



Linking Generations Northern Ireland

Evaluation of the Intergenerational
Safer Communities Project
(2013-2015)



JUNE 2015

Foreword

The concept of this project was built on the experience gained by Linking Generations Northern Ireland (LGNI) between 2008 and 2013. In this time frame we had developed relationships with a range of members of the policing and community safety family who were interested in the potential of intergenerational approaches in their work.

This project would not have been possible without the commitment of local government staff across Northern Ireland. But the biggest thank you, as always, is reserved for the volunteers in local community groups who take on board the ethos of this work and develop it in to real life initiatives that make a positive impact in neighbourhoods and in people's lives.

We have thoroughly enjoyed working with such talented and passionate people across NI through the course of this project. We remain committed to promoting and supporting intergenerational practice to tackle ageism, age segregation and age stereotyping in whatever form it exists.

Vicki, Lynn and Ken (LGNI)



Department of
Justice
www.dojni.gov.uk

This project was made possible by funding support from the Community Safety Unit of the Department of Justice Northern Ireland. We wish to acknowledge the foresight and trust that the Department placed in LGNI to deliver these services on their behalf.

Speaking at the 'What Works?' conference on 12th March 2015, **David Ford, Minister of Justice NI** said:

"My Department's Community Safety Strategy recognises the importance of intergenerational approaches to building safer, shared and confident communities..."

I welcome the opportunity to hear first-hand today about the benefits that local communities have enjoyed through the intergenerational practices developed jointly by LGNI and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships on the ground. It is clear that PCSPs – and the other statutory, voluntary and community organisations collaborating with them – have reaped the benefits of the experience and knowledge that Linking Generations have brought through this initiative."



David Ford and Vicki Titterington
(LGNI Manager)



Introduction

In mid- 2013, Linking Generations Northern Ireland (LGNI) was awarded funding from the Department of Justice (DoJ) to undertake the Intergenerational Safer Communities Project. The project ran from September 2013 until March 2015. The purpose of the project was for LGNI to provide expertise in the development of intergenerational approaches to community safety, in partnership with Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

LGNI place a strong emphasis on evaluation and therefore appointed an external evaluator (Juniper Consulting) to determine the extent to which the objectives and targets set by DoJ were achieved. The evaluation evidence was gathered in a number of ways including questionnaires, meetings, desk research and observations.

This evaluation should be read in conjunction with the work report which can be found on LGNI's website:

www.centreforip.org.uk/northern-ireland/

The objectives of LGNI's Intergenerational Safer Communities Project were:

- *To increase the use of intergenerational practice and build local capacity through PCSPs to develop and deliver intergenerational approaches for all ages;*
- *To improve levels of community safety, through reduced levels of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour(ASB); and*
- *To develop a learning network and improve understanding amongst key stakeholders from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors in developing intergenerational approaches.*

This report provides evidence that these objectives were met through the analysis of a range of data sources including questionnaires, participant and leader feedback forms, observation and interview.

LGNI and Community Safety

LGNI advocates for the development and promotion of intergenerational practice as a catalyst for social change in NI. They encourage practitioners to focus on activities which promote greater understanding, closer relations and respect between age groups and provide opportunities to address shared problems.

LGNI vision:

'Northern Ireland will be age-friendly. For LGNI, this means that age groups will not be segregated and ageism will not exist. All age approaches will be commonplace at community, organisational and policy level.'

LGNI has enjoyed a long and successful association with the policing and community safety family. They have received support for their work from Community Safety Partnerships (the predecessors of PCSPs), The Community Safety Unit of the DoJ and The Atlantic Philanthropies. This enabled them to distribute small grants, facilitate training and events and provide ongoing advice and support to many groups and organisations across NI.

In 2012 LGNI published 'A Review of Intergenerational Approaches to Community Safety in Northern Ireland'. This research also helped to influence the Community Safety Strategy for NI, 'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities' which commits to:

- 'Promote intergenerational projects to bring young and old together to increase confidence; and
- Support intergenerational programmes to build trust and positive perceptions of young people.'

Other commitments have been made to support intergenerational approaches to community safety, particularly the draft Active Ageing Strategy, which proposes a signature programme to address fear of crime and promote community safety by engaging with and understanding the concerns of older people and addressing these through community safety initiatives and intergenerational approaches.

Community safety, fear of crime and ASB remain real issues even though the actual risk of crime is low. Since the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament was established, fear of crime has remained one of the top three concerns of older people across the province.

