Intergenerational practice: outcomes and effectiveness

Local Government Education and Children's Services Research Programme

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intergenerational practice: outcomes and effectiveness

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Executive summary

Introduction

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), with the National Youth Agency (NYA) and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), was commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) to examine what works in intergenerational practice. Intergenerational practice refers to activities that bring together older adults and young people or children. Five intergenerational projects were selected to cover a range of foci and target groups. Proformas, semi-structured interviews and discussion groups were completed with younger and older participants, providers and relevant local authority (LA) staff. Baseline and endpoint data were collected from three projects. Only endpoint and retrospective data could be gathered from two other projects. Project materials and internal evaluation documents were also collected, where available, and have been included in the analysis.

Five approaches to intergenerational practice

The five projects focused on football, arts, knife crime, living history, and personal and social education. Two were located in schools, one in a health centre, one in a youth drop-in centre, and one at a football club.

Staff with experience of delivering intergenerational work coordinated all of the projects. Two included specific input from a LA intergenerational officer. Three of the projects were new activities, whilst the remaining two were continuing projects.

Each of the five case-study projects had the global aim of improving perceptions and challenging stereotypes of both young and older people. They also had various project-specific aims.

Two of the projects targeted young people who were hard to reach. One targeted a whole year group (year 8). One targeted gifted and talented pupils and another those with an aptitude or interest in art.

In both of these, the schools were specifically targeted in order to bring community groups together.

The majority of older people were over 60. They were recruited in a variety of ways, usually via the project coordinator who either worked for an older people's organisation or had links to older people.

There were variations in the amount and nature of training and preparation participants received prior to engaging in the intergenerational work. In three out of the five projects, sessions were held with the young and older people separately before the two groups were joined together. Much of the 'formal' training was given to the older people.

Nearly all of the projects began with 'getting to know you' activities and some developed codes of conduct with participants. The participants often determined the precise nature of the activities.

On some occasions young people worked with older people on a one-to-one basis, on others they worked in small groups. All but one of the projects, which was run over the course of a whole week, were delivered via weekly sessions held over an average of ten weeks.

Outcomes of intergenerational practice

Prior to undertaking the intergenerational activities the views of young and older people about each other were broadly positive. There was recognition that, although there are stereotypical views, not all people conform to them. This may reflect the type of participants who are likely to volunteer for intergenerational projects and the fact that some had engaged in similar activities beforehand.

The most fundamental outcome for all participants is that they enjoy the activities. They also develop friendships, gain increased understanding of the other age group, gain confidence and develop new skills.

Specific outcomes for young people include positive benefits for academic work and improved relationships with grandparents, as well as small positive increases in their enjoyment of learning, ability to make friends and their participation in community activities.

Additional outcomes experienced by older people relate to their well-being. They include a reduction in isolation, sense of satisfaction and pride when acknowledged by young people in the local community, and increased opportunities for involvement in other activities.

More general outcomes include greater community cohesion. Some young and older people said they are more likely to speak to older or younger people they have not met before, as they understand the other generation better and are more confident in interacting with them.

There is some evidence of potential negative outcomes, if stereotypes are reinforced through activities.

Implementing intergenerational practice: issues and challenges

Challenges centred on recruitment and selection of both young and older people, the activities provided, the organisation and logistics of intergenerational work, and working with partner agencies.

It can be difficult to engage sufficient numbers of older people for intergenerational practice to be effective. A range of reasons is cited including older people lacking confidence and having concerns about working with young people.

There were mixed views about the appropriateness of this type of work for different groups of young people. It was suggested that working with hard-to-reach groups, including NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and young people exhibiting challenging behaviour, for example, could be more difficult.

Young and older people were said to have different needs and different motives for attending intergenerational projects. It can, therefore, be a challenge to ensure activities are appropriate and maintain the interest of both groups.

The organisation and logistics of intergenerational work can be challenging. Finding a suitable time and venue for young and older people to work together can be problematic. It can also be difficult to ensure the commitment of partners, and existing pressures of work can hinder the establishment and delivery of intergenerational work. As gatekeepers to participants, partners may not prioritise or promote intergenerational work effectively.

Key features of effective intergenerational practice

The ratio of young people to older people was identified as a key factor for achieving successful outcomes. One-to-one work was preferable. The selection of the older people, ensuring a consistent group of participants and matching older people with young people with similar interests, is also considered important.

Understanding the needs of participants is critical to success. Providers advocate preparation sessions with individual groups before embarking on intergenerational work. Activities need to be tailored to the needs of both groups. Having a mutual or shared interest was said to be critical to success. Involving participants in the planning and design of activities and the use of interactive activities were also highlighted as critical.

The skills of those delivering projects were also identified as important for success. It is important to have a 'hands on' approach to challenging misconceptions and to agree a code of conduct from the outset. These factors are critical for avoiding the reinforcement of negative stereotypes.

Planning and organisation were said to be crucial elements of intergenerational work. The length and duration of sessions, finding a suitable venue and providing transport for older people were cited as issues.

Having a champion for intergenerational work, who could drive it forward strategically and make others aware of the benefits, was said to be beneficial. The support and commitment of partners allows intergenerational coordinators to draw on their expertise and can help ensure sustainability.

It is important to make sure appropriate funding is available and to be realistic about what can be achieved. Effective strategic planning, the involvement of partners and the mainstreaming of intergenerational activity were said to be critical for sustainability.

Concluding comments

The intergenerational projects selected for this study did not appear to include participants with entrenched negative views about younger or older generations, yet there was still evidence of these activities having an impact on the perceptions of participants despite their positive outlook.

Intergenerational work is complex and not easy to get right. Activities involving young and older people require careful planning and supervision to be successful. The preparation required should not be underestimated.

Many of the key factors for success were those that one would typically expect for any participatory project. Given the potential for reinforcing negative stereotypes, they become particularly crucial in this type of work.

It is vital that staff facilitating intergenerational work have the skills and confidence to deal with the unexpected and be able to react appropriately when issues arise.

Intergenerational work would often not be possible without support from external organisations that have the time and resource to establish and deliver activities. Having an intergenerational officer at LA level to drive this work forward is beneficial.

1 Background, aims and methods

The NFER, in collaboration with the NYA and NIACE, was commissioned by the LGA to evaluate what works in intergenerational practice.

This chapter introduces the research study and presents:

- the background to intergenerational practice

- the aims and objectives of the study

- the research methods employed during the study

- an outline of the rest of this report.

1.1 Background to intergenerational practice

The term 'intergenerational practice' covers a wide range of activities, and is only loosely defined (Granville, 2002). The accepted definition is:

> *Intergenerational programmes are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning amongst older and younger generations for individual and social benefits.*
>
> Abrahams *et al.*, 2007, p.1

Granville (2002) suggests that this means younger people aged up to 25 working with older people aged 50 or over, and makes a distinction from 'multigenerational working', which could also involve the generation between these two age groups. She also raises the issue of whether to include in the definition intergenerational activities involving members of the same family, suggesting, for example, that this is less successful if the aim is to break down stereotypes between older and younger generations.

Intergenerational practice undoubtedly has a role to play in the social context of the UK today. The UK has an ageing population, as the birth rate has declined at the same time as people are living longer (Granville, 2002). Alongside this, there is an argument that young and older people are becoming increasingly disconnected due to changing family patterns; the breakdown of traditional community structures; age-segregated activities and living arrangements; and policy interventions or services that target only specific groups (Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Granville, 2002).

Interest in intergenerational practice and what it can achieve has grown amongst practitioners and policymakers in the UK and Europe since the 1990s (Abrahams, 2007; Hatton-Yeo, 2006). In 2009, the government allocated £5.5 million to promoting intergenerational practices. The Generations Together programme aims to increase the number of older people working on intergenerational activity; encourage a more strategic and sustainable approach; and provide robust evidence of the effectiveness of intergenerational initiatives (DCSF, 2009).

There is some readily accessible literature suggesting intergenerational practice may be effective at achieving outcomes such as reducing ageism and stereotyping between generations; achieving some Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for children and young people; improving the health and well-being of older people; and reducing loneliness and social exclusion, particularly amongst older people (Abrahams *et al.*, 2007; Robinson *et al.*, 2006; Ellis, 2004).

In 2008, the LGA commissioned the NFER to undertake a literature review to find out what is known about the effectiveness of intergenerational practice. The findings from this review highlighted the potential benefits that could be gained from intergenerational activity for the well-being of both young and older people (Springate *et al.*, 2008). However, it also suggested the need for more research exploring the effectiveness of intergenerational practice in a UK context and demonstrating the outcomes from and key factors of successful projects.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this project was to evaluate what works in intergenerational practice. The objectives were to:

- gather evidence on the outcomes of intergenerational practice

- evaluate current intergenerational practice in order to conclude what works and why.

1.3 Methodology

The study was carried out in three phases.

- **Phase one**: identification and selection of intergenerational practice to be evaluated (in partnership with the NYA, NIACE and key third sector organisations such as the Beth Johnson Foundation, Age Concern and Community Service Volunteers).

- **Phase two**: collection of baseline data from surveys and semi-structured interviews and discussion groups with young and older people, providers and relevant LA staff.

- **Phase three**: collection of endpoint data from proformas, semi-structured interviews and discussion groups with young and older people, providers and relevant LA staff.

Five intergenerational projects were selected to cover a range of foci and target groups, as well as to ensure a spread of the various third sector organisations through whom they were originally recruited. Baseline and endpoint data was collected from three of the projects. However, due to difficulties in recruiting case studies operational within the specified timeline for this research study, only endpoint and retrospective data could be gathered from the remaining two projects. Project materials and internal evaluation documents were also collected, where available, and included in the analysis.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report's structure is:

- **Chapter 2**: Five approaches to intergenerational practice

- **Chapter 3**: Outcomes of intergenerational practice

- **Chapter 4**: Implementing intergenerational practice: issues and challenges

- **Chapter 5**: Key features of effective intergenerational practice

- **Chapter 6**: Concluding comments.

