

Strategy for Library Services for Older People in East Sussex

1. **Community Services - Policy Steer**

Provide modern Library Services for all, especially older people and rural communities.

2. **Objective of the strategy**

To provide quality library services appropriate to the needs of older people who live in East Sussex, working in partnership with others to ensure needs are identified and met.

3. **Why is a strategy needed?**

3.1 Demographic considerations - 25.7% of East Sussex residents are over pensionable age. The County has the highest proportion of very elderly residents of any county in England – 12% over 75 as opposed to average for England of 7.6%, 3.1% over 85 as opposed to average for England of 1.9%.(Source, ESCC website)

3.2 The Council has made improving services to older people a priority, achieving this is not limited to action by Adult Social Care.

3.3 Development of library services over the years has been inconsistent resulting in an ad hoc service across the county. There is little uniformity and a lack of service standards. Capacity has increased with the introduction of a Manager: Equal Access Services who will develop the service.

3.4 There are statutory requirements (see Appendix 1) and national guidelines (see Appendix 2) which have implications for the service that is offered and its delivery.

4. **Target audience and proposed action.**

The following are listed in the greatest order of need and therefore priority.

4.1 **Older housebound people**

In East Sussex there are approximately 6500 people who are being helped to live at home by Adult Social Care. Books and other library material are mainly delivered by volunteers to just over 1200 of these people. Current provision is patchy, procedures vary, there is no service standard and the policy has not been revised for over 10 years.

This client group will be given the highest priority because they have no other form of access to library services.

Action: The service will be improved by setting new guidelines and procedures and ensuring they are applied consistently. The service will be expanded to reach those who do not receive a service, through promotion, the recruitment of more volunteers and partnership work with voluntary organisations.

4.2 **Older people in care homes**

There are 427 registered care homes in East Sussex (11 County Council run) for older people serving approximately 5000 people. About 100 homes receive a service from the library either through a deposit collection or some residents receiving a housebound service. Current provision is patchy, often with poor quality material, infrequent exchanges due to limited delivery capacity and a lack of agreed criteria. This service is a high priority because people in care homes have limited access to library services as many of them have mobility or other difficulties.

Action: The quality of service will be improved through the increase of new stock, an improved delivery service and new procedures for the loan of material. The number of homes served will

be increased through the use of volunteers, voluntary organisations and more efficient procedures. In the medium term (1 year) processes will be set up to recover the costs of lost material. In the longer term (3 years) funding will be sought to provide a dedicated mobile service.

4.3 Older mobile people

Over 25% of the county's population is over pensionable age and a large number visit libraries in person. The number of library members over 65 is not available although anecdotal evidence shows that there is a high percentage in some areas.

Some older people have particular needs e.g. they may have restricted mobility or failing eyesight and it is important that our buildings are accessible, have comfortable seating, good lighting and clear guiding. Material should be in a range of formats stored on suitable shelving. In addition the rural nature of the county can lead to hidden social exclusion, particularly amongst older people, due to lack of affordable and accessible transport.

Action: The priority is to determine how many people use the service, consult on current and future provision and implement the findings where possible.

4.4 Older people with disabilities

There is no total figure for the number of people with a disability living in East Sussex aged 65+ and no records of those using the library service. Difficulties with hearing, mobility and health are often age-related and this group has special requirements.

Action: Buildings and delivery points will meet DDA requirements where possible or reasonable adjustments to service provision will be made. Clear procedures will be introduced to enable staff to supply information in alternative formats.

4.5 Older people with a visual impairment

In East Sussex there are 4400 people who are over 65 and registered as either blind or partially sighted. 1600 people are registered as receiving a library service either through the Equal Access Centre or the RNIB. A review of the Equal Access Centre recommended that that the service relocates to more suitable premises, is expanded and access increased.

Action: Existing service provision will be examined and a charging structure will be considered to cover costs and release money to fund future improvements. Opportunities will be examined to relocate the Equal Access Centre within any new library to improve access.

4.6 Older people from Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups

2.3% of the people living in East Sussex are from BME groups and 0.5% are over 65 years old. The results from 2 surveys undertaken in 2004/05 have informed the increased provision of stock in a variety of languages and the translation of some library leaflets. Although the number of people within this group is small their specific needs may make access to current library services difficult.

