

Intergenerational practice

A guide to running a self assessment workshop



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Background

Councils work across all ages and are key to achieving positive relationships between generations. The Ageing Well programme worked with the Beth Johnson Foundation to help councils bring different generations together and this guide draws on the methods used and lessons learned.

The Ageing Well programme was delivered by the Local Government Association with funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. It worked with the Beth Johnson Foundation to develop intergenerational good practice in a number of councils through the development and implementation of an intergenerational practice peer assessment model.

Visit the Ageing Well website www.local.gov.uk/ageing-well for more information on intergenerational practice and other topics related to making better places for people to grow older.

The Beth Johnson Foundation is a national organisation that seeks to make a positive impact on the lives of older people, to gain recognition for the valuable role older people play and to challenge age discrimination through pioneering initiatives that bring together research, policy and best practice. See www.bjf.org.uk

The Beth Johnson Foundation has an international reputation for its work on intergenerational practice and has a website dedicated to it. See www.centreforip.org.uk for comprehensive resources, case studies, links and much more.



What is 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

Bringing together older and younger people to work together can make a positive difference, not only to those involved, but the whole community.

Intergenerational practice can take many forms, linking together a range of processes that build positive relationships between generations, bringing mutual benefits to all involved. One consequence of this is improved community cohesion but the impact can also be much wider, including reduced isolation and a breaking down of negative stereotyping.

Working intergenerationally plays an essential role in promoting and supporting wellbeing while also improving the delivery of efficient and good quality services to people of all ages. We hope you find this guidance useful in assisting you in developing a good place to grow older for all ages.

More information and resources can be found on the following websites:

www.local.gov.uk/ageing-well
www.centreforip.org.uk

The benefits of intergenerational practice

At its best intergenerational practice is an agent of change designed to revitalise neighbourhoods and communities by connecting the generations. More specifically benefits include:

For older people

- increased motivation
- increased perception of self worth
- reduced social isolation
- recognition of the skills they possess
- improved health and wellbeing.

For children and younger people

- increased self esteem and resilience
- access to adults at difficult times
- enhanced sense of social responsibility
- reduced involvement in offending
- better health and wellbeing
- improved school attendance and attainment.

For the community

- improved community cohesion
- more diverse volunteering
- increased engagement
- increased social capital
- enhanced feeling of safety.

For more information on the benefits of intergenerational practice, see www.centreforip.org.uk

How intergenerational practice also supports councils

Councils are increasingly looking to involve local communities to support and enhance service delivery through more cost-effective and innovative ways. Intergenerational practice has an important part to play in addressing new challenges and shaping new working methods. Experience confirms that intergenerational practice can provide councils and their partners with:

- a framework for sharing resources and promoting co-production
- improved working across departments and sectors
- multiple outcomes for different groups
- value for money
- extra tools to address service priorities
- increased understanding of local service needs.

About this guide

This guide outlines a step-by-step approach for councils to self assess and improve their intergenerational practice. The self assessment approach is a simple and quick way to test the delivery of intergenerational practice in a council. It gives a 'light touch' overview of a council's approach to intergenerational practice and can be undertaken by key council leads from a range of service areas. Based upon a series of constructive conversations within agreed themes, a summary action plan is produced with strengths and areas for further development highlighted. The self assessment tool is included at the end of this guidance.

An intergenerational self assessment framework

In order to self assess a council's strengths and areas for development it is necessary to have a framework against which to make that assessment. The work carried out by Beth Johnson Foundation as part of the Ageing Well programme has identified four key themes:

1. The big picture: a strategic approach to intergenerational practice
2. Contribution across partners: engagement and participation in intergenerational practice
3. Effectiveness: achieving positive outcomes that are agreed and measured
4. Making a difference: impact and added value of local intergenerational practice.

These are outlined in more detail overleaf.

1. The big picture: a strategic approach to intergenerational practice

Good practice suggests that councils deliver intergenerational practice most successfully where initiatives are part of a strategic approach, take account of wider strategies and have cross-departmental and partner support. The initiatives are sustainable and adequately resourced.

The key focus for this theme is to identify whether or not there is clear leadership and a planned approach to intergenerational practice. This does not mean that there has to be a strategy in place but there needs to be commitment and a robust business case for implementation.

2. Contribution across partners: engagement and participation in intergenerational practice

Positive differences are achieved when a wide range of backgrounds, life experiences and age groups are actively engaged and work together across generations. There are benefits for all taking part and they work together to overcome barriers with the support of partnership agencies.

