment to practice in line with the Code of Ethics is a condition of membership of the Community Learning and Development Standards Council.

Why do ethics matter?

Community Learning and Development (CLD) is a values-based profession. The **values underpinning CLD** have been widely agreed, and the **CLD Competences** provide a framework for practice. But how we practice needs to be directly informed by why we're doing it – the CLD Code of Ethics provides the means for us to make this connection.

Getting your bearings

You will find the Code of Ethics itself on the next two pages.

Section 1 is an introduction and includes some initial topics for reflection and discussion which provide starting points for using the other sections.

Section 2 covers what we mean by “ethics” and explores theories, frameworks and professionalism.

Section 3 looks at ethics in CLD and considers four themes in particular: boundaries, accountability, “enforcement” and professional identity.

Section 4 offers worksheets exploring each clause of the Code of Ethics in depth, highlighting links to the CLD Competences and offering prompt questions about applying ethical principles.

Section 5 is about embedding the Code of Ethics in practice as an organisation. This section is designed to be of particular relevance to senior managers with responsibility for CLD.

The appendix is an essay – ‘CLD: From Vision to Practice’ – that sets the Code and the Competence Framework into the context of the purpose and values of CLD and highlights their central role in making a commitment to high standards of practice.

All the material in this resource pack is available to download from the Standards Council website. There is additional material available online only including video clips and a youth work commentary on the Code of Ethics.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) is a field of professional practice constituted by the adult education, community development and youth work professions. While their practices and the constituencies they serve may differ, they have in common a commitment to their constituents as their primary clients, and to the power of informal education to transform situations, structures, communities and individuals.

Education is a prerequisite for democracy and citizenship. CLD seeks to extend the reach of effective democracy, particularly by actively engaging those who are excluded from participation in key social processes that shape their lives, and to widen the scope of democracy to enable full participation in the common wealth. The following principles are informed by this core position.

1. Primary client

Our primary client (our 'constituent') is the community, the young person, or the adult learner with whom we engage.

2. Social context

Our work is not limited to facilitating change within individuals, but extends to their social context and environment. It recognises the impact of ecological and structural forces on people.

3. Equity

Our work promotes equality of opportunity and outcome. Our practice is equitable and inclusive.

4. Empowerment

We seek to enhance constituents' capacity for positive action by:

- enabling them to clarify and pursue their chosen priorities
- building skills of decision-making, engagement and co-operation
- making power relations open and clear
- supporting constituents in holding those with power accountable
- facilitating disengagement from the professional relationship.

Our starting point is that constituents are capable of assessing and acting on their interests.

5. Duty of Care

We will avoid exposing our constituents to the likelihood of harm or injury.

6. Corruption

We will not seek to advance ourselves, our organisations or others, personally, politically or professionally, at the expense of our constituents.

7. Transparency

Engagement with the young person, adult learner or community, and the resulting relationship, will be open and truthful. Potential conflicts of interest will be openly declared.

8. Confidentiality

Information provided by constituents will not be used against them, nor will it be shared with others who may use it against them. Constituents should be made aware of the limits to confidentiality. Until this happens, the presumption of confidentiality should apply. Wherever possible they should be consulted before disclosure.

9. Co-operation

We will actively seek to co-operate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes for our constituents.

10. Professional Development

We will work reflectively, identifying and using the information, resources, skills, knowledge and practices needed to improve our capacity to meet our obligations to constituents.

11. Self-awareness

We should be conscious of our own values and interests, and approach cultural and other difference respectfully. While the need to challenge may arise, we must try first to understand.

12. Boundaries

The CLD relationship is a professional relationship, intentionally limited to protect the constituent and the purpose of our work. These limits should be clarified, established and maintained. The relationship with an individual constituent is based on trust and is not available for sexual engagement.

13. Self-care

CLD practice should be consistent with preserving the health of CLD workers.

Why does the Code of Ethics matter?

As CLD practitioners we see ourselves as part of a value-based profession and what we do as underpinned by a set of principles. And we see this as a distinctive feature of CLD practice, central to its effective operations and delivery. The principles and values have been articulated by the **CLD Standards Council** and in a variety of statements from the **Scottish Government** and others.

However, until recently, there has been no framework for *systematically* relating the values and principles to practice. There was no clear statement about the standards of professional behaviour that CLD practitioners, wherever and by whoever they are employed, should expect of themselves, and that others should expect of them. The **CLD Code of Ethics**, together with the **Competences**, provides the framework for thinking about how the values should impact on what practitioners do on a day-to-day basis.

The Code then first and most fundamentally matters because it is a key means of ensuring that the impact of CLD in the lives of the communities, young people and adult learners that we work with is positive and the quality of practice is of the best. Wide and effective use of the Code of Practice, in conjunction with the CLD Competences, is also essential if we aspire to CLD as a professional grouping having a central role in governing our own practice. Without an agreed and recognised reference point for the behaviour and competence of practitioners there is no means for this to happen.

Consideration of the Code of Ethics does not provide an alternative to practitioners' accountability to their employers; it does provide a means of ensuring that this accountability is governed in a way that is appropriate to the nature of CLD, and a point of reference for practitioners and managers in ensuring that employers recognise and understand the ethical basis of CLD practice.

Underpinning all of this, it is also designed to encourage practitioners to consider their own position in daily and ongoing practice contexts. It is not a set of rules.



Points for reflection and discussion

In what ways could it be viewed as important that there is a recognised statement of standards of professional behaviour for CLD practitioners?

To what extent should CLD practitioners as a professional grouping have a central role in governing their own practice?

What issues, concerns and advantages are raised if we consider that the statement of ethics for CLD practitioners should be at the core of our practice?

Consider situations you've been involved in or have observed – when would it have been useful to be able to reflect on recognised standards of professional behaviour for CLD practitioners?

The purposes and uses of the Code of Ethics

Ethics are often described as the standards of behaviour that govern the conduct of an individual or the members of a profession. The Code has a central role in defining and communicating what CLD work is; together with the widely-agreed **values and principles** and the **Competence Framework** it provides the foundation for improving standards in CLD and for strengthening the identity of CLD as a profession. One of the criteria for registration as a member of the Standards Council is a commitment to the Code.

The Code does not seek to provide a set of rules for the conduct of CLD practitioners. It sets out ethical principles and is deliberately expressed in positive terms to describe what we do. Of course

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Section I: Introduction

this does also provide some strong indications of what we shouldn't do, but the Code has a strong emphasis on the responsibility of practitioners to make their own judgements on conduct guided by the principles of the Code.

The Code can be used to:

- Express the distinctiveness or identity of CLD;
- Articulate the shared value base that we have;
- Challenge, examine and reflect on our practice;
- Promote professional dialogue and understanding;
- Support and inform accountability;
- Offer reassurance and protection, within an informed perspective, for practitioners and for the people we work with;
- Help deal with tensions with other partners and define our limits in partnership work; and
- Support learning for students, new entrants, practitioners and managers.

The Code is intended to be useful to everyone involved in the delivery of CLD: to practitioners, to the young people, adult learners and communities we work with, and to all those with a role in managing CLD.



Points for reflection and discussion

What do you think the most important implications of the Code of Ethics are (in your own context, and more generally)?

Do you think the consideration and application of the Code of Ethics would be problematic in any of the areas outlined above?

Do you have ideas about what other purposes and uses the Code can be put to?

Can you identify any “health warnings” that should accompany use and application of the code?

How the Code of Ethics was developed

The Code was developed using an inclusive, participatory process, designed to ensure that it reflects the reality of our contexts and practice.

Initial work on a draft and an accompanying discussion paper was carried out by Professor Howard Sercombe and Peter Taylor. The draft Code was presented to a meeting of the Standards Council's Registration Committee in January 2010 and to a joint meeting of all members of the Standards Council's committees in March 2010.

An amended version drawing on comments from these meetings formed the basis for a wider consultation that involved eight events across Scotland and giving opportunities for practitioners with a specific focus on youth work, adult learning or community development to participate in a discussion relating the Code to that context. In addition there was an online discussion. For more information on discussion and issues raised, you can download the report on the consultation process here: http://www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/Registration/Code_of_Ethics/Code-of-Ethics

The Code was amended to take account of comments received through the consultation and the final version was approved by the Standards Council in 2011.

The Council agreed that the ongoing conversation around language, semantics and use of terms had been exhausted. The Code therefore carries a note of suggestion that individual practitioners must assume responsibility for interpreting terms from their own perspectives. This does not diminish the central message of any of the statements within the Code.

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Section I: Introduction

Ethical Practice – Competent Practitioners

As noted above, the Code of Ethics does not provide a set of rules for conduct. Not only are the circumstances and issues that CLD practitioners (probably in common with any professional grouping) encounter too varied and complex for this to be feasible; it is also essential to ethical decision making that the individual takes responsibility for applying a set of principles to their own situation.

The purpose of this learning resource is to assist CLD practitioners, and everyone with an interest in CLD practice, to do this; to use the Code of Ethics to inform, develop and challenge practice; and to promote the use of the Code in their organisation (and with partners). Following on from this introduction, the material is presented in sections as follows:

- What do we mean by “ethics”? Theories, frameworks and professionalism;
- Ethics in CLD – boundaries, accountability and professional identity;
- Using the Code of Ethics in developing competent CLD practice; and
- Embedding the Code of Ethics in practice.

