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# Intergenerationality in the Context of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities: Older people's Experiences and Perspectives on Place and Community Living in the UK

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## ABSTRACT

Intergenerational communities can be understood as communities where multiple age groups interact, feel valued, and contribute to community life in an inclusive way. However, older adults in many communities in the UK can be excluded from intergenerational mixing. The PlaceAge project undertook interviews, photo-diaries, community mapping workshops, and knowledge cafés to explore older adult experiences of and participation in their cities and communities. Three key themes were generated, showcasing intergenerationality: (1) Connectedness in place and space; (2) Feeling old in siloed communities; and (3) Play in everyday life. This research emphasizes the importance of inclusive and accessible intergenerational places and activities that foster sustainable social connections and combat ageism. It highlights the value of playfulness, skill-sharing and co-mentoring, and advocates for the importance of incorporating intergenerational opportunities into the planning and development of age-friendly cities and communities.

## KEYWORDS

Intergenerational; older adult; inclusion; age-friendly communities; ageism

## Introduction

Rapidly aging populations, alongside urban and social change mean that communities, services, and organizations must adapt to meet older adults' changing health and well-being needs (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016; Woolrych et al., 2021). While aging-in-place is often seen as a positive experience for older adults, enabling a sense of belonging and attachment to community, aging in some urban settings can be perceived as hostile and isolating, creating feelings of "estrangement" (Makita et al., 2020; Woolrych et al., 2022). Experiences of loneliness and isolation amongst older adults have increased over the COVID pandemic (Rodney et al., 2021) and these can exacerbate poor

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mental and physical health (Fawcett & Karastoyanova, 2022). This may lead to increased reliance on health and social care, voluntary and community services, creating perceptions of older adults as an unproductive burden to society (Ayalon et al., 2020). This can create ageist societal, service and community attitudes (Levy, 2009), often exacerbated by demographic factors such as socio-economic status, migration, race, and gender (Fang et al., 2023).

When considering aging-in-place, it is therefore important to recognize the diversity of older adults and their needs alongside the individual, socio-political, and cultural factors that shape their lives (Peace et al., 2005; Phillipson, 2004). Failure to recognize the heterogeneity amongst older adults and their communities, can contribute to intersecting health and social inequalities, perpetuating experiences of unequal aging, cumulative disadvantage, and ageism (Holman & Walker, 2020).

Greater focus is needed on enabling diverse older adults to navigate community resources, services, safe spaces, and participation opportunities to minimize potential negative social and health outcomes (Sixsmith et al., 2023). The age-friendly movement has been a key policy driver in attempting to achieve this (World Health Organization, 2018). Age-friendly cities and communities use policy and practice to improve the lives of community members, with a focus on older adults, in key domains such as social inclusion, housing, and health services (Meeks, 2022). Alongside this, intergenerational community work has emerged over the last three decades as a potential solution to the challenges faced by older adults living in the community as they age (Newman, 2014). Indeed, Kaplan et al. (2017, p. v) have emphasized that “strong intergenerational relationships are not only at the root of healthy and productive aging; they are also an important component of sustainable societies.” The positive impact of intergenerational activity and relationships on older adults’ health and well-being are already established. For example, Park’s (2014) literature review suggests that intergenerational programs can benefit older adults living at home in the community through improved cognitive functioning, emotional and social well-being. More recently, a systematic review conducted by Krzeczowska et al. (2021) has indicated potential short-term benefits of intergenerational engagement for older adults in terms of cognitive functioning, anxiety, mood, physical activity, and cross-age attitudes.

To date, research into intergenerationality in the context of age-friendly environments is limited. Ronzi et al. (2020) used photovoice in a community-based participatory approach to examine age-friendly environments for older adults from an intergenerational perspective, focusing on respect and social inclusion. Both physical and social environment were found to influence respect and social inclusion from the perspectives of older adults themselves. They suggest that wider social processes such as neighborhood fragmentation affect the health, well-being, and

intergenerational relationships of older adults, contributing to their feelings of exclusion, inclusion, and connection (Ronzi et al., 2020). However, some disadvantages to intergenerationality have been found. Ayalon (2020) contends that the portrayal of individual older adults with diverse experiences in intergenerational research as a homogenous, vulnerable group can increase ageism and intergenerational tension. In this way, intergenerational relations can increase a sense of difference and conflict between generations (Yaghoobzadeh et al., 2020).

