

# Creative Learning Network Report 2019/21



Image – Argyll and Bute Creative Learning Network

## Introduction

The work of local authority **Creative Learning Networks (CLNs)** across the country supports national priorities such as the National Improvement Framework and Scottish Attainment Challenge and their twin aims of excellence and equity in education. Importantly, they each do this by responding to local needs and priorities, working in partnership with educators and creative partners to develop a range of skills and capacities in learners.

The intended long-term outcome of the 2019-20 Creative Learning Networks Fund was **Creativity skills are recognised, articulated and valued by leaders, practitioners and learners**. Local authorities were invited to address this outcome through programmes focused on learning, teaching, assessment and achievement, and/or skills development.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the work of CLNs across the country, with face-to-face working stopped and schools closed from March 2020. In response to the challenges, local authority Creative Learning Network coordinators drew on their creativity, continuing to support practitioners and learners by adapting planned workshops to digital formats, engaging with

participants virtually and outdoors in some cases, and developing resources to be accessed digitally. As schools reopened in August 2020, CLN coordinators continued collaborating with partners to deliver a range of activity despite restrictions on external staff working in schools. During this period the **National Creative Learning Network (NCLN)** - a professional learning community consisting of local authority Creative Learning leads - met every month online instead of the usual three times a year in person, building relationships and allowing a greater degree of professional dialogue than in previous years. In addition, the online nature of the discussion proved more equitable for colleagues from across Scotland, improving accessibility and enabling a consistent attendance by members.



## A fresh look at Scotland's Creative Learning Plan

**Vision** - The Scottish education system enables everyone to recognise, develop and apply their creativity to ensure they thrive in an increasingly complex and fast-changing world.

**Mission** - To embed creativity at the centre of Scottish education and adopt a collaborative culture where all learners are empowered, creative and confident.

**Our values-based goals are to:**

**Collaborate** - We will engage and participate through collaborative, sustainable and impactful networks and relationships, so that conditions are right for creativity to flourish across all places of learning.

**Empower** - We will co-create the conditions and environments in which all learners lead their learning and apply their creativity.

**Embed** - We will ensure creativity is embedded, prioritised and actively informs curriculum rationale and that all learners' creativity is explicit throughout their learning journey.

During this period and in recognition that the current context was very different from that in 2013 when the Creative Learning Plan was first published, a small NCLN working group produced a new vision, mission and goals for the refreshed Creative Learning Plan, approved by the Creative Learning Steering Group. This process acknowledged that some of the documents in the authorising environment, such as the Plan and the 3-18 Curriculum Impact Review of Creativity across Learning, although useful, were not up to date. There was also an appreciation that the impact of COVID-19 required a rapid rethinking of Scotland's education, skills, employability and careers provision. The Creative Learning Plan vision was refreshed **to ensure the Scottish education system enables everyone to recognise, develop and apply their creativity and to ensure they thrive in an increasingly complex and fast-changing world.** Delivery of the Plan is contingent on partnership and stakeholder support, to embed creativity at the centre of Scottish education and adopt a collaborative culture where all learners are empowered, creative and confident. The vision, mission and goals were shared publicly in March 2021, during a week-long online event, '[Creativity in Leadership and Learning](#)'. The event, usually a one-day conference, was expanded to support increased engagement from CLNs and practitioners across Scotland, with many sessions confidently led by CLN coordinators.

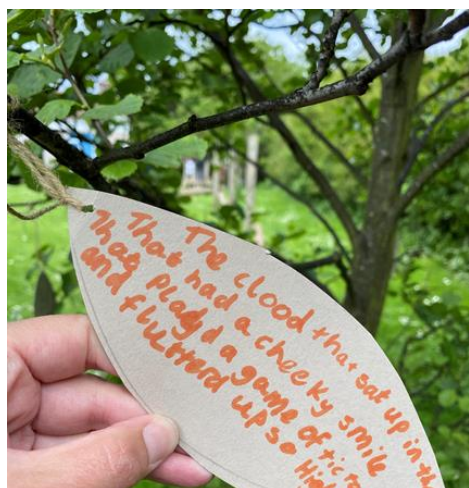
The priorities of individual CLNs reflect local, identified need, however, some key themes have emerged across the country. These include resilience and wellbeing, virtual learning, thinking outside the box, communities of practice and building capacity.

## CLN programme leaders highlighted key strengths resulting from the work undertaken during the period Oct 2019-March 2021

**Aberdeen City's Creative Learning team** responded quickly to provide support for vulnerable learners and their families through Hubs established as part of the city's emergency response to COVID-19. The team was an equal member in a multi-agency approach to supporting learners, which also included Education, Social Work, Community Learning and Development, NHS, third sector organisations and more recently, Children First as one of the lead organisations. As a result of this work, there has been a real shift in the city in providing more holistic approaches to support families by having a team around them and referral routes for professionals and self-referrals for families. There is a recognition of the value of the range of skills and experiences each agency brings which has led to significant developments in **Fit Like Hubs** work has enabled the Creative Learning team to progress other areas of work with the same partners. Youth Arts Fund and Small Grant Scheme funding has been secured by joining up with youth organisations like Children First, Aberdeen City Council Youth Work and the Foyer Aberdeen. Individually, the Creative Learning team has also secured Youth Link funding to deliver education recovery work through the **Fit Like Hubs**. The heart of this work is about positive impacts and outcomes for learners.



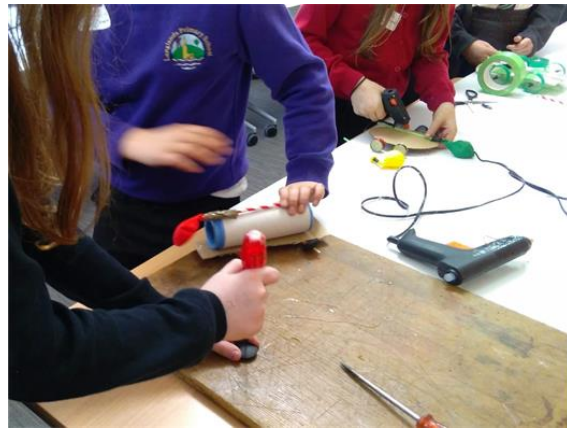
For more information, see national event presentation: [Say YES to the mess – Leading through systematic change](#)



Partnerships in **Aberdeenshire** remained resilient and continued to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design. The Scotland in Focus programme in Peterhead Academy went ahead, supported by the development of online resources and online input. The continuing enthusiastic commitment to working more creatively within the school, contributed to positive impacts and outcomes for learners. In contrast, the decision to delay the [Scots in the Landscape](#) and Sensational Science programmes emphasised the understanding of, and commitment to, working collaboratively, and in person. Both projects were about discovery, allowing imagination and creativity to be inspired by the practitioners and the

experiences. The programmes could have gone ahead online with more structured activity, reducing the time commitment required, but schools clearly recognised the value of the collaborative approach without which the programme would have been limited in terms of ongoing development and engagement in their schools.

