



Education (Scotland) Bill: Short Call for Views

Context

We know that a young person's education is key to determining their own future prospects and contributing to a flourishing society and economy. We therefore welcome the proposals set out in the bill, and offer here, some suggestions for how intergenerational approaches can help with the delivery and implementation of the bill.

Intergenerational practice brings together people from different generations in intentional and mutually beneficial ways. It has an invaluable role to play in society, to improve understanding between generations and to reduce social isolation and loneliness across all ages.

What is its relevance to education? Intergenerational projects can be designed to support educational development, through mentoring programmes, skills-sharing and knowledge-exchange. Our older generations have a wealth of untapped knowledge that we must utilise to educate young people. This can be particularly important in instances where young people don't have an older role model in their lives to look up to and learn from; MENTOR (2017) reports that at-risk youths involved in intergenerational mentoring programmes are 55% more likely to be enrolled in further/higher education. Intergenerational practice can therefore be key to helping close the attainment gap, by providing educational and emotional guidance to young people who need it most, whilst simultaneously providing older people with new opportunities to share their skills and build new friendships.

Integrating intergenerational approaches into educational governance and curriculum presents an opportunity to shift away from our existing institutional siloes, towards an educational system that values the importance of all generations, placing social cohesion at the heart of decision making. Below are Generations Working Together's recommendations on how Qualifications Scotland can adopt an intergenerational lens in their governance.

Recommendations

- Advocate for the inclusion of intergenerational representatives in the Strategic Advisory Council and during consultations (sections 7,8,9,10). This will ensure that the voices of a range of relevant stakeholders can inform outcomes, providing younger groups with a sense of responsibility in informing decisions that affect them, whilst generating co-learning opportunities for them alongside older stakeholders.

- Emphasise the value and benefits of intergenerational learning in the Learner and Teacher Charters. Improving understanding among teachers about what intergenerational learning is, why it is important and how it can be easily integrated into existing teaching systems can help drive interest and improve outcomes for students.
- Recommend collaborations with intergenerational organisations and recognise their contributions to education, utilising existing resources to guide intergenerational practice within schools and educational institutions. Generations Working Together offer tailored training opportunities to educators and also have a new 'Teachers' Guide to Intergenerational Learning' publication launching soon. Utilising these resources and opportunities can be potentially instrumental in improving outcomes for young people, if promoted widely.
- These recommendations align with the bill's focus on enhancing education quality, inclusivity, and collaboration, demonstrating how intergenerational practice can contribute to these goals. Generations Working Together can offer a wealth of experience and knowledge to contribute to discussions and implementation of educational reform. We would be grateful to be involved in the conversations moving forward.