

# Guidance Notes for Facilitators (National Discussion: Toolkit for Adults)

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## The National Discussion : Let's Talk Scottish Education

### Background

- Twenty years ago Scotland held a national debate on the future of education and this led to the development of Curriculum for Excellence.
- The recent [Muir Review](#) (2022) recommended holding a national discussion to agree a clear vision for the future of Scottish education.
- Scottish government is inviting everyone who has an interest in the future of our education system to join 'Let's Talk Scottish Education' – Our National Discussion. This includes children and young people, parents and carers, adults, practitioners, and those in the community.
- Professor Alma Harris and Professor Carol Campbell, members of the International Council of Education Advisers, have agreed to oversee the process. They have developed eight core questions to support the National Discussion. These can be found at the start of this document.
- The key principles underpinning the National Discussion are that:
  - it is inclusive
  - it is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that children and young people should be at the heart of the process.
  - parents and carers are involved and meaningfully engaged in the process as outlined in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

Children and young people, and parents all had a unique experience of education during the COVID-19 pandemic and are well placed to inform the future of education in Scotland.

- Practitioners and young people of all ages will be invited to test these materials prior to their formal launch and availability online, ensuring they best meet the needs of those working with children and young people in different contexts.
- The resources can be used either independently or by facilitators to support conversations.
- The resources are open source; they can be freely adapted to best meet the needs of different contexts.
- Evidence from conversations can be collected and submitted in a whole range of formats – video, audio, presentations, online conversations, posters. Those working with adults, children and young people are best placed to judge how, where and when conversations take place and the nature of the evidence that is collected.

**Guidance**

Facilitators working with adults are best placed to judge how, where and when national discussions can take place and the nature of the evidence that is collected.

- Facilitators should use the 'National Discussion: Toolkit for Adults' along with these Guidance Notes as appropriate and adapt if necessary. They are not meant to be prescriptive, rather they should be used as an aid to support meaningful discussions. Consideration should also be given to adults' circumstances and barriers to participation should be addressed before any sessions are delivered.
- Recent reports and consultations on education have produced valuable insights and will also be used to complement evidence collected from the National Discussion.
- The National Discussion will lead to a '**Call to Action**' with clear priorities for the future of Scottish education.
- The national discussion will be launched by the Cabinet Secretary at the Scottish Learning Festival (SLF) on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

## **Purpose of the Toolkit and this guidance**

### **Purpose of National Discussion Toolkits**

- Prepare participants to give a considered response to one or more of the eight core National Discussion questions and/or any additional questions.
- Produce artefacts (posters, drawings, video clips) that can be easily shared with the ND research team via email or Twitter.

### **Guidance for facilitating national discussions**

- View the introductory video linked in the Toolkit from Professors Campbell and Harris at the outset of each session, if possible, to ensure a consistent understanding of the National Discussion.
- There is no requirement to cover all the questions.
- The Toolkit and text in this guide are for exemplification only.
- Facilitators are welcome to use the activities in the Toolkit or adapt their own group activities, or those from the other toolkits, to support discussion and exploration of the questions. Facilitators will know their participants' needs best.
- You may also wish to engage adults in discussions about the best ways to capture views around the questions. This will help to ensure that adults feel this process is being done 'with' them rather than 'to' them. Adults involved may have very creative ways of approaching and gathering data around the core questions.
- It is inevitable that in discussing the future shape of education in Scotland that participants may well refer to their personal experience of school, including their child's current setting or school. It will therefore be important to set boundaries around what should and should not be raised. For example, facilitators should request that individuals are not named and that discussions around people's experiences of education are sensitive and respectful.
- It is equally important to establish ground rules, such as respect and honesty, for your group discussions to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.
- It is important to ensure that the video from Professors Campbell and Harris is shown at the outset of the session, if possible, to ensure a consistent understanding of the National Discussion.
- Facilitators are encouraged to complete the survey from their perspective.

## Session 1: Our Future Education

### Facilitator Notes

#### Purpose

This session supports participants to consider the core National Discussion questions. Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions. Depending on the group each of the questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

\*Questions 5 – 7 can be used together to facilitate deeper discussion on vision and prioritising the actions for implementation. Alternatively, they can be discussed separately.

