Tayside & Fife Continuing Professional Development Partnership

Research Project: Impact and Evaluation of Continuing Professional Development

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Background

This research project was carried out between January and March 2014 on behalf of the Tayside and Fife Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Partnership and funded through the Scottish Government's 'Growing Excellence; A Programme to Support the Upskilling of the Community Learning and Development Workforce' (Scottish Government 2009).

The research aims were to identify:

- The extent to which CPD activity is changing practice and contributing to better outcomes for learners and practitioners
- Future professional learning needs that support the Partnership and individual agencies to plan appropriate responses.

The research project was carried out on a secondment basis by a CLD practitioner, with support from an independent research mentor.

Data collection

Primary data was gathered for the research through:

- 6 focus groups comprising 56 CLD practitioners from the four Partnership areas (Angus, Dundee, Fife, and Perth & Kinross).
- An on-line survey which gathered responses from 90 CLD practitioners.

Approximately half of survey respondents were from Fife Council, with respondents from Perth & Kinross, Dundee and Angus representing the remaining 50%. CLD practitioners working within adult learning were the largest group of respondents, followed by youth work and capacity-building. Some respondents indicated more than one area of work.

Predominantly, focus group and survey respondents were local authority employees. In total, six voluntary sector employees participated in the focus groups and survey.

Key findings

- Almost all focus group and survey participants had undertaken CPD activities in the last two years, covering diverse professional and personal interests and via a range of providers, including Tayside Upskilling Partnership.
- Participants were predominantly happy about the overall range and quality of CPD opportunities available to them. Over 70% of survey respondents stated CPD activities were either 'good' or 'very good'.
- There was consensus within focus groups that CPD was important, if not crucial, both for individuals' development and for maximising CLD impact.
- CPD Upskilling programme was perceived as broadening the range of CPD opportunities available and encouraging greater participation among CLD practitioners.
- Contexts for identifying CPD needs included the need to respond to internal developments, external policy developments, community issues and the demands of individuals' jobs. Few research participants mentioned CLD competences being the stimulus for identifying CPD

learning needs. Most frequently, participants perceived that self-identified CPD needs led to more personal investment in learning opportunities and more likelihood of learning being seen as appropriate and useful.

- Participants in both the focus groups and the on-line survey identified a positive impact on nearly all CPD opportunities that they undertook and gave a number of examples of how it had improved their practice leading to developing new or improved approaches to working with communities. The Coaching programme appears to have had the biggest impact and has continued to be rolled out to all CLD staff as the initial training supported participants to become trainers. Further impact of CPD has been identified in the areas of welfare reform, asset based training, health & wellbeing and in specialised areas of youth and adult work. Action Learning Sets was the only identified CPD which received mixed responses from focus group participants.

- When relating impact of CPD to the CLD competencies through the on-line survey, respondents reported average to excellent impact. The lowest score was In relation to facilitating and promoting community empowerment which scored 67.8% for positive impact and 32.2% for minimal impact. The highest score was in developing collaborative working which scored 85% for positive impact and 14.4% for minimal impact. Focus groups participants, on the whole, did not, on a day-to-day basis, relate their training to CLD competences.

- Participants experienced that CPD activities at local, regional and national levels enabled them to make good links with staff from other sectors and local authorities that could impact on practice, although it was recognised that these links were sometimes difficult to maintain long-term due to work demands and resources.

- Participants identified the following areas for future CPD activities:
- Developing knowledge and understanding of geographic community or community of interest in which practitioners work. This could be through developing skills in working more effectively with specific service-user groups – e.g. young people, children and families, adults, parents and volunteers – and maintaining knowledge and understanding of policy developments (e.g. Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, asset transfer, Curriculum for Excellence and welfare reform).
- Organising and managing resources, including budgets, human resources, quality assurance, time-management.
- Reflective learning through evaluation and review of practice.
- Development of use of i-develop.
- Specific CPD activities identified were child protection, first aid, health & well-being, dyslexia and ESOL.
- Broadening learning through engagement with national networks and opportunities to share practice with other professional staff, including job shadowing, discussions and study visits.

Other recommendations

- Carry on rolling-out coaching programme using the peer-led approach.
- Review the Action Learning Sets training.
- Identify some specific leadership training for CLD practitioners.
- Continue delivery of joint CPD across local authorities through the Tayside & Fife Upskilling Partnership.

- Encourage frontline staff to be part of the Tayside & Fife Upskilling group.
- Identify, where possible, staff with specialisms who can deliver CPD across authorities.
- Hold staff in-service training days at least twice a year, clearly identified as policy updates or authority updates, similar to school in-service days.
- Hold digital inclusion seminars once a year to keep up with technology changes.

1.   Introduction

Upskilling research & evaluation 2014

Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross and Fife Local Authorities (Tayside and Fife Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Partnership) have collaborated in delivering a joint Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for all involved in providing Community Learning and Development (CLD) since 2010. This has been funded through the Scottish Government 'Growing Excellence; A Programme to Support the Upskilling of the Community Learning and Development Workforce' (Scottish Government 2009)

The Tayside & Fife CPD Partnership commissioned a research project to consider the evaluative and summative impact of the joint upskilling programme they initiated. In particular they wanted an

- Evaluation of the impact of CPD on practice and outcomes
- Further identification of learning needs in order to plan future training based on the identified need of the workforce

The information from the research will also provide the basis for future funding bids to the Scottish Government.

The research was carried out between January and April 2014.

If you would like to more information about this research please contact

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2. Research approach, data collection and analysis methods

Research approach

In keeping with the CPD Partnership's agreed remit, a key aim of the research project was to provide a CPD learning opportunity. CLD staff in the Partnership authorities were given the opportunity to apply for a part-time secondment as a Research Co-ordinator to carry out the research project (1 day per week, Jan-Mar 2014). A member of CLD staff from Perth & Kinross Council was appointed to the post. An external researcher was also appointed to provide research mentoring and advice to the Co-ordinator.

Focus groups

Six focus groups were held over the period 21 February – 12 March 2014.

Table 1- Focus group details

Focus Group	Date	Venue	Number of participants
Angus	21.02.14	Angus House	8
Dundee (1)	28.02.14	Mitchell Street Centre	11
Dundee (2)	28.02.14	Mitchell Street Centre	12
Fife (1)	12.03.14	Lochgelly Centres	9
Fife (2)	12.03.14	Rothes Hall	7
Perth & Kinross	11.03.14	Glenearn Campus	9

Two focus groups were held in Dundee and Fife to accommodate the number of staff who expressed interest in taking part.