In **Angus**, several very effective partnerships were strengthened through the delivery of Mission Possible. Following the previous year's highly successful engagement events, Mission Possible reached a further 385 learners from seventeen schools. Over two years, learners from 42 of 51 primary schools had the opportunity to learn about creativity skills in a STEM context. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from learners, accompanying parents, practitioners and from the facilitators. Improvements to the programme proved successful, including an enhanced cold task which engaged learners with creativity skills and the importance of these to employers prior to the event, making for a more informed discussion with the keynote speaker.



**Argyll and Bute** developed work with arts practitioners, learners and teachers in more remote areas of the authority, enabling learners and staff to develop their creativity skills using the Argyll Collection and the outdoors. The work with practitioners included digital art, visual arts, creative writing and film. The partnership with University of St Andrews has been a particular strength enabling access to the collection of African artworks in the Argyll Collection. The development of educational resources and creative writing workshops, in partnership with schools and creative professionals, has impacted on learners', teachers' and senior education leaders' understanding, knowledge and curiosity about post-colonial African countries at the time of independence.

In **East Ayrshire** strategies to support literacy and health and wellbeing have led to increased capacity to engage with these priority areas and activities have increased in ability and reach. The mechanisms to evidence impact in consultation with local authority advisers continue to be refined and the findings have been extremely positive. In particular, the literacy support modules have benefited from the production of a series of highly popular audio books and illustrated activity packs available on Glow. The health and wellbeing support programme has benefited from the production of a wide range of creative activity packs and mindfulness resources for all age groups.

**East Dunbartonshire** involved learners in a project looking into different literacy pedagogies with the aim of enabling them to understand that literacy did not have to mean whiteboards and writing but could be a lived experience. During a trip to a local park, learners were asked to consider how different people, including "youth voice", "expert", "scientist", "dog walker", and "authority" (Woodland Trust) might perceive and speak about nature and the natural. They also looked at non-

human communication through visual signs in the forest itself. They then reflected on the experiences and on the process, they had used to create new thoughts and meaning. Their new understanding helped develop confidence and self-esteem allowing them to better articulate their thoughts, feelings and emotions. Learners were empowered by creative approaches that challenged their previously held beliefs about learning literacy.

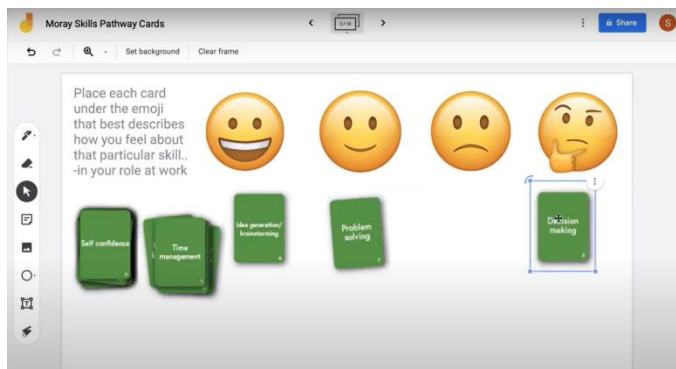
**Glasgow CREATE** has formed partnerships with Apple and Vox Liminis, taking forward and enhancing their Creative Leadership theme **Rewrite the Future**. The creative thinking, flexibility, hard work and determination of staff built on learners' creativity skills and independent learning, and the reach of the initiatives, extended well beyond original plans.

CREATE's partnership with Apple and the Glasgow Regional Training Centre allowed the development of **30 Days of Creativity** and subsequently, **30 More Days of Creativity** which supported learner's digital and creativity skills in school and at home allowing them to progress in their learning through high quality interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Glasgow's Connected Learning Programme has supported learners with an iPad



or access to an alternative digital device to maximise engagement. The resource is now available on the [Glasgow CREATE website](#), social media channels and has been shared with West Online School.

**Moray's Talking Tubs** resource supports the generation of creative questioning and discussion with early learning practitioners and partners, encouraging learners to understand their local context and opportunities that are available.



The **Conversation Skills cards** allow real dialogue around the skills that learners have developed in a range of contexts. The cards can also be used to generate questions and to look at the skills required for a range of different situations and roles. The development of the **ASN/First Level cards** now ensures that Moray schools and partners have a resource to support

learning conversations from early years right through to employability services.

**Orkney** brought creativity to the centre of two schools' approaches to learning. Each school developed creative approaches to learning exploring and testing learner-led curriculum design that reflected their unique community and its lived experience. Staff from participating schools came together in a final evaluation meeting in early March. They unanimously identified that the experience had given them the confidence to trust their processes as skilled practitioners and trust that learners would guide them to what is necessary, urgent and important to them.



Working within the context of the pandemic, **Perth and Kinross's Education Support team** explored the possible use of digital tools to enable projects and allow them to continue their work. An ongoing review and reflection of progress helped them to adapt their approaches, for example, creating a package of materials which could be used and adapted further by practitioners to support them in developing creativity through storytelling. The development of links with a range of partners provided knowledge, expertise and different perspectives as well as support to projects. Experiences from these partnerships will be invaluable in future work and developments.

The appointment of an Education Support Officer (Creative Learning), to the Creative Learning team, City of Edinburgh Council, was a significant success and added capacity to the **South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)**. Having a dedicated officer at a strategic and relatively senior level has ensured Creative Learning is on a level with other SEIC ESO posts. This has raised awareness and promoted the value of Creative Learning across the SEIC. Creative Learning is in a central position within the SEIC, able to lead and support learning, teaching and assessment. This has accelerated progress more than hoped, despite the impact of the pandemic, and brought about new benefits such as the practitioner creativity network (a supported but self-led network of practitioners passionate about Creative Learning). The SEIC CLN Steering Group is now one of the SEIC Networks and is recognised as having that status. In addition, the Heads of Creative Learning is now a well-established forum. All Creative Conversations have been remote with over one hundred people signing up each time. Feedback has been consistently excellent and sessions have been recorded for sharing and training.

