



Linking Generations  
Northern Ireland

# **An Intergenerational Approach to Improving Skills and Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland**



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# INTRODUCTION

Linking Generations Northern Ireland (LGNI) promotes and supports intergenerational practice<sup>1</sup>, providing information and advice to individuals and organisations to facilitate its delivery, while at the same time advocating for its development and sustainability. LGNI is part of the Beth Johnson Foundation<sup>2</sup>, a UK charity based in Stoke-on-Trent that works to inform and influence discussion and good practice around age and aging.

LGNI's regional intergenerational networks provide support to practitioners and facilitate the sharing of ideas and best practice. We also provide a range of training for those interested in learning about intergenerational practice.

*Our vision is that Northern Ireland is a place where all generations are respected, understood, connected and engaged together in their communities.*

The aim of this research is to enhance LGNI's evidence base of knowledge that participating in intergenerational practice can help improve skills and educational outcomes for children and young people, in particular school and college students. The research was supported by a grant from the Public Health Agency of Northern Ireland.

## Background to the Research

LGNI has successfully worked with schools and colleges across Northern Ireland (NI) over the past 10 years, supporting them to undertake a wide variety of different intergenerational activities and helping them to connect with older people in their community – through voluntary and community groups, residential and care homes and those living in sheltered accommodation. We have also delivered intergenerational and Dementia Friends training sessions to schools, and through the establishment of 11 regional intergenerational networks in 2019, we now have many schools, colleges and teachers signed up and attending network meetings. We also regularly interact with schools and colleges on social media.

Since our establishment, the majority of our work has focused on delivering benefits for older people through intergenerational activities; for example, addressing isolation and loneliness, improving social inclusion, reducing fear of crime and improving digital skills. This focus related to the funding we received<sup>3</sup>.

We have always placed a strong emphasis on evaluating our work, and while we mainly focused on delivering benefits for older people, we always gathered evidence

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<sup>1</sup> For a definition of intergenerational practice please see Annex A.

<sup>2</sup> For further information please see <https://www.bjf.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> Our funders include: The Atlantic Philanthropies Older People's Programme, Community Safety Partnerships, Community Safety Unit of the Northern Ireland Office/Department of Justice, Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Arts and Older People's Programme, Big Lottery's 'Reaching Out Connecting Older People' Programme for Northern Ireland

of the benefits for young people. Our evaluations have consistently shown that participating in intergenerational activities can help young people to:

- Learn more about older people, their interests and concerns;
- Learn that they have things in common with older people;
- Develop more respect for older people;
- Change their views about older people;
- Learn new things;
- Become more confident; and
- Feel more a part of the community.<sup>4</sup>

More recently we delivered two projects (Connect IT<sup>5</sup> and Digital Age Project<sup>6</sup>) that aimed to improve the digital skills of older people. Students from post primary schools across Northern Ireland, supported by our partner organisations, worked with older people to develop practical IT skills such as shopping online, booking travel, accessing council services and staying safe online. As part of the evaluation of the third year of the Digital Age Project we decided to increase the range of questions asked on evaluation forms in order to capture information about skills and capabilities the students developed as a result of their involvement. The results showed that:

- 94% improved their confidence;
- 98% improved their communication skills;
- 92% improved skills such as listening and empathy;
- 96% improved skills such as thinking, decision making and problem solving;
- 88% developed their interest in helping others to learn or teaching as a career; and
- 86% developed their interest in working with older people in the community.<sup>7</sup>

Comments from projects included:

*'It was an excellent project enjoyed by the pupils, teachers and residents. There were many benefits for the students. They learned a lot by listening to the residents and they were introduced to some new ICT skills. Their communication skills improved and they learned to give time to people older than themselves. The school benefitted as it provided us with the opportunity to work with people in the community. Part of the Every School a Good School document recommends that every school should get more involved in the community. This project has underpinned our desire to work with the community and improve community involvement.'* (School teacher, Digital Age Project)

*'This has been a fantastic opportunity for the pupils to help build their confidence and allow them to share their expertise. They have definitely improved their communication skills and are more confident in interacting with older people. We plan to include digital inclusion work in the future.'* (School teacher, Connect IT project)

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex B for more detailed results across a range of LGNI projects

<sup>5</sup> For more information on this project see: <https://linkinggenerationsni.com/portfolio-posts/connect-it/>

<sup>6</sup> For more information on this project see: <https://linkinggenerationsni.com/portfolio-posts/digital-age-project/>

<sup>7</sup> The results were based on 67 responses

*'A clear indication of the younger participants commitment and responsibility in the project can be drawn from the attendance register. Many of the younger participants attended every week clearly feeling a responsibility toward the continued development of their partners ICT skills'* (IT tutor, Digital Age Project)

*'I developed new skills teaching others, I like working in teams and also this is good for my future and it's going to be on my CV as well'* (Student, Digital Age Project)

*'I have become more confident and made new friends. I have learnt how to teach properly and have patience'* (Student, Digital Age Project)

*'I gained teaching skills and developed my confidence'* (Student, Connect IT project)

*'It allowed me to connect with the older generation. It has helped me with my social and communication skills'* (Student, Connect IT project)

The most recent area of development for LGNI has been working with Further Education (FE) Colleges – the South West College (SWC) in Dungannon, South Eastern Regional College (SERC) in Downpatrick and the Southern Regional College (SRC) in Newry. We have supported the establishment of an Intergenerational Café in Dungannon, the Golden Memories project in Downpatrick and an intergenerational project in Newry.

## Age-friendly Schools and Colleges

In 2019 we began a series of meetings with a cross departmental group of civil servants from the Department of Education, Education Authority, Department for Communities and Department of Justice to discuss our emerging ideas for a schools-based intergenerational programme across Northern Ireland. This group supported an Intergenerational Schools event in June 2019 at which Professor Peter Whitehouse spoke about the establishment of intergenerational schools in the USA<sup>8</sup>. The range of potential benefits that intergenerational work in schools can have were also highlighted and discussed.

LGNI has also been developing the concept of Age-friendly Schools, linked to the global Age-friendly ethos<sup>9</sup>. We currently participate in all existing Age-friendly Alliances/Steering Groups across NI. Their strategies and action plans detail their support for intergenerational practice, including working with schools, with LGNI as a delivery partner<sup>10</sup>.

To support Councils and practitioners across Northern Ireland, the Age-friendly Network NI<sup>11</sup> was launched in November 2019. One of the Network aims is to encourage Age-friendly partnerships to explore evidence-based intergenerational approaches to creating great places to grow older for everyone.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information see: <https://www.intergenerationschools.org/>

<sup>9</sup> For more information see: <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/about-us/>

<sup>10</sup> As an example, please see Ards and North Downs' Age-friendly Strategy and Action Plan. Available at : [https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/downloads/Age\\_Friendly\\_Strategy\\_and\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2019-2022.pdf](https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/downloads/Age_Friendly_Strategy_and_Action_Plan_2019-2022.pdf) or Fermanagh and Omagh's Age-friendly Strategy. Available at: <https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/app/uploads/2019/03/Age-Friendly-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> For more information see: <https://www.ageni.org/news/launch-of-age-friendly-network>

LGNI's vision is that Northern Ireland is a place where all generations are respected, understood, connected and engaged together in their communities. Our concept for an Age-friendly School or College is one that:

- Supports the WHO Age-friendly ethos;
- Participates in their local intergenerational network and Age-friendly Alliance;
- Develops a plan for ongoing intergenerational practice (activities, mentoring and/or learning) that:
  - provides mutually beneficial experiences;
  - develops skills and capabilities;
  - contributes to the improvement of health and wellbeing;
  - enhances the delivery of the curriculum/subjects and contributes to the achievement of educational outcomes for students; and
  - which is supported by a network of sustainable community connections.

Our ultimate vision would be for schools and colleges to become intergenerational spaces, contact zones<sup>12</sup>, or even community campuses<sup>13</sup>.

## The Need for More Evidence

The above sections provide an overview of our work with schools and colleges in Northern Ireland and the evidence we have gathered to date to demonstrate its benefits. We are however conscious that this is an emerging area of work for LGNI and that we need to gather more evidence to support our vision for Age-friendly Schools and Colleges. Therefore, through this research we aimed to find out:

- How does intergenerational practice link with key policies and the curriculum;
- What research and good practice is available in relation to intergenerational practice and education, in particular improving skills and outcomes; and
- What are the opportunities for this work going forward?

In relation to the curriculum, we decided to look at one specific subject in further detail. We choose Health and Social Care as we felt this aligns particularly well to LGNI's work. This subject is also taught in both schools and FE colleges.

## Research Approach

The research involved gathering and reviewing information from a variety of sources, including:

- Discussions with school teachers, FE College lecturers, students, academics, project leaders and partner organisations;
- Meetings with staff and examiners from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);

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<sup>12</sup> For more information see: <https://aese.psu.edu/extension/intergenerational/articles/intergenerational-contact-zones/introduction> and <https://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/blog/2015-intergenerational-contact-zones-blog>

<sup>13</sup> For more information see: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/news/article/2056/jedburgh\\_set\\_for\\_new\\_intergenerational\\_learning\\_campus](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/news/article/2056/jedburgh_set_for_new_intergenerational_learning_campus)

- Visits to live projects supported by LGNI in SERC Downpatrick and SWC Dungannon to speak with students and staff;
- Information requests to CCEA and the statistics branches of the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy; and
- Attendance at the Generations Working Together in March 2020 and participation in workshops and a symposium of international academics and organisations.

The following chapters set out the findings.



# NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT

This chapter examines the local context, describing key policies and drivers, along with an overview of the NI school curriculum and in particular the Health and Social Care subject.

## Education Policy

Responsibility for education policy, strategic development and funding in Northern Ireland is split between two government departments<sup>14</sup>:

- The **Department of Education** is responsible for 0-4 provision, primary, post-primary, special education and the youth service; and
- The **Department for the Economy** is responsible for further and higher education.

One of the most relevant Department of Education policies to intergenerational practice is **Every School a Good School**<sup>15</sup>. This school improvement policy aims to support schools and teachers in their work to raise standards and overcome barriers to learning some pupils may face. The policy sets out four characteristics of a successful school:

1. Child-centred provision
2. High quality teaching and learning
3. Effective leadership
4. A school connected to its local community

The goal of the policy in relation to promoting engagement between schools, pupils, parents, families and communities is:

*To work with schools to ensure that their pupils are given a voice in the running of the school and that there are strong and effective links between every school and the parents, families and local communities it serves.*

The Education & Training Inspectorate, which undertakes school inspections, reports on how well schools relate to parents and the wider community through its inspection reports.