An invitation to participate in the focus groups was sent via email to all CLD staff in each of the Tayside & Fife CPD Partnership local authorities, using existing email distribution lists. This included CLD staff within the third sector.

Five focus groups were facilitated by the research co-ordinator. One focus group (Dundee 2) was facilitated by the Research Mentor. With the exception of the Perth and Fife focus groups the facilitator was supported by a note-taker. Discussions were also recorded so that they could be reviewed during the data analysis process.

Each focus group discussion lasted approximately one hour. A topic guide (Appendix 1) was devised and used by the facilitators as a guide to ensure that the key research topics, as identified in the research brief and during discussion with CPD Partnership members, were covered during discussions. Additionally, participants were invited to use 'post-it' notes to write down any issue that they felt had not been covered adequately during the discussions.

There were no significant ethical issues associated with the focus groups; however, prior to the start of each group, participants were asked to consent to the recording of the discussion and to the use of anonymised, verbatim quotes in subsequent reports. No participant raised any objections to these request and each gave informed, written consent.

Notes and audio recordings of the focus groups were reviewed by the research co-ordinator and research mentor. Data was summarised and inserted into thematic charts which provided a framework around which data could be analysed and compared across the groups and key themes identified.

Survey

The identification of survey questions was guided by the research brief and discussion with the CPD Partnership. Draft questions were circulated to Partnership members at various stages of design, providing opportunity for comment and suggestions about question wording and order.

The final survey questions (Appendix 2) were uploaded to Survey Gizmo, which provided an easy and accessible format for participation.

An email was sent to all CLD staff in each of the Tayside & Fife CPD Partnership local authorities and third sector organisations, using existing email distribution lists. The email provided details about the purpose of the survey and the link to Survey Gizmo.

The survey was open for responses from 03.02.2014 to 21.03.14.

90 responses were received. Just under half of respondents were from Fife Council, with respondents from Perth & Kinross, Dundee and Angus representing the remaining 50%. CLD practitioners working within adult learning were the largest group of respondents, followed by youth work and capacity-building. Respondents were able to indicate more than 1 area of work in CLD.

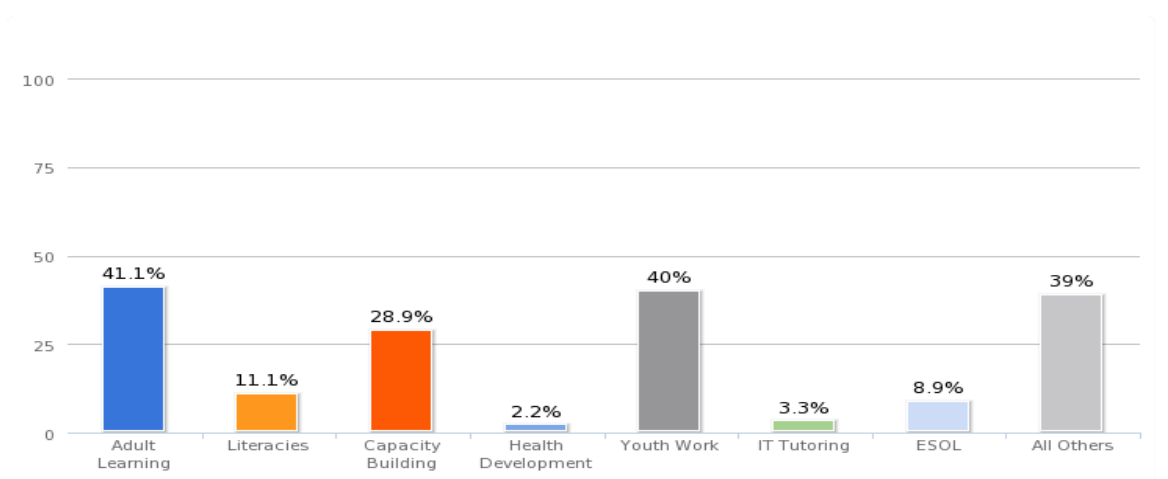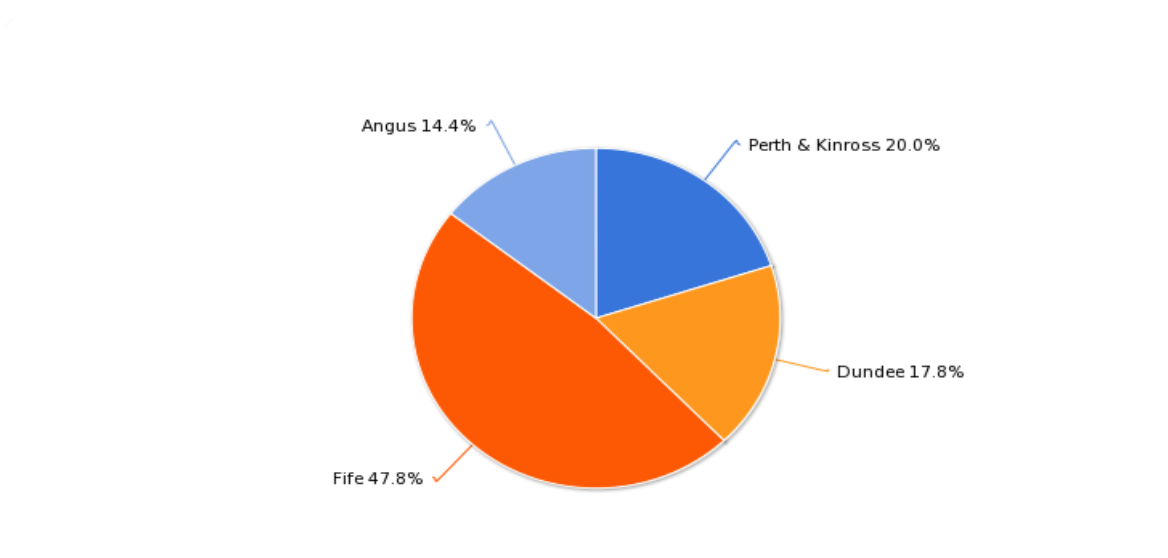**Table 2 – Respondents' areas of work (on-line survey)**

**Table 3 – Location of respondents (on-line survey)**

Survey responses were analysed by the research co-ordinator and research mentor. Both met regularly during the analysis period to discuss and review survey and focus group findings.

