



Linking Generations  
Northern Ireland

# 2022 - 2023 Evaluation Report



Public Health  
Agency

Project supported by the PHA



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# INTRODUCTION

## Linking Generations Northern Ireland

Linking Generations Northern Ireland (LGNI) was established in 2009 with the vision of a Northern Ireland where all generations are respected, understood, connected, and engaged in their communities. As the development body for intergenerational practice (IP), LGNI promotes the concept, benefits, and principles of high quality intergenerational work across all sectors.

As of March 2023, LGNI had a team of four part-time staff and works across all of Northern Ireland. They also link internationally to share and learn of good practice, and to highlight local innovation. LGNI operates under the umbrella of the Beth Johnston Foundation, a UK national charity dedicated to making a future for all ages.

## Intergenerational Practice (IP)

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contribute to building more cohesive communities.

Intergenerational practice is inclusive and builds on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them. Thus, IP work has to be collaborative in order to deliver outcomes and utilise the resources that generations have to offer one another. More information about IP can be found on the LGNI [website](#).

## Objectives

LGNI, with the support of the funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA) aims to:

- Maintain **intergenerational networks** to connect members and inspire and support IP in each NI council area.
- Promote and deliver **small grants** programmes via networks.
- Deliver NI focused **intergenerational training programmes and resources** to support capacity building and learning within communities/settings/ organisations.
- Provide a **NI Centre of Excellence for intergenerational work**: advice & support service, inspiration, and resources for those wishing to engage in IP at all levels.
- **Embed IP** and influence its application in the areas of Age-friendly, Education, and Health & Social Care.

As the diagram overleaf illustrates, each of these objectives are inter-linked and the activities undertaken towards achieving one objective can also benefit the achievement of other.

The activities and objectives also aim to embed intergenerational practice at three levels in Northern Ireland – community, practice, and policy.



## Evaluation Report

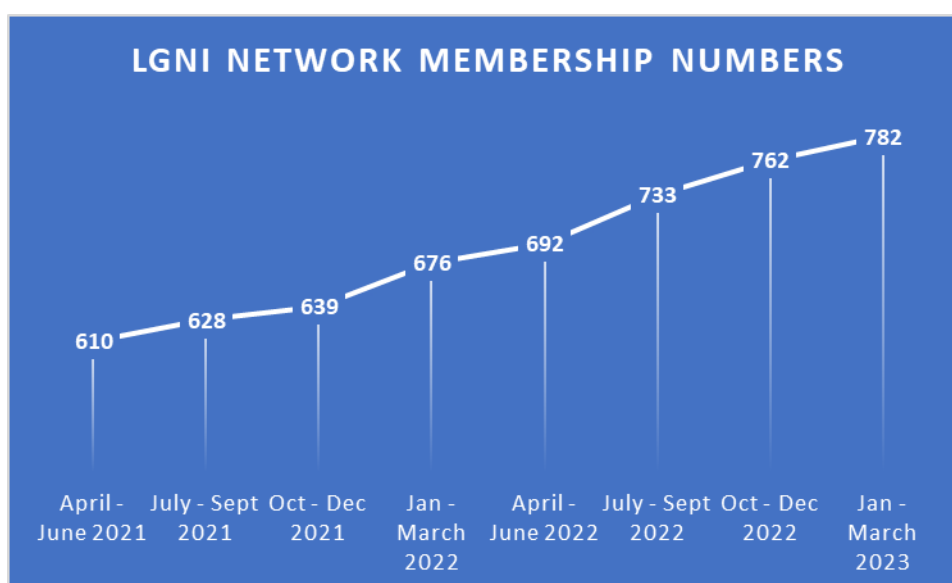
This report covers the work of LGNI for the financial year 2022 – 2023. The evaluation focuses on the work enabled by a grant from the Public Health Agency (PHA), and reference is made to other areas of LGNI's work where appropriate.

LGNI completes a quarterly monitoring report for the PHA, which provides an update on the activities undertaken. This report supplements that and provides further evaluation evidence to support LGNI's achievements. It is structured around the objectives that LGNI aims to achieve with the PHA funding. The last chapter of the report makes a number of recommendations based on the evaluation findings.

## INTERGENERATIONAL NETWORKS

A key approach to creating a stronger intergenerational practice infrastructure in NI is through the ongoing development of **intergenerational networks** to connect members and inspire and support practice.

LGNI currently operates (virtual) networks across NI, which are grouped into four geographic areas<sup>1</sup>. Mailchimp is used to manage network membership, and as of March 2023 there were 782 members, an increase of 106 (almost 16%) from 2022. Network membership has grown steadily over the past two years.



Members come from each of the District Council areas, with Belfast making up the largest proportion (20%). Often there is a correlation between people signing up to the networks to find out about small grants available, or those who have received a grant subsequently signing up to the networks.

