

KCC Libraries and Archives Contribution to Public Health in Kent

KCC Libraries & Archives are working towards the **KCC Towards 2010** target aiming to improve health, care and well-being of the people in Kent by working in partnership with public, private and voluntary sectors to help people lead healthy lifestyles.

We do not view health and well being as being just about illnesses, nutrition and exercise. Most of our contribution is around mental well being (fighting stress to take up a new hobby, investigating alternative therapies), general happiness and intellectual improvement (learning new skills, volunteering or engaging in the community).

Health Promotion - General

We have 103 libraries and 11 mobiles providing neutral non-judgemental environments. They are a safe place to meet, or just be around, other people- they are often a lifeline for the elderly and the mentally ill, job seekers and those wishing to pursue interests outside of recognised learning environments.

- Sources of Information- signposting/first stop shop leaflets, books and links to local providers) and access to more in-depth if needed.
- Displays of health related issues eg:- Salt awareness week at Maidstone Library, 'Mind, Body Spirit' book display at Cheriton Library
- On-line Reference library with links to Health & Wellbeing website at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries/online-library-services/libraries-health.htm>
- Health related reading lists are available via our online catalogue at <http://libcat.kent.gov.uk/05 Reading Lists/05 001 BrowseReadinglists.aspx>
- Regular activities held in libraries such as baby bounce and rhyme times, storytimes, homework clubs, reader development events (eg reading groups etc) encourage people's emotional literacy and benefit their mental, and therefore their physical, wellbeing.
- Working in partnership with Kent & Medway Cancer Network and Macmillan Cancer Support, 13 collections of materials were launched in July 2007 - suitable for adults, children, ethnic minority and visually impaired users - in main town centres. List of materials are held in all libraries, mobiles and on our website <http://libcat.kent.gov.uk/05 Reading Lists/05 001 BrowseReadinglists.aspx>. Bookmarks promoting this are available in service points. The Kent and Medway Cancer Guide website was launched in Nov 2007 and the link is available on our on-line reference library health website at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries/online-library-services/libraries-health.htm>

Health Promotion – Events

Working in partnership with local practitioners- nutritionist, GP surgeries, health sector librarians, healthy schools, Trading standards, Adult education and self help/voluntary organisations:-

- Eg 'Get Healthy' Healthy Eating week at Dartford library working with Trading Standards, NHS Dietician/Nutritionist and Dartford Borough Museum.
- Healthy eating activities during the Summer Reading Challenge at Swanley Library
- Adult Learners Weeks working with Adult Education- various locations- activities included Indian head massage, declutterin , look good/feel good, healthy lunch boxes, knittorama, be healthy/stay healthy.
- Adult Learners Week events in Maidstone SIP wards in partnership with Adult Ed, NHS, Maidstone Museum, St Johns Ambulance and others.
- 'Health on the web' at Tunbridge Wells library working with PCT Health librarians to introduce the public to health resources on the internet.
- Working with Kent Teenage Pregnancy partnership by distributing and promoting to libraries their CD Rom for young people 'the Edge' which covers the topics of sexual health, drugs, alcohol and provides service information for Kent.

- Healthy weekly walks with PCT Health promotion and in places local district authorities at Ashford, Folkestone, Birchington, Westgate, & New Ash Green- extremely well attended (eg at Ashford about 20 walkers each week).
- Family nature walks from Summerhouse Drive Library with Joydens Wood Support Group
- Town walks eg explore your past at Dartford working in partnership with Dartford Borough Museum
- Countryside walk promoting library services at Gravesend in partnership with Gravesend Historical society.
- Walks around Gravesend for particular groups eg ESOL students with Adult Ed, walks for older people and Boys Grammar School History Tour.
- Historical guided walks eg around Higham parish with Higham Village History group.
- Book displays working with partners eg Parkinson's disease awareness display- books leaflets at Herne Bay Library with Parkinson's Disease support group,

- First time Mums clinic working with health visitors at Herne Bay library.
- Health Visitors check up at Dover library

Appendix 4b

- Hearing Tests at Hive House Library working with Sure Start
- Poetry and prose sessions to Kent association for the Blind during make a Noise in Libraries week.
- Yoga & Dance classes at Westgate Library in partnership with the PCT health authority.

We have promoted our services relating to health to partners eg The Local and Planning monitoring group, Mental Health Promotion Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT.

Planned Activities

- Silver Surfers day (May 23 2008) 9 library districts will be taking part offering IT taster sessions to the over 50s.
- Promote the library service at events eg Eastern and Coastal Mental Health Promotion 'Active Recovery- Olympic' event on July 22 at Pzifers.
- Promote the library service at The Community Health Day with partners in Tonbridge North Trench Ward on May 25 (SIP ward).
- 2008 National Year of Reading. Successfully bid for authors who have just published a book on beating stress to talk at a library in July (venue and date TBA)
- 'Recovery through Reading' –possible bibliotherapy pilot project working with the Librarian at St Martins Hospital and the Occupational Therapist at the Arundel unit William Harvey Hospital Ashford, to start a reading group at the Arundel unit – possibly in the autumn.
- Deliver a programme of library service information/awareness to Health Trainers in East Kent in July with the local PCT.

Health Prevention

- KCC Libraries & Archives have worked in partnership with health practitioners in Eastern and Coastal PCT, West Kent PCT and the Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust to develop 'Books can Help'. This scheme aims to assist people with mild to moderate mental health problems and collections are now available in 39 libraries. Leaflets and bookmarks are available in libraries and on line at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/publications/leisure-and-culture/books-can-help.htm>
- Have extended the scheme to include bereavement and stop smoking working with the specialist bereavement library at

St Christopher's Hospice, London and the local PCT Stop Smoking Advisors.

- Intend to widen the scope of the scheme by incorporating materials suitable for young people, people with learning or other disabilities and those from ethnic minorities.
- Already established a MIND Reading group which meets monthly at Maidstone Library. This has been running for about a year- discuss books eg RaW Quick Reads- also involves a coffee and chat- about 10 people attend accompanied by MIND helpers.
- Established links with Mental Health Carers Support Group Maidstone- delivered a talk and visit planned to Maidstone library on June 10 during Carers week.

Planned activities

- Working with The Social Care Commissioner for Mental Health in East Kent to establish walks and talks groups with Mental Health service users possibly in Thanet/and or Whitstable during 2008 National Year of Reading
- Working with KCC Trading standards colleagues to promote salt awareness to the public. Displays planned at Cheriton (May) and Ashford library (September)
- Working with KCC Healthy Schools Programmes Manager to assist in the promotion of the healthy eating/weight agenda to parents/carers through libraries.

Harm reduction

- Working with KCC Policy Officer in the Public Health Department and Stop Smoking Advisors in the local PCTs to promote our library buildings as possible suitable venues for stop smoking sessions. At present these have been held at Tonbridge, and also continuing at Newington and Margate Library Gateway. The Stop Smoking Advisor in Gravesham uses Coldharbour library for awareness sessions to signpost people to sessions held at the Gr@nd Gravesend.