2 Five approaches to intergenerational practice

This chapter is an overview of the five approaches to intergenerational practice included in this study. It has details of:

- background and development

- aims and intended outcomes

- partners and providers

- target groups and recruitment

- training and preparation work with participants

- activities.

Appendix 1 gives descriptions of each of the five case studies.

2.1 Background and development

Staff with experience of delivering intergenerational work coordinated all of the case-study projects. In two instances this included specific input from a LA intergenerational officer. Three of the case studies were new activities where project coordinators were working with either key groups of young people or partners for the first time, or in a new geographical area. The inspiration for one of the projects (case study 3) came from a young person with a specific desire to overcome the negative images of young people in the media. Working with youth centre staff and the LA's intergenerational officer, this evolved over time into an intergenerational project.

The remaining case studies were continuing projects. These activities were well developed and some, if not all, of the older people had been involved previously. For example, in case studies 4 and 5, the projects have been delivered in schools on a regular basis over several years.

2.2 Aims and intended outcomes

Each of the five case-study projects had the global aim of improving perceptions and challenging stereotypes of young and older people. However, they also had other project specific aims.

- **Case study 1 – football learning programme for NEETs**: inspire young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET); promote social inclusion by bringing together community groups who would not typically engage with each other; and increase the physical, dietary, mental and emotional well-being of all participants.

- **Case study 2 – community arts project**: create a space where young and older people feel comfortable to share their skills and experiences; engage in the creative process; and develop relationships between the arts organisation, local community groups and the school.

- **Case study 3 – knife crime project**: challenge stereotypical images of young people; engage older people with a local voluntary-run youth provision for hard-to-reach young people; reduce the social isolation of older people; and improve community cohesion.

- **Case study 4 – living history project for gifted and talented pupils**: create links between older people and a local secondary school; address negative stereotypes (particularly about older people); enhance students' writing and communication skills and their understanding of the past; provide older people with the opportunity to reminisce about their lives; and introduce older people to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

- **Case study 5 – personal, social and health education (PSHE) developing an 'ideal community'**: provide pupils with an opportunity to participate in 'active citizenship'; engage young people

with members of the local community and develop a wider perception of their community; help different generations develop mutual respect for each other; and enable different generations to utilise, share and benefit from each other's skills and expertise.

2.3 Target groups and their recruitment

Two of the case-study projects included young people who were considered to be hard to reach. In case study 1, this included young people who were NEET recruited via various agencies, such as Connexions and a leaving care support service. In case study 3, this included young people who were, or at risk of becoming, non-attendees, excluded from school and young offenders. These young people attended a local voluntary-funded youth centre and were recruited via word of mouth and posters displayed in the centre.

Of the remaining case studies, which comprised secondary school pupils (years 7–9), one involved gifted and talented pupils and the other young people with an interest in and aptitude for art. Pupils were selected by school staff and involved on a voluntary basis in their own time. In both of these projects there were some community tensions and the schools were specifically targeted in order to bring community groups together.

The final case study consisted of a whole year group (year 8), where the intergenerational work was a compulsory part of their PSHE curriculum.

The majority of the older people were over 60, with the oldest being 93 years. They were recruited in a variety of ways, usually via the project coordinator, who either worked for an older people's organisation or had links to older people via Age Concern, sheltered accommodation, over-60s and pensioners clubs, welfare societies, and football supporters' clubs. In one case, a project was advertised via flyers distributed to the local community and, in another, participants were recruited from a pensioners' group following a visit from a provider who gave a talk about intergenerational practice. There were also several instances where older people with experience of intergenerational practice acted as advocates for this work and recruited friends and family to participate in activities.

2.4 Training and preparation work with participants

There were variations in the amount and nature of the training and preparation participants received prior to engaging in intergenerational work. In three of the case studies, project coordinators and their partners held sessions with the young and older people separately before the two groups were joined together. The aim of these sessions was to set out clearly what was expected of participants, what will happen, identify individual needs and interests, and build the confidence and trust of participants (in each other and project staff).

Much of the 'formal' training and preparation was given to the older people and covered aspects of safeguarding and child protection. Older people that were going to be left alone with young people were CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked to ensure they were suitable to work with children and vulnerable young people. Several of the projects also obtained written consent from young people's parents or carers.

2.5 Activities and delivery

Nearly all of the projects began with 'getting to know you' activities to bond the group with each other and delivery staff. Some projects developed codes of conduct with their participants. It was common for projects to discuss commonly held stereotypes of young and older people in the initial session.

Although the projects all had broad aims, the participants often determined the precise nature of individual projects. Some time was spent in deciding how participants wanted the project to develop, which young or older person they wanted to work with, and how they wanted to work together.

Project delivery varied. On some occasions young people worked on a one-on-one basis with a designated older person, in other case studies participants worked in small groups. There were a few examples where project staff delivered formal sessions, such as a historical overview of photography. Other sessions were more active involving, for example, cookery, filming and cultural visits.

All but one of the projects was delivered in weekly sessions. These were usually up to two hours long and held over an average duration of ten weeks. Two of the projects involving secondary school pupils were delivered after school, and the other was delivered in lesson time as part of the PSHE curriculum. One of the case studies focused specifically on NEETs and was held over a week with participants required to attend daily.

Two of the projects took place in schools, one in the classroom as part of PSHE activities, and the other in the library, learning resource centre and other locations within the school such as the technology block, where cookery sessions were conducted. In one project, whilst the intergenerational work itself took place in the local health centre, preparation work with the young people took place in the school. Another project was mainly located in a youth centre, although outdoor visits also took place. The final project was located in a football club, which was selected as an attractive location for both young and older people.

3 Outcomes of intergenerational practice

This chapter highlights the outcomes of intergenerational practice evidenced in this study. It draws on the pre- and post-activity proformas completed by young people, and case-study visits to the projects. However, the findings of the proformas suggest that little or no change was evident as a result of involvement in the intergenerational projects. Where there was a small change in attitudes and beliefs, this tended to be a positive change. This is likely to be a result of the generally positive attitudes and beliefs expressed by young people prior to starting the activities. Given such a positive starting point, it would be unlikely that there would be a significant positive shift. This chapter looks at:

- participants' attitudes to young or older people prior to starting the intergenerational activities

- outcomes for all participants

- outcomes for young people

- outcomes for older people

- community cohesion

- potential negative outcomes.

3.1 Attitudes to young or older people prior to activities

In three of the five case studies, young people discussed their views of older people prior to undertaking the intergenerational activities, and their views were broadly positive. They recognised that although there are stereotypical views of older people, not all conform to them.

The young people felt that older people tended to be intimidated by them, especially if they are part of a group. Whilst they recognised that some young people were intimidating, they felt it was unfair to assume all young people are a threat. As one young person

explained: 'The worst thing is when they grab onto their handbag when you walk by, because they think you are going to rob their handbag.' Whilst there were some indications of stereotypical views in some young people, for example, that older people are smelly, grumpy or frail, overall the main feeling was that older people are 'just people' and all are different.

The proformas that some young people filled in prior to the activities also suggested that their attitudes and beliefs were generally already positive towards older people and about mixing with others. They already disagreed, for example, with the views that young people do not get on with older people; and older people do not like young people. Most young people also disagreed that they (young people) found it hard to make new friends, disliked school and engaged in risky behaviour. They already agreed that they had lots of friends and mixed with people of different ages. This may reflect the type of young people involved in the projects and the fact that some of them had been engaged in intergenerational activity beforehand.

The older people who discussed their views prior to starting the activities were also generally positive about young people. Some had worked with young people throughout their lives in, for example, youth clubs, sports clubs and schools, and had a good understanding of them. Some of the older people were acutely aware of the negative way young people are portrayed in the media, and felt this was unfair. As one older person explained:

People view young people as the enemy quite often [...].
The newspapers tend to give examples of extreme behaviour and that sort of labels all the young kids, and it is nothing like that.

Overall, the projects visited in the study were not working with people who have entrenched negative attitudes towards each other. However, as described in this report, perception change is not the only outcome of intergenerational practice; there are other significant and beneficial outcomes for all participants.

3.2 Outcomes for all participants

Perhaps the most fundamental outcome for participants is they **enjoy the activities**. Young and older people explained how they **develop friendships**, and these (where appropriate) continue beyond the life of the project, for example, with people talking to each other in the street, or when older people come into schools or community centres when the young people are there. This particularly occurred when the activities enabled significant one-to-one interaction with a young person working with an older person to achieve something.

Young people, and some older people, also suggested that they **gain increased understanding of the other age group** from participation. Young people learnt more about the lives of older people and understood that older people had been like them once, and are 'just kind of normal […] just older than us'. Some older people also felt they understood young people better and that the activities 'gave us some insight into the way youngsters behave […]. You can see exactly the same thought processes as we had when we were kids'. In addition, the proformas filled out by young people suggested small positive changes to the statement that they know a lot about older people, and that older people know little about younger people.

Both young and older people also gain **confidence** from participating in intergenerational activities. This is evidenced by the case studies and a small positive change in the young person proformas before and after projects. For all participants, this sometimes related to learning new skills and finding they could succeed in tasks. Some young people also felt they were more confident in speaking to and interacting with older people. Some older people felt a renewed confidence as they were able to do something useful and 'give something back' to society.

Participants also develop **new skills**.

- Older people learning technical and/or practical skills, such as IT, photography and how to operate a video camera.

- Communication skills for all participants, and especially interaction between generations.

For example, the young person proformas showed a small increase in their perceived ability to mix with people of all ages.

- 'Soft' skills for young people, such as team working, conversation skills and social skills. As a member of school staff explained: 'Because they're working with older people, it opens up their social skills in a different way.'

3.3 Outcomes for young people

The most significant outcomes for young people were those described in section 3.2. However, there were additional outcomes that were expressed in relation to some of the activities. Where projects focus on activities that relate to the curriculum, such as history and PSHE, there can be **positive benefits for academic work**. For example, some young people felt that hearing firsthand about World War II would aid them when they came to study it in history. Others were able to use the artwork produced as part of their GCSE coursework.