Action: Access will be improved through the increased provision of information in a variety of languages. Further consultation will take place with specific groups relevant to establish their needs and respond with the purchase of requested materials.

4.7 Older people in day centres

There are 28 centres in East Sussex, 3 of which will close later this year. 6 (3 of which will close) of these centres receive a library deposit collection. Current provision is patchy, often with poor quality material, infrequent exchanges and no regulation.

Adult Social Care assists some housebound people to attend day centres. Since many people will already have access to a housebound library service this client group is seen as a lower priority by the library service.

Action: In the longer term provision and demand will be examined with a view to providing a service where needed.

4.8 Older people in hospitals

There are 7 hospitals in East Sussex with a further 4 outside the county serving the people of East Sussex. The library service does not provide a service to these hospitals. Currently people in hospital are served by local agreements between hospitals and voluntary bodies such as the Red Cross.

Action: This client group is a low priority as there is some current provision. There is scope in the long term to examine the level of provision and offer a service in partnership with the existing voluntary bodies if there is a demand.

5. Supporting action

5.1 Performance measures

The majority of statistics given throughout this report are estimates as there is not enough detailed information available about specific groups of people. A suite of management information specific to older people will be set up and performance measured to inform service delivery.

5.2 Consultation

Consultation is core to improving service provision. The results from previous surveys including the two Equal Access Reviews, Adult PLUS and BME survey will be studied and findings implemented. Further consultation will be undertaken with lead providers such as Adult Social Care, and client groups including the Countywide Older People's Fora, housebound people and people in care homes.

5.3 Resources

This strategy involves refocusing existing resources and generating new special projects.

5.4 ICT

Some older people find IT daunting and difficult to use especially if they have a disability or are infirm. All libraries have one specially adapted computer with assistive software for people with disabilities although use is minimal. A few libraries provide IT training sessions for the over 50s either through external providers or library staff. Feedback indicates that there is a demand for IT training for the public so a programme of courses will be developed using external providers where possible. A training programme will be developed for staff to help them assist older people.

5.5 Information needs

Information and signposting for older people with disabilities is provided through the Equal Access Centre. The information needs of older people will be established to inform our services.

5.6 Partnership working

There are a large number of statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with older people. The library service is a key player in the provision of services to older people. Partnership working is vital to the improvement of the service and will be a high priority for the Manager: Equal Access Services. Key partners will be identified to help promote, support, and deliver library services.

5.7 Training

It is essential that all staff (including volunteers) dealing with older people receive appropriate training. The training will be included in induction programmes and in the training passport. Refresher training will take place every three years. Specialist trainers from statutory organisations or voluntary partners may be sought to deliver the programme

5.8 Providing champions within the Service

The current structure has a variety of arrangements within the Library Service for services to older people. The new structure will identify champions for Equal Access services as a whole to ensure more efficient and effective service provision.

5.9 Communications/Marketing

Currently there are a few library leaflets aimed at older people and some information is available on the website. The specific needs of some older people should be considered in any communication including following the guidelines relating to Plain English and using appropriate format e.g. large print. Marketing should target places where older people meet e.g. GP surgeries and day centres. We will link with existing service providers to promote our services. All library leaflets will be made available in appropriate format on request. Produce leaflets on library services relevant to older people.

Appendix 1

Statutory background

a. Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964

The terms 'comprehensive and efficient' are not defined within the 1964 Act. However, broadly speaking, the Act requires library authorities to provide free of charge, access for people who live, work or study in their area to borrow or refer to books, printed material and pictures in line with their needs and requirements.

(www.culture.gov.uk/libraries_and_communities/statutory_requirements.htm)

b. Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

It is the duty of every local authority to meet the requirements of anyone to whom the Act applies by making 'arrangements for all or any of the following: the provision for that person, or assistance to that person in obtaining wireless, television, library or similar recreational facilities'

c. Disability Discrimination Act 1995, 2005

There is a duty not to discriminate in the provision of services on the grounds of disability as defined by the Act. There is a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to allow people with

disabilities to access goods and services including physical adjustments to premises and provision of auxiliary aids.

From Dec 2006 public bodies (including local authorities) will have a duty to promote disability equality. The main element will be to produce a Disability Equality Scheme.

