



THE HAVEN

Intergenerational Manifesto 2021



**Generations
Working
Together**

Generations Working Together is calling on Scotland to become an intergenerational nation by 2030. Our manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Government Election:

- identifies three areas that we believe the Scottish Government elected for 2021 – 2026, and all elected Members of the Scottish Parliament should focus on to help ensure that relationships between generations are strengthened and Scotland becomes more connected and inclusive.
- makes fifteen specific calls for action, which we believe would help the nation to make significant progress towards becoming an intergenerational nation and improve the quality of life for Scots of all ages.

At a time when international and intergenerational solidarity is needed the most, we express our deep concern over the escalation of ageism, including age discrimination and stigmatization of older persons, which aggravate their vulnerabilities.

We also recognize that solidarity between generations at all levels, within families, communities, and nations, is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages.”

-United Nations 2020

Our vision is for a Scotland where different generations are more connected, and everyone can build relationships that help to create a fairer society.

This manifesto has been developed through a dialogue with our members and partners. It is supported by research evidence and the experiences of intergenerational projects and practitioners in Scotland and around the world.

The Manifesto starts from the assumption that intergenerational relationships, activities, and initiatives can make a positive contribution to Scotland, its people, and its communities. It focuses on creating a ‘policy and practice’ environment that has the potential to maximise the impact these activities have.

It will take longer than a five-year parliamentary cycle to deliver fully on some of our asks, however, we believe that the next Scottish Parliament can lay the foundations for longer-term development and make progress with all our proposed actions.

1 Embed intergenerational approaches in governance and policy making

- **Intergenerational Heroes (Champions)** – establish Intergenerational Heroes in all governmental and public bodies (National and Local)
- **Intergenerational Fairness** – ensure that policymakers at all levels of Government (National and Local) evaluate the impact of policy on the wellbeing and interests of all generations, including future generations who don't have a voice in the political process
- **Integration of Intergenerational Approaches** – give consideration as a matter of routine to the added value which intergenerational approaches can bring to all areas of policy (and service delivery) at national and local levels
- **Intergenerational Governing Bodies** – ensure that there is appropriate representation from all generations in the governance of all public sector bodies
- **Intergenerational Engagement** – ensure that there is an intergenerational dimension to public and community engagement activity

2 Create more intergenerational places and spaces

- **Spatial Planning** – ensure that Scotland has a planning structure that enables the development of communities to support intergenerational contact and engagement
- **Intergenerational Living** – promote and support intergenerational developments and initiatives that enhance Scotland's housing provision (intergenerational villages, intergenerational housing projects, intergenerational care villages, intergenerational living initiatives)
- **Public Space** – encourage the development of civic and public spaces that can be used by all generations and are conducive to contact and the development of relationships between people from different generations (town centres, parks, gardens, green infrastructure)
- **Learning Spaces** – promote and support the establishment of intergenerational hubs/learning spaces in education establishments





EYEMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

3 Increase knowledge and understanding of intergenerational approaches

- **Combatting Ageism** - deliver a national campaign to challenge ageism and build trust and respect between generations.
- **Challenge Ageism in School** – embed learning on age and ageing well in the curriculum and ensuring all children and young people experience intergenerational learning as part of the Broad General Education.
- **Professional Learning** – embed intergenerational learning in graduate and post-graduate training of key education, health, and social care professionals and promote/support post-qualifying professional learning opportunities.
- **Workplace Learning** – promote and support intergenerational learning initiatives that contribute to economic recovery and development.
- **Research** – commission and support research to increase understanding of the contributions that intergenerational initiatives and relationships can make to the quality of individual lives, community inclusion, and cohesion.
- **Improving practice** – commission the development of practical tools and frameworks that help to drive improvement in intergenerational practice.

50%

Scotland's population is continuing to age, with a 50% increase in over 60s projected by 2033.



Why do we need an intergenerational nation?

Generations Working Together is a national charity and centre of excellence that fights ageism and campaigns for stronger connections between younger and older generations. We have been championing intergenerational connections since 2007. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has become obvious that, more than ever, we must connect generations.

The pandemic has highlighted that we are reliant on our communities and many people have experienced increased loneliness and isolation. The pandemic has meant that we have lived through death, disease, and physical distancing from our loved ones. However, we have also witnessed an incredible show of kindness between younger and older people coming together to support each other in the community, building new relationships, trust and respect and strengthening connections between all ages. We want to ensure that these connections are not lost and that Scotland is better prepared to tackle loneliness, isolation, and ageism as a nation.

The risk of loneliness and isolation

If Scotland is to become an intergenerational nation, the Scottish Government must take decisive action and work closely with the public, private, and third sector organisations to embed intergenerational practice into all levels of our society. Scotland's population is continuing to age, with a 50% increase in over 60s projected by 2033. If we fail to act, we risk creating a country where both younger and older people become increasingly isolated. With an increase in negative media stories pitting generations against each other, ageism will continue to rise.

Our communities today live in silos segregated by age, with most only having friends from their own generation. This has been further impacted by Covid-19 with increased numbers of people living in isolation with little or no family support and no digital access, equipment, knowledge or confidence in device use. One way to tackle this is to connect generations through programmes and projects where relationships are encouraged. However, this will not happen without the support of people like our Intergenerational Heroes that call for and help build connections. Research

has shown that intergenerational connections help tackle ageism, loneliness, and ill health. Academics agree that bringing generations together can improve our wellbeing, feelings of safety, as well as bringing new skills and friendships. Evidence highlights that having no intergenerational connections can contribute to a lack of understanding of the ageing process, age stereotypes and prejudices, and lack of new skills and information.

