STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES

DRAFT INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE STRATEGY FOR WALES

CONSULTATION

June 2008
Acknowledgements and Introduction

We would wish to give our thanks to the young and older people who participated in preparing this document to go out to formal consultation. There was a strong consensus from both groups of the need to develop mechanisms to promote positive contact between the young and old and they supported the Assembly Government’s aim to develop a formal strategy to enable this to be taken forward.

The young people’s groups focused on discussions of general principles and ideas while the two older people’s focus groups also explored an earlier draft of this document. For both groups there was a striking resonance in a number of the issues raised.

The role of the media in focusing on negative stories that were seen as sensationalist was seen as a major contributor to suspicion between the generations. It was seen as important to challenge this in every way possible both by developing and publicising positive stories of engagement between the generations and also by creating as many opportunities as possible for people to meet and learn about each other.

The phrase ‘respect is a two way street’ or variation of this came up a number of times and this was seen as fundamental to developing stronger relationships across the generations. Both the young and older participants were also adamant that the strategy to develop better intergenerational connections should be aimed to
the benefit of all and not be just about targeting certain groups who were seen to be of concern. Whilst there was a recognition of the need for some targeting (some of the young people were keen to try and develop volunteering with isolated older people and people in residential homes and the older people were interested in volunteering to help young people improve their school performance and confidence) all of the participants were keen that the final intergenerational strategy was for all in Wales. In developing this they also recommended that proper consideration needed to be given to issues of equitable access, particularly the role of public transport.

Generally they supported taking the initial draft out to formal consultation with the inclusion of some specific changes that have been included in this final draft. In undertaking the formal consultation they recommended that emphasis should be on developing mechanisms to enable some intergenerational consultative groups to be established and that consideration should be given to these as pilots to establish intergenerational forums as part of the wider processes for engagement and participation across Wales. There was also a request to ensure that the formal consultation also took proper account of both cultural diversity and the differences between rural and urban areas.

The pro forma that accompanies this document has been developed to reflect this input.
Article 1
We, the representatives of Governments meeting at this Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, Spain, have decided to adopt an International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 in response to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the twenty-first century and promote the development of a society for all ages.

Article 14
We recognise the need to strengthen solidarity between generations, and intergenerational partnerships, keeping in mind the particular needs of both older and younger ones, and encouraging mutually responsive relationships between generations.

From the political declaration of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Building a Society for All Ages, Madrid April 8th to 12th, 2002
Building a Society for All Ages

In January 2003 the Assembly Government published ‘The Strategy for Older People in Wales’. The strategy was based on a wide ranging consultation and one of the findings was the need to promote the development and improved awareness of the benefits of links across all generations. As a consequence, one of our action points in the strategy was to establish a development programme to promote intergenerational links. In identifying the importance of a systematic approach to promoting intergenerational relationships and cooperation we became the first country in the world to build the Madrid declaration into a national policy.

Following the publication of the ‘Strategy for Older People in Wales’ we commissioned the Beth Johnson Foundation in July 2003 to work with partners across Wales to support the development and understanding of intergenerational practice. Since that time a great deal has been achieved in Wales including:

- The establishment of The Welsh Centre for Intergenerational Practice at the University of Glamorgan.
- The Launch of the first accredited intergenerational course in Europe at the University of Lampeter.
- The delivery of a national training and conference programme.
- The development of a network of over 900 individuals and organisations interested in intergenerational practice.
Alongside these developments there has been increasing interest internationally in intergenerational work and the developments here in Wales, which have been presented in a wide range of international conferences and seminars. In 2007 the Scottish Parliament announced its plans to establish a Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice in its strategy ‘All Our Futures – Planning for a Scotland with an ageing population’. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion in ‘Our Shared Future’ affirmed the importance of intergenerational approaches to building community cohesion. The Treasury report ‘Aiming high for young people; a ten year strategy for positive activities' reported:

‘There is also a clear need to dispel negative perceptions of young people by building better relations between the generations, as well as between different ethnic and faith groups, fostering better community cohesion, and generating a stronger sense of collective responsibility for our children and young people. Poor perceptions of young people are not new. However, the level of fear and mistrust at play today undermines community cohesion and corrodes the stake young people need to feel they have in society.