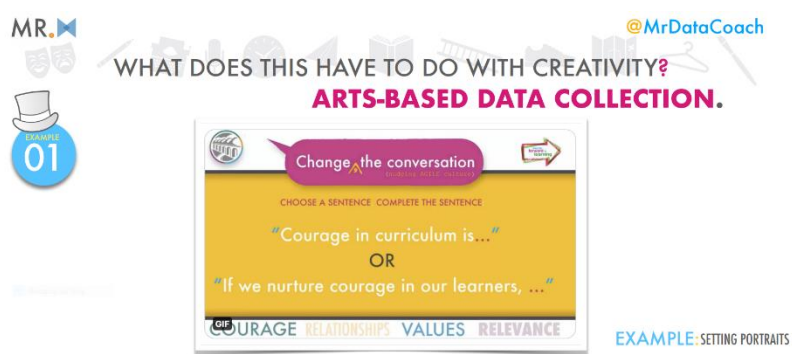


In **Shetland**, two hundred learners from five schools took part in workshops, delivered by creative partners, to inspire teachers and learners' creativity encouraging open mindedness, curiosity, imagination and problem solving. Learners re-interpreted Fair Isle knit into geometric shapes and then designed their own motif based on that work. They produced a range of ideas including fiddles, surfers, dinosaurs and spaceships. A range of talks and sessions about working in the creative sector were delivered to Art and Design and Fine Art learners and students, highlighting the opportunities potentially available to learners.

The opportunity to reflect on their programme and consider how to do things differently produced positive outcomes for **Stirling CLN**. They created opportunities and resources that were more visible and more widely accessible through the development of virtual and web-based materials. Initially considered for during lockdown only, the potential of offering much of the CLPL programme in this way in future was quickly recognised. Being able to be part of a wide range of national opportunities online such as the Creative Bravery Festival, AOB and What Next discussion forums, and Firestarter Festival and make connections nationally and internationally was hugely influential.

Recent experience magnified the need for creative learning and highlighted its place in an ever changing and challenging world. **West Dunbartonshire** focused on the development of their digital learning platforms to support learners and families. Resources, materials, lessons and projects to support both classroom and remote learning have been developed and made available through [OurCloud.Buzz](#). This development was made possible through strong partnership working between schools, local authority staff, learners and families, artists and local organisations. The virtual online school Campus@WDC is embedded in the OurCloud homepage along with more than seven hundred teaching videos developed for use by Education Services including teachers and early years staff, instrumental music services, education development officers, libraries staff, and WD Leisure teams such as Active Schools and Sports Development.

Relationships with key personnel and the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) have allowed **West Lothian CLN** to build on its strategic importance within WL Council and supported an important cultural shift. The pandemic offered the CLN and its partners the opportunity to champion a more agile way of working. This strategic placing has given confidence to the wider system establishing greater levels of experimentation and innovation.



By offering teachers online spaces to explore some of the emerging discourses within education: the role of the teacher, curriculum design, learner voice, the four capacities, and collaborating with outside partners, schools and teachers connected to others in new ways, networking and making new contacts and relationships beyond their usual spheres of influence. This has increased the confidence and agency within schools and encouraged the removal of real and perceived barriers.

## Priority Areas of Work

CLNs identified the areas of work which were a strong priority/ medium priority/ not a priority

Which of the following did your work contribute to?	Strong Focus			Medium Focus			Not a priority		
	17/18	18/19	19/21	17/18	18/19	19/21	17/18	18/19	19/21
Creativity skills are recognised, articulated and valued by educationalists/leaders	60%	65%	64%	40%	35%	36%	0%	0%	0%
Creativity skills are recognised, articulated and valued by practitioners	73%	75%	79%	27%	25%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Creativity skills are recognised, articulated and valued by learners	27%	44%	79%	67%	56%	21%	6%	0%	0%
Learners and practitioners engage in dialogue about the development of creativity skills	33%	63%	71%	40%	31%	29%	27%	6%	0%
Partnerships are used effectively to deliver highly engaging creative learning	73%	81%	93%	27%	19%	0%	0%	0%	7%
Learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer their creativity skills to new contexts	27%	38%	79%	33%	50%	21%	40%	12%	0%
Learners' creative endeavours at home and in the community are acknowledged and celebrated	20%	12%	21%	20%	44%	50%	60%	44%	29%



## Case Studies

Each case study emphasises an aspect of CLN activity which worked well, reporting against one or more of the following themes:

- Creativity skills are recognised, articulated and valued by leaders, practitioners and learners
- Practitioners are supported to engage learners in dialogue about the development of creativity skills
- Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design
- Learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer their creativity skills to new contexts
- Learners' creative endeavours at home and in the community are acknowledged and celebrated

**Aberdeen City:** Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design

### Emergency Response Vulnerable Hubs – Summer 2020

Following on from the successful Creative Learning input to the Tillydrone Vulnerable Hub over the spring school term, Creative Learning practitioners worked with learners at the Manor Park, Tullos and Tillydrone Hubs. This service supported the need for regular contact with identified learners to ensure their safety, health and wellbeing, and that their families had food and learners were well fed. Learning and development was supported with the view to learners returning to school in August 2020. Summer Community Hubs were led by the Food and Fun Partnership and included partners from Education, Social Work, Community Learning and Development and third sector agencies. The input from creative practitioners was child centred; they took cues from the learners and responded in ways that got imaginations and curiosity going. Activities ranged from group drama work, 1-2-1 conversations, playing, exploring and bringing ideas to life. Collaborating closely with other professionals, sharing approaches and learning, helped embed creative approaches across the work, as well as providing experience for creative practitioners in areas such as trauma and nurture. Effective partnerships have been developed and the profile of the Creative Learning team's work has been raised.



The Creative Learning team's involvement has helped to identify new areas of work they can deliver and to secure funding from a variety of sources. Importantly through the work of the hubs, learners thrived through approaches that were tailored to their needs, gaining confidence, resilience, and new friends.

"I love doing things like this and I'm good at it" (Participant)

"We bonded in drama and now we're the best friends" (Participant)

"I can build and make whatever I want. Its important kids get to do that so they can make their dreams come true." (Participant)

**Aberdeenshire:** Creativity skills are recognised, articulated, and valued by leaders, practitioners, and learners

Two primary schools, Laurencekirk and Catterline, took part in the [Scots in the Landscape](#) project to discover and use the Scots and Doric of the immediate landscape surrounding the schools. Learning outdoors through creativity was at the heart of what the project sought to achieve. Learners were given artistic, poetic, and environmental stimulus and activities at each step to process and channel their learning by creating art and poetry. Both practitioners and learners modelled the creative process and nurtured that element of response to the language and the environmental science being explored. Classes were involved in the creation of poems and artworks in response to Catterline Bay and the Laurencekirk School Forest play area in both the biological diversity of the flora and fauna and the rich wealth of Scots and Doric attached to the plants and trees that surrounded them.



