

HEALTH STRATEGY

'Medicine for the soul'.

Inscription on the ancient library of Thebes.

Background

The Idea Store Strategy 2009 set out how the Idea Store service 'would make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Council's Community Plan 2020'.

The Strategy stated: The Council's vision is to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Tower Hamlets...The provision of high quality, accessible library and information service facilities in the Borough will contribute significantly to the achievement of this vision, notably by supporting improvements in outcomes relating to learning, community cohesion, health, economic and social wellbeing'

The contribution to national and local outcomes on health and wellbeing was underlined. Strategies to further develop or improve existing products and services to make a stronger contribution to the Council's and the Government's priority of a healthy community were recommended. In particular the Strategy recommended actions to support priorities in the Community Plan 2020:

- *Reduce differences in people's health and promote healthy lifestyles*
- *Improving access to ,and experience of, local health services*
- *Promoting self-care and improving management of long term conditions*

Based on residents' feedback and the research evidence available, the Idea Store Strategy 2009 proposed that health specific services be developed within Idea Stores though links with NHS Tower Hamlets' public health agenda, the Transformation of Social Care programme. In the subsequent restructure a 'health portfolio' was created with a manager given the responsibility of co-ordinating and developing the Idea Store offer on health.

Since then the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), in partnership with the charity The Reading Agency, has developed a new strategy (2012) describing libraries' health and wellbeing contribution and proposes a national libraries health offer. This has been integrated into the Arts Council England development plans for libraries. The SCL strategy is based on extensive research and makes a strong statement of ways in which libraries contribute to health. This has informed the development of this Idea Store Health Strategy and it is a valuable starting point. However the Idea Store service goes far beyond this with its holistic blend of libraries, learning and information, all under one roof. The Idea Store offer provides a uniquely powerful contribution to health outcomes. This is done through:

Idea Store: the place

Idea Stores provide a shared, non-clinical, free community space where people gain a sense of belonging to a wider community outside home. The place provides opportunities for active engagement and participation in a range of free activities.

Idea Store Libraries

Idea Stores provide active support for reading for all ages and a wide range of reading groups.

Idea Store Learning

Idea Stores provide an extensive programme of adult learning classes that support active engagement and enhance skills, employability, creativity and wellbeing.

Idea Store Information

Idea Stores provide a comprehensive range of health and other information in print and online and staff help in accessing information.

Policy and planning frameworks

This is a key moment for Idea Stores to contribute to local authority health solutions as part of the commissioning landscape.

- 1) **The Health and Social Care Act, 2012, aims to deliver better services within tight funding through:**
 - A new focus on public health and health inequalities
 - Improved quality and choice for patients
 - Local authority responsibility for improving health outcomes, tackling the wider determinants of health and combining traditional and new approaches
 - Local authority Health and Well Being Boards
 - GP/clinician responsibility for commissioning health care

- 2) **National Dementia Strategy, 2009, focuses on partnership/ joint commissioning and improved community support services**

- 3) **No Health Without Mental Health, 2011 cross government strategy to:**
 - Improve health and keep people well through early intervention
 - develop prevention strategies that tackling underlying causes
 - NHS, local government and third sector working together

The need

National headlines

Differences in people's health are explained to a large extent by differences in the social, economic and environmental circumstances of their lives that impact from before birth and throughout life.¹

- 1 in 6 people experience mental ill health each year
- This increases to 1 in 5 for older people in the community
- 1 in 3 people with depression have no health service support²
- 1 in 2 people with anxiety disorders have no health service support³
- Mental illness has the same effect on life-expectancy as smoking, and more than obesity.⁴
- Within the NHS people with mental illnesses represent the greatest areas of unmet need both among adults and children.⁵
- rates of depression, anxiety and psychosis combined are much higher in the lower quintiles of incomes⁶

