

Education Policy Consultation 2019

The Scottish Co-operative Party wants to hear your opinion on education in Scotland and how to best to promote co-operative education in Scotland.

As you are reading this report, please consider the following questions:

- What is your biggest concern regarding the education system in your area?
- What changes have taken place in education in your area?
- What is your local communities experience of education?
- How could education be improved in your local community?
- What is your view of co-operation and co-operative values and principles in education?
- How could local government and the Scottish Government be changed to support co-operative education?
- What opportunities are there for co-operative values to be applied to and taught within Higher Education and lifelong learning sectors?
- How could we encourage co-operative solutions to childcare?
- Are there co-operative solutions to the cost of the school day?

If you are an individual Co-operative Party member, local party branch or council, co-operative society or active within the co-operative movement, we would like to hear your answers to these questions.

Our consultation is open until 30 April 2019

Governance

As co-operators we believe that ownership matters and that staff and service users should have a say in how services which they use are operated. In terms of Scotland's schools we see little appetite for a change in how they are governed, with the overwhelming majority of schools run directly by councils. We want to encourage councils to listen to staff, pupils and carers when deciding how schools are operated

What is co-operative education?

Children get the best education when schools, parents and communities work together and when they feel their views are taken into account. This approach is at the heart of co-operative education; supporting children to feel valued and to take responsibility for themselves and their communities.

In the last ten years, a growing number of Co-operative schools and places of education in England have offered this alternative vision of learning. It is a vision of learning founded on the co-operative values and principles.

Adopted a co-operative dimension to the curriculum and use teaching and learning methodologies which emphasise team goals, individual accountability, equal participation and co-construction.

The values, principles and models of co-operation should also be included in the curricula of the UK's education systems. This can instill the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity within education, and show pupils and students that another way of doing business is possible.

Co-operative Education in Scotland

We are very supportive of the work of CETS – the Co-operative Education Trust Scotland. Unfortunately, CETS has not been as well resourced in recent years as it could have been. CETS is a charitable education trust that promotes co-operative enterprise and co-operation throughout all levels of Scottish education. If we are serious about promoting co-operative education how will we ensure that the resources are provided

Scottish Co-operative Party Current Position

As outlined in our policy document for the 2017 council elections our headline policies around education are set out below.

We will ensure that education and training around the co-operative model is available at all levels of school, we would also encourage education and training around the co-operative model in Further and Higher Education. This would build on the work of Co-operative Education Trust Scotland. We would ensure that all economic development agencies are open to developing co-operatives and have the practical knowledge and resources to do so.

We believe that there is a very strong case for a co-operative approach to education. An approach that seeks to include pupils, students, parents and carers, teachers and other staff in the organisation of the learning experience.

We believe that the education system in Scotland should introduce pupils to the co-operative model, and believe that it should be taught at all levels from primary school up to postgraduate level at university. We also believe that the Scottish Government should provide support for the production and promotion of materials which will facilitate the teaching about co-operatives.

We believe that the governance of our education system should be open and transparent and have clear democratic controls. Any move towards a regional education board must be accompanied by a clear understanding of how democratic control is exercised.

Childcare is essential for many parents and carers, there is a need to develop more flexible and responsive childcare which meets the needs of modern families. We will promote co-operative and mutual models of wrap-around childcare.

We believe that cultural policy is important to Scotland's future and that Scotland's culture belongs to all the people of Scotland. Major cultural institutions should be accountable to the people who finance them, mostly the public. Boards of cultural trusts and quangos should look for ways to include service users and/or workers on their boards. These organisations should act in a way that takes the interests of workers and of service users or customers into account. There is also a very strong case for a secondary co-operative to deliver back-office services for groups of cultural organisations in a particular location.

How to respond

The Scottish Co-operative Party will be organising events around this policy discussion. Local branches are also encouraged to hold events which focus on this policy document. Co-operative societies and individual members are also encouraged to respond to this policy paper. Anyone with an interest in education policy is encouraged to respond.

Please send your policy suggestions to scotland@party.coop by 30 April 2019, the Scottish Co-operative Party will finalise its policy positions at the Scottish Party Council meeting in June 2019.