



**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES &
CULTURAL SERVICES**

**LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING HEALTH AND WELLBEING –
ROLE, IMPACT AND POTENTIAL**

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Health and Wellbeing Board about health and wellbeing related activity taking place across the Libraries, Archives, Information and Learning Service and outline opportunities for further development.

Information and Advice

Existing Framework

2. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 aims to deliver better services and outcomes with greater demographic accountability and efficiency through a new focus on public health and health inequalities; the local authority has responsibility for improving health and wellbeing outcomes, tackling the wider determinants of health and combining traditional and new approaches, and providing improved quality and choice for patients.

Background

3. Public libraries and Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS) are poised to play an important role in the health and wellbeing of local communities through services and resources that support the new public health responsibilities of local authorities. They are ideally placed to deliver early intervention, preventative care and address local health inequalities, and can help Health and Wellbeing Boards to deliver better public health outcomes, as part of the commissioning landscape.
4. Nottinghamshire Libraries and the Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS) have a significant reach into all areas of the County, with over 3 million visits to libraries, 0.5 million information requests, 400 mobile stops, 8,000 adult learners and service delivery in 60 libraries and 300 learning venues.
5. The profile of library customers matches the demographics of their catchments and 73% of learners come from the most deprived communities.

6. The Society of Chief Librarians (the national body for leaders of libraries) has endorsed this approach, and the Health Offer is one element of four national offers.
7. Libraries provide:
 - a network of local hubs with non-stigmatised, non-clinical community space where people can meet others and stay connected physically and virtually
 - community outreach supporting vulnerable people
 - staff with local knowledge and expertise in information management, reading and community engagement
 - assisted on-line access.
8. They enable local communities to help themselves through:
 - health and care information services
 - referral and signposting
 - Public Health promotional activity
 - national reading programmes promoting learning, literacy and well-being
 - social and recreational opportunities e.g. reading groups
 - volunteering and community engagement activities that build people-centred services and keep people active, involved and learning.
9. Outcomes are substantial as they:
 - empower people to access and use health and wellbeing information
 - can help with the prevention and early diagnosis of illness
 - provide a network of easily accessible, non-threatening, inclusive environments
 - reduce isolation amongst the elderly
 - provide carers with an escape mechanism
 - provide information to appropriate self-help and local health services.
10. Similarly Community Learning managed by local authorities has been shown to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing for those who participate. The recent Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) strategy, *New Challenges New Chances* identified a range of objectives for the national Community Learning budget to address. These include:
 - to improve/maintain health and/or social wellbeing
 - reduce costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour.

Evidence of Impact

11. Research has shown that an increased emphasis on health promotion, health awareness and health prevention activity can reduce the need for costly intervention. There is a growing emphasis on self-help. It is also now recognised that health is as much about emotional and psychological wellbeing as it is about physical wellbeing. There is a clear role for libraries here. Libraries are information providers and library staff are information facilitators, helping and guiding people to access and understand the information they require.

12. There is also a strong correlation between reading, literacy and health. Reading services offered through public libraries impact on literacy levels and there is overwhelming evidence that literacy has a significant relation to a person's health and success in life. In addition, reading for pleasure reduces stress and increases mental and emotional wellbeing. Research by consultancy Mindlab International at the University of Sussex indicates that reading is the best way to relax and even six minutes a day can be enough to reduce stress levels by more than two thirds (68%).
13. Reading and literacy is attracting increasing attention from primary care practitioners as a means of reducing demand on the National Health Service. This interest is further reinforced by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines indicating that primary care professionals should offer bibliotherapy based therapy for mild to moderate mental disorders.
14. According to Professor Neil Frude (consultant clinical psychologist, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board), who first developed the Books on Prescription Scheme, bibliotherapy has the following advantages over medication:
 - higher patient acceptability
 - more immediate effects than some medication
 - no rebound effect at the end of treatment
 - tendency for continued improvement over time
 - lower relapse rates
 - no appreciable adverse side effects as with medication
 - no danger of overdose.
15. Research undertaken on the value of adult learning has shown the contribution this activity makes to support the improvement and maintenance of health and social wellbeing as well as wider outcomes. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) document *The case for investment in learning for adults, A contribution to the 2013 Spending Review* highlights research that shows how lifelong learning contributes to better health, with huge potential savings to the health service and demonstrates the measurable impact of lifelong learning on social value and wellbeing.
16. NIACE itself has developed work on the value of learning for adults for a number of outcomes, using the approaches advocated in HM Treasury's Green Book Annex on valuation techniques for social cost-benefit analysis. This shows that participating in learning for adults leads to improvements in health, with a value in terms of increased wellbeing equivalent to £148 for each individual; a greater likelihood of finding a job and/or staying in a job with a value of £224 per individual; better social relationships, which has a value of £658 to the individual; and a greater likelihood that people volunteer on a regular basis, which has a value of £130 to the individual.
17. Recent BIS data suggest that learning can offset the natural decline in wellbeing associated with ageing. Department for Work and Pensions research found that healthier, more active later lives could result in significant savings in the costs of health care, social care, pensions and benefits. The research estimates that "improving healthy life expectancy by just one year each decade could generate a 14% saving in spending on healthcare and an 11% saving in spending on benefits between 2007 and 2025".

