

Libraries transformation in Redbridge

Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure (VRCL), a charitable Trust, provide and operate cultural, sport and leisure facilities on behalf of the London Borough of Redbridge. The Library services were transferred into VRCL Trust in 2011, since then VRCL has taken an innovative and collaborative approach to driving transformation that has seen library use grow.

Integration of library services with other services

Culture Development delivers much of its work programme within libraries and Redbridge Museum has widened its reach through the creation of Hidden Museum' in libraries. The co-location of services has created close working relationships and provided a platform for the delivery of key library programmes such as services to under 5s and families. Libraries also work collaboratively with children's services, social care and health, housing and other key agencies such as Age UK and the police to deliver on joint priorities.

Efficiencies

VRCL has made significant progress in driving efficiency savings in libraries in relation to the use of electronic procurement, outsourcing stock selection, implementing RFID technology for both self-service and stock management, re-organising back office staff and a focus on frontline services. A programme of modernisation, innovation and refurbishment has increased visitor numbers and issue numbers.

VRCL is a founder member of the London Libraries Consortium; the 16 authorities share one library ICT Management System, hold joint stock purchasing contracts and allow seamless access to library services and library stock across all participating partner authorities.

In summary, the key successes are:

- integration of services that provides a cohesive customer offer
- business efficiencies in excess of £1m
- long term sustainability securing no library closures
- enhanced community participation - over 8000 hours of volunteer support
- growth in library usage

This has brought the following benefits to the council:

1. lower costs
2. robust service delivery with less likelihood of closures
3. strong partnership approach with overall control left to the Council
4. low risk business model
5. collaborative approach with other council services and providers

For more information contact: Iain Varah, Chief Executive VRCL Iain.Varah@visionrcl.org.uk

Incorporating a sport and leisure offer for clients with learning disabilities through co-location

Working in partnership Adult Social Care and the Sports and Active Lifestyles Service in Leeds City Council identified the need to provide support for people with learning disabilities to access leisure centres.

The catering services in leisure centres have been reduced over recent years, and where cafes and bars are now closed, this has freed up additional spaces. Traditionally the cafes

and bars are located at the heart of a leisure centre, making these ideal locations in which to develop ASC bases.

So far, bases have opened up at 5 leisure centres in Leeds, with Holt Park Active recently opened to partner Adult Social Care (people with learning disabilities, older people, people with physical disabilities) in a centre run by Sport & Active Lifestyles.

Outcomes include:

- 5 leisure centres have opened up to between 10 and 20 people with learning disabilities 5 days a week, who would not have been able to access the facilities without the support offered.
- A number of the users have now started accessing the facilities out of Adult Social Care hours. This is because they have built relationships with Sport & Active Lifestyles staff and have the confidence to use the facilities on their own.
- Increased usage on adapted bike session and indoor bowls, as well as ASC customers using the gym, swimming and tennis.
- Better access for all people with disabilities through the Adult Social Care works – installation of changing places facilities and improved access to the leisure facilities.
- A change in public perception of people with learning disabilities.

In summary, by using leisure centres as bases to provide services for people with learning disabilities, there has been an opportunity to integrate users into mainstream facilities and activities within the user's local community.



For more information contact: Mark Allman, Head of Sport and Active Lifestyles, Leeds City Council Mark.Allman@leeds.gov.uk