At the Northern Ireland Executive level, the **Children and Young People's Strategy 2019 – 2029**<sup>16</sup>, sets out at a cross-departmental level, how they will work together to improve the well-being of children and young people living in Northern Ireland and

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<sup>14</sup> Detailed information about the education system in Northern Ireland is available at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2016-2021/2016/education/4416.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> For further information see: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/every-school-good-school-esags>

<sup>16</sup> For further information see: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/2019-2029%20CYP%20Strategy.pdf>

to achieve positive, long-lasting outcomes. Eight outcomes are set out, including that children and young people:

- learn and achieve; and
- make a positive contribution to society.

In relation to the first outcome, the strategy notes that:

*When our young people leave formal education, we want them to be resilient and equipped for what comes next, and to have the skills they need to continue to grow as individuals, to meet the challenges, demands, opportunities, financial and economic challenges and setbacks of a modern economy. We want them to be prepared for adult life, future training, education life chances and employment opportunities – whatever they choose to do. We must consider how the curriculum can continue to be enhanced to provide young people with the practical life skills they will need in adult life.*

In relation to the second outcome it notes that:

*By promoting meaningful participation and identifying appropriate opportunities for active citizenship, children and young people are more likely to feel confident to engage in discussions about issues affecting them, to participate in activities in school and outside school, and to actively contribute to the life of their communities. It is important that children and young people are supported to develop socially and emotionally, to build self-confidence and develop skills which will enable them to deal effectively with significant life changes and challenges.*

**Further Education Means Success<sup>17</sup>** provides the future direction for further education in NI and sets out the policy commitments to ensure its delivery. The vision is that further education colleges are recognised locally, nationally and internationally for high quality and economically relevant education and training provision. The objectives supporting this vision are:

- ensuring high quality provision for learner education and training;
- developing the talents of those already in work and those seeking to enter employment;
- supporting employers to become more innovative and competitive, and to source new markets; and
- encouraging and supporting the economic participation of those who have barriers to learning and who are furthest from the labour market.

The strategy notes the existing partnerships between colleges and post primary schools, and emphasises the need for these to continue. It states that colleges have good relationships with schools through Area Learning Partnerships, and they support schools in the delivery of professional and technical provision as part of school pupils' entitlement to a mixed curriculum.

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<sup>17</sup> For further information see: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/further-education-means-success>

## Northern Ireland Workforce Requirements

Another important policy area to consider is the needs of employers and the economy.

The Northern Ireland Skills Barometer provides detailed information about the skill requirements of the Northern Ireland economy for the next 10 years, with the aim of ensuring that any skills gaps are identified and addressed. The research analyses where the skills gaps are currently, where they are emerging, and where they are likely to emerge over the longer term. The 2019 Barometer<sup>18</sup> outlines that Health and Social Work will be one of the top growth sectors over the next 10 years and that there will be a need for people with foundation level degrees/higher level apprenticeships in this area.



The report also highlights the wider employability skills that are essential to securing employment. Among these are communication, problem solving, self-confidence, teamwork and adaptability.

<sup>18</sup> For further information see: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-skills-barometer-2019-update>



Source: Department for the Economy, Skills in Demand 2019

## The Northern Ireland Curriculum

The Northern Ireland Curriculum was introduced in 2007 and covers all 12 years of compulsory education in Northern Ireland – from Foundation Stage (age 4-6) to Key Stage 4 (age 14-16). The aim of the curriculum is to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

The curriculum emphasises the development of:

- **Cross-Curricular Skills** - communication, using mathematics, and using ICT; and
- **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities** – managing information; thinking, problem-solving and decision-making; being creative; working with others; and self-management.

It also sets out:

- **Areas of Learning** – including language and literature, mathematics and numeracy, personal development and mutual understanding, and learning for life and work;
- **Learning Experiences** – such as investigating a problem, ongoing reflecting, enquiry based, skills integrated, offers choice, active and hands on; and
- **Attitudes and Dispositions** – such as personal responsibility, respect, tolerance, optimism, concern for others and community spirit.

As an example, the 'Big Picture' of the Key Stage 3 curriculum is provided overleaf. Details of other Key Stages are provided at Annex E.

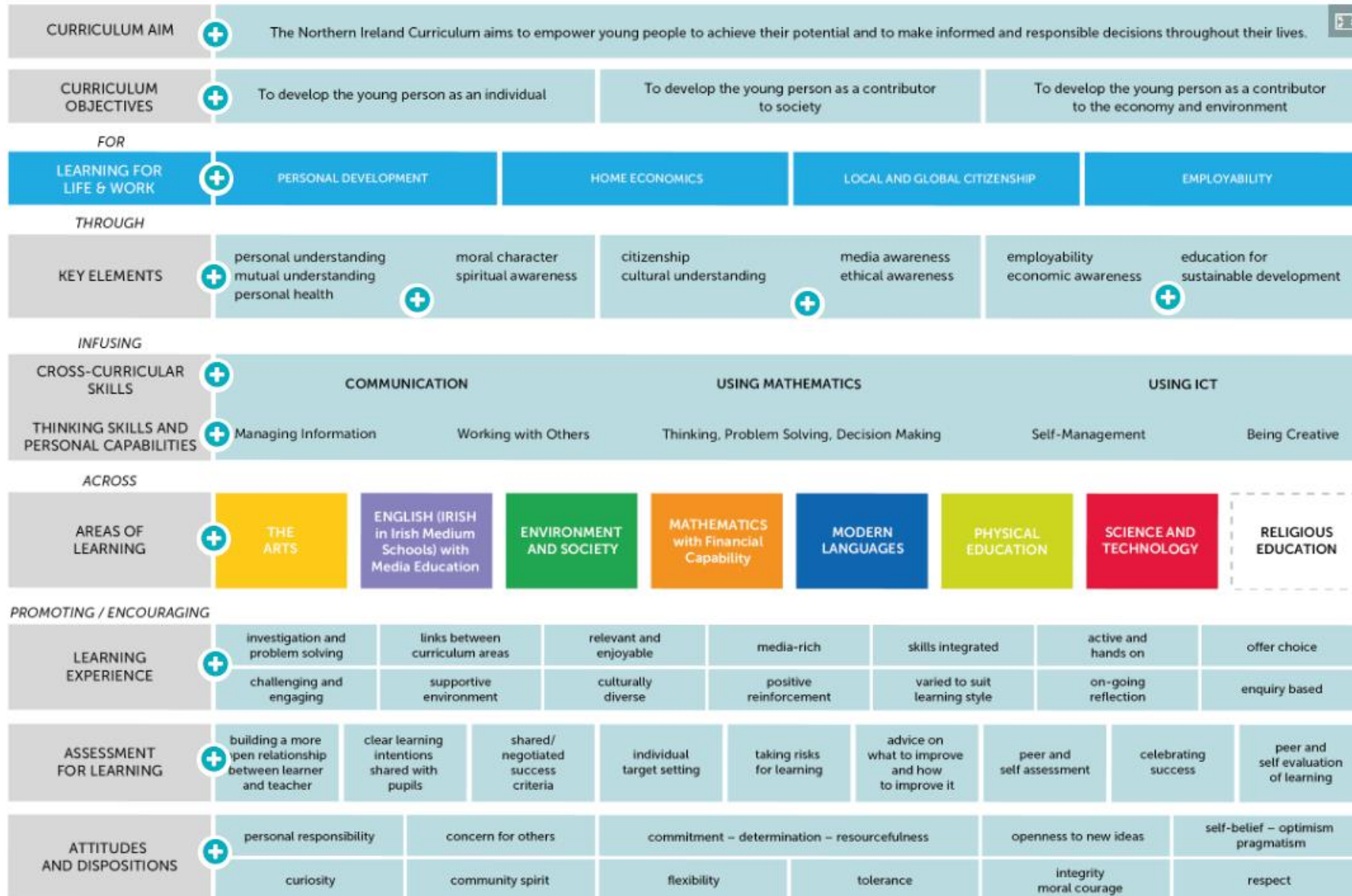
Established in 1994, The Northern Ireland **Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment** (CCEA) has several roles, among which is to continually review all aspects of the curriculum, examinations and assessment for schools, and to develop qualifications and assessments.

The Northern Ireland **Entitlement Framework**<sup>19</sup>, is the post 14 curriculum which aims to provide access for pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum. All post primary schools are required to provide pupils with access to a minimum of 21 courses at Key Stage 4/GCSE and 21 courses at post 16 (A-Level). These courses should best meet the needs of young people and the economy by offering them access to a broad and balanced range of courses that are relevant to their needs, aptitudes, interests and their future career aspirations, regardless of where they live or which school they attend.

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<sup>19</sup> For further information see: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/entitlement-framework>

# The Big Picture of the Curriculum at Key Stage 3





## Health and Social Care

As outlined in the initial chapter, we decided to look at Health and Social Care as a curriculum subject in more detail as we felt this aligns particularly well to LGNI's work.

The subject is taught in post-primary schools at GCSE and A-Level, with over 600 students entering exams at GCSE level, and over 1,000 at A-Level in 2017/2018<sup>20</sup>. Further Education Colleges also provide courses in Health and Social Care at a variety of levels, including BTEC and NVQ. Across the six regional colleges in 2018/19 there were 3,710 student enrolments for the subject<sup>21</sup>.

The content of health and social care courses vary, however in general they aim to prepare students with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills for the work environment or further study. Courses cover key areas such as:

- Promoting quality care, including the values of care and safeguarding;
- Communication, including the importance of effective skills and techniques;
- Diversity, equality and inclusion;
- Health and well-being and factors that affect it;
- Working in the Health and Social Care sector;
- Meeting the needs of service users and providing person-centred care;
- Anatomy and physiology; and
- Nutrition and health promotion.

The courses, unless specifically tailored, cover the full life course and consist of a mix of mandatory and optional units.

In schools, most of the learning takes place in the classroom, with GCSEs assessed through a written examination and a controlled assessment task. At A-Level students are assessed through written examinations and internal assessments, and must produce written reports on two areas - promoting quality care and communications. The report should be based on their experiences in a health, social care or early years setting.

In colleges, the courses usually provide a mix of classroom-based learning and work placements. Assessment is more focused on projects and assignments, and depending on the course, students spend substantially more time in work placements than school students do.