This learning resource provides material that can be used in a variety of ways. It provides information that should be helpful in thinking through how to use the Code of Ethics. There is a range of material from which you can select: to stimulate individual reflection; to promote discussion as part of a team, partnership or other meeting; or to provide the focus and content for a CPD session.



Key learning

What do you see as the main reasons for having a code of ethics for the CLD practitioner base?

In what ways is a statement of professional behaviours for CLD practitioners expressed through a Code of Ethics useful and important for you and your colleagues?

Do you have areas of concerns in relation to the Code of Ethics for CLD? What are they, and how do you think they could be addressed?

Points you record at this stage can form a point of reference as you use other sections of this resource.

Section 2:

What do we mean by “ethics”?

Theories, frameworks and professionalism

Is Ethics relevant to CLD practice?

In thinking about what is meant by “ethics”, let’s start with two questions about CLD:

- Can CLD workers do their job by just doing what they’re told?
- Is CLD practice just a set of techniques?

Most if not all CLD practitioners would answer “no” to both these questions. But what underpins these views?

Ethics is about why we should do one thing rather than another; it’s concerned with the development of frameworks for thinking about what we should do and how we should do it.

What does the dictionary say about “ethics”?

Ethics (noun)

1. (Functioning as singular) the philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct and of the rules and principles that ought to govern it; moral philosophy.
2. (Functioning as plural) a social, religious or civil code of behaviour considered correct, especially that of a particular group, profession or individual.
3. (Functioning as plural) the moral fitness of a decision, course of action, etc.

All three definitions are relevant to working out why ethics may be relevant to CLD. The second one – “a...code of behaviour considered correct” – of course relates directly to the Code of Ethics for CLD. This at first sight suggests something like a set of rules or a definitive guide to conduct.

However, a look at the other two definitions starts to suggest why an attempt to arrive at a definitive guide may not get us very far. If ethics

are about “the moral fitness of a decision” then experience tells us that finding “right” answers isn’t straightforward; no doubt this is why “the philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct and the rules and principles that ought to govern it” has continued for more than 2,000 years – at least – without reaching final conclusions.

Ethical theories and frameworks

This philosophical study has of course generated a range of theories that seek to provide a basis for understanding how to behave in a way that is guided by ethical principles.

- One type of theory says that the basis of ethical behaviour is to do whatever produces the greatest amount of “good” consequences; one well-known way of describing this that we should aim for “the greatest good for the greatest number”.

In other words, this type of theory bases morality on the consequences of human actions, rather than on anything intrinsic to particular actions in themselves. Most non-religious people see themselves as using this theory.

Theories of this type are known as “consequentialism”.

- On the other hand, another set of theories focuses on human actions in themselves, and teaches that acts are intrinsically “right” or “wrong”, irrespective of the consequences that may result from them.

This kind of theory can be described as being concerned with “the principle of the thing”, or more technically as “non-consequentialism” or “deontological ethics”.

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Section 2: What do we mean by “ethics”?

- Or instead of seeing ethics in terms either of the consequences of particular actions, or the nature of particular actions in themselves, a third type of theory concerns itself with the way individuals live their lives.

In this way of looking at ethics, “good actions” are the result of virtuous people expressing their “inner goodness” in the things that they do. We can judge that an action is right if it is what a virtuous person would do in the same circumstances (which might allow us for example to consider both the consequences of an act and the act in itself).

This type of theory is known as “virtue ethics.”

There is further information on these and other ethical theories and frameworks at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/guide>.



Points for discussion:

What ethical theory or theories do you think underlies – perhaps not in a conscious way – how you make decisions in day-to-day life?

In what ways do you think the ethical frameworks you use, maybe without thinking about them, are helpful in reaching good decisions? Can you identify ways that they might work *against* this?

Applying the theories: “professional ethics”

“Professional ethics” has been described as:

The norms and standards of behaviour of members of specific occupational groups and the ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in their practice.¹

Professional ethics is seen as a branch of “applied ethics”, that is, the study of how the types of theoretical framework sketched out above can be applied to practical issues including those involving policy decisions.

The study of professional ethics involves analysis of the meaning and legitimacy of relevant concepts, such as confidentiality, empowerment or autonomy (or of the concept of “professional ethics” itself).

In a presentation to the Standards Council in 2010, Professor Gordon Kirk outlined three stages in a continuing debate about professional ethics: the “established view”; challenges or threats to this; and a re-interpretation responding to these challenges. The key points in this account are set out below.

Professionalism: the established view

In this view, the “established” professions (health, law, education) are seen as characterised by:

- Provision of a service essential to human flourishing through a special relationship.
- A requirement for sustained education and training.
- Adherence to an ethical code.
- The exercise of autonomy of professional action and judgement.
- Self-regulation through a legitimating body.
- Taking on a role in commenting on public policy.

It was suggested that key advantages of understanding professionalism in this way are that:

- It gives professions a role in providing a counter to a centralising government.
- It provides the basis for a sensible compromise between expertise and public accountability.

Challenges and threats to the established view

The established view of professionalism has been criticised and attacked in a number of ways; the developments and arguments include:

- The established criteria are exclusive in their effects.
- Professionalism based on this model encourages a “silo” mentality.

¹Ethics, accountability and the social professions, Banks, 2004 (p.3)

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Section 2: What do we mean by “ethics”?

- The personalisation agenda in the delivery of public services challenges the claims of “professional expertise.”
- The movement supporting competence-based training and emphasising competence-based practice challenges the value of professional education.
- Managerial approaches to service delivery and emphasis on the over-riding importance of financial accountability challenge claims to autonomy and self-regulation.
- Well-publicised cases of professional misconduct and incompetence challenge several of the claims of professionalism already mentioned.
- Professions can be seen as self-serving monopolies.

Re-interpreting professional values

Issues such as those listed, and the debates arising from them, have led to a continuing re-interpretation of professional values with an emphasis on:

- Stronger intra- and inter-professional collaboration.
- Evidence-based practice.
- Commitment to enhanced performance.
- Stronger involvement by practitioners in setting professional standards.
- Shared inter-professional ethical values such as non-discriminatory practice.
- Personal morality and professional action.



Points for discussion:

Thinking about “professionalism” in society today in a broad sense:

- Are there aspects of the “established view” that you think are still of value, bearing in mind the critique of this outlined under “challenges and threats to the established view”?
- How powerful do you think the “challenges and threats to the established view” are? How far do you agree with the arguments put forward?
- How strong a basis do you think the re-interpretation of professional values briefly outlined provides for professionalism that has a valid place in the 21st century?

Sarah Banks’s book, *Ethics, Accountability and the Social Professions and Youth Work Ethics* (Sercombe, 2010) explore these issues in much greater depth and with specific reference to the “social professions” (youth work, social work and community work) and youth work respectively.

Section 3: Ethics in CLD – Boundaries, Accountability and Professional Identity

Section 1 provided some initial indications and areas for discussion on why ethics are important for CLD and why a code is relevant, together with some background information on how the Code was developed. Section 2 looked at what ethical thinking is about, and how ideas of “professional ethics” have developed.

In this part of the package – Section 3 – we examine some ways in which CLD practitioners engage with, or find themselves confronted by, ethical issues; and explore the relevance of a Code of Ethics for CLD for addressing these issues in practice.

In particular, this section provides some prompts for reflection and discussion around the following themes:

- Setting boundaries for acceptable practice
- Accountability
- “Enforcement”
- Professional identity.

Setting boundaries for acceptable practice

What’s the issue?

CLD engages people, often those who are vulnerable, and intervenes with the intention of bringing about change. CLD practitioners find themselves in positions of trust and sometimes power. The potential exists to cause harm – in some documented instances, serious harm. It follows that boundaries for what is acceptable practice are needed.

There is a well-established framework of values for CLD, which is an essential basis for setting boundaries; but it doesn’t take us very far in actually setting them. The values don’t in themselves express that some behaviours are essential and that some others are prohibited.

Employers have a role in setting boundaries, but do we as practitioners want to leave it entirely to them?

How can a code of ethics help?

A code of ethics provides a link between broad statements of values and the specifics of practice. If it is owned by practitioners, it provides a means through which we can set boundaries for acceptable practice ourselves.

This is why the Standards Council has developed the Code of Ethics for CLD by working with the field. It is also one of the reasons why the Code is more about enabling practitioners to make their own ethical judgements about practice than it is about establishing a set of rules.

The Code of Ethics will not ensure CLD practitioners always practise in an ethical way, but it will remind us that there is a dividing line that needs to be drawn between what is ethically acceptable and what isn’t, and help us to decide where the line should be in particular situations.



Points for discussion

- Can you think of situations in your practice of CLD where you were faced with an ethical choice about whether a particular course of action was acceptable or not?
- How did you reach your decision? What would have been the impact (positive or negative) if you’d made a different decision?

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Section 3: Ethics in CLD – Boundaries, Accountability and Professional Identity

- Can you think of situations where you think a CLD practitioner (yourself, a colleague, someone working in another context that you are familiar with) crossed the boundary into unacceptable practice?
- Who was aware of the issue? Was the situation addressed? If so, how?
- In what ways do you think a code of ethics could have helped in any of the situations you've been considering?

Accountability

What's the issue?

