

South Gloucestershire Library Service Annual Report 2015-2016

This report summarises the work of South Gloucestershire Libraries in 2015/16, it highlights the impact we have had on communities and individuals.

Reading and literacy

Vital statistic 1.1 million books issued

Emersons Green Library 79,242 books issued

Time4Reading

This year the service has been working across South Gloucestershire on the Time4Reading project involving schools (primary and secondary) and the wider community. Schools have developed an award scheme to reward schools who achieve certain criteria, see www.southglos.gov.uk/time4reading

Children reading

The work with children and the encouragement of children to read makes South Gloucestershire one of the leading authorities – more children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge per capita than any other library in the South West. The service does work with all ages from pre-school children to teenagers, 44% of books issued are children's books. The Concorde book Award is becoming a highly prestigious award and this year's ceremony was an exciting affair.

Parents said: 'The Summer Reading Challenge is a fantastic idea that is extremely well thought out in order to achieve maximum benefit for all... and it's free!!' Children said: 'It improves my reading and makes me read bigger books!!'



Adult reading

To mark the Rugby World Cup libraries supported the regional reading passport, this opened doors to working with Bristol Sport through a longer term relationship both in schools and libraries.

The high profile events and activities are complimented by work within all the communities in engaging people with reading both within the library and in community settings.

In June the LibrariesWest consortium expanded to include Dorset and Poole, providing users with a range of 2 million books to choose from.

Information service

Vital statistic 140,000 enquiries

Emersons Green Library 14,196 enquiries

Libraries provide access to information, they are often the first place people will go to for help and staff are able to either provide the answer or refer to another agency or resource. For details of the information service see <http://bit.ly/1rCICEJ>. A woman asked for information on foods that do not contain caffeine. We were able to give her authoritative information from both books and the internet. As a result of the conversation the woman then revealed there was a serious medical cause for her enquiry, so the member of staff was able to check that she was receiving medical help.

Digital literacy

Vital statistic 137,000 hours of usage of the computers **Emersons Green Library** 9,862 hours of usage

Digital inclusion is a priority both at local and national level and the service working with Community Learning has trained staff and volunteers to deliver a consistent offer to people wanting support with IT. With the increasing channel shift in all organisations access to IT and staff to support is becoming critical for the success of the digital inclusion plans.

The service was successful in receiving a grant to promote online access and worked with the other community groups in South Gloucestershire to promote access to IT.



Mrs R wanted to email her son who was working abroad. She had an initial 1:1 session with an IT volunteer who helped her set up the account. She was very nervous and shaking with fear. Over the year and with subsequent help from staff, this lady has become so confident with IT that she now owns her own laptop and uses the free Wi-Fi in the library.

Culture and creativity

Vital statistic 9,600 adults and 65,000 children attended events in libraries

Emersons Green Library 1,277 adults and 4,886 children attended events

Libraries enrich the lives of individual and communities through the provision of events, activities and exhibitions helping people gain a sense of place and take pride in their neighbourhoods and communities. . The Discover Festival is a major part of our promotion, festival highlights at Emersons Green Library included a Murder Mystery and Community Gardeners Questions. The service also supports national weeks to raise the profile of specific issues such as British Science Week, World Mental Health Day and World Book Night.

Health and wellbeing

Vital statistic 4,000 Books on Prescription titles borrowed

Emersons Green Library 305 borrowed

Reading is healthy in its own right but libraries have continued to develop a series of books for specific conditions under the Reading Well Books on Prescription project – this year the dementia collection was launched which included stock for carers, and people experiencing dementia. In addition staff were trained to become health champions in each library. This complements the dementia and mental health arts project and memory cafes hosted in libraries.



Learning

Vital statistic 16,667 hours of formal learning

Emersons Green Library 2,147 hours

'I'm doing an MSc but, with a young family at home, I just have to study in your quiet room. I'm so grateful I can be here for 3 or 4 hours without question'

A Polish lady needed help in knowing how to translate and present her CV for a UK job. Staff were able to help.

Libraries promote lifelong learning, self-improvement and social mobility and play an important role supporting the educational curriculum with reading for enjoyment. They provide both formal learning programmes working closely with Community Learning and local colleges and informal learning opportunities with people developing their own skills and knowledge through use of IT and books. The service works closely with UWE where users can use their library card to access high level stock. The library workforce provides users with essential support to get the most from available learning opportunities.

They also support the economic growth of the area through providing volunteer opportunities and providing a touch down base for local workers. One gentleman regularly uses this (and other libraries) as a temporary office using the Wi-Fi and taking mobile phone calls. This means he has no office overheads.

Community

Vital statistic 917,743 visits

Emersons Green Library 65,791 visits

Libraries are valued safe and neutral spaces where people of all ages are welcomed and participate in a range of activities. The stories behind the visits are powerful testimonies to the value of libraries – the adopted child for whom the library is the first place outside their new home that they have felt safe. The library staff are the first adults with whom they have formed a relationship, outside of their new family. Then there is the adult with brain damage who came to learn to use the computer. After three sessions with staff he is now coming and using the PCs independently to take up his life again.

Being based in most main communities enables the service to host the delivery of other services, we work in partnership with Community Learning, Public Health, DWP, and various voluntary sector groups enabling to work with local communities. At Emersons Green Library we work closely with health visitors, Walking to Health, Village Hall, Town Council, Alzheimer's Society and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.

In addition libraries can be hired by community groups to ensure use of the building is maximised – users of Emersons Green Library include the local wind band and the Dyslexia Association.