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<sup>20</sup> Source: Analytical Services Unit, Department of Education

<sup>21</sup> Source: Analytical Services Unit, Department for the Economy

# RESEARCH AND GOOD PRACTICE

During the research we looked for examples of relevant intergenerational practice locally and further afield, particularly with schools, colleges and universities. Having reviewed these, we set out below examples of academic research and good practice, giving an overview of each.

## Research

There have been many academic studies around the world about the benefits of intergenerational practice. Publications such as the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*<sup>22</sup> focus on presenting of this evidence. The studies frequently cite the benefits for children and young people as being:

- The development communication and interpersonal skills;
- Improvements in confidence and self-esteem;
- The learning of new practical skills – such as arts, crafts, music, sport/games;
- Positive improvements in attitudes towards older people and the development of mutual respect; and
- Enhanced connections to their local community.

A search of relevant literature, along with discussions with LGNI's academic contacts, has revealed that there has been limited research to date in relation to intergenerational practice and improving educational outcomes, or contributing towards the delivery of the curriculum. There are however are a couple of relevant studies, including:

- A study commissioned by the Local Government Association in England (2010)<sup>23</sup>, aimed to gather evidence on the outcomes of intergenerational practice through five different case-study projects. The report noted several of the benefits listed above, but also that:

*"Where projects focus on activities that relate to the curriculum, such as history and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education), there can be positive benefits for academic work. For example, some young people felt that hearing firsthand about World War II would aid them when they came to study it in history. Others were able to use the artwork produced as part of their GCSE coursework".*

- Research by Hanmore-Cawley and Scharf<sup>24</sup> investigated the potential of intergenerational learning collaborations to develop civic literacy in young children (aged 9-10 years) in Irish primary schools. Their findings confirmed that across a

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<sup>22</sup> For further information see: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wjir20/current>

<sup>23</sup> Martin, K., Springate, I. and Atkinson, M. (2010). *Intergenerational Practice: Outcomes and Effectiveness* (LGA Research Report). Slough: NFER

<sup>24</sup> Hanmore-Crawley, M. & Scharf, T. (2017). Intergenerational learning: collaborations to develop civic literacy in young children in Irish primary school, *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 16, 104-122



range of curriculum-related collaborations, students showed significant improvement in civic literacy scores over an academic year of intergenerational learning activities. In their findings they also noted the development of skills such as critical thinking, gaining confidence and taking greater personal responsibility.

- Research by Corrigan et al.<sup>25</sup> reported on the evaluation of an intergenerational learning<sup>26</sup> project in Dublin City University which began in 2008 and had involved almost 500 students and over 400 adult learners at the time of writing. The authors note that at first the concern of the project was primarily to benefit older people by giving them access to a range of short courses and modules designed specifically for them (including ICT, media, creative writing, health and wellbeing). The focus was entirely on the older people, with the intergenerational element arising from the fact that students (from all faculties at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) were asked to volunteer to act as tutors and mentors to the older people. The authors go on to note that the vision of the project changed to include an appreciation of the value of a two-way transfer of knowledge, expertise and insight between senior citizens and University students. The research aimed to answer 2 questions:

1. The extent of the professional and personal development which emerged for the younger people while meeting and learning with older people; and
2. The potential benefits in terms of intercultural and intergenerational understanding for the university students and for the wider community of engaging older and younger people in an intergenerational learning programme.

By way of example, some of the comments from students included:

*'The project has helped me to grow in confidence and greatly enhanced my knowledge of what it means to both learn and teach.'*

*'I view the Intergenerational Programme from two distinct perspectives. First, it was fantastic opportunity to gain networking experience with a generation so far removed from my own, and it was ultimately mutually beneficial. In addition, this programme facilitated my development of competence in innovative thinking.'*

*'It (the DCUILP) has improved my communication and social skills, promoted my self-esteem and increased my confidence.'*

*'Volunteering has given me the opportunity to facilitate the older learners and teach them some IT skills. This has greatly improved my confidence and self-esteem. The older learners are my teachers too. They tell me stories of my life experiences, they give good advice, and they teach what we cannot learn from books – life skills.'*

*'I think the sharing of knowledge aspect of the course is hugely important... Often I find that the exchange of knowledge is not tangible but instead comes*

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<sup>25</sup> Corrigan, T., McNamara, G. & O'Hara, J. (2013). Intergenerational learning: A valuable learning experience for higher education students, *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 52,117-136.

<sup>26</sup> For more information about intergenerational learning, see Annex A

*in the form of self-development for myself personally. I have found this very valuable in my personal life and in my academic and workplace environments.'*

The research concludes that intergenerational learning is an excellent methodology for enabling transformative education. The authors argue that the development of intergenerational programmes creates significant learning opportunities and a transformation in attitudes between generations. Intergenerational and intercultural solidarity is also fostered. The paper advocates for the development of similar initiatives in other higher education institutions as a means to promote engagement between older people and higher education students.

- A study by Park<sup>27</sup> undertook a literature review to assess current research regarding intergenerational activities and outcomes among young people, with the aim of exploring the literature on the effectiveness and economic aspects of intergenerational interventions among children and young people in terms of academic performance and psychosocial outcomes. Eleven studies (including randomised control trials) were reviewed, involving students at primary/elementary and secondary school levels, mostly in the USA. The author notes that most studies reported that the regular interactions of the young people with the older generations contributed to positive changes in attitudes towards older people after taking part. In addition, better psychological outcomes for students were found, such as a decrease in the levels of anxiety and an increase in self-worth. The author highlights an intergenerational project in the USA (Experience Corps Baltimore) which undertook a randomised control trial and found that the students (aged 8 to 9) showed significantly higher reading scores than those in the control schools. There were also significant decreases in disruptive behaviours amongst students, with less referrals to school head offices as a result.

## Good Practice

We have gathered together examples of good practice case studies from Northern Ireland and several other countries. These aim to show the range of intergenerational practice that is taking place, in particular highlighting the benefits of involvement for children and young people in schools and colleges.

### Northern Ireland

In early 2019, the **South West College** in Dungannon launched an **intergenerational café** as part of the college's Project Based Learning initiative. The first year of the project involved students from the Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) programme, working alongside Primary 3 pupils from Dungannon Primary School and service users from an Age NI Day Centre. In the second year this has expanded to include more care homes (including one for people with learning disabilities) and students studying subjects such as STEM, sport and

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<sup>27</sup> Park, A-La. (2015). The Effects of Intergenerational Programmes on Children and Young People, *International Journal of School and Cognitive Psychology*, 2(1), 1-5

business and marketing. There are plans to involve students studying Health & Social Care before the end of 2020. The objectives of the café are to:

- Bring together people, organisations and networks to improve wellbeing for the wider community, particularly those who might be otherwise marginalised;
- Empower disadvantaged young people to develop as individuals and enjoy new challenges through volunteering and social action, whilst making a positive contribution to their education;
- Encouraging young people to develop a sense of citizenship, community responsibility and long-term interest in social action; and
- Create a sustainable student-led initiative that actively engages young people in real-world and meaningful projects.

The intergenerational café is closely linked to the curriculums of the subjects that students are studying, mapped to particular units and helping them to complete assignments.

Information from a report on the project by the College, highlighted that the café has:

- Had a positive impact on the acquisition of new skills for students, particularly around critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication skills;
- Created positive learning experiences for students, engendering a desire for more learning, alongside building their identity and social capital;
- Had a positive impact on the aspirations and employability skills of students. Students now have tangible examples of 'soft skills' they have achieved in relation to communication, teamwork and problem solving; and
- Given them working knowledge and experience of new and innovative practice within their vocational field, opening up future career aspirations.

**Alexander Dickson Primary School** in Ballygowan Co. Down have undertaken intergenerational projects for many years, first working with LGNI in 2009, when they received a small grant to undertake an intergenerational project with Ballygowan Seniors. The project was a success and they received a further small grant in 2010 from LGNI to continue their partnership, with the P7 students and seniors creating a mosaic together. The school has continued to embrace intergenerational work and have incorporated their commitment to it into their School Development Plan. Under the Every School a Good School<sup>28</sup> priority of "a school connected to its local community" the school committed to undertaking an intergenerational project each year. In their 2016 Inspection Report, ETI noted<sup>29</sup>:

*"The school's enrichment activities, such as Roots of Empathy and the intergenerational project, enhance the development of the children's interpersonal skills and provide opportunities for them to learn together with members of the local community"*

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<sup>28</sup> Link to DE website

<sup>29</sup> Source <http://www.alexanderdicksonprimary.com/sdp.html>

**Glastry College** is a post primary school located in Ballyhalbert on the Ards Peninsula. With over 600 students the college offers a wide range of subjects for students aged 11 to 18 years. In 2019 LGNI facilitated the college partnering with a local care home (Rocky Acres) to deliver the EngAGE project, which focused on community safety issues (fear of crime and anti-social behaviour) and improving relationships between older and younger people and the police. Funding for the project came from the Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership and was supported by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

The students involved in the project (all girls) were studying Health and Social Care at A-Level. They visited the care home for one hour each week for six weeks, undertaking a variety of art and craft activities with the residents, many of whom have Dementia.

While the students have now left the school, teachers and the care home manager were able to describe the benefits of the project for the students. These included the development of multiple skills and capabilities such as communication, confidence, listening, patience, empathy, organisation and teamwork. Involvement in the project also enhanced their experiences outside of the classroom, while improving their understanding of, and levels of interaction with, older people. While the project was not directly linked to their Health & Social Care course, the students developed a great understanding of Dementia, which is an area they study. In addition, the Health and Social Care teacher recognised its potential for the future:

*'It seems to link in really well with my Unit, which is about communication and also the exam unit which is all about providing services and promoting care values.'*

*'If possible, building it into the Year 13 course would be fantastic because some of them have very limited experience of H&SC services. As close to the beginning of the Year 13 Academic year would be good as they could then also use this to help them write their portfolio work.'*

In addition, it was also noted that the project helped students with their further/higher education applications by providing them with experience they can use for their personal statements. Significantly the project was also credited with helping one student to re-engage with school and improve their attendance. Four of the students have also gone on to work in care in the community roles after leaving school.

