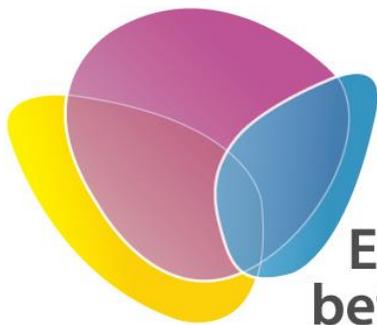




**Linking Generations NI report
Intergenerational Consultation
on the OFMDFM**

**Active Ageing Strategy for NI
2014-2020**

to celebrate



29 April
**European Day of Solidarity
between Generations**



Background

LGNI, Age Sector Platform and the NI Youth Forum formed a partnership to promote the collective voice of older and younger people during 2012 EY2012. Our partnership aims to promote intergenerational discussion and the civic participation of both generations relating to a range of issues. Too often in society our younger and older members are marginalized and feel they have little say in the decision making processes that affect their daily lives.

Age Sector Platform and the NI Youth Forum are very similar in structure and represent the voice of younger and older people respectively although it has become apparent through both organisations agendas that many of their top issues were the same or similar. LGNI therefore act as the catalyst within this partnership supporting a different but more inclusive way of working which addresses issues of potential intergenerational conflict. LGNI advocate for the collective voice of all ages on issues that are cross generational recognising the contribution that each age group has to make. By bringing together younger and older people at the grass roots level empathy and understanding for each other's issues can be fostered.

LGNI feel that the consultation process on the new Active Ageing Strategy for NI offers an important opportunity for the engagement of older and younger people in having their opinions heard as the older people of today but also the future. One thing that we all have in common is ageing, everyone is getting older and the old were once young. The vision of the strategy states that ***“Northern Ireland is an age friendly region in which people, as they get older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights and dignity protected”***.

This highlights its relevance to people of all ages and in particular its reference to Northern Ireland as an age-friendly region. Specific references within the strategy to ***challenging the stereotypes of ageing***; the promotion of older people as ***active members of the community*** and recognising the ***challenges facing older people to lead active lives*** are all issues that cannot be addressed in age isolation and that benefit from an cross-generational approach. This mirrors the view of Age Platform Europe President Marjan Sedmak when speaking of the commitment to achieve an Age-Friendly EU by 2020 - ***“Creating an Age-Friendly European Union means fostering solidarity between generations and enabling the active participation and involvement of all age groups in society while providing them with adequate support and protection. This cannot be achieved through isolated initiatives. It requires a wide commitment and common vision”***.