The 'chapbooks' learners used in collecting Scots and Doric on a day-to-day basis worked well. On the first 'environmental' day the learners filled their chapbooks with scraps of seaweed, shells, leaves, mosses, words, stories, rock, and bark rubbings. In Catterline a digital microscope was used on the shoreline to show learners the forms of creatures and plants they had gathered from the beach. These chapbooks had pages of words, sketches of objects and ideas that had emerged from their experience. Having roamed the beach and woods, they were able to capture ideas and words in the environment they were reacting to. It was clear from the interaction with the learners and practitioners as we progressed that there was a real shared appreciation of the richness and worth of the language that was being used. As a result of his experience one of the class teachers involved in the project is leading on implementing a more creative approach to the curriculum in the school.



The poems that the learners wrote about both the environment of the school and the things that they saw around them displayed an increasing confidence in the use of Scots in their creative thinking. The project involved remembering Scots and Doric words through games and rhymes, understanding them in the context of their environment, applying them in poetry and art, evaluating them in the context of the task set to them and ending with space to use all that in a creative way to achieve their creative goals. The art and poems created gave the pupils a fun way of developing the higher order skills involved. The poems, their rhythms, rhymes, and the artwork created by the learners demonstrated a wide range of engagement with the ideas and the concepts involved in their creation

“Pupils commented to me that they were proud of their poems. They thought they'd never write a poem in Scots, but you made it easy for them.” (Teacher)

“I would definitely enjoy taking part in a similar project again. I've downloaded the materials and would feel confident to use them with a new class in two years' time.” (Teacher)

“It was great because we got to learn about rhyming couplets, scrapbooking and lots more.” (Learner)

**Angus:** [Learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer their creativity skills to new contexts](#)



**Mission Possible**, an engagement event for learners in P6 and P7, involved learners in interactive workshops based on the theme ‘Creativity and Careers’. Learners were encouraged to apply creativity skills to a variety of STEM-based activities, whilst gaining insight into how creativity is used within STEM and exploring careers and career pathways. A cold task was sent out to participating schools which introduced the learners to the creativity skills and links to the Career Education Standard. This was completed in class prior to attending the event.

Learners chose three from the nine workshops offered on the day, for example, designing rockets and launching them to the ceiling, using coding to programme Spheros or Beebots, or finding out about flood prevention through experiments. Creativity skills were linked with each STEM-based

workshop, supported by posters and evaluation sheets which encouraged the learners to reflect on the creativity skill used at each of the workshops. Links to careers were made throughout.



Partners supplied a ‘career journey’ which was designed and printed to create a display for the event. This stimulated interest in STEM careers and highlighted the idea of no wrong path. A suite of posters was created which has been shared digitally with all participating schools to support career education. Learners returned to school with enthusiasm for STEM learning, demonstrating a good understanding of the creativity skills and how creativity can be used across the curriculum and in all jobs. They recognised where they were using creativity skills in the different activities and were able to record this information. The plenary discussion allowed learners to share their understanding of where they had applied the creativity skills. The event has been a springboard for embedding a shared language and understanding of creativity in the classes which took part.

An unexpected impact from the previous year was the professional learning opportunity afforded to the practitioners who accompanied the learners. To ensure that

this was maximised, practitioners this time were encouraged to take part in workshops and chat with the facilitators. Evaluations show that learners were challenged and motivated by the learning experiences; they had an increased understanding of the creativity skills and their uses in different contexts; and increased levels of engagement in STEM education. Practitioners had increased confidence, skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm.

“Exceeded expectations. A very interactive event that has certainly encouraged creativity.” (Practitioner)

“This event has been fab! It has been so interesting to watch the learners work in different ways and practise the skills of creativity in such fun and engaging ways.” (Practitioner)

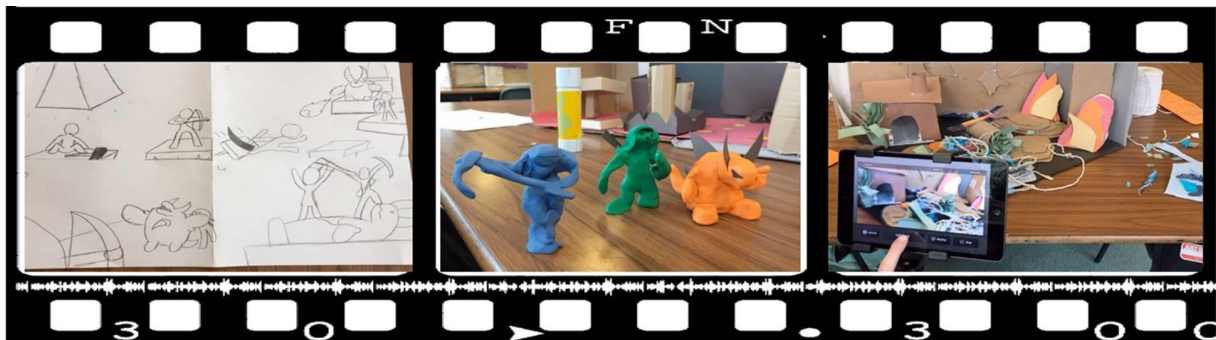
“There are several aspects of the Mission Possible event that can be taken forward in my future practice. During the keynote, the explanation of what creativity is and how it is a sought-after skill by today’s employer shows that STEM activities and creative thinking approaches are great ways of engaging learners and developing the skills they can transfer to the workplaces if the future. In follow up lessons we will discuss how creativity skills are used in different careers.” (Practitioner)

**East Ayrshire:** [Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design](#)

### Creative Film Making and Animation Workshops - Loudoun Academy 2020

Following on from work undertaken the previous year, a series of practical skills-based workshops took place in Loudoun Academy with two groups of twelve learners from S1/2 over four days in February 2020. Sessions were designed to explore links between creativity and skills for work, using a combination of traditional crafting techniques and a variety of digital applications. In particular, the development of team working, problem solving, communication and IT skills was a priority, while

encouraging attributes such as imaginative thinking, open-mindedness and curiosity. The process involved creating sets using cardboard and other materials, modelling Plasticine characters, storyboarding, scripting, stop-motion animation and movie editing. An important aspect was for staff and learners to recognise and reflect on the connection between creativity and generic skills for the workplace, while acquiring industry-specific skills. The sessions were led by a partner, an artist and filmmaker, and staff from Loudon Academy. The workshops were designed to take participants through the three stages of preproduction, production and postproduction, creating a film using technology available in the school. Learners worked in pairs to design a set out of recycled cardboard and to design simple characters that would move through the spaces they had built. The second stage introduced learners to stop frame animation through the iPad app IMotion, devising storyboards, shot sequences and thinking about elements of story and characterisation. In the final stage, having shot the material, the learners moved onto editing with iMovie: putting their shots in sequence and adding sound effects, music and titles. Participants achieved improved film literacy and understanding of how a story might be told in moving images as well as a better grasp of the language used. There was a high level of skill building in animation and editing and in the understanding of the process of filmmaking in general. The project planning, dedicated space and significant involvement of staff all contributed to its success.