Health in Tower Hamlets: Headlines

- Male life expectancy is 75.3 years compared to 77 years nationally.
- Female life expectancy is 80.4 years compared to 81.1 years nationally.
- By the age of 5 only 46% of Tower Hamlets infants have achieved a good level of cognitive development compared to 56% nationally
- Around 1 in 10 children are estimated to have a mental health disorder
- Tower Hamlets has the fifth highest admission rates for mental health reasons in London and is significantly higher than the London average
- Compared to London, Tower Hamlets has the third highest premature death rate from circulatory disease, the highest death rate from cancer and the fifth highest death rate from chronic lung disease
- Although it is expected that around 7% of the 65+ population would have dementia only around 2% are on dementia registers indicating significant under diagnosis
- rates of depression, anxiety and psychosis combined are much higher in the lower quintiles of incomes⁷

¹ 2010 Marmot Review of Health Inequalities (Fair Society, Health Lives).

² Psychiatric morbidity among adults living in private households in GB. ONS, 2000

³ *ibid*

⁴ The Centre for Economic Research Report 'How Mental Health Loses Out in the NHS', Layard (et al) LSE, June 2012

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Rates of mental illness by income group (%): McManus et al., 2009. Quoted in Layard report 2012

⁷ *ibid*

How Idea Stores contribute to better health outcomes

Recent research for the MLA⁸ found evidence of a wide range and diversity of health and wellbeing activity in libraries. It noted that, despite this level of activity, libraries are notable to articulate their health and wellbeing contribution particularly well, to either partners or the public.

Idea Stores, because of the integration of libraries, learning and information in the same location, offer a far wider range of health and wellbeing activity than traditional libraries, yet their contribution to the health agenda in Tower Hamlets is consistently under-rated. It is generally appreciated that Idea Stores, because of their large footfall and high street presence, are useful to health partners and there is a shared history of working together on promotions and health checks. However what is not well understood is the *intrinsic value of core Idea Store services*—particularly in supporting wellbeing and good mental health. The evidence base for this is large and growing and points to Idea Stores as being a highly cost effective deliverer of improved health outcomes. Although its contribution to the health and wellbeing agenda is significant the Idea Store service is relatively invisible in high level health, wellbeing and social care planning, and in strategy and policy documents. This invisibility means that Idea Stores' potential as a contributor to health and wellbeing in the borough is not being fully realised.

This is an opportunity missed – especially as Idea Stores are visited by communities that clinical practitioners find hard to reach. Research demonstrates that large proportions of people – children as well as adults – with mental health conditions have no NHS support. The 2012 Layard report indicates that previous figures have been an underestimate. Although most people with serious mental disorders, such as schizophrenia and bi-polar, do receive treatment, a large number of people with depression and anxiety disorders have no contact with the health service. The report states: 'People with mental illnesses are particularly vulnerable. They are often afraid to seek help or even to say they are unwell, and so are their relatives. But they represent nearly one half of all the health-related suffering in this country. Within the NHS they represent the greatest areas of unmet need both among adults and children'⁹

Idea Stores provide one way of meeting this need in Tower Hamlets. The Idea Store as a place is a huge asset. Idea Stores promote social inclusion in a public space that is open to and shared by the whole community on an equal basis. The ethos of accessibility and inclusion underpins the running of the stores, which are open every day of the week throughout the year, including bank holidays. The environment is very attractive – design specifications are high so that the stores are a good place to spend time in – and rules and exclusive membership requirements are avoided. All available evidence shows that use of Idea Stores is in line with local demographics

⁸ MLA 2011 (Debbie Hicks et al)

⁹The Centre for Economic Research Report 'How Mental Health Loses Out in the NHS', Layard (et al) LSE, June 2012

(and unlike library use nationally which is typically older with more females than males.)

