

# Looking back **Looking forward**

Developing intergenerational connections in Manchester



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

## **Foreword** by Councillor Val Stevens Deputy Leader, Manchester City Council

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Although we may not use the term, all of us enter into intergenerational relationships. As parents, grandparents, children, politicians even, our lives revolve around mutual support and care. The sharing of knowledge and expertise between the generations is the hallmark of healthy, sustainable communities, creating the neighbourhoods of choice and mutual respect that lie at the heart of Manchester's Community Strategy.

Modern life can represent a strain on good relationships between generations. As families and as individuals we live more isolated lives. And sometimes young, old, and those in between, are set against each other competing for resources, public space and attention.

This report sets out the case for promoting a multi-generational approach to developing and providing services, and designing future neighbourhoods. There is a significant body of evidence, locally, nationally and internationally, that intergenerational approaches can break down the stereotypes young and old can have of each other. There are impressive examples of improved educational attainment, reduced crime rates and a better sense of community spirit and wellbeing.

I hope you enjoy reading this impressive report and, most importantly, take part in our plans for the future, which are set out on page nine.

July 2007



# Introduction

by Alan Hatton-Yeo

Director, Beth Johnson Foundation

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities that promote greater understanding and respect between generations, and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

These generations have become progressively disconnected from each other at an individual, family and community level due to a number of circumstances that have meant the natural relationship between them has been affected. These disconnections include smaller families, increased geographical distance between family members, divorce and single parent households, and the different expectations of working women.

Alongside these changing family patterns has been the development of age-segregated activities and living arrangements that have further distanced the old and young from each other. This has been further exacerbated by the way policies and services are normally developed around target groups or issues that are by their nature disjointed and discriminatory.

The aim of intergenerational work is to find ways to develop and strengthen these relationships and consequently become an agent of social change with benefits to the whole of society. The middle generation has an important part to play in enabling and supporting this intergenerational exchange to take place.

Intergenerational practice has never had a higher profile in the UK and Europe. Both the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies have funded strategies for intergenerational work, and the joint Cabinet Office and Treasury Review at the end of last year highlighted the importance of cross-generational work to develop social

cohesion. In Europe the EAGLE (European Approaches to Intergenerational Lifelong Learning) project is currently undertaking a systematic study of intergenerational learning from a European perspective, which will include some pilot initiatives in Manchester.

This report was commissioned by the Valuing Older People team with the specific aim of producing a strategic plan for the development of intergenerational practice and programmes reflecting the demographic change the city will experience over the next five years. From the beginning it was agreed that it was essential the report was grounded on what was currently happening in Manchester and reflected the frameworks that were already in place.

To reflect this, the information for the report was initially gathered through a systematic review of city policy and strategy documents and a call for any existing documented examples of intergenerational work. Thirty-one people across the city were then interviewed. The full list of interviewees is appended. People were selected for interview because they had a key strategic lead, a relevant interest or involvement, or because they were recommended by an interviewee as someone it was important to talk to. It was not possible to interview all the people identified due to time constraints, but the backgrounds of interviewees reflects the diversity of intergenerational practice itself.

This report would not have been possible without the generous way interviewees gave time, collated material and engaged in discussion. The researcher would wish to record here his thanks for the warmth and openness of the people who worked with him.

## Findings

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This report seeks to summarise the key findings from the background research to form a basis for further developing intergenerational practice in Manchester.

All the people interviewed identified intergenerational work as being of relevance to their specific areas of responsibility and more broadly. However, people were clear that we shouldn't develop another strategy. What was needed was an approach that developed what was already in place, built on existing policies, which included:

- a Examples of cross-cutting projects that drew several departments to work together.
- b Advice and support on how to develop programmes and overcome barriers accompanied by readily accessible resources to help people develop their ideas.
- c A mechanism to promote the wider understanding of intergenerational work to relevant front-line staff, such as ward co-ordinators, to help them see how this could benefit their work.

One of the strongest messages that came through from the interviews was that there

is a real need to establish opportunities to connect people across the generations to build understanding and respect. A large proportion of interviewees described the age segmentation that is an increasing part of our society, and that often the young and old have very little contact with each other.

