

**Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
11 February 2010**

**Additional sub-group report, insert after Agenda Page 75**

**Our Future Lives:**

**Scrutiny of how well Library and Community Services engaged with older people 2008/09**

Cllr Brian Marshall and Jean East – Harrogate and District Forum for Older People met with Chrys Mellor and Barbara Poole as officers on 4 August 2009.

Overall, Library and Community Services provide excellent services and their engagement with all sections of the community, particularly with the over 50s, is first class. All the evidence in the matrix was discussed, point by point, and each element rated. The evidence provided could not be faulted, with the appropriate method of engagement having been used in all cases, ranging from empowering (the majority) through consulting or collaborating (some) to informing (the minority), as indicated in the ladder of participation.

**Appendix**

Examples of the different levels of engagement included in the evidence matrix are given below, with reference to the matrix paragraph number:

**Empowering**

Displays and promotions are held in Libraries across the County on the themes of healthy lifestyles and the promotion of good physical and mental health, including Alzheimer information and Mind and Body displays (part of National Year of Reading). Where libraries are situated near to doctors' surgeries, coffee mornings have been held to attract those attending for flu jabs to visit the library and see the range of health and other information available. (1.1)

A Wii console was set up in Stokesley Library and young people were able to introduce older people to computer gaming as part of an intergenerational project, helping to break down barriers which can exist between generations for the mutual benefit of both age groups. (1.2)

Libraries, in partnership with Age Concern, are supporting and promoting the ADAM (Activities Designed Around Men) Project to encourage single men over 50 to find out about social activities and to learn about healthier lifestyles. It is hoped to extend this to men of all ages across the authority. (1.2)

Wherever there is the capacity, home library service users in the rural areas are served by the mobile library service. Where there is currently insufficient

capacity for the mobile library service to deliver the service, those rural users, along with users in the urban areas, continue to have the service delivered by local volunteers. Currently (May 2009) 149 HLIS customers served by mobile libraries and 1,414 served by volunteers. (1.5)

Reading groups for visually impaired people continue at Scarborough, Pickering and Harrogate libraries. All reading groups are accessible to VIP readers. (1.5)

'Feel Good Friday' - a reading group for those with learning disabilities - is run at Selby Library. (1.5)

178 smart energy monitors have been purchased and are available for loan from libraries free of charge for 3 weeks. The aim is to allow people to monitor own electricity consumption and make changes to reduce their bills and benefit the environment. 146 have also been provided to Broadacres Housing Association for the use of tenants on benefits. An evaluation of this scheme is being undertaken. (2.1)

In conjunction with North Yorkshire Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, libraries will be developed as Hate Crime Reporting Centres, enabling people who would rather not report a hate crime, including racial abuse, directly to the Police to visit a Library and complete a form with help from Library staff. (2.2)

In partnership with the Hambleton and Richmondshire Learning and Disability Partnership Board, the safeguarding project - Keeping Safe - will be piloted in Libraries in Hambleton and Richmondshire before being rolled out across the County so that all libraries will be established as safe places to support those with learning disabilities. (2.2)

Intergenerational work continues to be developed in libraries including Scarborough, Catterick Garrison and Stokesley. (2.2)

LAA target has been revised upwards to increase number of active library borrowers aged 50 or over to 47,000 by March 2010.

All libraries are registered as UK online centres.

Libraries continue to provide Silver Surfer sessions targeted towards the over 50s, as well as other public IT sessions that are attended by a high percentage of the over 50s, across the County, some in partnership with Age Concern and Learning Disability Partnership Advocacy Groups.

An IT based family history session was held at Scarborough in partnership with the East Yorkshire Family History Society in response to the number of older people asking for help to access on-line resources (ancestry.com, etc). IT taster sessions have been held in partnership with Scarborough and Ryedale Carers Resource designed for carers at a time convenient for them and focused on their needs. The sessions also provided the opportunity for the carers to meet each other.

Libraries continue to be a social hub in a wide range of settings including some of the more rural areas of North Yorkshire. Events are held regularly for older people with speakers on a range of topics including author visits and learning sessions. (2.5)

## **Involving and empowering**

Older people are a key beneficiary group of the Harrogate Library Community Libraries project which focuses on active citizenship and participation, with

opportunities for involvement in decision-making and for volunteering. The Partnership Board that is helping to develop the project includes representatives from Harrogate & District Older People's Forum and Age Concern and has links with Harrogate Older People's Reference Group. Consultation on services to be provided by the project continues and is planned with the key target groups in mind, and the local population will be participating in the selection of the contractor providing shelving, furniture and equipment.

Public consultation including a number of sessions held in supermarkets during weekdays to ensure people over retirement age were consulted. The Friends of Scarborough Library provides the opportunity for member of the community, predominantly aged over 50, to engage with the service by assisting with booksales, producing a quarterly newsletter and holding regular events and concerts that raise money for other events such as the sponsorship of authors at the Literature Festival.

