

Case Studies for WPLS 2016-17

Safeguarding vulnerable people

Gorseinon Library - Supporting those with Disabilities in the Community

Ms B is 32 and visits Gorseinon Library regularly. The manager saw her “excitedly whizzing around on her mobility scooter... searching for books on her mobile device then retrieving them off the shelves with a huge smile on her face.”

Here are Ms B’s thoughts.

“I feel that the libraries are doing an excellent job at engaging the community.

As a full-time wheelchair / scooter user it has been hard to feel included in society and staying bed-bound was often preferable to the stigma and abuse I’d get outside, from being refused entry, refused travel and denied services.

The library – both Penlan and Gorseinon, have been a refuge from all that negativity.

The staff at Gorseinon have been welcoming and encouraging. The groups they run for free are having a huge positive impact on myself and others.

Another example explains how gradually increasing interaction helped Mr A.

A lives alone locally and has advised us he suffers from mental health issues due to a dysfunctional childhood. Noise has a detrimental effect on his mental health and he likes the quiet. However staff have noticed that his tolerance of noise has improved, and whilst he comes to the library to read the paper they are pleased to see him socialising with other customers.

A states “At a time when lots of support services are falling away, people need places which provide social and supportive amenities, libraries are not just about books (though my love of reading provides a valuable escape from my worries and stresses), they offer activities and reliable information service. A free and warm environment eases the financial pressures of living on benefits.”

Building sustainable communities

Clydach Library – Tackling isolation

Libraries continue to play an important role in their communities as highlighted by the various groups that meet regularly whether it is walking, crafting, knitting, digital skills etc. They contribute towards social wellbeing, tackling isolation and poverty.

This extract is taken from a letter to Clydach library and perfectly highlights the difference the library makes to the local community.

“Over the years I have had numerous reasons to visit my local library in Clydach... There’s an occasion that particularly comes to mind when I was desperate to communicate with my son and the only way I could reach him was in an email. I wasn’t computer literate and I was indebted to the staff in Clydach Library who helped me set up an email account and made this possible. This opened up a whole new world to me of communication that would not have been possible without their support. Sadly I lost my son last year and a friend recommended that I read the “chicken soup for the soul” books... I believe one copy needed to be ordered from America at a small cost and the comfort they provided was much needed on-going therapy. I often have difficulty with the complexity of the computer despite being on a course, again provided by the library but the helpful manner of the staff is always welcome and they go the extra mile to help.

Recently I have joined a “Colour yourself happy” group there every Tuesday. This gives me the chance to forget my worries and lose myself in the pictures. It also gives me an opportunity to mix with other people and enjoy conversation. For people like myself who don’t have the luxury of the internet at home, our local library provides a much needed facility.

The services supplied by the library and the kind, helpful and generous staff who work there are an asset to the community of Clydach.”

Creating a vibrant and viable city and economy

Pennard Library - Addressing employability

Adrien Rees from PACE (Parents, childcare and employment) visited Pennard library to talk to mothers at the Library's weekly rhyme time session. The aim of the PACE project is to help parents return to work after a career break. A parent of 3 young children, Ms D, joined the project and took advantage of free childcare provided so that she could update her computer skills. She is currently working part time in a local Primary School, a job she would not have applied for without taking part in the scheme.

Below is a statement from Ms D.

"I am a local mum with three children, two attend the local Primary school, and my youngest is currently pre-school age. We frequently visit Pennard Library to attend children's events and activities such as rhyme time and crafty Friday sessions.

Occasionally representatives from various local council / government departments or charities attend such events as a way of engaging with the local community. At a visit from a Jobcentre plus employee I found out about a project which aims to help parents not currently working into training and employment through tackling barriers such as lack of childcare.

The European social fund project, PACE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) is a joint initiative supported by Welsh Government and Jobcentre Plus.

I immediately identified with the aims of the project, since I would like the opportunity to retrain and gain employment but cannot afford childcare costs. After speaking to the Parent Employment Advisor I found I was eligible to participate. As a result I will be able to access free childcare and undertake a level 2 Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools course. Part of which will involve a work experience placement at the local Primary School. Gaining the qualification will enable me to apply for jobs such as a Teaching Assistant, Learning Support Assistant or Special Educational Needs Assistant."

Pupil Attainment

Mrs W has a 14 year old son with Autism. The child initially joined for books as he liked reading and would visit the library about once a fortnight. He started attending the arts and crafts club on a Monday and still continues to. This led to him attending holiday clubs and other after school activities and enabled him to meet new people and make friends. *“All this has been really useful to Lewis and has enabled him to mix with the community and overall the whole experience has really built his confidence.”*

This is one of the many ways library services support pupil attainment and the service receives numerous comments about its children’s services and staff.

In Spring 2016 a new child began coming to rhyme time. L has Down’s Syndrome. Having seen L’s mum signing during Old MacDonald the manager was inspired to learn basic Makaton sign language.

“L is 18 months old now and has been learning more signs though rhymetime. Furthermore, having Makaton to accompany the songs has meant that more children in the community have been exposed to it and are familiar with the signs. I am immensely grateful as these children will grow up with L and rather than seeing her as a 'different' child who communicates with sign language, they know the signs and will be able to communicate with her as an equal peer.”

We are very lucky to live so close to this fantastic resource and be able to use it as we do!”