The Central Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework<sup>1</sup> (CMSRF) promotes a vision of 'Connected City: Connected Citizens' that celebrates diversity and promotes cohesion. The concept of connected citizens in a society that is promoting cohesion provides a framework for developing intergenerational relationships in Manchester. This commitment is affirmed across the other regeneration zones, which all have strategies that promote the importance of engagement across the whole community.

A number of interviewees talked about the often negative perceptions of young people, and of the behaviour of a small group of very difficult young people colouring the way all young people were perceived. Mention was also made of too often describing both the young

### **Pro-social Behaviour Strategy Intergenerational Project**

The aim of the second year of the project was to pilot ways of improving communication between generations. A songwriter and community musician were used to bring people together to share perspectives and perceptions to improve understanding and foster respect between the generations. A series of events was held in different settings across Manchester leading to the production of CDs that became both valued records of the joint generational work and important resources. Evaluation showed that the projects

had a significant impact on participants, promoting better intergenerational understanding and respect, making young and old people aware of their behaviour and how this might affect others, and building stronger community connections with ideas for future projects.

For further details contact:  
Antisocial Behaviour Policy team  
on 0161 234 4439

and old in terms of the problems they posed, of their needs and issues, rather than their qualities as citizens. This growth of negative perception, distance and mistrust has been fuelled by the transitory nature of some neighbourhoods in recent years and a general societal increase in lack of trust and separation from the people living around them. It is human nature to be concerned about the unknown and if this concern is fed by a media that at times places sensation above fact, then people will become more fearful of each other.

The Manchester Way 2006–2015<sup>2</sup> lays out a vision of a sustainable community development strategy where people are healthy, successful and satisfied. It acknowledges the need for full community engagement to create sustainable change. The Community Engagement Toolkit<sup>3</sup>, training of ward co-ordinators and the developing 'Sense of Place'<sup>4</sup> have helped to translate this vision for community engagement into substance.

## Aquarius Community Centre

The Centre has established a Good Neighbours scheme to counter the social isolation of some older people. Young volunteers 16+ do small domestic tasks, run errands and generally watch over their older neighbours. This has increased the confidence of the young and old alike and helped to break down barriers between the generations. It has fostered a positive attitude throughout the community and made it much less intimidating for older people when they come across groups of young people in the street.

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Angela Simpson on 0161 226 8254

Regenerating the city is grounded in people's developing sense of community pride and belonging. Challenge Manchester 100 Days campaign<sup>5</sup> emphasises the importance of community and active citizenship to develop the type of place people want to work in, live and age in, and the challenge for this report is to draw out the steps necessary to build on this recognition of the importance of cohesive, intergenerationally connected communities.

The strongest single finding from this study is that people are committed to the importance of intergenerational work and are passionate about the work they are doing already. To further develop intergenerational work in Manchester, they want advice, support and some additional resources to help them build on what is already beginning to emerge. In particular, they want ways to share practical lessons across the city to learn from each other and share successful practice.

In the second part, this report will focus on some of the more specific outcomes and recommendations from the study. These have been chosen to help to develop a direction of how this work can be taken forward and to illustrate the diversity of settings that lend themselves to intergenerational approaches.

In looking at community cohesion, it is important to begin to explore and understand the different world views of the different generations. It is also necessary to acknowledge that tension between generations is not a new phenomenon, as each new generation strives to develop its own identity and place in society. It is the way these relationships are negotiated and established that is key. It is also important to recognise the role of the extended family where this still exists. In the Netherlands, a programme called 'A Neighbourhood Full of Stories' has been developed that uses storytelling techniques for groups to learn both across different ethnic groups and generations<sup>6</sup>.

This is reflected in how clearly culture as a tool to build cohesion and understanding came out in the interviews.

