

# DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

## Community Learning and Development (CLD) in Development Trusts

This report explores how Development Trusts engage with Community Learning and Development (CLD), revealing a widespread lack of recognition, awareness, and accreditation —and clear opportunities for stronger collaboration and support.

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# Community Learning and Development (CLD) in Development Trusts

## Executive Summary

In partnership with CLD Standards Council<sup>[1]</sup>, we surveyed 59 members of the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) to explore how they engage with Community Learning and Development (CLD). With a 17% response rate, the findings reveal some eye-opening trends—and clear opportunities for stronger collaboration.

## Key Findings:

- Over half (52%) of Development Trusts are already running CLD activities, even if they don't always call it "CLD."
- A staggering 92% feel their CLD work doesn't get the recognition it deserves
- Most (78%) hadn't heard of the CLD Standards Council before this survey.
- Just 5% have staff registered with the CLD Standards Council.
- No DTAS Members hold CLD Standard Mark

These results show a real gap—and a chance to build stronger ties between Development Trusts and the CLD sector. By raising awareness and giving these efforts the credit they're due, both could achieve even more for and with Scotland's communities.

## Why This Matters

The recommendations in this report align with Scottish Government priorities—community empowerment, lifelong learning, and social justice. If DTAS and the CLD Standards Council work together, Development Trusts could unlock new funding, partnerships, and professional development opportunities.

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## Survey Overview

We surveyed DTAS members to get a clearer picture of their work in Community Learning and Development (CLD). Out of 350 members, 59 responded - a 17% response rate. While this gives us a solid snapshot, it's not exhaustive. Still, the findings suggest trends worth exploring across the wider DTAS network.

## DTAS & CLD Standards Council: Who They Are

### DTAS Membership

The Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) supports community-led organisations working to create lasting change. Their members—mostly development trusts—are grassroots groups run by local people, tackling everything from job creation to environmental projects. Any profits go straight back into the community.

To join DTAS, organisations must be non-profit, community-focused, and democratically run. In return, they get access to expert advice, funding support, and a stronger collective voice.

### CLD Standards Council Scotland Membership

The CLD Standards Council Scotland (CLDSCS) is the professional association for staff and volunteers in youth work, adult learning, and community development. Members help people and communities identify their needs, take action, and grow together.

To join, you need to:

- Be actively involved in CLD work
- Follow professional standards
- Keep developing your skills

Benefits include professional recognition, networking, training, and a stronger voice for CLD across Scotland.

## What is CLD—And Why Does It Matter for Development Trusts?

Community Learning and Development (CLD) is all about empowering people through learning and collective action—especially in disadvantaged areas. It is a distinct educational based approach to lifelong learning that aims to empower individuals and communities to participate actively in, and shape their own, learning and development. In Scotland, local authorities must support CLD, but much of the actual work happens through local groups like Development Trusts.

CLD focuses on three key areas:

1. Adult Learning – e.g Helping with skills like literacy, digital know-how, employability, English for Speakers of Other Languages.
2. Youth Work – e.g. Building confidence and leadership in young people and family learning.
3. Community Development – e.g Supporting communities to organise and drive change.

However, the breadth and range of CLD activity also includes a variety of settings across the public and 3<sup>rd</sup> sectors.



## The Link to Development Trusts

Many Trusts are already doing CLD work—they just might not call it that. Common activities include:

- Digital skills workshops
- Youth volunteering programs
- Community-led planning
- Managing local assets (like parks or hubs) for public benefit

This isn't about adding more work—it's about recognising and strengthening what's already happening. And there are real benefits to making this connection clearer:

- Access to new funding and partnerships
- Professional recognition (like CLD Standards Council membership)
- A stronger voice in local decision-making

This report digs into how Scottish Development Trusts are engaging with CLD—and how we can raise awareness, build confidence, and make the most of this natural partnership. At their core, both CLD and Development Trusts share the same goal: helping people and communities thrive through learning, empowerment, and action.

### Community Development Initiatives



## Understanding CLD in Development Trusts

Our survey explored how Development Trusts perceive their work in relation to Community Learning and Development (CLD). We examined whether Trusts identify with CLD, their current level of engagement, and how they value this connection.

### Survey Findings

- 10% (6 Trusts) are fully engaged in CLD work
- 42% (25 Trusts) deliver some CLD-related activities
- 29% (17 Trusts) are uncertain about their alignment with CLD
- 19% (11 Trusts) do not engage in CLD

Projected across DTAS's 350 members:

- Approximately 35 Trusts would be fully engaged
- Around 147 Trusts would deliver some CLD activities
- About 102 Trusts would be uncertain
- Roughly 66 Trusts would not engage

### Key Observations

#### The Recognition Gap

More than half of Development Trusts (52%) are already delivering CLD work without formally recognizing it as such. This presents a significant opportunity to increase awareness and gain proper recognition for these efforts.