#### Feedback:

Towards the end of the session participants should either work together – or through the facilitator - to complete their group's response via the following link:

<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-feedback>

Participants can instead complete their own personal response via the formal consultation: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-on-education>

If neither of these options fit your needs, you can instead choose to email a summary to: [nationaldiscussiononeducation@gov.scot](mailto:nationaldiscussiononeducation@gov.scot), or post on social media #TalkScottishEducation (via Instagram or Twitter). Please remember to include a rough description of who was in your group and how many people took part.

**Core Question 1: What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future and how do we make that a reality?**

**Discussion prompts:**

Question 1, could be considered in two parts:

1 (a) What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future?

1 (b) Do you have any thoughts on what might be needed to achieve this?

In considering questions 1 participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What do children and young people need to learn to prepare them for the future and help them thrive? This may include developing skills that do not currently exist. They are skills to excel; to collaborate and empathise with others and to create their own future.
- What is needed for an education system that is fair to everyone and equitable (i.e. it works for everyone and any barriers to access and educational opportunities that any young person faces are removed)? What needs to be done to make this happen?

**Core Question 2: How do we ensure that children and young people in Scotland feel supported in their learning in the future?**

**Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around Question 2 - **What do you think children and young people in Scotland will need in the future to help them feel supported in their learning?**

In considering question 2, participants could also be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- How can learners' views, experiences and suggestions be listened to, respected and included in future education decisions? What existing approaches can be built on, or what new approaches are needed?
- What supports for mental health and wellbeing are required? And how can the right help at the right time be provided?
- What is needed to ensure all children and young people feel safe in education settings?

**Core Question 3: What is one thing that needs to stay and why?****Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around question 3 - **If there was only one thing about Scottish education that you think should continue, what would this be and why?**

In considering question 3, participants could also be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- Reflecting on your own and/or your child's experience of Scottish education, what works well and should continue?

**Core Question 4: What are the most important priorities for a future Scottish education system?****Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around question 4 - **In your opinion, what do you think the most important priorities for the Scottish education system should be in the future?**

In considering question 4 above, participants could also be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What should the 'point of education' be in Scotland? This question can support participants to consider what they see as current priorities in education as well as who sets them, and how much they feel involved in that process. It will likely involve discussions about success and how it is/might be measured.
- What is most important for children at different ages and stages of their development and education?

**Core Question 5\*: Overall, what is your vision for the future of education in Scotland?**

**Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around question 5 - **What are your thoughts on what the future of education in Scotland should look like?**

In considering question 5 above, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- What would the school day look like?
- What would classrooms look like?
- Where and when might learning happen?
- What would a timetable in a secondary school look like?
- What would assessment look like?
- What would teachers be like in future? How would they teach?
- What will the curriculum of the future look like?

**Core Question 6\*: How can we make that future vision for education a reality in Scotland?**

**Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around question 6 – **What are your thoughts on how that future vision for Scottish education could be achieved?**

In considering question 6 above, participants could also be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- *Is there something that education in Scotland should be doing in future that it isn't now?* This 'compare and contrast' question invites participants to consider how things might be, in contrast to how they are. This might involve them suggesting things to keep, discard or improve.

**Core Question 7\*: What are the most important steps we need to take to achieve the future vision for education in Scotland?**

**Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around question 7 – **What do you think would need to happen first to achieve that vision for education in Scotland?**

In considering question 7 above, participants could be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- Reflecting on your answers for questions 5 and 6, what is the first thing that needs to be addressed to make this happen?
- Who needs to be involved in the process?

**Core Question 8: How can we ensure that everyone involved in education in Scotland has a say in future decisions and actions?**

**Discussion prompts:**

A possible prompt to promote thinking around question 8 - **What needs to happen to enable everyone with an interest in Scottish education, to have their say and contribute to future decisions and actions?**

In considering question 8 above, participants could also be provided with the following scaffolding to support their thinking and any discussion. For example:

- How can parents/families be meaningfully engaged in knowing about and contributing to their child's learning in education settings, such as early years and schools?
- Thinking about your own circumstances, what would help you engage and contribute to future discussions and actions on Scottish education.

## Session 2: Our future learning, equity, wellbeing, rights & world

### Facilitator Notes

#### Purpose

This session supports facilitators to explore the five additional thematic questions of the National Discussion with groups. It is suggested that participants are split into small groups to explore some of the different themes included.

