Community Learning and Development Plans: Guidance for 2024-2027

April 2024

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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Introduction

Background

This guidance document outlines the national policy context for community learning and development (CLD) that education authorities should be aware of in complying with the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 during the period of 2024 - 2027.

The Scottish Government recognises the role of CLD across the public and third sectors in providing invaluable support to Scotland's learners and communities by developing new and flexible ways to deliver key services for vulnerable and marginalised learners in community, school and college settings.

This guidance builds on and does not replace previous guidance notes published in 2014, revised guidance published in 2017 and the CLD Plan Guidance note published in 2020, to support the creation and ongoing development of CLD plans. Links to previous guidance below:

- 2014 - The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (education.gov.scot)
- 2017 - Revised Guidance Note on Community Learning and Development Planning 2018-21 (education.gov.scot))
- 2020 - Community learning and development plans: guidance - 2021 to 2024 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Independent Review of CLD provision in Scotland

The Purpose and Principles for Post-School Education, Research and Skills (28 June 2023) set out a direction of travel for future reform which was reflective of reviews and evidence gathering exercises which had been conducted across the portfolio area. Furter information available at the following link: Post-school education, research and skills - initial priorities (www.gov.scot).

As part of the wider reform work, the Minister for Higher and Further Education; and Minister for Veterans announced on 5 December 2023 an independent review of CLD provision across Scotland.

The independent review of CLD will seek to better understand the extent to which CLD is delivering positive outcomes for some of Scotland's

most vulnerable learners. In doing this, the review will consider how the CLD sector:

- Effectively and consistently measures outcomes delivered through CLD and reports this across the sector. This includes data on the CLD workforce, engagement opportunities and outcomes for learners.
- Delivers positive outcomes and improved life chances for marginalised and vulnerable learners in communities, in the context of wider education reform and public finance constraints.
- Maintains a strong and suitably professionalised CLD workforce equipped to deliver high quality outcomes for learners in a reformed education system.

This guidance has a specific focus on supporting education authorities with the development of their CLD plans while this review is ongoing. Further guidance will be provided following conclusion of the review and in time to support any future changes to CLD plans as a result of the review outcomes and once the strategic orientation of CLD can be fully considered.

The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations (2013) (the 2013 Regulations)

The 2013 Regulations place requirements on education authorities that they are to meet in discharging their duties, under section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, to secure adequate and efficient provision of further education. The key requirements are set out below:

Regulation 2 requires an education authority to facilitate and maintain a process where CLD is secured in a way that:

> (a) identifies target individuals and groups;
>
> (b) has regard to the needs of those target individuals and groups for that CLD;
>
> (c) assesses the degree to which those needs are already being met; and
>
> (d) identifies barriers to the adequate and efficient provision of that CLD.

Regulation 3 requires the education authority to take such action as is appropriate, to ensure that the following persons are involved in and consulted on the process:

(a) persons appearing to the education authority to be representative of the target individuals and groups; and

(b) persons appearing to the education authority to be representative of persons providing CLD within the area of the education authority.

Regulation 4 requires an education authority to publish a 3 year plan no later than 3 years after the date of publication of their last plan. In practice, this has the effect that the next plans are expected in **September 2024.**

The plan must specify:

(a) how the education authority will co-ordinate its provision of CLD with other persons that provide CLD within their area;

(b) what action the education authority will take to provide CLD over the period of the plan;

(c) what action other persons intend to take to provide CLD within the area of the education authority over the period of the plan; and

(d) any needs for CLD that will not be met within the period of the plan.

Before publishing a plan, the education authority must consult:

(a) persons appearing to them to be representative of the target individuals and groups CLD;

(b) persons appearing to the education authority to be representative of persons providing CLD within the area of the education authority; and

(c) such other persons as the education authority thinks fit.