“I enjoyed participating in the group activities, working with people I generally wouldn't usually work with, seeing what I can do with the available materials.” (Participant)

“I'm really happy with how it turned out. I learned lots of skills such as working in a group and how to use stop motion animation.” (Participant)

“Really pushing myself and not saying I can't do that in x amount of time when I can.” (Participant)

**East Dunbartonshire:** [Learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer their creativity skills to new contexts](#)

Six twilight CLPL sessions, delivered in partnership with [In Cahootz](#), introduced and shared creative learning resources designed to explore maths and science using drama, visual art and creative writing. Each session included warm up drama games. Key to the approach was learning by ‘doing,’ allowing space for creative thinking and making connections. Putting the teacher ‘in the shoes’ of the child - delivering the same creative activity - supported the teachers to make their own creative pedagogical connections and learning. This allowed them to appreciate that time for creative space can result in ‘Eureka’ moments for teacher and learners.

Teachers were asked to try out the new approaches in the classroom by the following week. Materials were provided so that each teacher had the resources to explore their approach and

delivery within their own classroom. At the start of each session the group discussed how these creative lessons went and how participants had adapted them for specific current topics. A good example of how this worked was in the delivery of the times-tables stick. This is a creative way to learn the times-tables by making a number stick and then developing a script which explores how to arrive at the correct answers. The number stick approach to learning times-tables had been highlighted in previous CLPL and developed further into a creative activity. A couple of teachers decided to adapt the stick to explore percentages and fractions. The numbers stick could also be used to explore tiling shapes and the creative design and history of typography to represent numbers. Through the discussion the group unpacked the potential of each approach and considered applications across the curriculum.

“Creative approaches can be used easily and applied to various contexts - therefore I feel confident using these. I also feel so engaged by the approaches I know kids will too!” (CLPL Participant)

“This is the best Maths lesson ever” from a pupil whilst creating a counting stick to “Teach” multiplication. My whole class have been really engaged with all creative approaches.” (CLPL Participant)

“Where previously I might have thought of these methods as an ‘add on’ I now see how they are important in making enjoyable and memorable lessons.” (CLPL Participant)

**Glasgow:** [Creativity skills are recognised, articulated and valued by leaders, practitioners and learners. Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design.](#)

Building on the CREATE Creative Leadership Theme, the ‘Rewrite the Future Conference’, involved primary and secondary learners, teachers and education staff. 150 participants were immersed in the fictional world of the **SECRET CREATIVITY SERVICE**, where they were invited to play, explore and create throughout the day. Artists designed the day to spark thoughts and actions about creativity and creative leadership in education. The aim for the day was that together, participants could rewrite the future by activating their natural curiosity, open mindedness, problem solving and imagination.

Activities were split into three separate lesson plans where attendees were put to the test by the different Secret Creativity Service departments:

- The Department of Curiosity
- The Department of Imagination and Open mindedness
- The Department of Problem Solving



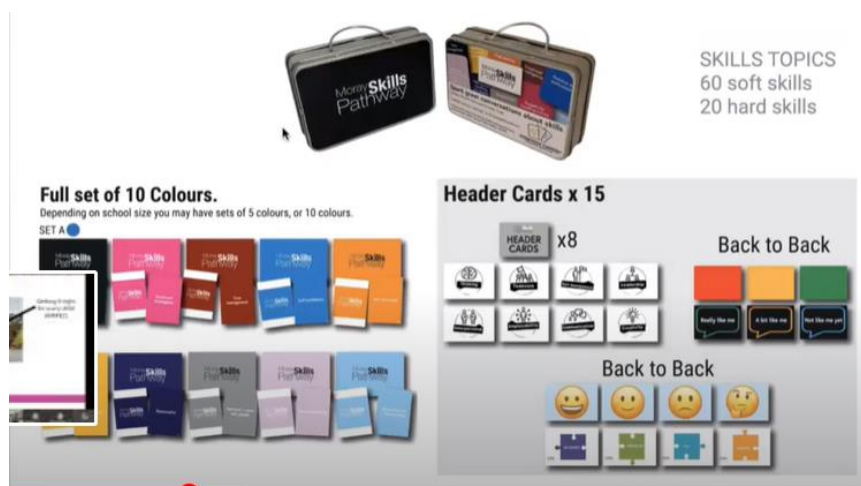
Following its success, the conference was turned into a resource entitled 'The Secret Creativity Service' which includes an introductory video, lesson plans, activities and materials required for schools to incorporate this approach into their own curriculum to support the development of creativity skills. Alternatively, schools can use the Top Secret Invite to allow them to get started on their fictional journey into the world of the Secret Creativity Service.

The resource has been rolled out to West Online School, the National Creative Learning Network and the [CREATE website](#); data has shown a high level of uptake. The approach has shown that when positive learning environments and creative teaching approaches are combined with learners having the space to explore their own creativity, participants can become more curious, open minded and critical thinkers. In partnership with highly effective teachers who have been

open to exploring new possibilities and using technology to enhance learning, learners have been supported to become even more collaborative, intensely curious, motivated and ambitious for change.

**Moray:** Practitioners are supported to engage learners in dialogue about the development of creativity skills

The Moray Skills Pathway has taken the opportunity to look at embedding creativity skills in the establishment of the Career Education Standard (CES) entitlements for all young learners. A key barrier to this has been starting the dialogue to support practitioners' understanding that the need for CES begins at early level and that beginning skills development early gives a solid foundation for the learner going forward. **Talking Tubs** include resources representing each of the eight key industry sectors, allowing the generation of creative questioning and discussion with early learning practitioners and partners to support learners to understand their local context and opportunities that are available. This further encourages family learning by allowing parents and employers to go into settings and explore the roles they perform in the local community, supporting learners to developing curiosity through family learning tasks.