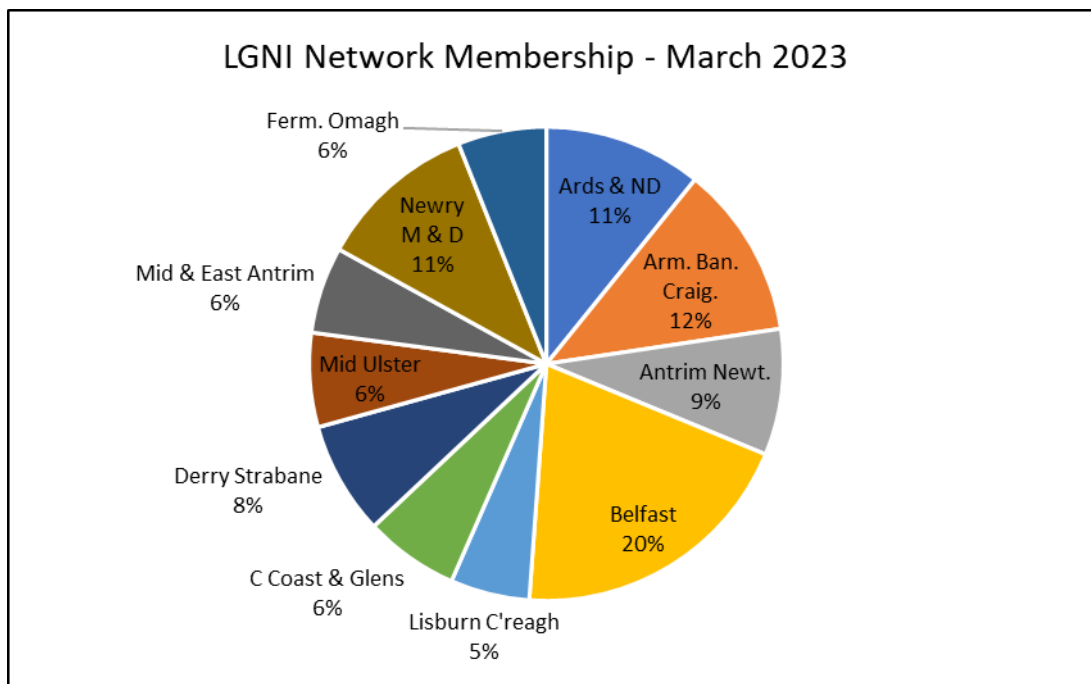
Having a database of network members also helps LGNI to **monitor levels of interest and engagement in intergenerational practice** across Northern Ireland. This is currently limited at the moment as the free version of Mailchimp used only allows for basic profiling of members. LGNI is aware of this and if funding can be secured an CRM system could be introduced.

The network database also enables LGNI to **develop links between members** – for example responding to requests to find a partner for an intergenerational project. LGNI worker Lynne Bennett explains how this has worked in practice:

*“I helped a school who wanted to make links with care homes in their area. I looked at our network list, found a care home, and then facilitated an online meeting between them and we talked about what they could do. The school teacher then came to the training and following that they successfully applied for a small grant (Food for Life). So a whole new relationship has been established thanks to the information held in our network database.”*

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Ards & North Down, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Belfast. 2. Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim. 3. Mid Ulster, Armagh Banbridge Craigavon, Newry Mourne & Down. 4. Fermanagh Omagh, Derry Strabane, Causeway Coast & Glens.



The database also enables LGNI send out **regular emails** to members and to organise **network meetings**. The meetings (which take place online twice a year) provide attendees with information about local intergenerational work, funding opportunities, ideas for, and encouragement to undertake intergenerational projects, and opportunities to learn about the work of others. LGNI work in partnership with Age-Friendly Officers in Councils to host these meetings.

Two sets of meetings took place in the last year (September 2022 and February 2023). In total 214 people<sup>2</sup> registered to attend a network meeting, with 168 attending.

## Feedback

Network meeting attendees are asked to complete a feedback form after each meeting. Over the last year 52 responses were received (approx. 30% of attendees) across all meetings.

In terms of the profile of attendees:

- *44% worked in the community and voluntary sector, 17% worked in a council or statutory organisation, 8% worked in the care sector and 8% worked in an education setting. Others attending were from community groups, academics and 'other' settings.*
- *There was a good representation across council areas, with the highest number of attendees coming from the Mid Ulster and Mid & East Antrim Council areas.*
- *75% were current LGNI network members.*
- *48% were attending a network meeting for the first time, while the rest had attended previously.*

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<sup>2</sup> Note: not all attendees were network members

- *The number one reason for attending was to network and meet other practitioners. Additional reasons included gaining information about LGNI's work and finding out what was happening in their area, to share ideas, good practice and learning, and to access funding opportunities.*

Attendees were also asked to rate different aspects of the meetings. They advised that it had:

- *Increased their knowledge of IP and its relevance (87%).*
- *Connected them with others that can support IP in their area (77%).*
- *Given them ideas and resources to support their own IP (77%).*
- *Provided an opportunity to share learning with others (81%).*
- *Given them information on the work of LGNI and how they can help (96%).*
- *Increased their awareness of IP in their area (87%).*

In relation to follow up actions after the meeting attendees intended to connect with each other, explore potential projects, share information with colleagues, apply for funding, and undertake intergenerational practice training with LGNI.

The vast majority of attendees were very happy with the format and content of the meetings. A couple of people made suggestions; this included the return to face to face meetings and providing more information on existing members for those that were attending for the first time. Attendees also valued the support received from LGNI and encouraged them to keep providing network members with ideas, resources and funding opportunities.

In addition to the online feedback gathered after meetings, information was also gathered by a QUB student undertaking a placement with LGNI during 2022. They gathered information from 12 network members to understand how valuable they thought nine of the services offered by LGNI were. While a very small sample of network members responded the results showed that the most valuable services offered were Advice & Support and Project and Partnership work. The least valued service was 'Campaigns' such as Global Intergenerational Week. However, it should be noted that many of the respondents may not have been fully aware of the fully range of services/activities offered by LGNI.