As CLD practitioners, we assert that we have a direct accountability to the individuals, groups and communities that we work with. This doesn't mean that we're not accountable to our employers, but that we expect employers to recognise the validity of our other accountabilities. An element of tension is more or less inevitable as a result; it can be creative or not dependent on how it is managed by employers and by CLD practitioners.

To the extent that an employer is tightly focused on narrowly-defined targets, short-term impact and service-specific outcomes, these tensions can become more problematic.

On the other hand, from the point of view of an employer, particularly one with no direct knowledge of CLD, the claim of direct accountability to people and communities that we work with can look like a licence to do as we please. Any instances of CLD practitioners misusing their position can exacerbate this.

How can a code of ethics help?

A code of ethics articulates the responsibilities we place on, and the commitments we make to ourselves, and to each other as members of a professional grouping. It expresses our commitment, as CLD practitioners, to discipline our own practice.

Where CLD practitioners' commitment to accountability to the people and communities that we work with is under pressure from an employer, a code of ethics based on an agreed collective view provides a clear ethical position from which to argue.

A code also provides employers, partners and colleagues with both a statement of the conduct and behaviour they should expect from a CLD practitioner, and an explanation of the distinctive ethical framework that should guide their actions. It can aid both legitimate accountability, and better understanding.



Points for discussion

- Can you think of particular situations where tensions have arisen between your accountability to the people and communities you work with, and to your employer?
- How did you manage these tensions? What happened as a result?
- To what extent is your accountability to the people and communities you work with limited because of how you see the expectations of your employer?
- Can you think of situations where CLD practitioners have misused the principle of accountability to the people and communities we work with?
- How might a code of ethics help in any of the circumstances you've been considering?

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Section 3: Ethics in CLD – Boundaries, Accountability and Professional Identity

“Enforcement”

What’s the issue?

The “established” professions usually have a disciplinary process, with a code of ethics as a key point of reference for this. If a complaint against a practitioner is upheld through the process, sanctions including de-registration and withdrawal of the “licence to practice” can be applied.

The Code of Ethics for CLD doesn’t, currently at least, have a function of this kind. There are significant practical difficulties that would need to be addressed before this kind of disciplinary process could be put in place to apply to CLD practitioners.

Some people think that a code of ethics without enforceable sanctions is ineffective; others that getting involved in an enforcement role would go against the ethos of the Standards Council.

How can a code of ethics help?

The question here is really whether a code of ethics without sanctions to back it up can have a positive impact.

No code of ethics guarantees that practice will be ethical: enforcement by definition happens after a breach of a code takes place, and only when a breach has been discovered, reported and evidenced.

However, if practitioners are aware of a code of ethics and see it as “theirs”, they will be more likely to factor ethics into their decision-making, argue about the ethical implications of actions and challenge each other. These are concrete ways in which a code of ethics can be used to change the culture of practice.

A code of ethics can also impact through the internal disciplinary processes of employing organisations. It can help agencies to be clear about what behaviour is acceptable in the CLD practice they have responsibility for. On the one hand this means that the code can be indirectly supported by the sanctions available to the employer; on the other practitioners can refer to the code to explain and seek to justify behaviour that is consistent with it.



Points for discussion

- What would influence you, and your colleagues, to take account of the Code of Ethics in making decisions about your practice?
- If, in future, a practical way can be found of enforcing a disciplinary process to support the Code of Ethics for CLD, do you think that would be a good thing? What do you see as the pros and cons of having formal sanctions e.g. “de-registration”?

Professional identity

What’s the issue?

CLD encompasses very diverse activities, in a wide range of settings, carried out by people with a variety of job titles. Its distinctive value derives from a role that can be difficult to understand for anyone whose mind-set is based on the most widespread traditional concepts of “service delivery”. Funding and other pressures sometimes lead to a loss of focus on core purpose and methods.

The resulting lack of clarity can be seen as a barrier to wider recognition of the impact and value of CLD practice, and can inhibit CLD practitioners themselves from identifying with CLD as a profession. This is sometimes compounded by the fact that practitioners may identify themselves more readily for example as a youth worker or a community development worker than as part of the CLD profession.

The CLD Competences provide a common framework for practice in all settings. However, practitioners are clear that CLD is a values-based activity and this implies that its identity cannot be adequately described through competences alone.

CLD has also been given greater prominence in Scottish Government policy, and guidance has articulated the purpose of CLD from a government perspective.

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Section 3: Ethics in CLD – Boundaries, Accountability and Professional Identity

However, if CLD is understood as simply a means of delivering particular policies, the resulting “identity” will be vulnerable to the inevitable changes in policies and priorities and will be seen as relevant by practitioners only to the extent that they see their role in close relation to the implementation of government policies.

For example, a practitioner working for a third sector organisation may be less likely to identify themselves as part of the CLD profession if they see the identity of CLD as tied directly to the delivery of government policies.



Points for discussion

- What defines CLD for you?
- Do you see yourself as part of a CLD professional grouping?
- How do you think a code of ethics could be used by CLD practitioners to help develop a sense of professional identity?

How can a code of ethics help?

A code of ethics can provide a statement of identity; it can be a collective, public statement by a body of practitioners about the principles that form the basis for their work, as well as an explicit set of standards to which they can be held accountable.

A code of ethics and a competence framework, that have been developed with the involvement of practitioners, and have been agreed and owned by them, provide the basis for a distinctive identity, shared by practitioners in different practice settings and independent of particular government policies. They can underpin the role of practitioners collectively influencing policy at all levels affecting CLD.

A professional body based on a code of ethics and a competence framework owned by practitioners has the opportunity to attract practitioners from all sectors and settings because it can clearly identify itself using the code rather than by reference to particular government policies or to a particular grouping of staff.

A code of ethics can also help in identifying what isn't CLD. The word “community” can be used as a label for all sorts of practices, some of which do not reflect CLD principles; a code of ethics can help make clear to participants and partners what they should expect when someone introduces themselves as a CLD worker.

Section 4: Using the Code of Ethics in Developing Competent CLD Practice

Introduction

The Code of Ethics sets out ethical principles for the practice and conduct of CLD practitioners. If it simply provided a set of rules, the expectation of practitioners, straightforward if not necessarily realistic, would be compliance; but the essence of the Code is that it sets out shared commitments, with responsibility on practitioners to understand and apply these to their own particular context.

The purpose of this learning resource as a whole is to assist practitioners and managers of CLD to do this. Other sections should assist you to develop your own and others' understanding of the purpose of the Code and benefits of using it, of the role of ethics in decision-making and of how a focus on ethics can be embedded into the work of your organisation. This section is designed to help you focus in on how the Code can and should inform practice. It does this by providing some materials for looking more closely at the individual clauses; however in using these it will be obvious that the clauses are closely interlinked.

The Code of Ethics should be used in close conjunction with the CLD Competence Framework. The Code of Ethics forms the link between the values set out in the Framework and the Competences themselves; the Competences provide the means to translate ethics into practice. This is explored in depth in 'CLD: From Vision to Practice' which you will find in the appendix.

It's important to bear in mind that there is never a final right answer to ethical questions: one part of the essence of ethical behaviour, in or out of a particular professional context, is that we go on **examining and challenging** what we do and why we do it. Another essential aspect of ethics is that we **act on** our reflection and discussion, on the basis of the best conclusion we can arrive at. So deciding on what should change is a key part of initial learning about the Code of Ethics, and a starting point for using the Code in continuing to develop practice, as a part of CPD activities and self-evaluation processes.

The rest of this section looks at each of the clauses of the Code in turn. There is a brief note on the **background** to the clause and why it is important; a **statement of principles** to inform how we apply it to practice; two sets of questions to promote **reflection**, one set focusing on **applying ethical principles**, the other on **developing ethical and competent practice**; and finally some further questions to assist in looking at **what we need to change** as a result of reflection. There are suggestions of particular aspects of the competence framework that are particularly closely linked to individual clauses of the Code.

All or any of the material can be used for personal reflection, to inform discussion or as the basis for part of the programme for a CPD event. You may want to select particular clauses of the code that are pertinent to current issues for you, your team or your organisation, and focus on these.

CLD

STANDARDS COUNCIL
FOR SCOTLAND

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Primary Client

Our primary client (our “constituent”) is the community, the young person or the adult learner with whom we engage.



As a CLD practitioner, there are a variety of people that you're expected to answer to, including employers, colleagues, and regulators. This key clause is a statement of the primary obligation of CLD practitioners to their "constituents".

Principles

- We place the communities, young people and adult learners we engage with at the centre of our work.
- We are motivated to serve their best interests.
- We work from their unique starting points as individuals, groups and communities, recognising their talents and capabilities.
- We take account of the individual circumstances of young people, adult learners and community members, and the social and economic circumstances of communities.

This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Know and understand the community in which we work:

- Critically analyse internal and external factors impacting on individuals and communities.

Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups:

- Seek out and engage with individuals, groups and communities.
- Recognise the power dynamic and action needed to equalise power relationships in decision-making.

Applying ethical principles

- Is the primary constituent always the person or the community group you are currently working with?
- If your primary client is the community, who is part of it? Who decides?
- What responsibilities do you have towards the wider community that includes people you're not engaging with?
- How do you balance your commitment to primary clients with organisational requirements?