**Skills Pathway Cards** allow real dialogue around the skills that learners have developed in a range of contexts – the skills cards can also be used to generate questions and to look at the skills required for different situations and roles.

The introduction of the resources is supporting practitioners, allowing them to develop natural opportunities to embed CES/Career Management Skills into curriculum delivery. The importance of developing creativity skills has been evident in all the dialogue between partners and schools. Helping learners develop their resilience will be key to sustaining Moray's Economy going forward.

Moray's Skills Cards project was shared at the national Creativity in Leadership and Learning event:

[Play your 'SKILLS' cards right](#)

**Orkney:** [Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design](#)

In October 2019, education consultants met with staff from Dounby and North Walls primary schools to build metaphorical models of their school, using visual facilitation methodologies. The experience of building a model takes time, and enables participants to think through what they feel, and to question what they think they know. The ensuing discussions were facilitated using open, coaching questions. Being able to visualise their school, its practices, routines and taboos, the embedded assumptions, unspoken beliefs and forces at play was a profound and illuminating experience for individuals and the staff team as a collective body. Staff from Dounby expressed their surprise at their own boldness to share a model of their school harbouring dinosaurs and defences against numerous perceived outside threats. North Walls discovered that they had built firm boundaries constraining a unique school that sits in a huge open landscape. The staff were invited to begin the process of rebuilding their models with the changes they could now see and felt needed to be made. A series of online meetings enabled a consistent dialogue around the changes each school had identified, and the on-going support for the reshaping of culture(s).

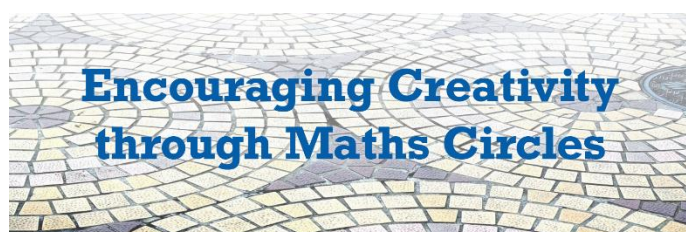
Both schools were inspired by Ted Aoki's ideas (1993) to reimagine the curriculum as a lived experience. The Orkney islands are a unique environment, offering much potential to frame learning and teaching around what 'matters' to both learners, teachers, and the wider community. Creative changes to curriculum design were made possible by enhanced teacher agency, and wider learners' participation. Staff in both schools were able to draw upon the experience and insight afforded by the model-making, and the explicit naming of changes that they could both see were necessary, and also had ideas about how to implement these. North Walls moved to dismantle the metaphorical barriers they had built around the model of their school and began to enact the head teacher's vision to 'Teach on the Beach.' Teachers and learners embraced the uniqueness of their school, weaving the curriculum through their individual and collective 'lived experience.' Online meetings continued with small groups of teachers for coaching conversations. The head teachers of Dounby and North Walls provided feedback on how they were changing their approaches to leadership, and how the culture of their schools was changing – in both cases for the better. North Walls was inspired to participate in the Creative Bravery Festival in September 2020, and a delegation of learners presented their school's creative curriculum journey at the National Creative Learning Network event in March 2021.



## Outcomes

- Both schools reported lower rates of staff absence (previously linked to stress).
- Both schools reported teachers reasserting their agency and professional judgement to reposition learning and teaching around 'lived experience,' where previously the curriculum followed more pre-determined plans.
- Both schools reported improved learners' behaviour and engagement.
- Both schools report better relations with the wider community – through more transparent engagement, and happier learners talking more positively about their experience in school.
- Both schools report a collective sense of optimism about the challenges ahead, where previously there were significant concerns.

**Perth and Kinross:** [Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design](#)



**The Maths Circles Project** encouraged family learning by empowering practitioners to host events for families, across Perth and Kinross. These events were to support and develop creativity skills through maths related activities. The opportunities were designed to raise the profile of, and at the same time, increase engagement levels in family learning. The events were hosted in schools, libraries or community spaces. Staff were invited to take part in an initial training session, in partnership with Edinburgh University, on Maths Circles and a follow up session focusing on developing creativity skills with the Education Support Team. Once staff had completed the training, they would facilitate events for parents and learners within their own setting/Local Management Group. Two members of staff from a school took part to allow collaboration and joint planning. The intention was that Maths Circles would become embedded and the trained staff could continue to facilitate training of peer educators to ensure sustainability. The Maths Circles enable staff to work in partnership with learners, parents and other partner organisations to develop more creative approaches to numeracy and maths. Staff had the opportunity to consider their own creativity skills and completed a survey before and after the training sessions. Staff feedback was gathered to measure the impact the training and partnership work with Edinburgh University had for staff. The survey results show a clear increase in staff confidence in being able to describe creativity skills and in teaching creatively.

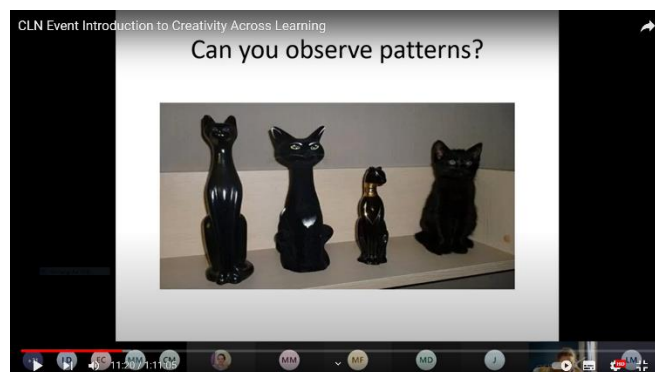
Staff also indicated an increase in confidence in planning experiences for learners to develop their creativity and numeracy skills.



**South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC):** Practitioners are supported to engage learners in dialogue about the development of creativity skills

### Creativity Skills CLPL

In response to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Edinburgh’s Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Officer (Creative Learning) with SEIC Education Support Officer for Creative Learning, adapted the CLPL courses previously delivered in person in Edinburgh. They developed CLPL to specifically support Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) and support staff, enabling them in turn to support class teachers and learners. Train the Trainer approaches were used to build capacity and remote delivery that was engaging, interactive and ensured wider participation across the SEIC was developed. A suite of professional learning courses was delivered virtually for practitioners in any sector and setting, as well as at any stage in their professional career, to embed creativity skills into learning and teacher practice. Over the funded period, approximately 670 educators, including 440 probationers and early-phase teachers, engaged in the virtual sessions. The courses have also been offered to practitioners, support staff, Foundation Apprentices, Youth Music Initiative (YMI) tutors and as a part of whole-school in-service training. This is in addition to the nearly two hundred practitioners who participated in face-to-face CLPL prior to lockdown in March 2020. In addition to this, the [‘Introduction to Creativity Across Learning’](#) session was well attended at the virtual National Creative Learning Event, in March 2021.