Findings from the 2013/14 Northern Ireland Crime Survey in relation to perceptions of crime, highlight that it is not just older people that are affected by fear of crime and ASB:

Fear of Crime

- 26% of respondents claimed that fear of crime had a moderate effect on their quality of life, while 4% stated they were greatly affected by it; and
- Those most likely to state that their lives are greatly affected by 'fear of crime' were: people living in areas perceived to have a high level of ASB (15%); respondents who are separated (10%); recent victims of crime that were reported to the police (10%); respondents living in social rented accommodation (10%); people living in the 20% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (9%); and those with a limiting illness or disability (9%).

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 10% of respondents perceived the level of ASB in their area to be high;
- The proportion of people perceiving a high level of ASB in their local area tends to decrease with age, with 17% of 16-24 year olds citing a high level of ASB in their area, compared with 3% of those aged 75 and over; and
- Those most likely to perceive ASB as a problem in their local area were: people living in the 20% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (27%); respondents living in social rented accommodation (23%); recent victims of crime that were reported to the police (23%); women aged 16-24 (19%); and single adults with children (19%).

Age-friendly Communities

Northern Ireland has the fastest growing elderly population in the UK, with the number of people aged 65 or more projected to increase by 44% in the next 15 years (2012 – 2027). This brings with it many positive economic benefits for society, as highlighted by research undertaken by the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland¹.

The World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Cities and Communities programme encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. Intergenerational approaches play a key part in supporting age-friendly, in areas such as community safety, health, and participation and social inclusion.

¹ Appreciating Age, Valuing the Positive Contributions Made by Older People in Northern Ireland, COPNI, 2014

Project Activities

This project was delivered by two part time Regional Development Workers, with management support. The main activities are summarised in the 'At a Glance' section of this report, in the centre pages.

Meetings and Workshops

It was clear from the outset that this project could only be delivered through collaboration. Development Workers set up meetings with every PCSP Manager and/or their representatives during the first 4 months of the project. These meetings were followed by a number of presentations and free workshops for PCSP members and/or community representatives. 222 people attended these.

Intergenerational Initiatives

Supporting intergenerational initiatives by working with local communities, along with PCSPs and PSNI, was a core part of the project. LGNI Development Workers provided a range of support to initiatives in each area. This included advice, help with idea generation, linkage work, facilitation of sessions, training and good practice guidance.

There were 18 intergenerational projects developed and/or supported in 13 different local council areas, with a total of 376 participants. Ten innovation grants ranging from £100 to £800 from the total fund of £4,500 were used to resource projects where activities would not have taken place otherwise.

Awareness Raising

LGNI used every opportunity available to publicise their work and raise awareness of the services they could provide. This included attending PCSP Managers meetings, meeting members of the NI Policing Board and senior

PSNI officers, attending the DoJ Community Safety Unit's Older People's Delivery Group and participating in the NI Policing Board's Youth Advisory Panel and Strategic Advisory Panel. LGNI worked closely with the Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP), joining their steering group for the 'Feel Safe and Sound' project and undertaking intergenerational consultations for them.

The project was promoted through social media, newsletters and presented at the Generations Working Together National Conference in Stirling, March 2014.

'What Works?' Conference



Guest speakers included David Ford, MLA, Minister for Justice NI; Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People Northern Ireland (COPNI) and Koulou Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), who are pictured above with Vicki and Lynn from LGNI.

The final conference of the project was held in March 2015 at Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast. Entitled; 'What Works? Intergenerational Approaches to Community Safety in Northern Ireland', it provided opportunities to share learning about the use of intergenerational approaches to tackle community safety issues across Northern Ireland. Attendees came from private, community, voluntary and statutory sectors. Workshops were hosted by groups who had facilitated intergenerational projects throughout the project.

Evaluation Evidence

The following sections outline the evidence gathered throughout the project to support the achievement of the objectives and targets set by DoJ for the project.

This consists of feedback from the workshops undertaken, the projects supported and the final conference.