The Context for CLD in 2024-2027

Independent review of CLD provision in Scotland

While the Independent Review of CLD is underway the existing statutory obligations will continue to apply to education authorities, including the requirement to publish a CLD plan by the third year after the publication date of the previous plan (September 2024).

However, during this period of independent review, education authorities may consider it relevant to acknowledge the existence of this review in

the preparation and content of their next CLD plan. This is a matter for each education authority to consider as appropriate to their area but it may include things such as:

- Carrying forward much of the content of their existing plans and only reflecting significant changes which have impacted communities and learners;
- Considering the level of learner and partner consultation appropriate to the level of updates made to the plans at this time.

Where such an approach is taken, once the Independent Review of CLD is published, education authorities are encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate for their area to undertake a more substantial learner and partner consultation and update their 2024-2027 plans accordingly. This would enable education authorities to reflect the impact of the review outcomes along with the outcomes from a more extensive consultation process. A guideline for the timing of a CLD plan update may be a target of September 2025, which would then be in place for the remaining two years of the plan cycle.

It is important to note that it will remain the responsibility of the education authority to acknowledge the CLD review as they consider appropriate and determine the correct approach for their own area and circumstances in complying with the statutory requirements. This includes each education authority progressing with identified areas for continuous improvement, including any aspects for improvement identified by HM Inspectors of Education.

Priorities

The Scottish Government expects education authorities to take account of a variety of priorities when planning to secure adequate and efficient CLD services. Examples of national policy objectives are highlighted in ANNEX A. The priorities for the delivery of CLD throughout the life span of the CLD plan (2024-27) should include, but not be limited to:

- Priorities set out in Local Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIPs) and other national policies, whilst taking account of an evidence base most relevant to CLD provision;
- Working with partners in community planning partnerships, additional voluntary and third sector organisations, schools, colleges and other partners across the local authority area, to ensure services are adequate and efficient;

- Identifying priority groups and target the most vulnerable and marginalised learners in community, school and college settings to remove barriers and engage with CLD services that are accessible, safe and inclusive;
- Protecting and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for young people, adults and families;
- Creating additional opportunities as well as increasing public awareness and support for learning, employability and creating local wealth;
- Recognising and taking appropriate action to support those most disproportionately affected by digital poverty ensuring they have the necessary tools, skills and support to access digital learning and services;
- A commitment to incorporate the UNCRC into decision making and policy across CLD services;
- Taking account of the need for community based adult learning, family learning, youth work and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning and embedding in provision across the local authority area.
- Recognising and supporting volunteering as a pathway towards skills development, upskilling, improved wellbeing and people supporting their communities.

Developing the CLD Plan 2024-27

As outlined above, education authorities should consider the most appropriate way to develop their September 2024 CLD plan, with the impact of the ongoing Independent Review of CLD reflected to the extent they consider necessary.

As a result, local authorities will be responsible for determining the extent to which this section of the guidance will apply to the development of their September 2024 plans.

Involvement

It is envisaged that education authorities will continues to develop a collaborative approach to delivering CLD services in community, school and college settings and with voluntary and third sector organisations.

CLD plans should be developed in partnership with learners and communities. The needs of learners and communities should clearly inform priorities and there should be evidence of effective community

engagement which is enabling learners and groups of all ages to have ownership of CLD priorities in the area.

Shared CLD Priorities

In creating the CLD plan, it is important to consult with and recognise the strength of CLD delivery provided by partners from schools, colleges, third sector organisations and other partners across the local authority area. This will help to ensure CLD provision is adequate and efficient and meets the needs of young people, adults, families and communities. Education authorities should:

- Create a shared CLD plan that sets out clear and coherent priorities for the delivery of CLD services across the education authority area. The plan should be developed with community planning partners from schools, colleges, third sector organisations and other partners across the local authority area;
- Demonstrate what steps community planning partners are taking to maximise the impact of CLD by focusing activity on the most disadvantaged learners and communities;
- Describe the role of partners that will be involved in the delivery of CLD services from schools, colleges, third sector organisations and other partners across the local authority area;
- Consider the outcomes identified by the Regional Improvement Collaborative;
- Clearly articulate the contribution of CLD services in their area to the policy priorities outlined above and in ANNEX A.

