

intergenerational working

june 2011

a model of practice



Company of Voices: Model of Practice

Contents

1.0 Introduction

This Model of Practice is a guide that sets out practical aspects for carrying out Intergenerational work in Somerset. It is designed to complement Company of Voices, our Value Statement that sets out the key features of Intergenerational work. This is attached as an Appendix to this model (in this draft referenced as Appendix X). This guide includes information on:

- The values and understanding of Intergenerational Practice, including the range of things it can include, to help you consider the best approach for you
- Information on the Three Ps of Intergenerational Practice (positive, planned and purposeful)
- Information on measurement of impact
- Outline of an induction process to Intergenerational Practice
- Places to go for more information

1.1 Context

Intergenerational Practice (IP) has taken an unprecedented profile over the last two years. This has recently been reflected in the Government's Generations Together Programme that has emphasised the central role of Local Authorities in mainstreaming this agenda to the benefit of all people, especially younger and older people. In addition the Government has continued work in exploring how intergenerational approaches and projects can contribute to achieving Local Area Agreement [LAA] targets and the Comprehensive Area Assessment [CAA].

These areas are prioritised in the Government's Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for 2008-2011, covering four main areas of social policy:

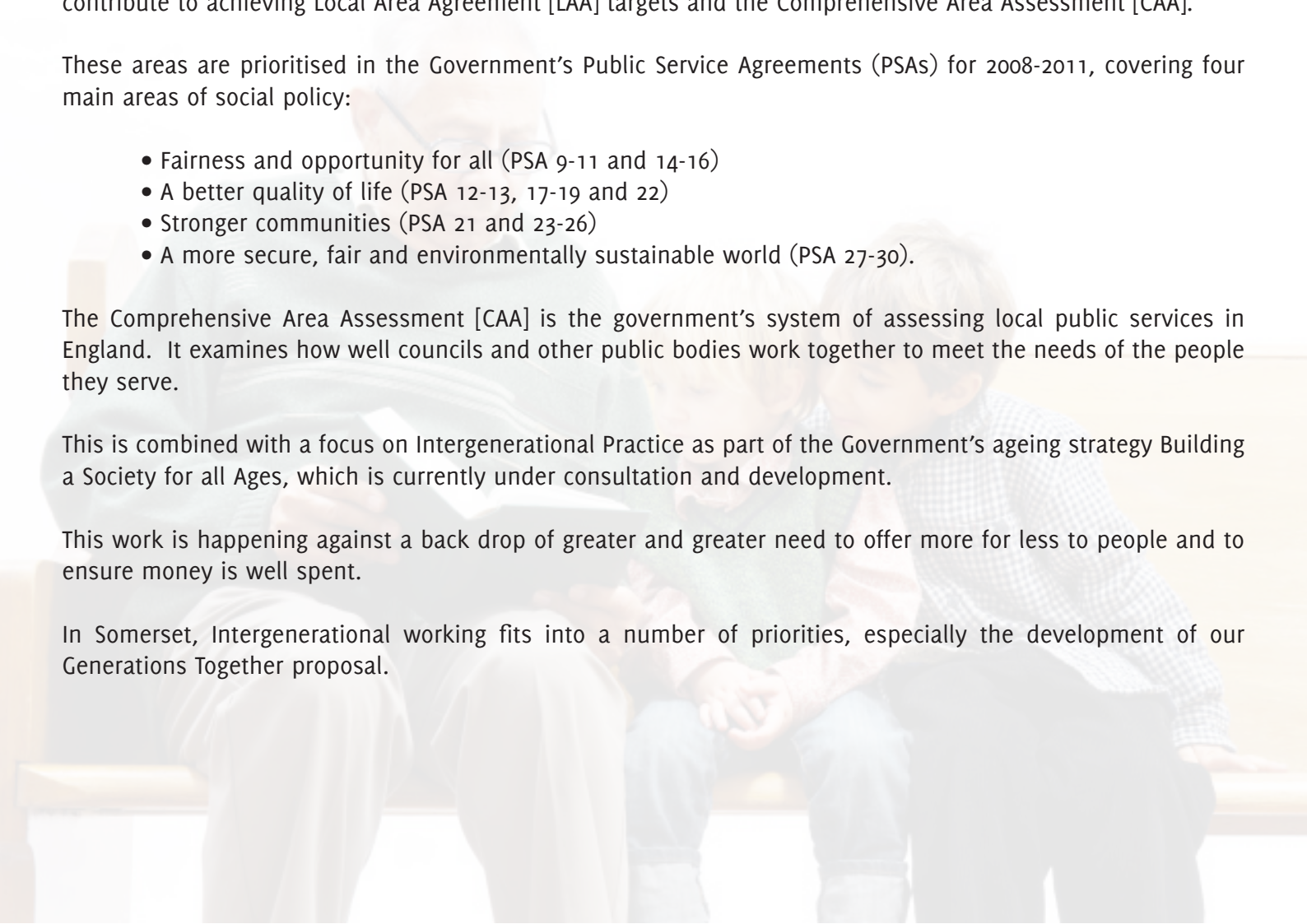
- Fairness and opportunity for all (PSA 9-11 and 14-16)
- A better quality of life (PSA 12-13, 17-19 and 22)
- Stronger communities (PSA 21 and 23-26)
- A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world (PSA 27-30).

