

Swansea Libraries WPLS 2021-22

Appendix 2 – case study template and additional strategic narrative

Good impact case studies are expected to include evidence that the library service has made a positive difference to an individual (or group of individuals). This would normally go beyond a description of services provided and their use, to show the outcome, and may include testimony from the customers concerned.

Authority: Swansea Council

The impact which the library has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. Describe the use made of the service, and the difference that use made to the individual or group concerned. Up to four case studies may be provided (indicative length: 500 words each), two of which can be digital. However, the digital case studies are not compulsory.

Please indicate if permission for the Welsh Government to re-use and/or publish the case studies has been obtained or not: Permission not obtained for any case studies.

a) **Working with Kurds All Wales Association at Morrison Library**

Local volunteers with the Kurds All Wales Association (a not for profit organization aiming to provide help and support to all the BAME communities across Wales, especially the Kurds) were looking for an accessible and welcoming place in their local community to use to provide free Kurdish classes for children aged between 6 and 8 years.

A representative of the group identified the library as such a place and after their approach the Library Manager was able a free community meeting space on a weekly basis. In addition, staff could support the class organisers with other services such as printing and copying of materials and library memberships and other wider service benefits for the families who were attending.

As well as the immediate benefit of a welcoming place in the locality with open access for those who wished to attend; the use of this base in the library at the centre of the community helped the group to share information and demonstrate evidence about the impact and success of the classes. This base was then used to access additional funding with which they were able to hire a larger space, which was better able to accommodate the class for a greater number of families as it grew in size. The good relationship the library built with the group and families who attended classes continues and the new customers who had not accessed the library before continue to benefit from its services, including access to reading material in English (and Welsh) for those associated with the group for whom English is a second language.

b) **YGG Tirdeunaw Wellness Reading Group at Penlan Library**

Penlan Library have taken the opportunity to strengthen ties with a local Welsh medium primary school, following a move to a new build site close to the library. Previously the distance from the library made it difficult to establish regular library visits. However, since the move (and with the support of the Winter of Wellbeing Grant grant) a weekly bilingual reading group was established for the nurture/rainbow group children who all have

different emotional support needs. Each session started with a bilingual empathy story read in English by library staff and then reading by the children in Welsh. Activities such as crafts, parachute play and some yoga were also incorporated into the story sessions. The confidence of the group members grew weekly and they all thoroughly enjoyed expressing themselves through the craft or movement part of the session. Topics explored included sharing, being a friend, being individual, trying new things, growing and feelings and this offered an opportunity to engage the children with material from the library empathy collections and the Reading Agency, Reading Well material. Through the introduction of the library through the reading group, some children from the group have visited the library after school with their families, attended library events, becoming regular library customers.

Following the success of the group the library is initiating these sessions to other nurture groups from different schools in the community.

c) **Multiple benefits of library membership to a senior customer at Gorseinon Library**

LD is a 76-year-old lady who has been an avid library user throughout her life. She suffers from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and other health problems that have led to her having difficulty concentrating and reading as well as carrying on her work as an aspiring author.

Previously she used the Central Library to aid in her Masters degree and teaching role, but in more recent years has been a frequent customer of Gorseinon.

L visited the library creative writing group which started her journey of writing poetry, and often used the public access PCs to type documents for publication. She has found access to help using the PCs invaluable, as well as general guidance provided by staff which has helped her complete her work as well as providing a source of information and inspiration through borrowing books relevant to her studies:

“To me the service is immeasurable, it’s like gold. It’s such a valuable benefit, I couldn’t have done it without you. You have such a wealth of knowledge and have given me help with such a broad range of topics.”

L struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic when the library was briefly closed and had a reduced service. Suffering from isolation and Covid related cognitive disability she was having difficulty reading simple texts and she missed the library. However, adaptations made once the service could operate again, such as extended loans and renewals and suspending overdue charges, reportedly helped remove some of anxiety she was experiencing and helped her complete her writing.

The impact and benefit to L of the service provided by Gorseinon Library in terms of free access to a PC and printing, digital support to produce her work to a standard, the writing skills and social interaction from the writing group attendance

“On so many occasions I’ve worked here all day... I accomplished something – you’re helping a writer to be published.”

“(during COVID and library closure) it was completely bleak. I could get books to read. You were always very kind and didn’t mind if I kept renewing (books). I hated the fines, so was so pleased I didn’t have to pay any – the really heavy burden was gone.”

"I would really miss you if you were closed again. You're open to different requests and have so much knowledge."

d) Digital Support and information and signposting for a customer at St Thomas Library

In late 2021 a gentleman approached the library for help with an IT issue as he had limited IT skills. He had not used the library for quite some time and was in particular need of help due to extremely difficult personal circumstances.

The presenting need was to retrieve information from a mobile phone and print out multiple copies as the information was required as part of an ongoing police investigation and would potentially be ongoing for some time to complete.

The library staff were able in the first instance to show the customer how to use the public PC to access the information needed and transfer it to a suitable format maximising the print space and drastically reduce the amount of printing and associated costs when on a limited budget. The customer then disclosed other issues he was dealing with, and the library staff were able to signpost to other local support, including the local MP, Local Area Coordinator, church and the food bank. The confidentiality offered and trust engendered by library staff was key to the gentleman due to the nature of his issues.

This new customer has been using the library almost daily since their initial visit and is extremely grateful for the opportunity to use a convenient and welcoming space to both work on their dossier and to meet with various service providers. It has made an enormous difference to their self-worth and wellbeing to know that they have access to a safe space, as this is paramount due to their personal circumstances. They have thanked staff many times for the peace of mind that comes from using the library. The initial query for help to use a PC has become a much wider example of how, with a customer centred approach to our work, a library can offer a wide range of support and discreet signposting to relevant services.

