

## **Downton Intergenerational Digital Project**

**Overview** – Within contemporary society it is recognised that risks can develop for people if they become socially isolated (1). This can occur in a range of ways and may cause difficulties which reduce the potential for older people to enjoy happy, healthy and connected lives. The issue of poor health is a concern for society due to reduced independence and resilience of individuals often associated with chronic poor health, sometimes both physical and mental health. The main aspects which we aim to address here are reducing physical and social isolation, specifically by improving digital inclusion (2).

As part of promoting health and wellbeing within the population of Southern Wiltshire through the work of the Area Board (3) it is proposed to create opportunities for older people to associate with young people, while exploring and extending practical, social and digital skills, sometimes referred to as gateway services. Work elsewhere has raised awareness of how the knowledge and skills of the young can contribute to the benefit of others in a local setting (4). Such sharing opportunities also promote improved social cohesion and build on the learning undertaken within citizenship studies at school by extending the community engagement of the students in their local setting.

**Rationale** - Society is very aware that the young are often more adept at gaining new skills than adults as the young tend to learn through instinct, play and curiosity. As we age we can find it less straightforward to tackle new things and learn – but knowledge grows through doing - better than reading about how to do, especially for practical applications. This project seeks to share skills and appreciation between both groups with younger and older members of society. The roles of the participating organisations being to facilitate, create opportunities and enhance the experience of local residents, in particular where natural association might not have occurred otherwise. The added benefits of the intergenerational approach are seen as:

- To encourage younger and older members of society to mix with a shared theme
- Learning new life skills with other people in small groups
- Sharing new interests which can continue beyond the life of the project
- Appreciating the experience and talents of others
- To open subjects for dialogue while each learning something from the other.

## **Planned skill sharing – 1) Computing – digital skills**

**Context** - For the older population experiences of digital technology can range from very good to often unhelpful or frustrating, but such technology provides a major channel of communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It might be said that these skills are essential for contemporary living (1,5).

Planned benefits include increased inter-generational interaction, how to access forms and reference websites and stay safe online. This latter aspect is extremely important and additional expertise will be supplied from the Wiltshire Police Cyber crime team, who are the local experts in understanding and minimising risks and keeping us safe online.

This knowledge-sharing will be achieved with a group of students (Year 8, Trafalgar School, Downton) tutoring local seniors in small groups or 1:1 to share knowledge and understanding and help older people to get more out of their technical equipment. Practical coaching will take place within planned sessions and will be supported by members of Wiltshire Online digital champions.

**Proposal** - It is proposed that facilitated sessions be provided in Downton to enable seniors to learn how to maximise safe use of their own computers and hand held devices, including online shopping and direct communication.

Optimal timing of sessions, the venue and the logistics are being explored and are outlined here:

Venue – Trafalgar School (agreed as the appropriate setting)

Client group – clients/ volunteers recruited through AUK Wiltshire and Wiltshire Online local digital champions

Schedule – 6x weekly sessions at a fixed time, maximum 60 minutes, clients can attend for multiple sessions or just one, could bring own device where feasible,

Logistics – Administration by AgeUK Wiltshire. Trafalgar School students to have appropriate adult present (1 per x?), safeguarding and risk assessments completed pre-meet for all parties, simple refreshments to be provided.

Outcomes – Administration to include feedback forms and other measures of success using Wiltshire Online record process. Post series discussion of lessons learnt, testing how best this information and ‘gateway coaching’ can be conducted, a written summary of the project will be prepared with all parties and for feedback to SWAB.

**Additional elements** – Safeguarding practice and plans with respect to students and seniors will be scoped, and examined. Appropriate supervision and confidentiality precautions will be taken – the students continue to be under supervision of the school. Consent to share information appropriately and personal and behavioural ‘boundaries’ will be discussed with participants.

**Awareness of cyber crime** – Wiltshire Police Cyber-crime unit will collaborate with the pilot to use this opportunity of the intergenerational work to ensure that all interested parties will gain up-to-date knowledge of the main digital safety issues across Wiltshire and in online society.

**Legacy effect** – growing knowledge that can be developed in informal ways to share expertise, organising facilitated sessions and coaching on one topic can be readily translated for other subjects or issues, introducing one age group to another will raise mutual awareness and aid the understanding of each others technical skills and needs, while demonstrating individual talents and enabling sharing of aptitude and enlightening attitudes.

### **Planned skill sharing – 2) Digital communication – facilitation session**

**Context** –With many families being geographically distant, opportunities for communication across the generations may not be feasible for those whose daily life is within a residential home setting. Learning and documenting a simple routine to enable residents to use modern ways to talk with family would be very beneficial. The assistance of students who are adept with contemporary IT skills can assist in provision of modern communication routes, inspire the mind and keep open options for interaction. Social linkages within the care home setting can also be refreshed, by learning new skills and sharing gateway knowledge while growing an understanding of others.

**Proposal** - It is proposed that one facilitated pilot session be provided in Ashley Grange Nursing Home to enable students and seniors to learn together how to undertake modern digital communication.

Optimal timing of sessions, the venue and the logistics have been explored and are outlined here:

Venue – Ashley Grange Nursing Home, Downton (as the appropriate setting)

Client group – clients/ residents and student volunteers recruited through the school and the home.

Schedule – One session at a fixed time, maximum 30 minutes talk time per client (tbc), clients to have the opportunity to have a digital conversation with friends or family e.g Skype or similar, according to need and interests.