## Scotland

In Scotland, Generations Working Together (GWT) have produced a guide on **Learning Through Intergenerational Practice**<sup>30</sup>. This looks at intergenerational learning<sup>31</sup>, covering learning at any age. In relation to children and young people the guide notes that intergenerational learning can improve academic performance and can help to deliver any of the learning areas of the Scottish school curriculum

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<sup>30</sup> For further information see: <https://generationsworkingtogether.org/>





<sup>31</sup> See Annex A for more information

(Curriculum for Excellence) as it fits with both curriculum areas and the development of skills and capabilities. It also notes that undertaking formal intergenerational learning will help schools attain external partnerships along with developing a coherent and inclusive curriculum. It recommends that intergenerational activities should be developed and become embedded within the school, ensuring that the ethos and life of the school as a community benefits all.

In 2015 the Citadel Youth Centre in Leith (Edinburgh) began the **Old's Cool Intergenerational Project**<sup>32</sup> with the aim of training and supporting young people at risk of disengaging from school to facilitate intergenerational activity with older people. One of the objectives of the project is to evidence the value of youth work in general, and intergenerational practice in particular, for delivering the outcomes for the Curriculum for Excellence. Their model is targeted at 'hard to reach' young people and those who have difficulties in their communication and oracy skills<sup>33</sup>. As part of their Intergenerational Practice Toolkit they set out in detail how the Old's Cool model can be used to evidence the educational outcomes of the Curriculum, in particular developing its four capacities – successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

**Curriculum for Excellence**

The Old's Cool model can be used to evidence the educational outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) framework. By using this toolkit to create your own Old's Cool programme, you will support your young people in developing the four capacities of the CfE:

-  **Successful Learners**  
The Old's Cool model allows both young and older people to gain new skills and learning opportunities. Communication and future employability skills are also improved.
-  **Confident Individuals**  
Old's Cool increases young peoples' confidence and self-esteem by providing them with the opportunity to build positive relationships.
-  **Responsible Citizens**  
Young and older people are encouraged to explore their views in relation to their local community.
-  **Effective Contributors**  
Old's Cool encourages team work and for young people to contribute equally. Furthermore, young people are also encouraged to take ownership of their work.

The Old's Cool model can also be used to evidence the following CfE experiences and outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

- Working with others**  
Understanding rights and responsibilities - HWB 09a  
Welcoming others as individuals – HWB 10a  
Improving my learning and encouraging others – 11a  
Representing my community gives me confidence – HWB 12a  
Helping create positive change in my community – HWB 13a  
Making friends and working as a group – HWB 14a
- Listening, talking and writing**  
Engaging with others and valuing their contribution – LIT 02a  
Presenting useful information to an audience – LIT 06a  
Engaging with others in a confident and expressive way – LIT 10a  
Contributing to a public performance – EXA 01a
- Local knowledge**  
Discovering interesting places to visit and work in the local area – SOC 10a  
Understanding how the needs of a group in my local community are met/ understanding inequality – SOC 16a  
Learning how discrimination affects people – SOC 16b
- Relationships**  
Understanding the importance of being cared for; how to sustain different relationships – HWB 44A  
Positive friendships and relationships – HWB 44b
- Using a computer**  
Using technology to enhance learning TCH – 04a  
Using multimedia to communicate information to others – TCH – 08b
- Planning ahead**  
Identifying my strengths and achievements; preparing for the future – HWB 19a

Source: Old's Cool Intergenerational Practice Toolkit, page 14

Another example from Scotland is the **Intergenerational Mentoring Network**<sup>34</sup> that operates across Scotland, and run by the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. The work focuses on developing and supporting one-to-one mentoring to improve

<sup>32</sup> For further information see: <https://citadelyouthcentre.org.uk/intergenerational-work/>

<sup>33</sup> Oracy refers to the skills associated with speaking and listening and the ability to communicate effectively using spoken language

<sup>34</sup> For further information see: <https://intergenerationalmentoring.com/>

outcomes for children and young people as they progress through the education system. They draw on the knowledge, experience and networks of older adults and retirees who have the time available. The work is research informed and shaped by ongoing evaluation and development. To date the work has focused on supporting communities where there are challenges in terms of pupil attainment and progression into and through higher education. This includes the development of mentoring programmes in secondary schools supporting young people seeking to enter higher education, nurturing literacy development in primary schools and a pilot around mentoring for children and young people who are care experienced.

## Wales

**Friend of Mine / Ffrind I Mi** is an initiative of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (NHS Wales) and its partners which began in 2017 and which supports people who feel lonely or isolated to reconnect with their communities. Working with Community Connectors and existing volunteer befriending services, they recruit volunteers to support those who are lonely and/or isolated. While intergenerational practice was not originally considered, as the initiative developed the potential of including this was increasingly recognised. As a result an Intergenerational Strategy was launched in 2018 which sets out their intent to establish, embed and grow intergenerational practice in order to promote and support meaningful and mutually beneficial activity for younger and older people. The strategy's aim is that intergenerational practice will enable children, young people and adults to reach their potential, maintain life-long learning, play a valued role in society and maximise well-being.

Clear links to Welsh Government policy, much of which already supports the development of intergenerational practice in Wales, is set out in the strategy. In relation to education the strategy highlights the ability of intergenerational practice to provide children and young people with opportunities to learn from expertise and experience from outside the school environment<sup>35</sup>.

The Intergenerational Strategy, and its clear links to the curriculum, has been very successful in encouraging schools and colleges to take part in Friend of Mine. To date 72 care homes have been twinned with 84 primary schools and uniformed cadets. In the past year 15 secondary schools have also become involved as have a number of further education colleges.

Friend of Mine is gathering evaluation evidence, particularly on how intergenerational elements contribute to the six Areas of Learning and Experience set out in the Welsh curriculum for 3 - 16 year olds: expressive arts; health and well-being; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; mathematics and numeracy; and science and technology. Information already gathered from students shows that for some their participation has sparked an interest in choosing a career in health and social care, in roles such as dementia nurses, doctors and paramedics.

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<sup>35</sup> This is recommended in Successful Future, An Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales

## USA

**Intergenerational Schools** were founded in 2000 in Cleveland Ohio by Catherine and Peter Whitehouse, and Stephanie Fall Creek. There are now three schools across the area with 700 students. The schools created a new intergenerational model of education that challenges traditional age segregation and embraces learners of all ages within a lifespan learning community. The schools have small, multi-age classes that allow children to learn and teach alongside older adults who serve as learning partners.

Intergenerational Schools are intended to guide participants of all ages – students, parents and guardians, teachers, staff, volunteers, mentors, collaborating nonprofits and civic organizations – to acquire the tools and confidence needed to achieve their personal best as lifelong learners and spirited citizens.

The mission of **Link Generations**<sup>36</sup> is to educate middle and high school students about aging and connect them with older adults in interactive programs that benefit both populations. This intergenerational programme is unique in that it includes education and training for youth that introduces them to gerontology concepts and helps increase their skills and comfort level when interacting with older adults.

The programme engages participants in interactive conversations about different perspectives and overlapping experiences. Adult participants feel a sense of purpose by helping young people learn life lessons and at the same time mitigate feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Young participants practice social skills, get to appreciate history from someone who lived through it, learn about resilience, and improve their attitudes toward aging.

The Link Generations programme consists of an education component and an applied intergenerational activity. Middle and high school students meet for the education component before the intergenerational programme and are introduced to basic principles of adult development and aging through review of attitudes toward aging, stereotypes about aging, and physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that occur with aging. Through a simulation exercise, students learn what it is like to have reduced vision, hearing, sense of touch, and mobility. From this experience, they learn best practices for communicating with adults of all ages.

The applied intergenerational activity is a 1 to 1.5-hour interactive discussion session focused on select themes. Participants are seated at round tables of 4-8 people, with at least two students and two older adults at each table. The session begins with a program leader or student volunteer introducing the theme. Each table is provided a list of questions generated in advance by students to help facilitate the conversation. Participants are not required to use the questions, but they have them if needed to facilitate interactive discussions. Examples of themes are getting to know you, resilience, gratitude and music through the ages. At the end of the session, each table reports a highlight of the conversation to the full group.

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<sup>36</sup> A full version of this case study is provided at Annex D

Link Generations has involved over 400 middle and high school students; more than 325 older adults since its inception in 2017. Evaluation of these programmes demonstrates success for adult participants in generating a connection to others and a continued sense of commitment to the future. Programme results for students show improved attitudes toward aging and comfort in working with older adults.



# ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

In order to further inform our research, we gathered information from students studying for a BTEC Level 3 in Health and Social Care at the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) in Downpatrick, Co. Down. These students (aged 16 years+) were part of Golden Memories, a student led initiative set up to support older people in their community.

## Golden Memories

SERC encourages the establishment of student companies<sup>37</sup>, which provide students with opportunities to apply vocational skills in a business environment, and to develop employability skills, which complement the vocational skills they learn in their course. Golden Memories is one of these student companies.

As part of their course students identified the opportunity to help older people in their local community, particularly around isolation and loneliness. This linked to elements of their course, which examined the effects of ageing, while at the same time giving students the skills to deal with real life work scenarios as part of their studies. Students researched the issue and planned how they would establish the company and deliver the activities. They consulted the Safe and Well team in the South Eastern Health and Social Services Trust, Newry and Mourne District Council and Good Morning Down to help plan the activities. They also secured funding from Linking Generations NI and the Geraldine Boden Student Enterprise Fund.

Golden Memories aimed to provide a place for isolated older adults from the local community to come to the college on a weekly basis and enjoy the company of others. The sessions took place in the college's restaurant, which is open to the public and located in the centre of the town. With the support of the lecturing team, the students planned and organised the weekly sessions and interacted with the older people (service users) through a range of activities such as arts and crafts, history, culture and food. The first session was held in December 2019 and were planned for most weeks until the end of the college year<sup>38</sup>. Newry & Mourne District Council supported the involvement of six older people in the project and the opening session was also attended by the Commissioner for Older People.

## Research Findings

In early March 2020, six students were interviewed on a one to one basis using a questionnaire, with a further six students completing this afterwards. The questions asked were:

- How has Golden Memories helped you with your health and social care course?

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<sup>37</sup> For more information see: <https://serc.ac.uk/about/student-companies>

<sup>38</sup> These sessions had to be suspended in late March 2020 due to COVID-19

- What have you learnt from, or about, older people that has helped you with your course?
- What skills have you developed as a result of your involvement in Golden Memories?
- Has Golden Memories had any influence on your future career or further study choices?

A summary of the responses to each question is given below. Full details are provided at Annex G.

