

Appendix 1: Supplementary Report – CLD Responses to COVID-19 - March 2021

“Learning and life in general will never go back to what we think of as “normal” and this equipment will enable our learners access to a wider world, allowing them better learning, employment and socialisation opportunities.”

DIAL Project

1.1 Fairer More Equal – COVID-19 Responses

This section highlights how stakeholders have delivered against the CLD priority to make Glasgow a Fairer and More Equal place for everyone. The UK went into lockdown at the end of March 2020. Facilities were closed and some service provision stopped. However, many CLD organisations

quickly adapted to offer support to families and vulnerable people. Local organisations recognised the added instability that was created with the lockdown restrictions, particularly for vulnerable families and those affected by in-work poverty. Local hubs were set up to organise and deliver food to those that needed it. For those working with ESOL learners, the early focus was on making sure that they could get access to health information, either in plain English or in their own languages. While ESOL learning providers have successfully delivered a range of online learning programmes, engaging adults with very low levels of English has been particularly challenging during lockdown. GL curated and coordinated the delivery of ESOL Learn At Home Packs to 150 adults. Access to online learning is also being supported through national schemes including the Digital Inclusion Fund and Connecting Scotland with awards made to a number of organisations in the city including Glasgow’s three colleges, Glasgow Women’s Library, Rosemount Lifelong Learning, Govan Housing Association, Glasgow ESOL Forum and GL.

A major challenge for the COVID-19 response has been the accelerated need to work digitally and to improve the digital capacities of learners. The pandemic has not only caused anxiety and mental health issues but has also brought social isolation to the fore. Tutors across GL and the Third Sector have tried to combat this by phoning learners. Some learners were able to learn online, (for example Gaelic) whilst others lacked the kit and/or the financial means for broadband and data packages. CLD organisations have tried to support learners, by providing kit and upskilling learners to use online platforms. A challenge has been the lack of infrastructure and up-to-date kit for CLD staff to allow them to teach remotely using digital platforms. However, some learners have been directed to online learning resources such as ‘Journey to English’. GCVS now offers courses using online platforms.

Feedback from learners suggests that a blended model incorporating face-to-face and remote digital learning will be needed going forward. While some learners still feel that face-to-face session best suits their needs, others are keen to get online but need help and resources to do so. We are finding that it is not just about getting a device into someone’s hands, that is just the beginning of the learning journey for many.

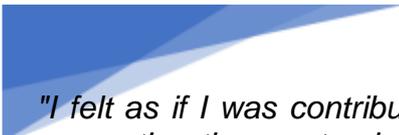
1.2 Resilient Communities COVID-19 Response

The pandemic has acted as a unique catalyst in bringing Glaswegians together to meet the most basic and complex needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens. There is much to be acknowledged regarding communities' achievements in response to COVID-19, however gaps in accessing services are widening e.g. lack of access to venues and services, and plummeting resources. In "building back better" we should aspire to maintain Glasgow's community spirit that has been demonstrated in recent months. In early lockdown the community action response generated new grassroots organisations including 30 Glasgow based Mutual Aid groups, with 2,800 members, which fostered peer support and kindness in neighbourhoods across the city.

Some charities and community groups had to suspend services due to guidelines while others have rapidly diversified, for example, Shettleston Junior Football club delivered food parcels. Funders quickly prioritised small pots of funding to meet local needs. The Foundation Scotland report from September 2020 showed that £778,442 was awarded to 41 organisations in Glasgow and to GCC, offering flexibility in the spending of funding.

In March 2020, GCVS with Volunteer Glasgow, Glasgow City Council and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services launched [Glasgow Helps](#). This citywide online directory of 300 organisations and free helpline provides a means of linking hundreds of charities and organisations providing services to those most in need including: food and prescription delivery and befriending services. Over the first six months, the helpline received over 1,000 calls and the website gets more than 5,000 hits per month. Similar helplines were awarded funding for local needs including [G53 Together](#).

The Community Resilience Working Group was formed in March 2020 with members from Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Volunteer Glasgow, GCVS, GL, GCC and NHS. Working collaboratively this group identified operational and strategic support to reduce duplication and promote effective and efficient signposting. Glasgow's Shielding helpline is another example of strong cross-sector partnership working where GCC referred callers to support via the British Red Cross and Glasgow's Third Sector. During lockdown, 100 British Red Cross volunteers were supporting the delivery of 1,000 food packages weekly. A new GL 'Employer Supported Volunteer' policy enabled employees to volunteer during their working time with community organisations and charities, resulting in an additional 1,520 hours of volunteering with an economic value of almost £14k with British Red Cross.



"I felt as if I was contributing towards supporting the most vulnerable in our community during the Covid-19 crisis."

Glasgow Life Employee

Volunteer Glasgow offered digital and phone-based support to organisations recruiting and managing volunteers, including practical advice to new groups on safeguarding and Protecting Vulnerable Groups membership. GCVS developed a menu of online informative Zoom sessions on topics including funding, poverty, food provision and digital accessibility.