Workshop Feedback

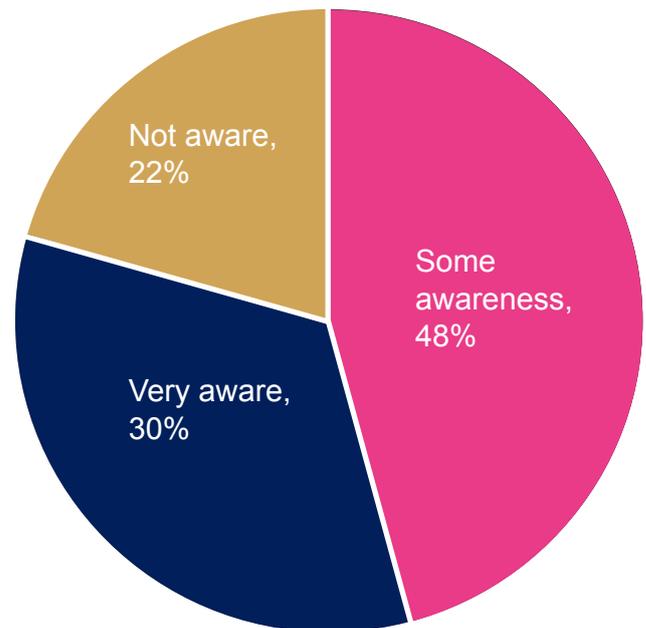
The first area of evaluation evidence is the workshops that LGNI facilitated in the first few months of the project. One hundred and fifty-eight people attended these workshops – PCSP members, PCSP staff, community and voluntary groups etc.

Their feedback was gathered at the end of the workshops through a questionnaire.

When asked about their levels of awareness of intergenerational practice before they came to the workshop, this was generally good, with almost half having some awareness, and 30% being very aware.

However there was still a fifth of people attending that were not aware of intergenerational practice, therefore the workshop was a good opportunity for them to learn more about it.

The vast majority of attendees agreed that intergenerational approaches are 'helpful' or 'very helpful' in assisting PCSPs to address their priorities, particularly in reducing fear of crime, helping people to feel safer and making communities safer.



Awareness of Intergenerational Practice prior to attending the Workshop

Attendees were also asked for their views on the **helpfulness of intergenerational practice in assisting PCSPs to address the key areas of safety, crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour**. These ratings were given at the end of the workshop thus giving attendees an opportunity to develop their understanding and awareness of intergenerational approaches through the discussions that took place.

We also asked attendees about the types **of situations that intergenerational approaches can help with**. There were 11 situations listed, relating to policing and community safety. Areas that LGNI has not focused on (drugs and alcohol, hate crime, domestic violence) were listed to test attendees' feelings towards using an intergenerational approach to these. As expected, opinion was divided in areas such as domestic violence, hate crime and drug and alcohol issues.

Helpfulness of intergenerational practice in assisting PCSPs to...

90% Reduce fear of crime

88% Help people feel safer

88% Make communities safer

85% Prevent ASB

84% Reduce/address ASB

79% Reduce/address crime

74% Prevent crime

However, there was a very positive response to other areas including:

- Improving relationships in local communities;
- Reducing isolation;
- Developing skills, knowledge and experience;
- Addressing concerns and perceptions held by different generations;
- Breaking down barriers between different generations; and
- Improving relationships between different generations.

Attendees Comments

"Great day, very informative. I can now take good ideas and have also met great contacts that I intend to work with"

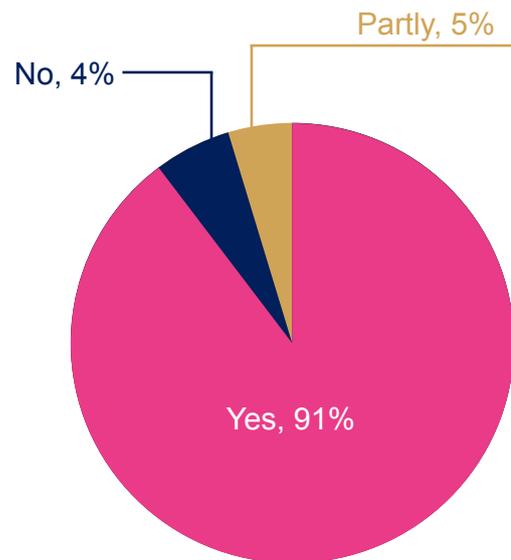
"Enjoyable and well-focused workshop"

"Exceptionally beneficial to reduce fear of crime"

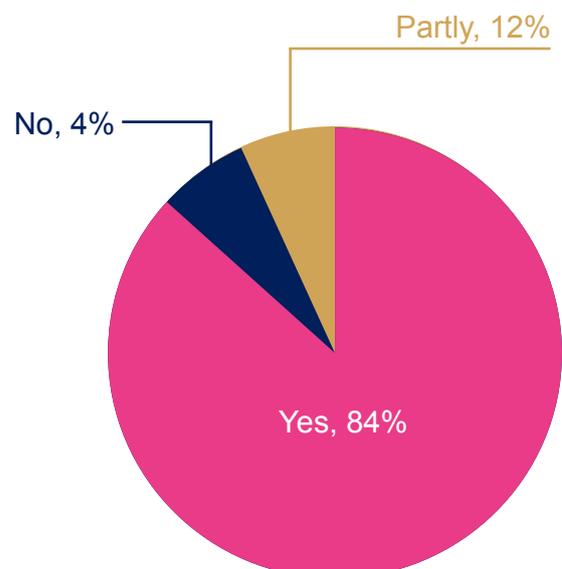
"Fear of crime a very important issue to address"

"Excellent presentation"

The final questions on the form assessed attendees' satisfaction with LGNI's delivery of the workshop. As the diagrams show, the vast majority of attendees agreed that they had both increased their awareness and developed a better understanding of intergenerational practice.

