Public Libraries demonstrating Impact – the Gateshead experience

Stephen Walters

Principal Library Manager
Gateshead Council
Gateshead: background

• Gateshead – located on the South bank of the River Tyne....
Gateshead: background

• ... across from a rather more famous neighbour
Gateshead: background

• ....from a rather more famous neighbour
Gateshead: background

• ....from a rather more famous neighbour
Gateshead: background

- ....from a rather more famous neighbour
Gateshead Council: Context

• one of 5 urban districts in Tyne & Wear
• population 191,000
Gateshead Council: Context

• one of 5 met districts in Tyne & Wear
• population 191,000
• Library Service – Charter Mark
Gateshead Council: Context

- one of 5 met districts in Tyne and Wear
- population 191,000
- Library Service - Charter Mark
- 3 Star Best Value Review in 2001
Gateshead Council: Context

• one of 5 met districts in Tyne and Wear
• population 191,000
• Library Service - Charter Mark
• 3 Star Best Value Review in 2001
• Beacon Council status for Culture, Sport and Tourism 2001
Gateshead Council: Context

• one of 5 met districts in Tyne and Wear
• population 191,000
• Library Service - Charter Mark
• 3 Star Best Value Review in 2001
• Beacon Council status for Culture, Sport and Tourism 2001
• judged an excellent council
Gateshead Council: Culture

• made bid for European Capital of Culture 2008 as part of NewcastleGateshead partnership
Gateshead: Cultural Developments

• Angel of the North
Gateshead: Cultural Developments

• BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art
Gateshead: Cultural Developments

• The Sage Gateshead
Gateshead: Cultural Developments

• The Sage Gateshead
Gateshead: Cultural Developments

• Gateshead Millennium Bridge
Gateshead: urban challenges

- Declining heavy industries
- Pockets of high unemployment
- Poor levels of educational achievement
- Poor levels of skills for modern jobs
- Serious health problems
Gateshead: Council Priorities

• Economic regeneration
• Improved educational achievement
• Safer stronger communities
• Healthier communities
• A Gateshead where people enjoy living and want to visit
Gateshead Libraries: the basics

- 17 libraries, 1 mobile and ExploreMusic
- Total items issues annually 1.3m
- Total number public PCs 180
- Total number of visits annually 1.4m
Government priorities for libraries

- Framework for the Future
- Books, Reading and Learning
- Digital Citizenship
- Community and Civic Values
Government priorities for libraries

• Public Library Service Standards
  • 10 standards covering:
  • Opening hours
  • Coverage of library network
  • Customer satisfaction
  • Number of library visits
  • Number of public PCs
  • Speed of satisfying requests
  • Stock additions and renewal
Government priorities for libraries

• Public Library Impact Measures
  • Raising Educational Achievement
  • Economic Vitality
  • Safer Stronger Communities
  • Improving quality of life for children, young people, families and older people
Government priorities for libraries

• Public Library Impact Measures
  • Raising Educational Achievement
  • Economic Vitality
  • Safer Stronger Communities
  • Improving quality of life for children, young people, families and older people
• But not Improving Health
Impact Measure: Raising Educational Achievement

Bookstart delivers free books to all under fives, in partnership with health workers.
Impact Measure: Raising Educational Achievement

Summer Reading Challenge: a free reading promotion for all libraries, aimed at encouraging reading confidence and literacy.
Impact Measure: Economic Vitality

• PeoplesNetwork has been a key component of the modernisation of libraries
• ICT Skills offered for the young.....
Impact Measure: Economic Vitality

• PeoplesNetwork has been a key component of the modernisation of libraries
• ICT Skills offered for the young.....
• .......and old!!
Impact Measure: Safer Stronger Communities

- PeoplesNetwork has been a key component of the modernisation of libraries
- ICT Skills offered for the young.....
- .......and old!!
- Overall uptake is key – but target not yet set.
Impact Measure: Improving the quality of life for vulnerable sections of the community