Being connected to different generations is vital when our society becomes disjointed and

Crannog Care Home in Glasgow. In both projects, older people have been supported by friendships, life storybooks, and shared activities that are impactful for all ages. The potential of these projects on health and wellbeing cannot be underestimated.

Embed Intergenerational Approaches in Governance and Policy Making

Bringing generations together is not only fun, cost-effective, and rewarding for all involved, it is vital to ensure our communities stay

1 in 2

Care home residents have depression or symptoms of depression. Intergenerational activities demonstrate that as an intervention, they lift the spirits of residents and are an effective way to respond to loneliness.

Source: Apples and Honey Nightingale



the levels of loneliness and isolation increase. Loneliness and isolation are part of our mental health and wellbeing and the Campaign to End Loneliness report highlights that if this is not tackled, we risk increased mental health issues. The report also highlights that older people need more support to tackle loneliness. Intergenerational projects that specifically support people who have dementia, have been very successful, such as those organised by Anam Cara Respite Centre in Ayrshire and

connected and people feel less isolated and lonely. When people from different generations get together, there is the potential to address some of the biggest issues of our time. From healthcare reform, climate change, inequality, and political instability, investing in an intergenerational approach will deliver dividends across the policy spectrum. The Scottish Government has recognised the global climate emergency and the impact on younger generations as a result of Covid-19, so

let's ensure that both younger and older people are involved in finding the solutions to these.

The focus on intergenerational practice becomes more urgent as our societies age and demand for health and social care services increase. Individual schools, a council, or a single charity cannot do this alone, it is therefore essential for people to network, create strong partnerships, and build trust with organisations from sectors who they may not necessarily have had contact with previously.

These measures will work if aided by Intergenerational Heroes across the country who are inspiring and working to improve the quality of intergenerational work in their local areas.

We need to recognise the importance of accredited intergenerational training to ensure good practice. Our members highlight that this is especially important in rural communities that have higher rates of loneliness. By creating an intergenerational nation, Scotland would become a global leader in intergenerational practice and research, joining other nations such as America, Northern Ireland, and Spain, ensuring our nation cares about the wellbeing of all ages of citizens and our future.

Intergenerational initiatives support people of all ages. Younger generations can become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. These capacities are central to Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. Intergenerational relationships create pillars of support, friendships, build trust, respect and

connections which can improve the nation's health and wellbeing.

Intergenerational relationships have the potential to create wellbeing and happiness beyond measuring GDP. The need for this in Scotland has already been highlighted. The commitment to wellbeing has increased with our collective experience of the pandemic, with the Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy report highlighting that the challenges of a post-Covid-19 world will include factors such as unemployment, which significantly reduce our collective wellbeing as a nation.

More Intergenerational Places and Spaces

A truly intergenerational space is one where both younger and older people feel comfortable and safe enough to build relationships, and where ageism is significantly reduced. During our Build an Intergenerational Nation event, members reported that spaces and places were key to developing a true intergenerational nation. Covid-19 restrictions have shown that the redesign of spaces may be necessary to enable us to engage with each other in safe and new ways. This presents an opportunity to ensure that our new environments are welcoming to different generations and offers opportunities to spend more time together. The increase in hours for Early Learning and Childcare provides a significant opportunity for the private and public sector to create and redesign co-located spaces such as Apples and Honey Nightingale in London, and Wee Mac's outdoor intergenerational nursery in Inverness.

Ageism has a detrimental effect on our society, Age UK found that, in Britain, being old is considered younger than in many other countries and purposefully mixing generations reduces stigma and ageism. This is supported by academics who claim that sustained contact between people of different ages, religions, or socioeconomic backgrounds results in greater understanding.

Shared intergenerational spaces not only bring communities together but are also extremely cost-effective and beneficial to the environment. A Generations United survey in 2018 found that, instead of costing more, intergenerational spaces could save money, share staff and resources such as transport, benefiting the organisation. It is relevant to note, especially in light of Covid-19, that intergenerational spaces can be delivered safely online. Investment in digital devices, intergenerational training and connection can and should be encouraged to bring younger and older people together online.

We welcome the commitment to digital innovation in the Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland 2020 report. However, we would encourage organisations, local authorities and the Scottish Government to incorporate a strong intergenerational element to any plans.

Intergenerational spaces have a lower staff turnover rate, **26%** compared to the industry average of **65-85%**

Source: Generations United, 2019





Scotland needs to invest in intergenerational learning and research

Intergenerational practice is often viewed as a nice 'add-on' in our community, rather than a tool for change. Academic research has been undertaken internationally and television documentaries such as 'Old School with the Hairy Bikers', and 'Older People's Homes for Four Year Olds' have produced encouraging evidence. However, to encourage deeper thinking into intergenerational practice, we need to invest more time, funding resources into research in Scotland.

Generations Working Together has witnessed first-hand the positive impact of the understanding intergenerational practice can make and therefore calls on teachers, health workers and community leaders to increase their learning, knowledge, and confidence around what builds strong intergenerational relationships.

Generations Working Together share and encourage intergenerational research.

Architects, care staff, students, and academics are interested in taking part in further studies however, this needs to be supported and funded by partners including the public, private and voluntary sectors and government.

Older and younger generations living in Scotland deserve the very best. We believe fostering better relationships between generations can go a significant way to increasing the quality of life for all. With support and commitment from of all political parties we can make change happen. With relatively modest investment in finance, training, research and commitment we can make Scotland recognised across the world as a leader in intergenerational practice.

We are relying on your support to make Scotland the world's first intergenerational nation.

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