1.3 Family Learning Team - COVID-19 Response

In response to COVID-19, the team shifted their focus to meet the new identified priorities and to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of targeted families. This included providing information in relation to COVID-19 for families whose first language is not English and working with Education Services and third sector partners to provide a range of services such as food parcels, home energy and shopping vouchers, access to health services, signposting to a community helpline, safe play sessions for families who had no outdoor space and socially distanced support walks for parents struggling to cope.

The team also provided guidance and information from their child's school which was delivered to households, either in easy to read or translated material, as well as face-to-face on the doorstep.

The team have been involved in an initiative with Education Services, Scottish Government, Scottish Book Trust and Harper Collins to facilitate the development and delivery of free learning resources to those families most in need. Target families received a range of home learning resources including; books, games, literacy and numeracy activities and Bookbug packs that supported both the home learning environment and provided much needed fun activities during the school summer break.

1.4 Youth Work - COVID-19

There has been emerging evidence that the pandemic is having a detrimental effect on the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Youth organisations in the city are responding to this by working in partnership with the health partners and by supporting young people digitally. Some youth organisations are also providing services directly to their communities, such as food distribution, which is supported by their young volunteers. Young Scot carried out two 'Lockdown Lowdown' surveys with young people and these show that young people's greatest concerns are their mental health, education and employment opportunities.

Support to care experienced young people

GL youth work staff facilitated a range of outdoor physical cultural, sporting and educational sessions for young people living in the 19 residential homes across the city. This resulted in a total of 188 attendances across the sessions. Using funding from the Life Changes Trust, GL purchased a range of fitness equipment for the young people in the residential homes including treadmills, exercise bikes, rowing machines and a variety of outdoor equipment. Sessions were suspended for a period but are planned to resume in April 2021.

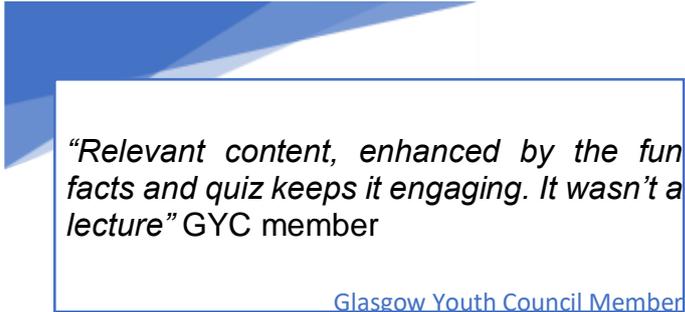
Youth Digital Online Offer

The Youth Work Sector has been proactive in responding to the challenges created by COVID-19 by transitioning to online delivery. The GL South Communities team undertook a two-week trial programme, with 90% of the participants stating that the programme: reduced their boredom; made them feel better; and gave them the chance to get help or support if they needed it.

Streetwork

A coordinated programme of streetwork was planned and delivered by a range of voluntary sector partners in the three areas of the city. It was recognised that there

was a need to address young people's mental health and sense of isolation and to support them to be outdoors within the current restrictions. Activity was paused with the second lockdown with support to young people continuing online where possible.



"Relevant content, enhanced by the fun facts and quiz keeps it engaging. It wasn't a lecture" GYC member

[Glasgow Youth Council Member](#)

Glasgow Youth Council

Since the first lockdown in mid-March, members of the Glasgow Youth Council have continued to meet online with 150 attendances at meetings. The GYC executive participated in a national pilot project to review the online versions of the NHS Healthy Minds sessions. A total of four sessions were undertaken covering mental health awareness, emotional literacy, sleep and meditation. Glasgow Youth Council has elected a new Executive group, holding hustings and an EGM during the pandemic.

1.5 Adult Learning Activities During Lockdown

Face to face services have been suspended and assessments are now being carried out online with organisations sharing information on engagement of learners, the assessment tools and the online platforms being used. ESOL providers recognise that online assessments will now play a more significant role in this initial step into learning. However, this can be problematic for adults with low levels of English and no access to digital devices.

Glasgow Life (GL) accessed funding through the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund to collate and distribute 150 ESOL Learn At Home packs, secured 30 Chromebooks and mobile data for ESOL learners through Phase 1 of the Connecting Scotland scheme and a further 25 devices through the Digital Inclusion Fund. While the planned pilot blended learning programme through Klik2Learn Journey 2 English had not been launched in Ibrox Library prior to lockdown, a good deal of preparation had taken place. As a result, GL was able to offer this programme with tutor support, delivered email and online tutored sessions. Other literacies, ESOL and creative writing learners have been sent worksheets and access tutor support through email and phone. At the start of lockdown, GL Gaelic responded to demand from learners who wished to continue their studies online. Gaelic tutors underwent familiarisation sessions with a variety of platforms and tutors worked on developing new methods to deliver the classes online. GL are now offering conversation sessions for learners and are currently working with partners from the Western Isles.

Glasgow Women's Library ALN Provision has managed to reach learners, using technology to keep in touch including phone calls, WhatsApp or weekly one to one sessions on Zoom. A small group called Conversation Cafe for women who want to improve their English also takes place.