In addition, some young people develop **improved relationships with grandparents** as they came to a better understanding of older people. This occurred where the young people had one-to-one contact with an older person and the chance to get to know them well. As one young person explained:

My nan rings every week and sometimes it's really difficult talking to her because she doesn't listen […]. I used to say to my mum, 'Don't make me talk to her', and then, after I'd had my session with [older person]*, I actually asked mum to put me on the phone with her.*

Young people also spoke about their desire to take part in further intergenerational activities and, in some cases, young people have progressed to being volunteers with older people's organisations.

In addition, the proformas completed by young people suggest small positive increases in their enjoyment of learning, ability to make friends, and their participation in community activities.

3.4   Outcomes for older people

There were several additional outcomes experienced by older people, which related to their **well-being**. Generally, older people stressed that it was good to enjoy the activities and do something positive for the young people and society:

> *You feel better for it, don't you? After you've been with the kids you feel that there's something good in our lives instead of watching television and falling asleep.*

> *I know it's given me something to live for, an interest in life, and you feel like you're doing something towards society.*

Participating in intergenerational activities also **reduces the isolation of older people**, where they have few opportunities to socialise. Older people described the intergenerational activities as an opportunity to get out of the house, meet with other people, and also build friendships with other older people. One individual had been suffering from depression when he got involved in intergenerational activities, and explains: 'It's filled a void in my life which needed filling […]. I made a lot of friends […] as well.' There were also a number of instances where older people spoke about a sense of **satisfaction and pride** when they were acknowledged by the young people they had worked with in school and the local community.

For some older people, participating in an intergenerational activity can be the **start of a wider involvement in other activities**, such as other intergenerational activities or volunteering in the community. This has additional benefits as they are involved in further positive activities. One older person explained how he had got involved in multiple activities through starting an intergenerational activity and commented:

> *What's turned out now is that there aren't enough hours in the day. They say that when you retire you vegetate, but* [there are] *not enough hours in the day.*

This tends to occur when there is a key individual, who recruits the older people to the intergenerational activity, whom they get to know and trust, and who is able to encourage and support them to get involved in more activities.

3.5   Community cohesion

There are also some outcomes that related to **community cohesion**. Young and older people who have met through intergenerational activities will stop and speak to each other. Some participants also say that they are more likely to speak to older or younger people they have not met before, as they understand the other generation better, and are more confident about interacting with them. The proformas completed by young people showed small positive changes in their belief that they are nice to older people, and that older people like younger people. In addition, where projects bring together young and older people from different ethnic groups, there is a potential for cross-cultural understanding to be enhanced.

3.6   Potential negative outcomes

Whilst the majority of the outcomes evidenced in the study are positive, there is some evidence of **potential negative outcomes**, if stereotypes are reinforced through the activities. For example, one older person found herself doing an activity alongside a large group of young people who were 'completely out of control'. She says: 'They were idiotic, immature and riotous and I was quite intimidated.' Although this did not negatively affect her perceptions of young people (she recognised that they are all different), there was the potential for this to happen.

Some young people at another project indicated the older people they worked with and the activities had been boring, and the older people were too dominant and had not listened to them. Again, whilst the outcomes for this group were generally positive, there is clearly the potential for negative stereotypes to be reinforced. The proformas completed by young people also suggested a slight negative change in their belief that older people are scared of younger people.

4 Implementing intergenerational practice: issues and challenges

This chapter focuses on the issues and challenges associated with implementing intergenerational practice. Ways of overcoming challenges and the key factors that make intergenerational practice work are discussed in Chapter 5. Challenges centred on:

* recruitment and selection of older people

* recruitment and selection of young people

* activities

* organisation and logistics

* working with partners.

A summary of the challenges is given in Appendix 2.

4.1 Recruitment and selection of older people

One of the most frequently identified challenges was the recruitment of older people, which was said to be **time consuming**. This can make organisations, such as schools, reluctant to become involved in intergenerational work.

In most instances, providers stated that it could be **difficult to engage sufficient numbers of older people**. Some projects initially selected did not take place due to the low numbers of older people. In others, older people had to be shared amongst groups of young people or the group of older people was inconsistent, making it difficult for young people to build relationships.

A number of reasons were proffered for older people's reluctance. Some lack confidence in working with young people, whilst others have doubts about whether they have anything to offer young people, as illustrated by this older person:

> As you get older you can lose your confidence and, because of that, you don't always listen properly […]. A

lot of young people speak really fast and you don't always understand.

There can also be peer pressure that instils the view that those who think they have something to offer are 'above their station'.

The weather and the timing of projects, for example, during Christmas time or the summer holidays, can also influence older people's participation. Older people stated that people of their age may be busy and may be reluctant to get involved because they do not get paid for it:

> Not many people put themselves out to do something for others […]. They'd rather do something for themselves, especially when they're not being paid.

It is important to recognise that not all older people will be interested in participating.

It was also evident from the discussions with older people that **they may have concerns about working with young people** and may feel intimidated. According to one person:

> When you start a project, there's the uncertainty of the unknown. Everyone's frightened of the unknown. You don't know what to expect.

Young people, who were concerned that the older people may be scared of them, also picked this up:

> I think some of them might be a bit nervous at being approached by youths and teenagers who are obviously stereotyped as being dark, aggressive, not very friendly.

A specific **difficulty in recruiting older men** was highlighted. One male older person referred to his lack of experience with young people:

> I've never been involved with children before because of working in industry […]. It [recruiting men] might be easier now that heavy industry has gone and men are involved in family life more.

Some of the comments from young people suggested that they thought they might not get a balanced view of older people unless they had the opportunity to work with both males and females:

You don't really get to know what all older people are like. It could have just been that one person. I would have liked to know what it was like and if it was different working with an old woman.

A further difficulty in **accessing older people who are more isolated** was cited. Providers stated that the ones who volunteer tend to be those who are actively engaged in the community already.

Some older people are better at working with young people than others. This may be because they have experience of young people, for example, their grandchildren or through other voluntary activities, such as football coaching and the Brownies. According to one provider:

Some [participants], *particularly men, can be very impatient and grumpy with young people. You are trying to dispel myths around grumpy old people but you have got to take the good with the bad, it's about learning to respect others.*

Providers and both young and older people thought some older people might not be able to put aside their misconceptions about young people. According to one young person:

They treat people all the same even though we're all different […]. *If there is a gang in the street or something, they treat everyone like that if they've experienced that* […]. *They don't let anything else in.*

Safeguarding issues can also be a barrier to recruiting older people, since all those coming into contact with young people need to be CRB checked. This may make people reluctant to take part and can be time consuming to arrange, as noted by this deputy headteacher:

I certainly think for schools that haven't been involved in it [intergenerational work]*, it* [CRB checking] *would be one of the big barriers for them with all the pressures that come from elsewhere. Where would they find the time for that?*

Older people's **lack of understanding of intergenerational practice** was also said to make it difficult to promote this type of work and to secure their engagement. Some older people, for example, think they are attending a course and that they can pick and choose from the activities on offer. Others see it as a one-way activity, in that they are giving something to the young people, rather than gaining something themselves.

4.2 Recruitment and selection of young people

Selecting the right group of young people to be involved in intergenerational work can also be a challenge. This is crucial because there is a danger that the activity can reinforce the stereotypes it is trying to dispel. Among interviewees there were mixed views about the appropriateness of this type of work for different groups of young people.

It was suggested that it was more challenging to deliver intergenerational activities for **young adults** (that is those aged between 18–24 years old), as their perceptions of old people could be too ingrained. It was also thought to be more challenging to undertake this type of work with **hard-to-reach young people** or **those exhibiting challenging behaviour**, as they may reinforce negative stereotypes. According to one provider:

There is always that danger, because what you are trying to do is dispel the stereotypes, that you reinforce the stereotypes.

According to another:

I have to safeguard these older people […]. *I cannot take older people into a situation where there is a disruptive child.*

Young people too were uncertain whether intergenerational work was suitable for all youngsters:

I'm not sure about the badly behaved students doing this because they might not respect them [the older people].

There was a suggestion that problems could arise if projects are over ambitious, as indicated by this deputy headteacher:

If you're too adventurous and you go for a large group or you go for some very challenging pupils it might not be the right thing to do at first until you have got that relationship and the older persons' representative knows the volunteers as well.

There were, however, examples of successful intergenerational activity with such young people, and the view held by some young and older people was that poorly behaved or deprived children might benefit more, as indicated by this older person:

I think perhaps, because the children volunteer for this themselves, we are getting children largely from good, caring homes so we are not getting at children who are deprived and who might benefit even more.

One young person reiterated this: 'I think this could teach them [badly behaved students] to respect older people.'

Where young people were asked to volunteer for intergenerational activities, they suggested that some **young people may think older people are boring**, or there might be **peer pressure** not to attend:

That's why one of the boys doesn't come any more […]. He would have got some stick off his mates. I did […]. People care too much about what their friends think and they shouldn't because we got loads from it.

Concerns expressed by other young people also suggested they were worried by **older people's frailty**:

I was nervous in case they were less able, in case they made it awkward […]. I don't know how I'm going to take it.

Don't be afraid of them because [name of young person] *didn't do it because he thought, if they cried, he wouldn't know what to do.*

As with older people, young people's **lack of understanding of intergenerational practice** was also said to make it difficult to secure their engagement.

4.3   Activities

Young and older people were said to have **different needs and different motives** for attending intergenerational programmes. It can be a challenge,

therefore, to ensure activities are appropriate and maintain the interest of both groups.

Young people may prefer an opportunity to take part in informal activities, in contrast to school, whilst older people may prefer to have a structured learning environment. Whereas older people may prefer a quiet lunchtime, young people may need to be kept occupied. If older people cannot understand or hear properly, they can be embarrassed or lack confidence.