The Comprehensive Area Assessment [CAA] is the government's system of assessing local public services in England. It examines how well councils and other public bodies work together to meet the needs of the people they serve.

This is combined with a focus on Intergenerational Practice as part of the Government's ageing strategy Building a Society for all Ages, which is currently under consultation and development.

This work is happening against a back drop of greater and greater need to offer more for less to people and to ensure money is well spent.

In Somerset, Intergenerational working fits into a number of priorities, especially the development of our Generations Together proposal.



1.2 Induction process

For volunteers and staff who have never been Intergenerational working, an Intergenerational Practice induction process is a useful place to start. This process could incorporate a number of process. These include:

- An introduction to what IP can be. This would draw upon models across the UK, Europe and North America. This would build on the examples within this Guide and the Values Statement
- A step by step discussion through the Value Statement and why IP is important (including joint working, value for money and efficiency and principles of creating better communities)
- An outline of how this fits into wider principles around Social Capital and Community Engagement. IP work is both a tool for Community Engagement and Development but also a mindset of principles
- A more detailed analysis of case studies. For example using the BJF Guide of how Intergenerational working achieves National Indicators
- An analysis of evaluation. This could include visits to Generations Together pilots who have to develop evaluation based around an online model developed by York Consulting

An induction process into IP could also be built into a wider skills training programme that could include:

- Presentation skills
- Facilitation skills
- Communication skills

2.0 Values and understanding of Intergenerational Practice

The key values for Intergenerational working in Somerset are set out in our Value Statement: Company of Voices (Appendix X):

- We believe that all people's contributions are of equal value
- We believe that younger and older people have much to offer each other and their wider communities
- We believe that Intergenerational work is based on mutual respect and exchange of skills and ideas

In Somerset, we believe that an activity is actually Intergenerational when:

- People of different ages come together with a shared purpose
- Older and younger people benefit from participating
- Participants gain an increased understanding and respect for each generation
- There is a positive benefit to people and generational connection after the activity has finished

These values are the basis for Intergenerational working in Somerset. In addition, there are a number of things about IP that people carrying out this work may wish to consider. This covers the mindset to bring and how this fits into wider strategic aims. This includes:

- IP is not a single approach, but a style of working. It fits under a banner of community cohesion, engagement and development (groups of people working together) in projects, or as part of a programme or initiative. It can be part of initiatives empowering older people or young people in communities and cities, addressing poverty, social exclusion and unemployment and approaches to support the extended family, parenting and cultural understanding.
- Younger (under 25) and older (50+) people are the two groups most affected by ageist attitudes and when we talk about abuse, poverty, lack of political voice and marginalisation these two groups are the most affected. They are doubly disadvantaged if they are also members of other socially excluded groups.

- IP can also be seen as an approach to providing services and the development of a city and communities. It is about place and community shaping

- Intergenerational initiatives have direct impacts on those involved, as well as on their communities. Participants may feel increased self-esteem from being able to give to and receive from others. They can experience improvements in health and a greater sense of being valued members of their communities. Older people can provide younger people with positive role models both of engaged citizenship and of active ageing. Young people represent a link to the future for older people.