Competent practice

- How well do you know your community?
- Who are you good at engaging with? And not so good?
- Do you explain what you do clearly?
- How do you negotiate your role with constituents, your employer, partners?
- Are there skills you need to develop in order to put this ethical principle into practice?

What should we change?

- What does practice look like when it puts the community, the young person or the adult learner at the centre of our work?
- Is this different from the way we work at the moment? In what ways?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

CLD

STANDARDS COUNCIL
FOR SCOTLAND

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Social Context

Our work is not limited to facilitating change within individuals, but extends to their social context and environment. It recognises the impact of ecological and structural forces on people.



WHAT AREN'T YOU TELLING THE PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH?

CLD practice focuses on collective learning and action alongside individual development, valuing change in the wider community as well as the people who we directly engage with. There is an ethical requirement to recognise the importance of sustainable development.

Principles

- We will try to understand the communities, young people or adult learners that we work with in their wider context.
- We will be alert to common issues and to ways of engaging people in collective learning and action.
- We will help individuals and groups we work with to make connections with the wider society and develop appreciation of differing views and perspectives.
- We will recognise in our practice that barriers for the individuals, groups and communities we work with are often rooted in wider structures, processes, institutions and attitudes in society.
- We will ensure that supporting learning and action for sustainable development is embedded in our practice.

Applying ethical principles

- How does your own personal context and those of your colleagues affect the way you understand and work with communities, young people and adult learners?
- How does poverty, inequality, stereotyping and discrimination affect the people you work with?
- How do you incorporate the principles of sustainable development in your practice?
- Do you see yourself as having a role in promoting political awareness and discussion? If so, what are the parameters of the role?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Know and understand the community in which we work:

- Conduct an external community/environment assessment, considering the political, economic and social context of the community.

Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups:

- Understand and deal with the underlying dynamics at work within relationships and groups.

Competent practice

- How do you go about analysing the factors that impact on individuals and communities?
- Can you describe the decision-making processes, formal and informal, that impact on the people you work with?
- What skills do you use to enable people to participate in decision making or to campaign for change? How could you improve them?

What should we change?

- What does CLD practice look like when it extends to the social context and environment of the communities, young people and adult learners we work with, and recognises the impact of ecological and structural forces on people?
- Is this different from the way we work at the moment? In what ways?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

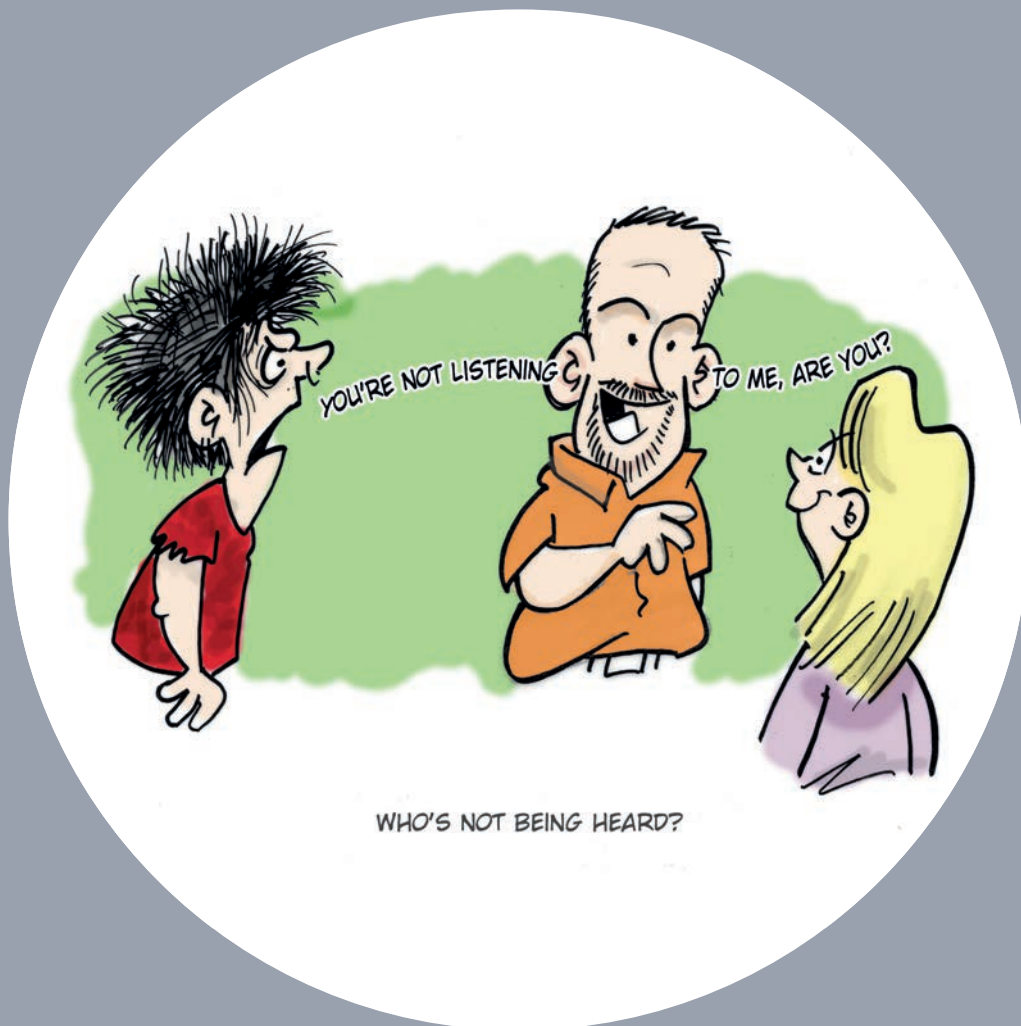
CLD

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Equity

Our work promotes equality of opportunity and outcome. Our practice is equitable and inclusive.



Equalities legislation applies to CLD practitioners and their managers together with everybody else delivering public services. CLD seeks to actively engage those excluded from participation in key processes that shape their lives. As CLD practitioners we need to ensure our practice reflects both legal and ethical requirements for equality and diversity.

Principles

- We will be sensitive to the particular needs of individuals.
- We will actively challenge discriminatory practices.
- We will keep our own practices under review to ensure we're working in an equitable way.
- We will tackle difficult situations that arise from equitable and inclusive practice.
- We will develop our practices to work with the most marginalised people and communities.
- We will work with other agencies to promote equality and inclusiveness.

Applying ethical principles

- How do you ensure that you give equal respect to the people you work with regardless of race, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation?
- Are you aware of relevant current legislation, and policy and practice guidance?
- Do you consider the key relationships you have with those you're working with to be equal and reciprocal?
- What would you do if a group or individual you are working with wanted to discriminate?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Provide learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts:

- Tackle barriers to participation.

Facilitate and promote community empowerment:

- Be inclusive and involve the wider community.

Organise and manage resources:

- Interpret and apply relevant legislation.

Competent practice

- How do you find out who is discriminated against in your community?
- If the people who are most discriminated against aren't knocking on your door, what do you do to engage with them?
- What learning opportunities do you develop to help people you are working with to explore and challenge the barriers they face? Or how they may contribute to discrimination?
- Could you do more to enable people in your community affected by discrimination to challenge and participate in decision-making?
- Are there skills you need to develop in order to promote equality of opportunity?

What should we change?

- What does CLD practice look like when it is equitable and inclusive, and promotes equality of opportunity and outcome?
- Is this different from the way we work at the moment? In what ways?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Empowerment

Empowerment of individuals and communities is at the core of CLD practice. It is central to the ways in which CLD enables people to make positive changes in their lives – to the competences of CLD practitioners – and at the same time is an ethical commitment to the people we work with.



WHEN DID YOU LAST MANIPULATE TO YOUR OWN ENDS?

We seek to enhance constituents' capacity for positive action by:

- Enabling them to clarify and pursue their chosen priorities;
- Building skills of decision-making, engagement and co-operation;
- Making power-relations open and clear;
- Supporting constituents in holding those with power accountable;
- Facilitating disengagement from the professional relationship.

Our starting point is that constituents are capable of assessing and acting on their interests.

Principles

- We will promote the autonomy of the people and communities we work with, while taking account of their capacities and vulnerabilities.
- We will work with individuals, groups and communities to assist them to develop a credible and influential voice.
- We will be conscious of power that our position gives us in relation to the people and communities we work with, and of the responsibility to avoid misusing it.

Applying ethical principles

- How often to the people you work with hold those with power accountable?
- Do you speak for people? If so – in what circumstances? Are you clear about why you're doing it?
- If a group you're working with is starting a campaign against something your employer is doing, how do you decide what to do?
- When did you last ask "can this group/individual do without me?"



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Facilitate and promote community empowerment:

All indicators are relevant, including:

- Analyse and understand power-dynamics and decision-making processes.
- Use community action as a means to achieve change.
- Be inclusive and involve the wider community.

Competent practice

- In the community you work in, who is not taking part and what is stopping them?
- Are people you work with moving on? If not, do you know why and what are you doing about it?
- How do you support individuals and groups to explore the implications of different choices and make their own decisions?
- What skills do you use to empower individuals, groups and communities? How could you develop them?

What should we change?

- What does CLD practice look like when it has a clear focus on empowering people and communities?
- Is this different from the way we work at the moment? In what ways?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

CLD

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Duty of Care

We will avoid exposing our constituents to the likelihood of harm or injury.