3. Main findings (Combined analysis of survey and focus group responses]

3.1 Description & classification of CPD activities

Almost all survey respondents said they had undertaken CPD activities in the last 2 years, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – No of CPD activities taken in the last 2 years (on-line survey).
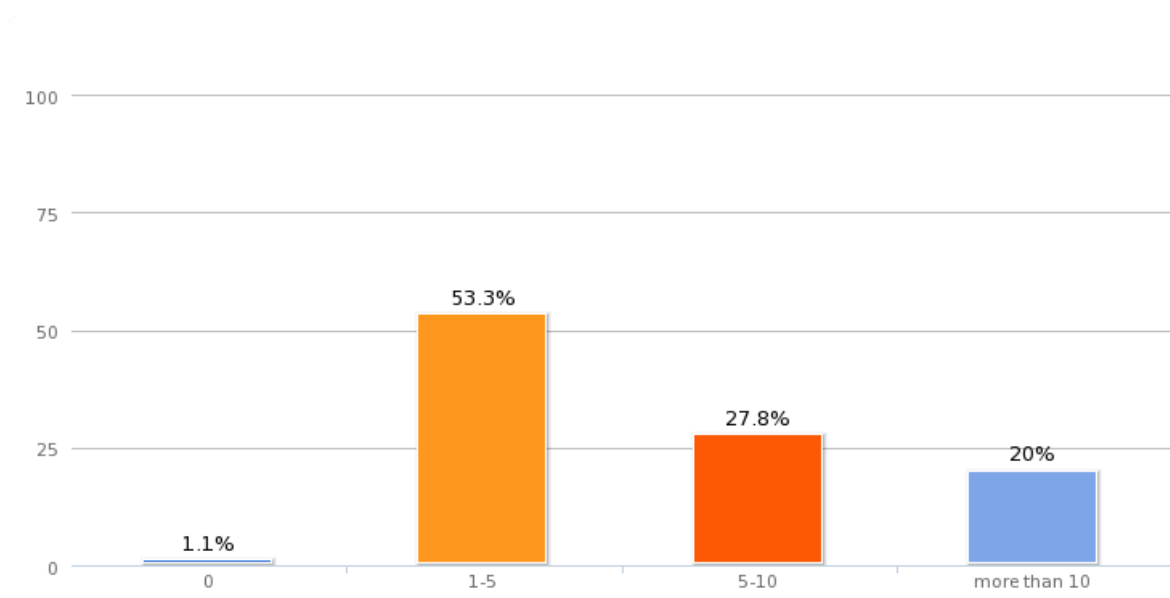

Focus group participants identified a wide range of CPD activities that they had participated in over the last two years. Analysis of these activities indicated that they fell into a number of categories, with supporting examples:

Table 5 – Identification of previous CPD activities (focus groups)

Specialism training:	Capacity-building:	Professional:
Anti-bullying	Community profiling	i-develop
Youth work training	Community needs	CPD conference – values & principles
Adult and family learning	Community resilience conference	Registration for CLD standards
Food hygiene/ food handling	Public participation training	Reflective practice
ESOL	Community engagement	Professional reading (youth work policy)
		HMIE associate Assessor
		Internal verifier
		MSc in CLD
		SVQ Assessor qualification and internal verifier
IT:	**Interpersonal skills:**	**Awareness-raising:**
Digital futures	Courageous conversations	Equalities [on-line training]
Digitally agile	Counselling	Child protection
Introduction to text help software	Coaching	Curriculum for Excellence conference
	Action learning	Attachment theory
	Improving speaking skills	Welfare reform (e-learning)
	Masters Certificate in counselling	GIRFEC

Table 5 – CPD activities provided through: (on-line survey)
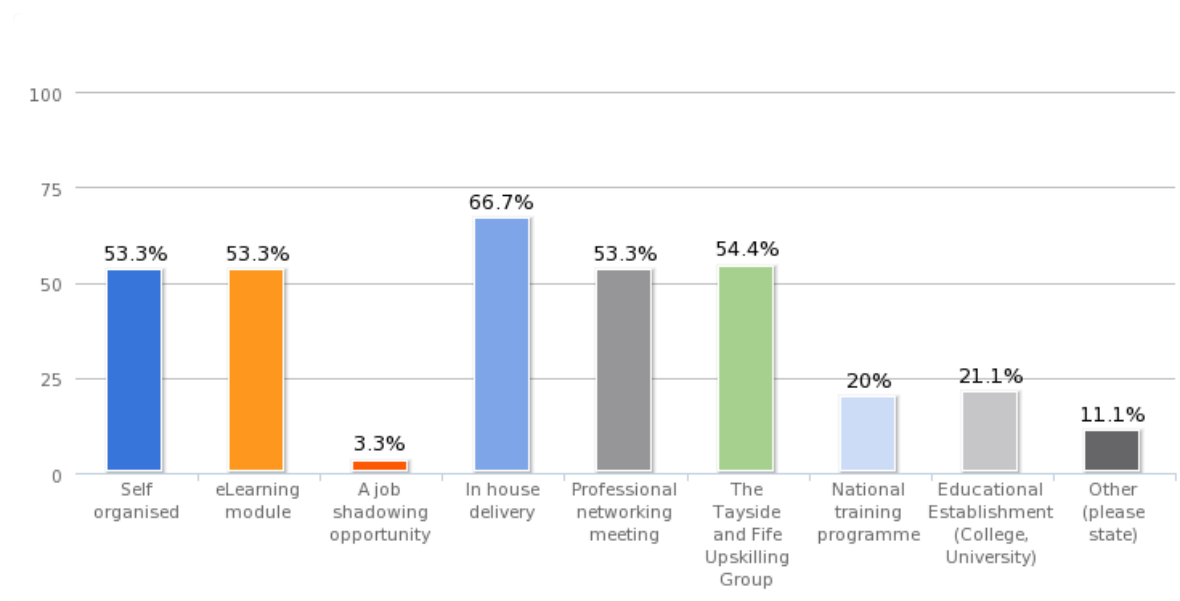
Additionally, focus group participants also mentioned other ways in which CPD delivery had taken place; seminars, team meetings, networking, observation, on-the-job learning, evening classes and volunteering.