- Intergenerational approaches are an effective way to address a number of issues - many of them key government priorities - such as building active communities, promoting citizenship, regenerating neighbourhoods and addressing inequality.

Below is a list of dos and don'ts around IP working:

Do:

- Have a clear understanding of why you want to do Intergenerational working. Clear on the aims on what you want to achieve and then identifying that IP will be the best approach.
- Consider it a CE tool and as any tool it needs a clear purpose and plan to do it (set out in this guide).
- Think about it in a wider context of making Somerset a better place to live for all ages.
- Consider it within both social policy and urban design.
- As projects, but also in terms of how services think of younger and older people in a generational context
- Explore the principles of Social Capital and Community Engagement (connections in section X)
- Have clarity on the scope of the work.

Don't:

- Maintain stereotypes such as all older people have common sense and young people don't
- Maintain a model of subservience being perpetuated
- Have a focus on the negative. IP can address problems but it shouldn't always be that why
- Think it was always better in the past - avoid value assumptions

Remember:

- The purpose of IP can be hugely varied. This could be sharing skills, responding to needs, knowledge, information, challenging perceptions, discussion, debate, supporting each other, providing services, having fun/celebrating, implementing a project.
- Certain outcomes come from IP work, based on the purpose of the activity. These could be intended stated outcomes (eg, finding out how young people and older people experience services in a city), but other possibly un-stated outcomes (young and older people interact more meaningfully, possibly building Social Capital). However IP work cannot be seen as a way of achieving anything and everything.
- IP is not a single approach, but a style of working. It fits under a banner of community cohesion, engagement and development (groups of people working together) in projects, or as part of a programme or initiative. It can be part of initiatives empowering older people or young people in communities and cities, addressing poverty, social exclusion and unemployment and approaches to support the extended family, parenting and cultural understanding.
- IP can be used to address a problem, however it is primarily focussed on building on strengths and positives, especially for children and young people.

- IP can be applied to the built environment. This could be part of planned, age friendly urban design and specifically built Intergenerational places or spaces. These places or spaces are designed to support interactions between generations on a work basis, living basis or both.
- IP is not just about older people telling young people things. It can be multi-generational in terms of life cycles but also inter as in interactions between generations.
- Think about mutual respect and mutual benefits. Participants both young and older may hold stereotypes. How would you challenge stereotypes held by older people?

2.1 Implications

Intergenerational practice brings together younger and older people. These groups of people may not have regular contact with each other. There could also be an element of fear or distrust present, especially from older to young. This may not be the case, but to help prepare for this, always plan your first meetings well. Things to consider include:

- Plan your session. Who is coming, where will it be and how well do you know the space. Where possible use venues that are neutral to both groups or discuss with participants prior to activities
- Be clear on the purpose of this first meeting in your own mind and communicate this to participants. If possible, send out information before or speak to participants. It may be worth meeting with each group separately before bringing them together
- Go through a process that clear sets out why your are doing what you are doing, the scope for this to change, how things will be carried out, timescales and methods to use
- Your back up plans. What will you do if something doesn't go to plan?

It is always helpful to visit the space where you will first be meeting and/or carrying out your project or programme. Know the safety issues, where toilets are, any planned fire drills, refreshments, space and accessibility.

As you will be working with younger and older, always consider:

- The negative attitudes young and older people may have experienced before and factor in to your approach
- The negative perceptions that participants may have of each other and how you would deal with this if these are there
- Don't make ageist assumptions about younger and older people and the amount of experience and expertise they may or may not have
- Don't assume that because of age, older people don't want to do fun or interesting activities that may have been considered only the domain of one or other of the generations, such as Wii Fit or Skittles
- The age of your participants. If they are under 16 you will need parental permission to work with them and people involved in the project will probably need Criminal RB checks. Older people may (but of course may not) need a venue that has wheel chair access or is planned around limited mobility

3.0 The three Ps

Positive

The mindset for staff and volunteers. Why would anyone get involved in something that isn't interesting, fun and helps people feel good? IP working is all about building on the positives of younger and older people. It can be an approach to address issues, or problems, but try to come at it from a positive approach. What can we do to make change happen and how will we do it?