The key focus for this theme is to examine the existence of widely-based participation that draws upon the active engagement, experience and expertise of all relevant sectors and generations.

3. Effectiveness: achieving positive outcomes

Positive outcomes such as greater intergenerational collaboration and enhanced individual self esteem have been clearly identified by the council and its partners. These also reflect the priorities of local people and communities.

The key focus for this theme is examining the extent to which intergenerational practice contributes to the outcomes of local priorities and is included in service planning. Intergenerational practice is monitored and evaluated to ensure positive outcomes.

4. Making a difference: impact and added value of local intergenerational practice

The initiatives have made a lasting and positive difference. There have been clear benefits across generations, including older people, agencies and communities and a clear legacy has been agreed.

The key focus for this theme is to establish the extent to which intergenerational practice has added value with intergenerational principles integrated into a way of working.

Organising and running a self assessment workshop

Self assessment, using a clear framework, is a tried and tested way of helping councils and their partners assess their achievements and support areas that might need improvement. One of the most effective approaches to adopt is to organise a workshop session using the framework outlined here.

The self assessment workshop is designed for a variety of circumstances; it can be used by councils who are experienced in intergenerational work as well as those who are at the early stage of the process.

The workshop provides a half day facilitated forum for elected members, relevant officers, a wide range of council departments, partners from both the public and voluntary sectors and community representatives from across all generations to come together on an equal basis to be able to jointly discuss and develop their intergenerational practice.

Every council and partnership is different, and using self assessment in a constructive and collaborative manner can identify what will most help the council and partners to continue to improve their approach to intergenerational working.

It can be applied within or across the departments of one council, or on an area basis involving partners from the same locality.

Using self assessment provides:

- a process for all partners to work together and develop a jointly owned approach to intergenerational practice
- a way of assessing the current state of the approach of a council and partners to working productively across generations
- an action plan to identify key areas of improvement.

Preparing for the self assessment workshop

The following four stage approach to the workshop is recommended.

Stage 1: Planning the assessment, agreeing the outcomes

Before planning to hold an intergenerational practice self assessment event, it is suggested that the following questions are considered:

Outcomes

Are you clear on what you want your council and partners to achieve from holding a self assessment?

For example, is the event being held to:

- improve engagement with your local community and understand more clearly their needs and aspirations with regard to intergenerational working? Or to inform a draft intergenerational strategy or test an existing one to ensure that they remain current and best able to meet future challenges?
- ensure your senior officers and elected members have an informed understanding of intergenerational practice to enable them to meet the needs and challenges when planning, commissioning and delivering services?
- to raise awareness amongst elected members and senior officers of the opportunities good intergenerational practice brings to your communities and how this should be reflected in the design and delivery of services across all council departments and partners?
- to help highlight and learn from good intergenerational practice that may be taking place in your district already?

Senior ownership of event within a local authority

In order to achieve your identified outcomes, it will be important for the event to have the appropriate leadership.

Are the senior officers and elected members prepared to have round table honest conversations and to accept both positive and negative contributions? Experience has shown that the event will produce some challenging feedback and this should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Involvement of different age groups

How are you going to ensure different age groups from across your community are represented at the event? Consider having community representatives alongside the council and partner organisations.

Securing the right audience

Who do you really want to be there to lead the day? Ideally there should be council senior representation at the event eg Chief Executive, Director of Adult Social Services, Director of Children's and Young Peoples Services, leisure services elected member and other council departments outside of social care. Also, and importantly, senior level representation is required from across external partners from other statutory agencies and the voluntary sector.

Stage 2: organising a self assessment

Listed below are some of the practical areas to consider around the organisation of an intergenerational self assessment event.

General organisational responsibility

It is helpful to have an overall named lead and admin support to take on the practical organisation of the event. It is also a good idea to establish a small planning group to meet regularly before the event.

Preparing the agenda

The planning group will need to prepare the agenda for the event as soon as possible, ensuring that they have considered how long they want the event to last.

Delegates

Ideally you need to invite all senior internal and external people that you would like to attend the event at least six weeks before the date. You also need to make sure that participants have the date as soon as it is decided to ensure a fair and balanced representation between themselves and professionals/elected members on the day.

Size of audience

It is really important to think about the numbers likely to attend as this can have a bearing both on the venue, and the number of facilitators and scribes needed to capture the learning. Will you offer to pay travel costs to community representatives who are not formally representing organisations?