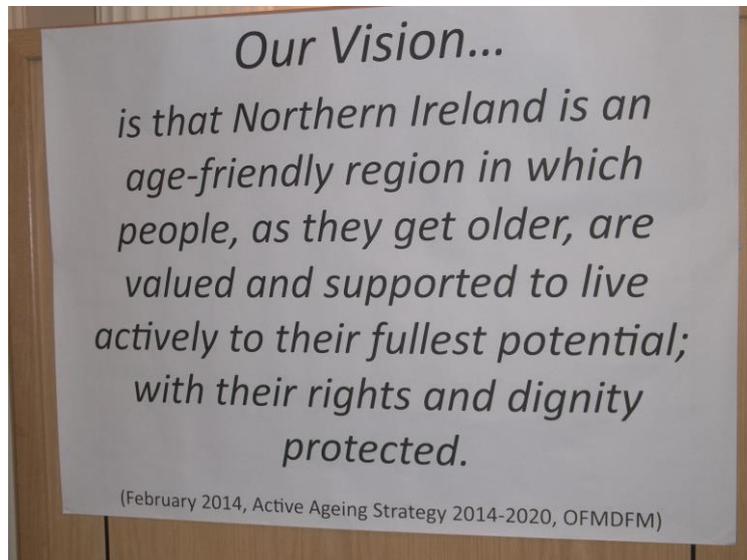


Contribution to the Active Ageing Strategy

OFMDFM sponsored LGNI to host an intergenerational consultation to the Active Ageing strategy in partnership with Age Sector Platform and the Northern Ireland Youth Forum on the 29th April, EU Day of Solidarity between Generations. This event aimed to add value to the findings and contribute to a wider understanding that what is good for older people is good for all ages. This is particularly relevant to achievement of the strategic aims focusing on ***Participation, Self-fulfilment and Dignity*** as older people must be enabled to be active members of their communities, be free from ageist practices and attitudes and valued as individuals. LGNI believe that this can only be achieved with the cooperation of other age groups and the use of all-age approaches and in particular, engagement with young people. References within the strategy recognise the importance of intergenerational approaches to improving community safety in tackling negative stereotyping and intergenerational approaches are increasingly being recognised in other government strategies such as ***Together Building a United Community***.

Intergenerational consultation event in celebration of 29th April

On the 29th April 2014 older and younger people gathered in Belfast City Hall to take part in an intergenerational consultation event on the Active Ageing Strategy for NI. In particular they were asked to choose their top four topics and discuss the strategies proposed signature projects to address them. Participants were also asked to give their view on the strategies vision – ***'Northern Ireland is an age friendly region in which people, as they get older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights and dignity protected'***.



The four topics were decided upon through the use of an electronic voting system, all discussion notes are detailed below along with evaluation reporting from the event. The four selected topics were: Fear of Crime, Transport, Poverty and Discrimination. Four facilitators moved from table to table to listen to the views of those present. Each facilitator then contributed to a whole room discussion which summarised the views expressed. The notes taken by facilitators are transcribed below:

Topic area: Fear of crime

Each table was asked to consider the action in the strategy relating to fear of crime.

Relevant signature proposal -

‘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’

Every table agreed that addressing fear of crime was important and expressed that they thought the use of intergenerational approaches is a good thing. Every table discussed the role of the PSNI and had general comments to make about policing. The comments made are summarised as follows:

Policing

- Neighbourhood police don't generally have good relations with young people
- We need more neighbourhood officers. PSNI should provide neighbourhood officers on the basis of need. There needs to be a local officer 'on the beat'.
- Paramilitaries are running areas and this means that people don't use PSNI.
- PSNI general efficiency is poor – the clearance rates must increase to reduce fear of crime.
- To tackle fear of crime, you have to tackle crime itself – more criminals need to be caught
- Younger people feel that they are negatively judged by PSNI officers. Stop and search powers are used too frequently on young people by PSNI.
- The PSNI is a faceless organisation; there is no confidence in policing in NI.

Other comments:

- Paramilitaries protect older people from young people in neighbourhoods
- Stereotyping of young people is an issue that must be addressed to tackle fear of crime – often it's fear of young people.
- The media has a lot to answer for in pumping negative views of young people.
- Older people's negative perceptions of young people need to be tackled.
- Tackling fear of crime by bringing older and younger people together is a good way to go about it
- My granny doesn't go out because she feels insecure, especially if there are young people hanging around.
- 'Recreational rioting' happens in Glengormley and the fear of this is very real for some older people.
- Concern expressed about the use and dealing of drugs and alcohol amongst young people.

Suggestions as to what else could be done:

- Neighbourhood watch should focus on intergenerational relationships
- Police need to put more effort into forming close relationships with younger people – when this happens it can be very beneficial (example given – Simon Community in Belfast –PSNI

officers have very positive impact). Neighbourhood officers should spend more time in existing community facilities, getting to know people.

- There should be a neutral organisation that can mediate and build the confidence of ordinary people in the police.
- PSNI officers should be trained specifically in how to deal with older people. The approach of the police should be standardised so that everyone receives the same service
- Community workers need to work to a standard. Paramilitaries aren't the best people to be youth and community workers.
- Prevention of crime measures should continue – this is helpful.
- We should use existing schemes that work for and with older people and engage younger people in them – e.g. Good Morning call, home visits, befriending schemes, driving volunteers, Duke of Edinburgh award (young people could focus on working with older)
- Better funding for youth and community projects is needed.
- Intergenerational work should be incorporated into community safety initiatives.