3.2 Usefulness or not of CPD activities

Survey respondents were predominantly happy about the range and quality of CPD opportunities available to them; with over 70% stating activities were either 'good' or 'very good'.

Focus group participants expressed many positive views about the CPD activities they had participated in. They highlighted features of their own CPD activities that they felt had made these particularly useful:

- Learning achieved through sharing practice and experience with others
- Learning that was relevant to work roles
- Learning that broadened personal perspectives and understanding
- Learning that could be consolidated through application in a professional setting

Good or useful CPD activities were perceived to be those that also:

- Achieved a balance between theory and practice
- Demonstrated a presenter's/facilitator's quality in terms of their passion, knowledge and experience
- Were identified by the individual practitioner and not imposed on them

Aspects around the usefulness of CPD activities that prompted debate within the focus group discussions included:

- Theory versus practice: is there a need for balance between these?
- Generic or in-depth learning?

- E-learning: different views about the appropriateness of this style of learning for CLD practitioners.

In relation to the Tayside and Fife CPD Partnership Programme, perceived useful aspects of the Upskilling programme were that it broadened the range of CPD opportunities available and encouraged greater participation among CLD practitioners. CPD opportunities focusing on Coaching were mentioned as useful and beneficial by some participants.

3.3 Identifying CPD needs

Focus group participants identified different approaches to identifying their CPD needs, both structured and unstructured. The more structured approaches were through one-to-one meetings, support and supervision sessions, annual reviews and staff appraisals. Also included in this category were team meetings and staff seminars.

Unstructured, more informal approaches included ad hoc, day-to-day discussions with and feedback from colleagues, word-of-mouth feedback about others experiences.

Participants emphasised that these approaches enabled CPD needs to be identified because they presented opportunities for reflection on and discussion about their work and future learning needs. A perceived weakness in reliance on structured approaches was, however, the potential for a practitioner to become passive in the identification of needs process.

With few exceptions, emerging from the focus group discussions was a strong sense of participants' expressed motivation to learn. They described some of the principle, professional contexts that, in their experiences, stimulated reflection on personal learning needs: organisational or departmental changes and developments, national and local policy direction, community issues. In addition, learning needs could be driven by individuals' jobs and the need to rise to these demands, as well as responding to a 'changing world' - for example, social media – that might require changes in practice. Identifying CPD needs in relation to the CLD competences framework was mentioned in a limited way within focus group discussions; one participant suggested that a more structured approach to this was needed.

Participants frequently mentioned the need for time to reflect on and discuss learning needs, both individually and collectively with colleagues. The importance of using reflection on personal experience as a source of learning was felt to underpin CPD needs identification more generally.

Some participants emphasised that, in their experience, identifying CPD needs was not always easy and there was not always help to so this. One participant expressed disappointment that there was now less opportunity for exploring 'hunches' or early stage ideas within CPD. A member of staff from the voluntary sector expressed the view that isolation and the sector's limited capacity for delivering CPD put CLD staff at a disadvantage in comparison with the statutory sector.

Finally, there was repeated mention of the importance of CPD needs being self-identified rather than imposed because it was perceived that this led to more personal investment in learning opportunities and more likelihood of learning being seen as appropriate and useful.

3.4 Importance of CPD

There was consensus within all the focus groups that CPD was important, if not crucial, both for individuals' development and for maximising CLD impact.

Supplementary comments were that CPD opportunities often provided the space to reflect on practice and to develop new ideas. To be most effective, CPD needed to be inspirational and of high quality.

Some local authority participants expressed the view that there was currently a lack of opportunities for the sharing of skills and experiences within and across departments. For this reason they welcomed the opportunity that the Upskilling research project had provided for them to participate in the focus groups discussions around CPD.

3.5 Impact of CPD

Through the on-line survey and the focus groups, participants gave examples of CPD that had an impact on their practice and the communities they work with.

Summary of responses from on-line survey

Participants were asked to relate the impact of their CPD in relation to their practice using the CLD competences

Table 6 – CPD in relation to CLD competences (on-line survey)

Competence	No impact/Minimal impact	Average/Excellent impact
1. They have enabled me to increase my knowledge and understanding of the community in which I work	27.7%	72.2%
2 I have built and maintained relationships with individuals and groups	21.1%	78.8%
3 They have enabled me to provide learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts	18.9 %	81.1%
4. They have enabled me to facilitate and promote community empowerment	32.2%	67.8%
5. They have enabled me to organise and manage resources	31.1%	68.8%
6. They have enabled me to develop and support collaborative working	14.4%	85.6%
7. I am better able to evaluate and inform practice	18.9%	81.1%

Analysis from the table above indicates that respondents reported that CPD had a positive impact across the range of competences. Further analysis of Table 6 is given at the end of this section.

Summary of responses from focus group discussions

These have been collated under headings reflecting a particular training or under a CLD heading where the training was more generic. They were then matched to a CLD competence to allow for comparison with the on-line results measuring impact of CPD.

Table 7 – Impact of CPD (focus groups)

Welfare reform/ Employability **Examples of CPD:** Job Centre website SQA Assessors course	**Competence 3** The impact in relation to welfare reform training has been to 'generate learning opportunities that will stimulate personal and community change' and using 'appropriately targeted methods to promote learning and development' by increasing workers' knowledge of the provisions and information required to increase learners' skills and knowledge so they can be more effective within the current economic (work) climate' (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). Comments from focus group participants: *'Enabled me to provide new qualifications to learners, which offered increased value in the qualifications I could offer thus improving the employability for those involved.'* '*Supported adults with navigating the Universal job match account and job search.'* *'Improved knowledge to support learners with their job search skills.*' In some cases there is evidence that this has required more collaborative working i.e. adult learning, and job centre staff. *'Inclusion of employability work in local communities through engaging third sector partners.'*
IT **Examples of CPD:** Text help software training social media The Digital Inclusion seminar Digitally Agile GIS (geographical information system) training E-safety	**Competence 3 and 5** IT resources and training in new forms of media for workers have been used to increase learners' and communities' knowledge by 'taking advantage of learning and development opportunities' and 'using appropriate methods and techniques' (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'Better use of software, and encouraged learners to use it in promoting events.'* *'Better use of social media to inform communities about opportunities, and led to the development of a community website.'* Evidence also suggests that the use of GIS improves community capacity building, increases knowledge of local communities and allows workers to plan and evaluate practice (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'Very useful, together with a subsequent involvement in a GIS user-group.'* *'Easier to access and use background data, produce plans, source planning information etc. Extremely helpful in a local community planning context.'*