## SMALL GRANTS

LGNI currently delivers two main small grant schemes each year:

- **All Ages April.** Supported by funding from the PHA these grants of £125 are open to a range of groups across NI<sup>3</sup> to create connections across generations and organisations that wouldn't normally come together. Activities can be one-off, or a project delivered over a number of sessions. The grants tie in with Global Intergenerational Week that takes place in April each year.
- Grants of £125 each delivered through the **Food for Life Get Togethers** project which is delivered in association with the Soil Association. In December 2022 these grants supported the Age Connected Christmas Campaign.

### All Ages April- 2022

Funding from the PHA enabled small grants to be awarded to 28 groups in 2022. An evaluation report was completed and can be downloaded [here](#).

The evaluation findings showed that through developing connections with people of another generation in their community and taking part in All Ages April intergenerational activity, participants felt more connected to their community, welcomed and respected and were keen to engage in further intergenerational activity:

- *87% stated that as a result of their involvement they now felt more connected to their community.*
- *98% stated that as a result they felt more welcome and connected in their community.*
- *98% said they would like to take part in more intergenerational activity.*

#### Headline Findings for Groups & Participants

Participants were asked about the practical benefits of taking part in the project. They commented that it gave them the confidence to:

- *Try intergenerational activities and something new.*
- *Manage the practical issues that arose.*
- *Problem solve - from navigating Covid restrictions, to thinking about steps to enable the very young and the very old to come together with consideration to their varied access and accommodation needs.*

In addition, the intergenerational benefits reported included:

1. Increased understanding by young people of the community and personal fears of older people.
2. Learning about the personal stories, experiences and community spirit of older people who lived through 'The Troubles'.



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<sup>3</sup> Older people's groups, care homes, schools, community groups, youth groups etc.



3. Younger participants learned that they should be more appreciative of what they have got after listening to stories of the poverty and hardship of an older generation.
4. Older participants increased their awareness of the serious mental health issues affecting young people these days.

### All Ages April – 2023

In February 2023 LGNI launched its 2023 small grants scheme and in March it was announced that 40 successful projects would be funded, each receiving £125 each. The grants tie in with Global Intergenerational Week (24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April) and a list of those receiving funding can be accessed [here](#).

A wide range of communities, organisations and settings participated. These included community groups, mums & tots, grandparents, colleges, care homes, nurseries, housing settings, schools, sports clubs, faith groups, arts organisations and museums. Around 80 groups were involved, with almost 2,200 participants. Activities included Bingo, Gardening, Crazy Golf, Kindness Postbox, Tree Planting, Reminiscence, Tea Parties and Art projects.

Projects took place during April and further details will be reported to PHA in the next financial year.

Council Area	Number of All Ages April Grants
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	4
Antrim Newtownabbey	1
Ards & North Down	4
Belfast	2
Causeway Coast & Glens	2
Derry City, Strabane	2
Fermanagh & Omagh	13
Lisburn City Castlereagh	3
Mad & East Antrim	1
Mid Ulster	4
Newry, Mourne & Down	4

## TRAINING COURSES

Through training courses, along with follow up advice and support, LGNI strives to build capacity within communities and organisations to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and ideas necessary to undertake their own intergenerational activity.

Over the past few years LGNI has evolved its training delivery model<sup>4</sup>. Since the organisation was founded in 2008 it offered a range of generic training which was open to everyone. To respond to needs of the core groups that LGNI works with, a decision was made in 2021 to develop more targeting training programmes, offering optional accreditation to participants.

Training now primarily focused on three sectors – care homes, education (schools and colleges), and community practitioners, with the training delivered to care home staff, teachers/students and those working in the community and voluntary sector. Bespoke training to other groups is also provided on request. The new training delivery model brings with it the flexibility to respond better to the needs of participants – in particular tweaking the contents of each course to their particular needs and adapting the delivery approach to their working patterns and environments. In addition the training delivered to care home staff helps support the achievement of care home standards.

The accredited training is delivered over 3 modules, *What Is Intergenerational Practice, Bringing Generations Together, Evaluating Social Impact and Promoting Sustainability* – trainees are supported from generating an intergenerational idea through to all the stages of developing and delivering a project. The course ends by advising how to evaluate success/social impact and exploring how to make their intergenerational approach sustainable. A handbook has also been developed for those working in care home settings. Accreditation is provided through CPD.

From summer 2023 onwards only accredited training will be offered by LGNI, with the exception of training for school pupils, which LGNI is examining for the future.

During the last year LGNI staff delivered training to 134 people and distributed 94 accredited certificates:

- 37 community practitioners based in the Fingal County Council area (north Dublin)<sup>5</sup> and the Western Heath & Social Care Trust (2 cohorts).
- A group of eight teachers from six schools across NI<sup>6</sup> in December 2022. This was the first ever accredited training for teachers and took place online. A second cohort of three teachers from three schools undertook the training in February/March 2023<sup>7</sup>.
- 15 care home staff, across two cohorts in August 2022 and February 2023.
- 71 students studying Health & Social Care at the Southern Regional College in Newry in May/June 2022 and February/March 2023.