This body of research underscores the need to understand older adults' perspectives on intergenerational relationships within age-friendly environments, to mitigate negative outcomes and promote positive ones. The PlaceAge study undertook research in diverse urban and social contexts to explore older adults' experiences of sense of place and age-friendliness, drawing out issues of social participation, inclusion, and sense of place (PlaceAge, 2021). This qualitative research generated data in three communities in each of three cities in the UK, Brazil, and India. The notion of intergenerationality and its value in developing age-friendliness was significant in the data. Only the data from three UK cities (Manchester in England, and Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland) is presented in this article, focusing on older adult perspectives on intergenerationality as they arose naturally in the data despite no specific questions asked on this topic.

## Methodology

Three communities in each of three UK cities were chosen based on socioeconomic status (low, medium, and high): Craigmillar, Leith, and Morningside in Edinburgh; Easterhouse, Govanhill, and Hyndland, Dowanhill and Partick (hereafter Partick) in Glasgow; and Baguley, Rusholme and Didsbury in Manchester. Older adults (aged 51 to 94, mean age 73) residing in those communities were invited to engage in a range of qualitative data generation methods, resulting in: 104 semi-structured interviews (with 110 older adults involved, as some were group interviews), 61 walk-along interviews, and 30 photo-diaries.<sup>1</sup> We organized 9 community mapping workshops<sup>2</sup> (111 older adults), and 9 knowledge cafés<sup>3</sup> (116 older adults; 69 service providers). The qualitative data generation focused on older adult perspectives on everyday life, sense of place and the age-friendliness of their local communities and city context.

This methodological triangulation enabled older participants to express their feelings, thoughts and perspectives in ways which made sense to them and allowed for different interpretations of aging and place to emerge, including cognitive and emotional data (semi-structured interviews), sensory aspects of their environment (walk-along interviews), visual reminders and recognitions (photo-diaries) and social talk and interactions (workshops). This paper

analyzes the participants' data concerning intergenerational relationships and activities.

### **Recruitment and sampling**

A purposive sampling framework was adopted for recruitment and potential participants were identified through personal and organizational contacts, and a snowballing technique. The initial inclusion criteria required participants to be aged over 60 and to reside in the case study community, although we lowered this to age 50 for a small number of participants ( $n = 5$ ) for those who were actively engaged in older adult groups in the local area and expressed an interest to be included in the study. Following an inclusivity approach, the sample also included older adults with mild cognitive impairments and those living with impaired mobility. Some of the interview participants were then recruited into the walk-along interviews, photo-diaries, and workshops.

### **Procedure**

The semi-structured interviews lasted 60 minutes on average and covered issues of perceptions of aging and sense of place, reflections on age-friendliness, and experiences of barriers and challenges to aging in the community. The walk-along interviews varied in duration, from 35 to 120 minutes, averaging 73 minutes long. Each participant chose a route and led the walk around their neighborhood while discussing their reflections on age-friendliness, and meaningful places and spaces with the researcher.

For the photo-diaries, participants were asked to document their everyday lives in the community with at least 12 photographs<sup>4</sup> over two weeks, representing physical, social and community dimensions of healthy aging and age-friendly cities and communities. The researcher revisited each participant to discuss their photos; the emphasis was on older adults choosing and prioritizing those photographs that captured their experiences of aging in the community. The interviews were guided by a set of questions around each image aimed at eliciting the social and personal meanings attached to home, community, and neighborhood, and to co-produce a coherent narrative of the residents' story. [Table 1](#) shows the demographic characteristics of the total participants ( $N = 141$ ) in the interviews and/or walk-along interviews, and/or photo-diaries; participants were all white except for 10 participants from BAME groups. Mapping workshops involved older adults discussing age-friendly and community resources using local area maps, and Knowledge Cafés involved a range of older adults, practitioners, and policymakers in discussing the findings of the qualitative data analysis and prioritizing policy and practice interventions.

**Table 1.** Participants' demographic characteristics.

EDINBURGH	Craigmillar	Leith	Morningside
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Total	16	14	15
Male	6	3	6
Female	10	11	9
Age range	51 - 92	63 - 78	62 - 90
Years living in the area	1-84	2-77	0.6-70
GLASGOW	Easterhouse	Govanhill	Hyndland, Dowanhill & Partick
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Total	15	19	20
Male	5	4	6
Female	10	15	14
Age range:	57 - 87	60 - 80	59 - 84
Years living in the area	9-78	8-79	0.6-76
MANCHESTER	Baguley	Didsbury	Rusholme
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Total	12	12	18
Male	3	4	3
Female	9	8	15
Age range:	63 - 92	66 - 90	65 - 94
Years living in the area	10-92	15-60	10-53

Total number of participants ( $N = 141$ ) that took part in either an interview, walk-along interview and/or photo-diaries.