WHAT PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT YOUNG PEOPLE
FACING INJURY, HARM OR ABUSE THROUGH YOUTH WORK

CLD is an intervention in the lives of people and communities. It often involves leading or influencing people to take on new experiences, responsibilities and risks. CLD practitioners need to make judgements about risks and take responsibility for them.

Principles

- We will develop clear policies and practices that guide us in managing risk in our work.
- We will be aware of our statutory obligations, and policy and practice guidance, in protecting young people and vulnerable adults from harm or injury.
- We recognise that the nature of our work involves taking risks and that we have a responsibility to manage these while also assessing potential positive outcomes.
- We recognise that different types of risk arise depending on the particular context of CLD practice.

Applying ethical principles

- Do you avoid risk, ignore it or manage it?
- Are you aware of relevant current legislation, and policy and practice guidance?
- Have you assessed whether the organisation you work for is risk-averse, ignores risk or manages it?
- What procedures are in place to prevent people experiencing injury, harm or abuse as a result of CLD intervention?
- What risks are people being exposed to as a result of your CLD interventions?
- How aware are people you work with of the responsibilities they will take on through their involvement in CLD activities and in the community?



This clause of the Code links particularly to this aspect of the CLD Competences:

Organise and manage resources:

- Understand and manage risk.

Competent practice

- Do you regularly make an assessment of the risks the people you work with are exposed to?
- How do you ensure that people taking on responsibilities have access to the personal support they need?
- How do you support colleagues to manage risk?
- When you evaluate your work, how do you assess any harm to the people and communities you work with that resulted from it?

What should we change?

- What does CLD practice look like when risks are being managed in a way that is proportionate?
- Is this different from the way we work at the moment? In what ways?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

CLD

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FOR SCOTLAND

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Corruption

We will not seek to advance ourselves, our organisations or others, personally, politically or professionally, at the expense of our constituents.



Corruption happens when we benefit from our work, or the roles that we have as a result of our position, at the expense of the people and the communities we work with. It can be about money, power or status, or, more subtly, emotional security or personal identity.

Principles

- We will work towards the best interests of the people and communities we work with rather than being driven by our own self-interest.
- We will not manipulate situations for our own or our organisation's ends.
- We will ensure that the interests of the individuals, groups and communities we work with are at the centre of everything we do in our work.

Applying ethical principles

- Do you ever put your own interests before those of the people and communities you work with?
- What in particular motivated you to do this? What will help you to avoid doing something similar in future?
- In what ways has success in your CLD work advanced your career? Are there any ethical issues about this?
- Have you ever used the people you work with to further a political campaign that you were involved in?
- What are the pitfalls in chasing funding sources if these will change the nature of our work?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Know and understand the community in which we work:

- Ascertain conflicting needs and demands.

Develop and support collaborative working:

- Challenge and be challenged on issues undermining effective partnership working, being aware of tensions and conflicts.

Evaluate and inform practice:

- Learn from other perspectives and challenge your own assumptions.

Competent practice

- How do you test out whether you are working in the best interests of the people and communities you work with?
- Do you use support and supervision to help ensure you are working in that way?
- In partnerships, collaborative and joint work, are you clear about what the benefits are for the people and communities you work with? How often do you do things because they make life easier for you, or enhance your reputation with partners?

What should we change?

- Does our CLD practice consistently follow the principles set out?
- Are there changes and safeguards that we need to put in place, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to do this, how will we go about it?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Transparency

Engagement with the young person, adult or community, and the resulting relationship, will be open and truthful. Potential conflicts of interest will be openly declared.



ARE YOU SCARED OF CONFLICT? HOW DOES THAT
IMPACT ON YOUR WORK WITH CHALLENGING GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS?

CLD practice depends on relationships based on trust. The ethical commitment to openness and honesty underpins this and extends beyond not deceiving the people we work with to transparency over where our funding comes from, who we are working for and what we are trying to achieve.

Principles

- We will work with young people, adults and communities in a climate of honesty, trust and respect for the individual.
- We will declare at the earliest opportunity any interests that may conflict with or impact on our work.

Applying ethical principles

- Are you clear with the people you work with about who you work for and what they can reasonably expect from you?
- Have you knowingly withheld information from the people you work with?
- Is it ever justifiable to do this? Are there situations in your work where it's not possible to be open and truthful?
- Do you facilitate contact between the people you work with and other stakeholders? Can this present ethical dilemmas?
- Are you clear about boundaries that you will set for the relationships you form through your work?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups:

- Seek out and engage with individuals, groups and communities.
- Handle challenges and opportunities constructively.

Competent practice

- What are the pitfalls in engaging in an open and truthful way? What skills do you use in order to avoid these?
- What skills do you use to maintain positive working relationships when you've made people aware of conflicts of interest?
- How could you improve skills to better reflect principles of transparency in your practice?

What should we change?

- What does CLD practice look like when it is consistently open and truthful?
- Is this different from the way we work at the moment? In what ways?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Confidentiality

Information provided by constituents will not be used against them, nor will it be shared with others who may use it against them. Constituents should be made aware of the limits to confidentiality. Until this happens, the presumption of confidentiality should apply.



The commitment to confidentiality follows from key values of CLD – respect for the individual and for people’s right to make their own choices. If the commitment could be absolute then it would be simple to put into practice. Clarity about confidentiality is essential for developing and maintaining relationships based on trust.

Principles

- We will respect the rights of the people we work with to confidentiality.
- We will be clear with ourselves about what the legitimate limits to confidentiality are.
- We will communicate to the people we work with our commitment to confidentiality, and what the limitations to this commitment are.
- If situations arise where we may be required to breach confidentiality, we will as far as possible advise the people affected of this.
- We will not abuse our position through making confidential information available to others when there is no apparent need to do so.

This clause of the Code links particularly to this aspect of the CLD Competences:

Organise and manage resources:

- Interpret and apply relevant legislation.

Competent practice

- What sort of issues about confidentiality have arisen in your CLD practice?
- Looking back at the situations where these issues arose – is there anything you think you should have handled differently? What can you learn from this for the future?
- How do you get advice and support in dealing with issues around confidentiality?
- How do you deal with sensitive information that you come across from third parties?

Applying ethical principles

- Are you clear about how the commitment to confidentiality applies to your role and context?
- Do you know about the statutory obligations or agency policies that could impact on your commitment to confidentiality?
- How do you go about reconciling any contradictions between your ethical commitments to confidentiality and agency expectations that may arise?



What should we change?

- Are we consistently following the principles for confidentiality set out above in our CLD practice?
- What are the difficulties that arise in applying the principles of confidentiality? How can we overcome them?

CLD

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A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Co-operation

We will actively seek to co-operate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes for our constituents.



Partnerships of one sort or another form the context for much of what we do as CLD practitioners; and other professionals often share many of the same values. We need to co-operate with others to achieve the best outcomes for our “primary clients” while being aware that co-operation is not an end in itself.

Principles

- We will ensure that we have a clear understanding of the key ingredients in building a partnership approach in CLD contexts.
- We will work collaboratively with practitioners in other disciplines, showing due respect for their views, opinions and perspectives while articulating the values and principles of CLD.
- We will ensure that our involvement in partnership and collaborative work is focused on achieving the best outcomes for our primary clients.
- In situations where there is conflict between agencies, we will seek constructive ways forward in the interests of constituents.

Applying ethical principles

- How well do you work as part of a team within your service? Do you play an active part in building team-work?
- Do you make sure that communities have opportunities to participate in partnerships in ways that benefit them?
- What do you think are the key differences in practice interventions by various professionals in the communities you work in?
- What are the implications of these differences for collaboration and partnership?
- What do you think are the key factors that help related professions to work together effectively? What gets in the way, and what can we do about it?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Develop and support collaborative working:

All the indicators for the competence are relevant, including:

- Develop and support collaborative working within your own organisation.
- Initiate collaborative working with relevant organisations.

Competent practice

- Have you reviewed your involvement in partnership working recently?
- Is it clear why you're involved? Are there opportunities for your primary clients to be more directly involved?
- Are there other opportunities for partnership or collaborative work that would benefit your primary clients?
- What skills and attributes do you use in promoting co-operative working practices and managing conflicts and barriers? Could you develop them further?

What should we change?

- What does co-operative CLD practice that seeks to achieve the best outcomes for our primary clients look like?
- Are there differences from the way we work at the moment? What are they?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

CLD

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A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Professional Development

We will work reflectively, identifying and using the information, resources, skills, knowledge and practices needed to improve our capacity to meet our obligations to constituents.



Social change is the fundamental context of CLD practice and we are working in a society where change is accelerating. Lifelong learning is a principle that we need to apply to ourselves as well as the work we do with others, keeping abreast of the best intellectual and practice tools for understanding change and developing practice that is relevant and challenging.

Principles

- We take responsibility for our own professional development.
- We aim to be reflective practitioners.
- We continually develop our skills, knowledge-base and understanding to better serve the people and communities we work with.
- We listen to, and learn from and with the people and communities we work with.
- We share learning with other practitioners.
- We take account of up-to-date research to inform and validate the work we do.