Topic area: Transport

Each table was asked to discuss transport with particular reference to the proposed signature projects relating to the improvement of rural transport services and also making the use of public transport easier. This included focusing on the impact that such services have on access to health and welfare services and social inclusion and suggestions as to how the situation could be improved.

Relevant Signature Proposals -

Rural Transport 'To improve access to health and welfare services and reduce social isolation. This may be through increasing the flexibility of Rural Community Transport Partnerships and other transport service providers and by extending rural bus services provided by Translink where demand proves to exist.

Easier Travel – 'To make the use of public transport easier through the use of technology to provide information for example through audio visual displays on bus fleets.'

All of the groups highlighted that improved services would have intergenerational benefits or be beneficial for people of all ages; the discussion notes are as follows.



Rural Transport

- Bus passes useless due to access problems – could these be extended to some private transport services?
- Lack of rural transport services – suggestion to free up services by using idle school buses
- Translink can't run all services – community transport needed
- There has been such a negative impact of funding cuts on community transport to and from hospital appointments – not having ease of access to public transport, adequate time tabling, missing last bus home
- Cutting special services for rural transport causes social isolation for all ages – community transport needs more funding
- A joined up approach to rural transport would be best e.g. mix of public and private provision, taxi's DRD refund companies
- Linkages between bus and train services need to be better particularly rural – arrival and departure times make connections difficult
- Boundaries areas of rural transport restricting for those who need to travel outside
- More special buses for those with mobility issues and needs required
- As access to healthcare services are becoming more centralised and being taken out of local areas rural and public transport must reflect this
- Times of buses in rural areas a real barrier for social life and employment
- There are only 2-3 services per day!

Making Public Transport easier to use

- Better timetables that connect with rural services so that people can attend evening events and have a social life outside of their own area
- Access to transport must be made easy for all as it is essential for promoting interaction, social links and positive mental health
- Audio visual equipment on trains is excellent this should be introduced in metro and Ulsterbus – it is great for all ages and tourists
- Wi-Fi on transport services is great
- Park and rides must be more effective to promote the ease of use of public transport e.g. open at the weekends, provision of more buses to stop overcrowding
- Trains – more frequent services to L'Derry and Coleraine, not enough coaches very overcrowded, more social routes needed e.g. seaside
- Why are there no buses to the ferry (Stena) that connect at the right time?
- We need more late night buses – there are not enough night services past 9pm
- Night service buses must have some kind of security – people must feel safe, problem with drunks etc.
- Shuttle bus services drivers should be multilingual
- Lost property services on transport need to be better
- Not all bus shelters have adequate cover for bad weather this needs to be improved
- Free transport for older people is great, it saves money and promotes positive mental health and enables people to be active

General

- Better school buses less overcrowding and restrictions on times – ‘I missed my school bus and had to get two buses in and out of town’
- Public transport costs are high and can be a barrier for those seeking employment – reimbursement schemes are not widely known and can also take too long
- Free bus passes available for those 60+ who may be in full time employment yet 16-18 year olds pay and may be in full time education
- 16 year olds pay full adult prices yet not adults until they are 18 – YLink scheme must be promoted
- Timetables and journey planners must be easier to understand for people of all ages

Topic area: Poverty

Each table was asked to discuss poverty with particular reference to the proposed signature projects relating to benefit uptake and fuel poverty initiatives aimed to improve this issue for older people. This included focusing on supporting benefit uptake, the implementation of energy efficiency measures in particular areas and suggestions as to how the situation could be improved.

Relevant Signature Proposals –

Benefit uptake ‘To annually target up to 10,000 older people, older people living with a disability/care needs, older people as carers themselves and working age people caring for older people with the aim of increasing benefit uptake.

Fuel Poverty/Affordable Warmth ‘To enable Councils to implement energy efficiency measures, using local installers, for households facing fuel poverty in the Mid-Ulster (Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon) and Newtownabbey Council areas.