### Data analysis

The semi-structured interviews, walk-along interviews, and photo-diary talks were all recorded, transcribed, and anonymized. Notes were taken during the Mapping Workshops (MW) and the Knowledge Cafes (KC). A team approach to thematic analysis was used to analyze the data (Braun et al., 2016). Each dataset was analyzed separately, and a combined analysis was also completed. Initially, the team members read the data transcripts to familiarize themselves with each community dataset. The researchers (MM and RW) systematically coded the data for meaningful chunks of information relating to the research aim and combined codes into potential themes based on the similarity of codes and their interrelationship. The research team then collectively discussed potential themes and revised meanings at three reflexive collaborative workshops until a set of themes were agreed. This involved reflexive exploration of the researchers' own interpretations, assumptions, and biases throughout the data analysis process to recognize the potential influence of their perspectives on the analysis. This produced a revision of potential themes. Write-up of the themes generated further discussion and themes were finalized at this stage.

### The themes

The data analysis generated three main themes on intergenerationality: "Connectedness in place and space," "Feeling old in siloed communities" and "Play in everyday life." Each theme is presented below.

### **Theme 1: connectedness in place and space**

Aging well in the right place (Golant, 2015; Sixsmith et al., 2017) can be complex and requires not only a sense of safety and comfort within the home, but for outside places and spaces to be comfortable, accessible, and carefully tailored to meet the needs and preferences of all generations (Larkin & Newman, 1997). The older participants in the current study suggested that careful planning, rather than simply bringing generations together, is required for such activities to be successful in the development of intergenerational connections. Participants highlighted the importance of well-resourced and programmed community assets to support positive intergenerational connections including parks and green spaces, churches, and community centers where intergenerational activities were planned, offered joint interests, and information about them was widely shared concerning activity, place, and time:

We've [Leith Community Cinema] it's only been going two or three years . . . and it's intergenerational. There are people younger than me. There's some people older. Yeah, men, women, disabled, it's really nice. We have films in the half-term for little children and the nursery brings ten little children. (Female, 66, Leith, Edinburgh)

Parks were a valuable space for forging intergenerational connections, particularly those that were 1) inviting, relaxing and offered specific activities such as family play, picnics, or walks, and 2) were well-managed, this being important to feelings of well-being and safety:

I use the parks all the time . . . I walk through here with my grandchildren . . . there is always activities going on here . . . we have got three nice parks, so we can take the children into parks. I can take my great grandson in his pram. The parks are nice, and they are kept nice. (Female, 90, Didsbury, Manchester)

The park photo in [Figure 1](#) was described by one participant as a welcoming place for all ages, the advertisement making clear what was expected or possible in that space. Evident place-based rules and information were important to several older participants in signaling places where intergenerational connectedness was allowed or expected.

Parks also offered older adults a legitimate place to be seen and to see others of different ages, challenging the perceived invisibility of growing older in urban environments (Menezes et al., 2021). However, the connectedness afforded by parks could vary depending on the time of day, as well as other park users and their reasons for being there. Parks could feel unsafe if poorly maintained, or at night, or when used as a gathering space for “bored younger members of the community who had nothing to do” (Easterhouse, Glasgow, KC).

Intergenerational events can also strengthen intergenerational interactions. These can extend across family generations, or between non-related family members and as Newman (2014, p. 310) suggests can occur in both “familial and nonfamilial settings and involve interaction that demonstrates positive



**Figure 1.** Place rules for connectedness.

and negative interactions.” PlaceAge participants indicated such events provided bonding and memory-making experiences, especially important when family were absent (see Figure 2).

Besides notions of connectedness, intergenerational interactions can reinforce negative stereotypes. Some participants were clear that the coexistence of multiple generations in shared living spaces, such as tenement (apartment) buildings, has resulted in conflicts when requirements for space, different activities, and the negotiation of power relations across intergenerational family groups becomes contentious. Divergent preferences and lifestyles were particularly difficult to navigate as some participants talked about their struggles to maintain space within their families, exemplified by the contrasting needs of students who engage in nighttime socializing and older individuals who prioritize quiet time at night:

[...] the flat across the landing from me was so bad we had to get 12 police officers one night to break up a party, 12 police officers! [...] it's a stress on people because you cannot get a decent sleep. (Male participant, Morningside, Edinburgh, MW)

Situations like these run the risk of embedding misunderstandings across generations with specific prejudice of younger toward older adults and vice versa, fueling ageist attitudes and behaviors.