As set out in ‘Our Shared Future’, work with young people is a critical starting point for tackling the tensions between different groups in the community. Positive activities, particularly through volunteering and intergenerational
activities, can help build better relations across the
generations and between different groups of young people.’

Our vision for Wales is one of strong, vibrant and sustainable communities where there is active participation between services and citizens to achieve better outcomes. Our commitment is to move to high quality, accountable, ethical and collaborative services focused on the well being of the citizen. Public services working together, not letting boundaries between sectors, organisations or professions stand in the way of meeting people’s needs. Our public services working together as a team, responsive to our citizens.

We are convinced by the evidence that we have reviewed that intergenerational practice and programmes provide an essential tool to support our approach to promoting more active and engaged citizens, living in healthier and safer communities supported by services and systems that are as integrated and cross cutting as possible. This conviction has been endorsed by the initial consultations we have undertaken with young and older people in preparing this document.

To achieve this vision we need to move from our current programmatic approach to a strategic approach where we identify where intergenerational considerations can strengthen existing strategies and propose an action plan to translate these opportunities into practice.
We also see a potential weakness in intergenerational practice in spreading its impact and application too wide and we therefore propose to focus our strategy on a defined number of areas where it links to existing or developing Assembly Government strategies. Our proposed areas of focus are as follows:

**Ageism and Equality**

The interim evaluation of the Communities First programme found that ‘Widespread negative attitudes towards young people in communities and local authorities is a major obstacle to Communities First making a difference in young people’s lives.’ At the same time the evidence for the ageism that inflicts older people is only too well documented and is endemic in our society. It is our belief that to challenge ageism across the generations we have to adopt a multi faceted approach that will:

i) Seek to include ageing in the Personal and Social Education syllabus to inform young people and challenge their own perceptions of age.

ii) Develop mechanisms that promote increased contact between the young and old to develop a better shared understanding of what they have in common as well as their differences.

iii) Promote intergenerational volunteering by young people to provide increasing numbers of positive models of young people to their community and elders.

iv) Develop existing models of intergenerational volunteering by older people to provide positive support and
encouragement to young people who would otherwise lack this in their lives.

Communities First/Communities Next

The interim evaluation of Communities First found that 40% of the projects were concentrated on youth issues and engagement, often with projects for the elderly and encouraging intergenerational awareness and activities. In ‘One Wales’ we have announced our intention to develop Communities First into its Communities Next phase drawing on the experience of the wider community development movement in Wales and the findings of the interim evaluation. We will ensure that intergenerational considerations are integrated in to this process and that specific recommendations are made as to how this should be addressed in the emerging Communities Next Framework.

In addition we will explore the potential for intergenerational programmes to contribute to the wider development of social and community cohesion across all areas of Wales.

Community Focused Schools

‘A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. Across Wales, many schools already provide some community services including adult education, out-of-hours learning/study support, ICT facilities and community sports programmes’.
Community focused schools, Guidance circular number 34/2003, National Assembly for Wales, 2003

The community focused schools approach recognises that schools need to work in partnership with others. Working in this way helps to meet both the school's priorities in line with its School Development Plan, and also the wider needs of children, young people, their families and those of communities. It is a vehicle for meeting a range of targets and delivering on a range of agendas including school improvement, delivering integrated children's and community services and community regeneration, with governors and partners having key roles. Community focused schools are not about the school doing everything - partnership working is key.

We have worked closely with Continyou Cymru to support their development of a toolkit and resources to help the development of Community Focused Schools and the initiative reflects our vision of schools being at the heart of the community. However, to date insufficient emphasis has been placed on how this initiative can address developing intergenerational relationships and programmes. It is therefore our intention to develop a framework for schools to complement the Continyou toolkit and to make this available electronically to all schools in Wales.