“It was really good and interactive – I usually shy away from talking on chats but it was welcoming and engaging” (Participant)

“It was exceptionally relevant and engaging” (Participant)

“It has certainly opened up my eyes to what creativity really stands for” (Participant)

The CLPL is being developed as a Train-the-Trainer model to develop capacity as well as support practitioners with leadership opportunities to deliver high-quality CLPL in their settings and beyond. A GTCS-accredited Creativity Practitioner Enquiry course is being developed to share effective practice and lead creative learning and teaching within settings and own professional practice. The course will develop high quality resources that are shared and lead to improved learner outcomes.

An example of the CLPL training was presented at the national event:

The new YouTube channel will help improve practitioner accessibility, further CLPL and will encourage more practitioners to watch recordings as a part of their own self-led professional learning. Within the SEIC, Fife Creativity Network, an informal network of teachers enthusiastic about creativity has been established, supported by Fife Pedagogy Pioneers team. The network will be supported to grow and become practitioner led and self-sustaining, with learning shared across SEIC authorities.

**Shetland:** Learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer their creativity skills to new contexts

Civic Soup, an Edinburgh-based architecture and design collective participated in producing a piece of public art as part of the LOCUS Sculpture Trail around Lerwick’s town centre. They worked for two weeks at the beginning of February 2020 with learners in Hamnavoe, Whiteness Primary, Brae Secondary, Sound Primary and Whalsay schools. The learners, aged 9-15, were asked to re-interpret Fair Isle knit into geometric shapes and with these shapes, to design their own motif depicting their choice of activity/idea. The learners produced a range of ideas from fiddles, surfers, dinosaurs and space ships. They were most animated when they got a chance to speak about their home in Shetland and all the things they can do in the area, particularly outside activities related to the sea including swimming, boats, jumping off piers, but also about sweeties from the local shop.



“You are free to do what you want” (learners from Hamnavoe School)

The collective also gave talks about working in the creative sector to S2/3 Art & Design learners at Anderson High School and to Fine Art students at Shetland College. The Creative Links team worked in partnership with Shetland Arts to deliver the workshops which reached over two hundred learners. The insights provided by the learners were reflected in the final piece of work produced by the collective installed for the opening of the Art Trail. The Art Trail is accompanied by an illustrated map by a Shetland student in third year at Glasgow School of Art.

**Stirling:** [Practitioners are supported to engage learners in dialogue about the development of creativity skills](#)

### Maker Space and Maker Mondays

The development of Maker Space in 2018-2019 and creation of Maker Mondays in 2020 to offer a virtual makerspace aimed at widening the sharing, understanding and development of creativity skills. Makerspaces are collaborative workshops that provide a flexible environment for learners where learning is made physical by applying science, technology, maths, and creativity to solve problems and build things. Maker Space was developed in partnership with staff at Allan’s Primary School in Stirling. The main challenges explored were around establishing the aim of the space, the need to create a space with little or no funds, ensuring the space did not become an art room and enabling teachers to feel confident supporting creative work. A wider consultation, about Future Stirling, looking to the type of jobs that might exist in Stirling in 2030, was happening at the same time. This was considering the skills, values and aptitudes learners attending Stirling schools would need to have to be part of these industries and, more generally, to support success in life, learning and work. The discussion and research around skills led to the development of the 5 C’s framework for Stirling, which some schools have since taken on:

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Communication



Design Thinking was used as the creative process to construct a framework that teachers and learners could use to support, understand and develop creativity, creative thinking and creativity skills. Each term a Maker Space week was held at Allan's Primary School until lockdown. Maker Space has now been developed at Stirling High School as part of their STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Maths) weeks and other schools and nurseries have indicated interest in creating their own Maker Spaces. A [film](#) was created about Maker Space at Allan's Primary that provides details of the impact the approach had on both the teachers and learners. This success led to creating an online interactive version of Maker Space – Maker Mondays - that offers regular challenges and brings the work of learners across Stirling together in a gallery. The first challenge was launched in March 2021.

**West Dunbartonshire:** [Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design.](#)

### **Online Professional Learning Programme - Exploring and designing project-based learning**

A series of professional development learning programmes exploring project-based learning were developed and offered to all schools and early learning and childcare centres (ELCCs). The programmes built on the West Dunbartonshire Skills Based Framework, which supports schools in their approach to developing key skills. The programmes aimed to develop deeper learning, an understanding of existing knowledge, problem solving skills for learning, life and work, partnership working and a stronger understanding about creative approaches to learning and teaching.

Three learning programmes were developed with [Single Steps Learning](#) and delivered online. A Teacher/Early Years Practitioner Course explored creating effective, collaborative project-based learning projects, strengthening partnership collaboration for improvement, research, building staff confidence and expertise and the sharing of good practice. Ninety-eight participants took part from 92% of education establishments, with every sector represented.

“It has allowed me to think outside the box in a creative and innovative way.” (Participant)

The Head teachers and Heads of Centre course focused on the theory and practice of project-based learning and how this could be embedded in the curriculum. Leaders had the opportunity to reflect on current curriculum design and how to empower staff through the development of shared values, learner entitlements, capabilities and attributes within the four capacities. Thirty-seven head teachers and heads of centre attended these sessions. The Leadership Course for Middle Leaders (PT/DHT) explored leading and supporting the strategic development of Interdisciplinary Learning. By exploring and analysing the key components of project-based learning, leaders had the opportunity to identify and support the CPD needs of staff in their settings. Twenty middle leaders from across all sectors participated in this programme.

Leaders felt:

“...much more aware of principles and approaches behind Project-Based Learning.”

“...better equipped to support staff”

“...excited for the opportunities this will lead to for our learners.”

As a result, a wide range of project-based learning projects have been developed and shared amongst learning communities through the WDC Virtual Campus. A project-based learning showcase is planned for the summer term as part of the West Dunbartonshire Learning Festival. Playing a crucial role in enhancing integrated partnership working, the virtual dimension of the project allowed staff to work together, sharing ideas, skills and knowledge to develop creative, innovative problem-based learning projects together.