Applying ethical principles

- How committed are you to improving your CLD practice?
- How do you decide whether your practice in a particular situation is “good enough”?
- Do you feel you are part of a professional learning community with shared values and practice principles? What’s your role in developing one?
- Do you acknowledge your own mistakes and successes, and learn from them?
- How much has your practice developed in the last year?
- Is there anyone you talk to who challenges you and tells you when your practice needs to change?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Evaluate and inform practice:

- Draw on evaluation findings to inform your own practice.
- Interpret and use evidence related to outcomes and impact.

Competent practice

- Do you act on feedback about your practice?
- If you don’t get enough constructive challenge to your practice, where could you get it from?
- Do you make time in your work schedule for professional development? Does your manager/ employer support you to do this?
- Do you use time allocated to CPD effectively?

What should we change?

- How effectively are we taking responsibility for our own professional development?
- What do we need to change, what are the barriers to be overcome in order to bring the change about, how will we go about it?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Self-awareness

We should be conscious of our own values and interests, and approach cultural and other differences respectfully. While the need to challenge may arise, we must first try to understand.



IS THERE A GAP BETWEEN WHAT YOU SAY PUBLICLY ABOUT YOUR WORK
AND WHAT YOU YOU TELL YOURSELF AND IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS YOU KNOW TO BE TRUE?

Self-awareness is essential if we are to make decisions with an ethical basis, rather than using statements about ethics to justify what we want to do. Professional judgement is a cornerstone of CLD practice; a clear awareness of our own values and interests is needed if we are to exercise judgment without being merely judgemental.

Principles

- We seek clarity about our personal and professional values, and to be aware of potential conflicts between them.
- We will be sensitive to the differing needs of others and respectful of their values and beliefs.
- We take responsibility for knowing our own strengths and limitations and seek help and guidance when we need it.
- We encourage feedback from others, including constituents and colleagues, and use it to improve our understanding of our own motivations and practice.

Applying ethical principles

- How aware are you of your own personal values, how they relate to the professional values of CLD and how they impact on your practice?
- Do you know your own “blind-spots” about yourself and your practice?
- How well do you work with people who are different from you in terms of culture and identity?
- How well do you respond to feedback from constituents or colleagues, in particular when it is critical?
- How open are you to changing your CLD practice?
- When you change the way you do things, are you clear why?
- When you're evaluating a piece of work, do you assess the impact of you own values and interests on what you did and the outcomes for constituents?



This clause of the Code links particularly to this aspect of the CLD Competences:

Evaluate and inform practice:

- Learn from other perspectives and challenge your own assumptions.

Competent practice

- When do you take time to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your practice?
- How do you get feedback about how you respond to comment on or criticism of your practice?
- How do you go about making changes to your practice or behaviour when you've identified these are needed?

What should we change?

- What can we do to improve our own self-awareness?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Boundaries

The CLD relationship is a professional relationship, intentionally limited to protect the constituent and the purpose of our work. These limits should be clarified, established and maintained. The relationship with an individual constituent is based on trust and is not available for sexual engagement.



As CLD practitioners, we are often working with people who are vulnerable as a result of past negative experiences, and may at the same time be going through changes in their lives which open out new opportunities and the uncertainties that go with these. This makes it particularly important that we are aware of and observe boundaries.

Principles

- We will maintain a clear understanding and awareness of the responsibilities associated with a professional relationship based on trust.
- We will be aware of the power that we may have in relationships as a result of our professional position and practice, and the responsibility not to abuse that power.
- We will be aware of the need to work within a professional relationship, and of what that means in terms of behaviour.
- We will take on our share of responsibility for ensuring that there is a consistent approach by the agency we work for to setting appropriate boundaries.

Applying ethical principles

- How do you go about determining where the boundaries are in your work with young people, adults and communities?
- Have you thought through what sorts of relationship are acceptable in your own particular professional context?
- To what extent do you have power in relationships with constituents as a result of your role and position? Do you use it appropriately?



This clause of the Code links particularly to these aspects of the CLD Competences:

Develop and support collaborative working:

- Clarify and articulate the role of your own organisation and that of others.

Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups:

- Facilitate endings for individual and group relationships where appropriate.

Competent practice

- What are the kinds of thing you might say or do that step over the boundaries in your work with young people, adults and communities?
- What kinds of implications and issues could arise?
- If you've been in situations where the boundaries have become blurred or you've crossed them – how did the situation arise? What could you do better in future?
- How do you use supervision to help you to decide on and observe boundaries?

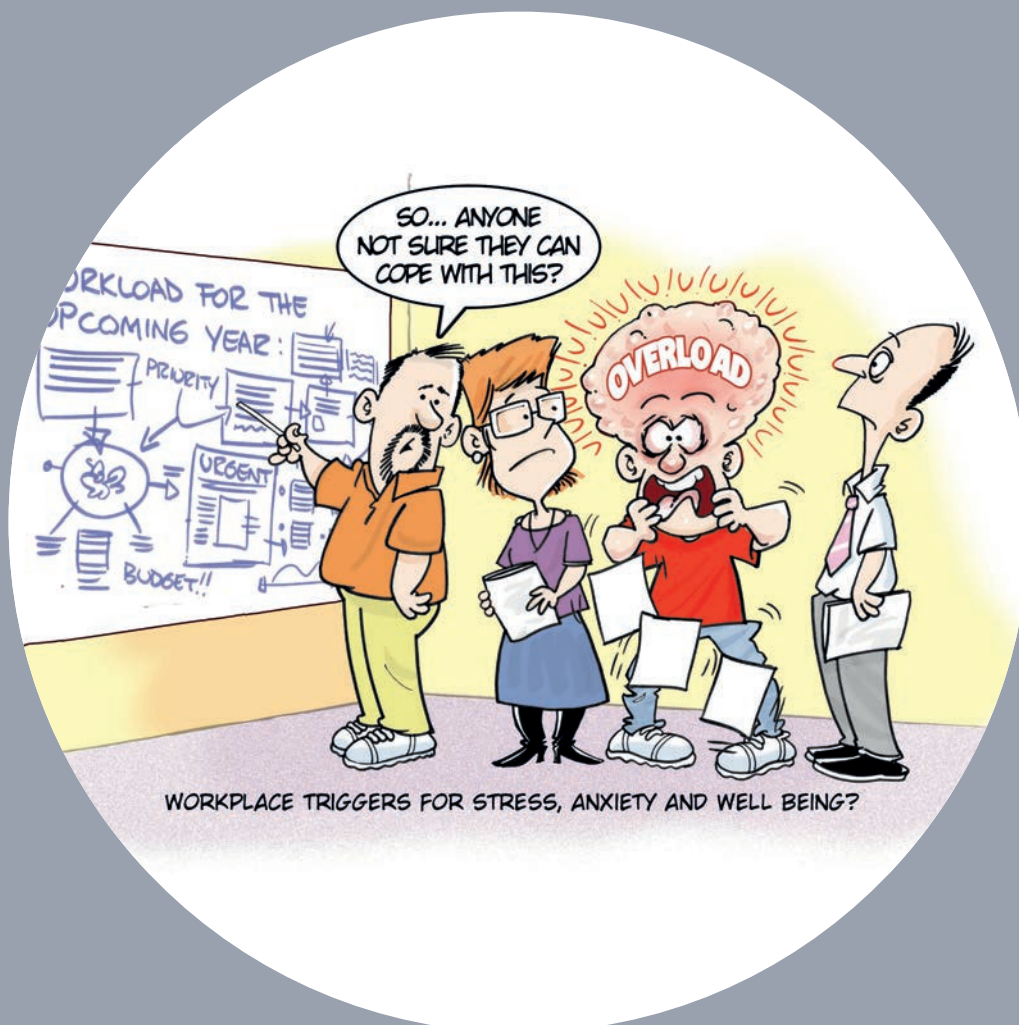
What should we change?

- Are we fully aware of professional boundaries and do we observe them consistently?
- What do we need to change, what are the challenges in doing this, how will we go about it?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Self-care

CLD practice should be consistent with preserving the health of CLD workers.



Like workers in other contexts, CLD practitioners can suffer from exploitation; again like others, they can be victims of their own commitment. There can be particular issues for isolated practitioners. There is a shared responsibility for practitioners themselves and employers to look after the well-being of practitioners.

Principles

- We will be aware of our role, the legitimate expectations attached to it and the limits of these, as well as our own capacities and limitations.
- We will take on a degree of responsibility for our own health and well-being within the workplace.
- We are aware that we should ask for help when we need it.
- We will expect there to be a clearly established system in place in the workplace through which to seek support when required.
- We will co-operate with our employers to take a preventative approach to our health and well-being.

Applying ethical principles

- What are the characteristics of an organisational culture that promotes the health and well-being of staff?
- What are the triggers in the workplace for stress anxiety and burn-out?
- What are the responsibilities of line managers in relation to the health and well-being of staff?



This clause of the Code links particularly to this aspect of the CLD Competences:

Organise and manage resources:

- Understand and manage risk.

Competent practice

- How do you manage competing expectations and the resultant pressures?
- What steps do you take to “look after yourself” at work?
- Do you need to give this a higher priority?
- What can you do to support colleagues to preserve their health and well-being?
- What can you do to influence your organisation’s culture in ways that help to promote the health and well-being of staff?

What should we change?