All of the group’s highlighted poverty was not just a problem that occurred in older age but something that impacts and across the lifecourse and must be addressed with an approach that supports this. The discussion notes are as follows.

Fuel Poverty

- Energy efficiency measures that use incineration aren’t good for the environment as they involve more pollution through their use, cultivation and transport
- We need more pollution free energy approaches such as windfarms
- The government need to provide more information and insight as to what the future might hold for energy provision e.g. knock on effect of new approaches to energy efficiency on public
- Fuel poverty effects people of all ages this must be reflected and connect in strategies that are not age specific as the issue does not discriminate
- Fuel poverty can mean people must have to choose to heat or to eat
- Use of solar energy efficiency approaches isn’t as good as it’s made out to be – installation is free but all energy generated isn’t attributed to the household that generates it
- Local windfarms and sea turbines should directly benefit local people – what impact will these have on local people who pay the rates to have these systems put in place

- The dependency on oil fuel is a big factor for many of those in fuel poverty – this must be regulated in some way as oil companies are able to fluctuate prices at colder times of year to exploit customers
- More action needs to be taken on fuel prices – who is responsible for this is it OFMDFM, Westminster or an EU issue?
- An extra winter fuel payments made to older people in England – this should be extended to NI and all ages in need, particularly young families

Benefit Uptake

- What specific checklist will be used to identify the 10,000 people mentioned in the signature proposal? What happens outside of this figure?
- Benefit uptake forms provided by social services are too difficult to understand, the process is designed to put people off
- How will achievements in this area be monitored as there is very little detail provided? Have bench mark figures been set?
- There are intergenerational opportunities for support in this area as young people could support older people to use technology to find out more about what they are entitled too
- ‘The benefits uptake is demoralising’
- Uptake on benefits doesn’t always benefit those involved as income is capped to a standard rate
- DLA is age specific although many people need this
- What is the value of saving and preparing for older age if this is then taken away to pay for care etc. – does this promote a benefit dependant society?
- If pensions were improved older people would be in a better position – this should reflect a living wage, NI pension lowest of the low

General

- What way does poverty link to active ageing? – unemployment in early age causes poverty and repeats itself through families and the generations
- Strategies need to link on issues not just on age, poverty affects everyone!
- Lots of issues impact on poverty we need to address these throughout the lifecourse e.g. economy, housing, employment and education
- Poverty is a young person’s issue – ‘We are the last of the lucky ones’ (older person)
- Older people today are in a much better position than future generations will be – ‘the future for young people scares me’ (older person)
- Pensions need to improve to address poverty in older people – ‘older people want to fight for the future for young people.....start fighting for your pension rights now’ (older person)
- Our health system has its problems but buffers poverty to a certain extent
- Poverty is promoted through the systems and across the lifecourse – university fees start young people off in life with deep rooted debts up to £16,000, lack of employment to follow on from education
- Many young people can no longer afford an education which was in the past provided free to generations before – young people need support to employment/education through youth schemes and incentives such as bursaries

- Older people can provide support to young people through mentoring intergenerational job share etc.
- If we can start to address poverty in younger generations we can maybe curb poverty in older age
- There needs to be a more equal and fair distribution of resources across the generations
- Poverty is not just about material goods it is also about 'culture' in its loosest term – bread and roses
- Employment opportunities for people of all ages must be promoted in a way that does not pitch generations against one another
- Successful NGO's and projects must be supported to deliver initiatives as part of this strategy they are the ones who work with 'people' on the ground daily they know the issues and are skilled at delivering initiatives that help – where is this role outlined in the strategy?

Topic area: Discrimination

Each table was asked to discuss discrimination with specific reference to age-related discrimination and the extension of legislation to address this. As this was an intergenerational group, discussions focused greatly on the inclusion of all age groups in this legislation and current arguments to support this.

Relevant Signature Proposals –

To end unfair age-related discrimination through developing and consulting on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation on the provision of good, facilities and service.

