



Essex Age-Friendly Collaborative Toolkit

This interactive Toolkit has been created as a user-friendly resource to inspire, share and showcase ideas making a difference in our communities.

Foreword



By helping people of all ages and backgrounds to come together, everyone can have their life enriched. Young can learn and be inspired by old, while older generations can have spirits uplifted, memories refreshed and learning enhanced from those in younger age-groups.

The excellent examples highlighted in this toolkit demonstrate eloquently how this can be achieved. They also show how, by bringing people of different generations together, it can help them to understand and empathise with one another, as well as reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

We hope that the simple steps outlined in this toolkit will take away some of the mystique. Everyone's Essex is for everyone; let's try to ensure that no-one feels left out.

Councillor John Spence

ECC's Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and ICS



This toolkit showcases wonderful examples of the importance of lifelong learning and how children and young people coming together with older people in their community, has numerous benefits.

It unlocks doors, widens our views, and helps us have understanding for people going through different experiences. It also harnesses younger people's skills for compassion, empathy and care, through a passion for lifelong learning.

All this enables residents to achieve their personal ambitions and can remove inequalities in outcomes.

Councillor Tony Ball

ECC's Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability

Introduction



In Essex we have strived to create dementia friendly generations through engaging with children and young people to increase awareness of dementia and the impact on the person living with dementia, their carers and families.

Through this work we can see the multiple benefits to reduce social isolation through enabling and empowering environments that promote social mobility and levelling up in the capacity for skills, community and education that draws on the strengths and assets within proactive age-friendly environments.

More inclusive communities can be seen to promote social cohesion and reduce social isolation and increase awareness and understanding through action resulting in social change and active citizenship and a focus on reducing health inequalities.

We have seen an impact on everyone involved in these activities and projects from our youngest to our oldest residents, including carers, families, the wider workforce, and volunteers involved in these activities. We have seen how this type of approach really matters and can make a real difference to someone's day.

We hope through this toolkit which shares a range of age-friendly activities that have been making a difference across our local communities in Essex, will inspire you around the intergenerational movement and how you can be involved; small actions can make a big difference.

Thank you to everyone who has collaborated and contributed to this toolkit, it would be an impossible task to be able to include everything we know is happening. We will plan to regularly update this toolkit.

▶ For any further information please contact: intergen@essex.gov.uk



This toolkit is built on the foundations of integration and partnerships and taking an all ages approach to starting well, living well and ageing well outcomes for residents in Essex.

A testament to collaboration, passion and permission to inspire and innovate, to create the spaces for enabling and empowering environments that draw on the strengths and assets of all-ages and supports children and young people's own understanding and awareness of ageing and harnessing skills for care.

Through inclusive approaches that bring children and young people together with older people in meaningful interaction and occupation, reducing isolation and loneliness and promoting wellbeing intergenerational outcomes from the early years to further years.

Key Principles



To promote an Essex Age-Friendly community footprint around all-age approaches.



To focus on all-age asset-based community development in localities as ABCD is a place-based approach



To promote age-friendly spaces as a catalyst to live and age well.



To support social participation and connectivity around care and kindness.



To unlock social community capital that harness the benefits of all-age contributors.



To maximise the social and economic contribution of age friendly approaches.



To drive social change and action which promotes age-friendly generations and intergenerational outcomes in communities.



A Dragon's Den Style Approach – Creating a space for listening to younger ideas

How it worked

We listened to children and young people who have some great ideas around ways to connect with their wider communities. This included a pioneering new scheme at Quilters Junior School to bring together young and older focussed on supporting children's reading and writing, created opportunities for primary school children and older people to become pen pals and reading partners. This has continued and remains firmly on the curriculum and shows a real ongoing commitment from the staff and children in reaching out to others, strongly linking with the school ethos of 'five Ways to Wellbeing' (Give, Connect, Take Notice, Be Active, Learn). There are more than 240 pupils at Quilters Junior school that have also become a Dementia Friend. As part of this they all committed to a number of pledges around how they will share their understanding of how dementia can affect families, and how they will do their very best to be as patient and kind as they can to everyone they meet.

How did it go?

The school managed the process of inbound and outbound letters, taking an innovative approach to developing reading and writing skills. The feedback from this pen-pal scheme has shown that everyone involved has benefitted in terms of wellbeing and learning.