#### Feedback:

Towards the end of the session participants should either work together – or through the facilitator - to complete their group's response via the following link:

<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-feedback>

Participants can instead complete their own personal response via the formal consultation: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-on-education>

If neither of these options fit your needs, you can instead choose to email a summary to: [nationaldiscussiononeducation@gov.scot](mailto:nationaldiscussiononeducation@gov.scot), or post on social media #TalkScottishEducation (via Instagram or Twitter). Please remember to include a rough description of who was in your group and how many people took part.

#### Scaffolding/reframing Prompts

In considering each of the five additional questions, the following might be useful:

### **Our Future Learning: How can high quality educational experiences, teaching, and learning be best supported for children and young people in Scotland?**

- What could effective learning for every young person look like in the future? What is most important for children at different ages and stages of their development and education? And for meeting each child and young person's individual and diverse needs?
- What will those supporting learning need to do to achieve this? How can high quality teaching and the work of practitioners be supported and developed to meet future learner' needs? What is the role of parents and carers and other local and national organisations in supporting learners' success?
- How can parents and carers be meaningfully engaged in knowing about and contributing to their child's learning in education settings, such as early years and schools?
- What will the curriculum of the future look like? What will young people need to know and do in order to be successful?
- Does Curriculum for Excellence need to be updated in any way? Are the four capacities (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors) still relevant for future learners?
- What should be considered successful outcomes for learners? How will all learners have opportunities for their successes to be recognised? What

reforms, if any, to assessments will be required to meet future learners' needs?

- What would a successful education system look like?

### **Our Future Equity: How can every child and young person's individual needs be supported and addressed in the future?**

- What is needed for an education system that is fair to everyone and equitable? For example, it works for everyone and any barriers to access and educational opportunities are removed for children and young people. What needs to be done to make this happen?
- What barriers to children and young people's engagement and achievements in education need to be addressed? How could this be done?
- What would a future education system look like if every child was respected, valued and included, and no-one was left behind? How can this be achieved in future?
- How can the education system be inclusive of, and appropriate for, the diversity of Scotland's children and young people, and their communities? What would need to change to make this a reality?
- How can children and young people learn to respect and value the diversity of people in Scotland and around the world? What would need to change to make this a reality?

### **Our Future Well-Being: How can children and young people's mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing and safety be cared for and supported in the future?**

- What is needed to ensure all children and young people feel safe in education settings?
- What supports are required for the wellbeing of children and young people? And how can the right help at the right time be provided?
- How do we ensure that all children and young people feel good about themselves so that they are ready to learn?
- What opportunities are needed in the future for children and young people to be physically active in play and learning?
- What should the priorities be for children and young people's mental health? What can the future education system do?
- How can learners' views, experiences and suggestions be listened to, respected and included in future education decisions? What existing approaches can be built on or what new approaches are needed?

- How can respectful relationships be developed/achieved throughout the education system in future? What would this require?
- How can the future wellbeing of adults also be supported and addressed? What is required and how can this be achieved?

**Our Future Rights: How can the right of every child and young person to have opportunities to develop their full potential be achieved in future?**

- How can a child-friendly and learner-centred education system be developed for the future? What current successes can be built on and what changes are needed?
- How will an education system in the future fully represent and safeguard your rights and the rights of all young people?
- How can children and young people be supported to develop their understanding of human rights, to live peacefully, and to respect other people and the environment?

**Our Future World: How can children and young people be helped to learn about our changing world, so they feel able to positively contribute?**

- What are the key issues, in relation to Scottish education, that you feel passionate about right now? Are these being addressed and if not, how can they be best addressed in future?
- How can young people be supported in their educational pathways and transitions to fulfil their personal aspirations and future career ambitions?
- In your opinion, what would an appropriate and effective integration of digital technologies look like in learning and teaching?
- What do Scotland's learners need to know about the world we are living in, how it is changing, and how they can contribute to the world (locally and/or globally)?

## Feeding Back:

Thank you for taking part in the National Discussion.

These tasks will have helped us all think about some of the National Discussion questions.

Learners should now either work in groups – or with the facilitator - to complete their group's response via the following link: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-feedback>

Or, complete their own personal response via the following link: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-on-education>

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