

CASE STUDIES FOR WG

TORFAEN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

A) The following case study has been compiled from the experiences and comments of a female customer who moved into Torfaen in 2015 and who has become a regular user of both Pontypool and Blaenavon libraries. Using the services provided by the library has assisted her to settle into and become established within her new community. The impact has included finding a place to live through online council services and is also helping her to gain experience for returning to work. The following comments are in her words:

“Having moved to Pontypool from Brighton in difficult circumstances at the end of last year, the local library was my first port of call to find out what goes on in the local area.

As an avid reader, I've found that the library has a diverse, interesting and up-to-date stock, as well as a great online service for ordering books from other local libraries and those out of area.

The availability of computer services has been a lifeline for me, both in practical terms (finding housing and work) and to discover more about local and national cultural events.

The relaxed atmosphere of the library is great for meeting locals and joining the library book group, which meets on a monthly basis, has helped me integrate into the local community and make new friends. However, the library's greatest asset is its friendly and welcoming staff, who go out of their way to be of help whenever asked to do so. “

Through the library service this customer has made contact with Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and this has led to volunteering opportunities which she believes will improve her employability.

B) In the year under review Torfaen Library and Information Service has become the first library service in Wales to be awarded the Alzheimers Society's Dementia Friendly status and the right to use their logos. This recognizes the efforts made by the service both in staff training and in service delivery. Every member of the library staff has had dementia awareness training mostly delivered by the Health and Well Being Information and Support Officer who is a recognised Dementia Friends Champion. Given the recent timeframe of this recognition and the highly personal nature of dementia this has to be a general case study rather than one which focusses upon an individual. Our service points have been positively audited by the Alzheimers Society, we have an agreement to continue to work with them going

forward. They have also publicly praised the work of the service in relation to dementia which includes:

- Mental health issues being one of the areas of focus of the health and well being information and support service
- Long standing shared reading group for carers and those they support, which involves working with people living with dementia. (one of these individuals was the subject of a previous case study)
- Shared Reading by library staff at the Alzheimers Society Memory Café held in the Llanyrafon Methodist Church.
- Read to Me service with vulnerable and isolated adults
- Pictures to Share collections which are available in all libraries and are used at shared reading groups in Age Connects hubs.

C) Ty Cae Nant Residential Home – Shared Reading Group Case Study

This case study has been written by the Library and Information Professional who delivers the shared reading group:

It's nearly 3 o'clock on a rainy Tuesday afternoon, and the Ty Cae Nant residential home shared reading group is drawing to a close. We are currently reading Laurie Lee's *Cider With Rosie* and have just finished the chapter about his village school. I say 'just', although it has taken us a good few weeks to read this one chapter because everyone in the group has so much to say about their experiences at school – from the milk bottles that would be frozen at the start of cold winter days and the stove in the middle of the school room, to school dinners and the education system today.

This group has been running for about 8 months, since an approach was made by a member of the home staff, who was aware of shared reading groups, asking if a shared reading group would work in Ty Cae Nant. She thought it might be an enjoyable activity for the residents, particularly as the building was newly opened and everyone was still getting to know each other. It was decided that a Library and Information Professional, who is an accredited facilitator for the Reader Organisation model, would visit fortnightly for an hour. About 6 people came to the first session and now there are 12 regular attendees and several who just 'pop' in on their way to the kitchen. The group is predominantly female and have an average age of 75 years.

The sessions follow the shared reading structure of reading material aloud to the group and encouraging them to discuss and interact with the text as and when they wish, as the story unfolds. The sessions are very informal and full of chatty conversation. The sessions finish with a poem, and most of the group take a copy to keep and read again. Though some were hesitant at first, they need little encouragement now to participate

and find it easy to make a connection with the story and share their personal experiences and reflections about their thoughts and feelings. S often comments about how lovely and uplifting the story is, and how she enjoys listening to Lee's beautiful descriptions, while V adds that it is easy to lose yourself in the story and really 'live' in it. P says how relaxing she finds being read to, and how she feels much calmer after the session. All agree that it is very relaxing, and that they all look forward to the group every fortnight.

After finishing the chapter on the village school, the facilitator was preparing to leave when J, who usually says very little but listens intently, started to recite Wordsworth's famous "Daffodils" as it was a poem she had learned by heart when she was at school. She was word-perfect and everyone joined in with her. As the session ended the participants were all laughing and remembering other poems and songs they had learned at school.