Often the training course is only the start of the intergenerational practice journey for participants. As detailed in the next section, many then go on to deliver their own intergenerational projects, often

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<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/training-advice-support/>

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/lgni-training-with-fingal-county-council/>

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/intergenerational-teacher-training/>

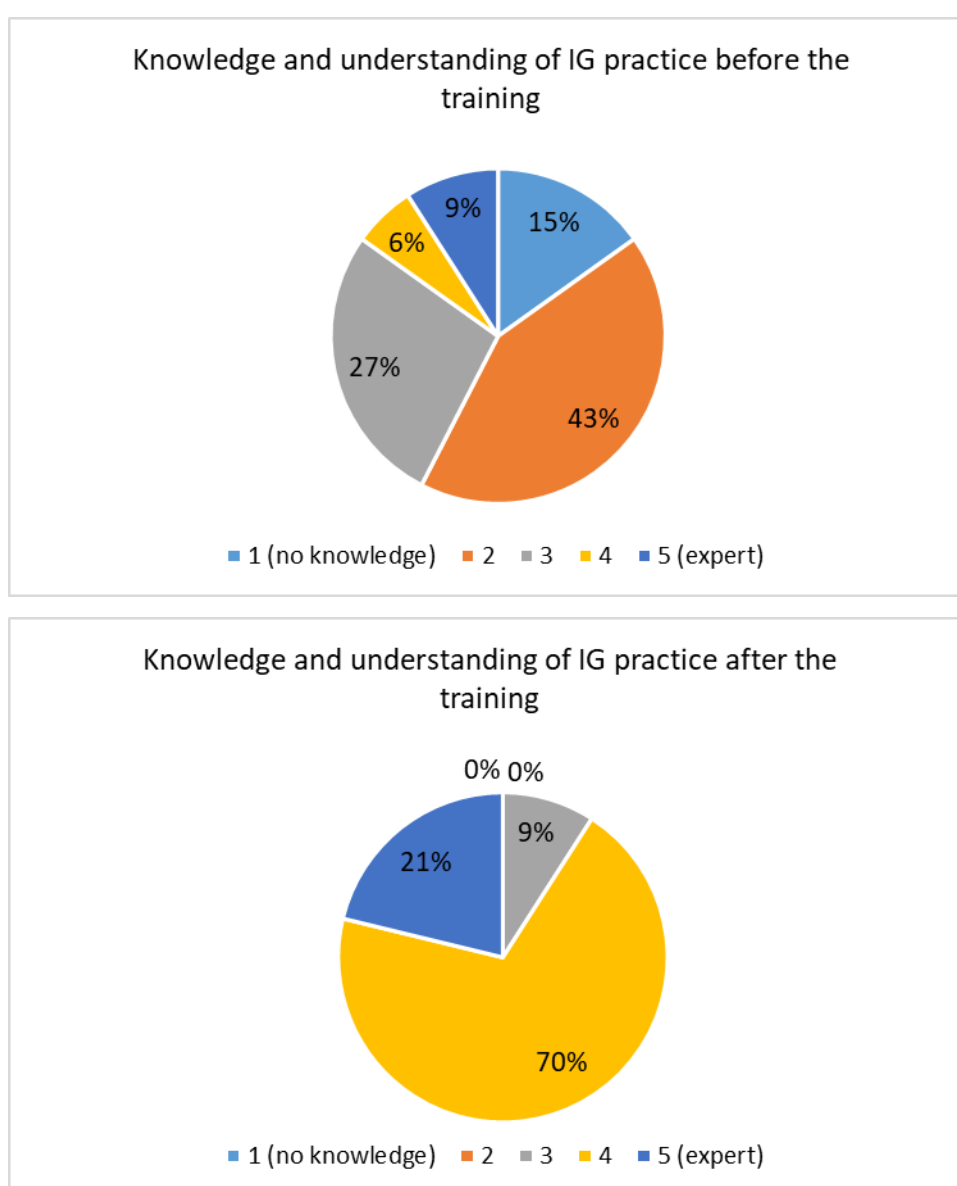
<sup>7</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/intergenerational-teacher-training-2/>

with the support of small grants and advice and support from LGNI – including helping to identify suitable partners. In addition one of the group of care staff trained in 2022 went on to set up their own support group to help each other with activities.

## Feedback

Those attending the training are asked to complete an online feedback form afterwards. Thirty-three responses (from approx. 25% of participants) were received during the last year.

Firstly, participants were asked to rate their knowledge and understanding of intergenerational practice both before and after the training – from 1 (no knowledge) to 5 (expert). The results show a marked improvement at the end of the training, with most participants starting with a low knowledge of intergenerational practice (1-3) and finishing with a higher score (3-5).



Participants were then asked to rate different elements of the training course – from poor to exceptional. The highest ratings received were for the knowledge of the facilitator, and the lowest (but still very good) for the activities/exercises.

### How would you rate the following?

	No answer	Poor	Adequate	Good	Exceptional
The knowledge of the facilitator	-	-	3%	30%	67%
The information provided	-	-	3%	42%	55%
The activities/exercises	-	-	6%	61%	33%
The overall event	-	-	-	55%	45%
The training manual	3%	-	3%	52%	42%

In terms of improvements to the course, most of the participants had no suggestions and were happy with the course. Five people would have liked face to face activity, two felt that there was repetition between the first and second sessions, one would have liked breakout rooms (on Zoom) to discuss scenarios, while another person suggested smaller sessions. A further suggestion was a good practice visit to see intergenerational practice in action.