The children also led on contributing ideas and supported with planning for the author Wendy Mitchell who has young-onset Dementia to visit their school. As part of a special assembly event with Wendy Mitchell in dialogue with children - who are all dementia friends - sharing the things that make such a difference to her. Acts of kindness, the importance of a smile and how with compassion and support, people living with dementia can successfully continue with their everyday lives, and live the best life that they can. An afternoon tea was also arranged as part of the day with the older pen-pals enjoying refreshments made by the children and playing games with those they regularly write to. As part of this event pupils developed artwork and reading materials to share key messages in their community around dementia awareness and the importance of kindness.

How it made the difference

We made a short 15-minute film to showcase dementia awareness and the importance of dementia-friendly communities. This was produced by Wendy Mitchell and the children at Quilters Junior School and is available for wider use in Essex which will support a greater understanding of ageing and dementia. The film is suitable for all ages and can be requested via dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk

This activity supported a measurable increase in dementia awareness and social interaction. Children were able to develop their reading and writing skills through innovative ways as a pen-pal and promoted wider skills attributed to kindness and wellbeing with people who may experience loneliness in their communities through social interaction.

► Showcase Films

[Children in dialogue with Wendy Mitchell](#)

[Showcase Film: Pen Pal Project](#)



Essex Year of Reading Reminiscence project using Wayback Virtual Reality technology

How it worked

This reminiscence project activity uses Wayback virtual reality to transport people back to the time period of the HM Queen's 1953 coronation year and the 1966 World Cup. The Wayback virtual reality App can be used through a phone or an iPad. This project activity linked schools such as Abacus Primary School and James Hornsby Secondary School with older people in their community such as care homes, this can also include day centres, memory cafes and other community groups. The use of VR alongside historical readings and images is a great way to ignite memories and promote conversations across generations, especially older people including people living with dementia.

How did it go?

Teachers told us the films were very engaging and helped pupils to visualise what life in the past was like and encouraged reading about the two film topics, the Queen and the 70 years of her reign, and life in 1966 when England won the world cup. The activity linked well to other subject areas of the curriculum. Schools linked with care homes, and groups for older people in the community. Some schools also offered the VR to their families with older relatives for use at home. The Wayback VR is becoming available in some of our Essex Libraries through our Memory Cafes, and Dementia Activity Groups, and for special events.

How it made the difference

Accessing learning through innovative ways such as virtual reality.

Increased confidence in socialisation through community interaction.

Engaging in community age-friendly spaces with benefits for young and older.

Developing spaces for enabling environments promoting all-age assets.

Increased social connection to reduce loneliness and promote wellbeing outcomes.

Raising awareness of ageing to harness skills in citizenship, care, kindness and compassion.

This showcase project includes a QR code, please scan with a phone to have 2-minutes inside the project brought to life by ITV.



Weblink:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WW1Rjn-uut0

Essex Year of
READING



The Voice of our Younger Generations



A special 'thank you' to Quilters Junior School in Billericay.

The short video showcases the work of a dementia-friendly school, and how their school makes curriculum links with older people in their local community including people with dementia.

The children express in their own words their feelings in being involved, and to their learning. The video is a powerful testament in how children readily embrace people with dementia and have a natural desire to be dementia friendly.

With the support of schools, we can create dementia friendly opportunities through meaningful connections in our communities.

▶ Please find a link to the video [here](#)

Making links to your local Care Homes, Memory Cafés, and Older People Groups

In local areas there will be a number of schools, care homes, memory cafes and younger and older people groups that will have a timetable of events throughout the week; there may be opportunities to get involved with activities and interests.

During lockdown we saw several virtual projects with classes using technology to join virtually with the lounge of their local care home, these interactions brought a lot of happiness to care home residents and staff, along with school pupils and staff supporting emotional wellbeing for everyone.

We can see how virtual methods another great way to connect. As you will see projects can be endless and the way they are delivered could be in-person, post or virtual, whatever works best as there is not a one-size approach.

There will be opportunities to capitalise on what is already happening in the community around ways to be involved. We have heard it works well to discuss ideas as a small or larger group, all of the ideas in this toolkit have come from a wide range of all-age contributors.

When we have spoken with children and young people about their ideas, they see the benefits for them and also for older people involved, they have said that they really liked being able to have a say on different ideas and being part of developing plans.

Use of stories to explore and discuss dementia

Stories in class can work well to explore the subject of dementia as they create an opportunity for discussion.