WEA offered CPD and support to Education staff to use Zoom as a classroom. Many classes resumed in May and the WEA now has around 400 learners in Glasgow. The CANVAS online platform has facilitated flexible learning and proved popular with both learners and staff.

Glasgow Clyde College moved to online delivery and was able to carry out some face-to-face ESOL assessments between lockdowns. The college is looking at home learning packs and a phone service for adult literacy learners who cannot access this.

The Wise Group and the DIAL project were championing people who experienced digital exclusion, before COVID-19 hit. This suddenly became vital and a range of methods are being used to re-engage learners, including the purchase of devices.

1.6 Digital Activities – COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 restrictions brought the importance of digital inclusion to the fore. It has also further exposed the divide between the digital haves and have nots. Many activities, information and support services have moved exclusively online without offering offline alternatives or with offline alternatives being limited. The first six months saw new initiatives and partnership working at a national and city level, all aiming to ensure that our most disadvantaged citizens have digital kit, connectivity and skills and support.

In May 2020 the first phase of Connecting Scotland was announced initially as a £5 million programme offering an internet connection, training and support, and a laptop or tablet to the vulnerable and those shielding, who are not already online. In subsequent phases, the Scottish Government have pledged an additional £38m with the ambition of connecting 50,000 vulnerable households across Scotland. The programme has distributed over 4,000 devices across Glasgow, with an additional phase expected to be announced in late April 2021. The Schools phase of Connecting Scotland has rolled out an additional 2,700 iPads and 1,100 MiFi connections to school pupils in the city. Youthlink Scotland also announced a £250k fund to help young CLD learners get the equipment and connectivity they need to learn online.

GCVS and partners created 'Glasgow Helps', and at a neighbourhood level Community Councils and over 60 local social media groups such as 'Govanhill Go' and 'Brighter Baillieston' were an integral part of a huge city effort to support vulnerable and isolated members of the community. GCVS have been working with the City Council and GL to distribute 900 recycled PCs and laptops with MiFi connectivity to vulnerable households in the city. GL will be supplying training and support for staff and volunteers to become '[digital champions](#)' to support people to use the internet confidently and safely.

In the absence of face-to-face classes many city partners supported learners who had home connectivity by phone and via video conferencing apps such as Zoom. The GL Digital Learning Team switched to supporting learners by phone and recorded a doubling of basic digital skills learners engaging with online courses. GL also moved its Universal Credit Support Service to a freephone number allowing customers to access assisted digital support for Universal Credit applications and maintain journals by phone. GL's Digi-PAL service now offers technical support to a range of learners and recipients of Connecting Scotland kit and connectivity via its freephone number. Gorbals Housing Association have been working with a range of local partners to get new and recycled kit and MiFi connectivity supplied to local groups, learners and households. The Govan Housing Association Community Inclusion Team have been working alongside Govan COVID-19 Respond Fund to deploy 120 tablets with six months of unlimited data to 10 community organisations, in order to reach local residents who are offline.

The Wheatley Group have also been supporting customers during COVID-19 by providing tablets, laptops and internet access to 359 people. Staff from Fuse in

Shettleston and The Pavillion Youth Café in Easterhouse have been delivering digital support to local residents via a blend of video and telephone call support for any digital skills or device support required. Usually two callers on together, to provide a 'Talk and Tech' service. Face-to-face support will also be offered when restrictions allow. Queens Cross Housing Association are offering online and phone support to help people safely and confidently get online and make the most of online services on a 1:1 basis. Structured online classes are available for residents to build confidence and gain skills using their devices

The Digital Glasgow Inclusion and Participation Workstream Group is working with partners to map all current activity and fill any gaps in provision.

"I really appreciated the course today. I was rather wary accessing the full power of the internet as I felt quite fearful of the many scams etc. we read about. I now feel braver and more in control of things. Thanks!"

Digital Learner, Glasgow Life

I enjoyed the course and the tutors were very patient. I have to learn the basics of my laptop and then build up confidence to use it. I was nervous and worried ... I would much prefer a classroom environment, although being given this opportunity to remotely learn was fabulous. I can now seek help from my daughters (whenever we can see one another) as I can now ask sensible questions and maybe Zoom with them! Thank you so much to the team for your patience and excellent communication skills"

Digital Learner

GL continued to increase the number of remote digital activities for people who received devices from the Connecting Scotland campaign and for those who already had their own device and

connectivity. As people's confidence has grown, there is more of interest and willingness to participating in digital learning.

Learners reported an increase in skills, knowledge and confidence and vitally 100% noted they had had fun.

Supported online learning units, remote learning bytes and learning sessions are all available and referrals can be made via the Digital Support Freephone Helpline.

"For the first time I have done Zoom. My tutor talked me through it, it made me feel good when I achieved it."

Digital Learner, Glasgow Life

Parents and teachers have continued to access the freephone helpline for support to set up devices issued to school children as part of the Connecting Scotland programme. 84% are first time callers and most need technical help with setting up.

COVID-19 forced a significant change in thinking and practice in delivery of ECDL accredited learning. The industry standard qualification is often required for college and university entry or for employment purposes and it was therefore vital that remote delivery was adopted and put into place.