### ***How has Golden Memories helped you with your health and social care course?***

Students were able to provide many examples of this; ranging from giving them a greater understanding of medical conditions and issues experienced by the service users, improving their understanding of what they had learnt in the classroom, providing them with opportunities to apply and practice skills, giving them 'hands on' experience, and helping them with future placements and to complete course work.

Comments from students included:

*'I have learnt about different (medical) conditions such as blindness. One of the service users is partially sighted – I learnt about what she can see/not see. I have also learnt about bereavement and how to engage with service users who have suffered a loss.'*

*'I have been able to apply the communication information I learnt in the classroom – e.g. how to communicate with a service user with hearing difficulties. It has helped me practice what I've learnt in the classroom.'*

*'It has allowed me to get hands on experience with older people, to see and experience what we have been taught, which is good because then we aren't just learning about it....it makes it more memorable and makes it easier to write about it and visualise it.'*

*'It has benefited me by giving me hands on experience; that I can refer to when doing course work.'*

*'What I have learnt through Golden Memories will help with my next placement in a care home. I can use the skills that I've learnt.'*

### ***What have you learnt from, or about, older people that has helped you with your course?***

Golden Memories has helped the students to learn a lot about the lives of older people and the issues they face, such as isolation and loneliness, often as a result of bereavement. They have also learnt about the needs of, and issues faced by older people, and how they can often be vulnerable. Several of the service users formerly worked in health and social care roles, and have shared their experiences with the students, **offering** advice and support.

*'It has given me an insight into what older people's lives are like and the issues they face, such as isolation. It's nice hearing about their lives. I've also found out*

*what they used to do. A couple of the service users worked as nurses and healthcare assistants. They've given me advice about my career and about getting as much experience as I can.'*

*'I have learnt about loneliness. A lot of the service users that attend are living on their own. It's been good to hear how they've coped and to help them open up about it.'*

*'I have learnt how to handle emotional situations with older people.'*

*'I have learnt that some older people are more vulnerable than others and some have different needs than others.'*

*'I now have a lot more patience with older people. I don't have many older people in my family, so Golden Memories has put me in contact with older people. We've built a bond and I really look forward to it.'*

### ***What skills have you developed as a result of your involvement in Golden Memories?***

Communication is a key element of Health & Social Care courses and this was the main skill students said that they had developed. A range of other skills such as empathy, listening, patience, confidence, time management, organisation, observation and team working were also acquired.

*'My communication skills have improved. At the start I struggled to talk to people, now it's easier to talk to them. My time management skills have also improved.'*

*'I have learnt how to communicate better with older people. I didn't really talk to them at the start, now I go and sit with them. I'm also more confident in general.'*

*'I learnt how to empathise with someone who has been bereaved and engage with them.'*

*'I have improved my active listening skills – asking questions, discussing everyday life and simple things.'*

*'I am now more comfortable in different situations, it's no problem now. I have improved my confidence, communication skills, empathy and patience.'*

*'In week one I was shy and reserved. Now I try and socialise as much as possible with the service users and help to integrate new people that come. It comes naturally now.'*

### ***Has Golden Memories had any influence on your future career or further study choices?***

For the majority of students, Golden Memories has influenced or helped to inform what they would like to do in the future. Four of the 12 students noted that as a result of Golden Memories they want to consider a career working with older people. For others the experience has been valuable in helping them decided on other future career choices.

*'At the start of the course I wanted to work with children. Now I want to be an adult nurse and work with older people.'*

*'When I started the course, I was looking at a career in social work. I did a placement on a dementia ward and that was challenging. I would prefer to work with children.'*

*'It has completely changed what I want to do. I wanted to work with children, now I want to work with older people.'*

*'I was thinking of working with kids at the start, now I want to work in geriatrics. I have started volunteering in a care home that I had my placement in. I am doing my second placement in a nursing home.'*

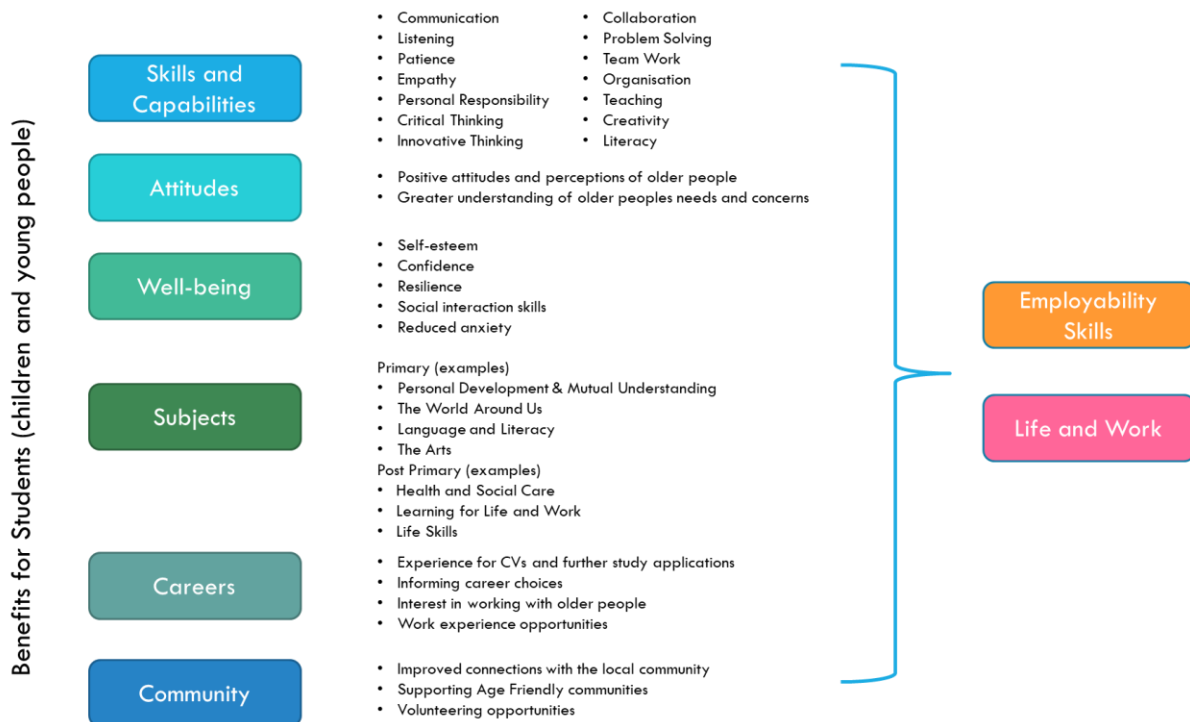
*'I want to do mental health but I'm going to do a placement in care home. I wouldn't have considered that before Golden Memories.'*

*'It has influenced me to work with the elderly in the future. This is due to loving socialising with them in the day centre.'*

*'It has helped me discover information about nursing that I didn't know before as some of the service users had personal experience and told me about it.'*

# THE WAY FORWARD

Research undertaken over many years, and in many countries, clearly shows that bringing generations together results in multiple mutual benefits. For children and young people, in particular students, our research has highlighted that their involvement can develop their skills and capabilities, improve their well-being, support their learning and have a positive impact on their employability skills and career choices. What they experience through their involvement in intergenerational practice will also support them in their future study, careers and in life generally.



The research has also highlighted that there are multiple benefits for schools and colleges, importantly in supporting the delivery and enhancement of the curriculum, but also in supporting key areas such as creating community connections.



While the research has highlighted multiple benefits, at the same time we acknowledge that this is still an emerging area, particularly for academic research. This presents many opportunities for more work in this area, and for LGNI to lead the way in its development. In Northern Ireland these opportunities include:

- **A pilot of the Age-friendly Schools model** (see page 3). This would be undertaken over the course of an academic year with a group of primary and post-primary schools and a FE college in a particular area, possibly utilising existing structures such as Area Learning Communities. LGNI would support the pilot with a dedicated Development Worker to co-ordinate the work, develop community connections, provide training and advice, and work with the schools/colleges to ensure future sustainability. There would also be a researcher appointed to evaluate the pilot, supported by a working group of academics who specialise in intergenerational practice;
- Improving awareness of how **intergenerational learning** can support students, schools and colleges. CCEA have identified multiple areas of the curriculum that intergenerational practice could support (see Annex F). An intergenerational 'learning' approach would enable all participants to learn from each other, to gain skills, values and knowledge. A training programme for school/college staff would be developed to support this;
- Exploring the development of an **intergenerational mentoring programme** in Northern Ireland, similar to that available in Scotland; and
- The development of more detailed resources for schools and colleges, particularly at a subject level. By way of example, the results of our meetings with CCEA staff and examiners, teachers and lecturers indicated that there are many opportunities for intergenerational practice to contribute to, and enhance, the delivery of the Health and Care subject, namely:
  - Developing students' communication skills – both verbal and non-verbal;
  - Developing students' understanding of:
    - the physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs of older service users and how to meet these;
    - diseases/illnesses that affect older people, including dementia;
    - issues such as bereavement, isolation, loneliness and mental health;
    - major life changes that older people experience – for example moving from their own home into a residential/care home or sheltered accommodation;
    - the nutritional needs of older people; and
    - attitudes towards and stereotypes about older people;
  - Providing information and opportunities for students to assist with the completion of the controlled assessment task at GCSE level, if this relates to older people; and
  - Encouraging students who choose the optional Applied Research unit at A-Level, to consider topics relating to older people, by providing research ideas and facilitating access to research opportunities.

# **ANNEXES**

## Annex A – 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, 2001)

The 8 principles of intergenerational practice are:

- Mutual and reciprocal benefits
- Participatory
- Asset based
- Well planned
- Culturally grounded
- Strengthens community bonds
- Promotes active citizenships
- Challenges ageism
- Cross disciplinary

For further information on the principles, please see:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED507349.pdf>

**Intergenerational learning** is a component of intergenerational practice.

The European Network of Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) defines this as:

*A learning partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality involving people of different ages where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge.*

In their publication *Learning Through Intergenerational Practice*, Generations Working Together note that intergenerational learning occurs when intergenerational projects or activities are purposefully planned to include one, or several, learning aims and outcomes across the generations, i.e. both sides learning from or with each other, to gain skills, values and knowledge. This learning could take place in a formal, nonformal or informal setting but one or more of the primary aims would include an intergenerational learning outcome. True intergenerational learning has learning outcomes for each generation.

