

Inspire supports libraries from all sectors in working together to enable members of communities across the UK who are engaged in lifelong learning or research to find and access their information needs.

My request for information on how libraries can support provision of health information to the both public and health professionals has elicited a fascinating range of responses from public and academic libraries and also from health libraries within the NHS describing their outreach work to the public and to libraries as partners in their role to distribute health information as widely and as effectively as they can.

This issue also coincides with the publication of research undertaken by The Reading Agency on behalf of MLA and the Dept for Information and Science on the role of public libraries in effective improvement of access to health information. Details and links are included below.

The clear conclusion from all these items is that all concerned are keen to work together and there is no shortage of opportunities for further partnerships and joint working to support the provision of health information to all who need it. Contact details have been provided with every item included for any who wish to know more.

Sally Curry

Using your library can keep you healthy

Blackburn with Darwen's Public Library and Information Service is one of the first in the country to support ActivHeart, a new website to help prevent the onset of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and strokes.

Customers can use the library for books and DVDs to help keep them healthy and can now get health checks and on-line information about preventing diseases.

Residents of Blackburn with Darwen aged 35 to 74 can book a free NHS health check at the library, during which, cholesterol, weight and blood sugar checks are completed and advice, information and support about health and heart disease is provided.

Using the website is recommended as a follow up to the free NHS health checks currently on offer and library staff have been trained to help people use it.

Other health related initiatives offered include Books on Prescription, Choose and Book and NHS Choices.

For more information about this initiative, please contact: Adele Karwat, Principal Librarian, Customer Services, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
adele.karwat@blackburn.gov.uk

New library integrates public and academic health library services

In an earlier newsletter we recorded the exciting developments in Worcester where a joint initiative from Worcestershire County Council and University of Worcester will bring together the City's public library and the University's library, as well as the County's customer service centre, record office and archaeology services into one building.

Visitors to the centre will have access to a wealth of knowledge at their fingertips. As well as general information, books, events and exhibitions, the Centre will offer information and activities about health and health services available in the area and nationally.

The fully-integrated university and public library will combine academic texts, journals and e-resources for over 40 health-related subject areas studied at the University of Worcester with additional books on all areas of health, and regular displays from local organisations about healthy living, including information on local walks, and exercise and dance classes. The centre will be a local focus for national events such as Health Week.

The joint library will bring together services which exist in the current facilities. For example, the academic liaison librarian for the University's Institute of Health and Society department can help students and non-students alike to find specific information and resources on a variety of subjects, from midwifery or sports therapy to health psychology, substance misuse and counselling, all subjects that are available to study at the University.

Alongside this, the centre will link in with the NHS, to further develop the well used "Books on Prescription" service, which currently runs in Worcestershire libraries. This scheme encourages people to make the most of the resources available to them in the library, by sending a list of books to local GPs. GPs can then write a prescription for a specific book on the list that they feel the patient will benefit from reading. The patient exchanges their prescription for the title. In addition, the inclusion of the customer services centre within the building will offer extra health information to visitors, who can get support for physical, mental, visual or hearing impairments, and learning difficulties, and find out how to claim for benefits for disabilities, such as qualifying for the Blue Badge scheme.

The integration of these services will compliment each other, and will offer everyone the chance to find out about health in many new ways.

The King's Fund Information and Library service

The NHS Evidence specialist collections on [health management](#), [commissioning](#) and [innovation and improvement](#) are unique resources which offer freely available access to authoritative and current issues within health management. The collections are managed by [The King's Fund Information and Library Service](#). As [The King's Fund](#) is a respected independent healthcare think tank, we are able to draw on the wealth of expertise and knowledge available within the Fund.

The collections aim to support both research and practice within management in health and social care. For practitioners and researchers within the field, these collections bring together the guidance, policy and examples of best practice all under one easily searchable and browsable portal. Each collection also produces briefings on [key topics](#) which provide a comprehensive starting point on timely topics, including definitions, key documents such as policies, guidelines, consultation documents and journal articles as well as media coverage and press releases.

