

East Ayrshire Intergenerational Practice

The last 3 years has seen a significant rise not only in the number of intergenerational connections in East Ayrshire but also an improvement in service quality and achievement of personal outcomes through regular intergenerational practice.

There are 20 care homes for older people in East Ayrshire and all 20 are engaged in regular intergenerational sessions with children from early childhood centres (ECC's), primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. There are also a number of sheltered housing complexes, day centres, lunch clubs and East Ayrshire Community Hospital with intergenerational connections to children and young people's services across East Ayrshire.

The benefits and importance of this to both generations cannot be underestimated. With relationships forming and often sustaining beyond the visits, perceptions changing, health and wellbeing improving, care homes are becoming part of school communities and vice versa; more people have opportunities to live and grow out with their own generation which is significant in today's world. Together with the Care Inspectorate supporting improvement in both early years and older adult's services and Generations Working Together, the national organisation supporting intergenerational work, services across East Ayrshire are now achieving the definition of true intergenerational practice:

'Intergenerational practice must bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between the generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities' (www.GenerationsWorkingTogether.org).

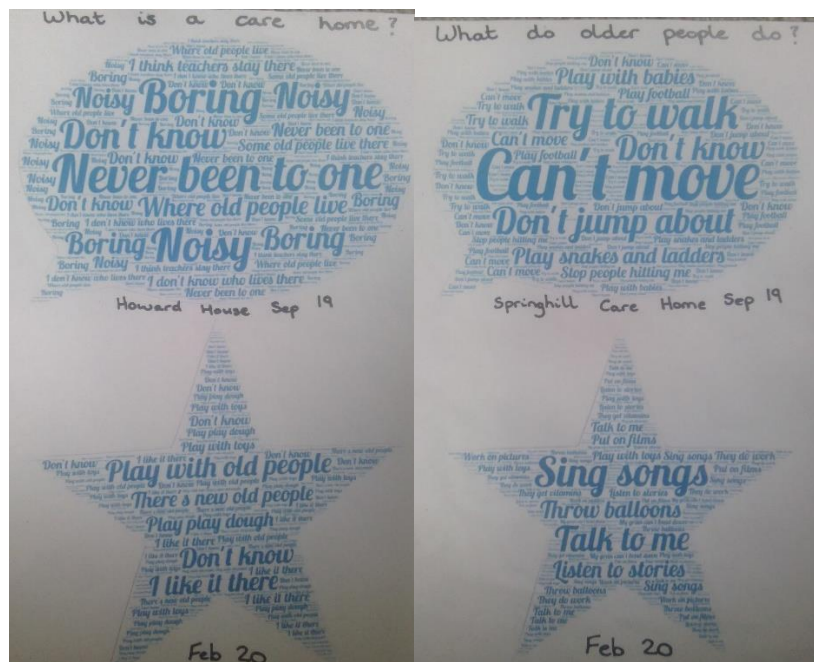
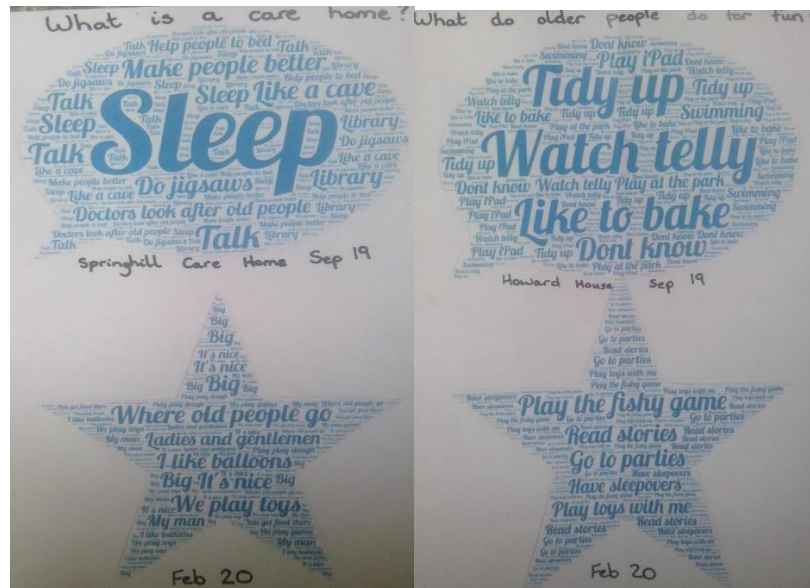
Melrose Stewart, Physiotherapist from Channel 4s 'Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds', visited East Ayrshire in October 2018 and said, "It was my understanding that Scotland was forging ahead in implementing high quality interactions with many positive and mutual benefits and my visit did not disappoint! Scotland is showing that intergenerational programmes can significantly change lives for the better."



The shift in practice can be attributed to learning sessions bringing teams together, resources, promotion of good practice on social media and early support and investment in the planning of intergenerational sessions. This must include a clear aim of what outcomes each generation is trying to achieve through intergenerational practice, methods of measuring the impact each session, and application of quality improvement to analyse data together and formulate action plans.

A snapshot of some of the connections and outcomes currently ongoing:

- Gargieston ECC visit Springhill Care Home and Howard House Care Home on a weekly basis with children walking 1 mile to and from the care homes exploring their local community. One aim of the sessions is to change the children's perceptions of older people and care homes and for residents to improve their physical activity levels. A significant shift was noticed when residents began visiting the nursery every 3-4 weeks and this is now part of the rolling programme. This work was recognised with a certificate of merit at the National Generations Working Conference in March 2020. An example of the children's data is shown below:



- Riccarton ECC visit Craigie Care Home every week for 4 week blocks and engage in physical games, arts and crafts and nursery rhymes with an aim of improving children's confidence in new environments. They are currently testing a new framework for data collection to aid sharing of outcomes and ensuring mutual benefits are achieved
- Annanhill Primary 1's visit Grange Care Home regularly where they have a range of activities for children and residents to choose from.

- Onthank ECC visit Crossgate Care Home twice weekly and engage in gardening activities, music and dance and arts and crafts
- Cairns ECC visit Graceland Care Home and are gathering evidence of the impact on language acquisition, leuven wellbeing and involvement scores in their 2 year old children
- Crosshouse ECC visit Thorntoun Estate and took part in a project preparing snacks together with residents

Much of the learning, data and outcomes from East Ayrshire has influenced the development of a new resource being published by the Care Inspectorate to support the creation of high quality sustainable intergenerational practice.