Venue

- Make sure that the venue is accessible to all participants and is able to seat in comfort the numbers that you want to attend.
- Does it have car parking and is it on a good public transport route?
- The room will need to be able to accommodate cabaret style tables and, if necessary, be prepared to book additional rooms to hold the round table discussions to ensure that the noise level is not too high.
- Make sure that you have a suitable sound system available ie microphone, hearing loops etc. Also consider dietary needs.
- Ensure that you have space for a registration area and consider whether you want a market place/display stands, ideas board etc. Who will co-ordinate this?
- Are you providing delegate packs? This could be an opportunity to promote the council, partners and local organisations as well as examples of intergenerational practice which have taken place locally. You may need a laptop and projector to show the self assessment tool. You will also need table materials (markers, table numbers, copies of the self assessment questions and action plan in A3 size) and name badges.

Staff support on event day

- Each table will need a facilitator and scribe.
- The scribes need to be briefed in advance on the purpose of the day, what theme they will be covering, who the facilitator is, what their role is with regard to assisting the facilitator and help needed to draw together the action points as part of the action planning session.
- Depending on the numbers attending, you will need to ensure that there is enough general support on the day including people on the registration desk, general runners and problem solvers.

Stage 3: The self assessment workshop

The most effective way that the self assessment can be used is in a workshop involving all the participants, working in four groups each discussing one theme.

Each of the four groups will have a facilitator to lead the discussion and a scribe to record discussion. You may use the table in this guide to record discussions and actions or notes or flipcharts. Please use as many sheets to record as necessary.

The first half of the workshop uses the themes as a means of discussing the key issues, strengths and needs and to identify priority areas for action.

During the first session, the facilitator's role, alongside a scribe, will be to lead the discussions using the suggested questions, making sure, as far as possible, that all the questions are covered for their theme, and that everyone in the group has a chance to have their say. The facilitator will ensure that the scribe captures the key comments.

The second half of the workshop is based around each group formulating an action plan which will be based on the key issues identified in their first session's discussions. This session is an opportunity to also recognise any good practice and strengths that can be shared between agencies. The action plans can then be taken forward by the local authority and its partners to help with the establishment of their future development priorities.

We recommended the self assessment workshop takes place over half a day with two sessions of approximately one and a half hours each.

We include a suggested agenda for a workshop at the end of this document, but these resources are designed so that councils can use them as a basis to design their own approach if required.

Stage 4: Recording and reporting

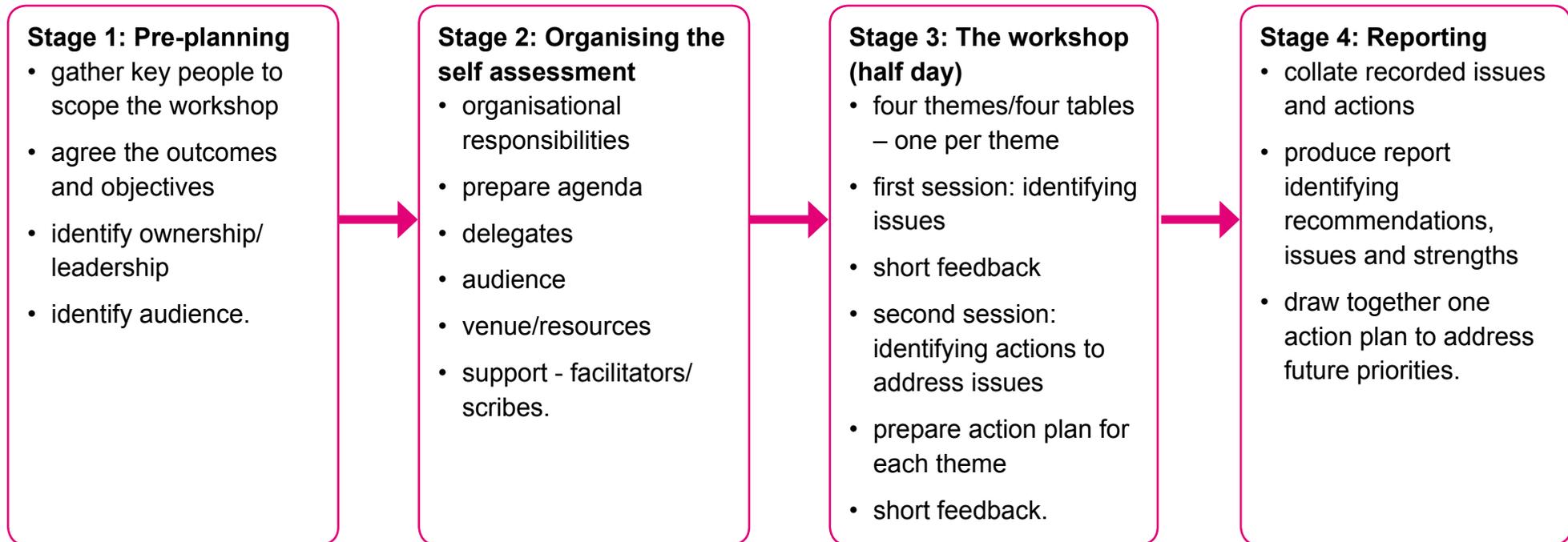
An important part of the activity will be recording the discussions and suggested actions and reporting back. The format of the report is to be decided by each individual council. The four group action plans need to be drawn together to inform one plan and a report.