Through our Essex Libraries there is a range of Children and Young People books that gently and sensitively explore the subject of dementia, suitable for all ages and stages.

▶ All of these titles along with a further book summary are available on the [Essex library catalogue request](#).



Project Postcard

There are several other related projects around writing to connect, this included Project Postcard in North Essex led by Age Concern, now Age Well East, with a number of schools, this involved pupils writing postcards, and christmas cards. These were delivered in the local community, including care homes, isolated older people in their own homes and hospital. As part of the christmas card entries this included a competition with a selection of small prizes.

The Age Well East groups also look to include intergenerational elements, a recent activity has been around wooden birdhouses being made by older people and decorated by pupils from Lexden Primary School, a lovely age-friendly idea to bring young and older together in conversation and connection that also contributes to our environment.

A further project was the 'Maldon UP' project which was a collaboration between All Saints Church of England Primary School and Longfields Care Home in Mid Essex, please find a link to their video: [Maldon UP](#) to hear more about the project from those involved and the shared outcomes for both young and older.

Engaging families in dementia friendly best-practice projects

A further example of best practice was the 'Muff Project' shared by Buttsbury Junior school in South Essex and one that involved the whole family.

A pattern for 'twiddle muffs' was shared with parents and grandparents, a 'twiddle muff' provides a source of visual, tactile, and sensory stimulation for an older person, including people living with dementia that can help with feelings of restlessness and also keep hands snug and warm.

As part of the project several twiddle muffs arrived back in school, with children feeling very proud and happy to give their 'twiddle muffs' to people with dementia in their local community. This wider community initiative has become very popular, including other inspired ideas supported by our knitters in Essex such as the 'Hug in a Shrug' project also run by the social movement 'United in Kind'.

Annual Dementia Action Week – a great way to get involved!

Dementia Action Week is held in May each year, this is an annual national event that aims to raise awareness to help improve the lives of those living with dementia.

Each local area in Essex has a 'United in Kind' coach, who do lots of fantastic work to support all ages in the community to come together and raise awareness of dementia, this year we had lots of activities in Libraries and Schools.

In a library this could be holding a local partnership event to raise awareness of dementia in the local community. In a school this could be through a whole-school assembly to learn about dementia, it could include a 'blue' non-uniform day that week – blue being the colour of the Forget-Me-Not flower which is a symbol for dementia.

Burnham Primary School and St. Mary's Primary School in Mid Essex created an opportunity for children to draw and colour in 'forget-me-not' flowers that were displayed in local business shop windows throughout the week to raise awareness that turn local high streets blue.

Plume Maldon Community Academy in Mid Essex shared how they proudly launched the display of their dementia friendly permanent large banner display outside their school as a superb opportunity to declare their intention in the start of their journey towards becoming a dementia friendly school.

The possibilities are endless, there are so many ways to develop a dementia best-practice project and hope that these ideas already happening in Essex schools inspire other schools to bring about a social change movement to create dementia friendly generations.

As part of planning for projects please also find a sample letter for parents and carers that could be used to accompany your planning for dementia best-practice project activity.



These examples show just a sample of age-friendly activity taking place across our Essex communities, these have been shared to inspire, and we know there is more happening.

We are keen for schools to continue to share their dementia best-practice projects across schools, and through their local Dementia Friendly Community (DFC).

As part of Essex's Year of Reading campaign, pupils of Quilters Infant and Junior Schools in South Essex have been involved in a range of activities that promote intergenerational friendships. Including visits to local care homes and memory Café and being pen-pals and tea-party hosts to older people in their community.

Both schools have received a Best Practice Award for Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), under which Dementia Friendly Schools sits in relation to the Healthy Schools Expectations as part of this work.

Sample letter for parents/carers

Dear parents and carers of class...

Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia – Best-Practice Project

The focus of the best-practice project is to raise pupils' awareness of dementia and its impact on the individual and the community. The Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia sets out to all primary and secondary schools being encouraged to include dementia awareness in their work programmes leading to the creation of a dementia-friendly generation. To support children and young people to understanding that dementia is not a normal part of ageing and challenging the assumption that there is nothing we can do to improve the lives of those living with dementia. Key to developing dementia friendly communities is an increased awareness about the impact of dementia both on those living with the condition and those who care for them. By educating the next generation we can begin to develop young people's understanding of dementia.