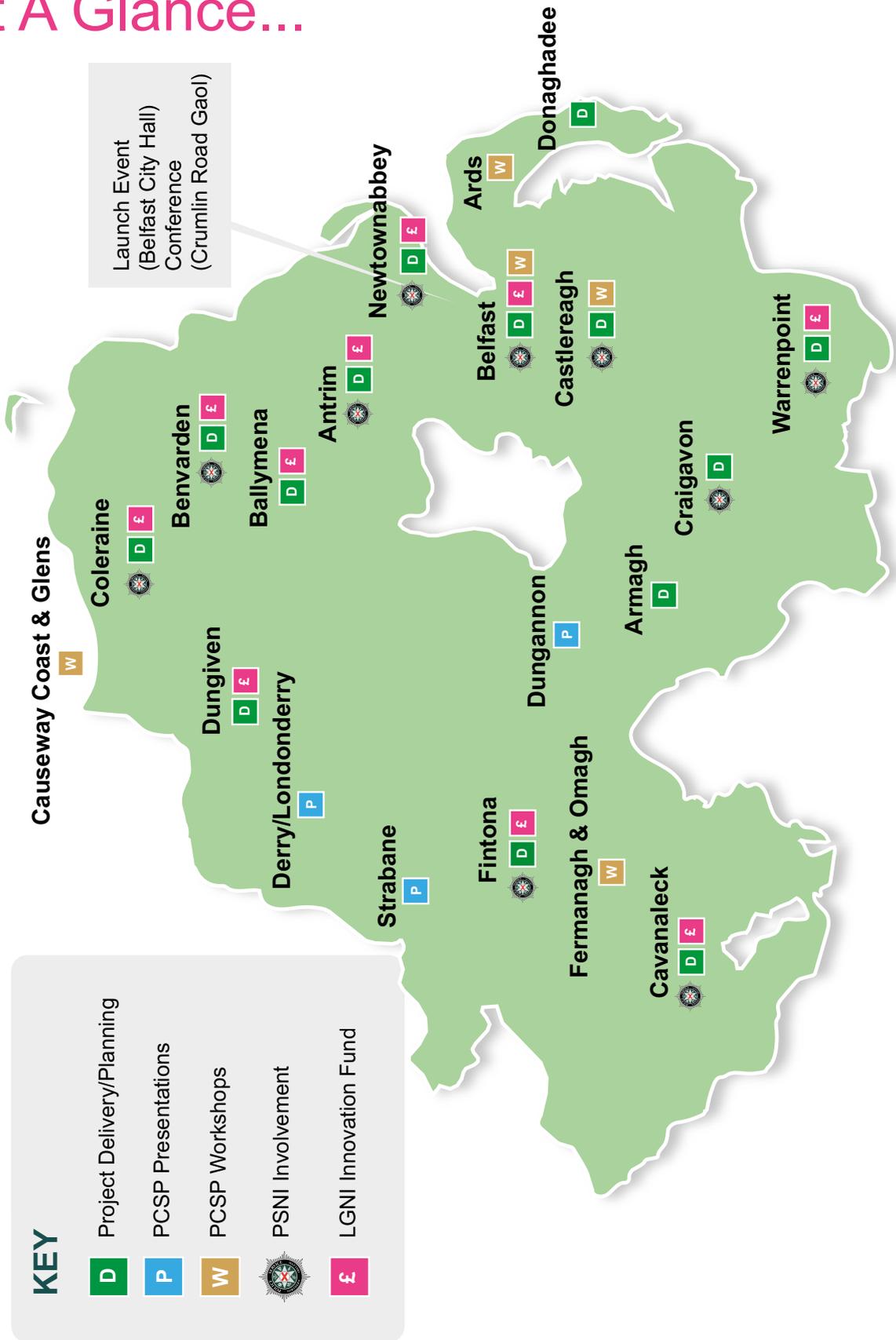


Have you increased your awareness of intergenerational practice?



Have you developed a better understanding of intergenerational practice?