The same approach is important for volunteers and people working with projects. There can be a lot of assumptions made about younger and older people. It may be worth allocating time to discussing perceptions and assumptions of each group and raising awareness of this.

Planned

Always plan whatever you are doing well. Keep an open mind and always learn from your experiences. Don't forget that what might work in one area may not in another. Don't forget to look at existing models and structures before you start and consider who you could work with. Don't leave it to the last minute and don't be taken. A checklist includes:

- Why are you doing this initiative and what do you think the outcomes will be
- How are you going to evaluate what works and what doesn't?
- If you are challenging perceptions of older and younger of each other, is it just the participants who will trust each other or are you trying to challenge perceptions of other groups of older and young people not participating?
- Always get in contact with people who will be involved early. Be clear about what you are trying to do and why and always be ready to change your approach if need be.
- What is it about what your are doing that IP will address? Always remember our values
- Consider how you will communicate what you are trying to do and how
- What is the timescale of your initiative? If it's a project, will it be one off or a first step to services changing how they operate with younger and older people?
- What resources do you need including time and money
- How will you communicate things as the project progresses and what you will do if people have an issue or problem
- Be honest. Always communicate clearly and concisely and think about the words you are using. They often hold a lot of power.

Purposeful

Remember:

- Who are you working with
- What are you doing?
- Why are you doing it?

- When are you doing it
- Where will you be doing it?
- How will you do it?

And in the end:

- What difference will this have made?
- How will you take this further?
- How could you persuade your most ardent sceptic that your work is value for money and is something that should be done as a matter of course

Never:

- Assume that people know what you know
- Assume that you wont have to reiterate what you have said.

3.1 Communication

Communication can be the biggest barrier to a successful Intergenerational project (or almost anything). Clear and concise writing and speak is very important and can either put someone off participating, or inspiring them to do so. For good guidance on writing, visit the Plain English Campaign website on www.plainenglish.co.uk

In general, always:

- Keep your sentences to an average of about 21 words. If they are over 27 words you will lost 70% of the populations ability to understand what you are saying easily
- Proof read what you write and be ready to edit.
- Avoid old fashioned words and phrases
- Write in active sentences rather than passive sentences
- Avoid jargon (although Intergenerational Practice could be called jargon if it is not properly explained)

Have someone else read what you write. Talk to people about how you plan to communicate (such as latter, email, posters, flyers, newsletters) and then plan your approach carefully.

4.0 Impact measurement

Following the three Ps, set out outcomes that you want to achieve, identify the best tools and what you want to change from your work. and what you want to achieve and from this, identify the best tools to achieve this. In terms of measurement of Impact, a hopeful set of steps includes:

1. Identify what you would like to do and how you will do it
2. As you go along your process set out what you actually do and how you do it in the form of case studies, or diaries
3. At the end, identify what has happened as a result of your work. What has changed? What impact has there been? What have you learnt? If you cannot answer this, then why did you do what you did?

A key thing to remember is that there is no point in trying to measure impact if you have no way of gathering evidence of what worked and what didn't as part of your work. Evidence gathering cannot be done at the last minute and should be built into your project process.

- How are you going to gather evidence that what you wanted to achieve has happened
- If it hasn't what would you do differently and what have you learnt from your approach?

5.0 Frameworks/signposting/learning

CRB checks and volunteering

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/third_sector/assets/CRB%20final.pdf

Guidance provided on the ISA website particularly around frequency of contact/regulated activity:

www.isa.gov.org.uk/default.aspx?page=402

Section 2: 2.5 example specifies frequency of activities that require checks/registration and that is; frequently (once a month or more) or intensively (on three days or more in a single 30 day period).

Section 2.8 examples demonstrates that the (some of) type of groups you will be collaborating with hold open-access sessions so there may be a problem if you offered activities to those groups beforehand then delivered over a period of time: say once a month over three months.

www.volunteering.org.uk/resources/goodpracticebank/Core+Themes/ProtectionandSafeguarding/Example+child+protection+policy.htm

For good information check out the CRB website: <http://www.crb.gov.uk/> There's also a Risk Assessment Toolkit that may prove useful on the CIP website, written by a worker from London Borough of Camden council:

www.centreforip.org.uk/default.aspx?page=23618