#### The Knowledge Barrier

Nearly one-third of Trusts (29%) remain unsure whether their work qualifies as CLD. As one respondent noted:

**"It would help to know what constitutes CLD before we can engage with it properly."**



## Case Examples

### Recognised CLD Work

The Langholm Initiative's Tarras Valley project focuses on outdoor youth education, clearly aligning with CLD's youth work objectives through leadership and confidence-building programs.

### Unrecognized CLD Work

Appin Community Development Trust operates community transport and care services that support adult learning and community development - core CLD activities they don't currently classify as such.

### Development Trusts' Requests

Trusts have asked for:

- Clear, practical definitions of CLD with real-world examples
- Introductory training sessions and professional development opportunities
- Information on measuring CLD impact and potential funding sources





## CLD Standards Council Membership

Current engagement remains low:

- Only 5% of surveyed Trusts (3 out of 59) have staff with who are Registered or Associate Members.
- Projected across all members, about 18 Trusts might have CLD Standards Council members
- An estimated 301 Trusts likely have no members
- Around 28 Trusts are uncertain

### Reasons for Low Engagement

78% of respondents were unaware of the CLD Standards Council before this survey. One participant commented:

**We've hosted CLD students but received no ongoing support from educational institutions."**

### Positive Indicators

A CLD-qualified Trust manager shared:

**"I'm working to help our staff recognise the CLD aspects of their work, though it's an ongoing process."**

## CLD Qualifications Among Staff

- 14% (8 Trusts) employ staff with CLD degrees
- 71% (42 Trusts) report no qualified staff
- 15% (9 Trusts) are unsure

Projected across DTAS membership

- About 49 Trusts may have CLD qualified staff
- Approximately 248 likely have none
- Around 53 are uncertain

### Differing Perspectives

Some Trusts seek help formalizing staff training, while others question whether degree-level qualifications are essential for their work. Several emphasized the need for clearer CLD career pathways

## CLD Standards Mark Adoption

The Standards Council Approvals Suite includes three quality assurance routes: Developmental Approval, Professional Approval, and the CLD Standards Mark. Developed in collaboration with the sector, this suite supports organisations to demonstrate quality and commitment in CLD learning and development.

The CLD Standards Mark is specifically designed for organisations that offer professional or continuous learning to staff and volunteers—ranging from small voluntary groups to large public agencies.

None of the surveyed Development Trusts currently hold the CLD Standards Mark.

This confirms a clear gap in formal recognition of the learning and development work already happening across the network.

### Additional findings:

- No DTAS members currently hold any CLD Standards Council accreditation
- 78% of respondents were unaware of the CLD Standards Council prior to the survey

### Suggested Improvements

Respondents highlighted the need for:

- Practical training and case studies to help identify and apply CLD principles in their work
- Clearer guidance on evaluation tools such as the LEAP framework

## **The Need for Greater CLD Recognition**

Our survey asked Development Trusts whether their CLD work deserves more recognition. The response was nearly unanimous.

### Survey Findings

- 92% (54 Trusts) believe their CLD efforts should be better recognised
- 7% (4 Trusts) don't see the need for greater recognition

Projected across all DTAS members:

- About 324 Trusts would support more recognition
- Around 26 Trusts wouldn't see it as necessary

## Recommended Actions

### 1. Improve Awareness and Clarity

- Develop straightforward guidance to help Trusts identify CLD work
- Deliver introductory sessions explaining CLD concepts and benefits