At A Glance...



NI Local Government Area	LGNI Intergenerational Safer Communities Project activity
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Cloughfern residents/Carrick Connect Intergenerational (IG) project with local PSNI * Rathenraw Youth Club/Rehability IG drama project with local PSNI *
Ards and North Down Borough Council	LGNI training workshop May 2014 Donaghadee Commerce and Development Group IG project, co-planned and co-facilitated by LGNI
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Start 360 and Armagh PCSP IG project planning / initial meetings Craigavon PCSP led 5 IG projects, each one supported by LGNI
Belfast City Council	Project launch and workshop in Dec 2013 – 80 attendees Suffolk and Lenadoon Interface Group IG pilot. PSNI involvement * Conversations with PSNI officers in North Belfast and Lisnasharragh
Causeway Coast and Glens District Council	LGNI training workshop Jan 2014 Benvardeen Craft and Friendship Group/Kilmoyle School IG project, led by PCSP member with PSNI involvement * Received continuation PCSP funding Coleraine Free Presbyterian Church IG project with PSNI involvement and PCSP funding * North West Tongues, Tones and Tappin' IG project (Dungiven) *
Derry City and Strabane District Council	Conversations with Peace Walls Programme to develop IG practice Presentations delivered to both PCSPs at private meetings
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	LGNI training workshop Jan 2014 Fintona craft IG project, led by PSNI officer * Cavanaleck gardening IG project, led by PCSP member, with PSNI involvement *
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	LGNI training workshop Mar 2014 Dreamscheme, Braniel IG project Cregagh Community Association IG project –co-facilitated by LGNI, funded by PCSP
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Provided IG expertise to community safety steering group of The Hope Centre, Ballymena Supported 'Feel Safe and Sound' Project of MEAAP*
Mid Ulster District Council	No activity other than our initial meeting with PCSP staff, which took place in every area Presentations on IG practice delivered to Dungannon PCSP private meeting
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	The Cabbagepatchers IG project *, with PSNI involvement and were successful in obtaining continuation funding from PCSP

*denotes a project which received LGNI innovation funding

Project feedback

Those participating in the projects that LGNI supported were asked to complete a short questionnaire about their experiences at the end of their projects. Questionnaires were also completed by project leaders.

Questions focused on the benefits of participating in the projects, in particular areas relating to community safety. Participants were first asked if they had ever taken part in an intergenerational project before; 73% had not. There was therefore a positive benefit to the projects in both increasing the reach of intergenerational approaches across NI and in providing opportunities for many more people to experience it.

Community Safety Benefits

Participants were asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' to a series of statements about their personal experiences of the project. There were positive results with participants indicating that as a result of taking part they had learnt more about fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and how it can affect people. There were also benefits in terms of feelings of safety and respect for other people.

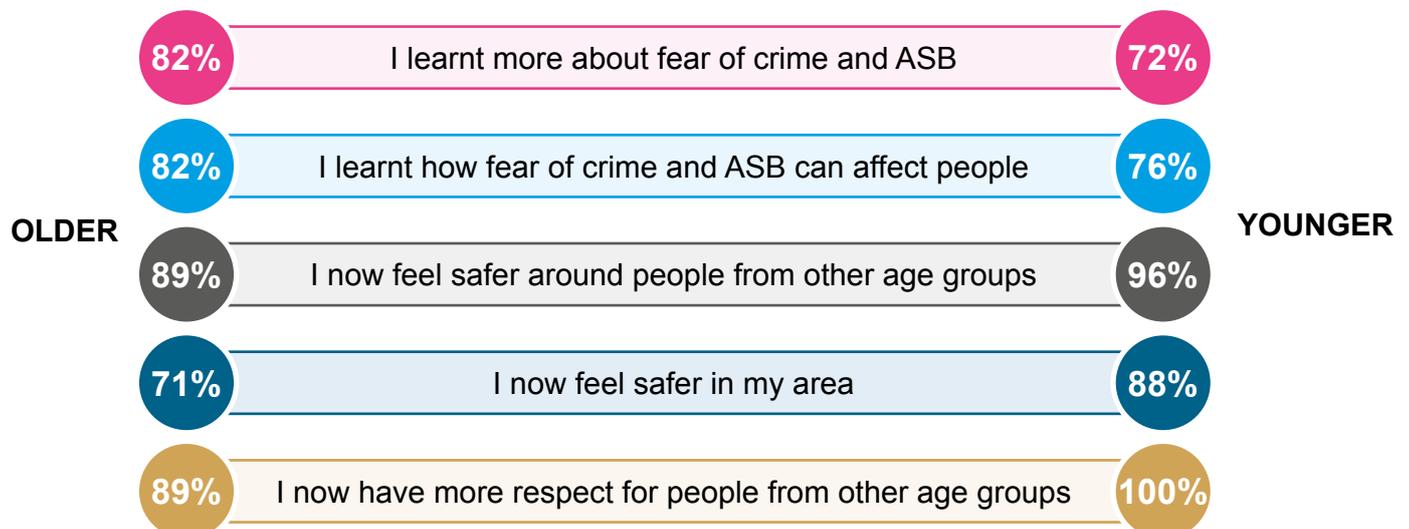
Participants were also asked a number of questions specifically about the community safety benefits of the project.