Misunderstandings were also voiced toward certain communities, including younger males from ethnic minority groups who were viewed by some as not





**Figure 2.** Intergenerational events and memory-making.

sharing the same cultural norms and values as the established community (Govanhill, Glasgow, MW). Sensitively promoting intergenerational and intercultural dialogue, and creating platforms for interaction and understanding, can help alleviate inter-ethnic and intergenerational tensions and promote a sense of belonging among residents.

### ***Theme 2: feeling old in siloed communities***

The positive benefits of involving older adults in intergenerational activities in communities where they already have affective ties were repeated throughout the interviews. In Rusholme (Manchester) befriending schemes worked well for some participants as a positive intergenerational experience to reduce loneliness and increase interest in the world around them. The befriending schemes, organized by the community and voluntary sector Good Neighbours initiative, matched younger and older adults to reduce social isolation and support older adults with health issues or disabilities. Such matching ensured varied conversations for older people and avoided their restriction to the company of other older adults. One female participant (Rusholme, Manchester, MW) noted that much of her social contact revolved around healthcare visits to hospitals, and that through the befriending scheme she had “someone to chat to” just to “talk and have a coffee” with someone removed from the context of hospital appointments and healthcare encounters.

Intergenerationality was often cited as an ideal concept for all ages to strive for through a shared collective responsibility although it was unclear who should orchestrate this:

Intergenerational stuff is very important within our family structure because that will help. More grandchildren should be encouraged to interact with older people within their family and across generations. How you do it, I don't know. It is important, it creates a sense of responsibility in younger people (Female, 81, Rusholme, Manchester)

Participants also pointed to the need to avoid siloed retirement communities (see Liddle et al., 2013). One female participant (85, Govanhill) reflected the perspectives of others when she said 'My worst nightmare is to spend all my time with other old people'. Lack of diversity of conversations, experiences and an expectation of health-related talk and negativity were all cited as part of as things to be avoided if positive wellbeing was to be achieved or maintained. The importance of mixing with other generations outside of family interactions was evident in the data. One male photo-diary participant was keen to propose community-based creative activities, viewing them not only as a remedy for loneliness and isolation but also to feel valued within the community; to exercise skills and knowledge that other community members could witness and to engaged in purposeful activity rather than siloed living alone or with other older adults (see Figure 3):

Others emphasized the valued role that they could be playing in imparting skills to younger generations, as a key part of intergenerational development within communities:

What people forget, the elderly, have a lot of skills that they could be imparting to younger people. And yet it's just going to die within - how can people not bring them



**Figure 3.** Purposeful, valued and engaged.

out? [...] I think the young and the old are going further and further apart instead of coming closer ... I think the young think the elderly are just, I've lost the word ... A burden, but they're not really. (Female, 82, Craigmillar, Edinburgh)

Alongside active, structured intergenerational engagement, just being outdoors and passively watching people of different ages could be a positive intergenerational experience. However, feeling too old, fearful, or “like an outsider” within local centers of activity was a barrier to intergenerational engagement. As Lindenberg and Westendorp (2014) state, accepting the “difficult task” of overcoming “the implicit negative social production of the meaning of old” (pp. 96–97), is required to promote intergenerational activity not just for older adults themselves (internal stereotypes), but also or others in their communities.

Living in intergenerational contexts was identified as life enriching. One participant described the concept of the “multi-generational (living) situation” as instilling a sense of community connectedness:

There's a 90-year-old up there, there's 30 years old upstairs, 30-year-olds over there and there's about a 40-year-old below us. So yeah, we all get on well [...] Yes, pretty much looking out for each other, we're quite friendly. And I think we have friends of all ages around this area. Yeah, we're friendly with people in their 30s and 40s. So don't tend to see much difference. (Male, 64, Partick, Glasgow)

Being recognized in community settings is also important. Woolrych et al. (2022), pp. 123–24) explain that “micro-exchanges,” engagements in public spaces, and small informal interactions (“Hello,” “How are you?”) can be central to older adults feeling of attachment to, and mastery of, their environments. This is especially the case when micro-exchanges happen between different generations. For older adults, intergeneration micro-exchanges ensured they felt seen and valued as community members, rather than solely as older adults.