Planning

During the planning process there are a range of considerations which will help to inform decision-making. Education authorities, in developing their CLD plans should:

- Consider the full impact of CLD in the wide range of environments and contexts where learning takes place;
- Ensure the CLD plans are consistent with existing and emerging priorities for young people, adults and their families within community, schools and college settings and with the voluntary and third sector organisations across the local authority area. CLD priorities should be embedded in school improvement plans, LOIPs and child poverty action plans, with appropriate representation

from the CLD planning partnerships as members of these forums, to report on achievements and concerns;
- Ensure that CLD plans have a timely Equalities Impact Assessment, in line with the public sector equality duty;

Governance

Governance is an important part of the CLD planning process and the following points should be reflected in building a CLD plan:

- Clear, robust governance arrangements, evident within the existing governance structures of the local authority of CLD service delivery, should be created for annual monitoring and reporting. This should include a timeline for reviewing and evaluating the impact and progress of the CLD plan and the services provided;
- Barriers to adequate and efficient CLD provision should be identified and communicated. This is also known as the unmet needs of CLD provision;
- The CLD plan and the reporting arrangements should be clear and accessible to local learners and communities.

Workforce Development

The education authority should ensure that CLD workforce planning is an integral part of the CLD plan and that the plan identifies the actions to be taken to support and develop the CLD workforce. In doing this, education authorities should:

- Identify specific actions required to demonstrate commitment to the CLD workforce, and to support this through strong partnerships with the range of providers delivering outcomes for young people, adults, families and communities across the local authority area;
- Provide practice placements for CLD students, supervised by a CLD qualified practitioner, or if not possible, with an identified placement mentor who is CLD qualified;
- Recruit qualified CLD practitioners, at the appropriate level of practice or leadership across all areas of adult learning, community development, family learning and youth work;
- Support the CLD workforce in its area, across all practice disciplines, to benefit from membership of the CLD Standards Council at registered or Associate status and to comply with the National Occupational Standards in place for the CLD sector.

- Strengthen cross-sectoral professional learning and development opportunities available for staff and volunteers linked to the requirements of the Competent Practitioner Framework.
- Explore and support training for practitioners to ensure adequate digital skills to meet the needs of learners as technology advances, resulting in a digitally agile workforce.

Annex A: National Policy

The national policy objectives outlined in this annex are key policy areas where CLD practice continues to have a significant impact on the most vulnerable learners and communities across Scotland:

Raising Attainment

The Scottish Government will continue to support schools and local authorities through its £1 billion investment in the SAC programme over the course of the parliamentary term. Within that is continued investment in Pupil Equity Funding, empowering headteachers to develop local approaches to suit their children and young people's needs; and investment in Strategic Equity Funding to local authorities to implement strategic approaches to closing the gap in their local authorities – and make progress towards their stretch aims. Additionally, the Scottish Government through the SAC programme also continues to provide funding to support care experienced children and young people's attainment and wellbeing.

The mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge is 'to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap'. The introduction of local stretch aims has been a key development in recent years to support and drive progress in raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This includes a requirement for local authorities to set ambitious but achievable stretch aims for progress in overall attainment and in closing the poverty-related attainment gap with ambitious aims for 2025/26 across a sub-set of the 13 National Improvement Framework measures of the poverty-related attainment gap. In this ground up approach to identifying stretch aims for progress, local authorities are responsible for implementing their local plans to make progress in raising attainment and for closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Their own stretch aims and their trajectories for annual progress towards them are included in their statutory improvement plans and published on local platforms. A summary of local authority stretch aims for raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap 2023/24 - 2025/26 has been published here:- Supporting documents - Scottish Attainment Challenge - Local stretch Aims: 2023/24 to 2025/26 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