The Home Library and Information Service engages with older people in two ways – as recipients of the service and as volunteer deliverers, the vast majority of whom are aged over 50.

Social events, such as coffee mornings, are held in libraries across the County to thank current volunteers and enable them to share experiences with each other, as well as promoting the service and attracting new volunteers. Libraries have held coffee mornings for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) to recruit volunteers from the retired community to listen to children reading at school to meet the National Year of Reading objective of encouraging people to become reading volunteers. Further events are planned for 2009/10.

Eastfield Library promoted various volunteering options during National Volunteering Week and celebrated International Day of Older Persons. In partnership with the Selby and District Family History Group, Selby Library held a Local and Family History Open Day that was particularly popular with older people.

The Scarborough Archive Group, most of whose members are over 50, contributes positively to the work of the Library by increasing access to local studies material with volunteers working with library staff to research and collate information that is valuable to those studying local and family history. The County Record Office engages with people and communities through the services it provides onsite and remotely, and through special events and initiatives in localities across the County.

University of the Third Age volunteers help with map preservation at the County Record Office, and volunteer groups from Aigill (Masham), Great Ayton and Northallerton help with archive cataloguing. All these groups have a high percentage of retired people amongst their members.

Talks, displays and general visits are made to many organisations run for and by older people in order to promote and discuss the Library Service, and particularly the Home Library and Information Service, including Over 50s groups, Over 60s Groups, Over 60s Lunch Clubs, Church lunch clubs, Eng-AGE events (Age Concern), Primetime programme (Harrogate Museum), BGOB conference, Soroptomists, Hospital Friends, WEA groups, Area Forums. Comments and feedback are gathered and used to identify needs and inform planning of services and buildings. (3.1)

## **Collaborating**

Pre recorded Audio books in digital format are being trialled at Richmond library and the results will be reviewed alongside those of the MP3 technology trial results from the VIP Reading Group at Pickering in order to develop and mainstream. (1.3)

Book Therapy collections continue to be maintained and promoted countywide. In response to a request from Job Coaches from Skipton Jobcentreplus, they have been used by the Coaches at Settle and Bentham Libraries to assist a group of older people in their quest to return to work after experiencing mental health problems. (1.6)

Discussions are taking place with PCTs to provide space for computerised Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (cCBT) to be delivered through libraries. Health-Link has visited to investigate current practice and the Library Service is being considered as part of a national pilot for cCBT delivery. (1.6)

TALIS Engage, containing library held data and data bases used by other Units in ACS to provide information to specific groups, including the over 50s, has been launched as Engage in North Yorkshire with links to CVS and MHS information websites. (1.7)

The library website and automated telephone service provide 24/7 access to library services such as the library catalogue, requests and renewals as well as on line reference resources such as Britannica.com and ancestry.com. Development work will be undertaken during 2009 to enable PCs to be booked via the website 24/7. (1.7)

Delivery of access to the services of County, District and other organisations face to face via all static libraries commenced July 2008 and now includes CABx, Age Concern and NY Credit Union. (4.4)

The mobile library service and Home Library and Information Service both deliver to people who find it difficult to visit the library themselves. (4.5)

The library website and automated telephone service provide 24/7 access to library services such as the library catalogue, requests and renewals as well as on line reference resources such as Britannica.com and ancestry.com (4.5)

For those unable to visit a Registration Office or outstation to register a birth or death, registrars arrange at home visits. Deathbed ceremonies can also be arranged under Registrar Generals Licences. (4.5)

The Library Strategy 2008-23 was launched in April 2009, following full consultation. Contributors to the document were wide ranging and included many hard to reach groups such as the Scarborough Older Peoples Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual Transgender Group. (5.4)

## **Collaborating, involving and informing**

Libraries hold stock in large print, audio format. Software and hardware accessibility aids are available for ICT users.

Language-line interpreter service is available.  
RNID Type Talk enables library staff to take phone calls from and make calls to deaf and hearing impaired customers.  
Hearing loops are available in some libraries.  
All libraries now have simple magnifiers to loan to customers.  
Daylight lamps are available in some libraries to enable those with limited vision to read more easily.  
Pre recorded Audio books in digital format are being trialled at Richmond Library and the results will be reviewed alongside those of the MP3 technology trial results from the VIP Reading Group at Pickering in order to develop and mainstream. (4.6)

## **Involving**

Aimed at the whole community, but a larger degree of take up by older people, the Scarborough Literature Festival provides the opportunity to meet authors, take part in workshops and engage in literature and encourages use of the library, promotes the town and provides enjoyment and entertainment. (2.6)

Funding has been allocated to further increase the Home Library and Information Service with the aim to achieve delivery to 2,400 users by September 2009. Three part time Volunteer Coordinators are being appointed to support the growing number of volunteers. (2.6)

Promotion of the Home Library and Information service continues at various venues and organisations, including Church and women's groups, community groups, lunch clubs, supermarkets and in partnership with Action for the Blind. (2.6)

North Yorkshire Advice Services Partnership

A funding round for projects was held in 2008/09. Projects relating to older people included:-

'With a Little Help from my Friends': Age Concern. Purpose: to employ a dedicated paid Age Concern Information & Advice Worker based to work in Harrogate library's relocated premises one day a week. The post-holder acts as the first point of contact for older people and is able to offer information and advice and signpost to other key partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux, Carers Resource and NYCC's Adult & Community Services. This project is acting as a pilot for projects to be rolled out to other libraries in the county following the library service's Big Lottery funding coming on stream. Information relating to benefits, pensions etc is available in libraries and staff can signpost.