### ***Theme 3: play in everyday life***

The challenges of community inclusion, exclusion and intergenerational fear are often discussed in age-friendly contexts. Less discussed is the idea of playfulness, intergenerational fun and enjoyability. The participants described the importance of opportunities, spaces and places to play. Playing together was thought to teach younger people how to “cope with older people” (Female, 78, Partick, Glasgow). The notion of playfulness extended to suggestions of community exercise facilities next to children's playparks, so that community members could mix while enjoying fresh air, fitness activities and fun (Leith, Edinburgh, KC). Echoing Newman et al. (1997), p. 415), children's perceptions of older age can vary, yet do not always “appear to view the physical changes [of older age] as

overwhelmingly negative,” and co-located constructive intergenerational encounters and activities can both strengthen positive ideas about older adults, and challenge ageist perceptions. One participant demonstrated this in their desire to play:

Have we got any children [in the building]? We’ve got dogs and cats, but I don’t think we’ve got any children [...] it’s always nice when you have children in the building because you get a good excuse to play. You get to play. (Female, 69, Govanhill, Glasgow)

The enjoyability and benefits of playing together are echoed in Fang et al. (2023) work on co-creating inclusive intergenerational places and spaces, where quality intergenerational spaces containing art and play structures were considered age-friendly.

Participants felt that spontaneous playing together refocused interactions from fear based on age difference or a sense of uncertainty to enjoyment. Spontaneous interaction and play between generations, can encourage cross-generational bonding, whilst encouraging informal learning and the development of social skills (Newman, 2014; Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008). PlaceAge participant perspectives emphasized the way play develops social skills, not just for younger but also older generations. As one male photo-diary participant said, “being older is not a barrier to play if the place and the activity is right” (see Figure 4).

As engaging in physical play may be difficult for some older adults, any opportunities for intergenerational play should consider their different preferences and mobility needs.



**Figure 4.** Being older is not a barrier to play.

The spontaneity of play may be designed into everyday environments such as city public spaces or parks. This would help to shift perceptions of play as “disconnected” from older adults to “normality” for younger and older generations alike. Some participants felt that playing together could not only help dispel ageist perceptions, but also help to generate intergenerational friendships. As Newman (1997, p. 7) notes, the success of intergenerational programs means sustaining the “interest of participants long enough for them to establish dependable and stable friendships,” which can be achieved by incorporating play and fun into activities across generations. This requires an understanding of how to foster communication and befriending across multiple age groups alongside the provision of play opportunities. Importantly, such opportunities can help to generate feelings of belonging and community:

I still interact with people of a different age. I think proper communities are better for having that. [...] Yes, replicate the real world, the microcosm of the inner city. So generally, I regard this as a good place, good to be getting older.” (Male, 64, Partick, Glasgow)

Playing together has the added benefit, participants reported, of generating natural conversations built around the play itself and the subsequent enjoyment might, they felt, alleviate mental health problems in both young and old.

## Discussion

Analysis of the PlaceAge UK qualitative data suggests that, from the perspective of older adults, intergenerational practice is an important part of the way they seek to live their lives. Social connectedness and engaging in safe environments are a key part of healthy aging (Fang et al., 2021) and intergenerational practice offers a wealth of possibilities for rethinking both environments and mechanisms to foster connectedness between age groups, facilitated by the design and planning of places which recognize the abilities, positive potential, and wishes of older individuals in connection with other generations.

The difficulties of aging in some urban settings and the potential estrangement of older adults can be a challenge in many communities (Makita et al., 2020; Woolrych et al., 2022), and are further compounded by institutional and interpersonal ageism; exacerbated by intersecting forms of demographic disadvantage such as race, gender, or socio-economic status (Fang et al., 2023). Ageism both stems from and perpetuates the difficulties faced by older adults and presents a barrier to mutual understanding and activity. The analysis of PlaceAge data underscores the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences and heterogeneous nature of older adults and the potential for intergenerational practice to acknowledge, understand and challenge perceptions of older (and younger) age, across diverse urban, social and cultural contexts.

Larkin and Newman (1997, p. 9) underlined the potential of intergenerational programs to reduce “ageist behaviors and attitudes” and to increase “positive exchange among generations.” The PlaceAge data reflects not only this potential but the benefits of intergenerational mixing through playfulness, informality, safety, purposeful interactions, and recognition of the strengths and contributions of older adults. Despite components of fear, ageism, and social division, the benefits of intergenerational communities were clear, particularly for connectedness and well-being. Furthermore, encouraging older adults toward healthy, active aging through community-based belonging, autonomy, independence, safety and security requires commitment from family members, governmental structures, and community members of all ages (Fang et al., 2021). Intergenerational practices and interactions can play a crucial role in understanding and enacting these ideals.

