



Developing Intergenerational Ideas in Ards & North Down Report June 2024



Linking Generations
Northern Ireland



Public Health
Agency

Project supported by the PHA

Introduction

Ards and North Down Borough Council are part of a Northern Ireland wide movement supported by the Public Health Agency NI to create an Age-friendly NI. This local movement is part of the World Health Organization's Global Age-friendly Cities and Communities Network which was established in 2010 in response to global population ageing. By signing up to members for the Network Ards and North Down Council committed to developing an Age-friendly Alliance of partners, stakeholders and older people and directly consulting and engaging with older people and the organisations that support them to develop and deliver on an Age-friendly strategic plan.

The network provides a mechanism to connect cities, communities and organisations worldwide with a common vision of making their communities a place where people of all ages can live healthy and active lives and where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age. Each NI council has a dedicated Age-friendly Officer who leads on progressing Age-friendly within their area and LGNI provide a regional intergenerational support to all NI councils. At an NI level all councils connect via the Age-friendly NI network which is made up of Age-friendly Coordinators and local older people partnership leads with support from Age NI. There is also a UK Age-friendly Cities and Communities Network coordinated by the Centre for Ageing Better to connect those working on Age-friendly across the UK.

Age-friendly Ards and North Down

Ards and North Down Borough Council launched their first Age-friendly Plan in 2019 running until 2022 [Age-Friendly-Strategy-Onlinefin.pdf \(who.int\)](#). The latest [Age Friendly Action Plan 2023-2027](#) contains actions that will enable Age Friendly Alliance members, and the Over 50s Council, to work towards the commitments made in the strategy. Three themes have been prioritised within the Age Friendly Action Plan. These are: ***Respect and Inclusion, Social Participation, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.***

The plans 'intergenerational' actions fall under the theme of Respect and Social Inclusion' including to:

- Support and promote the work of AND Intergenerational Network to increase capacity and raise awareness of the benefits of intergenerational practice.
- Create a local intergenerational day to celebrate older people (led by Over 50s Council)

To support this action Linking Generations NI were commissioned by Ards and North Down Borough Council to deliver intergenerational workshops. The aim of this piece of work was to support younger people and older people from the Borough to work together and generate their own ideas for intergenerational activities that support the development of an Age-friendly Ards and North Down.

What we did

LGNI were delighted to have the opportunity to work alongside Ards and North Down Borough Council's Age-friendly Officer to bring younger and older people together to develop intergenerational ideas!

The aim of this piece of work was to support younger people and older people from the Borough to work together and generate their own ideas for intergenerational activities that support the development of an Age-friendly Ards and North Down.

LGNI facilitated two intergenerational workshops in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex in April with young people from Youth Voice, Over 50s Council and other older people.

Workshop 1 focused on:

- Getting to know one another
- Exploring 'what is intergenerational'
- Discussing 'age' stereotypes, assumptions and identifying similarities
- Creating community characters - ages, hobbies, interests, issues

An initial icebreaker of 'human bingo' was used to get the older and younger people interacting with one another. Each participant had a sheet with fun facts that they had to complete by talking to people of a different generation e.g. find someone who has a tattoo. The first person to complete their sheet won a yummy chocolate orange for their efforts.

The participants were split into intergenerational groups and LGNI used Menti meter to establish some baseline information from the participants – it was great to see the younger people supporting their older partners with using this technology.

What are you hoping to get from tonight's event?

38 responses



What is Intergenerational?

The intergenerational groups were then tasked to discuss 'what is intergenerational?' and to come up with a definition to share with the wider group.



Definition of Intergenerational Practice

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, **mutually beneficial** activities, which promote greater understanding and **respect** between generations and contributes to building more **cohesive** communities. Intergenerational practice is **inclusive**, building on the **positive** resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

Beth Johnson Foundation, April 2001

The general concept of intergenerational was highlighted in all the responses and LGNi provided the definition that is most commonly used across the world.