A flow chart on the next page outlines the four stages.



Flow chart of the self assessment

This is a suggested plan for running the event. Councils may choose to vary this according to their local needs and the number of people involved in the self assessment.



1. The big picture – strategic approach to intergenerational practice

Is there an agreed understanding of what we need to do, and a strategic approach to intergenerational practice? Has this been developed with people from a range of ages? Is it based on a good understanding of local information? Are initiatives sustainable and adequately resourced?

Prompts for discussion

Who and what drives your intergenerational work and to what extent is a strategic approach taken?

Is there a shared understanding of intergenerational practice and are the benefits and challenges of cross-departmental working understood and addressed?

Is there clear evidence of commitment to intergenerational practice within and between partners?

Have the initiatives been maintained and are they sustainable and adequately resourced?

Comments

2. Contribution across partners: engagement and participation in intergenerational practice

Are participants drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, life experiences and age groups? Have there been benefits for all taking part and have they worked together to overcome barriers with the support of partnership agencies?

Prompts for discussion

Who have been the key players locally? Would it have worked without them and is there clear accountability?

Have participants been involved in intergenerational initiative design, eg co-production?

What training and support is there for those participating at all levels?

Have there been any barriers to participation? Can you identify any particular factors that you see as preventing or delaying progress locally?

What mechanisms are in place to resolve conflict?

Comments

3. Outcomes – positive outcomes of intergenerational collaboration have been agreed and are measured

Have outcomes been clearly identified and validated by systematic monitoring and evaluation? Are they owned by stakeholders and do they contribute to local priorities?

Prompts for discussion

Have outcomes been clearly identified and agreed and are there multiple outcomes for different groups?

What have been the highlights and achievements of the intergenerational practice initiatives so far and to what extent have they been publicised?

How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your intergenerational work?

Have all outcomes been tangible and measurable, or have some been ‘softer’ but still worthwhile? How can these be captured?

Have outcomes linked into local targets of the council or key local partnerships?

Comments

4. Making a difference: intergenerational practice has made a lasting and positive difference

Have the initiatives made a lasting and positive difference? Are there clear benefits across generations including older people, agencies and communities and has a clear legacy been agreed?

Prompts for discussion

Overall, what difference has it made within and across generations, agencies and communities?

Have impacts turned out as you expected? Have there been any surprises?

Have the initiatives been successful in demonstrating generations as a resource contributing to the mutual benefit of themselves and others?

If you were starting the initiatives now what would you do differently?

Has the intergenerational practice business case been made and accepted?

Does it identify potential savings and is it reviewed regularly?

Comments

Action plan

Please use this table to identify actions to address the issues identified in the first sessions. Also record and recognise any good practice and strengths that can be shared between agencies. Please use as many sheets to record actions as necessary.

What do we need to do?	How will we do it ?	Which partners need to be involved?

Action plan (continued)

What do we need to do?	How will we do it ?	Which partners need to be involved?

Intergenerational practice self assessment Draft programme agenda

A suggested plan. Councils may choose to vary this according to their local needs and the number of people involved in the self assessment.

Time/Date	Topic	Who is involved	Location
09.00	Welcome, introductions, scene setting	Self assessment lead. Potentially intergenerational practice champion – elected member/senior officer	
9.15	First workshop – four tables		
	Theme 1: Big picture	Table 1	
	Theme 2: Engagement	Table 2	
	Theme 3: Outcomes	Table 3	
	Theme 4: Making a difference	Table 4	
10.45	Break		
11.00	Brief feedback of key points	Facilitators	
11.15	Second workshop		
	Four tables identify actions to address issues	Tables 1-4	
12.15	Key findings reported back by facilitators	Facilitators	
12.30	Next steps and close	Workshop lead	



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