- All participants agreed that the projects had contributed to building positive perceptions of young people;
- 97% thought that the project had helped older and/or vulnerable people to feel more confident and safer in the community; and
- 91% agreed that intergenerational projects can help to improve community safety in their area.

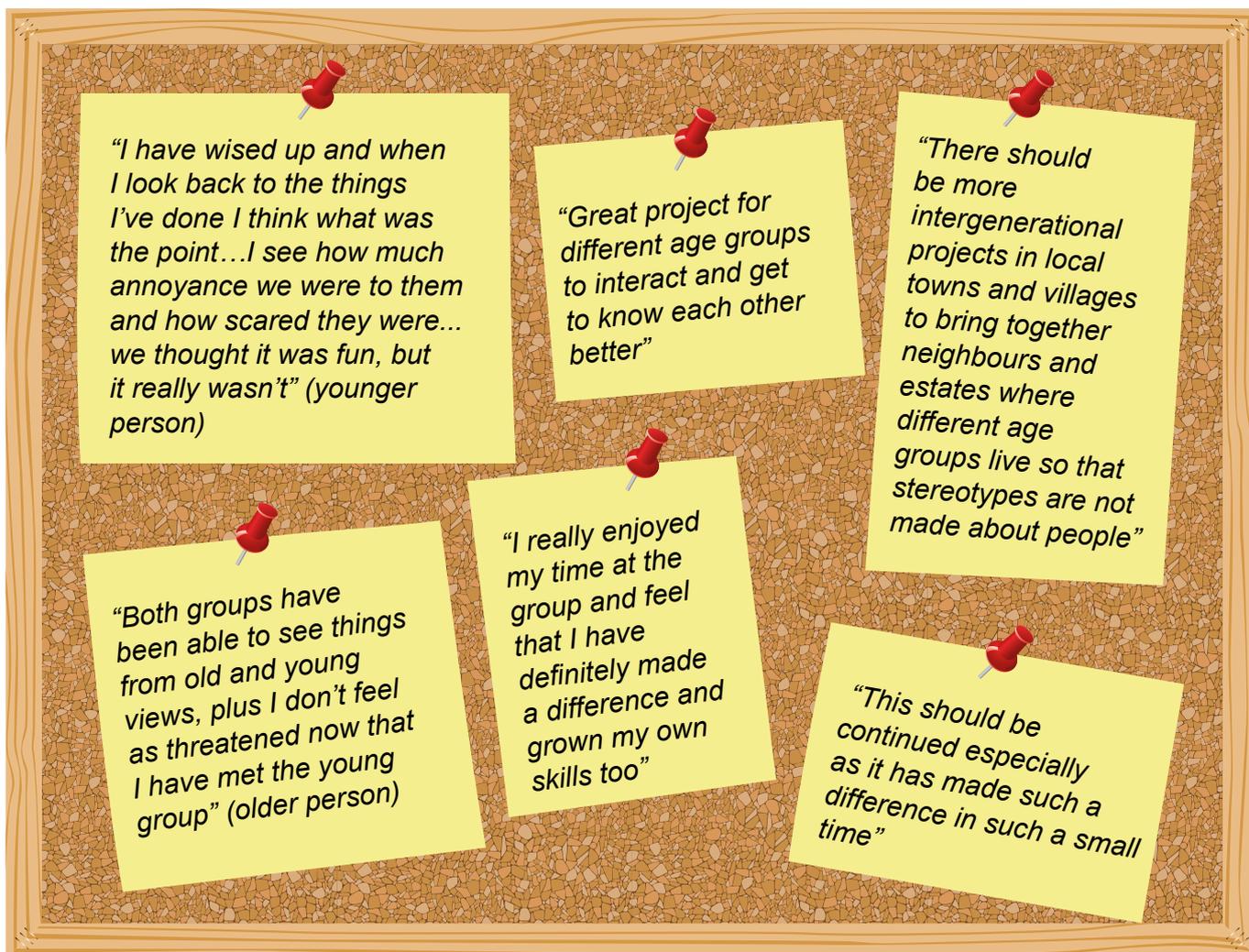
73% also agreed that the project had helped to address fear of crime in their area, and 79% agreed that it had helped to address anti-social behaviour in their area. 89% felt the project had helped to build better relationships in their community.