LGNi provided two activity examples to outline the difference between what is and what isn't intergenerational.

A group of young and older people come together to learn about digital photography, enjoy each other's company while making a calendar for charity.



A number of older people are invited into school to talk about what life was like in the olden days.



Discussing 'age' stereotypes, assumptions and identifying similarities

Equipped with an understanding of what is intergenerational the participants were then tasked with an activity to explore age related stereotypes and their own opinions on different age groups.



In your groups...

Discuss briefly and:

- write down 4 words that are associated with older people in your community
- 4 words that are associated with young people in your community



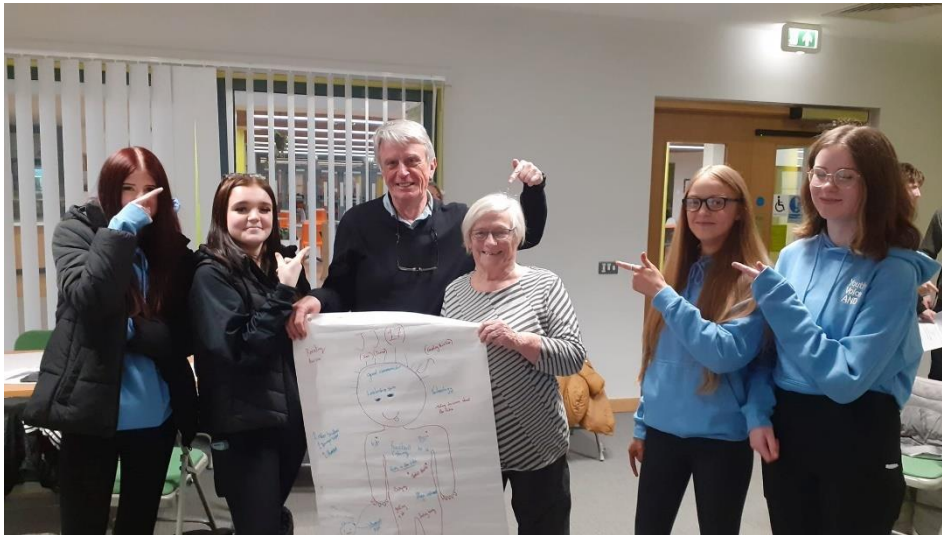
The participants had honest discussions and conversations about their thoughts and in some instances realised these were based on perceptions as opposed to from experience.

They realised that many of their opinions and views were based on perceptions rather than based on experience.



Creating community characters - ages, hobbies, interests, issues

Having explored their perceptions and stereotypes associated with people of different ages and the prevalence of ageism particularly relating to older and younger people they were tasked with creating a fictional character from their community older or younger. The characters were to be given an age, names, attributes, interests and personal situations. The groups had a lot of fun creating their characters and then presenting them to the wider group.



Following the presentations of their characters the groups were asked to compare and discuss the issues that both their younger and older fictional characters had in common. These were typed up on screen to be explored further as part of workshop 2.



Were there common issues/interests – Our Characters!

- Sporty, parties, communication, lives in foster, bullying, relationship issues, worried about employment
- Pets, sewing, music, hiking, IT, music, design, bills and worries about the times
- Kind, knowledgeable, buns, plants, worried about memory, grandparents/child connections, unicorns
- Dog, archery, drawing, football, loneliness, boredom, people, worried about future
- Hamster, siblings, football, fishing, helps out in cubs, bullying, mental health, loneliness, leadership, pizza, technology

Thoughts on Workshop 1

For evaluation purposes the participants were asked to give some feedback on their experience of taking part in workshop 1 via Mento Meter.

When asked what they would take away from the workshop they provide the feedback below:

What will take away from tonight's workshop?

32 responses



When asked what they learnt from people of a different generations they provided the following feedback:

Did you learn anything about someone of a different generation? Tell us what...