Traditionally, we have planned services for children and young people and older adults very separately without acknowledging their interdependencies and the fact that they are the people most present in communities accessing local services. Interviewees stressed that there was a need in commissioning processes, planning and the development of open spaces to take a more holistic view across the generations. This can range from recognising the role of grandparents and older kin in parenting to looking at shared site developments where a nursery may be built alongside an older persons' resource centre. Research from Japan, the USA and the Netherlands shows such developments to have great potential<sup>7</sup>. The Woodhouse Park Lifestyles Centre in Wythenshawe is beginning to explore how intergenerational work could be themed

## **Gorton for better or verse**

In February 2003, young people hosted a Gorton Youth Conference and invited older residents to participate. Valuing Older People agreed that such intergenerational approaches had proved their healing worth in communities, and that it made sense to involve young and old together in a poetry project. The published anthology reflects the discussion that took place across the generations, the experiences that were shared and the understanding that grew from this.

For further details contact:  
Rev. David Gray, Community Co-ordinator,  
Gorton Monastery Trust on 0161 233 3211

across their service to develop joint initiatives between the young and old users of the Centre.

Another example of co-locating services is libraries. The library at Clayton has now moved into the local Sure Start Centre and all future community library developments will be based on such a partnership model.

The change in employment over the past decade has also changed the nature of the employment skills that people need. As Manchester becomes increasingly involved in knowledge-based and service-based industries, greater emphasis will be placed on the needs for young people to possess good interpersonal and communication skills. At the same time there is a need to create a more aspirational culture in some communities that breaks generational cycles of lack of success. Older people could play a key role as mentors and supporters to young people on vocational schemes recreating some of the features of the old apprenticeship model.

To support the development of community engagement, the city has already developed an engagement toolkit and a comprehensive training programme for ward co-ordinators and support officers. It was recommended that an additional training component be developed to increase their knowledge of intergenerational work and that this should also be made available for other front-line staff, including youth and community workers. The environment is a perfect tool to bring the generations together and support Manchester's aspiration to be the greenest city in the UK<sup>8</sup>.

A wide range of practical examples were found, many linked to the 100 Days campaign. Examples ranged from litter-picking to allotments, hanging basket and bird box making to schemes to promote biodiversity. Of particular interest was the eco-links developing between the resource centres and schools. There were a number of examples of gardening projects as

well, some linked to Sheltered Housing schemes. In every case the reported outcomes included a greater sense of local pride, people feeling connected and changing their minds about previously poorly known generational groups.

Community safety and fear of crime were raised by a number of interviewees. One question raised was whether, because it was easier to report concerns now, this gave an impression of things being worse than they actually were. The role of the media was also called into question. It was described how at the 2002 Community Conferences there were a lot of initial complaints by older people about young people, but that the more they talked to each other the more they realised how much they had in common. One factor was that the small group of young people that do pose a threat have as negative an impact on other young people, if not more, as they do on older people. Feeling safe is a concern of both groups.

Changes in the way we support people as they grow older mean that more people will age in their own neighbourhoods. Social networks and interdependent relationships with the people you live alongside will be likely to become more important, and intergenerational programmes have a potential role to play in reducing social isolation. One of the great challenges for our society is how to challenge ageism. The Youth Service is about to run some pilots of normative education for young people, aimed to challenge and dispel the myths about how you should behave as you grow up. Consideration should be given to joint work in the future to see if this approach could be developed to also look at the myths about ageing.

Extended Schools is a Government initiative to provide a wider range of services from, or about, education sites and to promote involvement with the community. In Manchester the scheme is being developed on a cluster basis and staff are stretched to meet delivery requirements.

In discussions with people involved in regeneration, the role of intergenerational approaches in developing sustainable communities was clearly stated. An example was given of young people on vocational courses cooking food for an older people's group. It was also commented that in regeneration areas the structures already existed to develop a holistic approach and that attention should be given to a specific piece of work exploring and developing the role of intergenerational programmes to support regeneration.

The potential for work linked to schools came out very strongly. Manchester Boys and Northwood Housing have been involved in a number of projects, including developing gardening and a year 11 reminiscence project. They see great possibilities to develop intergenerational links, including work around citizenship, volunteering, mentoring by older people, skills exchanges and joint projects. It was from these interviews that the idea was raised to encourage more large Manchester-based businesses to allow people to become involved in volunteering in schools as part of their preparation for retirement.