Although not all older people have disabilities, there is a correlation between age and disability.

Appendix 2

National Public Library guidelines

a. Framework for the Future notes that :

'Libraries have a long tradition of offering services to people who are housebound and those in residential care.' (p38)

b. Building Better Libraries (Audit Commission, 2002)

This report recognised that:

'... defining the core role of libraries is difficult. Library services can contribute to a wide range of priorities. However, central to the value people place on them is their flexibility – the freedom people have to use them as they want – a flexibility which makes their core role hard to define.' (p8).

c. Impact measures

The newly introduced impact measures include one relating to improving the quality of life for children, young people, families at risk and older people.

**Strategy for Library and Information Services for Older People in East Sussex
Action Plan 2006 – 2010**

Action	Who	When
Target Audience		
Older housebound people		
Write new guidelines and procedures	Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2007
Recruit more volunteers (individuals and through voluntary organisations).	Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2008
Promote Service	Manager of Equal Access Services	Ongoing
Older people in care homes		
Purchase additional stock	Group Librarians, Equal Access Library Manager	By April 2007
Improve delivery service	Assistant Head of Library & Information Services: Professional Services, Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2008
Write new procedures for the loan of material.	Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2007
Recruit more volunteers (individuals and through voluntary organisations)	Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2008
Set up procedures to recover the cost of lost material.	Manager of Equal Access Services	By March 2007
Seek funding to provide a dedicated mobile service.	Manager of Equal Access Services	April 2009 - 2010
Older mobile people		
Ascertain number of people who use the service	Manager of Equal Access Services	By December 2006
Consult on current and future provision	Libraries through Public Library User Survey	By December 2006
Implement the findings of consultation where possible.	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2007
Older people with disabilities		
Introduce clear procedures for staff to supply information to the public in alternative formats.	Manager of Equal Access Services	By September 2006
Ensure buildings and delivery points meet DDA requirements where possible or reasonable adjustments to service provision will be made	Assistant Head of Library & Information Services: Customer Services, Manager of Equal Access Services	Ongoing

Older people with a visual impairment		
Map existing service provision	Manager of Equal Access Services	By June 2006
Undertake a feasibility study to consider a charging structure for different services	Manager of Equal Access Services	By December 2007
Examine the feasibility of relocating the Equal Access Library especially within any new library	Assistant Head of Library & Information Services: Professional Services, Assistant Head of Library & Information Services: Customer Services, Manager of Equal Access Services	Ongoing
Older people from Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups		
Consult with relevant groups to establish their needs	Group Managers	By December 2007
Increase provision of information in a variety of languages.	Group Librarians	April 2008 - 2009
Older people in day centres		
Map existing provision	Manager of Equal Access Services	By July 2008
Consult on service development	Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2009
Older people in hospitals		
Examine level of provision given by other agencies and the need for partnership working to meet demand.	Manager of Equal Access Services	By April 2009
Other Supporting Actions		
Performance Measures		
Compile a suite of management information specific to older people	Manager of Equal Access Services, Galaxy Support Staff	By March 2007
Consultation		
Analyse results from previous surveys and implement findings.	Manager of Equal Access Services	By September 2006 Start April 2007
Undertake further consultation with lead providers.	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2006 ongoing
Resources		

Investigate and secure external funding for special projects	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2006 ongoing
ICT		
Develop a programme of courses using external providers where possible.	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2008
Develop a training programme for staff to help them assist older people.	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2008
Information Needs		
Ascertain the information needs of older people.	Manager of Equal Access Services External providers	Start April 2006 ongoing
Training		
All staff to receive appropriate training to help them when dealing with older people	Assistant Head of Library & Information Services: Customer Services, Manager of Equal Access Services	Rolling programme from September 2006
Partnership Working		
Identify key partners to help promote, support and deliver library services.	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2006 ongoing
Seek funding opportunities through partnership working	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2006 ongoing
Champions within the Service		
Identify champions for Equal Access services in the new structure	SMT , Group Managers, Manager of Equal Access Services	By September 2006
Communications/Marketing		
Ensure all library leaflets and information is available in appropriate formats	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start June 2006 ongoing
Produce leaflets on library services relevant to older people	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start June 2006 ongoing
Link with existing service providers to promote our services	Manager of Equal Access Services	Start April 2006 ongoing