

Downton Intergenerational Digital Project:

➤ Report of Activity and Experiences – May - June 2017

Overview – Social isolation can develop for people living on their own, it is known that risks to daily life may develop as a consequence (1). Risks can be seen across a range of areas and can reduce the potential of older people to enjoy happy, healthy and connected lives (2). As part of promoting health and wellbeing within the population of Southern Wiltshire through the work of the Area Board (3) the pilot project created opportunities for older people to associate with the young, while exploring and extending practical, social and digital skills; these are sometimes called gateway services.

Rationale – This project was designed to share digital skills and appreciation between groups of younger and older members of society. The planned maximum group size, per session was 15 seniors. The roles of the participating organisations were to facilitate, create opportunities and enhance the experience of senior residents. 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). The added benefits of the intergenerational approach were seen as:

- To encourage younger and older members of society to mix with a shared purpose
- 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.
- *It is believed that all of these benefits were achieved, to varying degrees*
- *The issue of poor health is a concern for society due to reduced independence and resilience of individuals often associated with chronic poor health.*

Outcomes –

1) attendance and experience for

- *senior residents – 10 individual participants learnt a range of computing skills which they enjoyed and were able to apply at a later date. Sessional attendance varied from 5 to 9. Computing skill needs were described covering a range from generally basic such as how to search online to more advanced such as use of cloud based storage. Small successes were seen – e.g. learning to print.*
- *and local students had invaluable experience meeting, conversing with and assisting older members of their community which developed their verbal communication skills and self-confidence. There were also moments when senior members shared stories of their past which the students enjoyed.*

2) for pilot project delivery partners - setting up and running of the sessions provided various experience. There was opportunity for increased knowledge and awareness of the likely participants across the locality and the challenges in reaching the target population. Also, the benefits of liaison were seen across and between organisations during the planning stages and continuing during and after the delivery period. In assessing the benefits and outcomes for the participants, there is a question of net benefit per client over investment in time and effort in relation to out of hours activity in the school setting.

Decision points and Experiences:

- ❖ The focal centre was selected due to existing contacts and offers to participate within Downton, especially links with The Trafalgar School;
 - ✓ *the selected venue worked well, as this provided resources, access, and an appropriate setting. Opportunities included the use of school dedicated space and hardware to facilitate the teaching. Consent to share information appropriately and personal and behavioural 'boundaries' were discussed with participants, to cover safeguarding of both seniors and the students (these were under supervision of the school).*
 - ✓ *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. Safeguarding issues were covered with respect to students and seniors.*

- ❖ the population profile of Downton and the wider locality was considered appropriate from the age aspect of the proposal
 - ✓ *senior residents were identified who were willing to participate*
 - ✓ *the intergenerational opportunities were a popular part of the plan.*

- ❖ local intelligence assessed that there were residents in the area with little or no computing experience in support of the need for and investment in the plans
 - ✓ *the case of need was proven, although most participants had some degree of computing knowledge rather than zero. Few participants had their own equipment, so some needed basic coaching in hands on skills.*
 - ✓ *The needs and interests of senior participants were met by sharing background and contextual information on the initial development of the worldwide web together with an overview of the way the students learn about and use the web. Senior participants were advised that they are not alone if they consider the use of computer technology as a new and strange concept. It could be demonstrated that students feel similar but may just have a different purpose for learning.*

- ❖ It was considered that there were many opportunities to advertise the programme and publicity was expected to be productive.
 - ✓ *In fact, many local opportunities were identified to advertise the programme – numerous different venues and opportunities were found and utilised, including the local leisure centre, the supermarket, churches and pubs. Coverage was reasonably productive – but the response did not result in as many participants as*

anticipated for the introductory session (9 seniors) nor for the weekly sessions (maximum attendance 9 seniors at one time

- ✓ *The pilot project reached 11 senior individuals and 12 students overall. However, 80% of planned maximum attendance was considered constructive.*

- ❖ Selection of additional *organisations* to involve
 - ✓ *this required local knowledge and contacts, some of these became apparent later in the planning stages for this pilot.*
 - ✓ *It was found to be both positive and productive to engage with the parish council, local volunteers engaged with existing clubs and the village transport Link group, although no one requested transport to reach the sessions.*