Coaching **Examples of CPD:** Coaching training for CLD staff	**Competence 3 and 5** The Coaching programmes' impact has been very high for participants who have used this concept to improve their work within communities and with a variety of age groups. It has also been successfully rolled out to other workers through upskilling staff to become trainers. *'Powerful with young people – asked questions they wouldn't have asked before – teased out more about them and their family issue.'* *'Cascaded to peers and youth work staff and volunteer.'* It has helped to tackle 'barriers', 'stimulated personal change' and is an example of practitioners using 'appropriate methods and techniques' within a learning context (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'More intensive 1:1 support solutions are more meaningful to the participants and more likely to succeed.'*
Capacity Building **Examples of CPD:** Charitable Trust Training Placement in Capacity Building meant Asset based approaches training Assessing Community Needs Ease the load LEAP training	**Competence 4** Participants primarily identified asset-planning and assessing community needs training which has supported them to 'facilitate and promote community empowerment'. Practitioners identified and applied new approaches which have 'improved their own practice and increased the capacity of the communities they work with' (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'Training completely changed my practice particularly in the way I engaged with communities'* *'Helped in the communities I work with and the approaches I take with them.'* *'For many years, I had been applying a deficit approach to working with groups, learners and communities. This also challenged me to think of new ways of working and many new projects were developed.'* Participants mention using specialists within capacity-building field to delivering training; i.e. Steve Skinner an external consultant (www.steveskinnerassociates.org.uk) *'Advice, support and call on specialist partners in this field of knowledge.'*
Professional **Examples of CPD:** Supervision course Support to colleagues Development days Internal verifier Personal development opportunities. Quality improvements	**Competence 5, 7** Participants are more able to 'recruit, manage and support people' and have received training which has allowed them to better evaluate and inform their own and their teams practice (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'To provide better supervision to the team. Have better knowledge of how theory can impact of staff and can help them to understand their personal drivers and what can impact on young people's development*

programme (Dundee University) Compulsory eLearning modules Shadowing College Development network Validated self-evaluation	*so they can better support young people - resilience, attachment theory, etc.'* *'Helped me re-visit my own practice and assess the effectiveness of my intervention with the communities I work with.'*
Adult and Family Learning **Examples of CPD:** Book bug training ESOL tutors ESOL network Toxic trio training... The Tree of Knowledge 'pod' training Self-guided research SQA Training Certificate and delivery	**Competence 3** Primarily with Adult & Family Learning 'providing learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts' has been the predominant competence. Focussing on the individual learners who have been able to achieve formal qualifications. *'To better inform and teach my certificate class.'* *'To support groups to achieve their qualification developed greater collaborative working, adult learning and support to parents.'* Participants also reported that CPD training opportunities allowed them to develop more collaborative working and expand their practice in family learning. *'Opportunity to discuss and share practice with colleagues from other local authority areas and then a chance to try out some new things.'*
Young People and children **Examples of CPD:** Awareness-raising of issues around LGBT young people Criminal Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Safe Talk training P x 2 Outdoor Learning Conference SQA training FAST Training Early years work. Curriculum for Excellence Theatre work / drama A1 assessors Storytelling training Child minders	**Competence 3** Participants reported that they had taken part in training through which they could 'deliver learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts. In particular, participants have been able to learn and use new approaches within their work. It has also assisted them with evaluating the work they do and its direct impact (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'Having been in contact in the past with young people who had contemplated suicide this helped to prepare me to face young people who might have this in mind and how to deal with such a situation.'* *'Better understanding has helped plan youth activities around achieving more positive destinations for young people.'* *'Increased my knowledge in child development which I was confident in passing on to those I meet in the community and with other practitioners.'* There have also been increased opportunities to improve work within the school environment for youth workers and to support young people to achieve SQAs. *'Angus youth action event working with teachers in school.'*

	'Worked with young people supporting them with their SQA.' *'Delivered FAST Programme in Inverkeithing Primary School.'*
Health & Wellbeing **Examples of CPD:** Training in Mental health & wellbeing First Aid Mental Health health related topics c- card training anti-bullying training self-harm training health and hygiene young women at risk Applied Suicide prevention skills First Aid and Child Protection. Child protection event Fife Community Food project Food Champion training. Cooking in the Community Course Health promotion evaluation	**Competence 1, 5 and 7** CPD in relation to Health & Wellbeing can cut across just about all of the competences; however, it clearly allows practitioners to 'critically analyse internal and external factors impacting on individuals and communities' by understanding the impact of improved mental health & wellbeing that CLD, CPD and in turn the resulting activities from the training can provide to communities and individuals (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'The learners who engaged in the cookery session have reported that they now have a better diet and that they have continued to make meals from scratch at home. For some learners this was their first engagement in their local community and they have progressed into further opportunities within their community.'* *'Relevant legislation and developing learning activities/programmes in line with this has been applied through Health & Hygiene, First Aid, Child Protection programmes etc.'* *'This has enabled me to deliver healthy eating sessions in local communities which have benefited the health and wellbeing of individuals in the longer term and has also meant that we have seen a saving due to not having to employ a tutor.'* *'Increased knowledge of health-related topics; in particular how to improve health of individuals and client groups and think about how to transfer this knowledge to community.'* Participants also report increased confidence in their own practice through having relevant background information and knowledge *'Ensures a confidence in my own practice whilst addressing these issues with adults and young people.'*
General CPD Training (not attributed to particular training course)	**Competences 3 and 7** Mix of responses of impact from general comments not related to specific training opportunities. Participants reported an increased impact of learning and evaluation and overall 'providing learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts', many expressing the view that through continued evaluation they have been able to deliver new opportunities to people they work with (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). Through linking knowledge to practice and evidencing impact, participants have been able to better identify gaps in their own practice and seek out CPD training to address this.

