



## Practice Note 27

### **Inverclyde Intergenerational Project**

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### **Project Background and Aims**

Cromdale Road in Port Glasgow had been identified as a 'hotspot area' by the local Community Safety Team, with frequent – often nightly - complaints from older residents that young people were engaging in antisocial behaviour in the area. Between 1<sup>st</sup> of April and 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2009 there were 100 complaints to the police regarding the Cromdale Road shops. Nearly half of these complaints focused on young people playing street football late at night at the local row of shops.

Young people had been directed to other activities by community wardens and youth workers and Inverclyde Leisure's mobile football pitch was set up close to the problematic area. This was also the subject of complaint from neighbours as they were concerned that it would attract large numbers of young people.

Inverclyde Council Safer Communities thus carried out a survey with local residents to gather more information and try to get an accurate reflection on the issue. The survey indicated that street football was viewed by most respondents as an issue due to the noise levels being generated at night. Parked cars would often get hit with the ball, the ball would strike the shops' metal shutters and car and shop alarms would go off. The survey also indicated a few local sites where diversionary activities could be run.

In response to the survey findings, discussions took place with a local shop owner who had a vacant shop unit at the Cromdale Road shops, in principle an agreement was made that the unit could be used by the community as a drop-in centre for all, irrespective of age. Workshops would be delivered by community safety and partners to try and break down intergenerational barriers within the community.

The local housing association agreed to enhance the landscaping of the area, which would then be maintained by residents as part of a community project.

After further discussion it was decided that the use of the shop unit could possibly exacerbate the situation and frequent use of the unit could attract more young people to this area causing more of a disturbance.

It was agreed at a multi-agency meeting that an initiative involving all partners should be developed to tackle the issues at the Cromdale Road site. Inverclyde Council's Safer and Inclusive Communities provided funds to purchase metal containers, known subsequently as the PODs, and committed wardens and street mediators for the initiative, with other agencies providing support.

An area visit was carried out by all the partners to find a suitable location that would have least impact in the community, was close enough to the shops to attract the young people and large enough to provide accommodation for the POD and other activities. An alternative site was located within the grounds of demolished primary school.

The project was initially funded by the Community Safety budget. The initiative was extended due to intergenerational pilot funding from YouthLink Scotland.

The pilot intergenerational project was planned to for six months from January 2010 with the overarching aim of reducing antisocial behaviour and facilitating community cohesion, particularly between young and older residents.

### Outcomes

National	4: 'Our young people are succesfull learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens', 9: 'We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger', and 11:
Local	'People are, and feel safe from crime, disorder and danger', and 'Attitudes and begaviours towards alcohol and other drugs are changed and those in need are supported by better prevention and treatment services'.

### Resources

Funding:	Inverclyde Council, YouthLink Scotland
Partners:	Inverclyde Council Safer Communities, Strathclyde Police, Inverclyde Council Community Learning and Development, Inverclyde Leisure, Riverclyde Homes, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Elderly Forum and NHS Scotland.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

YouthLink Scotland employed a researcher to evaluate the four pilot projects, including the Inverclyde PODs. Monitoring data on attendance and activities was collected by the project team and the YouthLink researcher carried out focus groups

with older and young participants. An evaluation of the four intergenerational projects is available from YouthLink Scotland.

## Activities

The Intergenerational Project was not run out of the disused shop unit on Cromdale Road as this would merely continue to attract young people to the 'problem area'. Instead, two specially adapted, metal storage containers were situated at the brownfield site of the old Slaemuir Primary School, refitted to provide a workspace and kitted out with an electricity generator. The PODs were opened in November 2009, formally launched in January 2010 and closed at the end of July 2010.

One of the project's main objectives was to reduce antisocial behaviour, thus a conscious effort was made by the Safer Communities team to engage with young people who were known to participate in problematic behaviour. The team sought to engage with older residents through the local tenants and residents association.

The Safer Communities team approached intergenerational practice as something to help prevent antisocial behaviour and improve community cohesion, but did not ascribe particular features or attributes to it. Building relationships was seen as important because of the resulting impact that these improved relationships would have on community confidence. Key to the approach of the project was giving local people a safe location to 'hang out' together and take part in various activities

The PODs were used to provide a series of activities and workshops six days a week. These included arts and crafts, music, fly-tying fishing, photography, cookery and community gardening, guitar lessons, jewellery classes, DJing workshops, bingo nights and film viewings. The aim was to bring young people aged 10 - 18 years and older people from the local tenants and residents association together in a safe space to learn new skills and develop relationships.

To publicise the PODs, monthly workshop programmes were circulated to the community by mail drop and displayed in local shop windows. Various special events were also hosted at the PODs with an official opening, a community show and a gala day. The latter event was attended by the Justice Secretary for Scotland and attracted widespread media coverage.

The Intergenerational Project featured activities outside the PODs including a photography project and a community garden. The garden established on the old Slaemuir Primary School site, adjacent to the PODs.

