



Report of Programme Activities

April 2015-March 2016

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April 2016

Introduction and background

The ARK Ageing Programme was established within ARK in October 2013 and will run until December 2016. This report is the third in a series of four. It is a short report of the activities of the Programme for the year April 2015 to March 2016. It follows the more detailed Mid Term Review Report (May 2015) and the previous short Report of Programme Activities (April 2014). A Final Report is due in March 2017.

The purpose of the ARK Ageing Programme is to act as a resource to support engagement between the age sector and the academic sector. Its stated aims are to address two main issues:

- The lack of an evidence base for some of the work in the ageing sector in Northern Ireland; and
- the lack of a co-ordinated and sustained commitment to research in this area within the university sector in Northern Ireland.

The approach adopted is to encourage and to facilitate the production of research - research that will support lobbying and advocacy in the age sector - and the use of information and evidence by the sector.

The Programme is co-ordinated centrally from ARK through the work of the Programme Co-ordinator, Dr Paula Devine, based in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queen's University, and Professor Gillian Robinson, based at INCORE at Ulster University in Derry/Londonderry. There is a 50 per cent support allocation, comprising 20 per cent administrative support from each university and ten per cent technical support from UU.

The key elements of the Programme are to:

- Create two lectureships, one in each university
- Identify what new research is needed by the non-academic older people's sector
- Seed research projects, researchers (including four PhD studentships provided by the universities) and collaborations across both universities
- Facilitate the mining of datasets (especially longitudinal datasets) that already exist
- Identify and host visiting fellows
- Teach and facilitate the teaching of specialist courses.

The Mid Term Review concluded that the Programme was working effectively and efficiently towards its objectives. At the start of this reporting period, April 2015, the Programme was running for 18 months, lecturers and PhD students were in place, and work was ongoing on all of the other key elements.

Key activities for the year April 2015 to March 2016

In summary, this period can be characterised as a period of accomplishment with a high level of activity and output, building successfully on the extensive groundwork laid in the first 18 months.

Before looking in detail at the key activities in this period it is worth noting two things in relation the wider context of the Programme. First, the Programme team members are based in Queen's University and Ulster University and during the period reported both universities were undergoing re-structuring. This has included re-organisation of faculties, schools and research centres/institutes, and use of voluntary severance schemes. It has been an unsettling and difficult time for team members. Second, the focus of the Programme at initiation was ageing and older people. It is now apparent in work done to date and work that is ongoing that a common thread is ageing in terms of the life course and intergenerational relationships with a key theme that ageing affects all ages.

Team building

As noted, those involved in the Programme are dispersed in terms of location and subject matter. Several mechanisms are now in place that serve to enhance group cohesion and engender intra-team collaboration: a group email address is used to circulate information, progress and 'good news' stories to all team members; those within QUB meet regularly for informal discussion; and meetings of the whole team are held on a regular basis, alternating between the two hubs, Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, organised each time by a different team member and with a clear purpose or agenda.

Collaboration

Besides intra-team collaboration, the team members have in this time period worked with a wide range of organisations and individuals, inside and outside the host universities. Key examples include the following:

- Carers' NI
- AgeNI
- Playhouse, Derry/Londonderry
- Care Alliance, Dublin
- Public Health Agency
- Alzheimers' Society
- Verbal Arts Centre, Derry/Londonderry
- Arts Council for Northern Ireland
- Commissioner for Older People
- Linking Generations
- Scene Enterprises
- Detail Data, NICVA.

New links have also been developed within the universities: notably at QUB within the creative arts (QUB), and at UU with occupational therapy. In fact, in this period meetings and events were held with representatives of some sixty organisations and university schools or departments.