## Summary and recommendations

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Manchester is now well placed to take a leading role in working to become a city where the generations understand each other and are given the opportunity to get together in a climate of respect for themselves and each other.

A strong framework already exists to build on in Manchester, linking to its vision of sustainable communities and civic pride, and the will is there among officers to take this challenge forward and for Manchester not just to be a leading city for the third age, but for all ages.

### Recommendations

- 1 Development of a training programme and delivery of a series of workshops across Manchester to raise the awareness and understanding of front-line staff, volunteers and organisations.
- 2 Undertake an audit of existing intergenerational projects and produce an online database to be updated on a quarterly basis.
- 3 To provide support for six to eight demonstration projects to develop local examples of practice. These should include at least one example of projects addressing projects with schools, regeneration, co-located services, youth volunteering and older people volunteering.
- 4 To develop an intergenerational resource pack based on the learning from the demonstration projects.
- 5 To hold a city-wide event to promote good practice and establish a Manchester intergenerational learning event.
- 6 To develop a strategic partnership with the Centre for Intergenerational Practice to share learning, resources and

knowledge to promote the development of intergenerational practice in Manchester.

- 7 To meet with commissioners and strategic planners to explore mechanisms for cross-cutting planning.
- 8 To consider commissioning a study of the use and design of public spaces to make them both safer and more welcoming to both generations.
- 9 To work with large employers in the city to encourage them to give time for people approaching retirement to be involved as volunteers in intergenerational work.
- 10 To seek to locate intergenerational volunteering as part of a city-wide coherent strategy on volunteering.
- 11 To publish a progress report in October 2008 detailing the success in achieving the aspirations of this document for the city.

### References

- 1 Central Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework
- 2 The Manchester Way. Manchester Community Strategy 2006 – 2015
- 3 The Manchester Community Engagement Strategy and Toolkit
- 4 Sense of Place Framework 2007
- 5 Challenge Manchester – 100 Days 2007
- 6 Christine Mercken: A Neighbourhood Full of Stories (2007), NIZW, the Netherlands
- 7 Intergenerational Shared Sites: Making the Case. Occasional Paper, Generations United, Washington
- 8 [www.manchestergreencity.co.uk/site/](http://www.manchestergreencity.co.uk/site/)

## Action plan

Action	Timescale	Desired outcome
Develop a programme of workshops for front-line staff, volunteers and organisations	June 2007 – March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To raise awareness and understanding of intergenerational practice (IP)</li> <li>• To promote good practice through the application of the national Approved Provider Standards</li> <li>• To ensure effective evaluation of intergenerational projects</li> </ul>
Map existing inter-generational projects and produce an online directory	By March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a network of contacts for those considering intergenerational approaches to new projects</li> <li>• To encourage interdisciplinary debate and to identify future opportunities</li> <li>• To help share good practice</li> </ul>
To support and develop a diverse range of six to eight demonstration projects	June 2007 – March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop shared learning opportunities</li> <li>• To pilot and test evaluation methods</li> <li>• To inform the development of an online resource</li> <li>• To demonstrate the benefits of IP as an approach to project planning and its impact on promoting social cohesion</li> </ul>
To develop an online resource pack based on the learning from the demonstration projects	By March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide support, advice and information for new and existing projects</li> </ul>
To hold a city-wide learning event to promote good practice and inform shared learning	February 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To start to promote cross-cutting planning</li> </ul>

The development of this approach has been led and overseen by a steering group consisting of representatives from the Manchester Community Engagement Strategy, Children's Services Policy Team and the Valuing Older People team. This group will be expanded to include older people and other relevant partners to oversee the implementation of the next steps and the action plan.

## Interviewees

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People were selected for interview because they had a key strategic lead, a relevant interest or involvement, or because they were recommended by an interviewee as someone it was important to talk to.