All of our Year... pupils will explore the subject of dementia to extend their knowledge, understanding and awareness. In developing lessons on dementia, the best-practice project will include...

I very much hope you will support your child's involvement in this best-practice project

Education-Care Community Partnerships



What we did

In this project, the focus was on intergenerational age-friendly spaces built around reading, through linking schools with care homes, memory cafes and other community-care places. This sharing of stories, letters, and related conversations fostering language development in reading, speaking, and writing through intergenerational learning, and increasing social and wellbeing connections through enabling environments drawing on strengths and all-age assets that bring young and older together around reading that promoted positive health and wellbeing outcomes from the early years to further years.

How did it work

Through Essex Year of Reading this provided a wider opportunity to build on School and Care Home Partnerships across Essex through a range of intergenerational projects, to date there have been over fifty school-community care partnerships attributed to Essex Year of Reading projects and onward legacy, as partnerships continue to flourish and grow.



Cover of Joan's poem book.

Right: Joan with pupils from Braiswick Primary School.

Impact

The Essex Year of Reading showed support to older storytellers, Joan Vicente, a care home resident in Brentwood, had a dream to become a published author once again. Despite having dementia, Joan showed this was no barrier to achieving her dreams. Working with Howard Lodge Care Home and Adult Social Care teams, Joan was presented with a published edition of her poetry collection called 'That's the Story So Far - Mix and Match'. As part of a pilot with Braintree District Cultural Educational Partnership the poetry book has been shared with school art clubs and create links to local community care groups to share their art displays. Joan continues to get out and about to share her poems including other care homes and baby and toddler and early year settings to bring generations together around reading. Joan's poems are available through a library loan request and via the Essex Year of Reading app. The book is available to download below.

▶ [Download from the App Store](#)

▶ [Download from Google Play](#)





Essex Library Memory Cafés and Dementia Activity Groups – Taking an intergenerational approach

How it worked

As part of the Essex Year of Reading campaign Adult Social Care and the Essex Library Service worked together to set up a Memory Café using an intergenerational age-friendly model in Harwich Library. The café takes place at the same time as the Library's Baby and Toddler Rhymetime, those attending the café benefit from this intergenerational contact, with wider intergenerational activity organised regularly with visits from local primary schools. The Memory Café for people living with dementia and their carers and families offers a safe space to relax and talk over shared experiences. The café was launched in Dementia Action Week in May 2022, and open to all but designed particularly for anyone affected by dementia and carers.

How did it go

The café was set up in close consultation with the support of local organisations, such as Age Well East and the Essex Community Dementia Support service. Dementia Friends training was provided by Alzheimer's Society and someone living with Dementia attended the training and the first café to advise.

Co-production has been an element since the start of the café, with those attending the first café sessions consulted on what they would like from the cafe. The sessions have grown in numbers of attendees supported by wider partners including Carers First, with volunteers recruited by the library service.

Due to the success we have now launched groups in other parts of Essex. Including the launch of the West Clacton Library Dementia Activity Group on the same site as Market Field College which also provide opportunities for social care and health students to spend time with people with lived experience of dementia, their carers, and wider families to support their own awareness and understanding.

Members of the dementia activity group are well catered for by hospitality and catering students who run the 'Ambition Café' open every weekday in term-time. This approach shows how asset-based community development can be around creating social spaces and enabling environments from the early years to further years and somewhere residents of all ages can benefit. In providing support within a shared space, it has encouraged positive connections between children and young people, older people, carers, families, and the wider community.



Impact

The groups are having a significant impact of those attending and has also had a ripple effect in the local community. A volunteer from the Electric Palace Cinema often attends to promote the Dementia Friendly film screenings with attendance at their screenings increasing by 70% in the first year. With all Libraries being awarded ‘Working to Become Dementia Friendly Recognition’ in Essex.

Children from the Rhymetime session joined the café in singing Christmas songs. Children from St Joseph’s Primary School and Mayflower Primary School have also visited the café to chat, look at reminiscence books and wider activities such as craft, games, and pebble painting with those at the café. The children are kind, considerate and thoughtful, with feedback from the teacher on how children benefit from this intergenerational contact, as well as older people. Reminiscence resources such as books, scrapbooks and pictures are also used in the libraries and when children come in for visits these have been used to spark conversations and memories between young and older.