Project Leaders were also asked to reflect on the benefits of the project to the participants and their organisation. They concurred with the positive impacts on community safety reported by participants.

Participants Personal Experiences of the Project



Participant Reflections



Project Leader Reflections

"In getting to know each other better stereotypical perceptions were indeed broken down leading to the development of trust, mutual respect and shared values. Whilst holding conversations with the participants particularly the senior citizens it was obvious that in getting to know the young people better, it had reduced their fear of crime from that quarter and increased their feelings of living in a safer community."

'Teens & Twenties Down the Decades', Coleraine

"[there has been] no anti-social behaviour around the community over the last 6 weeks... no issues reported by PSNI, no complaints from older people to PSNI"

Cloughfern Residents/Carrick Connect

"The project has helped to address fear in the local community between different age groups. The project created friendships and increased confidence in the ability of the young and old generations to come together in a shared space"

Ashfield Gardens Quilting Project, Fintona

Conference feedback

To help determine the success of the ‘What Works?’ conference, the 74 attendees were asked to complete a short evaluation form before they left. Forty-two forms were returned, with 100% agreeing that:

- The conference provided them with an opportunity to learn more about intergenerational approaches to tackling community safety issues;
- They had learnt more about intergenerational work in general and the work of LGNI;
- The conference achieved its aims;
- It was worthwhile attending the conference; and
- Their expectations of the conference were met.

Different parts of the conference appealed to different attendees, with some finding the workshops most relevant, while others liked the plenary session and the speakers. Several attendees highlighted that they came away from the conference with more ideas, knowledge and new contacts for their own intergenerational work.

At the plenary session at the end of the conference, attendees were asked to reflect on what made the intergenerational projects they had been involved in successful. Many factors were suggested including establishing relationships at the beginning, good communication, committed participants and project leaders, letting participants take ownership of the project, flexibility and ensuring the project was fun and enjoyable. Making connections with the wider community, such as involving local PSNI officers and other key stakeholders, was also noted as a factor for success.



“What Works?” Conference, March 2015

Attendees also suggested a number of areas for LGNI to focus on in the future including good practice examples, further guidance on undertaking intergenerational projects, working in the areas of care homes/dementia and creating ‘community champions’.

Attendee Reflections

“Very insightful, educational day”

“Overall, found today very uplifting”

“Great venue, well organised, great attention to detail”

As part of her opening address at the conference, the NI Commissioner for Young People Koulla Yiasouma, noted that:

“This work needs to be woven into everything that we do in NI, but particularly into the fabric of all community safety structures and particularly again into the work of the PCSPs and community planning process within our councils”

Conclusions

This final section makes an assessment of the achievement of the project's objectives and targets, reflects on other findings, and looks ahead to further opportunities for LGNI in relation to intergenerational and all-age approaches.

Objective 1: To increase the use of intergenerational practice and build local capacity through PCSPs to develop and deliver intergenerational approaches for all ages



Target: Training provided to identified local community and voluntary groups

LGNI facilitated meetings, presentations and workshops at the start of the project in order to achieve this. One hundred and fifty-eight people (PCSP members, PCSP staff, community and voluntary groups etc.) attended five training workshops, with a further 64 attending 3 presentations given at PCSP private meetings. The positive feedback received at the workshops (see pages 4-5) indicates that attendees increased their capacity in relation to intergenerational practice as a result of their attendance.



Target: Development of intergenerational engagement in a minimum of 10 identified PCSP areas

There were a total of 18 intergenerational projects and, as the map indicates, these were in 13 of the 26 former PCSP areas.



Target: 200 younger and older people participating in local initiatives

This target was well exceeded with 376 participants taking part in initiatives.

Objective 2: To improve levels of community safety, through reduced levels of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

This was assessed through the project evaluation forms completed by participants and project leaders.



Target: Older people reporting less fear of crime in their area

The results and comments received (see pages 8-9) indicate that the projects did have a positive impact in this area. 71% of older participants stated that they now feel safer in their area and 89% of them stated they feel safer around other age groups.