CLD has an important role to play in supporting children and young people's well-being, readiness to learn and in helping improve the

educational outcomes of children and young people impacted by poverty in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. With the development of stretch aims there's the opportunity to ensure CLD plans align and compliment wider work underway in schools and across services in local authorities to deliver on the stretch aims in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to support refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland's communities. The Strategy is the result of a longstanding partnership between the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Scottish Refugee Council. The strategy both supports - and is supported through - the many partnerships and initiatives that exist across Scotland to welcome refugees. The third strategy takes account of a landscape that has changed considerably with new legislation on asylum and largescale relocations and resettlement of people from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The New Scots vision is "For a welcoming Scotland where refugees and people seeking asylum are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive." The key principle of New Scots distinctive approach is to support refugees and people seeking asylum from 'day one' of arrival in Scotland.

ESOL

ESOL supports the language learning needs of a diverse range of people, living in Scotland, whose first language is not English. These include refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers, settled minority communities and their families.

ESOL provision is offered by a range of providers including CLD services through local authority partnerships, colleges, schools, voluntary organisations and private language providers. ESOL learning also meets outcomes outlined in the Scottish Government's New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: 2024 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) sets out the approach to supporting refugees and asylum seekers living in Scotland.

The development of ESOL Partnerships within each community planning area has meant that a range of formal learning opportunities and activities is delivered across each local authority area in a manner that utilises the funding available to meet learners' needs more effectively.

Curriculum for Excellence

CLD is relevant to and supportive of, Scotland's Refreshed Curriculum Narrative: Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (scotlandscurriculum.scot). It contributes directly to the purposes of CfE and its four capacities (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors); it supports the development of skills for learning, life and work, and, it supports learners to gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century. CLD provides opportunities for all learners and is relevant for all practitioners and partners who are involved in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence.

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is relevant to all parts of the public sector and is an area of increasing importance. Part 2 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires community planning partners to secure the participation of community bodies in community planning. Account should be taken of the interests of people who experience inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

The Scottish Government is reviewing the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015. The review will have a particular focus on community ownership and strengthening decision-making to improve outcomes for local communities. Each part is being reviewed in ways that reflect its particular circumstances and will consider what the legislation has achieved to date and how it might be strengthened or improved in the future. The aim is to publish a report setting out initial findings during the summer 2024.

Family Learning

CLD plays a vital role in providing engaging and impactful family learning opportunities. Family learning is an approach to engaging families in learning outcomes that can have a lasting impact on the whole family (summary of family learning). Effective partnership working arrangements are considered essential in the development and delivery of family learning as recognised in the Learning Together national action plan : update 2023. Family Learning practice is supported by the recently refreshed National Occupational Standards: Family Learning NOS | CLD Standards Council for Scotland. In order to support a

consistent understanding of family learning Education Scotland have published a range of practitioner resources: Parents and families | Resource Themes | Education Scotland

Employment and Skills

CLD plays a critical role in skills development – very often working with people who have been excluded from work and everyday life because of their low self-esteem, skills and confidence. For many people across Scotland, CLD can create a route into skills provision at all levels. This route embeds literacy and numeracy into all of its provision, so that learning and skills development becomes accessible for many people who are disengaged from learning.

Developing a coordinated learning offer with partners will be vital in ensuring that young people and adults have good quality opportunities to gain the necessary skills and qualifications to progress in learning, training and employment. CLD plans will need to include details of joint work with partners including Colleges, Universities, Skills Development Scotland, Trades Unions, Chambers of Commerce and third sector providers to ensure sufficient opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development.

CLD intervention in this context has an important role to play in delivering key outcomes for young people, adults and communities alongside their partners. For example, CLD works alongside other skills development interventions such as Career Guidance and All Age Employability Services through No One Left Behind, to help support the person to get themselves ready by helping to develop the appropriate mix of attributes to be able to compete and sustain in the increasingly competitive job market.