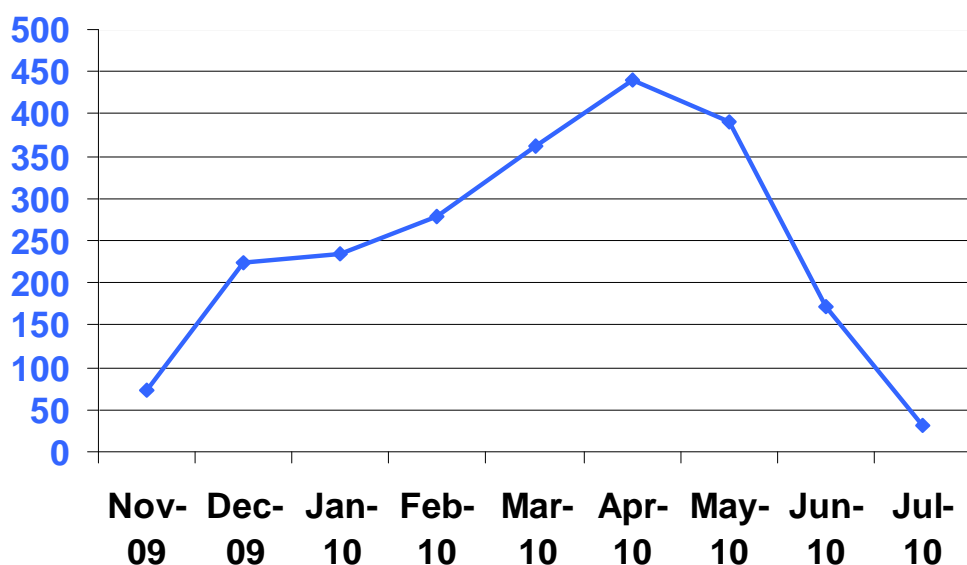
## Impact

Through the activities at the PODs the project began to engage with a regular group of young people, indicated by the sign in sheets for the project. On occasion some of the parents of the young people also attended the PODs.

Figure 1 below shows the number of people using the PODs between November 2009 and July 2010. The chart indicates a total of 2,203 attendees, which exceeded the expectations of the project team.

Poor weather was the prime reason for uneven attendance at the PODs over the winter months. Older residents found it particularly difficult to get to the POD site during the winter, which was one of the coldest in decades. Attendances tailed off after May as the project wound down the activities.

**Figure 1: Intergenerational Project Attendance 2009/2010**



The community garden project involved 30 local residents. The intergenerational aspect of the garden was a success, with younger and older communities engaging with the project. Young people particularly engaged with the project, planting vegetables and attending healthy eating workshops. Work on the community garden was delayed over the winter months due to extreme weather conditions.

The PODs project lifespan ran in tandem with other local initiatives aimed at reducing antisocial behaviour such as *No Knives, Better Lives* and enhanced stop-and-searches by Strathclyde Police. During this period, antisocial behaviour in the Cromdale Road area was significantly reduced.

Cookery classes were popular with both young and older residents whilst football, music, the gym and knife crime workshops were well-liked by young people. The photography project was also popular as this included a trip to Loch Lomond and many of the young people had never been out of Inverclyde before.

The Intergenerational Project was linked in with other local initiatives such as Fire Reach, New Horizon<sup>1</sup>, New Attitudes and Positive Futures Programmes. Thus, the

<sup>1</sup> See Practice Note 25.

project provided positive opportunities for young people who were either participating or at risk of participating in antisocial behaviour.

### Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The project team worked with the local tenants and residents association to engage with those older residents in the community most likely to be in conflict with young people and to encourage them to attend the PODs and spend time with the young people.

The project therefore relied on the local people being willing to come to the PODs and engage in the activities to build relationships between the age groups. It was envisaged that a committee of young and old people from the community would, over time, take responsibility for running the PODs so that gradually the Community Safety team could withdraw from the project and have less of a role in its day to day running.

However, engaging with the older residents generally proved more challenging for the project team. Community engagement is a lengthy process and the project team felt that more time would have improved the process of integrating different generations; it is not possible to change the dynamics of a community - which is not tight-knit in the first place – over an eight month period. That said, relationships and respect between the older and younger residents did improve over the lifespan of the initiative. For example, young people and older members of the community engaged with each other in the planning of a fete at the Pod Gala day. Transferable skills were exchanged and creative workshops provided a forum to build relationships and further break down intergenerational barriers. Money raised provided more opportunities for the community to meet and plan future events.

Whilst elements of the five principles of CLD and youth work were used by workers at the PODs they were not applied consistently. Over the course of the project a range of individuals from different disciplines were brought in to run the activities at the PODs. They were supported by the Community Wardens and, when other work commitments allowed, the local street mediators. Of the staff involved in the PODs, only the Street Mediators were CLD trained, and therefore the application of CLD principles was dependent on when they were able to be present.

The PODs were moved to a new 'hot spot', although there is a continuing presence at Cromdale road, with available facilities including football, fly-tying and fishing. The photography project was also continued with the involvement of the Social Protection Team and Wider Opportunities for Older People in Inverclyde (WOOPI).

Ideas from the Intergenerational Project have been applied in other areas of Inverclyde. For example, a large vehicle is used to deliver a range of workshops, both inside and outside, to young and older members of local communities.

## Summary

The Inverclyde Intergenerational Project was a pilot initiative which ran between November 2009 and July 2010. The initiative utilised two specially adapted metal storage containers to run a series of activities for young and older people with the aim of fostering community cohesion and reducing antisocial behaviour.

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