It can be **difficult to find mutual points of interest**. Young people expressed concern at the outset that they might get bored or not enjoy the activities on offer. Older people who are active are also likely to be more selective about the type of activities they engage in.

4.4   Organisation and logistics

The planning and organisation of intergenerational work can be particularly challenging, as illustrated by this coordinator:

You have so many people you have to line up to work. It is quite difficult and frustrating, plus it is not our stadium. I have no sway over whether people take part or the rooms we get access to.

Activities have to be scaled down to suit what is realistic and possible within a given timescale. A teacher said: 'Sometimes you start with a grand idea and it gets paired down because things are not practical.'

This can be exacerbated by **short-term funding** dictating the timescale and target group, and driving the nature of the intergenerational work. According to providers, projects sometimes had to finish when relationships between participants were just starting to develop and when they were starting to see an impact. In addition, accessing specific types of funding may restrict activity to certain types of young people, such as those that are gifted and talented.

However, in contrast, providers stated the source of funding could necessitate broadening intergenerational work to wider numbers of young people rather than continuing ongoing work with the same group (which may be more productive).

It can be a challenge to **find a time that is suitable** for both young and older people to meet. Activities for young people are probably best undertaken after school, whilst older people prefer them to be during the day. According to older people and providers, older people who are active often have things planned at set times during the week and are unlikely, therefore, to be able to commit to a whole week of activities. According to one provider: 'The ones that come today will be different from the ones that come tomorrow because they can't commit to doing something every day.' If the group of older people is not consistent, it can be difficult for young people to build relationships with them.

Finding a venue suitable for both young and older people can also be problematic. Older people may be unwilling to travel far, or at certain times. It can be unhelpful for activities to take place in community locations that are unknown to young people. **Lack of transport** can, therefore, be a barrier to intergenerational work and organising transport, for the older people in particular, can be **time consuming and costly**. The older people in more than one project indicated that, if transport had not been arranged, they would have been less likely to attend.

4.5 Working with partners

Intergenerational work usually involves working with a number of partners and this, according to project coordinators, can have its own difficulties. It can be difficult to ensure **partners' commitment**. Project coordinators stated that, as the gatekeepers to participants, it could be challenging when partners do not promote or prioritise intergenerational work. Partners can **lack understanding of intergenerational work** and lack experience of working with older people or with specific groups of younger people.

Pressures of work, particularly on school staff, can hinder the setting up and delivery of intergenerational work. It can, therefore, be difficult to sustain school staff's involvement. Another potential problem of working in schools is the **clash of older people with support staff**, to whom older people can be seen as a potential threat.

5   Key features of effective intergenerational practice

This chapter focuses on the key features of effective intergenerational practice. These link closely with the challenges already identified and centre on:

- recruitment and selection of older people

- preparation of participants

- activities

- delivery

- organisation and logistics

- partnership working

- funding and sustainability.

A summary of the key features of effective practice is given in Appendix 3.

5.1   Recruitment and selection of older people

Given the difficulties in engaging older people (see section 4.1), those developing intergenerational practice need to be **proactive in engaging older people** through community groups. It is important to encourage both men and women to be involved, but also to recognise that some may not wish to participate. Providers and older people agreed that giving older people accurate information and involving them in preparation work (see section 5.2) enables them to make an informed choice about attendance.

It was considered important by providers to **meet the older people beforehand** and to **select them** since not all older people have experience of young people and some are able to mix more successfully with them than others. According to one provider:

Because they are working one on one […] it is important that I use the right volunteers, because I cannot be sat

listening to everyone and what they are telling the children.

The young people thought that it was important to recruit older people who are friendly towards them so they are easy to talk to.

The **ratio of young people** to older people was identified as a key factor for successful outcomes. Equal numbers of young and older people was said by providers and older people to allow them to work on a one-to-one basis and to have increased contact. This was stressed by one provider: 'When you end up getting four older people and 20 younger people, the balance is totally wrong and they are never going to engage.' According to another provider, a ratio of two young people to one older person is also 'a really good dynamic' as the young people give each other confidence.

The young people themselves said it is helpful to work with **a consistent group of older people** so that they are able to build a relationship with them, although some are also keen to work with a range of older people. Where projects run over a number of sessions, it might be beneficial to gain the commitment of the older people to attend all the planned sessions beforehand.

Both young and older people suggested it is beneficial to **match the older people to young people** with the same interests. In one project (see case study 1) the young people chose who they wanted to work with and this was thought by the older people to be helpful:

Sometimes they do this in advance when they read a little bit about us and then pick, and that seems to help the situation when we both meet for the first time.

5.2   Preparation of participants

Providers agreed that **understanding participants' needs** is critical for success. This was emphasised by

providers: 'I think the biggest thing is understanding what the client's needs are and what they want to do.'

It was common for there to be three or four preparation sessions with individual groups before embarking on intergenerational work. Preparation sessions allow providers to get to know the participants and to assess their needs. They also ensure that participants know what is expected of them and enable them to feel comfortable and confident in what they are doing.

Providers and young people thought it beneficial for older people to receive advice and guidance on how to approach young people.

The young people involved in intergenerational work may not know each other and may also benefit from preparation work. It was suggested that more preparation might be required for some groups than others.

It was also considered beneficial by some providers to integrate older people into intergenerational work gradually. This allows them to get to know and support each other, and builds their confidence. Reviewing sessions with older people was said to be helpful in ensuring issues are identified early. Using established participants to support new ones was reported by providers to work well: 'The other volunteers are showing them the ropes, helping them along the way really. They're then really enthused about the next time.'

Preparation work can also involve young people reflecting on their views of older people and helping to shape the activities so they have more ownership of the project (see section 5.3), as illustrated by this provider:

To pull them together as a group I have to look at what their views are about older people and get them to examine them, and then I get them to devise a programme for the next nine weeks.

5.3 Activities

Taking account of the young and older people's needs when planning and designing the activities was said by providers to be a key factor for success. To be

successful all participants need to be able to get something out of the activities on offer. According to one provider: 'You have just got to plan it around their needs.' Young people agreed that activities had to be tailored to the needs of both groups so everyone is comfortable taking part. In some instances, where activities took place in schools, activities were also tailored to the needs of the curriculum so that there is a shared common interest.

Having a **mutual or shared interest** was a key factor and a common feature of most projects. This was said to break down barriers and 'make it work'. A coordinator in the football project illustrates this:

With this you have got young people who are passionate about football talking to older people who are passionate about football and that is what breaks down your barriers […]. Talking about something because it means something to them […]. They will engage and they will build bonds because it is a shared interest and it is a shared knowledge base.

Similarly, according to another provider, focusing on their different perspectives on one media, in this case, photography, empowered participants to be able to share ideas:

We showed the images and that gave the groups a strong starting point and something confident and comfortable they could talk about, and that was a really important part to making it successful.

Both young and older people reiterated that intergenerational work was more successful when the young people have a genuine interest and have knowledge to contribute. According to one young person:

Rather than talking about the olden days, we could have done something we were interested in, something that we know lots about that we can teach them.

Involving participants in the planning and design of the project was said to be of paramount importance. According to one provider, flexibility was the key to responding to the needs of the group and participants taking ownership:

If I had come up with a rigid plan, it wouldn't have been their project […]. I think that it is very good for those

people to take ownership of it, to be part of it because it's their project.

There was general agreement that, to achieve the desired outcomes, the **activities need to be interactive**. The young people themselves stated, if the aim was to influence people's attitudes, it was preferable to have activities where they had the opportunity to talk to older people about their views of young people, and ones which enable them to show young people at their best:

I would have liked to do an activity where you actually do something in the community, actually doing something rather than making an ideal community on paper because you can't exactly prove yourself to be good and proper and not anti-social when you do this […]. If we had an activity where we could just talk to them and talk to them about what makes them think bad things about young people and why we think those things about old people.

Providers, and young and older people thought it was good practice to use **'ice breaker'** sessions at the beginning of a project. According to one young person:

We had to get to know each other first […]. It was awkward at first because we didn't know who they were and we were just going to ask them about their lives and we had to ease into it.

Although not especially cited as a factor for success, a further key feature of many of the intergenerational projects was the creation of a tangible product and the celebration of achievements.

5.4   Delivery

The **skills of those delivering intergenerational work** were said by providers and older people to be key to success. In one instance, for example, where two staff worked together, their skills in working with young people and older people respectively were said to be complementary. Some providers and older people also felt their passion for intergenerational work was critical.

According to one provider, with longstanding experience in intergenerational work, **a 'hands on' approach**, where incidences that allow you to focus on common misconceptions are dealt with, is essential:

You can't deliver it effectively unless you are there […]. You have to be able to deal with things when they are not done positively, stop the session and deal with it there and then and not be scared of it really […]. You know sometimes the younger person might be telling the older person something they are feeling very uncomfortable with. I like to be there to […] help them understand really what the younger person is saying and the other way round.

Providers advocated that it was vital to have clear ground rules and **agree a code of conduct** from the outset. This is essential for the safety of participants and to avoid the reinforcement of negative stereotypes.

In some projects, a code of conduct was agreed and signed up to by participants at the first session. Where work was taking place in a school, it was agreed with the school beforehand.

Those responsible for delivering intergenerational practice have to be able to manage the relationships between participants, particularly as the different groups have different expectations and needs. This involves an element of risk management. According to one provider: 'I cannot take older people into a situation where there is a disruptive child.'

Interviewees stated that the first day was particularly important for setting the tone of future work.

Providers also advocated **a high ratio of staff to participants** in order to ensure effective management and sufficient support for the young and older people.

5.5   Organisation and logistics

Planning and organisation are said to be crucial elements of intergenerational work as these can help reduce the barriers to participation.

The **length and duration of sessions** were cited as key factors for success. It is important to consider the groups being targeted, although sessions of about two hours' duration once a week were common and were generally thought to work well.

There was a shared view that there should be **ongoing and regular contact** between the young and older people in order to impact their attitudes.