- There was agreement at all tables that age discrimination should be outlawed across all age groups.
- Health and financial discrimination came up as the big issues for older people. All groups agreed that discrimination in the provision of health care or treatment was totally unacceptable as people had a right to receive the appropriate treatment no matter what age they were.
- Specific concerns were raised about older people not receiving cancer treatment over a certain age and the cost of travel insurance for older people made it a major barrier that prevented many older people from travelling later in life.
- Young people cited the cost of car insurance as the major financial issue for them in relation to the topic. They believed it was very unfair to charge young people such high premiums. One young person said his annual insurance cost him a massive £4k – twice the value of his car!
- Some comments were made that the problem with insurance is that it is based on the overall risks associated with a certain age group so some questioned whether the legislation would change this.
- Another issue raised by young people at most tables was how they were treated in shops. Some complained that schoolchildren were often forced to leave their schoolbags at the door of shops which many believed was discriminatory practice.

- However, the biggest concern in relation to how young people were treated in retail outfits was in relation to 'mosquito alarms'. Young people advised that many shops played this high pitched sound to stop young people from staying in or near shops.
- A couple of tables called on 'mosquito alarms' to be banned.
- There was a strong sense that age discrimination should be outlawed by the NI Assembly as soon as possible.



Feedback about the event from participants

Which part of today's discussions were the most important or interesting to you? Why?

Young people

- Crime, because I feel that this is an area where so many young people are stereotyped and there is a lack of understanding.
- Discrimination as a topic was interesting because each person had interesting input
- Transport

Older people

- Issues about transport and poverty
- The divergence of views
- Participating with young people and hearing their views
- Fuel poverty, age discrimination, fear of crime
- Health care, employment and the environment
- Fear of crime and discrimination issues
- Public transport because I use it every day
- Being made aware of the diversity of the views of the group
- All the topics were of interest
- All four topics are relevant points of discussion
- Transport because it is so vital. Also rural areas and there were excellent suggestions for fear of crime
- Hearing a range of voices

Do you have any other comments about today's event?

- I think there needs to be more advertising about intergenerational linking and definitely more days like this in the future.
- Excellent discussion among everyone in the group
- Well done
- More younger people should have attended!
- One of the best events I have attended. We did what we set out to do and nobody said "*we don't have enough time!*"
- Nice group size to enable mixing
- Really enjoyed it but some young people found it very difficult and did not participate in terms of making input

In the future, what other topics could older and younger people discuss together?

- Continue to discuss crime and poverty
- Employment/benefit schemes, crime, education
- How young and old people can work together in economic, political and cultural spheres
- Responsibilities, drugs
- Suitable housing for older/disabled people and proficiency in IT and digital formats
- Perhaps some events that could run on a more regular basis
- How younger people should work to improve their image to older people
- The general image that each has of the other.
- Employment, health care, environment
- Politics, local history, sports subjects
- Ways of working together on issues in common such as crime/transport

**What can I contribute to this vision and what is most important to me?
(Participants were provided the opportunity to comment on the OFMDFM
vision statement below.)**

**Our Vision is that Northern Ireland is an age friendly region
in which people, as they get older, are valued and
supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their
rights and dignity protected.**



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Deputy First Minister**
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DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE

Through ASP I can get involved in more intergenerational work.

I can engage in community programmes which promote an age-friendly Northern Ireland. I can also support older people and respect everyone; I think it is important to support and age-friendly Northern Ireland.

Support building more trust between older and younger people in communities.

*A strategy such as this should strike a balance between a remedial approach addressing the needs of those who are not/have not aged actively - and preventative lifelong policies to reduce the extent of this in the future. I feel this balance has not been achieved and that at present it is not an active ageing strategy but a policy to enable older people to age well or better. I would amend the vision statement to read ...**an age-friendly region in which people of all ages, are valued...***

Support more trust between old and young people.

To encourage between links such as community transport.

Support improved community transport and make the voice of seniors heard! Shout louder for rural transport funding and promote the use of rural transport.

To care for everyone in the community and be there for them.

If retired and active, contribute to some form of local community.