31 responses



Workshops 2 focused on:

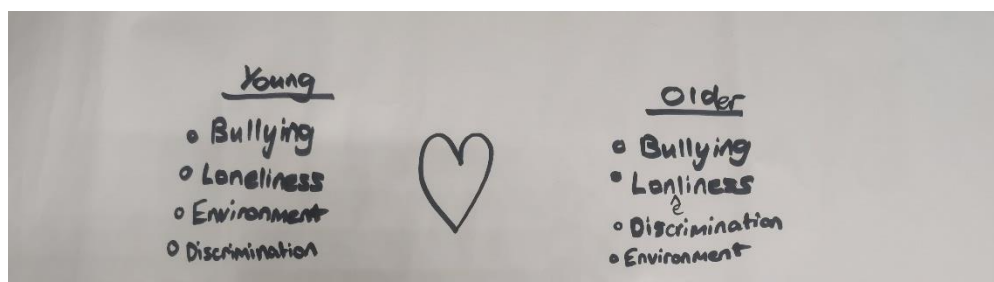
- Discussing and exploring local issues to address intergenerationally
- Discussing assets/interests of people and organisations in the room
- Discussing ideas for activities
- Planning and presenting intergenerational ideas

The aim of workshop 2 was to provide an opportunity for the participants to apply their new understanding of intergenerational practice and collectively develop and plan activities ideas that they would like to develop and engage in.

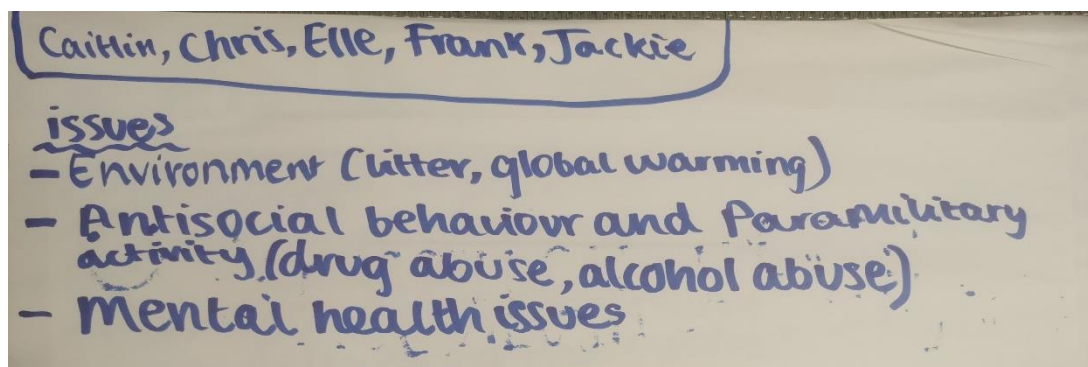
To begin LGNI facilitated a short 'Line up in Age' icebreaker and did a quick recap of the first workshops activities, feedback and findings. LGNI reminded the group of their 'Create a Character' activity and the many interest, issues, likes and personal circumstances related to their characters as a lead into the first activity.

Discussing and exploring local issues to address intergenerationally

To start of the process of developing their intergenerational ideas LGNI tasked the participants with identifying local issues that their activities might address and that were common to both younger and older people.



