

## South Gloucestershire Library Service Health & Wellbeing Annual Report 2016

This report summarises the work of South Gloucestershire Libraries in 2016, it highlights the impact we have had on communities and individuals, and supports the Public Libraries Universal Health Offer

### Mental health and wellbeing

**Vital statistic:** National outcomes for adult mental health Books on Prescription: 90% report increased understanding of their health (source: Reading Well)

**South Gloucestershire Libraries:** 1,283 Reading Well Books on Prescription issued

Reading is healthy in its own right but libraries have developed this, providing in every library a series of books for specific conditions under the national Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme; lists include dementia and common mental health conditions. One in ten young people have a diagnosable mental health condition and, in response to this issue, a collection for young people, 'Shelf Help', was launched this year- see [www.southglos.gov.uk/shelfhelp](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/shelfhelp)

To enhance the benefits of the Books on Prescription collection, a grant was successfully bid for from Arts Council England (ACE), to run a series of art projects in 3 libraries where the need was greatest for mental health improvement. The resulting Re:Mapping project has achieved outstanding results



'I've done every session and loved every session. It's made a major impact on me. I've grown massively'

'I've been so much more gentle and nice to myself since doing the project'

In partnership with other organisations the library service has worked to reach isolated older people. Work has been undertaken not only to provide information on what might draw these people out of their isolation but also to run activities that put them in touch with others. Library services continue to be delivered to frail and disabled people in their homes as necessary and referrals are made to other service providers through the Council's [First Contact scheme](#).

Kingswood Library offered its space free of charge to a peer support group organised by local charity Community Ignite to run 'Positive state of Mind' sessions. 13 people were supported through the sessions, of whom 85% report feeling happier as a result of attending. Funding has been secured to continue.

### Autism

**Vital statistic:** 1 in 100 of population nationally are living with autism (source: National Autistic Society)

**South Gloucestershire Libraries:** estimate 1000 loans of specialist books during the year

A collection of books in support of people with autism and their carers has been bought for every library in partnership with local support organisations

The National Autistic Society followed this up by touring an exhibition around all libraries, offering support and information. Through holding this exhibition in libraries they were able to raise the profile of autism to the wider community. In addition, library staff have been trained in awareness of issues facing autistic children and their parents when using libraries.

## Dementia

**Vital statistic:** Nationally: 73% found Books on Prescription increased their understanding of the condition (source Reading Well)

**South Gloucestershire Libraries:** 907 Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia borrowed. 360 attendances at Memory Cafes, Sporting Memories and Re:Mapping activities

One staff member is trained as a Dementia Champion and she delivered training to ensure every member of the library staff is a Dementia Friend. We were therefore able to commit to the South Gloucestershire Dementia Action Alliance, with every library offering safety and understanding. In addition, we have supported Public Health's Dementia Awareness week activities and attended every quarterly Dementia Roadshow, reaching out to people in their communities.

The Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme, has this year, expanded to include a collection specifically for carers and people experiencing dementia and this is available in all libraries, with an extended loan period and free reservations.



To offer further support, three libraries host hugely successful Memory Cafes every month. NHS Memory Service drop-ins have also been set up at 3 libraries, offering regular advice and information.

We were successful in bidding for funding to deliver 3 years' of arts for people with dementia. These started this year and have had some impressive outcomes: 'Going to the memory café is my only social contact since becoming a carer for my wife since her diagnosis'.

## Health Information

**Vital statistic:** NHS cost savings through use of libraries in reduced visits to GPs is £27.5 million each year (source: Arts Council's 'Health and wellbeing benefits of libraries' 2015)

**South Gloucestershire Libraries:** average 1,800 enquiries relating to health per year

We trained a member of staff in every library to be a Health Champion. This means they have an understanding of health issues and are equipped to spot opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of people with whom they have contact.



'I noticed someone just sitting in the library and discovered they had been made redundant, just moved into the area and didn't know anyone. I made them welcome, mentioned the Wi-Fi and, over time, got them using their laptop in the library and signposted them to volunteering and breakfasting at the community centre'

They are building on this expertise to develop Health Zones in each library, ensuring that libraries are a reliable, comprehensive and independent source of information and support for all topics.

### Other services

- Health information organisation [Wellaware](#) held advice and awareness sessions in libraries
- We contributed to the new Precious Time support for isolated older people, adding to the website and offering our services.
- The service also worked with Macmillan to test their drop-in advice session in several libraries.