Liz Postlethwaite  
Community and  
Education Director  
Library Theatre Company

Virginia Tandy  
Director  
Manchester City Galleries

Geoff Little  
Assistant Chief Executive,  
Performance and Improvement  
Manchester City Council

Patrick Hanfling  
Community Engagement  
Development Officer  
Manchester Partnership

David Gray  
Community Co-ordinator  
The Monastery of St Francis  
and Gorton Trust

John Hall  
Development Manager  
Adult Social Care

Paul Cullen  
Strategic Lead for Community  
Safety Strategy

Jacqui Naraynsingh  
Performance Manager  
Crime and Disorder Partnership

Paul McGarry  
Principal Programme Manager  
Valuing Older People

Sally Chandler  
Programme Manager  
Valuing Older People

Vicky Rosin  
Assistant Chief Executive  
Cultural Services  
Manchester City Council

Bev Taylor  
Environment Strategy and  
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Dave Thorley  
Social Regeneration Officer  
New East Manchester

Sue Brooks  
Youth Worker

Libby Graham  
Director of Education and  
Social Programmes  
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Fran Devine  
Co-ordinator: Access to Service  
Manchester Libraries

Naomi Jahoda  
Community Co-ordinator  
North Manchester Boys School

Helen O'Donovan  
Development Manager  
Northwards Housing

Caroline Marsh  
Director of Adult Social Care  
Manchester City Council

Zoe Higgins  
Cultural Strategy Team Leader  
Regeneration

Suzanne Kornecki  
Community Guardian  
Co-ordinator

Elaine Clarke  
Policy and Performance Officer  
Children's Services

Pat Leahy  
Older Manchester resident

Liz Anstee  
Head of Youth Service

Keith Howell  
Acting Manager  
Woodhouse Park  
Lifestyles Centre

Claire Davies  
Assistant Manager  
Woodhouse Park  
Lifestyles Centre

Mike Regan  
Head of Community Activity  
Manchester Leisure

Jim Canniffe  
Over-50s Sports  
Development Officer

Chris McLoughlin  
Head of Sure Start

Fiona Vincer  
Zest Hub Co-ordinator

Cath Collinson  
Head of Extended Schools

## Acknowledgements Demo project

Firstly, we would like to thank all those people who gave up their time to discuss intergenerational practice in their area, to contribute to the debate, and to give their often unique perspective on this agenda.

Finally, we would like to thank Alan Hatton-Yeo, Director of the Beth Johnson Foundation, for producing this report, and we look forward to our continuing relationship with the Centre for Intergenerational Practice at the Beth Johnson Foundation.

The Valuing Older People (VOP) programme has been striving to improve the quality of life for Manchester's older people since its launch in 2003. It works closely with older people from across the city through a network of engagement structures – the VOP Board, the city-wide VOP Forum and a range of local networks. It has developed its work programme and action plan in accordance with what older people consider to be the priorities for the city, and the actions needed to make the city a good place to grow older.

The Manchester Community Engagement Strategy (MCES) has been adopted by the Council and the Manchester Partnership. It sets out four aims for the Council and Manchester Partnership to achieve by the end of 2008, which will help develop inclusive community engagement in Manchester. For the strategy to work it has to have meaningful action and have the aims of many people working in Manchester.

To contribute to the expansion of this work and in order to promote and share good practice, support will be offered to a number of demonstration sites across the city. Bids from organisations were submitted and a diverse range of projects were selected. In addition to becoming pilot sites for a new national evaluation tool, outcomes and learning from each project will inform a city-wide learning event and an online resource for anybody considering this approach to project planning.

Demonstration projects will be hosted by the following organisations:

- Economic Strategy team, North Manchester Regeneration
- Zest, North Manchester Healthy Living Network
- Adult Social Care Department Community Resource Centres
- Manchester City Council Community Safety Co-ordination team
- Children's Services and Adult Social Care Workforce Development team
- Powerhouse Library, Moss Side
- Woodhouse Park Lifestyles Centre, Wythenshawe

For more information about the development of this programme, please contact the VOP team on 0161 234 3391 or [vop@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:vop@manchester.gov.uk)