- ❖ there was also a requirement for a liaison resource (need to identify person/people with the interest, time, willingness to be proactive, share contact details etc)
 - ✓ *the level of resource required for liaison was somewhat unpredictable probably due to my own lack of local knowledge and/or location compounded by this being a pilot; (learning point – identify a local resource for this role)*
 - ✓ *communications across the organisers/sponsors could benefit from simplification as there were a number of organisations and individuals involved in the planning, facilitation and delivery, again this was probably compounded by the pilot aspect of the project*
 - ✓ *even with constructive planning, unexpected events can disrupt delivery. There were a few issues that caused difficulty in achieving all that was proposed, e.g. it was necessary to cancel one session at short notice. Contingency plans for contacting all participants is therefore advisable.*

Overall – It is considered that the core objectives were necessary and achieved. Ensuring all aspects are planned and delivered does require parties to be committed to providing resources (mainly time) and being flexible, which they were in Downton. It is essential that the mandatory safety areas are covered appropriately. This is all achievable, but coordination of contributions can be (unintentionally) complicated. The parties involved in this pilot were helpful and responsive, it is considered that the pilot experience was worthwhile and beneficial. The opportunity to conduct this pilot has shown that such a project can be delivered to include student involvement and provide a healthy, collaborative setting for seniors to learn about computing.

Legacy potential – Key points from the pilot to influence roll out of this work in other settings or to expand in this setting–

- ❖ The pilot *centre* needs to be resourced and accessible – an appropriate venue is a key feature of future planning and can significantly influence recruitment levels
- ❖ the *population* profile of the locality needs to be appropriate for the target age group, either within or in reach of the village/centre selected

- ❖ local intelligence assessing *need* – the target group was *residents* in the area with little or no computing experience – helping to widen their experience and their horizons
- ❖ there need to be plenty of appropriate opportunities to advertise the programme as *publicity* coverage needs to be productive; a lead time of at least a few weeks is necessary to catch attention, establish and publish all session dates in the first advert to be clear on session logistics
- ❖ engagement with additional *organisations* - requires local knowledge and contacts – be prepared to engage with wider county groups too – e.g. Wiltshire Online – the resources are very helpful
- ❖ a definite requirement for a *liaison* resource (requirement to identify person/people with interest, time, willingness to be proactive, share contact details etc.), *plus* a simple booking system/contact number.

Awareness of cyber-crime – Wiltshire Police Cyber-crime unit collaborated with the pilot to ensure that all interested parties gained up-to-date knowledge of the main digital safety issues across Wiltshire and in online society. *The recently established team were supportive and willing to be engaged with the pilot. Their expertise was relevant to both the students and the seniors. Their publications and advice could readily be added into further delivery plans. Contact the team via <http://www.wiltshire.police.uk/information/cyber-crime>*

Digital communication – planned 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.

Proposal - It was 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 were explored and planned.

An unexpected issue prevented this plan being possible in the Summer of 2017, but it is hoped to conduct an alternative session during Autumn 2017.

Schedule

Utilised funds for the Downton Intergenerational Digital Pilot – May - June 2017

Resource/Organisation	Trafalgar School	Ashley Grange	Age UK Wiltshire
Administration			A* £360
Refreshments	B* £300	C* £25	
Transport	£20		£30
<i>Hardware</i>			<i>2@£300; £600</i>

Facilitation and review	£150	£50	D* £420
	£470	£75	£810
Total proposal - pilot			£1355 used
<i>Not yet utilised</i>		£75	£600

Notes:-

A* - preparation, coordination, facilitation of sessions, set up and liaison - total 30 hours @£12

B* = Introductory, facilitated afternoon tea session with prospective clients

+ 6 computer club sessions (5 on school premises)

C* - Ashley Grange hosting one session of computer usage – arrangements were in place but unfortunately this was unable to take place – *a replacement session is proposed*

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

Participating organisations (main contacts)

AgeUK Wiltshire (Pippa Webster: pippa.webster@ageukwiltshire.org.uk)

Trafalgar School (headspa@trafalgar.wilts.sch.uk)

Ashley Grange Nursing Home (matron@ashleygrange.co.uk)

Downton Parish Council (<http://downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk/contact-us>)

Wiltshire Online Digital Champions (Mike Lennard via www.wiltshireonline.org)

Wiltshire Police Cyber Crime team (<http://www.wiltshire.police.uk/information/cyber-crime>)

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 and information:

- 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)
- Wiltshire Online purpose, background and services on offer see:

<http://www.wiltshireonline.org/index.php/digital-inclusion>

<http://www.wiltshireonline.org/index.php/about-us/key-aims>