Examples of feedback we receive

“Thank you all so, so much for making Mum welcome at the Library. She was a bit worried about coming to the Memory Café but honestly, she thoroughly enjoyed herself and cannot wait for the next one. I am not wishing to sound dramatic but the difference in her was amazing. She was full of herself, her mind was sharper, and she didn’t keep repeating herself. She was chatting and laughing with the family and telling us all about the children making her tree decorations and how she had had made a new friend, and they had enjoyed a lovely chat”

(Carer)

“I volunteer as it gets me out for few hours, and I get to chat to some really interesting people. By talking to people it helps them realise they are not alone in what they are experiencing, and they can chat to others in a similar situation which helps them. And it’s getting them out into different environment, having a cuppa and just being normal for a while. I thoroughly enjoy those few hours”

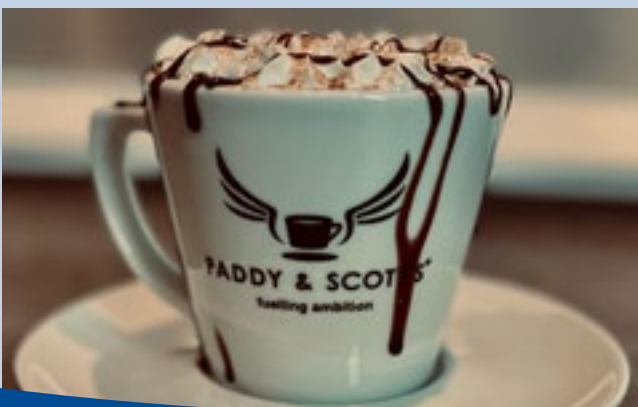
(Volunteer)

“We are so grateful to have the memory café”

(Carer)

“The Memory Café is absolutely wonderful, and it was lovely to see the happiness on the attendees faces when they interacted with my granddaughter”

(Grandparent)





Library Memory Cafés and Dementia Groups

We know a one size approach does not fit all...

We aim to shape groups around our residents as their place to be and keep this central to what we think and do.





The Archie Project - Essex Year of Reading

How it worked

The Archie Project is a national and regional award-winning dementia awareness project that links primary schools, care homes, memory cafes and other community-based places.

The project is based around the knitted character of Archie, a scarecrow with Alzheimer's. Archie's colours begin to fade as he becomes forgotten in his community. The story focusses on inclusion, kindness, and empathy.

The focus on learning outcomes is to increase children's awareness and to decrease apprehension and stigma often associated with dementia to create more dementia inclusive communities.

How did it go

The Archie Project was delivered to seven Primary schools reaching approximately 180 children, this was funded in an integrated way through Education and Health through the North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group using Covid 19 recovery funding.

A deep-dive case study was undertaken in 2022 which included three Primary Schools with 68 children aged 8 to 9 years, to measure the difference the project had made to their learning through their reading on dementia.

How it made a difference

When pupils had learnt about dementia, the children visited a local care home and/or memory cafe, engaging with older people who have memory loss or dementia, and being part of shared activities together.

The outcome was a measurable increase in dementia awareness and a decrease in anxiety when interacting with people living with dementia.

Children were able to apply their learning from reading in different contexts that promoted skills attributed to kindness, care and wellbeing in their communities, and showed increased confidence in socialisation and interaction in age-friendly environments.

The impact on children's learning was:

- +65% increase seen in children's awareness levels through their reading content transfer to learning on dementia
- +67% increase shown in how a child felt they could help someone with dementia in their community - learnt reading content
- +30% increase in children feeling less worried about talking to someone with dementia

Engaging children at a younger age can help to reduce stigma associated with dementia.

▶ If your school would like to take part in an Archie project, please contact office@reminiscencelearning.co.uk to look at purchase arrangements to make Archie part of your school day.



Dance Network Association – Intergenerational Project between Schools and Care Settings

How it worked

DNA InterGen offers a space where children, young people and older adults can realise their creative potential inspiring each other through a shared and universal stimulus. Groups support and celebrate one another by sharing their dancing, their stories, and their knowledge all reducing the stigma of ageism and increasing community cohesion. The projects with schools and care home, including sheltered housing schemes improve people's physical and mental health and well-being, by bringing younger and older together to connect socially and through movement in a safe and friendly environment. These types of dancing activities especially for adults support people to gain the confidence to engage in social activities outside their homes.