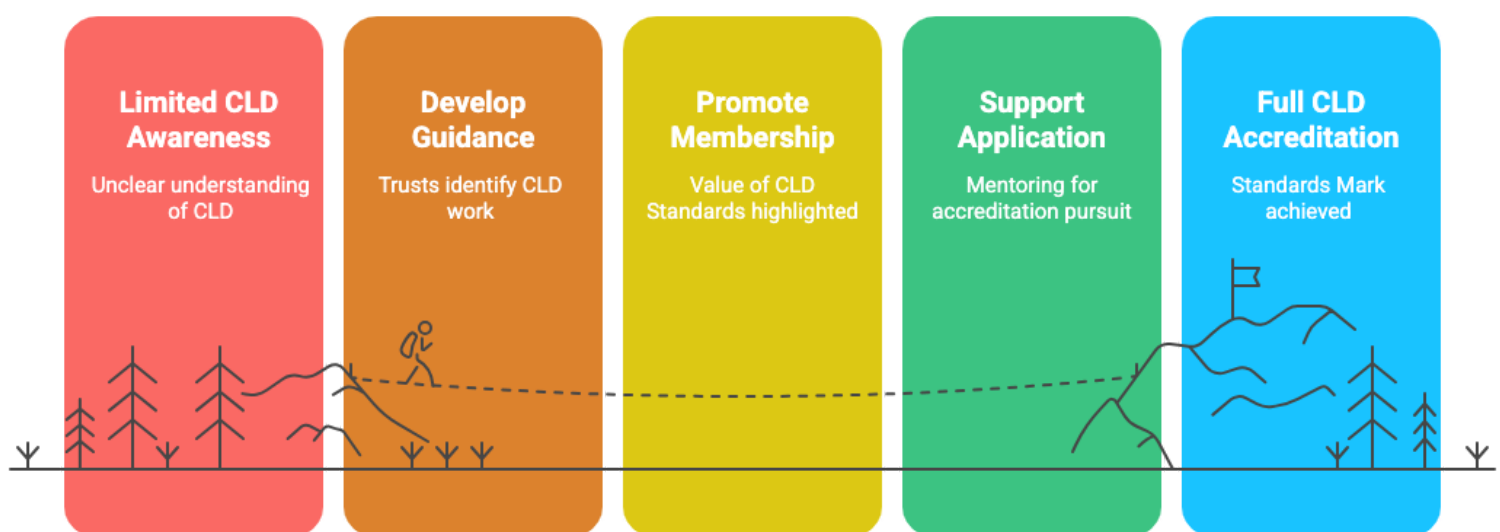
### 2. Improve Awareness and Clarity

- Promote the value of CLD Standards Council membership
- Create accessible training pathways for staff at all levels

### 3. Support Accreditation

- Raise awareness of the Standards Mark application process and benefits
- Provide mentoring for Trusts pursuing accreditation

#### Achieving CLD Accreditation



## Key Takeaways

### A Clear Call for Change

The overwhelming majority (92%) want their CLD work acknowledged. This isn't just a preference—it's a clear signal that the sector is ready for stronger support and visibility.

### A Strategic Opening

This consensus creates a prime opportunity for DTAS and the CLD Standards Council to step up their engagement with Trusts, helping them gain the recognition they're already seeking.

### In Their Own Words

Trusts shared candid perspectives on why recognition matters:

**Most Trusts deliver CLD work without labeling it as such. DTAS could help by identifying these efforts and promoting them collectively."**

**·"Development Trusts are filling the void left by shrinking local authority CLD services. That contribution should be visible."**

**The the sector lacks cohesion. Many Trusts don't view CLD as part of their mission, and the gap between statutory and community-led CLD leads to inefficiency. We need better alignment.**

## Next Steps: Turning Consensus into Action

### 1.A National Awareness Campaign

- Goal: Help Trusts and stakeholders understand what CLD looks like in practice
- Result: Stronger visibility for Trusts' role in meeting Scotland's CLD goals

### 2. Practical Support: Tools and Training

- Goal: Equip Trusts with resources to identify and showcase their CLD work
- Result: More compelling cases for funding and partnerships

### 3. Bridging the Gap Between Sectors

- Goal: Foster collaboration between Trusts and formal CLD networks
- Result: Shared learning, fewer duplicated efforts, and stronger outcomes

### Why This Matters

Development Trusts are already delivering CLD—often without resources or recognition. By addressing this gap, we can:

- Validate their contributions
- Strengthen their impact
- Unlock new opportunities for communities

The message from Trusts is clear: it's time to bring their CLD work out of the shadows.



## Where CLD and Development Trusts Fit in Scotland's Policy Landscape

Scotland's commitment to community empowerment, lifelong learning, and social justice creates the perfect environment for Development Trusts and CLD to work more closely together. Our survey findings reveal both the potential of this partnership and the work needed to fully realize it.

### Key Findings and Their Policy Connections

#### 1. The "Hidden CLD" Problem

Finding: 52% of Trusts deliver CLD work without calling it that

Why It Matters:

- Community Planning Partnerships[1] miss out when Trusts' contributions go unrecognized
- The Community Empowerment Act (2015)[2] could be leveraged more effectively if Trusts understood how their work aligns with it

As one respondent noted:

**"Recognizing our CLD work might help secure core funding, especially as local authority CLD services decline."**

#### 2. The Professional Development Gap

Finding: Only 14% of Trusts have staff with formal CLD qualifications

Policy Links:

- Adult Learning Strategy (2022-2027)[3] aims for high-quality programs - qualified staff could help Trusts meet this bar
- The Learning for All: For Life Independent Review of CLD (2024)[4] calls for stronger professional identity - an opportunity for Trust staff doing CLD work

[1][Community planning - Improving public services - gov.scot](#)