• Single measure looking at the provision of services to housebound people

• Other measures could be developed
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Activities:

• Health questionnaire
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Activities:
• Health questionnaire
• Stock analysis
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Activities:
- Health questionnaire
- Stock analysis
- Health improvement activities
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Activities:

• Health questionnaire
• Stock analysis
• Health improvement activities
• Awareness raising
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Findings:

• Questionnaire findings
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Findings:

- **Questionnaire findings**
  - 48% of respondents used library to find out about health
  - Of these:
    - 91% used books, 43% the Internet, 26% leaflets
    - 98% gained a better understanding of their condition / subject
    - 35% - ‘The information has a positive impact on my health’
  - 57% of all users felt the library contributed positively to their health or well being
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Findings:
• Questionnaire findings
• Stock analysis
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Findings:
• Questionnaire findings
• Stock analysis
  • Approximately 8% of adult non-fiction issues ‘health’ related
  • Preliminary analysis shows that health books only occupy 3% of shelf space
  • More baseline data needed
  • Are we being too narrow focusing specifically on ‘health books’?
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Findings:
• Questionnaire findings
• Stock analysis
• Health Improvement Activities
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Findings:

• Health Improvement Activities
  • Breast Cancer Information Project
  • HAZ funding for BSL health videos
  • Health Information training for library staff
  • Health Promotion sessions – for example “Fruity Friday”
  • Blood pressure sessions
  • Stressbusters / aromatherapy / reflexology sessions
  • Better evaluation required
Gateshead: Health Impact?

- Reader Development activities
- General groups
- Mental health group
Gateshead: Health Impact?

- Reader Development activities
- General groups
- Mental health group
- VIP groups
Gateshead: Health Impact?

• Books on Prescription

a project in partnership with Gateshead PCT Mental Health Team to encourage the use of self-help books for people with mild mental health problems.
Gateshead: Health Impact?

• Local History Walks...

a huge range of learning activities including walks.
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Impact demonstrated?:
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Impact demonstrated?:

• Questionnaire dramatic findings – but questionnaire could be improved
• Stock analysis – more data needed for targets to be set
• Report to Council and feedback to employees
• Gateshead Health Improvement Team see libraries as a key agency within the Council to work with.
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Impact demonstrated?:

- Questionnaire dramatic findings – but questionnaire could be improved
- Stock analysis – more data needed for targets to be set
- Report to Council and feedback to employees
- Gateshead Health Improvement Team see libraries as a key agency within the Council to work with.
- Director of Health Improvement: Gateshead PCT identified the role of libraries at a national health conference in 2005.
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Impact demonstrated?:

![Image of children and a man holding Roald Dahl books](image-url)
Libraries and ‘well being’

- 57% of all users felt the library contributed positively to their health or well being
- WHO “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”
- “A library is a much better place for health improvement than any NHS setting” Health Improvement Coordinator, Gateshead
Gateshead: Health Impact?

Libraries and ‘well being’
• The Gateshead Health Improvement team identify 3 clear roles for libraries in improving health:
  ✓ Quality health information and referral services
  ✓ Participation in the delivery of health messages to wider population – small messages many times to many different people
  ✓ ....and “do what libraries a library do”
Gateshead: Health Impact?

But no Health Impact Measure!

- There needs to be:
  - In depth evaluation of activities – for example Books on Prescription
  - The evaluation needs to result in a 'measure'
  - Evaluation must be academically robust
Gateshead: Health Impact?

But no Health Impact Measure!

• The health measure needs:
  ✓ To provide real and quantifiable hard data/output measures
  ✓ To be suitable for use by all library authorities'
  ✓ To enable comparisons between libraries and authorities
Gateshead Culture: Health Impact?
Gateshead Culture: Health Impact?
Düsseldorf Culture: Health Impact?
Public Libraries demonstrating Impact – the Gateshead experience

Stephen Walters
Principal Library Manager
Gateshead Council

email: stephenwalters@gateshead.gov.uk