According to one provider: 'If they are continuing to meet, we are […] continuing to build on those relationships and the respect they had for each other.' Young people also advocated the need for regular contact: 'I think it should last longer than just ten weeks so we can learn more about them and have more time.'

Young and older people agreed that it is helpful if the **venue is familiar and welcoming to both groups**. If participants feel safe and comfortable they are more likely to take part. One of the key factors for the success of one intergenerational project was its drop-in centre location, which young and older people agreed made it more likely that young people would participate and was a comfortable environment for the older people as well. This young person stressed the importance of finding an appropriate venue:

> Here [the school library] *we know the place. If we didn't know the place, we might have been a bit nervous about it. It just makes it even harder to know the person then because you have got to know the new place you are in.*

Making participants, particularly the older people, feel welcome was also considered important. The older people also appreciated having a break with a free drink or having lunch provided.

According to one deputy headteacher, where older people are given special badges to make them feel part of the school, it is important to integrate older people into the school 'so they're a little bit more than someone who has just walked in off the street to look at the plumbing'. This comment from an older person illustrates how this was appreciated:

> It's a lovely atmosphere of getting together. Usually we arrive at the school early and we go into the staff room where we have tea and biscuits and a lovely chat together and then we all go to the classroom. It's very good for us […]. A lot of schools provide us with lunch, which is nice.

The location of the venue is also an important factor as this dictates whether it is accessible to participants. **Provision of transport** for older people was said to be a critical factor in success as this can minimise the barriers to participation. This was reiterated by the older people: 'We get picked up and brought home, that's the main thing.'

It is important to consider the health and safety aspects of intergenerational work prior to implementation. For safeguarding reasons **older people must be CRB checked** and no adults left unsupervised with young people. It is also important to get permission from parents for young people to undertake off-site activities and for photographs to be taken.

5.6 Working with partners

Having a **champion for intergenerational work** was said to make a difference to a project's success. Having someone at a strategic level to drive intergenerational practice forward and make partners aware of the benefits was thought beneficial. An intergenerational officer said: 'If there is somebody in a role like mine, you can help facilitate these projects then you have obviously got to go and replicate that somewhere else.' If someone is appointed in this position it is said to give an important message that this type of work has LA backing:

> I think if they have got a role like mine, what they have got is local authority buy-in and I that if you are local authority they are employing somebody and they are taking the work seriously and driving it forward, then you have got that backing as well. So that is really key.

Partnership working was said to be a key factor in the success of intergenerational work because this enables a project to **draw on others' expertise** and can add value. It is beneficial to develop relationships with others who are passionate about intergenerational work, who are able to spread this enthusiasm, and be proactive in making links with the community.

The importance of **working with partners beforehand** and developing good relationships with them was stressed. It was recommended that projects start small and build up to ensure involvement and commitment. The projects visited had already developed strong relationships with partners who were then able to act as advocates for intergenerational practice.

The ethos and support of schools or other organisations involved were also cited as key factors for success. It is important that partners, such as schools, are supportive of the project. It was considered helpful to train school staff about the role of the older people so they would not be threatened by their

presence (see section 4.5). The older people working in a school also felt the support of the teachers was important. According to one deputy head:

> He [the assistant head] *was up for it and then I approached the head of year* [...] *and he was positive and he was willing to see something new introduced* [...]. *You need them on board if you are going to have the clout with other staff in other departments.*

According to another deputy headteacher, the visibility of working with partners was a key factor for success. In this project, he and the intergenerational worker taught the programme together and he felt this was a good model for the young and older people. He also felt that the project's visibility in terms of extending it to other areas was an important factor:

> *It would be a much more visible sign that older people aren't just those people with walking sticks and so on. We want to try and extend it so that all departments have an opportunity to engage with intergenerational learning.*

5.7 Funding and sustainability

Planning includes making sure **appropriate funding** is available and **being realistic** about what can be achieved with the funding and resources available. It is vital that there are no costs to the participants for taking part.

The majority of the costs associated with intergenerational work were said to be **staff time**, **transport and venue costs**. According to one provider, whilst the projects were resource intensive to set up, the running costs were minimal. Costs for the projects, which themselves were highly variable, when specified, were in the region of £2–10,000. For some projects there were said to be minimal costs because facilities were already in place.

It was evident from the comments about cost-effectiveness that the costs for most intergenerational projects were shared amongst partners and that in-kind resources were offered. The hope was, in some instances, that by working with partners, projects would eventually become self-sustaining.

Involvement in intergenerational work was beneficial for some agencies and organisations as it enabled

them to **achieve targets or to reach specific target groups**, which they would find difficult to address alone. For others, it was seen as a revenue earner or as bringing in resources. **Schools were said to benefit as**, in these cases, the costs were usually met by outside providers. According to one school staff member, even though the value of intergenerational work was perceived as 'enormous', the school would not be able to afford the cost itself.

According to one provider, you have to **mainstream intergenerational activity** and ensure that it is sustainable in order to get meaningful change. In order to sustain the work it was suggested that it should be embedded in the culture and ethos of the school or organisation. In this way, it was thought, young people would receive more regular encounters with older people, as indicated by this provider:

> *The older people are invited back to school by the school, things like harvest festival, so they become part of the school community. So it is not just the ten kids you have worked with, it is the other kids seeing the older people, 80 odd, 90 odd walking into the school without a wheelchair and not living in a home.*

Across the five projects there was a view that intergenerational work was more likely to be sustained if **partners are involved**. In fact, in some projects, one of the key aims was to enlist other agencies or providers in intergenerational work so that they could continue working with young and older people in the future (see section 2.2).

Activities need to be **planned well strategically**. It is important to get the first session right as this can result in spin-offs and may encourage partners to use intergenerational work where working together with young and older people might add value:

> *If you don't get it right the first time the participants won't continue. It is good practice to plan specifically, intentionally, and strategically* [...]. *If they have enjoyed the experience quite often spin-off projects will come from it and partners will say 'I am doing this with the older generation, would the younger ones like to join in?'.*

Monitoring and evaluation can ensure that future work builds on success. Evaluation can be important for the planning of future projects and in enabling providers to share success with partners.

6   Concluding comments

This study highlights key factors for success and the outcomes from five intergenerational projects. The intergenerational projects selected for this study did not appear to include participants with entrenched negative views about younger or older generations yet there was still some evidence of impact from this work despite the group's positive outlook.

Intergenerational work is complex and not easy to get right. Activities involving young and older people require careful planning and supervision to be successful. The preparation required should not be underestimated and sufficient time needs to be built in.

Many of the key factors of successful intergenerational projects were those that one would typically expect for any participatory project. However, given the potential for reinforcing negative stereotypes, they become particularly crucial in this type of work. It is vital that staff facilitating intergenerational work have the skills and confidence to deal with the unexpected and are able to react appropriately when issues arise.

Schools, in particular, can benefit greatly from intergenerational activities. This study highlights positive outcomes for pupils, teachers and the wider school community. However, barriers for schools, particularly around safeguarding requirements and the time needed to set up activities, present significant challenges. Intergenerational work would often not be possible without support from external organisations with the time and resource to establish and deliver activities. Having an intergenerational officer at LA level to drive this work forward and support the implementation of activities is beneficial.

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Appendix 1: Case studies

- **Case study 1**: football learning programme for NEETs

- **Case study 2**: community arts project

- **Case study 3**: knife crime project

- **Case study 4**: living history project for gifted and talented pupils

- **Case study 5**: personal, social and health education project

Football learning programme for NEETs

Project aims and target groups

This project aims to engage young people aged 19–25 years old who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) on a joint-learning programme with older people. The older people are over 50 years of age and some are at risk of becoming socially isolated. Both groups have a shared interest in football.

The project seeks to engage and inspire young people through learning about the history of the city's football club, its players and the local area, and having 'fun' activities in stimulating venues (for example, the football arena and training ground). It aims to break down barriers between generations and promote social inclusion and cohesion by bringing together community groups who would not typically engage with each other. Its overall objective is to increase the physical, dietary, mental and emotional well-being of all participants.

Involvement of partners and providers

A range of partners contributes to the project.

- Federation of Stadium Communities: provides project management and coordination, session support, and monitoring and evaluation.

- Playing for Success: delivers sessions focusing on digital photography and provides venue space for activities.

- Football supporters' club: identifies former players to contribute to sessions and supporters as potential older participants, contributes to session delivery and provides tours of the stadium.

- Football arena: provides a venue for activities and complementary tickets to the football match for participants.

- Local authority staff: including Connexions and leaving care support staff who identify younger participants.

The project expands the scope and reach of activities delivered by partners and allows them to engage with service users they do not typically engage with.

Project activities

Participants take part in a number of sessions held over one week. Each session is delivered by partner staff or external tutors, as appropriate.

- **Session 1**: 'get to know you' activities; an introduction to digital photography; and a stadium tour.

- **Session 2**: research, meet and interview former players and supporters; and participate in a physical activity session (less able-bodied participants have the choice of playing sport, refereeing, photographing or reporting on the session).

- **Session 3**: an introduction to desktop publishing, participants create a page for the match-day programme.

- **Session 4**: match-day experience with participants receiving a copy of the match-day programme and entry to the football match, free of charge.

Throughout the project, varied employment and volunteering opportunities within football and sport, such as coaching, physiotherapy and catering, are highlighted. Young people interested in exploring these further are sign posted to appropriate agencies. This project is monitored and evaluated through baseline and exit questionnaires for participants.

Challenges

The project faced a number of challenges.

- **Funding restrictions**: short-term funding streams and grant criteria placed constraints on project activity and the delivery timetable (for example, funding needed to be spent by the end of the financial year despite issues recruiting participants).

- **Participants' perceptions of the project**: some were unclear about the aims of the project (for example, some of the older people thought it was a course and were unaware it involved young people), and others were unclear about intergenerational practice as a concept.