Logistics – Administration via AgeUK Wiltshire, refreshments via Ashley Grange Nursing Home. Trafalgar School students to have appropriate adult present, safeguarding and risk assessments completed pre-meet for all parties. Transport for students tbc (school minibus or equivalent).

Outcomes – as before - Admin to include feedback forms and other measures of success. Post series discussion of lessons learnt, testing how best this information and ‘gateway coaching’ can be conducted, written summary of project will be prepared by/for all parties and for feedback to SWAB.

**Additional elements** – as before - Safeguarding practice and plans with respect to students and seniors will be scoped, and examined. Appropriate supervision and confidentiality precautions will be taken – the students continue to be under supervision of the school. Consent to share information appropriately and personal and behavioural ‘boundaries’ will be discussed with participants.

**Legacy effect** – new knowledge that can be developed in informal ways to share expertise, organising facilitated sessions and coaching on one topic can be readily translated for other subjects or issues, introducing one age group to another will raise mutual awareness and aid the understanding of each others technical skills and needs, while demonstrating individual talents and enabling sharing of aptitude and enlightening attitudes. Taking a fresh approach to this task will pave the way for people to develop practical skills through learning how to do and actually doing, then encouraging the practice that helps to consolidate new routines.

## **Anticipated Benefits for:**

### Seniors

Greater interaction, reduce social isolation, widen social age range and topics shared  
Not all older people have families nearby, if at all, so conversations with children may be limited  
Improved understanding of issues and concerns for others  
Improved resilience, feelings of self, improved mood?  
With better appreciation, are more likely to voluntarily interact with others of different ages  
Widen horizons

### Students

Greater interaction, less chance of social isolation, widen social age range and topics shared  
Not all children have grandparents or other older family members nearby, if at all, so conversations with seniors may be limited  
Improved understanding of issues and concerns for the others  
Improved resilience, helping to learn own beliefs and reasoning  
With better appreciation, are more likely to voluntarily interact with others of different ages  
Widen horizons.

### Community

Contribute to ongoing thriving community of Downton village  
Improved understanding of issues and concerns for others  
Improved resilience as individuals within the community  
With better appreciation, people are more likely to voluntarily interact with others of different ages  
Widen horizons, inspire continued learning in the older group  
Share the learning with other communities which directly relate to Downton, e.g. Redlynch and design a rollout model that could be adopted across the wider Southern Area Board locality and/or the county of Wiltshire.

## **Participating organisations (main contacts)**

AgeUK Wiltshire (Sue Wight : [sue.wight@ageukwiltshire.org.uk](mailto:sue.wight@ageukwiltshire.org.uk))

Trafalgar School ([headspa@trafalgar.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:headspa@trafalgar.wilts.sch.uk))

Ashley Grange Nursing Home ([matron@ashleygrange.co.uk](mailto:matron@ashleygrange.co.uk))

Wiltshire Online Digital Champions (Mike Lennard via [www.wiltshireonline.org](http://www.wiltshireonline.org))

Wiltshire Police Cyber Crime team – engagement to share key safety messages within project.

## **Schedule**

Introductory afternoon tea - end May 2017

Then -Six sessions, after school (afternoon) – these will be designed and delivered through collaborative working across engaged organisations. The sessions will be midweek during June and July 2017.

## **Estimated costs to provide and report on proposed Downton Intergenerational Digital Pilot**

Resource/Organisation	Trafalgar School	Ashley Grange	Age UK Wiltshire
Administration			A* £360
Refreshments	B* £300	C* £25	
Transport	£20		£30
Hardware c/o school	2@£300; £600		
Facilitation and review	£150	£50	D* £420
	£1070	£75	£810
Total proposal - pilot			£1955

Notes:-

A\* - preparation, coordination, facilitation of 7 sessions, set up monitoring - total 30 hours @£12

B\* = B<sup>1</sup> – Introductory, facilitated, consultative afternoon tea session with prospective clients to discuss and agree specific session content to meet client needs

B<sup>2</sup> - 6 computer club sessions (5 on school premises) – approx. 12 clients per session + students + teacher(s), @, say, £2 per head

C\* - Ashley Grange hosting one session of computer usage, specifically on digital communication procedures for residents, to include some staff training

D\*- review of outcomes, production of summary report and project resource pack - total 35 hours @£12

## **Participatory Organisations**

Trafalgar School, Downton – Head, IT department lead, students, transport of students to care home (potentially)

Ashleigh Grange Residential Home, Downton – Manager, matron and residents

Age UK Wiltshire – identification and facilitation of clients, provision of volunteers, transport of clients (potentially), outcome review, post scheme report and resource pack  
Wiltshire Online – volunteers engaged in IT teaching sessions  
Wiltshire Police Cyber Crime team – engagement to share key safety messages within project.

## References

1. Online Government Services and the offline older generation – Age UK/Fujitsu report (2011)
2. Healthwatch Area Board Update : Digital inclusion - Healthwatch Wiltshire (Nov 2016)
3. Southern Wiltshire Area Board (SWAB) : Joint Strategic Assessment (WC dataset for JSA review Feb 2017)
4. Wiltshire Online : Key aims include Digital Literacy (WC website accessed Feb 2017)
5. Combating Loneliness : a guide for Local Authorities - Local Authority Association, Commission to End Loneliness & Age UK, (Jan 2016)

See also – Additional publications :

Later Life in Rural England – Age UK (2013)

Map of Loneliness – Age UK (2015)

Promising Approaches : reducing loneliness & isolation in later life – Age UK (Jan 2015)

Testing Promising Approaches to reducing loneliness – Age UK (Nov 2016)

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