In addition to this, the collections also aim to support current awareness for busy health professionals and librarians. The librarians behind the collections sift through the deluge of publications to produce a twice-weekly bulletin on [health management](#) and a monthly newsletter on [commissioning](#). Alerts to new publications and events are also available via our [RSS feeds](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

As there is a dedicated librarian behind each NHS Evidence specialist collection, enquiries, feedback and suggestions are more than welcome and we can be contacted as detailed below:

Health Management - hmsc@kingsfund.org.uk

Commissioning - csc@kingsfund.org.uk

Innovation and Improvement - iisc@kingsfund.org.uk

Health Ideas at the Idea Stores

On 27 May Tower Hamlets, Idea Stores in partnership with NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) and NHS Tower Hamlets launched the 'Wellpoint' kiosk at Idea Store Bow as part of a NHS campaign to improve the health and wellbeing of the over 40s.

Tower Hamlets residents and Idea Store staff formed an orderly queue to try out the state-of-the-art touch-screen health kiosk. There were some surprising results! At the kiosk you are able to measure your weight, body mass index, body fat content, blood pressure and heart rate. You can then complete questionnaires, incorporating your test results, in order to assess your risk of a wide range of conditions.

Test results can be printed, or sent to your mobile phone via SMS, and you can also register to track your progress over time.

The kiosks are available at Idea Store Bow and Idea Store Chrisp from Monday 24 May until Saturday 24 July.

Tower Hamlets Idea Stores also take part in the 'Books the Healthy Option' scheme, offering stock and 'Feel Better With a Book' Reading Groups. http://www.ideastore.co.uk/en/containers/universal/book_and_reading_books_the_healthy_option and our website also offers a health information gateway with links to hundreds of quality health websites. The project is ongoing, with new sites added regularly. http://www.ideastore.co.uk/en/containers/universal/health_information_websites

For further information, please contact Denise Bangs
denise.bangs@towerhamlets.gov.uk

The Reading Agency: Libraries are good for Health and Wellbeing

There's been lots of activity on our health programme which supports and promotes the services libraries offer around health and well-being. The Museums and Libraries Archive (MLA) recently published research we have carried out for them in partnership with the Department for Information and Science at Loughborough University. This demonstrates the effective way in which public libraries are delivering positive outcomes on the health and well-being of local communities. Read more about the [research findings](#) and other health activities on our website. (Taken from The Reading Agency newsletter June 2010. <http://www.readingagency.org.uk/new-thinking/health/>

Details of the final report from the Reading Agency also available on the MLA website
<http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=1068>

Health information in the NHS in Bradford

Bradford & Airedale NHS Libraries is a cooperative of the library services of four NHS organisations in Bradford and Airedale working together. Our collective aims are to encourage and support evidence-based practice and lifelong learning to all NHS Staff and eligible users in the Bradford and Airedale district. The service assists the delivery of better patient care through the dissemination of current best practice and by facilitating access to high quality up-to-date research findings and knowledge. We also work as partners in the Inspire network in Bradford ([b-Inspired](#)) to ensure our resources are accessible to the wider public for reference purposes.

Our library service users include undergraduate students on placement, clinical staff such as doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and support staff such as secretaries, administrative staff, and domestics. In short anyone employed by, or on placement within, the organisations is entitled to use our services. In

In addition to this the Health Promotion Resources are available to a wider range of users such as teachers and community workers – anybody who actively promotes health across the district.

We provide a range of books and journals in both electronic and paper format, and facilitate access to the National Core Collection provided throughout NHS England. We perform literature searches and train our users in a range of information literacy skills, as well as providing a document supply service for material held off site, and a range of current awareness services keep our users abreast of the latest evidence. There is a Health Promotion Library which also offers a range of models, leaflets, posters, training packs and other resources on a wide range of health promotion topics.

For more information, please contact Dominic Gilroy,
Library Service Manager, Health Library, Bradford Royal Infirmary
Dominic.Gilroy@bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk

Better Information, Better Health in Stoke on Trent

Stoke-on-Trent library service is in the process of developing a health and well-being offer. The service currently offers a range of interventions including Books on Prescription and is in the process of developing new services including support for self help groups, NHS Choices/Choose and Book and creative bibliotherapy/reading groups for older people, using the Reading Aloud model.

The library service is also developing a long term partnership with NHS Stoke-on-Trent, which currently provides £50,000 funding for a permanent full time Information Officer post, managed by the library service, and linked activities and resources. The post developed from an 18-month pilot project, the aim of which was to increase access to health information for patients and the general public through public libraries in a particularly deprived area of the city. The library service is also developing a partnership with adult social care to support work with older people.