Target: Younger people reporting more positive engagement with older people in their area

Again this was assessed through the project evaluation forms with the findings highlighting the building of better relationships in communities and older people having more positive perceptions of young people. As is so often noted by projects, it is the breaking down of barriers and stereotypes and the creation of understanding between younger and older people that leads to positive engagement and the building of respect.

Objective 3: To develop a learning network and improve understanding amongst key stakeholders from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors in developing intergenerational approaches



Target: Develop a network of contacts and communications plan to share learning in 2013/14

LGNI developed a network of 251 additional contacts through the project. Updates on the project were communicated to everyone

on LGNI's e-mail list via five e-newsletters. In addition a wide range of new contacts were created by the projects themselves, including links to schools, GPs, pharmacies, sheltered housing, nursing homes and community groups. All project leaders expressed their intention to undertake another intergenerational project and the Cabbage Patchers (Warrenpoint) and Benvariden Craft and Friendship Group (Ballymoney) were successful in securing continuation funding support through their local PCSPs.



Target: Conference to be held in 2014/15 for key stakeholders to review progress and agree way forward.

The conference was held in March 2015 in Crumlin Road Gaol. A plenary session at the end of the conference discussed options for the way forward (see page 10). The conference had 89 registered to attend and 74 attendees. It was well attended by PCSPs with representatives from 8 of the new 11 PCSPs.

Comparison with Other Findings

The positive evaluation findings from this project are consistent with other evaluation evidence that LGNI has gathered over the past six years from projects they have supported. They also confirm the findings from the 2012 research 'A Review of Intergenerational Approaches to Community Safety in Northern Ireland' which highlight the evidence to support this approach. It is not just in Northern Ireland that intergenerational approaches to community safety have been successful. There are multiple examples across England, Wales and Ireland. In Scotland, particularly in North Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire, intergenerational approaches supported by Generations Working Together, local councils and Police Scotland have also had positive benefits for local communities.

Looking Forward

Northern Ireland and LGNI are leading the way in intergenerational approaches to community safety across the UK, Ireland and further afield. Through collaboration, community planning and connecting to the Age-friendly movement in NI, LGNI can continue to challenge age-segregation and develop innovative practice.

Collaboration

There are opportunities for LGNI to further develop the reach of intergenerational approaches to community safety by focusing on some of the other groups affected by fear of crime and ASB, such as those living in the 20% most deprived areas, young women or recent victims of crime (see page 2). Findings from the workshops undertaken at MEAPP in Ballymena highlighted that young women also experienced a significant fear of crime. This could be undertaken in partnership with other organisations supporting these areas/groups, in order to maximise resources and collaborative practice.

Community Planning

Policing and community safety is an area that will also be a key consideration in the Community Planning process being established by the new 11 Councils in NI.

LGNI should engage in these processes in order to advocate for the inclusion of intergenerational and all-age approaches in Community Plans.

Connecting with Age-friendly

Finally, the Age-friendly movement has strong links with intergenerational practice. Belfast City and Newry & Mourne have recently published their commitment to becoming age-friendly. Derry Healthy Cities are supporting the work of Derry and Strabane in their work towards becoming an Age-friendly city and region. LGNI should continue to advocate for the inclusion of intergenerational and all-age friendly approaches as other areas and cities in NI join the Age-friendly movement here.



Summary

...of LGNI's Intergenerational Safer Communities: Targets & Data

Intergenerational Safer Communities project Measurable Targets	Evidence of target being met
Training provided to identified local community and voluntary groups – target 90 people / 6 workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 workshops (Belfast, Coleraine, Irvinestown, Newtownards, Castlereagh) Total 158 attendees. • 3 PCSP presentations (Dungannon, Derry, Strabane): Total 64 attendees
Development of intergenerational engagement in a minimum of 10 identified PCSP areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 'old' local government PCSP areas had project activity • 18 intergenerational projects supported • 10 received small funding from innovation fund
200 younger and older people participating in local initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of project participants: 376
Older people reporting less fear of crime in their area Younger people reporting more positive engagement with older people in their area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See participant responses on pages 8-9
Develop network of contacts (250 new contacts) Newsletters circulated (6 newsletters to be produced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 251 new contacts on LGNI lists • 5 newsletters circulated to contacts during project • 2 mentions in PCSP magazine • Facebook used extensively to showcase activity
Conference (80 attendees) to be held in 2014/15 for key stakeholders to review progress and agree way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final conference 12th March – 96 registered to attend, 74 attendees
Publish an evaluation to share learning and consider forward strategy to embed intergenerational approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the evaluation report, to be read alongside the LGNI 'Intergenerational Safer Communities project Report', at: : http://www.centreforip.org.uk/northern-ireland/



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