All participants agreed that as a result of the training they had increased their awareness of intergenerational practice, had developed a better understanding of intergenerational practice and programmes, and received sufficient training to prepare them to undertake intergenerational projects. In addition 79% advised that the training had enabled them to make links between the use of intergenerational approaches and existing objectives within their own work or community.

When asked if they planned to undertake an intergenerational project in the future, all but two participants said they were. Some had already started a project, while others planned to link with care/residential homes, community groups, young people and schools.

Finally, when asked what the most important thing they would take away from the training was, the comments included the following:

- *The impact that intergenerational work can have on both the young and old.*
- *Anything is possible - really liked the equality conveyed that activities have to be mutually beneficial and most of all relevant to both parties creating an enjoyable learning experience.*
- *A reminder of the possibilities and the wider community benefits of intergenerational practice.*
- *To give broader consideration to how the community needs can be met or addressed via intergenerational approaches.*
- *The benefits of bringing people of all ages together are huge, for example when people understand each other and develop bonds/friendships mutual respect is formed, the hope being that it will filter into the communities we live in, neighbours will look out for each other more, resulting in people feeling cared for, less isolated and safe and promote a sense of belonging.*
- *It is more than just having older people across to the school to listen to the choir - it is about the connection and the impact for all involved.*
- *The brilliant ideas that were shared for using in future projects.*
- *The knowledge that you are there to support me in my work.*

## Case Study – New-Bridge College Students Take Intergenerational Action

Vicki from LGNI started working with New-Bridge Integrated College in Banbridge in the summer of 2022 to explore the possibility of school led intergenerational initiatives. Following a **presentation** to the whole sixth form about LGNI, intergenerational work and the potential outcomes for all involved, a group of students put their names forward. The group led by a school prefect and supported by their school Principal then embarked on LGNI training.

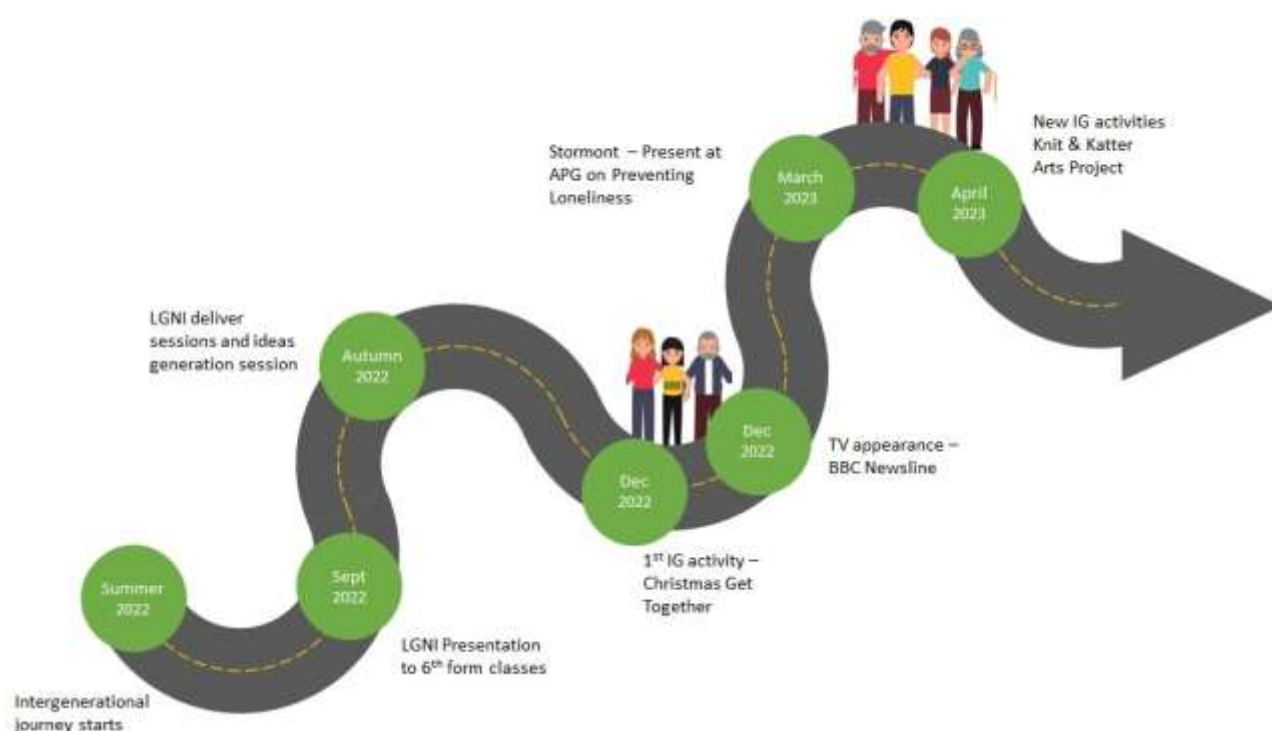
Vicki delivered two **training sessions** focusing on Age Awareness, What is intergenerational Practice, Best Practice in Bringing Generations Together, and Making Community Links. The students were then tasked with pitching their ideas for intergenerational activities. The dragons den style session saw three groups of students present their inspiring and very well thought out ideas followed by a discussion on the next steps to putting the ideas into practice.