How did it go

This project brought together Hazelmere Primary School in Colchester and Enoch House. This focused on a universal theme of 'Alice in Wonderland' - the book and film and a broader stimulus of animals and springtime which reflected the school's curriculum - as inspiration for our InterGen classes.

Each character was used as a starting point, and each group (older adults and school children) worked individually in their groups to create material and learn set sequences. Props were also used in class to add interest, sharing of items with each other create moments of conversation and ways to be creative individually.

People were also asked to bring certain items into the space such as photos which often come with lovely stories about them and their lives. This particular programme included digital elements due to Covid-19, with groups filmed weekly over a term. The videos would then be shared between each group at the start of class, and then the group would respond to the videos with their creative dance response. This was able to be finished with a final collaboration to share their creative dance piece as a whole: older adults and school children and wonderful for the groups to meet in person and to see the joy in their faces and conversations.

How it made a difference:

Observation - a beautiful intergenerational class with Hazelmere Primary to wrap up the activity with the school.

All of Enoch House's adults said they loved the class and said how much they thought the children enjoyed it too. Several said they wish it could be a regular exchange.

Quotes - "It's the hardest they have physically worked, and everyone said they felt tired after, but how much fun it was."

"There were so many individual and small group moments of joy."

"I feel like a new man."

"We would love to have you in more of our sessions."

"I feel invigorated."

"Chestnut loved watching the Enoch House videos and identified which animals the older adults were dancing to."

"Children enjoyed guessing and copying movements from the Enoch House group."



Essex Year of Numbers – Making this Space Count

Essex Year of Numbers is a countywide campaign that aims to inspire a love of learning, with a focus on numeracy. It is a year of exciting learning opportunities, fun events, and initiatives for everyone. Building on the success of the Essex Year of Reading campaign will challenge people's perceptions about maths. As part of the Essex Year of Numbers there are plans underway for specific projects around intergenerational engagement with Maths.

A Dance Network Association (DNA) InterGen project is being planned called 'Every Move Counts' bringing together music and movement and innovative approaches to number patterns through creative intergenerational opportunities.

We have piloted a 'Numbers Rock' project linked with schools, libraries, and wider community partners creating activities around painting pebbles. We plan to build on the pilot in the Essex Year of Numbers through a range of different community initiatives with the aim that 'Number Rocks' can be made, shared and found, with numbers as part of conversations, stories, games, songs and rhymes.

We are also launching a 'Cricket4Numbers' intergenerational project through Adult Social Care, Education, Active Essex, and Care Settings with support by the Essex County Cricket Club. The project will introduce 'Clock Cricket' as a way to work with numbers through mental and physical exercise and age-friendly activities that link educational settings to community care settings where fun social activities around numbers can be enjoyed by both young and older together.

Essex Year of



Wider resources



A link to guidance from the Alzheimer's Society's website is available on how to talk about dementia with children and young people, a link to their factsheet is available [here](#).

A session on 'Memories with Grandma' teaches children and young people about dementia and how they can support people living with the condition, which can be found here: [Memories with Grandma - YouTube](#) The Alzheimer's Society have also compiled a suite of school teaching resources to make it easier to teach and learn about dementia from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4. A link to the resource suite is available [here](#).

[The Dragon Story](#) is a free online resource aimed at children aged around 5-9 years. The 4-minute cartoon is about a young dragon called Simon, his mummy, and Grandpa Drake. As Grandpa Drake gets older, he exhibits behaviours common with dementia. A resource pack which identifies mini themes from the story for discussion to support a lesson plan is also available [here](#).



Creating a generation of Dementia Friends



In Essex we have a growing number of pupils in Essex that are a dementia friend.

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia.

A school, community group or club can offer a Dementia Friends information session, by involving children and young people in this initiative, it helps to create a generation of children and young people who are not afraid to speak about dementia and make people affected by dementia feel involved in their communities.

Information sessions for children and young people, use differentiated resources relevant to age-stage, and includes 6 to 8 year-olds (Key Stage 1), 9 to 11 year-olds (Key Stage 2), 11 to 13 year-olds (Key Stage 3) and 14 to 16 year-olds (Key Stage 4).

The sessions could include staff, volunteers, parents, and carers as part of a wider initiative. The sessions are led by a Dementia Friends Ambassador who will help people to understand what it's like to live with dementia and the actions you can take.

You can request a session [here](#) please include whether the session will be for children, young people or adults as this will help preparation for the session.