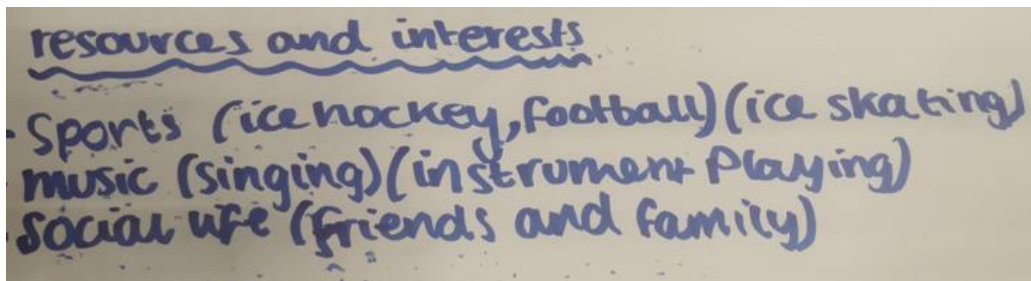
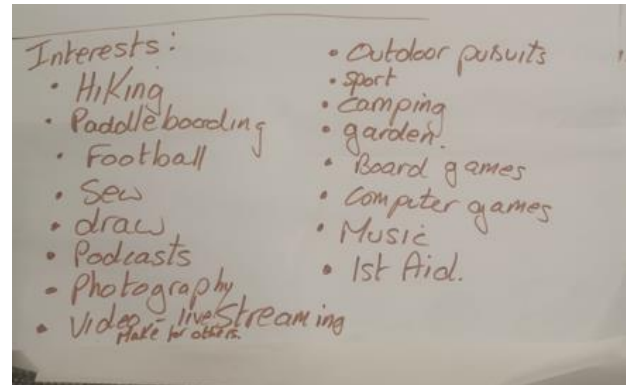
The groups took time to discuss this and jotted down their collective thoughts on flip chart paper before feeding back to the wider group. This activity proved to be very useful in identifying commonalities between the generations and creating empathy and understanding.



Discussing assets/interests of people and organisations in the room

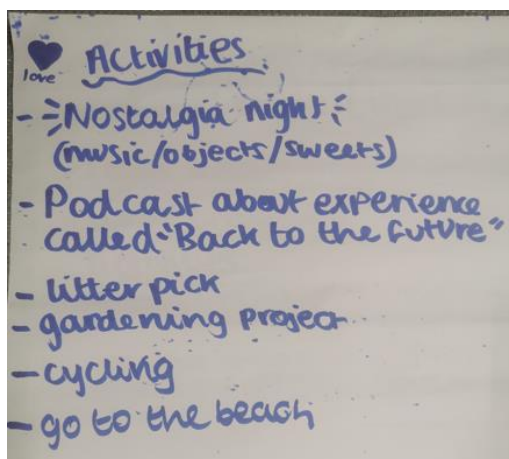
Co design and participation is at core of intergenerational working and its key that the participants have played a part in the identifying the activities they want to focus on. Connecting generations and the practitioners that support also opens up a wide range of skills, assets, experience and resources that can be utilised. With this in mind the participants were asked to discuss in their groups what these might be and how they could be factored into the activities.

The groups again jotted their findings down on flip chart pages and shared this with the wider group. See some photos of their discussions and suggestions are included here:

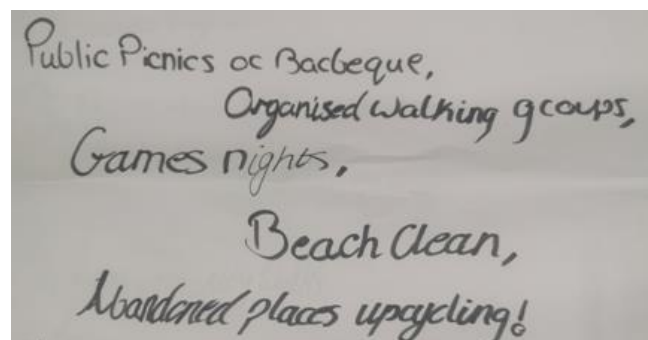


Discussing ideas for activities

Following on from their discussions about the interests of their group and also the skills and attributes that they could potentially utilise they were tasked with suggesting activities that would support the intergenerational issues they identified, be of interest to them and also utilise any existing skills that they had. These activities were again jotted down on flipchart pages in preparation for their next collective activity of planning and developing their intergenerational initiatives.