A distinctive feature of Idea Stores is the number and range of regular activities provided for all sections of the community every day of the week throughout the year. A description of these regular activities can be found in Table 1 below. These regular activities, all provided free of charge, promote participation, help build self-esteem, support learning and literacy and encourage engagement in social and creative activity. All of these activities are social connectors and support general wellbeing, and a large number of them, from reading together to knitting and art, have a more directly therapeutic value.

As well as these regular activities there are special events organised in stores – often in partnership with external groups. The annual WriteIdea free reading festival is one of many opportunities for local people to get together and engage with authors. More directly related to health are the ‘health days’ that have taken place frequently. These bring together a range of partners from health organisations as well as providing an opportunity for Idea Stores to showcase courses that promote a healthy lifestyle by giving taster sessions.

The power of reading in supporting health and wellbeing, both as an individual and as a shared activity is well documented. Reading reduces stress levels¹⁰ and bibliotherapy has been recognised by NICE as supporting mental health; there is also evidence that reading can reduce the onset of dementia¹¹. The therapeutic reading groups that Idea Stores deliver in partnership with the Reader Organisation (‘Book Breaks’) have been shown in research conducted by the University of Liverpool, to make a significant difference to the health of participants. All of the reading support provided by Idea Stores has real worth as a low dependency form of early intervention yet there is little sign that this value for money contribution is taken into account in high level health and wellbeing strategic planning.

The beneficial impact on health of reading works with any form of literature. Fiction and poetry are the texts most often used in therapeutic reading groups for their power in unlocking feelings, and research shows how reading fiction in children develops the neurological capacity for empathy. The OECD research which established that reading for pleasure is the most significant determinant in a child’s success in later life is well known. This demonstrated how the creative engagement in reading and use of imagination contribute to children’s cognitive development. This is in addition to the obvious importance of developing skills in literacy which in itself contributes to the wider social agenda.

¹⁰ University of Sussex Galaxy research ‘Mindlab international 2009’, quoted by the Reading Agency. Dr David Lewis who lead the research stated that reading was ‘ more than merely a distraction but an active engaging of the imagination as the words on the printed page stimulate your creativity and cause you to enter what is essentially an altered state of consciousness.”

¹¹ ‘Leisure activities and the risk of dementia in the elderly, New England Journal of medicine, 2003

Reading can also be valuable to health in a more instrumental way. Reading about health conditions, reading about the life stories of people with experience of these conditions and reading some self-help texts can all play a role in supporting wellbeing. The SCL together with The Reading Agency (TRA) have recommended collections of self-help books developed in partnership with medical practitioners ('Books on Prescription') which form part of the Idea Store offer; and Idea Stores also promote TRA's collection of 'Mood Boosting Books'.

Idea Stores are unique in providing an integrated libraries and learning offer under one roof. The adult learning element makes the Idea Store contribution to health and wellbeing even more powerful. Recently published research¹², bringing together NIACE work for the Local Government Association and Social Return on Investment analyses for the Skills Funding Agency, places a value on the impact of adult learning. It found that 'participating in adult learning [has] significant positive effects on individual health, employability, social relationships, and the likelihood of participating in voluntary work. In turn these four domains have positive impacts on individual wellbeing.'¹³

In terms of health in particular the research establishes that participation in part-time courses makes a statistically significant positive effect. People who are currently undertaking or have recently finished a course:

- report higher levels of health satisfaction
- are less likely to report heart and blood pressure problems; and
- are less likely to report an alcohol or drug abuse problem.

The research estimated that in monetary terms the health impact of part-time learning is worth *£148 per course* and a value of *£297 per year* to the individual.

Many courses delivered at Idea Stores have a direct impact on health. There are palpable health benefits to individuals who participate in exercise-related courses, dance, complementary therapy and healthy cooking; many creative courses also have a therapeutic effect. Other courses contribute to wider social determinants by supporting literacy and basic skills and increasing participants' chances of finding a job. ESOL classes can make an impact on a whole family's health by giving women the language skills and confidence needed to access health care in the community.

