

Learning Link Scotland Annual Report 2025-26

Robertson House, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4TB

Scottish Charity No. SC025308 Company No.
SC380020

www.learninglinkscotland.org.uk

@LearningLinkSCO



April 2025 - March 2026



Learning Link Scotland



Our Vision and Purpose



Our Outcomes



Funding



Staff Team



Board



Projects



Members



Social Media



CLD Strategic Leadership Group



Any questions?

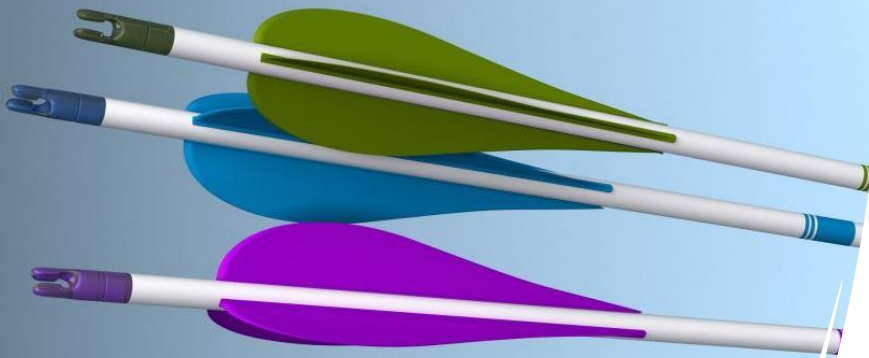
Our vision and purpose

- **Learning Link Scotland was established for and by third sector adult learning organisations.**
- Our vision for Scotland is for a learning nation where Scotland is not only the best place in the world to grow up in but also the best place to learn.
- At the heart of our vision is that adult learning in Scotland is recognised by all as a central element of personal and community empowerment. In our vision, people will have access and equal opportunity to strong, independent and vibrant third sector adult education, and that organisations work in partnership with others to fulfil lifelong learning, social inclusion, and democratic aspirations.
- Our purpose is to ensure third sector adult learning organisations work together to create a successful, dynamic and forward thinking Scotland.



Our Outcomes

- Outcome 1: Third Sector adult learning organisations and their learners are effectively contributing to emerging policies in order to build capacity, increase the effectiveness, and thereby maximise the impact, of adult learning provision on individuals, families and communities.
- Outcome 2: Workers in Third Sector adult learning organisations are supported and encouraged to assess their needs and engage in professional learning, networking and partnership opportunities, so that learners can increase their ability to achieve their goals as a result of high-quality learning experiences.
- Outcome 3: Learning Link Scotland members are supported to evaluate and monitor their impact and to share the evidence that Third Sector adult learning can make on learners' personal, family, work and community lives. This evidence strengthens the case for sustaining and developing the sector for the benefit of adult learners in Scotland's communities and Scotland as a whole.



Funding

- Please find our latest [Trustees Financial Report 2024-25](#) here
- Learning Link Scotland Core Funding from Scottish Government via Corra has yet to be confirmed



Staff Team

Jackie Howie, CEO

We also have a great team of **Associate Workers** including

- **Alison McLachlan** from [AMCLearn](#) who has worked on the maths and numeracy projects with us
- **Rob Bray** who has worked on the writing and delivery of PDA in Adult Learning with us



Learning Link Scotland Board of Directors

Chair: **Sarah Burton**, Lead Scotland

Vice-chair: **Lisa Bradley**, University of Glasgow

Treasurer: **Janet Naphine**, Independent, Co-opted

Director: **Kevin Brosnan**, University of Stirling

Director: **Bex Walker**, Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

Director: **Asma Abdalla**, Empowering Women for Change

Director: **Unyimeobong Matthews**, Inspiring Families

Director: **Pam Maxwell**, Independent

Director **Amy Cox**, RZSS

Position of Secretary was vacant



Projects 2024-25

- **PDA in Adult Learning** – delivery of SQA Level 6 Award for Edinburgh City Council
- **Supporting Adult Literacies Learning** – delivery of SQA Level 6 Award for Edinburgh City Council

Learning Link Scotland
Member
Organisations



The numbers

112 Third sector member
organisations

44 Third sector individual
members

89 Contact and partner
organisations

226 Contact and partner
individuals

Some examples of National Member Organisations

[Workers' Educational Association](#)

[Lead Scotland](#)

[Dyslexia Scotland](#)



Some examples of Community Based Member Organisations

[Lairg and District Learning Centre](#)