Commenting on the sessions, one of the teachers noted:

*It made them (the pupils) much more aware of the mutual learning benefits which can be derived from an intergenerational project. It also made them more aware of how our integrated ethos can be promoted within the projects. It was great opportunity for team development and leadership development for the Strategy Group - great capacity building opportunity.*

One of the pupils also commented:

*It's a fantastic workshop which enables you to gain life skills, teamwork, leadership skills and breaking the stigma between the older and younger generation.*



**The New-Bridge College Intergenerational Journey**

The Christmas period and a Get Together **Small Grant** from LGNI provided the perfect opportunity for the students to reach out to older people. A fantastic **Christmas event** took place at the school attended by approx. 40 older people including residents from a local care home, grandparents and the from the community. Everyone enjoyed a festive dinner, music and arts activity. Robbie Meredith from BBC Newsline covered the event which appeared on the local **TV news programme**.

In March 2022 the students presented their intergenerational journey alongside LGNI to the **NI Assembly All Party Group on Preventing Loneliness**. The school have also started their next intergenerational projects – a knit and natter project with a local care home, and an arts project. This approach is a very different one for LGNI by putting pupils in the lead, but so valuable for their own development and the **sustainability of intergenerational school activities**. They plan to reach out to other year groups and involve them as participants meaning that they get the experience of community development and leadership.



**Presentation to NI Assembly All Party Group on Loneliness**



# NI CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE

In this section we look at LGNI's communications, advice and support, as well as the resources it has developed to support intergenerational practice.

## Communications and Campaigns

LGNI's main methods of communication are through its website, social media channels, and emails to its network members.

LGNI's **website** was redeveloped during 2022 and now provides a much better experience for users as well as being easier for staff to update. Engagement has gradually grown over the last year, with 13,000 users during 2022. Other key statistics are shown in the box. These analytics are a great indicator that the website provides a signposting service to intergenerational information and opportunities that support people to engage.

**Social media** also continues to be a successful method for LGNI to engage with those interested in intergenerational practice. Facebook is the most successful method, followed by Twitter.

During the year LGNI sent five **e-mail newsletters** to network members. Each newsletter provides updates on LGNI's work, information about recent projects and resources and training opportunities. Additional emails are also sent out during the year to members for specific reasons – e.g. to make them aware of Global Intergenerational Week, Positive Ageing Most or funding opportunities.

In addition LGNI aims to **target and tailor its messaging and communications** to specific groups, particularly in order to attract participants to its training courses. For example, the teacher training is promoted on the C2K Blackboard and the NI Teachers Collaborative Page, while training for care home staff is promoted through organisations such as the Care Sector ECHO group. In addition by partnering with larger organisations (such as COPNI, NICCY, Soil Association, Twinkl and Age NI, LGNI can maximise the reach of its communications and their support can help to reinforce the LGNI 'brand'.

### LGNI Website – 2022 Key Statistics

13K users over the year  
5.7K individual users  
19K page views  
1.3k downloads  
Top pages – Resources, News and Global Intergenerational Week  
Top ways website accessed – Direct & organic search and organic social  
Top countries – UK, USA, Ireland, China

### LGNI Social Media 2022 Key Statistics

#### Facebook (2,955 followers)

43,784 page reach  
3629 profile visits  
138 new followers  
224 posts over the year

#### Twitter (1,450 followers)

59.1K post impressions  
80 new followers

#### Instagram (466 followers)

668 post reach  
238 profile visits  
104 new followers

#### LinkedIn

LGNI account - 150 followers



## Global Intergenerational Week 2022

The 2022 Global Intergenerational Week (GIW) took place from 25 April to 1 May. LGNI hosted three events; a launch event with the Commissioners for Older and Younger People (COPNI and NICCY) Bryansburn Care Home and St Comgall's Primary School, a webinar to showcase the Food for Life Get Togethers Project, and an event celebrating intergenerational 'champions', which showcased how particular groups and individuals had made huge positive contributions to their communities. A video of support was also recorded by the then Minister for Education, Michelle McIlveen MLA. The LGNI events were attended by 86 people and were also highly successful on social media – reaching over 16,000 accounts on Facebook alone. In addition two intergenerational ideas resources were created and shared, the All Ages April grants were promoted, a newsletter was distributed, and information on the week was sent to all NI politicians. Three councils also lit up their buildings in pink. A breakdown of LGNI Global Intergenerational activities in 2022 can be viewed at [Global Intergenerational Week 2022 – Linking Generations NI](#) report on the week is available [here](#).

Comments received from LGNI event attendees included:

*I will take away from this event the vital importance of intergenerational work. It is only when you see the generations interacting together that you fully appreciate the necessity for this work to continue, and to be built upon.*

*I really enjoyed this event and came away with lots of ideas which I hope to be able to put into practice in our intergenerational project. So good to hear from people who are so passionate about building intergenerational connections.*

*I will take away how much inspiring intergenerational work is taking place across NI and the enthusiasm and dedication of the Champions.*



**Global Intergenerational Week 2022 Launch Event at Bryansburn Care Home Bangor**

## Global Intergenerational Week 2023

Global Intergenerational Week 2023 took place from the 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April involving 15 countries across the globe to promote, showcase and inspire intergenerational connections. LGNI activity will be updated and archived on the following webpage [Global Intergenerational Week – Linking Generations NI](#).