**West Lothian:** Partnerships are used effectively to support creative and innovative approaches to curriculum design

Partners National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh University and Hidden Giants, explored with Blackburn Primary School, the value of visual arts to learners, building their capacity to deal with uncertainty, and supporting teachers to make the curriculum. There was a view that artists and creative practitioners have skills and knowledge that help deal with uncertainty. As Scottish schools re-opened in August 2020 with only essential keyworkers allowed entry to the building, artists no longer had the same access. This created the context to ask:

- what do learners consider to be essential, for learning and for their future?
- What skills do they value?
- What do they think is the role and value of art and artists in our society?
- What can artists offer to schools, without entering the school building, to build learners' resilience and capacity to deal with uncertainty?

The project set out to answer these questions. Three artists and a film artist were recruited to work with Blackburn PS. The whole school researched learner's ideas about what is essential to them and how art might be considered essential as a tool for learning. The partnership documented learners' views on art, artists, value and employability at the start and end of the project. Learners were supported to self-evaluate their creativity, agency, resilience and ability to cope with uncertainty. Partners co-devised and co-delivered activities which demonstrated and engaged learners in artists' processes, using creativity, agency and pedagogies of uncertainty.

Statements from teacher interviews gave an insight into the impact of the project:

"We have been encouraged to adapt, create, and be flexible"

"We are now more resilient in our thinking".

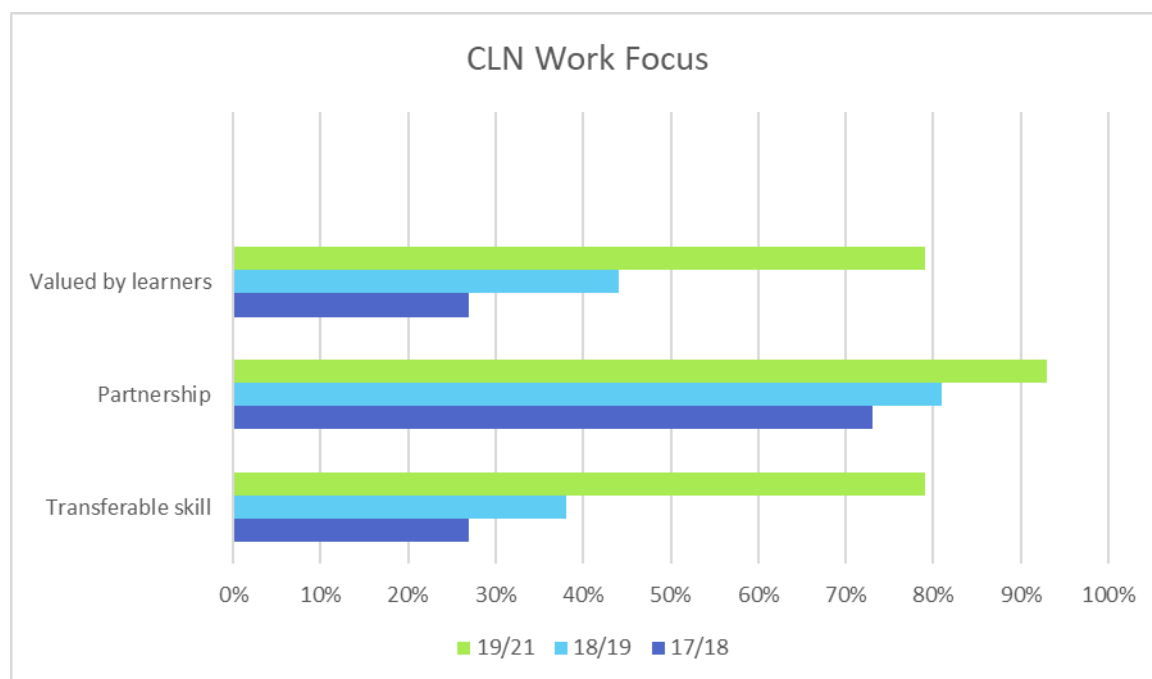
"I stopped seeing myself as the person who controls behaviour when a specialist is in my class to the person who is designing the activities in partnership. The artist forced me to think differently."

"it's had a big impact on my learning journey'

The final report on the project will be published and disseminated widely.

## Conclusions and next steps

CLNs across the country have continued to stimulate creativity in leaders, practitioners and learners, despite the various impacts of the pandemic, including schools closing from March 2020, a complete halt to face-to-face working and many people working from home. Their work in developing digital tools, creating online packages of materials, supporting remote learning and in stimulating and encouraging partnership working directly fulfils the Creative Learning Network Fund's overarching aims. Partnership working at both strategic and operational levels continues to be a key feature of the work of CLNs. The focus on partnerships being used effectively to deliver highly engaging creative learning by CLNs has increased. Engagement in CLN activities by a range of education and creative professionals continues to contribute to a shared understanding of creativity and creativity skills and their role in the development of skills for learning, life and work. The strong priority placed on the recognition, articulation and value of creativity skills by practitioners and learners continues to rise with the greatest increase in strong priority, being with learners. There is a continuing increase in CLNs identifying learners and practitioners engaging in dialogue about the development of creativity skills as a strong focus of their work. The biggest change has been the increase in CLNs identifying 'Learners are able to demonstrate their ability to transfer their creativity skills to new contexts,' as a strong focus of their work.



## Recommendations

A key development in this fund delivery period has been the establishment of regular, online meetings for members. Feedback from CLNs identifies the significant value placed on these virtual meetings, being able to be 'in the room' with colleagues, engaging in discussion and building relationships has supported both individual professional development and the development of practice across CLNs. Members also recognise the benefit of virtual meetings for a geographically wide-spread group.

It is recommended that consideration is given to establishing a calendar of online meetings in addition to the existing programme of 'in person' events.

The work of CLNs has consistently focused on the development of creativity skills in young people, contributing to increased confidence, achievements and skills for future life and work. Consideration should be given to advising Directors/Heads of Service of the refreshed Creative Learning Plan vision, mission and values-based goals, their relevance to the development of young people and the role of Creative Learning in their authorities as they plan services and recovery from the pandemic. It is also recommended that consideration is given to prioritising Creative Learning resources to support work with young people, schools and school communities during that recovery period.

CLNs worked to find innovative, creative solutions to enable them to continue to engage participants and partners throughout the pandemic. Many also used this time to reflect on their work and to think through how best to respond to these new challenges. It is recommended that consideration is given to providing an opportunity for this to be shared across CLNs and a review of practice development undertaken, to highlight innovative practice.