- **Participant recruitment and attendance**: there were difficulties recruiting participants, particularly older men, and those more socially isolated. This meant that there was an over-representation of young people in the sessions. Some of the young people had doubts about working with older volunteers and thought that they might be 'boring' or it 'wouldn't be enjoyable'. Irregular attendance of participants also meant that it was difficult for relationships between the two groups to become established.

- **Timetabling of activities**: the programme was held over a week, and for some older people who had commitments on other days (for example, doctor's appointments) this restricted their attendance. The young people would also have preferred an afternoon session and felt the start time was too early.

- **Engaging hard-to-reach groups**: some of the young people had extreme and quite variable needs. Some lacked the ability to concentrate and engage with others not previously known to them. Some of the providers also had no or limited experience of working with hard-to-reach groups.

- **Partnership working**: partners who were gatekeepers to participants did not always convey the project and its aims and requirements effectively, such as the need to commit to the whole week of activities; partners were also working to competing priorities and had limited time to encourage and monitor things like participants' attendance. Due to the timetabling of the programme (during a half-term holiday) not all partners were available to deliver sessions.

Outcomes and impacts

Prior to undertaking the intergenerational activities the views of young and older people about each other were broadly positive. There was recognition that, although there are stereotypical views, not all people conform to them. Due to the variable attendance of participants and the limited time young and older people had together, it was difficult

for interviewees to comment on impact at the end of the project. There were, however, examples of:

- development of new relationships between partner organisations

- expansion of staff skills and experience including working with hard-to-reach groups and older people

- development of digital photography and ICT skills of participants

- engagement of young and older people with the football club and its facilities

- improved motivation of some young people after a coaching session.

Key features

The project coordinator was working to the Centre for Intergenerational Practice Approved Provider Standard (APS). APS is a UK benchmark for organisations providing intergenerational programmes.

There were a number of key features of effective practice in this project.

- **Using common areas of interest to hook both groups of participants into the activity**:

  Not being forced to talk about something because they have been told to but talking about something because it means something to them – things like the war are abstract to young people and don't mean anything to their daily lives. [Football] *it's a shared interest, it's a shared knowledge base.*

  Project Coordinator

- **Establishing a project steering group** to build relationships between partners so that project work can be sustained after the initial programme has been completed. Developing a partnership agreement so staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

- **Recruiting participants from a number of agencies**, including having a reserve list of participants to fall back on. Making explicit in any publicity materials the concept of intergenerational practice and the specific aims of the project.

- **Investing time in preparation work** with participants in order to understand and meet their needs. Inviting key workers who have existing relationships with young people to attend sessions.

- **Running sessions with equal numbers** of young and older people.

- **Providing transport, refreshments and other incentives**, such as match tickets, for participants. Some of the young people were care leavers living independently, the incentives appealed to them and were a factor in their decision to participate.

- **Recognising that the first session is particularly important**, including 'getting to know you' activities and outlining codes of conduct with participants to set clear rules and boundaries.

- **Use of 'active' sessions for hard-to-reach groups**, this includes limiting the number of formal learning activities and minimising the completion of forms (required forms were made simple and used tick boxes).

Community arts project

Project aims and target groups

This arts project aims to encourage creativity, promote personal development, and challenge the perceptions and attitudes of young and older people. Working with diverse communities and using the arts as a means of addressing current and emerging social issues, this project focuses largely on the medium of photography and has creative outcomes at the forefront of the activity.

The project includes a small group of secondary school pupils, selected for a variety of reasons including and an aptitude for art and lower academic achievement. Although the young people were specifically targeted, their participation is voluntary. Older people include members of a local pensioners' group and a Gujarati Welfare Association. Some of the older people have previous experience of intergenerational work.

Involvement of partners and providers

The project is managed by a community arts organisation and is delivered in partnership with two freelance artists. Project staff are CRB checked. The activities take place in a local NHS health centre. The secondary school conducts a risk assessment of the activity and obtains written consent from parents for their child's involvement and permission for photographs of them to be reproduced. School staff accompany young people to the health centre and stay during the session, which takes place after school.

Project activities

Activities run over a period of ten weeks. Initially, young and older people work independently for three or four sessions with the artists. Participants are introduced to the equipment and some of the techniques that may be used during the project. The young people's sessions are delivered at school. When the two groups meet together sessions are held off site (see challenges section).

The first session for both groups includes 'getting to know you' activities to acquaint participants, the artists and project staff with each other. Young and older people then work together in pairs and use photography to produce images around a theme of their choice. At the end of each session participants review their images as a group and decide on a theme for the next session. The images produced by the group are exhibited at the end of the project.

Challenges

The project faced a number of challenges.

- **Transport**: sessions take place at a local health centre and require older people to travel. Some have mobility issues or do not have their own transport. The cost of community transport can be significant. Arranging transport for individuals also incurs a considerable amount of administration time.

- **Safeguarding**: all artists and project staff are CRB checked. Young people are never left alone with older people. Despite this, the school involved will not permit anyone on site who does not have a current CRB check. As checking each of the older people in a short period of time is difficult and expensive an offsite venue is utilised.

- **Recruiting older participants**: there were difficulties in recruiting the required number of older people. This delayed the project start date and resulted in a gap between the young people's introductory session and their session with the older people. Some had holidays planned and were unable to attend every session. All of the older people were female.

- **Young people's engagement**: a few young people did not attend all of the sessions instead

choosing to participate in other activities, such as football and exam revision. Most of these were male students.

Outcomes and impacts

The project achieved a number of positive outcomes for both young and older people.

- **Greater understanding among the generations**: the project allows participants to get to know each other as individuals rather than in traditional roles such as grandparents or teenagers.

- **Community cohesion**: the project provides opportunities for both generations to mix with different cultures that they typically do not engage with.

- **Increased opportunities for extracurricular learning**: the project gives young people time away from the pressure of school performance and results, and allows them to engage in a learning activity 'just for fun'.

- **Skills development**: there was evidence that young people's practical, technical and social skills improved. They can put the images they produced towards their GCSE coursework.

- **Empathy and attachment**: both young and older people became very attached to those they were working with over the course of the project. One of the older people was suffering from Parkinson's Disease and the young people showed compassion and offered support during the sessions.

- **The development of new and enhanced relationships between partners**: particularly between the school and the arts organisation which has led to other arts projects. The school recognises the benefits of intergenerational work and the extended schools coordinator hopes to build on this work in other curriculum areas.

Key features

There were a number of key features of effective practice.

- Introductory **sessions**: these enable artists to meet the groups separately and identify their individual needs, capabilities and interests. Basic training in the use of photographic equipment builds confidence, particularly in the older people. These sessions are also important for gaining trust between the participants and the artists. One artist said: 'When groups come together they can work together – people are willing to put their faith in someone you have faith in.'

- **Creating a space where participants of different generations feel confident and empowered to share their experiences**: This includes, for example, building self-esteem by reviewing images as a group at the end of each session.

- **Having a sufficient number of staff to participants** so young and older people are able to access help and support when they required it.

- **Commitment from school(s) involved**: two teachers attend every session and the school has been flexible about changes in factors such as session timings and venues.

- **Effective recruitment and induction of participants**: the project coordinator delivered a presentation to the local pensioners' forum about intergenerational practice and gave an overview of the project. The talk helped older people understand the aims of the activities and put their minds at ease about becoming involved. Older people from the group, with previous experience of working with the provider, were advocates for the project and encouraged others to volunteer.

Knife crime project

Project aims and target groups

A young person attending a voluntary run youth centre was concerned by the number of stories in the media associating young people with knife crime, and wanted to challenge the stereotypical image that 'all young people are the same'. Together with other young people from the centre they began to formulate ideas for a project to address this. The centre manager met with the LA's intergenerational officer and a group of young people. Together they agreed on an intergenerational project.

Young people attending the youth centre are considered to be hard to reach and, therefore, more likely to have behavioural difficulties, poor school attendance and be excluded. Most of the group had never engaged in intergenerational activities before, although some of the older people had experience of young people either as grandparents or youth leaders in, for example, the Brownies and Scouts. The older people were recruited via the centre manager. They included friends and relatives, as well as other older people who the manager links with through other work in the local community. There were fairly equal numbers of both generations involved in the activities.

Involvement of partners and providers

Key partners for this project included the centre manager, centre volunteer staff and the LA intergenerational officer. The project also received support from other partners at various points including a scriptwriter, filmmakers and the police. The centre manager carries out risk assessments for all activities and ensures volunteer staff and partners are CRB checked.

Project activities

The young people from the centre developed a survey to measure attitudes to knife crime, perceptions of young people and the influence of the media. Surveys were distributed to local residents attending luncheon clubs and coffee mornings, and to professionals such as the police, teachers and youth workers. Young people also visited local schools to distribute questionnaires to pupils. A total of 700 questionnaires were sent out and 545 returned.

The survey findings were launched at an event held at the centre on the European Day of Solidarity Between Generations. Young people, key partners and members of the local community attended. This provided an opportunity for young and older people to interact. Following the launch event, the centre was approached to make a short film and young people were provided with training and equipment. Both young and older people worked together on the development of the film and its production. They decided that the focus of the film would be to challenge the negative stereotypes of young and older people.

The group met together over five sessions prior to filming. These sessions took place in the evening at the centre and participants played games as a way of getting to know each other. A storywriter also worked with the group during some of the sessions. The premise of the DVD was role reversal (young people dressed as older people, and older people dressed as young people). The film was shot on location at a stately home. There was a celebratory launch of the DVD at the centre attended by participants, members of the community and partner agencies. The group have also engaged in subsequent activities together, including a forensic science evening.

Challenges

There were very few challenges specific to this project. Some of the young people expressed initial concerns about working with older people and

thought that they might be 'boring', 'really quiet' or 'scared and intimidated'. Older people's concerns centred around engaging in activities in the evening and the need for transport to get them to the centre.

Outcomes and impacts

The project has been very effective in building relationships between young and older people.