As part of the week LGNI launched a photo competition in partnership with COPNI/NICCY which aimed to showcase intergenerational moments and connections that take place in families and communities. The theme of the competition was 'Connecting Generations' and participants had a chance of winning an ASDA hamper. The winner of the hamper will be announced in early May following judging by LGNI, COPNI and NICCY.



A range of resources for communities and schools were also developed to support and inspire intergenerational activities during the week. These can be found on the LGNI [website](#). In addition this year's All Ages April grants were promoted as part of the week's celebrations, and nine of NI's 11 Council's lit up their buildings in pink during the week in celebration, including Belfast City Hall [NI Light's Up PINK for Global Intergenerational Week! – Linking Generations NI](#). LGNI also hosted an event with Generations Working Together and Apples & Honey to showcase their new project 'Creating Intergenerational Communities'.



## An Age Connected Christmas Campaign



On 20 December 2022 **BBCNI Newsline** featured a story with pupils from New-Bridge Integrated College engaging in intergenerational Christmas activities with local older people. In addition LGNI Director Vicki Titterington featured in the item.

### Advice, Information and Support

LGNI staff continue to respond to requests for advice and support from network members and a range of other groups and organisations that make enquiries. With a small team of three part-time staff, demand can often exceed resources, however staff respond as best they can to requests. In addition there is currently a high level of interest in intergenerational practice at a policy level in Northern Ireland. The invitation to the recent All Party Group meetings (see next section) demonstrates this. LGNI is also in regular contact with government departments (such as DE), MLAs and statutory bodies (such as EA), as well as large organisations supporting the community and voluntary sector.

For the second year in a row LGNI devised and delivered a Christmas campaign (Age Connected Christmas) in December 2022 aimed at inspiring LGNI's network members and supporters to take intergenerational action and make a connection during the Christmas Period. The campaign included multiple resources and activities that could be downloaded from the LGNI website. Those downloading the resources were encouraged to take photos of their activities and tag LGNI on their social media pages. Small grants were also made available to support the Christmas Get Togethers (via the Soil Association). Engagement with Age Connected Christmas 2022 was very successful with several schools and care homes posting their activities. See more on this campaign via [Thanks from LGNI – #AgeConnectedChristmas Campaign – Linking Generations NI](#)



## Resources

LGNI have continued to develop a number of resources to support those involved in intergenerational practice and there is now a dedicated page on the [website](#) that makes them easily accessible. The main resources developed in the last year are the extensive range for school teachers and pupils at KS1 and KS2 levels in primary schools, developed in partnership with [Twinkl](#). These include resources for Global Intergenerational Week, Easter, Christmas (for the Age Connected Christmas Campaign), Family History, Story Sharing, and various other activities such as 'Pots of Kindness' and 'Rocks of Kindness'.

Other resources developed include those for [Global Intergenerational Week](#) (April) and [Positive Ageing Month](#) (October). In addition, working with the Soil Association as part of the Food for Life Get Togethers project, an intergenerational gardening resource was developed in March 2023 as part of Plant and Share Month.

While the LGNI and Twinkl websites are the main ways of accessing the resources, LGNI also promotes them through emails to network members and as part of specific campaigns – e.g. Global Intergenerational Week, Age Connected Christmas and Positive Aging Week.

The resources have proved popular - they have been downloaded 411 times in the last year from the Twinkl website and the Resources page of the LGNI website has been visited 1,048 times in the last year and there have 1,200 downloads across the site in the last year.



## EMBEDDING INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE

This area of LGNI's work focuses on embedding intergenerational practice at a **policy level** in Northern Ireland. While there has been no functioning government in Northern Ireland for over a year, LGNI has nonetheless continued to work with a wide range of statutory, council, community and voluntary organisations, as well as inter-agency groups and networks, to promote and embed intergenerational practice.

During the last year LGNI staff:

- Attended a range of Council run groups that support older people including Loneliness Networks (e.g. Mid and East Antrim), Age Friendly networks/alliances (including Armagh Banbridge Craigavon, Belfast HASP and Antrim & Newtownabbey), community planning, and participatory budget meetings (Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon). They also supported the Ards & North Down Borough Council Positive Ageing month event. In addition LGNI staff correspond with all existing Age-friendly council staff including responding to draft plans, plans for network meetings and Global Intergenerational Week.
- Attended the NI Assembly All Party Groups on Ageing and Older People and Preventing Loneliness. In March 2023 LGNI were involved in an event of the Preventing Loneliness Group at Stormont, along with Antrim & Newtownabbey Seniors Forum and pupils and staff from New-Bridge Integrated College. Both groups highlighted the benefits of intergenerational connections in addressing loneliness as well as supporting other outcomes such as educational and health and wellbeing. LGNI is also a member of the Action Group on Loneliness Policy. Established in 2019 the group is lobbying the NI Assembly to develop and implement a strategy on loneliness for NI.
- Participated in a range of inter-agency groups including Digital Assist (BITCNI), Dementia Friendly East Belfast, South Belfast Health Forum, Age Sector Network, Care Sector ECHO group and Mid Ulster Seniors.
- Held a range of meetings and corresponded with organisations such as Age NI, Red Cross, Department for Education, Education Authority NI, Clanmil Housing, Twinkl NI, COPNI, NICCY, Soil Association, Alzheimer's Society and My Home Life.
- Continued to link in with national and international partners to share learning and work collectively on initiatives. These included Generations Working Together Scotland (including their annual conference), Beth Johnson Foundation and Communities for All Ages Network and presenting at the NI Frailty Network Conference. Global Intergenerational Week 2023 will see LGNI working with 15 international partners.

