

# HEALTH PROMOTION LIBRARY CARDIFF, WALES



# 'Making it easy for people in Wales to find and use health and wellbeing information.'

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## The Welsh Policy Context

People in Wales are encouraged to stay healthy and well and be **'prudent patients'**. To do this they need to be able to find and use reliable, up-to-date and quality information when it is convenient for them.

The Health Promotion Library is the national health and wellbeing library for Wales. We work with public libraries as key partners to deliver health and wellbeing services to people in Wales.

## Aims and Objectives

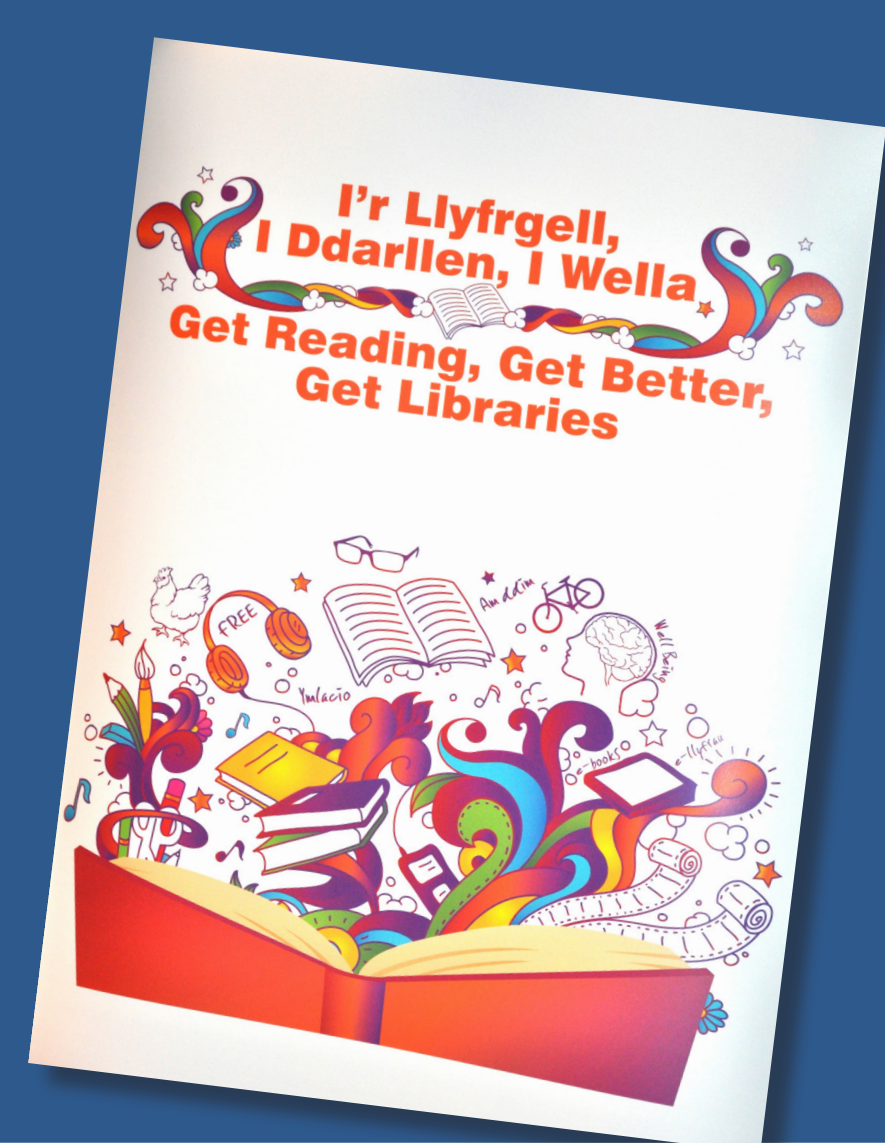
A Joint Strategic Group was set up with public libraries in 2012 to develop a viable health and wellbeing service.

We also wanted to market our work, increase training opportunities, extend partnerships to health organisations, and evaluate the outcomes and impact of our activities.

## Developing Promoting and Marketing Services



In January 2013 we jointly launched **'The First Incomplete Field Guide to Wellbeing in Libraries'**. This showcased the health and wellbeing work done in public libraries.



**'Get Reading, Get Better, Get Libraries'** annual marketing festivals in 2012 and 2013 supported health events and displays in libraries across Wales to promote our work.



The **'HealthInfo4Life'** service is being developed to signpost people to national and local information. This won a National Marketing Award in 2014.



**'Add to Your Life'** the online health check for people over 50 in Wales was launched in Cwmbran public library. This is now delivered in libraries across Wales working with the government programme for communities and with volunteers from Age Cymru.



## Training for library staff

The Health Promotion Library developed a training package for front-line library staff to help them deal with health enquiries. This work won a national marketing award in 2015.

Staff in libraries have also been trained as **'dementia friends'** and attended sessions on **'eye health'**, **'mindfulness'** and the **'5 ways to wellbeing.'**

Two evaluation forms were used. One was handed out at the events, and the other was sent to the local organisations.

## Impact, Feedback and Results

We have made significant progress since 2012. Annually we support the Alzheimer's Society conference with exhibitions, and take part in the National Eye Health Campaign.

**'Read Aloud'** groups are delivered in care homes, prisons and other venues showing the value of reading for people's wellbeing.

All public libraries offer the **'Book Prescription Wales'** and **'Better with Books (Wales)'** service.

**'HealthInfo4Life'** has been extended to link to the 5 ways to wellbeing work and the **'Making Every Contact Count'** all Wales health programme.

Books on mental health issues for adults and children recommended by psychologists are stocked in libraries. Health professionals 'prescribe' books for their patients which they borrow from their local library. The books are more often borrowed by people simply browsing the self-help collections.

Professionals from health and the voluntary sector are recognising the value of the work public libraries do. Joint plans are being made to further extend this work to improve the health and wellbeing of deprived communities in Wales.

## Summary

Developing this strategic partnership is both challenging and interesting.

It takes time to fully understand the different ways in which libraries work. As a specialist health library we need to remember that health and wellbeing information is only part of the work which public libraries deliver.

The links to the health service which the Health Promotion Library provides to public libraries is really useful. There are frequent changes to health services and this makes it difficult for public libraries to know who to contact and when.

The Health Promotion Library now has a much better understanding of the services of public libraries, and we can inform health colleagues, and more effectively broker partnerships between the organisations.

## Future Plans

We have made great progress in achieving the vision of our joint information partnership. There is still a lot more to do however, and this will be difficult with the financial and staffing challenges we face in the public sector.

We aim to build on the successful work we have shown in the past few years. We will use our strategic approach to look for sustainable funding on an all Wales basis. We also will more effectively evaluate the outcomes of the work we do so that we can show the impact of this partnership approach.

See Health Info4Life at:  
[www.publichealthwales.org/health-promotion-library](http://www.publichealthwales.org/health-promotion-library)  
Contact Sue Thomas at [hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:hplibrary@wales.nhs.uk)

### References:

Welsh Government Prudent Healthcare <http://www.prudenthealthcare.org.uk>  
Society of Chief Librarians Wales 'The First Incomplete Field Guide to Wellbeing in Libraries in Wales' <http://welshlibraries.org/reading/reading-health>  
Welsh Government 'Get Reading, Get Better, Get Libraries' Marketing Festival <http://welshlibraries.org/blogs/marketing/?p=2790>