Community Safety

Many older people report fear of crime as having a significant detrimental impact on their lives and general well being. They are particularly concerned about groups of young people who they see as posing a threat. At the same time research shows that young
people are much more at risk of crime on the streets than older people and show many of the same concerns about feeling safe and secure, including wanting a more visible policing presence.

A small minority of young people have created a situation where not only do people feel unsafe but where this has become generalised to a growing antipathy and lack of tolerance between the young and old. This has been exacerbated by the decreasing contact between young and old people leading to less opportunity to challenge prejudice and stereotype.

There is a need to continue to build on the ‘All Wales Youth Offending Strategy’ but to accompany this with initiatives that promote contact between the generations and joint working that promotes all of the generations feeling safer and more valued. We therefore intend to identify existing examples of good practice and to produce learning materials and training to disseminate their practice. We will also work with partners from the media to explore how a more balanced reporting on youth and older people may be achieved in the future.

**Culture and Identity**

‘Creative Future: A Cultural Strategy for Wales’ takes as one of its priorities the need to create the widest possible access to cultural activity for people of all ages and all backgrounds. It is our belief that culture provides an ideal means for the young and old to share experiences, learn from and alongside one another, and hence gain an improved sense of our national identity. We know that
many intergenerational activities already take place, often without being formally labelled as such. It is our intention to undertake a series of case studies of projects to inform a wider understanding of the role of culture in building better generational understanding.

**Engagement and Participation**

‘*Making the Connections*’ stresses the importance of engaging with our communities and citizens. In our proposals we emphasise the need to develop innovative ways to enable young people and older people to have a greater say in the design and delivery of services. With the development of youth forums and older people’s forums and other engagement mechanisms we are making this aspiration an increasing reality. However, our thinking has been to see this engagement and participation in age segregated terms and not to explore the opportunities and potential advantages of also seeking to engage with the younger and older people together.

In developing engagement and participation across Wales we will seek opportunities for intergenerational as well as age segmented approaches and we will seek to utilise the formal consultation on this strategy as a mechanism to identify existing and new models to take this forward.

**Environment Action Plan**

Our plan highlights the importance of environment to peoples’ health and well being and the need to see the promotion of outdoor activities as an important contributor to Health Challenge
Wales. As part of developing the plan we seek to develop the idea of the green gym for young people, to promote green volunteering by young people and to increase the number of Eco schools.

Based on evidence from around the world it is our intention to broaden our ambition and to see the environment as a means to also encourage intergenerational collaboration. We therefore intend:

i) To produce guidance for schools becoming Eco schools or developing green gyms on ways to collaborate with local older people’s groups and sheltered housing on working together for mutual benefit.

ii) To broaden the proposals for encouraging increased green volunteering by young people to widen the recruitment to include older adult volunteers.

**Grandparenting and Grandchildren**

The role of grandparents and older kin in supporting their grandchildren and receiving reciprocal benefits is well documented. We have already commissioned a working group to undertake a study of this area and we will continue to explore how the Parenting Action Plan may take account of their findings. We will establish information for Grandparents and those working with them on the website of the Welsh Centre for Intergenerational Practice.
Healthy and Active Lifestyles

‘Climbing Higher’ states that schools will have an integral part in a bigger partnership to deliver sport and physical activity across communities. In addition we need to invest in innovative ways to ensure that participation is sustained and integrated through to adulthood. It goes on to talk about the importance of helping people of all ages to become more comfortable with physical activity and raising their expectations about the potential for achievement. The overall health of our citizens is a major concern and if we are to sustain improved activity across the life course we need to explore intergenerational opportunities for the young and old to support each other whether through coaching, encouraging or grandchildren and grandparents passing messages and encouragement to each other.

In addition we will look at how intergenerational work across communities can contribute to people’s overall mental health and well being by developing self-esteem, self-worth and reducing isolation and loneliness.