All engagement in adult learning, whatever the course, has a contribution to make to individual wellbeing. Participation in adult learning courses, in the same way as participation in more informal Idea Store activities, breaks down isolation and connects individuals in a way that is conducive to community wellbeing.

The third element in the core Idea Store offer is information, which can be broken down into:

¹²Valuing the Impact of Adult Learning, Daniel Fujiwara, LSE 2012

¹³ ibid

- Provision of information both digital and in print form, and
- Assisting customers in accessing information they need

The need for provision of information about health and wellbeing issues is widely accepted, and the concept of Patient Choice is predicated on people having access to reliable information. Idea Stores are ideally placed to support the community in making effective, informed choices about their health.

An increasing amount of health information is available online. Idea Stores help with provision of content, from basic signposting – where is the nearest health centre – to more complex paid for sources of information. In an online world where there is an abundance of spurious and commercially sponsored health information, Idea Store content, available through its website, is authoritative and reliable. Idea Stores also offer an ideal space for access to NHS Choices and Choose and Book.

The Idea Store digital offer includes providing charge-free public access to computers every day of the week and help in accessing online information. This help includes providing members of the public with very basic computer skills – as well as more advanced courses in interpreting and assessing online information – so that people can access the information themselves. Staff, in a more traditional reference role, can also find information for people who do not want to use computers themselves.

The provision of assisted online services provides cost savings to partners whilst delivering health related services and supporting public accountability. Idea Stores can also promote the digital inclusion necessary to deliver the health inequalities agenda and Smarter Government priorities of cheaper and more effective digital public services. This is an area of opportunity to develop beneficial relationships in health and wellbeing partnership working. There is great shared potential for using Idea Store to deliver the digital health and wellbeing offer locally.

As well as online information Idea Stores provide a wide choice of health information in printed form – both books and magazines, and in audio formats. All Idea Stores have a comprehensive and well signposted collection of books about health and health conditions, which is not replicated anywhere else in Tower Hamlets. As there is no large bookshop locally Idea Stores are the only source of health books. The collections are wide-ranging, including: general health, mental health, sexual health – and also health, diet and exercise, guides to stop smoking etc. These are arranged bookshop style and are easy to find. The availability of self-service machines means that these can be borrowed without having to hand the book to a member of staff – which could make process easier for people who prefer anonymity.

As well as this all Idea Stores and libraries support parents with special collections of books and magazines about childcare. As with all other content, this is a totally free resource that health practitioners should promote to their patients.

Idea Stores are a valuable partner to health organisations. Idea Stores' location in busy shopping areas and a heavy footfall (more than 2 million visitors a year) mean that health promotions based in Idea Stores can provide access to communities which clinical and medical providers might find hard to reach. Added to this is the fact that the Idea Store demographic is broadly similar to the demographic of the population of Tower Hamlets as a whole - and a far higher proportion of males visit Idea Stores compared to health settings. This enables health partners to deliver the prevention agenda particularly effectively. Idea Stores are already the setting for regular health checks and other promotions including, from 2012, working with the Come Correct project – where Idea Stores are working with volunteers to distribute condoms to young people. As already mentioned, Idea Stores have run numerous 'health days' which have brought together partners from NHS and other providers, promoting a healthy living message to a wide audience.

Idea Stores also have a sophisticated marketing package including plasma screens in store and a website which can reach people at home. Idea Stores also have a database of more than 42,000 members, a large number of whom can be contacted via email. In store plasma screens are already used in an ad hoc manner by some health partners but there is scope to extend the reach of health promotions by working together.

Idea Stores need to develop relationships with health and social care providers. A priority here is to articulate the Idea Store health and wellbeing contribution so that the core Idea Store offer is taken into consideration at a strategic level locally in planning and commissioning services. A recognition of the impact the Idea Store service makes on public health is the first step towards maximising impact.