Wider communication

The ARK Ageing mailing list, begun at the start of the Programme, now has some 230 contacts. In terms of communication via the ARK Ageing web page, page views have increased from 9,078 in 2014 to 14,391 in 2015. The number of downloads of the Research Update publication increased from 1,854 in 2014 to 2,366 for 2015. The Occasional Papers section has also attracted interest (it includes papers on befriending, dementia and ageism, for example) with the number of downloads at around 6,000 for both 2014 and 2015. The Policy Brief publication has proved relatively popular: 427 downloads in 2015 and 256 in the first nine weeks of 2016. In 2015 YouTube editions of seminars received 357 viewings and 150 in the first nine weeks of 2016.

Imagine! Belfast

As part of the Imagine Belfast Festival in March 2016, Alexandra Chapman and Ciara Fitzpatrick, organized a workshop entitled, 'Planning for the future: Older people in Northern Ireland'. Both are both PhD students at UU, and Alexandra is a member of the ARK Ageing Programme team. The event – tickets for which sold out - included a presentation on planning services for older people in Northern Ireland by Kevin Keenan from the Health and Social Care Board's Older People and Adult Services. Event participants worked up policy ideas which they pitched to a panel comprising Evelyn Hoy, Commissioner for Older People; Gill Smith, Transforming Your Care; Duane Farrell, AgeNI; Ann Marie Gray, ARK Policy Director, UU; and Gemma Carney, ARK Ageing Programme, QUB. The winning idea, which has been piloted successfully by Linking Generations, centred on age-friendly schools in which older people help children with numeracy and literacy and children are trained as dementia friends.

British Society of Gerontology in Northern Ireland

As reported in the Mid Term Review, Dr Gemma Carney and Dr Paula Devine founded a branch of the British Society of Gerontology in Northern Ireland (BSGNI). It brings together practitioners, educators, policy-makers, students and older people, to explore how knowledge about ageing and later life can be enhanced and improved.

To date two successful events have been held, one within an academic and one in a community setting. The launch event, 'Representing Age', in April 2015 was hosted at the Arts Council in Belfast; the second event in October 2015, on 'Ageing and Research', took place at UU with contributions from Professor Jill Manthorpe (Kings College, London) and Sarah Penney (UU). Work on the next event is underway. It will focus on research on loneliness, and practitioner/participant experience of community gardening programmes. The BSG awarded Gemma and Paula small grant funding for these events, and talks are ongoing about hosting the BSG annual conference in Belfast in 2018 or 2019. BSGNI should provide an ongoing activity after the ARK Ageing Programme funding ends in December 2016.

Visiting Fellows

In this time period there were two Visiting Fellows. June 2015, timed to coincide with Carers' Week and in association with Carers' NI, saw the visit of Sue Yeandle, Professor of Sociology and Director of CIRCLE at University of Leeds. In October 2015, in association with AgeNI, John Williams, Professor of Law from the University of Aberystwyth, visited. Each visit involved a wide range of events, all of which were highly rated by participants. A particular highlight was Sue Yeandle's day-long workshop on 'Telecare' at QUB, and John Williams's workshop on existing/potential UN Conventions on Disability, Children, Older People. Material from both are available on the ARK Ageing website. One of the Programme's PhD students, Alexandra Chapman, produced a Policy Brief with Sue Yeandle, based on the Telecare workshop. Contact with both these Visiting Fellows is ongoing and Sue has named Professor Gillian Robinson and Dr Paula Devine as network members in her grant from the World University Network for '*Sustainable Care: connecting people and systems*'.

Work is underway for the visits of the fourth and fifth Fellows. However, while the Visiting Fellow Scheme has been a great success, it is resource-intensive and Programme staff have found it difficult to sell the idea to smaller organisations, those without the resources to identify a candidate, and plan and host a programme. Therefore for the rest of the Programme the team plans to run a smaller scheme, inviting academics and practitioners for a shorter length of time. Dominic Campbell, co-founder of Creating Aging International (<http://www.creativeageinginternational.com>), is the first of these new style Fellows. Dominic, former artistic director of St Patrick's Festival and of Ireland's ground-breaking Bealtaine Festival, will be working with the Playhouse in Derry/Londonderry over two visits, one in May and one in October 2016. The second Fellow is Norwegian Gunhild Hagestad, an internationally renowned sociologist of ageing, who will run two events in October 2016, a public masterclass and a session for undergraduates.