- Are we doing enough to preserve and support our own health and well-being and that of colleagues?
- How could we do this better?
- Are our employers doing enough to preserve and support the health and well-being of CLD practitioners? Can we influence them to do more?

Section 5: Embedding the Code of Ethics in Practice

The Code of Ethics is first and foremost a means for CLD practitioners to reflect on, guide and govern their own practice. Section 4 of the package provides materials to assist practitioners to use the Code in this way.

However, CLD practitioners work in the context of employing agencies ranging from small community organisations operating at very local level to large public sector bodies. “Ethical practice” needs to be developed in the specific and varied organisational contexts that CLD practitioners work in.

All employing agencies seek to hold their employees accountable, and have a responsibility to do this; for example, any employer in receipt of public funding needs to account for its use. For competent and ethical CLD practice to flourish, employers need to do this in ways that are compatible with, and make use of, the CLD Code of Ethics; and to understand that the Code sets out principles to assist practitioners to develop ethical practice, not a set of instructions.

This means that as CLD practitioners committed to the Code of Ethics we need to consider, as well as our practice with constituents, our role and influence with our employer, and with partner agencies that have an impact on the context for our work. This section of the package provides a framework for reflection, discussion and planning for action to embed the CLD Code of Ethics in practice.

Managers and decision-makers at all levels in organisations that employ CLD practitioners need to understand the principles of the Code of Ethics in order to create the context for competent and ethical CLD practice. Senior managers with responsibility for CLD have a key part to play in embedding the CLD Code of Ethics in practice, so this part of the package in particular is designed to be relevant to them.

A Framework for Embedding the CLD Code of Ethics in Practice

Area for attention	Key considerations
<p>Agency policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does your organisation have relevant statements about standards of behaviour? ● Are there any issues about how these relate to the CLD Code of Ethics that need discussion or clarification? ● In terms of formal commitment to supporting the Code of Ethics, at what level in your organisation should the decision be made (e.g. senior management or board? Departmental/corporate/political?) ● How can you help to ensure that the agency you work for supports practitioners to use the CLD Code of Ethics to guide practice?

A Code of Ethics for CLD – Learning Resource

Section 5: Embedding the Code of Ethics in Practice

A Framework for Embedding the CLD Code of Ethics in Practice	
Area for attention	Key considerations
Communications and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who are the practitioners within your organisation that the Code is directly relevant to? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In other teams, services or departments as well as your own? – Full-time, part-time, sessional, voluntary? ● Is your organisation communicating with them about the Code? ● What would be the best way for this to happen? ● Can you help to make it happen? ● What would be the best way for your organisation to communicate with CLD constituents (people involved in community organisations, in youth activities or in community-based learning) and partners about the Code? Can you help to make it happen?
Recruitment and CPD	<p>Based on your understanding of how things work in your organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is understanding of and commitment to the CLD Code of Ethics explored in the recruitment process for relevant staff? Which posts are included in this? ● Is commitment to the CLD Code of Ethics included in the contract of employment for relevant staff? ● Is consideration of the CLD Code of Ethics included in the induction of relevant staff? ● Are staff supported to reflect on their own practice? How could the Code of Ethics be used (more/more effectively) to assist with this? ● How is consideration of the Code of Ethics included in CPD plans, events and activities? ● Are practitioners supported to prepare for consideration of the Code at CPD events, and to use learning from events in their day-to-day practice? ● Are there useful ways that discussion and learning about the Code of Ethics can be incorporated into regular team meetings, management group meetings etc? ● What can you do to help ensure that your agency's CPD activities help practitioners to make use of the Code of Ethics? And that its recruitments processes include consideration of the Code?

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Section 5: Embedding the Code of Ethics in Practice

A Framework for Embedding the CLD Code of Ethics in Practice	
Area for attention	Key considerations
Agency culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does your employer do that supports commitment to the Code of Ethics? ● What does your employer do that hinders commitment to the Code of Ethics? ● Are there ways that the Code of Ethics could be used to develop improved mutual understanding between different groups of practitioners across the professional groupings or in different services or agencies? ● Are there ways that you can influence your employer to give stronger or more effective support to the Code? ● Who provides leadership for embedding the CLD Code of Ethics into practice? What's your role in this? ● Is there a culture that supports individuals to challenge unethical practice? Do you challenge unethical practice?
Monitoring, evaluation, accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What happens if a practitioner in your agency behaves in a way that's inconsistent with the Code? ● Does the agency have a way of knowing whether practitioners are taking account of the Code and making themselves accountable to it? ● Are there ways you can promote commitment to and understanding of the Code by CLD practitioners and managers at all levels in your agency and those employed by partners? ● Do CLD constituents and stakeholders have opportunities to comment on whether CLD practitioners are working in ways that reflect the Code of Ethics? Can you help create better opportunities for them to do this?
Making it happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is a focus on developing ethical practice built into improvement planning for CLD in your organisation? ● Who in the organisation has responsibility for this? ● If it's you – how can you make sure it happens? ● If it's not you – can you influence whoever does have responsibility? ● Are you clear about your own role in developing ethical practice?

CLD from Vision to Practice: Purpose, Values, Ethics and Competence

Introduction

The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland is the body responsible for the registration of CLD practitioners, the approval of training courses, and the continuing professional development of the sector workforce. The Standards Council's vision is

“...one of leading and supporting the continuing improvement of community learning and development practice to provide quality services for communities and individuals across Scotland.”

This vision and the specific functions as outlined only make sense within the context of a shared understanding of the purpose of CLD. Such a shared understanding has been elusive, and the Standards Council sees its responsibilities as including clarification of understandings of the profession, both for CLD practitioners and others.

The Standards Council has worked with the CLD field to reaffirm the values that underpin the profession, to develop for the first time a Code of Ethics for CLD and to update the CLD Competence Framework. These provide the foundations for a shared understanding of the CLD profession.

This paper aims to go a stage further by setting the values, Code of Ethics and Competence Framework in the context of the purpose and role of CLD within industrial and post-industrial society and by drawing out the connections between the different elements.

The Purpose of CLD

CLD has its origins in the welter of intellectual, political, economic and social changes that swept through society in Scotland, the rest of these islands and beyond in the 18th and 19th centuries. Through the Enlightenment, science and technology displaced religion as the dominant source of truth. New industries rose up on the back of new technologies, demanding new sources of energy, new sources of labour, and new forms of knowledge and education. Land use changed dramatically, with hundreds of thousands of people dislodged or evicted from their ancestral lands and ending up in the cities or on migrant ships to the New World.

While the old world had scarcely been egalitarian, in the capitalist world of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, new forms of poverty and inequality emerged. With the smashing of ancient connections to land, extended families were broken up and people became more mobile, more dislocated and more individualised: and often, more vulnerable. Ancient community and kin-based ways of bringing young people through into adulthood, making decisions at the community level, and finding a place for every person within the life of the community gradually (sometimes not so gradually) dissolved.

Democratic decision-making through the ballot box, wealth through individual enterprise and equality of opportunity through universal, free, state-provided education promised routes to a brave new world where everyone would have a stake in the system and an opportunity to make their mark; but all of these routes have proven to be strewn with barriers for those who have borne the brunt of disruptive change. Persistent disadvantage, often related to where you were born, your race or gender, has continued.

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Schools have provided social advancement for a few, but the schools themselves remained unequal and unequally suited to children from different backgrounds: school failure has cast a long shadow, often across generations. As young people have become more and more cut off from older family, workmates and friends, they have increasingly had to invent their own paths into adulthood without guidance and without resource, and with an adult world that was at best ambivalent about them.

The result is a society whose claims to be democratic are contestable, where opportunity is far from equal, and where individual striving can meet unsurmountable obstacles based on nothing more than a person's background. Or worse, where people have long learnt that it is not worth trying in the first place.

This is the place where Community Learning and Development practitioners are to be found: at the point where the structures of society have convinced individuals, groups and societies that they no longer have a choice, that their decisions don't matter, and that no matter what they do, nothing will change. The great skill of CLD workers is to get alongside people in that space, to build relationships with people who are often jaded and suspicious of people from outside, and to work collaboratively with them to find a way forward, to find a way for them to feel that their lives once more belong to them and that what they want matters.

The Settlement Movements, the Workers Educational Association and the Mechanics Institutes, the YMCA and the Boys Brigade all emerged in the 19th or early 20th centuries to meet this challenge. What we now know as CLD has been present and active, in various forms, in Scottish society (and indeed all industrialised societies) from the Industrial Revolution onwards.

The basic reason for this is that CLD, in modern society, is socially necessary. The consequences in communities, particularly disadvantaged communities, where no community learning and development is happening can be seen in intergenerational poverty, drug use, ill health,

poor education, crime rates and other social ills. Not that this profession is there to mop these things up: the police, the health service, the formal education sector and other professions have direct responsibility for these things. But we find consistently that if people feel their lives are worth living for, problems like this fade into the background.

Essentially, it is this commitment and purpose that the statement of CLD values, the Code of Ethics and the Competence Framework are trying to express. In its most explicit statement about the purpose of CLD, the Code of Ethics states that:

“CLD seeks to extend the reach of effective democracy, particularly by actively engaging those who are excluded from participation in key social processes that shape their lives, and to widen the scope of democracy to enable full participation in the common wealth.”