Some of the suggested activities are included here:



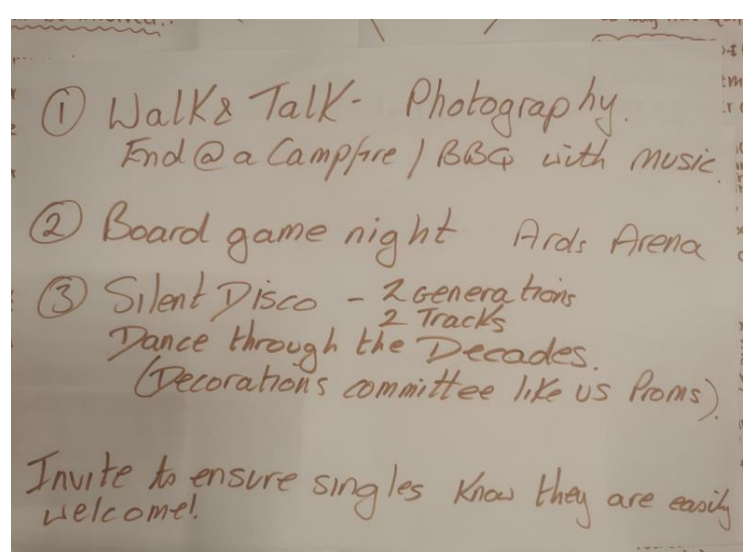
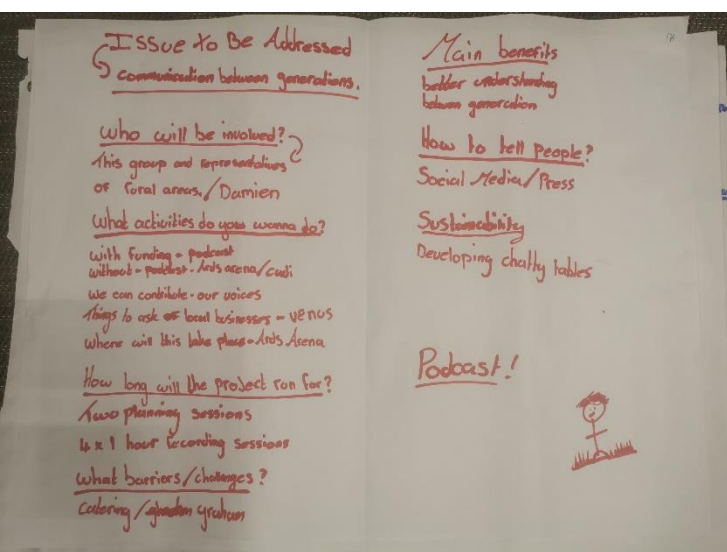
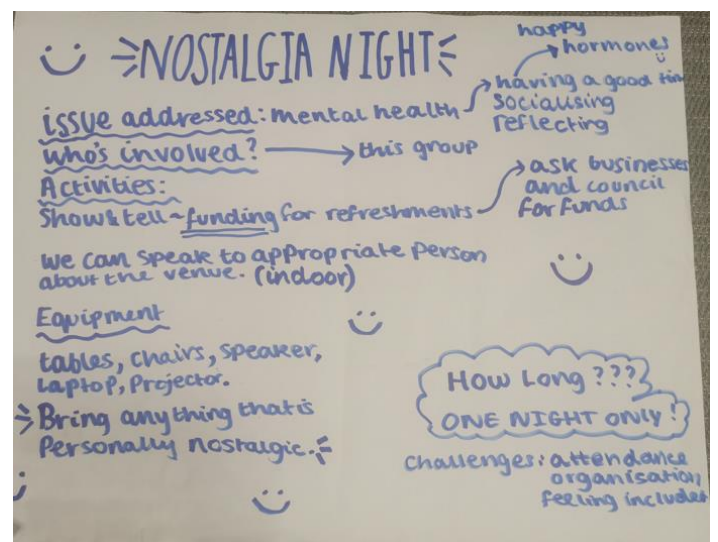
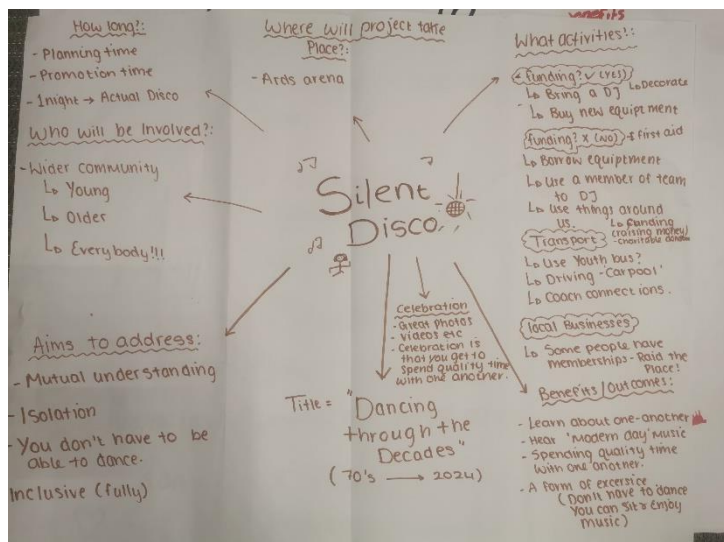
Planning and presenting intergenerational ideas