Targeted promotions to Home Library and Information Service customers – e.g. from the Benefits Agency, Fire Service.

'Energy advice drop ins' are being held in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust at libraries across North Yorkshire, giving the Trust the opportunity to provide information on how residents can save energy and money in the home and look at renewable technologies and smarter driving techniques. The Trust provided each person they spoke to with a free low energy light bulb.

Libraries in each of the seven districts in the County hosted an Over 50s Roadshow to showcase the range of advice, help and information available to older people in the current economic climate. Exhibitors covered council services, agencies and community groups, such as Housing Associations, Energy Savings Trust, Age Concern, Adult Social Care, Credit Union, Pension Service, Ageworks, Trading Standards, Community Leisure, Learning Service. Members of the public were asked to evaluate the Roadshow days and suggest ways in which future events could be improved. As a result of the Roadshows, we are changing the way we deliver services – we are working with the Credit Union and the CABx to investigate ways in which their services can be made more widely and permanently available through the library network. It is intended to hold a repeat series of Roadshows in libraries during autumn 2009, taking on board the comments and suggestions made. In addition, a number of regular events, including specialist sessions run by partner / exhibitors at the Roadshows, will be held in libraries throughout the year.

In response to comments received following changes made to the charges for the use of public access computers in libraries, a subscription service has been introduced to make accessing computers affordable for all, including those over 50. (6.2)

### **Involving and consulting**

Library membership requirements have been removed to encourage use by non-traditional groups. This is aligned to the service's 'Beat the Crunch' Campaign promoting use of this free service.

Advocacy document highlighting services for those who find it difficult to read ordinary print will be produced and circulated widely.

Access will be improved for visually impaired customers by promoting the People's Network (public access computers) to a minimum of one visually impaired group in each of the 9 team areas and by training every team in Supernova software.

Following an initial request from a member of the public, the Action for the Blind Information Bus was invited by the Library Service to visit several sites across the County and a series of visits have now taken place, with more planned. Some people who visited has not accessed support services previously and so they were given advice and information about the range of support available to them, including the Library Service Home Library and Information Service.

Physical access to library premises will continue to be improved with outside lifts at Whitby and Northallerton Libraries and a button-activated automatic door at Emsay Library.

The button-activated door at Emsay was installed in response to older people with mobility problems reporting that they found the doors difficult to navigate. They can now access the service more easily so are more likely to do so, to feel less embarrassment and to enjoy a pleasant experience when visiting the library.

Polish language bookstock project will continue with books available from an increased number of libraries. The service will be evaluated and action and marketing plans will be agreed in consultation with users of the service.

Action plan will be completed based on the findings of an Equalities Impact Assessment carried out at Eastfield Library last year.

Equality impact assessments on a range of new projects, strategies and policies will be completed.

Harrogate Library Big Lottery Community Libraries project: will be focusing on older people as a key beneficiary group, plus migrant workers and those with a disability. Community engagement will increase with emphasis on these key beneficiary groups

Three reading groups are run at Knaresborough Library. Following a public consultation meeting, older people said they did not want to go out after dark in the winter. In response, one of the reading groups is now held during the afternoon. (5.1)

## **Consulting**

Annual survey of Home Library and Information Service customers was carried out during November 2008 with 88.7% rating the choice of books as Very Good / Good. Comments are being addressed with individual customers.

Annual survey of Home Library and Information Service customers will be carried out in November 2009.

PLUS (Public library users' survey) surveys are carried out in 2 out of every 3 years. The survey in 2007 addressed children's library services and the results have been analysed and actioned, there was no survey in 2008 and the Adult PLUS will be carried out in 2009.

As 75% of County Record Office users (research visitors) are aged 55 or over, there is often little distinction to be made between programmes to serve general users and programmes to serve older users. The main user survey is the national exercise coordinated by the National Council on Archives and Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) approximately every 18 months. In 2007, 93% of users considered the service to be Very Good / Good.

A satisfaction survey was carried out by the Registration Service in May 2009 and of the clients who responded 29% were aged over 60. 95.2% of the target sample were Very / Fairly Satisfied. Specific comments are being addressed. (3.2)

## **Informing**

Displays and activities including reflexology and hand massage (MIND) were held in libraries as part of World Health Day