	'Much of the CPD I have done has made me think, contemplate and reflect on my practise and has been good for increasing my knowledge on certain subject matter.' *'Encouraging me to increase my theoretical understanding, informing my practice in youth work.'* *'By having knowledge, skills and the tools to offer a wider programme. '* *'More skilled at judging impact of the work we are delivering and so able to plan improvements better.'* *'Different ways of working – outcome-focused.'* *'To gain an understanding; important to keep refreshing your knowledge.'* *'Learning things every day resulting from a change in job role. They needed to pick up new knowledge and understanding on a daily basis and apply things immediately in order to perform the increasingly broad expectations of them.'* CPD opportunities have also meant that workers have been able to build better relationships with other workers leading to the 'development and support of collaborative working' (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). *'Events that enable you to develop hunches about things – to share examples and hunches; encourage people to speak about their hunches and half-thoughts.'* *'CPD that gives you a bigger picture of the work you're doing in a wider context.'*

Analysis

All seven competences show an overall positive impact on professional learning activities, with approximately two thirds of survey respondents indicating this.

Competence 1 showed most survey respondents felt that it improved their knowledge of the communities they work in. Within the focus groups it did not feature highly, as other competences (mainly 3) appeared to have had more of an impact. This may be due to competences 1 and 3 having similar outcomes, in that increased knowledge of communities led to professionals seeking out learning opportunities that directly impacted on providing learning and development opportunities to address identified needs.

Competence 2 results indicate that the majority of survey respondents found the learning opportunities they took part in increased their skills in relation to building and maintaining relationships. Although this is not reflected in the focus group discussions it may be assumed that

participants undertake CPD in order to enhance their professional skills which in turn are reflected in improved relationships with the communities they work with.

Competence 3 featured most highly in the focus groups where most indicated that their professional learning opportunities had an impact on the individuals and communities they worked with and, again, this is similar to the survey respondents' results.

Competence 4 in relation to community empowerment indicates that a third of survey respondents felt their professional learning opportunities had little or no impact. This competence does not feature highly in the focus group discussions either, with it mainly being attributed to training in relation to community capacity-building.

Competence 5 in relation to organising and managing resources also scores quite low among survey respondents and focus group participants. It is possible that the low return has been due to the roles of participants and this may have scored higher if more managers or people responsible for staff had taken part in the survey or focus groups.

Competence 6 focusing on collaborative working opportunities featured as the one with the highest positive impact by survey respondents. This is reflected in the focus groups participants who also indicated a high positive impact.

Competence 7 also scores highly in relation to evaluating and informing practice by survey respondents and, again, this is reflected within the focus group participants' responses.

In summary, the majority of respondents reported a positive impact of CPD on their practice and with the communities they work with. Respondents were able to give relevant examples of this which is reflected in the quotes. Competences 4 and 5 are areas which the results show that some improvements could be made. Through the focus group discussions it was clear that most CLD practitioners do not reflect on their practice using the CLD competences.

3.6 Opportunities to work with staff from other agencies or sectors

Survey and focus group participants were predominantly positive about the extent to which their CPD activities had enabled them to make good links with staff from other sectors and local authorities.

Within the context of CPD, CLD practitioners were meeting and making links with professional staff from other local authorities, other agencies and other sectors at:

- Conferences & seminars
- Courses, workshops & and training events (including Tayside Upskilling Programme)
- Partnership meetings and working groups
- Practitioner networking events

Some participants mentioned i-develop as a vehicle for making professional links.

> *'By posting a question on the i-develop forum, I have received valuable information regarding good practice elsewhere.'*

> *'I use i-develop – find out loads of stuff – good for asking questions and not re-inventing the wheel.'*

CPD events are taking place at local, regional and national levels.

Participants provided examples of perceived outcomes arising from inter-professional links, including:

- Sharing & comparing practice
- Benchmarking service delivery
- Establishing professional links for future work development
- Linking across sectors
- Co-working on joint responses to shared issues
- Sharing resources
- Improving outcomes for service-users
- Improving inter-agency communication leading to service improvements

> *'Attending training events has allowed me to meet many workers doing similar work in other areas.'*

> *'I linked with senior staff of Edinburgh Council and our tutors were able to access their tutor training.'*

> *'Networking and meetings enable me to get to know others and makes the referral processes for clients more effective.'*

> *'ESOL practitioner's network events help Fife ESOL to keep in touch with colleague across Scotland and ensure that our service is well-informed and our practice is up to date.'*

> *'Training with other partners has provided a wider understanding of how we can work together to achieve shared goals in the communities in which we work.'*

Some focus group participants emphasised the importance of ensuring CLD staff also developed effective links with professional staff colleagues in their own local CLD service, recognising that this could be done in a number of ways through CPD opportunities and day-to-day working; however, the potential dangers of becoming insular if this dimension was prioritised too greatly were recognised.

During one of the focus group discussions, it was suggested that there was need for more shared learning opportunities with community groups to be available; for example, visiting good practice elsewhere.

Finally, there was recognition that due to lack of staff time and resources, links developed with other staff through participation in CPD opportunities were sometimes short-lived.

3.7 CPD priorities for the next 2 years

Survey and focus group participants identified various CPD priorities for the next two years, spanning a full range of CPD approaches, ideas and techniques.

Most frequently, participants' suggestions indicated a strong sense of self-directed impetus for future CPD activities. While some participants prioritised formal courses of study, others identified general areas of work-related interest that they wished to pursue through CPD opportunities to inform their practice.

> *'I am interested in undertaking work-related research through a Master's degree.'*

> *'To complete a Masters in CLD or lifelong learning.'*

> *'Undertake management training.'*

> *'More dyslexia and other learning difficulties training, as each year there is more understanding in these areas.'*

> *'Keep knowledge up-to-date of current drugs trends, dealing with challenging behaviour, working with young people with special needs.'*

From a self-directed perspective, some participants prioritised continued reflective learning:

> *'To continue to review and improve practice especially in light of another part-time post I am about to take up.'*

> *'To implement the learning from the courses I have been on.'*

> *'Opportunity that helps me articulate my role better/professionally to other agencies.'*

> *'Opportunity that gives me the change to explore different ways of thinking about my job role.'*

CPD priorities encompassing peer contact were also reflected in participants' responses to this question. Broadening learning through engagement with national networks was mentioned, as well as taking advantage of opportunities to simply share practice with other professional staff. Desired approaches for engaging with other CLD staff included job shadowing, discussions and study visits. One survey respondent highlighted that links with other staff were intended to achieve more effective work outcomes:

> *'Creating links with partners to deliver a more holistic approach for service-users.'*

Intentions around the use of i-develop were mentioned by a few participants. These ranged from those who just stated a general intention to use i-develop more often for training opportunities to those who were more specific about their purpose in its use.