Mental Health Support

A new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy was jointly published with COSLA on 29th June 2023. The Strategy is evidence-based, informed by lived experience, and underpinned by equality and human rights. It focuses on outcomes, and is driven by data and intelligence. The scope of the Strategy is wider than our previous work in this space, with an increasing focus on wellbeing and prevention. We have also considered how the Strategy can take account of social factor and inequalities that may impact a person's mental health and wellbeing. The Strategy seeks to look ahead to make sure we're doing the right thing to meet changing mental health needs over the coming years.

Developing the Young Workforce

The Scottish Government is committed to supporting all young people to achieve their potential and we have a strong track record of tackling youth unemployment through DYW.

DYW Regional Groups are fundamental in facilitating the engagement between employers and schools to support young people transition into the world of work. Recognising the challenges young people can face entering the labour market, DYW implemented circa 300 DYW School Coordinators across all 32 Local Authorities.

With a focus on supporting all young people to have the best start in life, DYW has allocated over £1.7 million of funding directly to specialist third sector partners that support those hardest to reach during financial year 23/24.

By utilising employer relationships, the DYW Network plays an important role in engaging businesses to support Government priorities – particularly tackling child poverty. We remain committed to this cross government approach to ensure we work together to improve the lives of the people of Scotland as set out in “In the service of Scotland.”

We are committed to, by 2026, helping all school leavers to access the transition support they need to achieve their potential, and ensuring every young person aged 16-24 can further their education or secure a job or training place. Developing the Young Workforce has a key role to play in helping us achieve this commitment.

DYW’s third sector partners provide targeted provision for young people facing additional barriers by offering work based learning, work inspiration, and mentoring while connecting educators and young people with a network of inspirational business leaders.

UNCRC and Youth Participation

<u>UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024</u>
The Scottish Government is committed to Scotland being the best place in the world for a child to grow up. The National Outcome for children and young people is that children grow up loved, safe and respected, so that they reach their full potential. A central part of our vision is the respect for, protection of and fulfilment of children’s human rights. These include the right to be treated fairly, to be heard and to be as healthy as

possible. Our vision is a Scotland where children's rights are embedded in all aspects of society. A Scotland where policy, law and decision-making take account of children's rights and where all children and young people have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders.

The policy intent behind the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024 is to deliver a proactive culture of accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland, including the Scottish Government. The Act introduces new duties that will have important implications for how public services develop and deliver policy.

Participation

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of decisions which affect them. We want our young people to have the confidence and skills to influence decisions around them. This principle of meaningful participation is central to the adoption of a children's human rights-based approach and acts as a guiding 'General Principle' of the UNCRC. The UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024 incorporates Article 12 of the UNCRC, meaning it provides that children have the right to express a view in relation to decisions that affect them, and for their views to be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

Support for Public Authorities

We are working with the Improvement Service to provide advice and guidance for Local Authorities in preparing for UNCRC incorporation and in taking a child rights-based approach. Similar support is being provided to health boards via NHS Education for Scotland. The UNCRC Innovation Fund is providing financial support for testing and implementing creative approaches to embedding children's rights in public bodies. This fund is supporting the delivery of activities which contribute to our vision: A Scotland where children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Funding is intended to support public bodies and local authorities to develop a child's rights-based approach and embed children's rights into culture, policy and practice We are also providing support to listed authorities, understanding the opportunities and challenges they face in implementing UNCRC across their work.

Tackling Child Poverty

Tackling poverty and protecting people from harm is a critical mission for the Scottish Government. CLD has an important role to play in helping to tackle poverty, as part of wider Employment and Skills policies.

The Scottish Government's second tackling child poverty delivery plan, 'Best Start, Bright Futures' sets out how we will drive forward action that supports the path to achieving our child poverty reduction targets (see Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017). Covering the period 2022-26, the plan sets out the need to take a balanced approach to tackle poverty, committing action to increase the incomes of families, reduce the cost of living, improve the wellbeing of families, and to support the next generation to thrive.