Current Activity

18. Nottinghamshire Public Library Service and ACLS deliver a range of activities and information that supports the health and wellbeing agenda which are outlined in **Appendix 1**. In addition several discrete projects have been undertaken, for example:
- funding from Adult Social Care and Health was used to develop opportunities for people with Aphasia (a condition that affects a person's ability to communicate) to enjoy poetry. An external facilitator and poet ran 10 creative poetry sessions over a five month period. People who attended the sessions had a wide range of symptoms and disabilities. They found enjoyment in the social aspects of the sessions and pleasure in having the opportunity to express themselves in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.
 - the Library Service had external funding from the BBC's Headroom mental health project to deliver a series of creative writing workshops and sculpture workshops. This included the creation of a brain sculpture which became a focal point for discussions about mental health and increased understanding and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues.
 - several 'Unwind Your Mind' events have been held in libraries, most recently at West Bridgford Library during World Mental Health Awareness week. The event aimed to tackle stigma and raise awareness of mental health issues, to promote mental health services and to promote the benefit that reading can have on wellbeing. The event was planned in partnership with Rushcliffe Community and Voluntary Service and Rushcliffe Clinical Commissioning Group. The format was a selection of stalls providing health and wellbeing information and a combination of drop-in and scheduled activities including Mindfulness sessions, a Story Café and drum workshop.
 - libraries have worked recently with the Mental Health Co-Production team to develop a touring exhibition specifically for libraries. The 'Expressions' exhibition is touring Worksop, Mansfield and West Bridgford libraries over the summer. Artists who contributed to the exhibition have experience of mental health issues.
 - Worksop Library hosted a 'Choose Well' campaign in partnership with NHS Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group. The campaign aimed to encourage people to use the most appropriate health services according to their symptoms and to reserve A&E visits for life threatening emergencies only. Staff from NHS Bassetlaw were on hand to inform people of available health services through an interactive health game, and distribution of Choose Well leaflets informing people of the NHS services they should use for particular illnesses and injuries.
 - the Library Service has also received funding from internal and external partners to develop book collections; one such collection is a Books on Prescription Scheme which is funded by Public Health. Launched in 2013 the national Books on Prescription scheme for England 'Reading Well' builds on best practice and combining expert endorsed self-help reading and health information alongside mood-boosting creative material. This initiative is in partnership with a range of medical

organisations including: The Royal College of Psychiatrists, The Royal College of Nurses and The Royal College of General Practitioners.

- the Library Service is working with Sherwood Forest Hospitals to pilot memory bags for loan. People with dementia often find it easier to remember things from the past rather than incidents that took place recently. In the later stages of dementia they may have increasing communication problems which make social interaction with their relatives and friends difficult and distressing. The provision of themed bags can prove a valuable resource both for the person affected and their carers. They can be used either at home or taken along on a visit to someone in a care home to structure the interaction and provide an enjoyable social activity. Memory bags include a selection of suitable books (Pictures to Share, Opie Scrapbooks), objects on a particular theme, DVD or CD, photographs and pictures.
- Rug Rats activity was run by a voluntary sector organisation in partnership with the local Sure Start in Warsop. Over the 26 weeks of the project, 15 young parents took part with their children, the vast majority of whom were newly recruited to the centre for the project. The sessions started with an hour of relaxed social time where parents could sit and chat with each other and the workers. This was followed by a different activity each week. Activities included making baby books and story bags, plaster foot and hand moulds, healthy cooking and baby massage. The project workers linked the sessions with a range of other services to bring specialist advice and information to the parents. This included a session on weaning, and another on vaccinations. A Sure Start or Health Visitor came along to the group every other week.
- 'Nurtured by Nature' activities are for adults who have experienced mental health issues. The peaceful rural setting managed by the Indigo Brave organisation introduces them to sustainable farming and animal husbandry as a means of improving the individual's management of their mental health. ACLS funds Indigo Brave to work with the learners to consider their relationship to nature, their community and their wider relationships and learners then use that knowledge to motivate and mentor others.

Future Offer

19. There is potential to develop the future health and wellbeing offer from Libraries and ACLS, some ideas include:

- **Health and Wellbeing Centres in Libraries**

Branded areas within libraries which house healthy living and health-related books and resources, have informal, comfortable seating, and display space, providing a one-stop place for health and wellbeing information and activity. The centres could be situated in the County's 12 main libraries with a high level of accessibility in respect of transport links and opening hours.

The books and other resources would be selected in consultation with health professionals. Health and Wellbeing volunteers present to provide support, advice and signposting to health information and organisations. Touch screen kiosks providing health information when the volunteers are not present; the service is available through the online catalogue accessible from home.

Pods available which allow health groups to promote their services.

During the week a range of groups meet in the space. Some are self-help groups or carers' support groups that share information and provide support. At other times positive activities are held such as bibliotherapy sessions or workshops such as smoking cessation.

- **Books on Prescription Scheme for Children and Young People**

A collection of books and resources available from all County libraries, chosen from recommendations from child and adolescent mental health service professionals. Titles reflecting a range of ages, literacy levels and common health problems, including anxiety, eating disorders, sleep problems, depression, stress and behavioural problems. Parenting books are included in addition to titles for children and young people. Books and resources may be 'prescribed' by health professionals or selected from open library shelves.

- **Healthy Eating for Families**

ACLS offer of courses that will impact on obesity in adults and children. Working with the family to embed healthy eating through knowledge of balanced nutrition and the techniques of healthy cooking similar programmes have shown results in reducing obesity within families and across age groups. By linking a knowledge of healthy eating to the offer of subsidised enjoyable exercise - such as ice-skating - families which would be not normally physically active are motivated to use exercise as part of a healthy overall lifestyle.

Other Options Considered

20. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

21. Public Libraries and Community Learning Services are well placed to contribute to the health and wellbeing agenda in terms of supporting early intervention, preventative care and addressing local health inequalities.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the contribution and potential contribution made by the Library Service and Community Learning Service towards the health and wellbeing strategy be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

23. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 07/04/14)

24. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

New Challenges, New Chances – Department for Business Innovation and Skills

The case for investment in learning for adults: a contribution to the 2013 Spending Review – National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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