> *'Work through i-develop to re-visit range of topics and gain in-depth knowledge of competence themes.'*

> *'I have recently joined i-develop and enrolled with CLD Standards Council. I intend to work through i-develop modules etc. to develop my skills as well as attend relevant opportunities that are presented to me.'*

During one of the focus group discussions, i-develop was identified as a potential, single point of information about learning opportunities as it was felt that this would be something helpful for

practitioners instead of them having to spend time investigating a wide variety of sources about CPD opportunities.

Specific areas suggested for future CPD included child protection, first aid, health & well-being, dyslexia and ESOL.

Participants' suggestions and priorities for future CPD activities can also be viewed within the context of CLD competences (CLD Standards Council for Scotland). Most frequently, CLD practitioners identified CPD priorities that would assist in developing their knowledge and understanding of the geographic community or community of interest in which they worked or would generally inform their practice. This could be through intentions to broaden skills in working more effectively specific service-user groups – participants mentioned CPD activities associated with young people, children and families, adults, parents and volunteers – and also in using CPD opportunities to keep up-to-date with important policy developments.

> *'Would like opportunities to look at current policies and impact links/development of practice. Refresher on adult learning theories/practice.'*

> *'I have recently changed post to work with children and families (social work) so CPD priorities are to gain more knowledge and understanding of this area of work.'*

> *'Developing my skills and knowledge so I am better equipped to deal with/address the increasingly complex issues young people are facing.'*

Those practitioners who placed their CPD priorities within the context of current policy developments mentioned the need to increase awareness and understanding of the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, asset transfer, Curriculum for Excellence and welfare reform.

Participants also identified CLD priorities associated with competences around organising and managing resources, including budgets, human resources, quality assurance, time-management.

> *'How I will meet the challenges of ever-reducing budgets and getting a better understanding of how my work fits in with ever-changing priorities.'*

> *'Training on Council admin systems.'*

> *'Funding and managing budgets.'*

> *'Leadership skills, recruitment and selection of staff.'*

It is worth highlighting that a few participants expressed uncertainty and lack of clarity about their future CPD priorities. Although there were limited details provided by survey participants about why they were uncertain, one participant indicated this was due to uncertainty in their work environment.

> *'I'm not prioritising anything at present. I'm waiting to see what direction my work takes after out shift in to a new Directorate and team re-shuffle. In the meantime, I'll be looking to do one or two things from our youth work training programme (if we have the same set-up as previous years) to keep up to date.'*

In summary, survey and focus group participants identified the following areas for future CPD activities:

- Developing knowledge and understanding of geographic community or community of interest in which practitioners work. This could be through developing skills in working more effectively with specific service-user groups – e.g. young people, children and families, adults, parents and volunteers – and maintaining knowledge and understanding of policy developments (e.g. Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, asset transfer, Curriculum for Excellence and welfare reform).
- Organising and managing resources, including budgets, human resources, quality assurance, time-management.
- Reflective learning through evaluation and review of practice.
- Development of use of i-develop.
- Other specific, future CPD activities identified were child protection, first aid, health & well-being, dyslexia and ESOL.
- Broadening learning through engagement with national networks and opportunities to share practice with other professional staff, including job shadowing, discussions and study visits.

3.8 Delivery of future CPD

Table 8 – Future delivery of CPD (on-line survey)
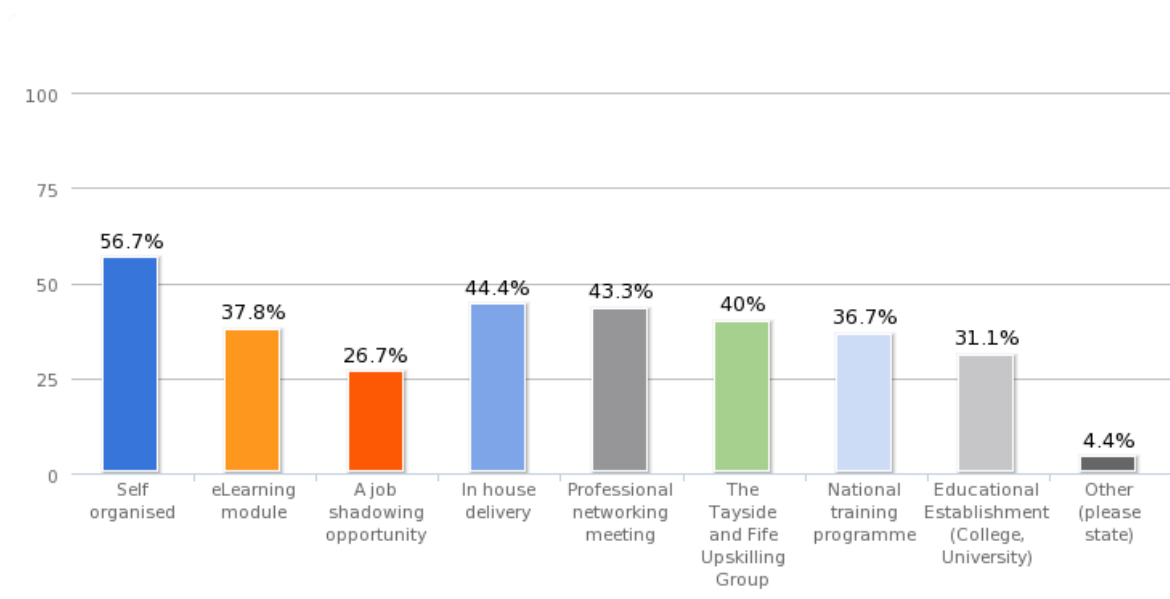
Analysis of future delivery

Survey respondents identified a range of ways in which their future CPD needs might be met. Most frequently, they identified their own role in organising their CPD activities, indicating a pro-active sense of involvement. There was a balance shown between CPD activities that might be provided through in-house (employer) and external (third party) delivery. 40% of responses identified the Tayside & Fife Upskilling Partnership as a future provider of CPD activities, indicating among practitioners a sense of continued role for the Partnership. Job-shadowing appeared popular among respondents as an anticipated way of meeting their CPD needs.

