**UNITED FOR ALL AGES’ SUBMISSION TO THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION’S CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON CO-LOCATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL HOUSING – SEPTEMBER 2019**

1.We welcome the APPG’s new call for evidence on promoting intergenerational connection through co-location and intergenerational housing. We hope this will encourage many more developments.

2. **United for All Ages** is a ‘think-do’ tank that supports and promotes bringing older and younger people together to create stronger communities and a stronger Britain. Founded in 2010 by Stephen and Denise Burke, United for All Ages has focused on developing intergenerational care, learning and housing. Our policy papers, including Mixing Matters and The Next Generation, feature a range of relevant examples and recommendations.

3. United for All Ages also coordinates the Intergenerational Housing Network and our response to the call for evidence on intergenerational housing has been submitted in the network’s name.

4. On co-location or shared sites, we have been campaigning for 500 such sites to be established across the UK by 2023. To date some fifty sites are now in existence offering activities and services for people of all ages, enabling different generations to mix and share experiences. These shared sites range from care-home nurseries to specialist housing with care for all ages to schools hosting other services to more traditional community centres which serve and involve all ages. There is not one model or one way of developing shared sites. They span all sectors – public, voluntary and private – and a variety of partners.

5.There is considerable interest in shared sites and more are in the development pipeline. We can supply details of those we know that are currently being developed although some are not yet in the public domain. But there are significant barriers to address if we are to roll out co-location in every community and this submission focuses on tackling those barriers. Our experience in supporting and promoting shared sites in the UK suggests that the following are key barriers to the development of more shared sites:

- location location location

- siloed services and culture

- lack of strategic approach

- resources – funding and people

- exemplars and evaluation

- awareness, understanding and mainstreaming

6. **Location location location**: shared sites can be developed on existing sites where there is already for example a care home or on new sites. Obviously not all existing sites have spare space or facilities to house other services/activities but even if they do, the site may not be in the right location. For example, a good location for a care home may not be a good location for a nursery. Nurseries need to be close to where families live or work and where there is unmet need. That said, using an existing site may be the easiest route to making co-location happen. Identifying a new site, finding compatible partners, securing funding and planning permission, build etc etc may take much longer. Some of the best examples to date have been where care homes have developed links with local nurseries through regular visits and then taken this further by opening a nursery on site. An alternative which may be more flexible is for care homes to host childminders and their children for part of the week - this would require less space and cost less while offering similar outcomes. The issue of location applies equally to other models of shared sites.

7. **Siloed services and culture**: Britain is one of the most age segregated countries in the world and the way services are commissioned and delivered reflects that. Very few providers deliver both services for children and for older people. Local authorities commission services for adults and children separately, and they have different regulators in England at least. That said, both Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have been very positive about the potential benefits of co-location and have given a number of outstanding ratings to providers on shared sites. Ofsted has issued guidance to its inspectors on registering and inspecting childcare set up on care home sites. Because of the siloed provision of care, United for All Ages often acts as a partnership broker between care homes/extra care/sheltered housing providers and nurseries/schools/colleges.

8. **Lack of strategic approach**: at the moment very few local authorities have adopted a strategic approach to creating communities for all ages. Such an approach would provide an overarching framework for developing intergenerational interaction across a community and across all council responsibilities from care, education and housing to planning and economic development. This could for example promote support for shared sites within planning policies and development plans. Local authorities as market shapers and developers in care and childcare can bring forums of eldercare and childcare providers together. Nationally central government could mirror this approach to create a country for all ages.

9. **Resources – funding and people**: all the sectors involved in shared sites but particularly eldercare and childcare are hard-pressed financially. We would argue that there are economic savings to be made by shared sites with shared costs eg premises, maintenance, catering, back office etc. Developing new projects inevitably requires investment up front. Sources of seed funding and capital funding would be useful. Staff and managers will also see developing such a project as an extra demand on already hard-pressed teams. There are benefits for staff such as making their job more interesting, developing new skills and providing subsidised childcare as well as improving quality of life for younger and older people. Workforce training needs to incorporate support for intergenerational activities, and some colleges have introduced this so their students are equipped to run schemes when they enter the workforce. All the successful co-located projects that we have worked with have been started and driven by a pioneering individual who is passionate about the benefits for all ages. These champions need support to pass on the lessons to the next generation of project leaders. Their experiences also need to be distilled into how to guides to get new projects started, bearing in mind the range of different models.

10. **Exemplars and evaluation**: for a long time the UK has had to look to other countries for examples of shared sites – from the USA to Japan and Singapore to elsewhere in Europe. A major step forward has been the creation of more shared sites in the UK which have provided domestic exemplars and have attracted considerable media coverage. Some such as Apples and Honey Nightingale run regular study tours to share their learning with other providers. As in 9 above, these sessions are resource intensive, but having more and more exemplars in the UK will encourage others to follow. Alongside these exemplars, we need more and better evaluation of the pioneering schemes. Too often evaluation has not been factored in early enough and has been done in-house so it is not seen as being independent and robust. Evaluation needs to be properly resourced from the outset, independent and well disseminated. An intergenerational research centre coordinating and promoting evaluation would be particularly valuable.

11. **Awareness, understanding and mainstreaming**: despite substantial national and trade media coverage, there is still relatively low awareness of shared sites and in particular understanding of why and how promoting intergenerational interaction through shared sites has huge benefits for all ages involved. A major communications programme would help promote shared sites in every community and make better use of scarce community facilities. In time shared sites would move from being unusual to being part of the mainstream – places where people of all ages can live and mix and enjoy a range of activities and experiences together, thereby creating stronger communities and bringing Britain together.

12. Earlier this year Generations United, our sister organisation in the USA, published The Best of Both Worlds on creating spaces that unite young and old. This report includes recommendations that would boost the number of intergenerational shared sites around the USA:

* **Spread the Word:** We must embark on a coordinated effort to raise awareness of shared sites.
* **Provide the Support:** We have to educate funders on the benefits of shared sites and encourage creative funding for these initiatives.
* **Refine the Rules:** We need to make regulations more friendly to shared sites.
* **Measure the Merits:** We must coordinate a national effort to collect data on the impact of shared sites.
* **Build the Field:** We should provide shared site staff with ongoing opportunities to connect with each other and exchange ideas and access to training and technical assistance to improve their programs.

While the context may be different, these recommendations for scaling up shared sites are all relevant to the UK in tackling the barriers outlined above. To make it happen, the infrastructure and support work provided by United for All Ages needs to be funded to deal with the demand for advice, information and professional assistance.

13. For further information, please contact Stephen Burke, Director, United for All Ages, stephen.burke@unitedforallages.com