Our analysis reveals that careful planning and design of places and spaces in age-friendly communities are crucial for optimal intergenerational interactions and activities. However, this also requires consideration of rest, relaxation, for being seen and seeing others, and ensuring older adults are visible and respected on city streets and community spaces (Menezes et al., 2021).

PlaceAge findings also suggest the creation of spaces that facilitate playfulness, informal everyday exchanges, and opportunities for skill-sharing. This reflects Sixsmith et al. (2023) research on ecosystems for community participation in emphasizing the significant role of integrated community resources and assets to promote such opportunities. In addition, Fang et al. (2023) work on living ecosystems suggests attention should be paid to play, feeling and emotion when designing for intergenerational connectivity. Such attention can help alleviate the fear and uncertainty of interacting between generations and promote a sense of connection and engagement among different age groups.

### ***Strengths, limitations, and future directions***

PlaceAge used a variety of different data generation methods in its commitment to voicing older adult perspectives, which was a key strength of the project. Data generation using verbal and visual methods gave participants a range of means to express their experiences and thoughts and generated rich qualitative insights into how the older adults recognized and experienced intergenerationality in their cities and communities. A further strength lies in the fact that although participants were not asked specifically about intergenerationality, the concept appeared naturally in the data, suggesting its importance in the lives of older adults.

In terms of limitations, the PlaceAge study was focused on urban environments and so has little to reveal about age-friendliness and intergenerationality in rural communities. This limits the transferability of findings to rural contexts. Additionally, the predominance of White British participants also limits the

generalizability of findings. Future research is needed in rural environments, and with a focus on the intersections between age, gender, and ethnicity. This research has focused on older adult perspectives. Future research needs to consider Newman (1997) insights by conducting intergenerational case-study work with younger and older adults. Finally, as this analysis was performed on UK data, the extent to which it reflects other national contexts has yet to be fully established. Future research could pay closer attention to more cross-national analyzes to fully consider the interplay of different national contexts.

## Conclusion

The insights generated from this research have implications for policy and practice. Policymakers can use these findings to inform the development of age-friendly policies and initiatives in urban settings. By recognizing the importance of intergenerational practices and the creation of inclusive places and spaces, policymakers can prioritize the design and implementation of programs that promote intergenerational mixing, facilitate play, skill-sharing, and enhance meaning, feelings, and social connectedness among different age groups. This can involve initiatives such as intergenerational learning programs, community events, and the incorporation of age-friendly design principles in urban planning (Newman, 1997, 2014) as well as providing funding for context and community-specific intergenerational initiatives (Hatton-Yeo et al., 2000). The implications of this work also extend to healthcare and social care practices. Health and social care providers can consider these findings, particularly those around reducing ageism and increasing normalization, and improving physical health and well-being through intergenerational interventions and social prescribing. Such initiatives might involve the development of community-based ecosystems (Sixsmith et al., 2023) of community organizations, neighborhood associations, and local stakeholders; all driven by a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to creating inclusive communities, addressing reductive stereotypes between young and old age groups, and promoting meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships (Newman, 1997). Here, the communication of age-friendly components of dignity and respect are key, alongside inclusive practices to involve minority and seldom-heard groups.

## Notes

1. For clarification, participants may have participated in more than one data generation method but have been counted only once for the purposes of the total sample in Table 1.
2. Community mapping workshops are often used as a participatory method to involve participants in the creation of maps that reflect community assets, challenges, and aspirations (Fang et al., 2016).

3. Knowledge cafes are informal, participatory gatherings where small groups of individuals engage in open dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaborative learning on an idea or specific topic of interest (Brown & Isaacs, 2002).
4. The participants who provided their photo-diaries and/or took part in walk-interviews (where photographs were also part of the activity), have given consent for their photos to be disseminated in publications and reports.

### Contribution to the field

- (1) This article enhances understanding of older adult views on intergenerational opportunities and how these contribute to age-friendly communities.
- (2) Methodological triangulation captured verbal, walking, visual and workshop qualitative data across diverse urban contexts, emphasizing the role of places and spaces in creating intergenerational opportunities.
- (3) Integrating play for older adults and avoiding siloed provisions are key aspects of intergenerational and age-friendly communities.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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### Data availability statement

Due to the sensitive nature of the information shared in this project, supplementary data has not been made publicly available.

### Statement of ethical approval

The study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Heriot-Watt University. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants, through a written consent form and Participant Information Sheet.

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