### Brief Overview of the Growth of Intergenerational Practice

In the UK, the first major investment in supporting intergenerational practice was made in 2001, when the Beth Johnson Foundation was funded by the Community Fund and Lloyds TSB to promote intergenerational work across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to establish the Centre for Intergenerational Practice. This was followed by funding in 2003 by the Welsh Government to establish the Welsh Centre for Intergenerational Practice and in 2007 the Scottish Government provided funding to establish the Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice (now Generations Working Together).

Intergenerational Practice was introduced to Northern Ireland through the Millennium Awards in 1999. Its growth and development were initially supported by Age Concern



Northern Ireland (ACNI) and subsequently by the Centre for Intergenerational Practice. The biggest investment came in 2009 when The Atlantic Philanthropies provided support over a five year period, enabling the creation of Linking Generations Northern Ireland.

At European level there has been an equally strong growth of interest in intergenerational practice and the widespread development of national networks and programmes. The European Day of Solidarity Between Generations was launched in 2008 and takes place annually on 29<sup>th</sup> April. The campaign is promoted by AGE Platform Europe, a network of organisations of and for people aged 50+. LGNI celebrate this through their All Ages April Grant Scheme. The European Commission also designated 2012 as the European Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity.

The Beth Johnson Foundation has been involved in a number of significant European intergenerational projects and ran the European Map of Intergenerational Learning (EMIL), which has partners in over 25 European countries. The Foundation was also one of the partners in the EAGLE (European Approaches to Intergenerational Lifelong Learning), IANUS (European Guidelines for Later Learning in Intergenerational, Intercultural and ICT-based Settings) and MATES (Mainstreaming Intergenerational Solidarity) and TOY-PLUS (Together Old and Young) projects. These resulted in a wide variety of toolkits, case-studies and guides being produced.

In the United States 'Generations United' is the national membership organisation focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies.

## Annex B – LGNI Evaluation Results from Younger Participants

Question	Regional Small Grants Programme 2010/2011	Ards Small Grant Programme 2010/2011	Small Grants Programme 2012 – 2014	Age-friendly School Project 2013 - 2014	Digital Age Project – Year 1-2 2014 - 2016	Digital Age Project – Year 3 2017
Evidence Base:	80 forms from 10 projects	145 forms from 13 projects	160 forms from 25 projects	15 forms from 1 project	184 forms from 16 projects	67 forms from 8 projects
<b>% Agree that:</b>						
I learnt that I have things in common with older people	98%	68%	83%	90%	93%	99%
I now have more respect for older people	96%	95%	98%	-	-	-
I am more likely to talk to older people	95%	80%	93%	93%	89%	-
I know more about older people	94%	86%	92%	-	-	-
I am more confident interacting with older people	-	-	-	-	-	96%
Projects can help younger and older people to get to know each other better	99%	99%	-	-	-	-
I learnt more about older people's interests/needs/concerns	-	-	83%	-	98%	99%
I've changed my views about older people	-	-	-	100%	-	-
I learnt new things	98%	92%	91%	-	-	-
I am now more confident	86%	81%	82%	-	-	-
The project helped them to feel more a part of the community	-	-	85%	-	88%	-

## **Annex C – Consultation List**

Alison Clyde, Generations Working Together

Claire Jordan and Tanya Strange, Friend of Mine/Ffrind I Mi, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Wales

Dale Heaney, Department of Education NI

Fey Cole, South West College, Dungannon

Jeff Scroggie, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Jim Dunbar, Education Authority NI

Katrina Harris, Glastry College

Lori Marks, Link Generations, Maryland, USA

Dr Mariano Sánchez, Macrosad Chair in Intergenerational Studies, University of Granada, Spain

Maureen Pue, Rocky Acres Care Home

Rosemary Peters, South Eastern Regional College, Downpatrick

Ruth Kennedy, Deborah McGuffin, Mary Joyce and Rosey Kerr, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Dr Trudy Corrigan, School of Policy and Practice, Dublin City University

## Annex D – Link Generations Case Study

Link Generations, USA

# Case Study

Submitted to Linking Generations Northern Ireland

Lori N. Marks, PhD  
3-17-2020

### **Link Generations Case Study**

#### **Link Generations Mission**

The mission of Link Generations is to educate middle and high school students about aging and connect them with older adults in interactive programs that benefit both populations. This intergenerational program is unique in that it includes education and training for youth that introduces them to gerontology concepts and helps increase their skills and comfort level when interacting with older adults.

The program engages participants in interactive conversations about different perspectives and overlapping experiences. Adult participants feel a sense of purpose by helping young people learn life lessons and at the same time mitigate feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Young participants practice social skills, get to appreciate history from someone who lived through it, learn about resilience, and improve their attitudes toward aging.

#### **Program Description**

The Link Generations program consists of an education component and an applied intergenerational activity. Middle and high school students meet for the education component before the intergenerational program and are introduced to basic principles of adult development and aging through review of attitudes toward aging, stereotypes about aging, and physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that occur with aging. Through a simulation exercise, students learn what it is like to have reduced vision, hearing, sense of touch, and mobility. From this experience, they learn best practices for communicating with adults of all ages.

The applied intergenerational activity is a 1 to 1.5-hour interactive discussion session focused on select themes. Participants are seated at round tables of 4-8 people, with at least two students and two older adults at each table. The session begins with a program leader or student volunteer introducing the theme. Each table is provided a list of questions generated in advance by students to help facilitate the conversation. Participants are not required to use the questions, but they have them if needed to facilitate interactive discussions. Examples of theme are getting to know you, resilience, gratitude, and music through the ages. At the end of the session, each table reports a highlight of the conversation to the full group.

#### **Program Outcomes**

Link Generations has involved over 400 middle and high school students and more than 325 older adults since its inception in 2017. Evaluation of these programs demonstrates success for adult participants in generating a connection to others and a continued sense of commitment to the future. Program results for students show improved attitudes toward aging and comfort in working with older adults. The

table below shows program objectives matched with participants' statements supporting each objective.

<b>Program Objectives for Students</b>	<b>Student Statements Demonstrating Objectives</b>
To gain knowledge about physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that occur with aging.	Discussion with students after sensitivity training: Students reported that they found themselves having to repeat themselves and talk louder to be heard and to be engaged in the conversation. They experienced how frustrating this could be for a person with hearing loss. One student showed his understanding by saying, "Sorry Nana."
To improve social skills and confidence through conversations with adults.	"We all felt nervous and awkward the first day. Over time it got better."
To improve attitudes toward aging.	"I loved today's program. I think it is important to get outside my comfort zone and I did that today. It was so much fun hearing the residents' stories and learning about their history."
To identify best practices for communicating with older adults.	"Our son likes coming to this. We can't always get him to go to activities willingly, but this is one he likes coming to."
<b>Program Objectives for Older Adults</b>	<b>Older Adult Statements Demonstrating Objectives</b>
To identify meaningful activities that generate a connection to others and a continued sense of commitment to the future.	"Having come full circle through all the phases of life, I now look forward to beginning again!"
To engage in activities with young adults.	"I love coming here. Talking to the teens makes me feel young again." "I like coming and seeing the young people. I used to think young people were scary. Now I see that they are not."
To mitigate feelings of loneliness and isolation.	Quote from resident's son "My mother loved seeing the kids. She always lights up when there are kids visiting and, believe me, it is hard to get her out of her apartment."

<p>To have fun with young adults while sharing life experiences.</p>	<p>"The program is about sharing experiences of different ages and from different cultures. That's how people learn to understand each other. We need that, especially today."</p>
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### Program Focused on Mental Health and Anxiety

One Link Generations partner is a day program for high school students who are transitioning from residential mental health programs back to their regular schools. Many of these students are dealing with depression, anxiety, and issues surrounding sexual identity. Link Generations provided a one-hour education session to the students at their school to talk about physical and social changes that occur with aging and stereotypes about aging. Link Generations also provided a one-hour education session to residents in independent living who would be interacting with the students. This training consisted of stereotypes about youth, including current trends related to sexual identity and gender stereotyping.

Students came to the independent living community for a Link Generations intergenerational meeting based on the theme of gratitude. Participants talked about common things they are grateful for:

- Family, friends, people you trust, past experiences (students and residents).
- Family members who taught us what we know and shaped us to be who we are now (student).
- Opportunity to listen to the stories told by these remarkable young people (resident).
- Grateful for being alive (resident).
- My mother who is the smartest and strongest woman I know (student).
- Taking the advice of a high school teacher (resident).
- A gentleman's advice to ask at the "top" for a job (resident).
- Being open and letting opportunities happen (students and residents).

The students' teachers noted that many of the students opened up during the course of the session, showing how comfortable and welcomed they felt by the residents. The residents were eager to listen with no judgment and learn about the experiences of the young people.

### Contact Information

For more information, please contact Lori Marks at [lori@linkgenerations.org](mailto:lori@linkgenerations.org) or visit the [Link Generations](http://linkgenerations.org) website.