New research

One of the aims of the Programme is to inform and provide background to work by other age sector organisations. To this end, the Programme has made use of ARK's suite of Life and Times surveys: the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey among adults; the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey among 16 year olds; and the Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey among 10 and 11 year olds. Considerable work has been done in this period: results of the 2014 surveys have been – and are still being – disseminated; and design and fieldwork for the 2015 surveys have been completed. Plans are in place for findings from the 2015 surveys to be released in May (YLT and KLT) and June (NILT) 2016.

The 2014 NILT survey included a module, Ageism and Ageing, previously fielded in 2003 and 2008. Questions on age and ageing were also included in the 2014 KLT survey, funded from a grant from the Improving Children's Lives initiative at Queen's, which also funded the visit of Professor Pearl Dykstra for a seminar to launch the findings in September 2015. A re-run of the Attitudes and Knowledge of Dementia module was included on the 2014 NILT survey, replicating questions asked in 2010.

The 2015 NILT survey includes a module exploring social care for older people, repeating questions last asked in 2010. The 2015 survey also includes a set of questions looking at informal care, again repeating questions asked in 2010. Questions on informal care were also included in the 2015 KLT and YLT surveys. These modules were funded from the ARK Ageing Programme, as they feed into the research theme of intergenerational relationships and the concept that ageing affects all ages.

As with all ARK's surveys, tables of results, questionnaires, datasets, and publications are made publicly available on the ARK website (www.ark.ac.uk).

The survey data contribute significantly to a wide range of ARK Ageing Programme activities and outputs including seminars, blogs, and presentations, have shown to be of interest to policy makers and have lead to collaborative working with other organisations. Examples of the use of the 2014 data as well as a list of other outputs produced in this period are given in Appendix 1.

Teaching datasets and course development

Dr Paula Devine has prepared two teaching datasets using the ageing and dementia modules, for use in undergraduate and postgraduate quantitative methods courses. The ageing teaching dataset will be used in QUB Sociology quantitative methods courses in April 2016.

Appendix 1

Examples of the use of the 2014 Life and Times data

- Research Update: 'Is Northern Ireland a good place to grow old?', by Paula Devine and Gemma Carney
- Research Update: 'What do children think of old age?', by Paula Devine and Gemma Carney
- Research Update: 'Dementia: look closer', by Elizabeth Byrne McCullough and Paula Devine
- ARK in School tutorial: Ageing, by Paula Devine
- NILT launch event, June 2015: 'Is Northern Ireland a good place to be old', by Paula Devine and Gemma Carney. Key speaker - Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
- Department of Finance and Personnel Innovation workshop on dementia services in medium/long term, June 2015: 'Public attitudes and knowledge of dementia', by Paula Devine
- KLT launch event, September 2015: 'Population Ageing Affects All Age Groups'. Key speaker - Professor Pearl Dykstra
- AgeNI/ARK Ageing Programme conference, October 2015: Welcome, by Paula Devine
- UU research day on dementia, November 2015: 'Public attitudes and knowledge of dementia, by Elizabeth Byrne McCullough (Alzheimers Society)
- QUB conference for 6th year Sociology students, November 2014: 'Is Northern Ireland a good place to grow old?', by Paula Devine
- Based on the ageing and the dementia data, 2 blogs were produced for QPol (a policy-engagement vehicle of QUB– <http://qppl.qub.ac.uk/>)

On the KLT ageing data, in May 2016 Gemma Carney is presenting a seminar in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work in Queen's in May; and Paula Devine is presenting the findings at the 'Growing up, Growing old' conference in Prague. Gemma, Paula and Katrina Lloyd (School of Education) are writing a journal article.