[2][Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act: summary - gov.scot](#)

[3][Adult learning strategy 2022 to 2027 - gov.scot](#)

[4] [Learning: For All. For Life. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development \(CLD\) - gov.scot](#)

A Trust manager shared:

**"I'm helping staff see the CLD in their work. Proper training support would make this much easier."**

### 3. Low Awareness of Support Systems

Finding: 78% didn't know about the CLD Standards Council

Missed Opportunities:

- National Performance Framework[5]: Trusts struggle to show how they advance national goals without this connection
- Asset-Based Community Development: Many Trusts already use these approaches but miss CLD resources that could strengthen them

Straightforward advice from a respondent:

**"Show Trusts how to link their work to CLD standards - and explain why it matters."**

### 4. An Overwhelming Call for Recognition

Finding: 92% want better acknowledgment of their CLD work

Policy Synergies:

- Could transform Trusts' role in Community Planning Partnerships
- Would help maximize the Community Empowerment Act's potential

As one put it:

**"We need to fix the disconnect between statutory and community-led CLD - the current fragmentation wastes resources."**

## Turning Recommendations into Policy Progress

Our proposed actions don't just help Trusts - they advance Scotland's broader goals:

What We Recommend	Policy It Supports	Potential Impact
Clearer CLD guidance for Trusts	Community Planning Partnerships	Better local planning with Trust involvement
More CLD Standards Council members	2024 CLD Review recommendations	Stronger professional standards across sectors
Support for Standards Mark applications	Adult Learning Strategy	Higher-quality community learning programs
Better cross-sector connections	Community Empowerment Act	More effective use of community assets
Proper recognition of Trusts' CLD	National Performance Framework	Clearer measurement of community impacts

The Bottom Line: By acting on these recommendations, we can simultaneously:

- Strengthen Development Trusts' work
- Advance Scotland's policy priorities
- Create more empowered, resilient communities

This isn't just about labelling existing work differently - it's about unlocking new potential in both the CLD sector and community-led development.

## **Conclusion**

Development Trusts are actively engaged in work that aligns with CLD objectives, often without realizing it. By increasing awareness, providing clearer guidance, and offering practical support, we can help Trusts:

- Gain proper recognition for their existing work
- Access new funding and partnership opportunities
- Develop their staff's professional capabilities
- Participate in strengthening the voice of the CLD sector

This alignment between Development Trusts and CLD represents a significant opportunity to strengthen community-focused work across Scotland.

This report has demonstrated that Development Trusts are already delivering a substantial amount of CLD-related work, with 52% engaged in such activities. However, there is a critical gap in the recognition, awareness, and support for this work. The overwhelming majority (92%) of Trusts believe their CLD contributions should be better recognised, presenting a clear mandate for action.

By addressing this gap, both DTAS and the CLD Standards Council can achieve several important objectives:

- For DTAS: Enhanced support for members, new pathways to funding and partnerships, and stronger alignment with national policy priorities
- For the CLD Standards Council: Extended reach into community-led organisations, increased membership, and wider recognition of CLD standards
- For Development Trusts: Improved recognition of their work, access to professional development, and stronger connections to policy and practice networks

## **Voices from the Sector**

**"A joint project with the CLD Standards Council; a twinning programme to fund CLD-qualified people to do awareness-raising with Development Trusts; case studies; study visits."**

**"We have extensive community development experience in our practice, planning, and service development and delivery and would be happy"**

**"We see ourselves as an organisation committed to community development in everything we do, and we see community learning as a subset of community development. We don't identify as a community learning and development organisation; rather, we identify as an organisation committed to community development, the social model of health, and the Five Ways to Wellbeing as guiding frameworks, methods, and values."**

## Key Recommendations

### 1. Raise Awareness of CLD Among Development Trusts

- Develop clear, accessible guidance on identifying CLD work
- Create opportunities for peer learning between Trusts engaged in CLD

### 2. Enhance Recognition Pathways

- Support Trusts in articulating their CLD contributions
- Create streamlined pathways to CLD Standards Mark accreditation

### 3. Strengthen Professional Development

- Promote CLD Standards Council membership among Trust staff
- Develop tailored professional development opportunities

### 4. Foster Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Create forums for knowledge exchange between Trusts and CLD professionals
- Identify opportunities for joint initiatives and shared learning

These recommendations offer a practical pathway to enhancing the recognition and impact of CLD work within Development Trusts. By taking these steps, DTAS and the CLD Standards Council can strengthen the vital connection between community-led development and professional CLD practice, ultimately supporting stronger, more resilient communities across Scotland.

The findings and recommendations in this report represent a significant opportunity to align the work of Development Trusts more closely with national priorities while enhancing and supporting their capacity, recognition, and impact.





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