# Annex E – Curriculum ‘Big Pictures’

## The “Big Picture” of the Curriculum at Primary



<b>CURRICULUM AIM</b>	The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.									
<b>CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>TO DEVELOP THE YOUNG PERSON AS AN INDIVIDUAL</b>			<b>TO DEVELOP THE YOUNG PERSON AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO SOCIETY</b>			<b>TO DEVELOP THE YOUNG PERSON AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT</b>			
	personal understanding mutual understanding personal health	moral character spiritual awareness		citizenship cultural understanding	media awareness ethical awareness		employability economic awareness	education for sustainable development		
<i>INFUSING</i>										
<b>CROSS-CURRICULAR SKILLS</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>			<b>USING MATHEMATICS</b>			<b>USING ICT</b>			
<b>THINKING SKILLS AND PERSONAL CAPABILITIES</b>	Managing Information	Working with Others		Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making			Self-Management	Being Creative		
<i>ACROSS</i>										
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING</b>	<b>THE ARTS</b>	<b>LANGUAGE AND LITERACY</b>	<b>MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY</b>	<b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING</b>	<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION*</b>	<b>THE WORLD AROUND US</b>	<b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b>			
<i>INCORPORATING</i>										
<b>ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING</b>	building a more open relationship between learner and teacher	clear learning intentions shared with pupils	shared/negotiated success criteria	individual target setting	taking risks for learning	advice on what to improve and how to improve it	peer and self assessment	celebrating success	peer and self evaluation of learning	
<i>PROMOTING/ENCOURAGING</i>										
<b>LEARNING EXPERIENCE</b>	investigation and problem solving	links between curriculum areas	relevant and enjoyable	media-rich	skills integrated	active and hands on	offer choice			
	challenging and engaging	supportive environment	culturally diverse	positive reinforcement	varied to suit learning style	on-going reflection	enquiry based			
<i>FOSTERING</i>										
<b>ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS</b>	personal responsibility	concern for others	commitment – determination – resourcefulness			openness to new ideas	self-confidence			
	curiosity	community spirit	flexibility	tolerance	integrity moral courage	respect				

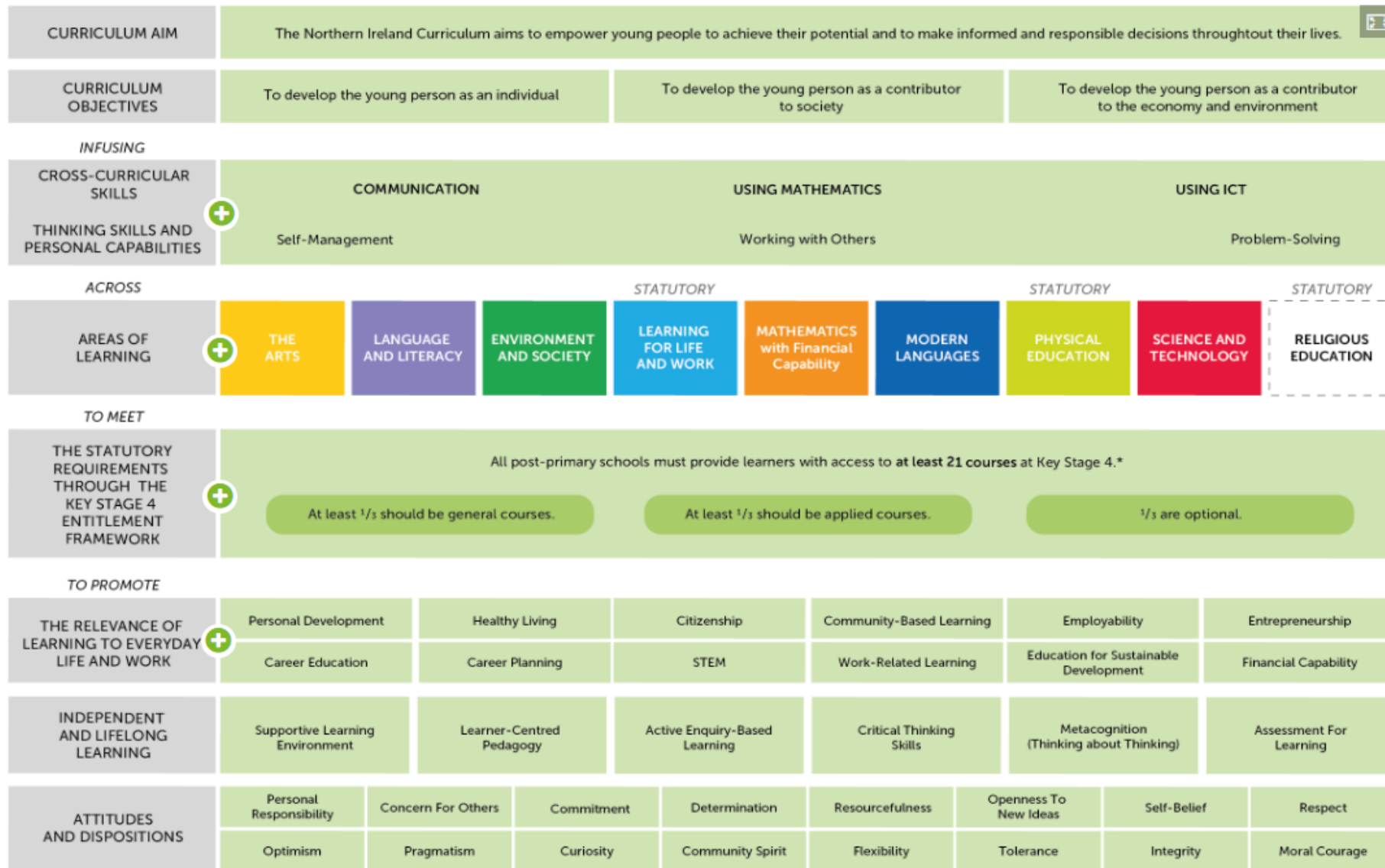
\*Physical Development and Movement at Foundation Stage

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Source: Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)



# The Big Picture of the Curriculum at Key Stage 4



\* See the DENI website at [www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk) for a list of approved courses at Key Stage 4.

Source: Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

## Annex F – Information Provided by CCEA

Intergenerational learning is not explicitly statutory within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. However, there are a range of opportunities for participative learning across the Areas of Learning and key stages within the curriculum. Some of these are outlined below.

### PRIMARY

#### Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

The statutory curriculum for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PD&MU) is set out in two strands:

- Personal Understanding and Health
- Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

***Intergenerational activities with children in primary school would address most strongly the requirements in the second strand of PD&MU, but there is also scope for work to support aspects of the first strand.***

The statutory curriculum for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PD&MU) in Foundation Stage promotes learning where children are encouraged to form relationships with adults and other children and to develop their self-esteem and confidence. They should learn to work co-operatively in the classroom and beyond.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, in the second strand for mutual understanding, children are encouraged to explore and appreciate the relationships with family, friends and other groups in school and in the local community.

Through the relevant statutory statements, children are encouraged to explore the following:

Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their relationships with family and friends;</li> <li>• similarities and differences between groups of people; and</li> <li>• learning to live as a member of a community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examine the variety of roles in families and the contribution made by each member; and</li> <li>• recognise and value the culture and traditions of one other group who shares their community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initiating, developing and sustaining mutually satisfying relationships;</li> <li>• valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity;</li> <li>• knowing about aspects of their cultural heritage, including the diversity of cultures that contribute to Northern Ireland;</li> <li>• appreciating the interdependence of people within the community; and</li> <li>• identifying the variety of groups, the roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>

		that exist within the community.
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### The World Around Us

This area of learning at Primary encompasses History, Geography, Science and Technology. Strands 1, 2 and 4, namely 'Interdependence', 'Place' and 'Change over Time' provide a wide range of opportunities to develop links with past generations.

Examples of topics that schools may choose to explore include:

- My family, parents and grandparents.
- Differences between my life now and lives of people in the past.
- Memories of older people about their past.
- What do older people remember about the area in the past?
- Stories about people from the past.
- People from the past in the local and wider community.
- How the area and community have changed over time.
- Reasons for changes in the locality now and in the past.
- Comparing an aspect of the community over a long period of time, for example, farming, working, shopping or changes in transport and passenger safety.

**There are also opportunities for intergenerational participative activities in other areas of the curriculum.** For example:

- In *Language and Literacy* pupils will listen, read and respond to a wide range of stories, poems, songs, drama and media texts and will also tell, retell and interpret stories based on memories, personal experiences, literature and imagination. They will also participate in talking and listening activities, listening attentively and engaging with people in a variety of situations.
- *The Arts* may provide opportunities for intergenerational learning in the context of art, music and drama. Primary and older people could work together in a shared learning environment to learn or practise different skills in art and design, or have shared and integrated musical activities by planning choir activities or learning songs together.

### **CCEA Resources**

Other ideas or contexts may be found in CCEA's non-statutory resources to support the curriculum.

- **Intergenerational activities are explicitly expressed in some of the CCEA *Living.Learning.Together* year group resource booklets for PD&MU.** Although these are linked to specific year groups, they could equally well be used in another year group.
  - Year 1: Unit 7 – Learning activity 4: *Working together*
  - Year 4: Unit 7 - Learning activity 4: *Getting to know the people who live in our local and wider community*

This activity suggests how to work with a variety of groups so schools can engage and develop understanding of the wider community.

- Year 7: Unit 4 – Learning activity 4: *Changing attitudes*

**Intergenerational activities are used to develop relationships, improve mutual understanding, provide enjoyment, increase self-esteem and improve confidence in making friends.**

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stages\\_1\\_and\\_2/areas\\_of\\_learning/pdmu/ivinglearningtogether/year7/yr7\\_unit4.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/areas_of_learning/pdmu/ivinglearningtogether/year7/yr7_unit4.pdf)

- Year 7: Unit 6 – Learning activity 2: *Too Young, Too Old?*

Both older and younger people experience ageism. Both older and younger people can be ageist in their perceptions, attitudes and actions, sometimes without even realising that they are. Ageism involves prejudice and discrimination, and it raises issues of fairness and justice. Intergenerational work enriches our relationships and our learning.

[http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stages\\_1\\_and\\_2/areas\\_of\\_learning/pdmu/ivinglearningtogether/year7/yr7\\_unit6.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stages_1_and_2/areas_of_learning/pdmu/ivinglearningtogether/year7/yr7_unit6.pdf)

- CCEA's **Thematic Units** include:

- *Celebrations and Good Times* (Years 3 to 4): Pupils explore topics such as 'Good Time Memories' and 'Where has our school come from?'
- *Being and Belonging* (Year 5): Activity 12 includes a Home Learning Activity on 'Memories'
- *Me Inc* (Year 5): includes an activity on making 'Memory Boxes'

[http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/key\\_stage\\_1\\_2/connected\\_learning/thematic\\_units](http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/key_stage_1_2/connected_learning/thematic_units)

- The **Woven in Ulster** resource has incorporated interviews with residents of the Shankill Road who describe their experiences growing up and working in the mills.

[http://ccea.org.uk/woven\\_ulster/unit\\_4/lesson\\_1](http://ccea.org.uk/woven_ulster/unit_4/lesson_1)

Although not an activity within the resource, it would be possible for pupils who were studying this topic to conduct their own interviews with the elderly within their community. Digital tools could be used to record these interviews or news reports may be written and uploaded on to (for example) NewsDesk using the following resource:

[http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/key\\_stage\\_1\\_2/areas\\_learning/language\\_and\\_literacy](http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/key_stage_1_2/areas_learning/language_and_literacy)

- The **Growing for the Future** resource provides an opportunity to 'Connect children of all ages and their parents with the concept of food growing, where their food comes from, the importance of buying local produce, and how to cook simply from scratch. In effect joining up the supply chain and increasing food knowledge.' For example,

children can explore how potato bread used to be baked in the past, or engage in food growing activities.