The plan also commits the Government to focusing on the impact of actions through the lens of the families at greatest risk of poverty and ensuring that policies and systems work for these families in particular. The Scottish Government has published a summary of evidence on the 'priority families' identified, to guide policy development and implementation: Tackling child poverty priority families overview - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

We want to ensure that parents – both in and out of work – are able to access the training and skills they need to progress in their career. To enable parents to take up employment and progress within the labour market, we must ensure they are equipped with the holistic support, skills and confidence they need to thrive. As noted in the 'Employment and Skills' section, CLD is key to this and as such plays a significant role in local action to tackle child poverty.

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) is our national approach to promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. CLD is central to providing the right support, at the right time so that every child and young person can reach their potential.

CLD helps lay the foundation for the collaborative approach to designing and delivering learning and skills-development services across the public and third-sectors which are responsive to the needs of children and young people, with a focus on prevention and early intervention through individual and whole family support.

Keeping the Promise

The Scottish Government Promise Implementation Plan was published in March 2022. The Plan sets out the commitments and actions that we are taking across SG to Keep the Promise, which is a key priority of

Government and is overseen directly by The First Minister and a dedicated Cabinet Sub Committee for The Promise**.**

Significant progress has been made since then and we are currently working on an updating the plan for publication in Spring 2024. This will complement The Promise Scotland publishing their Plan 24-30 in Summer 2024, following their review of Plan 21-24.

As we know, the lives of children and young people are shaped by the experience and the network of support they have around them. CLD have an important part to play in making the change required. The Scottish Government is keen to work with partners to drive forward the transformational change required to keep the Promise. In so doing we are aware that on the ground delivery is a key part of that change and are keen to identify where more focussed interventions or support may be needed.

Volunteering

The Volunteering Action Plan published in June 2022 aims to create a Scotland where everyone can volunteer, more often, and throughout their lives. This 10 year 'living' plan seeks to increase participation and reduce barriers to volunteering. It will also increase the opportunities available to volunteer: widening the breadth of opportunities and increasing access for under-represented groups. The plan provides a renewed focus on the contribution of volunteers in communities and seeks to tackle inequality in volunteering through supporting the most disadvantaged in our society. The plan acknowledges the reach of volunteering and the vital role of volunteers in the delivery of services across Scotland.

Volunteering has the power to make an impact on both society and to volunteers own health and wellbeing. It brings so many benefits – not only reducing loneliness and social isolation but making new friends, having fun and helping others. Volunteering brings communities together and helps people to feel valued and part of something good. Helping to improve volunteers' mental health and build their confidence. Scotland's volunteers are critical to the health and wellbeing of our people, places and communities. Helping to support and care for others and make a difference to people's lives. Volunteering can help improve and develop skills as well as finding a sense of purpose, increased self-esteem and experience which can help towards employment.

Learning for Sustainability

The Learning for Sustainability Action Plan published in June 2023 recognises that the call from learners and educators is clear: more needs to be done to ensure ALL learners receive their entitlement to LfS. Children and young people are asking for bold ambition and the necessary action to make change happen. They fully recognise the importance of climate and social justice, equality and outdoor learning for their future life and work in the 21st century and want these to be a real and meaningful part of their daily learning experiences and their learner journey as a whole. We need to accelerate the speed of change and educate our learners for the future. "Target 2030" – Sustainable Learning Settings aims to build an inspiring movement for change so every 3-18 place of education becomes a Sustainable Learning Setting by 2030.

Making LfS a key driver in the future of Scottish education will not only enable us to heed the call to action from learners but will allow us to achieve much more besides. All of our policy ambitions in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, climate and net zero, biodiversity, circular economy, and economic and social transformation can only be delivered with the commitment of Scotland's people, supported throughout their education.

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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83601-226-9 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, April 2024

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1450138 (04/24)

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