Recommendations

1. The Idea Store offer on health should be described to existing and potential partners – and ways of working together should be explored. There needs to be effective marketing of the Idea Store offer on health, including a series of presentations to existing and potential partners, including the Health and Wellbeing Board.
2. Partners should be asked to raise the profile of these Idea Store health activities and signpost Idea Stores to their users.
3. Idea Stores should work with partners towards joint planning and the development of shared goals and outcomes that are practical and realistic.
4. Idea Stores should develop robust evidence of impact with partners, including the Reader Organisation. This must show how Idea Stores can deliver the cost saving benefits of early intervention and of preventative services with clear health and wellbeing patient outcomes
5. Idea Stores should co-ordinate a series of health awareness days in stores which promote the Idea Store offer on health
6. A pilot offer of courses on prescription should be developed with at least one health centre in Tower Hamlets. This should have clearly defined outcomes as a building block for more sustained partnership activity

7. The Idea Store offer on health should form a staff induction module to raise staff awareness and skills. Staff have a key role to play in raising the community profile of the Idea Store health and wellbeing offer
8. A core health and wellbeing offer, including activities, should be clearly defined and available in all Idea Stores as standard.
9. Staff in stores should implement a programme of sessions to show people how to access health information online. This can be both stand-alone sessions and as part of regular activities such as Golden Time, Aaj Kal – or after Storytime.

Table 1)
Idea Store activities: regular groups meeting in Idea Stores

Name	Target group	Description
Book break	Adults	<p>Book Break follows the model of therapeutic Get Into Reading groups developed by The Reader Organisation. They are led by trained project workers and volunteers, meeting each week to read books and poems together. The group reads aloud, slowly, taking time over each text, allowing thoughts, connections and understanding to emerge. Members can choose to join in, or not, and at times the reading will stop to allow some talk about parts of the text, discussing what it might mean, or reflect on similar experiences of their own.</p> <p>By reaching people out to people who may not otherwise be readers, Book Break groups meet a vast range of individual needs. They help to ease those physically or emotionally troubled; provide a confidence boost to those who need it; allow people to unite with one another; and introduce new authors and poets to all our readers. A relaxed, friendly atmosphere is created in each group. Over time, people build up a confidence that enables them to tell their own stories, as well as to forge close relationships with others.</p>
Book groups	Adults	Regular groups of people who meet to discuss a particular book they have read at home. A different book is chosen each month.
Bengali book group Pathok	Bengali adults	Groups of people meeting to discuss books written in Bengali.

Name	Target group	Description
6 Book Challenge	Adults who are beginning to read	This is a national scheme developed by The Reading Agency. Emergent adult readers are incentivised to read a selection of six simple and clearly written books. Idea Store 6 Book Challenge groups include a high proportion of participants on ESOL and basic skills courses. Tower Hamlets has the highest number of 6 Book Challenge participants in London.
Golden Time	Older people	Regular weekly groups for older people. Golden Time can be very informal –tea and a chat – or more structured, depending on the wishes of customers. More structured events have included visits to Greenwich and a river boat ride and visits to different places of worship. There can also be informal learning in the group – using computers to trace family trees is an example
First click	Adults	Informal groups where adults can become familiar with using computers
Silver surfer sessions	Older people	Regular group where older adults learn computer skills in a non-threatening environment.
Mums online	Mothers	A regular group for women to improve their IT for employability and to signpost local services – and sometimes to share reading experiences.
Story time	Babies to 4 year olds and their parents	Daily event. A member of staff reads stories and gets children and carers to join in with rhymes. There is also time to choose books to take home. Variations include: talks to parents, learning to play musical instruments
Dads' Club	Fathers and children	Saturday morning club for fathers and children – with an emphasis on sharing stories and rhymes