The final activity and overall purpose of the workshops was for the intergenerational groups to put all of their discussions and suggestions together to create plans for their intended intergenerational projects and activities.

Four separate ideas were presented by the wider intergenerational group as potential activities/events/projects that they would like to take forward.

These included:

1. An intergenerational Nostalgia Night
2. An intergenerational Silent Disco
3. An intergenerational Podcast
4. Series of intergenerational activities – Walk & Talk, Games Night and Silent Disco



Evaluation of Intergenerational Workshops

To assess the success of the workshops and gather feedback LGNI asked participants to complete a short questionnaire based on their experience of taking part.

Participants Responses to our evaluation were as follows:

- 73% felt more connected to their communities
- 77% had learned something about a different generation
- 77% had things in common with a different generation
- 91% would like to do something intergenerational again
- 68% had never been involved in intergenerational work before
- 68% said the project made them feel good
- 91% thought bringing generations together was a good idea

The ages involved were:

11 – 15	1
15 – 17	11
45 – 64	5
65 – 79	3
80+	1

When asked what they enjoyed about the project:

“The food, drinks and presentation”.

“Meeting younger people and being impressed by them”.

“Good craic! Great to see such enthusiasm and imagination”.

“I learnt a lot and figured we aren't that different”.

When asked what they had found out about a different age:

“Different generations have more or less the same views as young people”.

“That different generations experience similar issues that I do”.

“They still feel young in an old person's body”.

“They have a lot of skills, are very pleasant and aren't too different from ourselves”.

“That our everyday language can be different between generations”.

The Youth Leaders commented:

“Really positive experience for the young people. Good opportunity to share views and ideas” and “Building connections between the different generations is not only impactful for our present but also our future”.

Recommendations, Moving Forward...

The workshops have successfully created new intergenerational links and engaged younger and older people from the Ards and North Down Borough. As part of this process the participants have collectively developed their own intergenerational ideas and activities that contribute to the vision of an Age-friendly Ards and North Down.

Moving forward and building on the relationships and ideas developed it is recommended to facilitate further intergenerational activities and sessions between Youth Voice, Over 50s Council and interested older people based on the four project ideas proposed by the group:

- 1. An intergenerational Nostalgia Night**
- 2. An intergenerational Silent Disco**
- 3. An intergenerational Podcast**
- 4. Series of intergenerational activities – Walk & Talk, Games Night and Silent Disco**

In addition to the above and as referenced in the Ards and North Down Age-friendly Plan to work together to develop a local Intergenerational Day in Ards and North Down Borough Council celebrating and showcasing older and young people's contributions and achievements.

Linking Generations NI look forward to seeing these ideas being put into practice and activities taking place which we will support where possible and share as inspiration for others.

A massive thank you and well down to all involved!



Report compiled by Linking Generations NI
Check out www.linkinggenerationsni.com for more information