4. Summary and recommendations

The Tayside and Fife Upskilling group proposed three broad themes for the Continuing Professional Development of CLD staff in the 2013 - 2014 period.

These were:

1. *To develop and support leadership – through a combination of learning activities designed to promote behaviours consistent with effective, dispersed leadership, such as coaching skills and approaches.*

- The coaching programme has been rolled out extensively and this was reflected in the positive responses from the participants of this research. Staff were able to use coaching skills in their practice and some were trained to become trainers, ensuring that a roll-out to all staff was achieved.
- Action Learning Sets training was also delivered as part of the CPD programme although it was one of the few training programmes to receive mixed reviews and little impact on community is recorded.
- Under 'professional impact of CPD', respondents identified a number of training options related to improving leadership, such as a supervision course, becoming an internal verifier and undertaking a shadowing opportunity. It was not indicated if this was self-directed training or offered as part of a CPD programme

  Recommendations
- Carry on rolling-out coaching programme using the peer-led approach
- Review the Action Learning Sets training
- Identify some specific leadership training for CLD practitioners

2. *To develop a learning culture – in which practitioners take increasing responsibility for their own occupational learning and employers play their role by ensuring that there are opportunities made available and practitioners are encouraged to go on learning; invest significantly in the development of practice networks and networking as an approach to learning, promote and support the use of i-develop as a tool for learning by extending use by individuals, creating and supporting on-line networks and piloting some CPD activity that is delivered through blended learning.*

- Networking opportunities featured very highly as a having a positive impact on CLD staff giving them the chance to learn from each other leading to an improvement in practice, sharing resources and improving outcomes for service-users.
- The Tayside & Fife Upskilling partnership method of delivering joint training across the authorities was also viewed as a positive impact for staff.
- i-develop was mentioned but did not appear to be widely used. Any training opportunities in relation to it appear to have been brief and without full explanation of purpose.

  Recommendations
- Continue delivery of joint CPD across local authorities through the Tayside & Fife Upskilling Partnership.
- Encourage frontline staff to be part of the Tayside & Fife Upskilling group.
- Invest in developing a fuller training programme for i-develop.
- Identify where possible staff with specialisms who can deliver CPD across authorities.

3. **To support policy and practice priorities** – *through a range of opportunities designed to ensure that practitioners are properly informed in relation to important Government priorities and able to respond to related practice challenges including family learning, community capacity-building, welfare reform, youth work, community empowerment, ESOL, effective needs assessment and digital agility.*

- Government policies were not directly mentioned; however, CPD that was undertaken in relation to policy was evident; e.g. asset-based approaches, community planning and welfare training were mentioned.
- Staff have been specific in determining their training needs which is reflected in the range of CPD undertaken specific to their job requirements.
- Positive responses were received about IT training strengthening staff's digital abilities.

Recommendations
- Training in relation to the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill would be useful for all staff.
- Staff in-service training days at least twice a year, clearly identified as policy updates or authority updates, similar to school in-service days*.*
- Digital inclusion seminars once a year to keep up with technology changes.

References

CLD Standards Council for Scotland (2014), The Competences
http://www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/the_competences/Competences_for_Community_Learning_and_Development

Skinner Steve (2014), Steve Skinner Associates

http://www.steveskinnerassociates.org.uk/home.html

Appendix 1 – Focus group questions

CLD Evaluation Focus Group

1) Introductions

2) Explain brief and confidentiality (project proposal and confidentiality sheets)

3) Can you tell me about some of the CPD activities you have been involved in?

4) Which have been interesting and useful and why?

5) What CPD activity was not useful and why?

6) What CPD activities have had the most impact on your work………. can you describe the impact?

7) In what ways, if any, have your CPD activities given you the opportunity to work with other CLD staff or other agencies? What benefits, if any, has this had for your learning and practice?

8) In your experience, can you tell me about any barriers there are to you taking up CPD activities?

8a) What, for you, are some of the features of good CPD activities?

9) How do you go about identifying your own CPD learning needs?

10) How important do you think CPD is to your development as a CLD practitioner?

11) Do you have any suggestions for future CPD activities?

12) Would anyone want to make a final comment?

Appendix 2 – Survey Questions

Survey Monkey Questions

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a combination of approaches, ideas and techniques that help individuals manage their own learning and growth. Within a learning culture it can include any event, formal or informal, that increases knowledge, experience and understanding, improves performance and contributes to lifelong learning.

(Standards Council for Scotland, CLD Competences, 2009)

1. How many continuing professional development activities have you undertaken/been involved in during the 2 years?

   0   1-5   5-10   more than 10

2. Were the activities provided through *(Please tick all that apply)*

   Self-organised

    eLearning module

   A job shadowing opportunity

   Employer provided

   Professional networking meeting

   The Tayside Upskilling Group

   National training programme

   Educational Establishment (College, University)

   Other (please state) …………………………………………………………….

   Please give examples of 1 or 2 learning activities you undertook

3. What did you think about the range and quality of the Professional Learning opportunities that have been available to you?

   Very Good   Good   Satisfactory   Poor   Very Poor

4. Please estimate the impact of the professional learning activities on your practice Scale 1 = poor 5 = excellent

   They have enabled me to increase my knowledge and understanding of the community in which I work

   I have built and maintained relationships with individuals and groups

   They have enabled me to provide learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts

They have enabled me to facilitate and promote community empowerment

They have enabled me to organise and manage resources

They have enabled me to develop and support collaborative working

I am better able to evaluate and inform practice

Please give a couple of actual examples of the impact on your practice and on the communities you work with.

5. Please give some examples of when your CPD has had an impact on the communities you work with.

6. To what extent has CPD you have undertaken given you an opportunity to make good links with staff from other sectors or Local authorities? Please select 1

Please give an example of how this has been useful to your practice

7. Please give an example of how CPD has allowed you to make good links with staff from other sectors or Local authorities

8. What are your CPD priorities for the next two years?

9. How might these best be met?

10. Any other comments about your continuing professional development?

11. Please tick which area of CLD you work in

12. Name (optional but desirable)

13. Local Authority

Please note all information from this survey will be used for the purpose of preparing a research paper to inform future professional development within the Tayside Cluster.