Support the public and require assistance or guidance in using public transport eg improved communication to guiding our passengers on ticket machines or services

Give support when needed – to continue to live a full and healthy life

Be supportive when you can

Be open and have a friendly face and provide support; understanding is most important!

Event Evaluation

Number of young people in attendance – 12 (5 filled in forms)
 Groups represented - Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF)

Number of older people in attendance – 13 – (12 filled in forms)
 Groups represented – Age Sector Platform (ASP), Associate & Retired Members
 PCS Union, NIPSA

Number of observers in attendance – 6 plus 5 facilitators = 11
 Groups represented – OFMDFM, ASP, COPNI, Translink, ASP, LGNI, NIYF

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Today I have learnt more about the concerns and issues facing older and younger people		O – 1	Y – 4 O - 4	Y – 1 O - 7
Today's event has changed my views of older/younger people (delete one)		Y – 1 O – 4	Y – 3 O - 6	Y – 1 O - 1
It is important to hold more events like this in the future			Y – 2 O - 3	Y – 3 O - 9
I have made new contacts today		O – 1	Y – 4 O - 5	Y – 1 O - 6
It was worthwhile attending today			Y – 4 O – 6	Y – 1 O - 6
My expectations of today's event were met.			Y – 5 O - 7	O – 4

How would you rate the following?

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Very Good
Organisation of the event				Y – 3 O - 5	Y – 2 O - 6
Format of the event				Y – 3 O - 5	Y – 2 O - 6
Discussion topics			O – 1	Y – 3 O - 4	Y – 2 O – 5

General Comments

Why did you decide to attend today's event?

Young people

- To see what the Active Ageing Strategy is about
- Intergenerational work is important
- 'Believe in Youth' coordinator told me about the event. I wanted to find out more about intergenerational co-operation
- To see what issues affect old and young people

Older people

- Interest in consultation issues and approach of LGNI
- Interest in intergenerational issues and concerns of older people
- Want to promote intergenerational issues
- To keep up to date
- Particular interest in health issues
- Interest in social interactivity
- I have worked with both younger and older people

Before attending, what were your expectations of the event?

Young people

- Honestly didn't know what to expect
- Did not think I would be involved in discussions or my views taken into account
- Getting older and younger people to discuss problems in society

Older people

- None, was open to what would happen
- That it would be informative
- To hear two different sides to the issues
- I looked forward to a lively discussion

Conclusion

LGNI consistently lobby for policy makers and practitioners to use an intergenerational lens through which to view age issues. This consultation event has clearly shown the value in this and that older people must be viewed and considered as members of a wider 'all-age' community/society and region. The top four topics chosen by the participants for discussion relate to people of all ages and it became evident through conversations on the day that these could not be separated by age and therefore would be difficult to address in isolated age groups. Common themes on the day across all discussion included the need for a life course approach to issues, better linkages between strategies on issues rather than age and also the support that could be harnessed between the generations in addressing these multigenerational issues.

As such, we think that there should be an underlying theme within the strategy which acknowledges the importance of all-age approaches (as opposed to all-age projects) in tackling the challenges of our ageing society. Bringing age groups together is a powerful tool to support participation. Having

older people engage as an isolated age group runs the risk of other age groups being viewed as being in competition, which is a feature of ageism that we wish to eliminate.

Too often in society older and younger people are marginalized and feel they have little say in the decision making processes that affect their daily lives. As resources have become tighter the generations are increasingly being played off against one another with certain decisions being framed for one group or the other promoting intergenerational conflict e.g. GFS legislation, subsidised transport, fuel poverty allowances. We suggest that having all age groups discuss 'age' and 'age' issues is likely to be more inclusive and is only fair, considering it is the young and mid-age people of today who will most benefit from longer term changes which must happen in order to cope with the ageing demographic. By bringing generations together at grass roots level empathy and understanding for one another's issues can be fostered whilst the collaboration of age specific organisations promotes equity and values the civic participation of all ages. We are particularly interested in the applicability of this intergenerational engagement/civic participation model with regards to decision making, good relations, community planning and indeed the building of an age-friendly NI.