<http://ccea.org.uk/growing/about.php>

[http://ccea.org.uk/growing/get\\_cooking\\_campaign.php](http://ccea.org.uk/growing/get_cooking_campaign.php)

- One Primary example of an intergenerational project involved a group of children who worked with an elderly community group to create a garden in the school. This involved:
  - planning designing and drawing the layout of a garden - *Using Maths, Being Creative, The Arts*
  - deciding on the plan of the garden, being given a budget and using it - *Financial Capability, Using Maths*
  - visiting a Garden Centre and making the necessary purchases - *Communication, Using Maths, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities*
  - manually preparing the garden with their elderly partner - *Working Together, Communication*
  - planting the crops and trees – *The World Around Us (knowledge of plants and growing, soil, fertilising etc)*
  - creating a feature within the garden - *working with an artist, The Arts*
  - presenting their work at a celebration event – *Using ICT to create a movie, Communication, Personal Capabilities*
  - organising a celebratory tea party – *Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, The Arts, Financial Capability, Communication*

## POST PRIMARY AND QUALIFICATIONS

As with Primary, intergenerational learning is not explicitly statutory but there are a range of opportunities for participative learning across the Areas of Learning.

We have included some information regarding the coverage within our suite of qualifications, Key Stage 4 to post 16. **As with the other key stages, there are opportunities across a range of subject areas to explore the concept and benefits of intergenerational learning. There are also opportunities to deliver the content of the qualifications through intergenerational learning, for example in the development of practical skills. Other qualifications facilitate discussions about age stereotypes and prejudice.** Below are some examples. They include Health and Social Care, which as identified; has a requirement for students to work intergenerationally, depending on the option they follow.

Qualification	Relevant content
GCSE Health and Social Care	Students investigate human development throughout the life stages. They also investigate factors affecting health and well-being, including relationships and the impact of major life changes and sources of support at these stages from the various sectors. This includes developing an understanding of different diseases/illnesses such as dementia. They explore the positive influence of relationships including in the context of culture and ethnicity. Students look at factors affecting self-concept, including age,

	<p>disabilities and relationships. In another unit students develop knowledge and understanding about identifying and meeting the needs of the main service users within the health and social care sectors. They learn about the provision of integrated health and social care for the different service users. An important aspect of this unit is the coverage of the values of care that underpin all health and social care practice, such as anti-discriminatory practice and respect and dignity. This unit is a practical unit and students will have the opportunity to link with practitioners, which depending on the task may be those who work within a care home setting or other settings that requires working with older people.</p>
GCE Health and Social Care (not all content is compulsory)	<p>Students explore values of care. By investigating practices in a selected health or social care (or early years) setting that they have experienced, students learn how care workers apply the values on a daily basis. They evaluate the effectiveness of policies in promoting quality care. They research poor practice and its effects on the well-being of service users, potential service users, the staff responsible, families and care workers or the organisation. They learn about legislation that promotes/requires quality care. In another unit Students gain an understanding of how important effective communication skills are in developing good relationships and promoting quality care. Students complete a report on the communication skills they observe in a health, social care or early years setting. They also evaluate their own communication skills by carrying out an interaction. This interaction must take place in the setting. They look at factors that positively affect communication and those that cause barriers, including differences in age. There are many other aspects of this qualification that develop knowledge and understanding and skills relevant to the concept and benefits of intergenerational learning, such as relevant organisations, discrimination and anti-discriminatory practice, Transforming Your Care report, holistic therapies, family structures, and understanding human behaviour. At A2 students have the opportunity to investigate a topic in depth which includes carrying out primary and secondary research and/or to investigate health improvement priorities and campaigns.</p>
Entry Level Skills	<p>This qualification is practical and students have flexibility is how and what evidence they present to show that they have met the learning outcomes. The optional units include a requirement for students to identify people who can help them at school, home and the community. They also have the opportunity to identify and participate in community or creative group projects. They learn about the ability to use language appropriate to a specific audience, and take part in discussions in real-life contexts. There is also a performing arts unit.</p>
Level 1 and 2 Preparation for Adult Life	<p>This qualification is a practical alternative to Learning for Life and Work. Students have flexibility is how and what evidence they present to show that they have met the learning outcomes. There are many units that are relevant to intergenerational learning. These</p>

	include exploring social inclusion, human rights and social responsibility, and equality and social justice. There are also units relevant to personal development including health and wellbeing.
GCSE Learning for Life and Work	This qualification covers content related to diversity and inclusion and the cause and consequences of prejudice and discrimination. They explore social equality and human rights. There is also a unit that explores wellbeing and health issues.
Entry Level Home Economics	In this qualification students have flexibility in how they gather the evidence that they have met the criteria. Relevant content includes a unit on family, that requires them to look roles and responsibilities of family and extended family, and to participate in a group activity to look at strategies to deal with a family issue.
GCSE Physical Education	Students learn aspects related to why it is important to maintain good mental health and social wellbeing and also about how lifestyle decisions can help or hinder mental and social health. Students develop knowledge and understanding of the positive and negative consequences of lifestyle decisions and ill health and the benefits to sustaining physical activities on issues relating to age.
GCE Sports Science in the Active Leisure Industry	There is a section in this qualification that requires young people to learn about social and physical effects of age on health and wellbeing and barriers to participation in sport, such as age.
GCSE Religious Studies	In this qualifications students who choose the Ethics option explore contemporary issues in Christianity including causes and types of prejudice and discrimination. It also includes biblical teaching on responsibility towards people in need.

## **Annex G – Additional Research – SERC Questionnaire Responses**

### **How has Golden Memories helped you with your H&SC course?**

- I have learnt more about the medical conditions that older people have, and now have a better understanding of them. GM has given me the opportunity to talk to someone about asthma and understand it better.
- I have learnt about different (medical) conditions such as blindness. One of the service users is partially sighted – I learnt about what she can see/not see. I have also learnt about bereavement and how to engage with service users who have suffered a loss.
- I was involved in planning the project – I learnt about risk assessments in the classroom and then was able to apply it when developing the project.
- It has helped me with writing case studies for my course.
- I have been able to apply the communication information I learnt in the classroom – e.g. how to communicate with a service user with hearing difficulties. It has helped me practice what I've learnt in the classroom.
- What I have learnt through Golden Memories will help with my next placement in a care home. I can use the skills that I've learnt.
- I have learnt more about bereavement – how to handle situations. Also about blindness and how people who are blind go about their daily life.
- I have learnt how to put what we learnt in the classroom into practice – everything comes more naturally to me now.
- It has helped me understand what I learnt in the course better.
- It has helped me with my course as it allows me to experience working with people and a better understanding of communication.
- It has helped me develop better communication skills which are essential for working in health and social care. It has also helped me with my course work that I am completing.
- It has allowed me to get hands on experience with older people, to see and experience what we have been taught, which is good because then we aren't just learning about it. It has let me see and learn about what we have learnt, which is good because it is more memorable and makes it easier to write about it and visualise it.
- It has given me an insight in working with people and has improved my course work ability as it's given me a better understanding of service users.
- It has benefited me by giving me hands on experience, that I can refer to when doing course work.

### **What have you learnt from, or about, older people that has helped you with your course?**

- It has given me an insight into what older people's lives are like and the issues they face, such as isolation. It's nice hearing about their lives. I've also found out what they used to do. A couple of the service users worked as nurses and healthcare assistants. They've given me advice about my career and about getting as much experience as I can.



- I have learnt about loneliness. A lot of the service users that attend are living on their own. It's been good to hear how they've coped and to help them open up about it.
- I have made a connection with an older lady that attends, who is partially deaf. It has helped me improve my communication skills and learn what they like / don't like. I like hearing their life stories and their struggles such as bereavement.
- I have learnt how to handle emotional situations with older people.
- I have learnt how older people like to communicate and be spoken to.
- I have learnt that some older people are more vulnerable than others and some have different needs than others.
- I have learnt about their careers and how they got their jobs. It has helped me as they gave me advice about nursing and how it will help me in the future.
- All of them are different. It has made me realise that some elderly are lonely and have no one to talk to. That's why it's so important to communicate and get to know them in the day centre.
- I have learnt that some older people may be more vulnerable than others and the struggles they deal with.
- I now have a lot more patience with older people. I don't have many older people in my family, so Golden Memories has put me in contact with older people. We've built a bond and I really look forward to it.
- It has helped me understand the ailments they deal with.

### **What skills have you developed as a result of your involvement in Golden Memories?**

- My communication skills have improved. At the start I struggled to talk to people, now it's easier to talk to them. My time management skills have also improved.
- Golden Memories has benefited the entire class and improved our skills.
- I have learnt how to communicate better with older people. I didn't really talk to them at the start, now I go and sit with them. I'm also more confident in general.
- I learnt how to empathise with someone who has been bereaved and engage with them.
- I have improved my active listening skills – asking questions, discussing everyday life and simple things.
- I have improved my communication skills – verbal and non-verbal. I have learnt how to communicate properly with older people, as they have different levels of ability.
- I am now more comfortable in different situations, it's no problem now. I have improved my confidence, communication skills, empathy and patience.
- In week one I was shy and reserved. Now I try and socialise as much as possible with the service users and help to integrate new people that come. It comes naturally now.
- Team working, communication and observational skills.

- Team working, communication and organisation skills.
- Team working skills – working as a team to make the day centre happen.
- Communication skills – talking to others and getting to know them.
- Organisation skills - organising various activities.
- I have developed my listening and observational skills.

**Has Golden Memories had any influence on your future career or further study choices? If yes, please explain**

- At the start of the course I wanted to work with children. Now I want to be an adult nurse and work with older people.
- When I started the course, I was looking at a career in social work. I did a placement on a dementia ward and that was challenging. I would prefer to work with children.
- It has completely changed what I want to do. I wanted to work with children, now I want to work with older people.
- I was thinking of working with kids at the start, now I want to work in geriatrics. I have started volunteering in a care home that I had my placement in. I am doing my second placement in a nursing home. Golden Memories will help my placement – I am now more comfortable around new people.
- I want to do mental health but I'm going to do a placement in care home. I wouldn't have considered that before Golden Memories.
- It has influenced me to work with the elderly in the future. This is due to loving socialising with them in the day centre.
- It has given me an insight into whether I want to work in this area or not.
- It has helped me discover information about nursing that I didn't know before as some of the service users had personal experience and told me about it.
- It has helped me decide on what career is best fitted for me.