In some schools, we have pupils leading raised awareness of Dementia and intergenerational clubs that take place during the school-day to support pupils to be dementia friendly advocates and role models linked to the schools' wider wellbeing ethos and their wider communities, through positive relationships, health wellbeing, active citizenship and enabling environments.

St Michaels Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School in Galleywood was one of the first Essex schools in the country to lead on the creation of a Dementia Friendly Community (DFC) that includes pupils leading on planning of intergenerational clubs and activities that make a difference in their community. We have included some of the pupil's art designs displayed as icons in this toolkit.



Creating Essex Dementia Friendly Communities



If you would like to find out more information on how your organisation, setting and/or group can become recognised as an accredited dementia friendly place, please email intergen@essex.gov.uk to find out more, and join hundreds of places in Essex working to become dementia friendly.

We would also like to encourage places where we have our youngest and oldest generations to be dementia friendly. We know that 1 in 3 children and young people will know someone living with dementia. This could be a grandparent, parent, another family member, a family friend, or neighbour, and how important it is that people know what it is like to live with dementia.

There is also a growing body of evidence to suggest that it is possible to reduce an individual's risk of dementia through modifiable risk factors. Improved public awareness of the risk factors associated with developing dementia, as well as promoting healthy ageing, shows the importance that dementia as part of schools' curriculum in support of children and young people being able to start well, and age well and informed to make healthy lifestyles choices.

The Dementia Strategy for Essex highlights the importance of intergenerational activity in communities and all-age benefits, as part of building the evidence base, in children and young people reporting that shows increased self-confidence, self-efficacy and wellbeing, and the impact of positive relationships and

positive changes in perceptions and attitudes about older people.

For older people, including people living with dementia, benefits include increased emotional wellbeing, reigniting memories, and cognitive and physical stimulation that can be seen to mitigate the impact of social isolation and loneliness. In these intergenerational place-based activities, a further positive impact has also been noted others involved, including unpaid carers, volunteers, wider families, and workforce.

An Intergenerational Linking [Handbook](#) has been created by Care Home Friends and Neighbours which was a national social action project that connected young people aged 5-14 years from schools and youth groups with older people living in care homes across 11 areas of England during 2019-2022.

Their guide shares information, tips and learning from the project and the positive benefits for all involved to help create more intergenerational connections between schools and care homes.

My Home Life England and The Linking Network (2023). Care Home Friends and Neighbours (Care Home FaNs) Intergenerational Linking Project Final Report: Discovering the untapped potential and social value of connecting younger people with older people living in care homes. City, University of London. Available [here](#).

Vocational Pathways towards Care as a Career



Intergenerational activities can promote many wider achievements, through volunteering and community-working with older generations, children and young people can gain skills for learning, life and work.

There are many ways in which age-friendly approaches link to age-friendly generations and future workforce, as younger people are supported to make plans for their future, as part of studies, training, volunteering, and employment in areas of social care and health.

Schools, colleges and wider further education programmes can support activity through links to ageing communities through apprenticeships, traineeships.

National organisations such as the Alzheimer's Society run Dementia Friends sessions for children and younger people to increase the numbers of younger dementia friends with increased knowledge, awareness and understanding of dementia that can link to skills for care. Another example we have recently set up is a dementia activity group, sited in a library and also on a school site, to support any opportunities to engage pupils that are taking subjects in social care and health, and wider links to catering and hospitality within broader themes of

occupation and workforce that can include older people. Wider citizenship programmes provide opportunities in schools to promote age-friendly approaches in practice to support students' skills, knowledge and understanding, and to positively influence the future of the workforce, we know there is a current and future predicted skills gap in health and social care occupations in Essex.

Adult Social Care are part of Essex County Council Career Insight Days with Adult Community Learning (ACL) supported by the Essex County Council Entry to Work team to talk to students about career pathways and entry routes into social care professions.

This Essex Age-Friendly collaborative toolkit shines a spotlight on just a sample of the amazing activities that have been happening across Essex; we hope the toolkit will continue to inspire age-friendly approaches that are growing and flourishing in our communities that make a difference and social care legacy through the generations.

Children have told us they care about others and the future of their communities, how they want to make a difference and have a positive impact on those around them and see themselves and be seen by others as being role-models.

▶ If you would like any further information on this publication, please email: intergen@essex.gov.uk

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