In developing the Better Information, Better Health programme, the library service aims to develop a high level of public engagement in order to shape the delivery of the services and resources offered. This will be achieved by developing the health club model, through the creation of a consultation group, a newsletter and perhaps a blog. In addition, a member of the public is already on the steering group, and is directly involved in decision making about the development of the work.

There are clear opportunities to extend this partnership and to link in with the development of a whole range of health related activity around support for self-help groups and NHS Choices currently under way in Stoke-on-Trent. The library is also bringing a much wider range of work to the table relating to literacy and learning, creative activity and reading groups, etc., which could lead to a holistic and fully integrated health and well-being offer for the city.

For further information on this project please contact: **Debbie Owen**/Library Health Information Development Officer, Libraries and Archives/ Adult Social Care, Health and Communities Directorate deborah.owen@stoke.gov.uk

Worcestershire Health libraries: a healthy interest in information

Worcestershire Health Libraries (WHL) provides library services to all NHS and Social Services staff in Worcestershire including 78 Health centres and General Practices and 2 Mental Health Units. There are library sites at the main hospitals and 7 dedicated library resource rooms (Internet Study Points) located across the county where NHS and Social Care staff can study, access on-line resources and receive training. The service is multi-disciplinary and there is 24/7 access at our two main libraries.

WHL has fourteen members of staff divided into four Teams including our Community Outreach team who promote services to the community, through road-shows and focus groups.

We have developed strong working ties with librarians from different sectors and have led on developing partnerships through the Inspire Worcestershire and Herefordshire group* and Books On Prescriptions in Worcestershire**. Through membership of Inspire, WHL has offered reference-only access to our libraries for the public since 2004.

WHL also work closely with Public Libraries during our yearly Health Information Week to promote quality health information to the public. Campaigns include a tour of Worcestershire on a computer bus, health information drop-ins on enquiry desks and stalls and displays at Worcestershire information hubs.

* Chamberlain D, (2007) 'Why bother to work together? How to avoid stepping on toes in partnership working' Library and Information Update 6 (1-2) p24-36

** Chamberlain D, Heaps D and Robert I (2008) 'Bibliotherapy and information prescriptions: a summary of the published evidence-base and recommendations from past and ongoing Books on Prescription projects' Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing 15 (1) p24-36

East Midlands: Working in Partnership to support health and well-being

Public Libraries in the East Midlands have a long tradition of working together on reader development initiatives and have identified working with health sector partners as one of the priorities for their service.

A mapping exercise of the regional reading and health landscape was undertaken by Libraries and Information East Midlands' (LIEM) Regional Librarian, Lynn

Hodgkins, in Autumn 2009 revealing huge potential for collaboration within the public library sector and for partnership development with external health and social care partners. The findings and a summary can be seen on [LIEM's website](#) .

Following this work, a regional Reading and Health Conference was held in April 2010 at Chesterfield Library in Derbyshire co-ordinated by East Midlands' Society of Chief Librarians and Libraries and Information East Midlands. The event brought together colleagues from libraries and the health and social care sectors across the East Midlands. It provided an opportunity to share good practice and experiences around reading for health and well-being; showcased a number of regional initiatives; and explored strategies for future partnership working.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to network and share experiences, to hear about the work already underway around health and well being and the chance to meet existing and potential partners. The high quality and well delivered presentations provided an excellent range of examples and ideas to inspire future working across the sectors. They were asked "if you only do one thing as a result of today what will it be?" The responses were tremendous, highlighting a huge range of individual actions which clearly demonstrated the enthusiasm and commitment to move this work forward.

The outcomes of the workshop discussions and the evaluations will be further considered by the EMERALD (East Midlands Libraries and Reader Development) Group, and local and region-wide actions to build on the outcomes of the day will be identified. A key area identified for future development is work with health professionals to provide evidence of the impact of the contribution that libraries and reading make to the health and well-being agenda.

