

Learning Snapshot: Intergenerational Working

Ageing Better is a test and learn programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

This learning snapshot details key findings and recommendations relevant to best practice in Intergenerational Working.

We collect information and insights from across 14 partnerships and use this learning to support service deliverers, funders and policy makers working to reduce social isolation in people aged over 50.

You can use it as a summary of the [full learning report](#), to share practical tools with colleagues and in teams, or include in your own presentations and briefings.

<p>1. Why do intergenerational projects work?</p> <p>The 50+ cohort is a diverse and vibrant group already encompassing 3 generations who do not want to attend activities targeted at ‘old’ people. A focus on learning, common interests and skill sharing (rather than age):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brings people together • gives a clear sense of purpose • breaks down barriers • encourages understanding. <p>Intergenerational projects are particularly effective with men and in a Care Home setting, creating a sense of community through sharing memories, world views and life experiences.</p>	<p>2. What are the challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal partnering with educational bodies can be tricky as free time is restricted by lessons, exams, or term dates. Activities linked to curriculum topics work well. • Cultural assumptions and a fear of being able to communicate/connect can cause anxiety in those with low confidence or who have not been around younger people for a while. Concerns around physical limitations are also barriers. • A lack of clarity about the purpose of an activity will deter people from participating.
<p>4. So what can we do with this learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear goal. • Take time to plan. <p>Intergenerational activities replicate the dynamic of family life, giving people a sense of belonging. Genuine friendships frequently flourish within the 16-25 and 65+ age groups as they have much in common; from loneliness and isolation to the lack of responsibility of dependents.</p> <p>College and university students often experience an improvement in their mental health through activities that give them someone else to think about as well as someone to talk to outside their peer group.</p>	<p>3. How can we improve support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a clear focus and structure, set aims and objectives is key to success. • Projects require a degree of flexibility for participants to suggest, adapt and build on ideas. Joint planning and design helps connect people, giving both older and younger members a greater sense of pride, belonging, involvement and ownership. • It is important to understand individuals’ needs and limitations and help build their confidence through sensitive facilitation. • Investing time (including one-to-one conversations and on-going consultation) will increase participation and enjoyment.