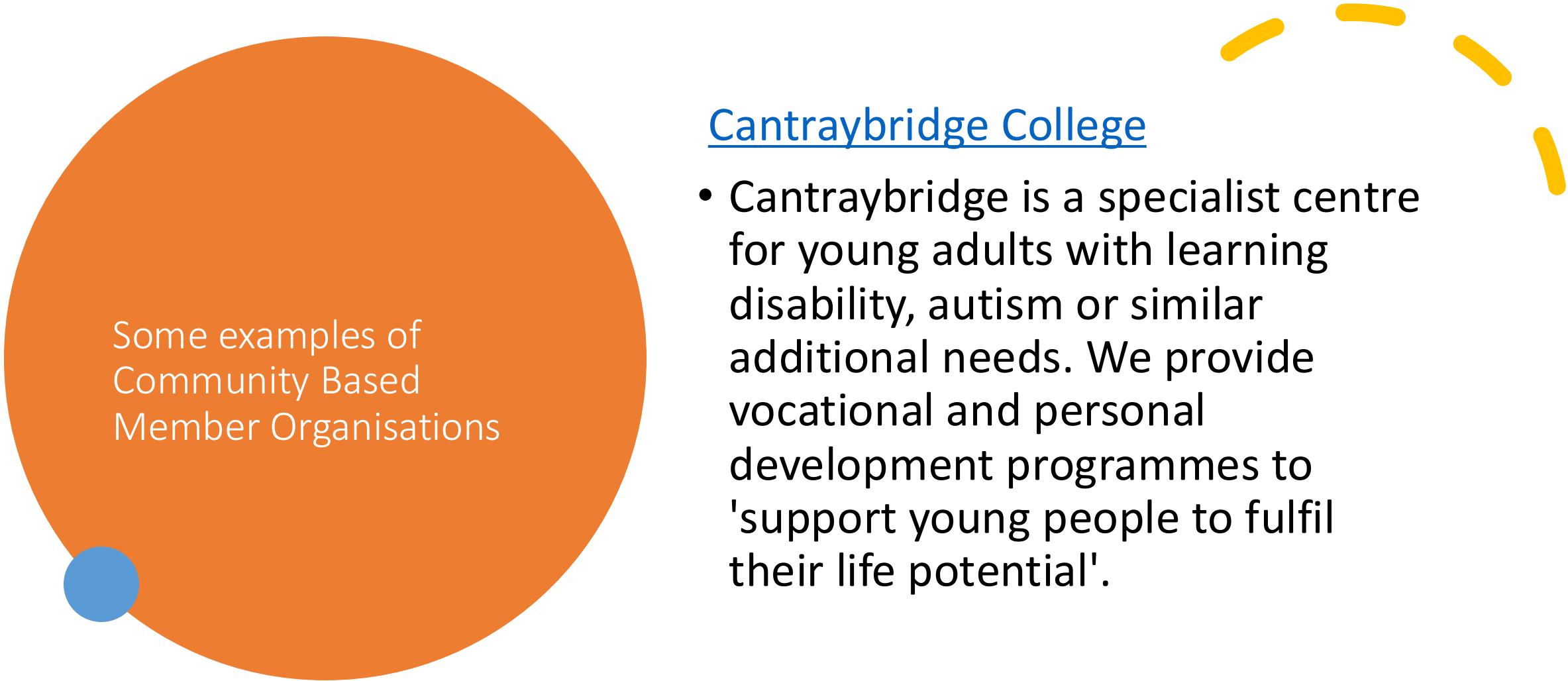
- Our main aim is to provide or assist in providing local facilities and resources designed to support lifelong learning and skills development. We have a general adult learning programme but there is much more. An example of one of our projects is Flight Path, which, along with 8 other centres throughout Scotland, LDLC are delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Scottish Government's Climate Engagement Fund.

Some examples of
Community Based
Member Organisations

Rosemount Lifelong Learning

- Our mission is to increase life chances through learning for children, young people and adults living in the North Glasgow area. This is an area in which many families and individuals are living in poverty and are disadvantaged. Our purpose is to tackle poverty and social exclusion.





Some examples of
Community Based
Member Organisations

Cantraybridge College

- Cantraybridge is a specialist centre for young adults with learning disability, autism or similar additional needs. We provide vocational and personal development programmes to 'support young people to fulfil their life potential'.



Some examples of Community Based Member Organisations

[Galgael](#)

- Our Vision, the 'great dream' we're wrestling into reality.
A just Scotland
freed from scarcity,
violence and loneliness.
A welcoming Scotland
where our ties to one another,
our waterways and land
are revealed and revered.
- Our Purpose
To work together on demanding common tasks that
demonstrate ways of living with more humanity in our
times.

Some examples of
Community Based
Member Organisations

Guided Lily

- Supports women and girls in Govan and surrounding areas of Glasgow to become more confident, creative, employable and enterprising by providing workshops, training programs and activities in an inclusive, accessible, culturally safe and supportive environment.
- Our aims and objectives are to inspire and empower women & girls, building resilience, community cohesion and integration through learning new skills and activities that helps to increase confidence, positive mental health & wellbeing, reducing isolation and barriers to opportunities and helps them to find their passion and fulfil their potential.



Some examples of our Contacts

- SCQF
 - Qualifications Scotland
 - CLD Standards Council
 - Education Scotland
 - Colleges
 - Universities
 - Youthwork organisations
 - Community Development organisations
-

Individual
Members
and
Contacts

Tutors

Organisers

Trainers

Volunteers

Development Workers

Cross-sectoral representatives

Learning Link Scotland Members

Membership update for AGM

- Membership numbers fluctuate slightly but remain consistent at the level highlighted in the previous slides
- We have mothballed our use of X and are aiming to focus on developing LinkedIn as our social media platform
- Members continued to engage with us on our online network meetings, we hold a minimum of 4 national network meetings per year
- We published regular monthly Ebulletins, and additional E-Express notices to highlight news items which are time sensitive such as; new funding streams; sector relevant events, information on elections and Scottish Government briefings on Adult Learning.
- We have maintained the frequency of news items on our website in the last year, aiming to have at least one new posting per month, and usually have managed to exceed this.