For further information, see the [LIEM website](#) or contact Lynn Hodgkins, lynn.hodgkins@derbyshire.gov.uk

CHEC (Community Health and Enterprise Centre)

Offers a community resource centre which promotes health and learning through access to information, services and training, within a multi-agency environment. It strives to provide what people need, where they live, within areas of social deprivation, to tackle health inequalities. The purpose of CHEC is to make a significant contribution to promoting good health and well being, to community regeneration and development and by providing services, opportunities for volunteering, information, advice and assistance to help local people to help themselves and their community. Although independent from the local library service, CHEC works closely with Telford and Wrekin Public Libraries.

Health Shop

- A drop- in approach to providing individual help, advice and support on a wide range of health, social and related issues
- Sign posting to other support agencies and local groups and develop user-friendly routes around/between agencies

Special Health Information issue

June 2010

- A wide variety of leaflets, books, teaching packs, videos, teaching aids plus other information on health promotion, disease prevention and various illnesses
- The provision of non-medical services (e.g. sexual health/drug and alcohol services)
- A de-medicalisation of services located alongside community facilities
- The commitment to reducing barriers and improving access to health facilities

For more information please go to <http://www.telford.nhs.uk/Your-Health/The-Health-Shop/> or contact Brenda Cockcroft, CHEC Manager, Brenda.Cockcroft@telfordpct.nhs.uk

NHS Direct Wales: Health and Information Service

With libraries often at the heart of the community and people looking for health information for themselves or others, how do you know you are directing them to the most appropriate resources and how can NHS Direct Wales help?

NHS Direct Wales is a 24 hour bilingual health and information service where you can obtain nurse advice if you are feeling unwell and don't know what to do or for health information on particular conditions such as diabetes and allergies. A team of Health Information Specialists provide information on a range of topics from general enquiries on local services and groups to more detailed information on health and wellbeing including conditions, treatments and healthier lifestyles. Information is provided through different channels such as telephone, email and texting services.

For further information please visit the website at www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

The Knowledge Resource team at NHS Direct Wales are responsible for ensuring all of the resources (websites, leaflets, books) used are accredited, up to date and evidence based. The team has been involved in a number of collaborations to deliver training sessions to front line library and information staff across Wales. The team are currently developing a modular training package which can be adapted to meet the individual training requirements of your service. These will include topics such as 'Accessing Health Information' and 'Assessing and Evaluating Health Information'.

If you require any further information on the training please contact Erin Abbott, Knowledge Resource Officer, erin.abbott@ambulance.wales.nhs.uk or telephone 01792 776252, ext: 5773.

And we could not complete a newsletter of this nature without mentioning the rest of the information services of: **NHS Direct**

NHS Direct is well known as the nurse-led service to contact when people are unwell or have symptoms needing home-care advice or referral to other NHS services. We have many partnership working agreements to provide services for

other NHS organisations but our national telephone helpline service is available 24/7 to any member of the public in England who requires advice, information or reassurance on a health-related issue.

In addition to the symptomatic service, NHS Direct provides a **health information service** with specially trained Health Information Advisors who can talk to people about their individual health concerns and offer information over the telephone or by post on diagnosed illnesses, conditions, tests, treatments, operations, medications, healthy lifestyles, support organisations and local health services. If enquirers prefer email to telephone, queries can be sent using the **send us a health enquiry** webmail page on the NHS Direct website, although this will receive a less personal response.

<https://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/Enquiry/Enquiry.aspx>

The NHS Direct health information service is supported by a quality assessed collection of leaflets, books and websites which are selected, evaluated and maintained by a small national library team. If you would like to know more about the provision of quality consumer health information resources or about NHS Direct services, please contact Tom Shaw, Interim Library Manager, tel: 01454 452537 or email: thomas.shaw@nhsdirect.nhs.uk

With many thanks to all who have contributed to this newsletter and apologies for the editing I have had to do to many entries in order to reduce the length of this newsletter.

Next Month...

The Silly Season in Libraries Competition :

As there is often less news in July and August, the Inspire e-newsletter will be running a silly season competition. Entries may be in two categories

- 1) the funniest reason for not returning a book
- 2) the most unusual thing found inside a returned item – and what you did about it

Competition entries to the usual address (below) before July 5th.

Entries may be published in the e-newsletter

There will be prizes

... and a **Reminder** that this newsletter should be about activities in the regions so if you would like to contribute information on events in your area, whether they are large or small, please send up an update on Inspire in your region or any other items which might be of interest to Inspire members –to me at the usual address:

sally.curry@newcastle.ac.uk

Thank you