- **Development of communication skills**: young people spoke about learning not to abbreviate words when talking to older people, speaking clearly and using hand gestures for those with hearing difficulties. One older person noted: 'It amazes me that you can have someone my age, 70, talking to somebody 17 or 18 and you can have a conversation which flows both ways.'

- **Improved confidence**: both groups felt more confident about speaking to the other generation. Older people also improved their self-esteem, feeling that they were able to 'give something back' to young people.

- **Relationship building and increased engagement between the generations**: young people felt the project had brought them closer to older people and had changed their attitude about working with older people in the future. Older people felt they had learnt about young people and the things they are interested in. Both groups talked about being more likely to speak to each other in the local community.

- **Improved behaviour and respect among young people**: a centre manger summed up the project's influence on behaviour:

  You don't hear them using foul language in front of the older generation, which is a real credit to them, whereas normal nights they're down here it's unreal some of the language but they don't have to be told to be respectful. It shouldn't have surprised me but I found that really rewarding. The fact that we've got the hardest group to work with and that it's working so well.

- **Volunteering opportunities**: two of the young people have won awards for their volunteering work at the centre. The young people have been accredited and recognised for the work they were doing at a national level.

- **Building relationships between the police and young people**: local police officers distributed the survey to colleagues, attended the launch event, and have helped to set up activities such as the forensic evening. This has meant they are engaging with young people at the centre in a sociable way, rather than being there in an official capacity.

- **Reduction in social isolation of older people**: some of the older people reported that they would not usually go out during the evening and looked forward to attending the sessions.

Key features

Key features for effective practice were evident in this project.

- **The appropriateness of activities**: this includes ensuring activities are appropriate for both young and older people, interesting and varied; and that participants have a say in the activities they do.

- **The importance of planning**: an intergenerational officer explains: 'If you don't get it right the first time the participants won't continue'. It is good practice to plan specifically, intentionally, and strategically.

- **Regular contact with older people**: a young person says:

  It definitely helps if you work with the same core of [older] people and then some extra ones each time because you build more of a relationship and then you can say it has had a bigger impact. Whereas if you meet someone for a one-off you can say 'yeah they're all right' but you can't say enough to get across about what young people think about older people.

- **Understanding of the young people involved**: the centre manager has a good relationship with young people and understands their various backgrounds and needs. She also had a good relationship with staff at the local school and is informed of any incidents involving the young people that might, for example, influence how they behave during the intergenerational sessions.

- **The venue**: young people felt that if the activities had been held at a retirement home, it would have sounded boring and they may not have participated. The centre is a comfortable environment for the older people, and young people respect the building, the manager and the rules of conduct.

- **Transport for older people**: the centre organises (and pays for) taxis for older people to attend the sessions. As they are held in the evening, older people would not be able to access them if transport was not provided.

- **Support from an intergenerational officer at the LA level**: this included knowledge and experience of working with young and older people, advice on successful intergenerational activities, access to funding and links to other partner agencies.

Living history project for gifted and talented pupils

Project aims and target groups

This school-based programme aims to create links between older and younger people in order to address negative stereotypes (particularly about older people). The project also seeks to enhance students' communication and ICT skills, along with their understanding of the past. The living history project, coordinated by the local Age Concern, is delivered across the LA in both primary and secondary schools. The school involved in this case study decided to focus the project on gifted and talented pupils and supported delivery costs through gifted and talented funding.

Ten pupils from year 7 who are on the gifted and talented register are selected to participate. Sessions are voluntary and take place after school. Many of the older people involved in the programme have participated in intergenerational work before.

A small number of new recruits are involved in each new project and are supported by more experienced volunteers.

Partners

The project is coordinated and delivered by the local Age Concern. This includes the recruitment of older people (training and CRB checks); organisation of transport; school liaison; and ongoing monitoring and support of participants. The secondary school provides funding for the project and sessions are held onsite in the school library. A member of school staff also attends each session.

Project activities

The ten-week project begins with a pupil-only session and explores young people's often negative perceptions of older people. Pupils are given a choice of how they would like to be paired with an older person. They pick names out of a hat and write a short letter to their partner describing themselves and their interests. Students then decide how they

would like the project to evolve and select from a range of topics such as World War II, the 1960s, first jobs and changes in technology.

Young people are required to do some research and preparation in advance of each session, and the project coordinator explains: 'It isn't going to work if I get a child there going "what are we asking about this week?" and then just thinking of the odd two or three [questions] off the top of their head.' In the remaining session, older people work one to one with a younger person recalling life memories and together they produce a personal 'life story' book.

Challenges

Challenges centred mainly on the interaction between young and older people.

- Young people disclosing personal information to older people.

- Some students were fearful of working with older people due to concerns about their state of health and ability to engage with them.

- The potential for young people to exhibit challenging behaviour during the sessions.

- Older people recalling upsetting memories while reminiscing about past, such as family bereavement and recollections from the war.

- Older people expressing personal views to young people during their conversations that could be perceived as prejudice or racist.

Outcomes and impacts

There have been a number of positive outcomes.

- An improvement in school work and attitude to learning including gaining knowledge of key topics in history before they are covered in the core curriculum.

- Better relationships with older family members (particularly grandparents) and increased communication and interaction with them.

- Improvement in perceptions among the wider school community. The project coordinator explains: 'Other kids seeing the older people, 80 odd, 90 odd walking into school without a wheelchair and not living in a home has an impact on them.'

- Improvement in perceptions of young people among older people, including exposure to different cultures.

- Reduced feelings of isolation among older people in the community and wider involvement in the school once the project finishes. For example, older people are invited back to school for harvest festivals, Christmas concerts and presentation evenings.

- Older people developing companionship and socialisation with people of a similar age: many of the older people have very few family members or friends of the same age still alive, and they have made strong friendships and continue to socialise with each other outside of the project.

- Older people learning ICT skills and motivated to access ICT courses after the project had ended.

- The life story books, which are produced by the young people, are kept in the school library and used as learning resources for other pupils.

- Engagement in other volunteering opportunities with Age Concern.

Key features

There were key features of effective practice.

- **Recruitment, selection and training of older people**: potential volunteers are invited to an awareness day and are provided with information about the project. They work though scenarios in

order to determine if they are suitable for intergenerational work. New recruits are integrated gradually into existing programmes so that they can learn and receive support from more experienced volunteers.

- **Bonding the young people as a group**: the project coordinator says:

  That is really important because weeks down the line when one of them goes 'Oh I can't be bothered going, I want to play football', the rest of the group, in a nice way, will round on them: 'You can't not go, why are you not here?', and there tends to be this buddying going on.

- **The project is distinct from schoolwork and maintains young people's interest**: pupils set their own learning agendas, which brings about feelings of empowerment.

- **One-to-one work**: equal numbers of younger and older people are recruited to the activity and work in pairs. The one-to-one nature of the work helps to quickly build relationships and trust.

- **Zero tolerance approach to bad behaviour**: if a student behaves inappropriately they are excluded from the project. Schools sign a code of conduct, which overrides their own behaviour policy. The project coordinator explains: 'I can't give three strikes [and they're out], because that is three sessions and we are a third of the way into the project.'

- **Session management**: having flexibility within the project and the confidence of delivery staff to stop the session when an issue arises and address issues as a group so participants are challenged about their misconceptions.

Personal, social and health education project

Project aims and objectives

Year 8 pupils and older people work together over a four-week period in PSHE lessons to create their ideal community. This is a rolling module delivered to the whole year group by their form teachers. The ideal community project has four key aims.

- It provides pupils with an opportunity to participate in active citizenship, engage with members of the local community and develop a wider perception of their community.

- Barriers are broken down between generations and the myths and stereotypes each generation

has of the other are dispelled through opening up lines of communication.

- Positive images of each generation are created, and help each generation develop mutual respect for the other.

- Different generations are able to utilise, share and benefit from each other's skills and expertise.

The ideal community project usually involves year 8 pupils, and two or three older people, aged between 50 and 90. Older people are recruited by the LA's cultural services

Involvement of partners and providers

An experienced senior teacher coordinates the intergenerational projects delivered in school and works in partnership with an intergenerational

officer employed by the LA. The intergenerational officer recruits and inducts the older people (this includes outlining expectations and introducing them to experienced volunteers). The officer is also responsible for ensuring all have CRB checks, organising transport and maintaining ongoing contact with older people throughout the duration of the project.

The programmes are co-delivered by the relevant form tutor and the intergenerational officer. The experienced teacher and intergenerational officer have created curriculum materials and guidelines to support teaching staff. In advance of delivering the activity, form teachers are encouraged to view videos or attend sessions delivered by colleagues to understand how older people are included in the activities (for example, as equal learners). On occasions, and in the absence of the intergenerational officer, the experienced teacher has also co-taught the programme alongside teachers who have little or no experience of intergenerational learning.

Project activities

The first session examines the perceptions each generation has of the other. Subsequent weeks focus on participants developing their ideal community. The approach provides opportunities for older people and pupils to discuss what they would like in an ideal community, share ideas and arriving at a decision. By working in small groups, the young and older people are treated as equals and co-learners.

Challenges

The project faced a few difficulties.

- **Recruitment of older people** was said to be difficult because of self-doubt among older people about what they had to contribute and peer pressure and criticism from other older people that the volunteers thought they were superior and 'getting above themselves'.

- **Timetabling of activities**: matching the timing of the lessons with the needs of the older people because some lessons were very early in the morning.

- **Support staff concerns**: some school support staff felt their role was under threat by the presence of older people in the classroom. Occasionally, there were 'personality clashes' between such staff and the older people.

Outcomes and impacts

Despite the challenges the project faced, there were a number of very positive outcomes.

- **Improved perceptions**: students commented on developing a better understanding of older people. One young person said he/she had learnt not to 'judge a book by its cover'. Participants found they had lot more in common than they had anticipated.

- **Changes in behaviour and engagement with older people**: this included young people's behaviour and engagement with other adults outside school.

- **Increased motivation and engagement**: there are anecdotes of young people participating more in other classes, motivated to work harder, and learning more.