Network Meetings 2025/26

- **May 2025:** Alexander Report at 50
- **June 2025:** Numeracy practitioner network
- **October 2025:** Funding for third sector adult learning
- **November 2025:** Numeracy practitioner network
- **February 2026:** CLD Workforce Survey
- **March 2026:** Numeracy practitioner network

* we had a further Network meeting planned for November which was cancelled due to staff illness.



Reviewing 2024-25 Professional Learning

- We have continued to distribute information on professional learning opportunities in Scotland and provide support through National Network Meetings
- We run the National Numeracy CLD Network
- We regularly contribute to ES Networks including ESOL Leads Strategic Group
- Jackie Howie sits on the CLD Standards Executive Committee
- We have delivered an increasing number of professional learning opportunities to a range of cross sectorial organisations



Looking forward to 2026-27

- Continuing to campaign for raising awareness of and funding for third sector adult learning, especially with new government in place after May 2026
- CLD Strategic Planning from Leadership Group
- Building Racial Literacies
- Establishing LLS as an SQA centre
- Collaborating with SCDC to develop PDA Adult Literacies and Health Issues in the Community Tutor training
- Increase funding for third sector adult learning
- Seeking funding to develop our support for evidencing the impact of adult learning
- Investigating best uses of AI in adult learning

Community Learning and Development Strategic Leadership Group

Overview

- The Community Learning and Development Strategic Leadership Group was established in December 2024.
- The group aims to provide sustained strategic leadership and to set out and deliver a clear, learner-centred vision of how community learning and development will provide the best outcomes for Scotland's communities and the people in them.



Community Learning and Development Strategic Leadership Group

Members

Membership includes the representatives from the following:

- Minister for Higher and Further Education (co-chair)
- COSLA Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing (co-chair)
- COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People (co-chair)
- Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)
- CLD Standards Council
- CLD Managers Scotland
- Education Scotland
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)
- Inspiring Scotland
- Public Health Scotland
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
- Scottish Local Authorities' Economic Development (SLAED)
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)

Recommendations Summary from the CLD Review

1. **Leadership and Structures:** Establish a joint CLD Strategic Leadership Group and a working-level Strategic Delivery Group.
2. **Overarching Policy Narrative:** Develop a clear policy narrative on lifelong learning and a strategic intent for CLD.
3. **Focus on Delivery:** Prioritize actions, especially addressing the ESOL crisis.
4. **Budgets and Funding:** Reassess spending across the sector and encourage multi-year project funding.
5. **Developing the Workforce and Standards:** Appoint a Chief Adviser on CLD and develop a workforce plan.
6. **Demonstrating Impact:** Fund participation in the OECD International Survey of Adult Skills and develop a shared outcomes framework.



CLD Strategic Leadership Group Priorities 2025/26

Members agreed the immediate priorities for 2025/26 should be centred around recommendations:

- 1.2 – The work of the SLG should be supported by a working-level CLD Strategic Delivery Group (SDG)
- 2.2 – the Scottish Government should develop and communicate a clear Statement of Strategic Intent for CLD.
- 3.2 – The Scottish Government working alongside New Scots partners, Colleges and Local Authorities needs to take immediate action to tackle the current ESOL crisis.
- 5.2 – The CLD Standards Council should lead work to develop a CLD Workforce Plan for consideration by the Strategic Leadership Group.

Members discussed crossover between the agreed priorities and the remaining recommendations. The Chair proposed that the group discuss progress for the remaining recommendations at the next meeting and the secretariat should prepare an appropriate paper.

Communique from the Community Learning and Development Strategic Leadership Group held on 2 December 2025

Action plan – strategic updates

ESOL survey - Catherine Damen

- Outlined interim findings from the survey COSLA undertook in relation to the provision of ESOL for New Scots across local authorities.
- A report of findings will be presented to the New Scots Expert Advisory Group on ESOL w/c 08 December 2025.

ESOL thematic review - Gill Ritchie

- Thematic inspection of ESOL underway by HMIE: being undertaken over three phases with HM Inspectors focusing on the experience of learners in accessing provision within communities and colleges and how providers respond to demand.
- Activity in fieldwork stage with a final report to be published early 2026.

Workforce - Marion Allison

- CLD Standards Council work to support recommendation 5.2 of the Independent Review of CLD report, which includes a CLD workforce needs survey.
- CLD Workforce Development Group also established, focused on four key themes: Qualification Pathways; Career and Job Pathways; Career long professional learning; and what Scotland needs going forward.

Next steps and next meeting

- The Chair proposed the sixth meeting of the SLG takes place in late-February 2026, in St Andrews House, Edinburgh. Members were content with this suggestion.



Any Questions?

Contact
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Thank you!