In addition LGNI staff:

- Facilitated an intergenerational session focusing on the cross-generational power of books and stories as part of the Generations on the Same Page project<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/generations-on-the-same-page-video-premiere/>



- Worked alongside Radius Housing and Alternatives Restorative Justice to deliver a fun filled intergenerational session as part of their 2022 Summer Scheme<sup>9</sup>.
- Planned and delivered an intergenerational Time Capsule event with Belfast Healthy Cities and QUB in November 2022 at The Mac in Belfast.
- Celebrated the end of the year long Connected Care Homes Communities project, with a virtual online session in June 2022. The project's funder (LFT Charitable Trust) and many of the care homes that took part. Staff from two care homes presented at the event and over 20 people attended from the community, statutory, voluntary sectors including COPNI and care homes<sup>10</sup>.
- Contributed to the National Youth Council of Ireland's recent Young Voices event in Dublin. The workshop explored and discussed ageism, potential intergenerational social issues, and the role young people could play in developing solutions. Through the workshop the young people identified that many of the issues faced by them were also applicable to older people<sup>11</sup>.



**National Youth Council of Ireland Young Voices Event**



**Generations on the Same Page Event**

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/intergenerational-summer-scheme-session-in-east-belfast/>

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/connecting-care-homes-communities-share-the-learning-event/>

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.linkinggenerationsni.com/news/national-youth-council-of-ireland-ign-workshop/>

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING LEVERAGED

The provision of funding by the Public Health Agency NI for LGNI's network and infrastructure continues to be crucial in the sustainability and development of intergenerational practice and LGNI as an organisation in NI. As a result of this funding provision in the period April 2022- March 2023 LGNI has been able to secure additional funds from a range of funders which has enabled them to extend the reach of their services, offer more services to their network members and increase the financial stability of LGNI.

A table of income generated for this yearly period is broken down below:

FUNDER	AMOUNT	PURPOSE
<b>Arts Council Northern Ireland Arts for Older People Fund</b>	£7788.00 (1 year)	Development and delivery of 4 intergenerational arts projects with Care Homes and Schools
<b>Halifax Foundation NI</b>	£5332.00 (1 year)	Development of 4 new intergenerational partnerships between younger and older people's settings
<b>National Lottery Community Fund UK Portfolio</b> – LGNI as a partner with Generations Working Together Scotland & Apples and Honey London	£119,250 (over 2.5 years)	Development and piloting Quality Indicators for Intergenerational Practice with 15 communities/settings across UK (10 in NI)
<b>Public Health Agency NI</b> – Service Enhancement	£4850.00 (March 2023)	Evaluation support and report and additional All Ages April 2023 grants
<b>Training income</b> – Care Homes, Teachers, Fingal Council, Western Trust cohorts	£2150.00	Delivery of accredited training for practitioners – not covered in current funding capacity
<b>LGNI Facilitation Income</b> – Generations on the Same Page, Radius Housing Summer Scheme, National Youth Council of Ireland Event, Belfast Healthy Cities & Queens University Time Capsule Event	£1580	Expert facilitation by LGNI staff at partner events and projects outside LGNI funded activity
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£140,950.00</b>	



## RECOMMENDATIONS

LGNI has a small team of dedicated, highly experienced and skilled staff that work hard to promote and develop intergenerational practice across Northern Ireland. The organisation operates with limited financial resources in a challenging funding environment. Significant ongoing support and recognition of the value of intergenerational practice by government departments, agencies and MLAs is very encouraging, however the lack of a functioning NI Assembly has hindered efforts to turn this support into funding.

The following recommendations are made on the understanding that their implementation is dependent on securing funding and resources to do so.

### Networks

- To boost attendance at network meetings. Approx. 21% of network members attended a meeting in the last year. There is a significant pool of members that could be encouraged to attend meetings in the future.
- To focus on increasing network meeting attendance from education and care settings – only 8% of network meeting attendees work in care/education settings. In recommending this it is recognised that it can be difficult for care workers/teachers to take time off to attend meetings.
- To not automatically send post-meeting information to those who do not attend the meetings – this may help to encourage better attendance at meetings.

### Information

- To invest in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database (or similar) that will enable LGNI to better profile and communicate with its members. The free version of Mailchimp only allows very basic information gathering and targeting of communications.

### Evaluation

- To review how evaluation information is gathered to increase completion rates of questionnaires (especially by network meeting and training course attendees). One option would be to dedicate time before the end of meetings/courses, rather than requesting completion afterwards.
- Questions on the online evaluation forms should all require an answer – currently they are optional and important information is not being captured effectively.
- To undertake short follow up surveys with small grant recipients and training course attendees in order to establish if they have continued to undertake intergenerational work and to understand any challenges they have faced. This could be done by email in the first instance, followed by a phone call. This could be undertaken by a university student on placement with LGNI.

### Website

- LGNI has undertaken a lot of work on its website during the last year. Given the amount of policy and advocacy work that staff undertake (see pages 18-19), it is recommended that this showcased on the website through a dedicated page.