- **Development of skills**: including team working and communication skills.

- **Socialisation**: a teacher said: 'The volunteers often say "it's better than looking at four walls", it's a very common phrase.' They develop friendships with others and pupils, and have access to wider social opportunities as a result of engaging in the project.

- **Improved self-esteem and self-worth**: a teacher said:

  We have got volunteers who have talked about meeting the students outside of school and saying how they felt very pleased that the pupils came up to speak to them.

  They gain a sense of satisfaction from doing something useful, having something to offer, seeing the pupils grow and change, being valued by the young people and the staff in the school.

- **Impacts on the wider community**: a teacher said:

  Volunteers will sing the praises of the school outside so it does help to maintain that reputation and perhaps in a different way as well because they talk about the warmth that the pupils have.

- Impacts on school staff: the project provides an opportunity for staff to engage in a different form of teaching and to see pupils learn in a different way. Older people also provide staff with an 'extra pair of hands' in the classroom.

Key features

There are key features of effective practice in this project.

- **Culture and ethos of the school**: the school places a strong emphasis on human values and respect. The culture of intergenerational work has also been embedded across the school and has become normalised.

- **Older people are integrated into the school**: this includes making them feel welcome on arrival at the school, giving them personalised ID badges, and inviting them to participate in other school events such as the Christmas lunch.

- **An experienced teacher champions intergenerational practice**: the teacher is committed to the approach, drives the work forward and helps to sustain the involvement of busy staff. Members of the school's senior leadership team and school governors also support this work.

- **Effective partnership working**: the school and the intergenerational officer have complementary skills and experience working with older people and pupils. Sessions have been co-taught by the intergenerational officer and teacher(s) as a visible sign of partnership and equality between the generations.

- **Support for older participants**: the intergenerational officer recruits and inducts older people, provides ongoing support for older people, and organises and funds CRB checks and travel.

- **Preparation of participants and staff**: this includes outlining the aims and objectives of the work to older people and explaining to staff, such as teaching assistants, the role of the older people so they feel involved and are not threatened.

- **Focus on joint learning**: a teacher said:

  Older volunteers are not people coming in with the wisdom and the knowledge to tell the kids this is how it should be, they are going through the same process as if they are the students themselves.

Appendix 2: Challenges involved in intergenerational work

Recruitment and selection of older people

- Recruitment of older people can be time consuming.
- It can be difficult to engage sufficient numbers of volunteers.
- Older people can doubt they have anything to contribute to younger people.
- There can be peer pressure on older people not to attend.
- They can be busy and reluctant to give up the time to others.
- Older people may feel intimidated by younger people.
- Older men, in particular, can be difficult to engage.
- Some older people are better at working with young people than others.
- Safeguarding issues can be a barrier to the recruitment of older people.

Recruitment and selection of young people

- There is a danger that activities can reinforce the stereotypes they are trying to dispel.
- It may be more challenging with hard-to-reach groups and those with behaviour difficulties.
- Young people may think that older people are boring.
- There may be peer pressure not to attend.

Activities

- Young people and older people have different needs.
- It can be difficult to ensure activities are suitable for both.
- It can be difficult to find common points of interest.
- If young people are not kept occupied they are likely to disengage.
- Active older people are more likely to be selective about the activities they engage in.
- Young and older people alike expressed concern about not knowing what to expect.

Organisation and logistics

- Planning and organisation of intergenerational work can be challenging.
- This can be exacerbated by short-term funding as the bid can drive the project rather than the needs of participants.
- Finding a time that is suitable for young and older people to meet can be difficult.
- Finding a venue that is suitable for both can also be problematic.
- Active older people are busy and may find it difficult to commit to every session.
- Lack of transport can be a barrier to intergenerational work.
- Arranging transport can be time consuming and costly.

Working with partners

- It can be difficult to ensure the commitment of partners.
- Existing pressures of work can hinder the setting up and delivery of intergenerational work.
- It can be difficult to sustain school staff's involvement.
- There can be a clash of older people with support staff in schools.
- Partners may not promote or prioritise intergenerational work.

Appendix 3: Key features of effective intergenerational practice

Recruitment and selection of older people

- Be proactive in engaging older people, especially men, through community groups.
- Give older people accurate information so they can make an informed choice about participation.
- Meet the older people beforehand and select appropriate volunteers.
- Ensure a one-to-one ratio of older to young people.
- Where possible ensure young people work with a consistent group of older people.
- Consider gaining the commitment of older people to all sessions at the beginning.
- Match the older to the young people with the same interests.

Preparation of participants

- Understanding participants' needs is critical for success.
- Preparation sessions allow providers to get to know the participants and to assess their needs.
- Preparation sessions ensure participants know what is expected of them.
- Give advice and guidance to older people about how to work with younger people.
- Integrate older people gradually into intergenerational work.
- Use existing participants to support new ones.
- More preparation may be required for certain groups.
- Preparation work can involve young people in helping to shape the activities.

Activities

- Take account of the needs of the young and older people.
- Tailor the activities to the needs of the curriculum in schools.
- Ensure activities are based on a mutual or shared interest.
- Young people need to have a genuine interest and knowledge they can contribute.
- Involve the participants in the planning and design of activities.
- Activities need to be interactive and allow young people to show themselves at their best.
- Use 'ice breaker' sessions to allow young and older people to get to know each other.
- Create a tangible product and celebrate achievements.

Delivery

- Ensure deliverers have the skills to work with young and older people.
- The passion of the providers can be a key factor for success.
- Adopt a 'hands on' approach to incidents that allow a focus on common misconceptions.
- Agree a code of conduct from the outset and have clear ground rules.
- Ensure a high ratio of staff to participants.

Organisation and logistics

- Allow time for planning and organisation.
- Make sure the length and duration of sessions is appropriate.
- Ensure that the venue is familiar to both young and old, or 'neutral'.
- Make the older people feel welcome and integrated into the setting.
- Ensure transport is provided, especially for the older people.
- Consider the health and safety aspects, especially CRB checking.

Partnership working

- Having a champion for intergenerational work can make a difference to success.
- Partnership working adds value and draws on the skills of others.
- Partners who are passionate can spread their enthusiasm.
- Work with partners beforehand to ensure a good working relationship.
- Ensure the ethos of schools and other organisations supports intergenerational work.
- The visibility of partnership working can be a good model for participants.

Funding and sustainability

- Ensure appropriate funding is available.
- Be realistic about what can be achieved with the funding and resources available.
- Mainstream intergenerational activity, where possible, to ensure sustainability.
- Embed intergenerational work in the culture and ethos of the school or organisation.
- Ensure partnership involvement to facilitate sustainability.
- Plan strategically and ensure continuation by getting the first session right.
- Monitoring and evaluation can ensure future work builds on success.
- Monitoring and evaluation can also allow success to be shared with others.

Recently published reports

The Local Government Education and Children's Services Research Programme is carried out by the NFER. The research projects cover topics and perspectives that are of special interest to local authorities. All the reports are published and disseminated by the NFER, with separate executive summaries. The summaries, and more information about this series, are available free of charge at www.nfer.ac.uk/research/local-government-association/
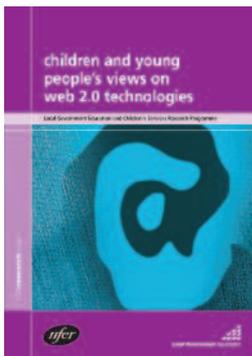
Children and young people's views on web 2.0 technologies

This project focused on young people's personal use of social media, and on the potential to use these tools to collect the views of young people and involve them in democracy in communities and local authorities. This report is important reading for LAs, children's services practitioners and all those working with young people.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LWT01/
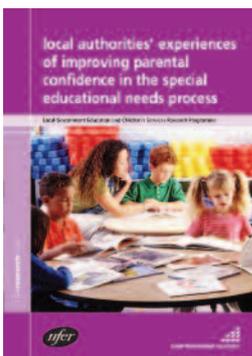
Local authorities' experiences of improving parental confidence in the special educational needs process

This research focused on LAs with evidence of good practice in supporting children with SEN. Partnership working is enhanced where SEN teams have a positive ethos and approach towards parents. LAs need to ensure that parents have good quality, face-to-face contact with SEN professionals at the earliest possible stage in the process.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LAM01/
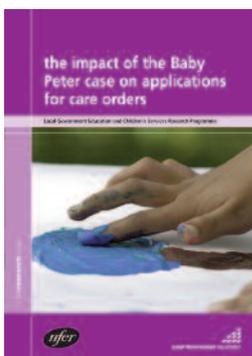
The impact of the Baby Peter case on applications for care orders

This study looked at the impact of the case of Baby Peter Connelly on LAs' applications for care orders and child protection more widely. There was evidence of a rise in applications for care/supervision orders and LA staff reported implications of the increase in care orders on staff workload, morale, recruitment and retention.

www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/BPI01/

For more information, or to buy any of these publications, please contact: The Publications Unit, National Foundation for Educational Research, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ, tel: +44 (0)1753 637002, fax: +44 (0)1753 637280, email: book.sales@nfer.ac.uk, web: www.nfer.ac.uk/publications.

How can local authorities bring people of all ages together?

What activities work best?

This research looked at five intergenerational projects focusing on football, arts, knife crime, living history and personal and social education. Two projects ran in schools, one in a health centre, one in a youth drop-in centre and one at a football club. Each project had its own aims, but in addition to these, the projects aimed to improve perceptions and challenge stereotypes both of young and older people.

The report covers:

• outcomes for participants

• issues and challenges associated with intergenerational projects

• key features of effective practice.

The research found that although older and younger people's views of each other were generally positive prior to engaging in intergenerational activities, the activities often led to improved perceptions among participants despite their positive outlook. Intergenerational projects have benefits and challenges and would often not be possible without support from external organisations. Having an intergenerational officer at local authority level to drive this work forward is beneficial.

This report is important reading for all those involved in planning and running projects to bring together people of all ages.

LGAresearch report