Questions from the NILT ageing module have been included in the OFMDFM consultation document for statistical indicators for the Active Ageing Strategy.

The 2014 dementia data has been used by the Dementia Together (DT) programme, funded through Delivering Social Change initiative. It is serving as a baseline in advance of a Public Health Agency public information programme being rolled out. Paula has had correspondence about whether the module will be rerun in 2018 (no funders involved as yet).

To advance its public dissemination strategy the Programme commissioned a video infographic, 'Is Northern Ireland a good place to be old?' It is available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psodHhFAk6U>) and is based on 2014 NILT data on ageing and ageism.

Publications/outputs, March 2015-March 2016

Teaching resources

Ageing, by Paula Devine, is one of a series of downloadable tutorials which are designed for use in school years 11 and above (for pupils aged 14 years or over).

Two *teaching datasets* have been created based on the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. These are designed for undergraduate and postgraduate courses teaching quantitative statistical analysis in the social sciences.

Blog entries

Imagine Belfast – Enter the camper van of dreams and imagine the future we all deserve, by Gemma Carney. This blog was published at <https://ageingissues.wordpress.com/> on 18 March 2016.

Dementia: look closer, by Paula Devine and Elizabeth Byrne McCullough. This blog was published on *QPol* (Queen's University Belfast), on 11 December 2015.

Wise Owls Come Home to Roost, by Gemma Carney, Mabel Stevenson, Paula Devine and Lynn Johnston. This blog was on *Ageing Issues* (British Society of Gerontology), on 29 October 2015.

Is Northern Ireland Ageing Well?, by Paula Devine and Gemma Carney. This blog was published on *QPol* (Queen's University Belfast), on 27 August 2015.

Re-Presenting Age: Launching the BSG in Northern Ireland in Style, by Gemma Carney, Mabel Stevenson, Paula Devine and Lynn Johnston. This blog was on *Ageing Issues* (British Society of Gerontology), in May 2015.

Research Updates

Dementia: look closer by Elizabeth Byrne McCullough and Paula Devine (ARK Research Update 104) is based on data from the 2014 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

What do children think about old age? by Paula Devine and Gemma M Carney (ARK Research Update 101) is based on data from the 2014 Kids' Life and Times Survey.

Is Northern Ireland a good place to grow old? by Paula Devine and Gemma M Carney (ARK Research Update 100) is based on data from the 2014 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

Edited book

Ageing through austerity: Critical perspectives from Ireland, edited by Kieran Walsh, Gemma M Carney and Áine Ní Léime, Published in March 2015 by Policy Press

Discussion papers

Evaluating arts-based programmes for people with dementia, and their impact on wellbeing, by Paula Devine and Katrina Lloyd (November 2015). This Discussion Paper highlights key issues and case studies related to evaluating the outcomes of an arts-based intervention or programme for people with dementia, with a particular focus on participants' wellbeing.

Policy briefs

Telecare solutions for older people and carers, by Alexandra Chapman and Sue Yeandle. This Policy Brief is based on the event Advances in telecare: new solutions for carers and older people, which was held on 9 June 2015.

Social isolation and older men – meeting the need?, by Paula Devine, Frank Johnston, Janet Carter Anand, Lorna Montgomery, Caoimhe Ní Dhónaill and Laura O'Hagan (April 2015). This Policy Brief was produced as part of the Northern Ireland Assembly Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) event held on 29 April 2015.

Journal articles

'Unmasking the 'elderly mystique': Why it is time to make the personal political in ageing research', by Gemma M Carney and Mia Gray, *Journal of Aging Studies*, December 2015, Volume 35, pages 123–134

Restoration of cerebral and systemic microvascular architecture in APP/PS1 transgenic mice following treatment with Liraglutide™, by Kelly P, McClean PL, Ackermann M, Konerding MA, Hölscher C and Mitchell CA (2015), *Microcirculation*, Volume 22, pages 133–145.