It also indicates that CLD practitioners “have in common a commitment to their constituents as their primary clients, and to the power of informal education to transform situations, structures, communities and individuals.”

Each of the individual competences within the Competence Framework has a purpose statement. Several of these refer more to how the particular competence enables the practitioner to deliver or support particular aspects of learning and empowerment processes, rather than the purpose of CLD in a broader sense. Two of the purpose statements relate directly to a sense of overall purpose; these are:

- “So that people can identify and achieve their individual and collective goals”; and
- “So that people can take individual and collective action to bring about change.”

If we use these statements in the Code of Ethics and the Competence Framework as the basis for a statement of the purpose of CLD, what we arrive at is something like:

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“The purpose of CLD is to enable people, particularly those who are excluded from participation in key social processes that shape their lives, to identify their own individual and collective goals, to take action to bring about change and through this to achieve these goals, and while doing this, extend the reach of democracy, widen its scope and enable full participation in the common wealth. In pursuit of this, CLD uses informal education to empower people and communities and to transform situations and structures.”¹

The Purpose of the CLD Standards Council

The Standards Council was established in 2009-2010 to:

“Work with the sector to establish and maintain high standards of practice in CLD across Scotland.”

This is important from the point of view of CLD as a field of practice. CLD is already a profession, but in order to constitute ourselves convincingly as such, CLD practitioners need to be committed to establishing and maintaining high standards. The Standards Council provides CLD with a means of articulating its own purpose, and with support to establish and maintain the high standards required by that purpose.

Prior to the Standards Council’s inauguration, Community Education Validation and Endorsement (CeVe) had developed an effective and influential set of understandings for the practice using a *competences framework*. This approach used surveys of what workers were already doing to analyse the skills and knowledge they needed to do them. For the first time, the field defined the

practice in a systematic way. Employers knew what to expect; training courses in colleges and universities know what they had to cover.

When the CLD Standards Council was inaugurated, this work fell under its remit. In fact, the Council began the consultation on refreshing the previous competences for community education even before being fully established in 2010. Part of that conversation was about the areas of *understanding the practice* that the competences framework couldn’t (and shouldn’t) cover: especially ethics, attitudes and commitments. With the refreshed competences for community learning and development in place, a code of ethics for CLD practitioners was developed for the first time.

This paper aims to assist further in constituting CLD as a profession by locating the Code of Ethics and the Competence Framework within the purposes of CLD as a profession and of the Standards Council.

The CLD profession: values, competences and ethics

The CLD field has committed itself to a value-base for practice focused on its purpose; the elements of this have been widely agreed:

- Self-determination – respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.
- Inclusion – valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice.

¹The Scottish Government, in its Strategic Guidance on CLD for Community Planning Partnerships (2012) describes the purpose of CLD:

“Empowering people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and their communities, through learning.”

It goes on to say that CLD’s “specific focus” should be:

- Improved life chances for people of all ages, including young people in particular, through learning, personal development and active citizenship;
- Stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities.

Clearly this is a statement primarily about the government’s policy goals for CLD; it is less concerned than the Standards Council needs to be about the purpose of CLD as a profession embodied in distinctive set of activities, and more concerned about what CLD will deliver, directly relating to current policy concerns.

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- Empowerment – increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/or collective action.
- Working collaboratively – maximising collaborative working relationships in partnerships between the many agencies which contribute to CLD, including collaborative work with participants, learners and communities.
- Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity – ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.

The purpose and the values we share have an essential role in guiding CLD practice and assisting practitioners to set an overall direction for their work; they are also essential in CLD constituting itself as a profession. But they are broad in their reach, and most are shared with many other professions and disciplines. To guide us in ensuring that the value-base genuinely informs practice and to clarify what makes CLD unique, we need a framework for translating the purpose and values into practice.

Achieving the purpose or purposes of CLD requires interventions in people's lives and in the functioning of communities to achieve change through learning. This is complex: on the one hand, it needs a range of skills, knowledge and understanding, that underpin particular techniques and methods, in order to be effective in bringing about change. On the other, the actual work must be directed by the purpose, values and ethics, to ensure that whatever techniques are used, the practice recognises the risks and responsibilities that this kind of intervention carries.

The Code of Ethics for CLD and the Competences together provide a framework that enables both these sets of considerations to inform practice. The Code of Ethics sets out the core commitment that practitioners make to the people they work with, and to the society that provides the resources for their work. The Code is brief, but demanding, asking high standards of practitioners and an uncompromising focus

on helping young people, adult learners and communities to take control of their destiny. The Competences lay out the skills that are needed to carry this commitment into reality, to make it work.

The Values set out what we believe is important. The Code of Ethics defines the CLD relationship through which these values are to be expressed, and the ethical principles that follow from the values in order to clarify their application to practice. It provides a means for practitioners to explore and challenge their own practice, and to set appropriate boundaries for their role and actions. The Competences indicate what a competent CLD practitioner will be able to demonstrate in their practice.

CLD is defined by the purpose, values, ethics and competence framework and not by one or more specific job titles or roles. In other words, those who align themselves with the purpose, values and code of ethics, and whose practice aligns with the competence framework, are in principle embraced by the CLD profession, whatever their job title and whatever context they work in. Empowerment and inclusion are central to the values on which CLD is based, and must be reflected in the way the CLD profession is constituted. A commitment to high standards of practice is central to this professional identity.

The Values, the Code of Ethics and the Competences also define the difference between CLD and other professions. For example, the Code of Ethics states that CLD practitioners' *primary clients* are the communities, young people, and the adult learners with whom they engage. In other words, in any decision they make, CLD practitioners must firstly consider and give priority to the interests of the communities, young people, and the adult learners with whom they engage. Social workers do not, and should not, make this commitment: their role is to balance the different interests of different stakeholders and seek to find the best outcome for all. Their different relationship to the State and to legal sanctions places them in a different relationship to the people they work with than CLD workers.

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The BASW Code of Ethics says, for example, that “Social workers should only take actions which diminish peoples’ civil or legal rights if it is ethically, professionally and legally justifiable” (Clause 2).

Therapists would share the sense of the person as the primary client, but the scope of their work is different: they are interested in the client’s internal psychological life. CLD workers work with people around their social context, their relationships and connections, how their social networks are working for them, rather than their internal psychology. Teachers would share the commitment to education, but the student is less clearly their primary client (for example, the curriculum is prescribed by the State) and the scope of their practice is determined by the school as a learning institution. Though they recognise the impact of the social context of the student, it isn’t their job to work with students to change it. Police officers’ primary duty is to the Crown. Doctors are primarily concerned with physical and mental health, not with social context, although their patient should be their primary client, and an awareness of social context should arguably be an important element in their practice.

These are not criticisms. They reflect the different commitments of different professions, and the points at which it would be important to refer a constituent to someone else. For example, for family mediation, we would involve a social worker; if someone is struggling with the spectre of suicide, we would refer to a psychiatrist or psychologist. The differences between our professions are a real strength in partnership working, and it is important to understand them. And while we have a lot in common, we will also sometimes disagree.

How the Code of Ethics and the Competence Framework underpin work to improve standards in CLD

The Standards Council’s objectives are that:

- Individuals, groups and communities will be supported by reflective, competent and confident CLD practitioners (whether paid or voluntary) to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Practitioners will receive appropriate initial training and support to fulfil their roles.
- Practitioners will actively and continuously develop their skills and practice.
- The CLD sector will engage in a raised standard of professional debate with groups, communities and practitioners.
- Employers will promote, acknowledge and value the skills, knowledge and understanding of practitioners.
- The CLD sector will be widely recognised and valued amongst other professional disciplines, policy makers and the general public.

So, in line with its name, the Standards Council aims to raise standards of CLD practice, so that the CLD sector can deliver its purpose as described above as effectively as possible.

The Standards Council sees the development of CLD workers as reflective practitioners as the essential process through which standards are improved. This process of reflection should be embedded in the Approved qualifications that have a key role to play in developing and assuring these standards. It also provides the basis for opening pathways to professional recognition for those who are unlikely to access qualifications through traditional routes.

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The Standards Council's responsibilities follow directly from its purpose and objectives. The Standards Council is committed to:

- Approve CLD training, skills and development opportunities;
- Implement a system of registration for CLD practitioners;
- Work with partners to develop models and standards for the delivery of continuing professional development and training;
- Work with employers and partners to ensure high quality workforce development strategies, including the design of their supported induction;
- Advocate on behalf of the sector on matters pertaining to registration, training courses and CPD in CLD; and
- Advise government with regard to registration, training courses and CPD in CLD.

In order to carry out any and all of these responsibilities, the Standards Council needs to have a rigorous basis for its work and its decisions. To secure credibility and command respect, it needs to be able to demonstrate this rigour. Just as the Code of Ethics and the Competences provide the framework for CLD as a professional discipline, so they are the core framework for the Standards Council in working with the field to raise standards. They underpin:

- The approval of CLD training, skills and development opportunities;
- The development of a system of registration for CLD practitioners;
- The development of models and standards for continuing professional development;
- Work to ensure high quality workforce development strategies; and
- The Standards Council's role as an advocate for the CLD sector.

At the core of all this, they provide the framework for practitioners to develop as critically reflective CLD workers, and for CLD practitioners collectively to develop as an inclusive profession with a commitment to high standards of practice.

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