Local Service Boards

‘Making the Connections; Delivering Beyond Boundaries’ proposes the establishment of Local Service Boards to bring together the key contributors to local service delivery, both devolved and non-devolved. The Boards will have the mission to improve service delivery and undertake joint action where the need is identified or where good outcomes depend on joined up action. Our plan is to
develop financial and governance arrangements across sectors to make it easier to bring together budgets, staff, facilities and other resources to get the best value for people and communities.

Intergenerational practice is by its nature cross sectorial and seeking to join up policy and practice. In developing the framework for Local Service Boards we will explore where intergenerational approaches may provide a way to promote service integration with improved efficiency and impact. We will also explore how cross-generational engagement and participation can be integrated into these developments to give a clear voice from all of the generations in local planning.

Volunteering

The Russell Commission has provided a rationale and blueprint for the promotion of volunteering by young people. ‘Living Longer, Living Better’ the report of an advisory group on the Strategy for Older People in Wales makes a strong case for the promotion and support of volunteering by older people. The contribution of volunteering to active citizenship, social cohesion and healthy communities is well documented and the recent ‘The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration; final report’ produced by the Treasury and Cabinet Office for England makes a policy commitment to developing intergenerational volunteering.

It is our intention to establish a working group to draw together all relevant partners to recommend how intergenerational
volunteering can be systematically developed and sustained in Wales.

**Summary**

Wales is one of the leading countries in the world in seeking to address intergenerational opportunities and concerns at a policy level. With this strategy we believe we have provided a framework to embed intergenerational practice in to our whole approach to communities, citizenship and integrated government. This strategy and the action plan will make a real and lasting contribution to Wales becoming a Society for All Ages.
ACTION PLAN

Ageism and Equality

Seek to include ageing in the Personal and Social Education syllabus to inform young people and challenge their own perceptions of age.

Develop mechanisms that promote increased contact between the young and old to develop a better shared understanding of what they have in common as well as their differences.

Promote intergenerational volunteering by young people to provide increasing numbers of positive models of young people to their community and elders.

Develop existing models of intergenerational volunteering by older people to provide positive support and encouragement to young people who would otherwise lack this in their lives.

Communities First/ Communities Next

The implications of intergenerational practice to be proactively considered in developing the Communities Next Framework.

Explore the potential for intergenerational programmes to contribute to the wider development of social and community cohesion across all areas of Wales.
Community Focused Schools

To develop a framework on intergenerational projects to complement the Continyou Community Focused Schools toolkit.

Community Safety

To identify existing examples of good practice and to produce learning materials and training to disseminate this practice.

Work with partners from the media to explore how a more balanced reporting on youth and older people may be achieved in the future.

Culture and Identity

To undertake and publish a series of case studies of intergenerational projects in the field of culture.

Engagement and Participation

To identify opportunities for collaborative approaches to intergenerational engagement and participation particularly linking youth forums and over fifties forums.

Seek to utilise the formal consultation on this strategy as a mechanism to identify existing and new models to take this forward.
Environment Action Plan

To produce guidance for schools becoming Eco schools or developing green gyms on ways to collaborate with local older people’s groups and sheltered housing on working together for mutual benefit.

To broaden the proposals for encouraging increased green volunteering by young people to widen the recruitment to include older adult volunteers.

Grandparenting and Grandchildren

Establish a dedicated information section relating to Grandparents on the Welsh Centre for Intergenerational Practice website.

Healthy and Active Lifestyles

To undertake a study to identify the opportunities for intergenerational approaches to developing healthy lifestyles.

Identify how intergenerational work across communities can contribute to people’s overall mental health and well being by developing self-esteem, self-worth and reducing isolation and loneliness.
Local Service Boards

In developing the framework for Local Service Boards we will explore where intergenerational approaches may provide a way to promote service integration with improved efficiency and impact.

Explore how cross-generational engagement and participation can be integrated in to these developments to give a clear voice from all of the generations in local planning.

Volunteering

To establish a working group to draw together all relevant partners to recommend how intergenerational volunteering can be systematically developed and sustained in Wales.

General

To continue to fund the existing programme until March 31st 2009 to provide the infrastructure to support the action plan.