Name	Target group	Description
Kids' Club	Children 5-10 years	Arts crafts and reading for children
Art clubs	Children 7+	Drawing and painting for children
Bright Young Stars	Children aged 6-11	Book group for children based on the Reader Organisation model of reading aloud in a group. This group typically reads short texts with children who then discuss the story with the support of staff. This is followed by a craft activity using ideas generated by the group (see description of Book Break at top)
Family Reading Group	Families	Book group for children based on the Reader Organisation model of reading aloud in a group. This group includes parents – typically mothers – in the experience. (see description of Book Break at top)
News views	Adults	Sunday morning breakfast group with coffee and croissants at which participants discuss latest news events
Aaj Kal	Bengali adults	Bengali current affairs group – members can discuss news and views or learn basic computer skills.
Knit wits	Adults	Informal drop in where people can knit and crochet together, learn new stitches – and chat.
Martial arts	Children 7-13	An award-winning martial arts grandmaster leads this regular group

Table 2 :

The Idea Store contribution to health and wellbeing measured against key life stages

	Health issues	Idea Store contribution
All ages	<p>Differences in people’s health are explained to a large extent by differences in the social, economic and environmental circumstances of their lives that impact from before birth and throughout life</p>	<p>A shared, neutral, free community space in beautiful buildings open every day of the week throughout the year.</p> <p>No exclusive rules or membership requirements.</p> <p>A place where people gain a sense of belonging to a wider community</p> <p>A place for engagement outside home</p> <p>Opportunities for active engagement and participation in a range of free activities</p> <p>Support for literacy, learning skills and employability contributes to wider determinants of health and wellbeing in the community</p> <p>Idea Store offer on employability includes employability skills programmes as well as business and finance courses</p> <p>Idea Stores have over 2 million visits a year. Health promotions reach a wide audience.</p> <p>Health promotion days at all Idea Stores</p>

<p>Being born in Tower Hamlets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9% of babies born to Tower Hamlets mothers have a low birth weight compared to 7.5% in London. Low birth weight is particularly associated with poorer health and educational outcomes 	<p>Storytime for babies to pre-school children every day at all sites. Support for new parents in a non-clinical setting. Peer support and advice. Target audience – for health promoters to talk to mothers after storytime</p> <p>Special parenting collections in each Idea Store.</p> <p>ESOL classes: mothers obtain skills enabling easier access to healthcare for the whole family</p>
<p>Growing up in Tower Hamlets – early years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the age of 5 only 46% of Tower Hamlets infants have achieved a good level of cognitive development compared to 56% nationally 13.3% are obese (7th highest in the country) 55% of children in Tower Hamlets classified as living in poverty (the highest in the country). 	<p>Storytime every day at all sites. Children introduced to rhyme, stories and books.</p> <p>Support for parents in a non-clinical environment</p> <p>Reading aloud to children contributes to their cognitive development.</p> <p>‘Comparing children with the same family income, parental characteristics and home environments, a child taken to the library on a monthly basis from ages 3 to 5 is two and a half months ahead of an equivalent child at age 5 who did not visit the library so frequently.’ (Sutton Trust 2010)</p> <p>‘Children who are read to every day at three are likely to be flourishing in a wide range of subjects by the age of five.’ (London University, Institute of Education 2010)</p> <p>Peer support and advice. Target audience – for health promoters to talk to mothers after storytime</p> <p>Support for learning skills and employability contributes to wider</p>

		<p>determinants of health and wellbeing in the community</p> <p>ESOL classes give mothers ability and confidence in accessing healthcare</p> <p>Family learning classes</p>
<p>Growing up in Tower Hamlets – children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25.7% 10-11 year olds in Tower Hamlets are obese (3rd highest in the country) the incidence of sexually transmitted infections in young people country is likely to be high (overall Tower Hamlets has the 8th highest rate in the country in all age groups) Around 1 in 10 children are estimated to have a mental health disorder 	<p>Reading for pleasure is the most important indicator of the future success of a child (OECD, 2002),</p> <p>Children's book groups</p> <p>Children's activities after school and at weekends</p> <p>A safe place to meet friends</p> <p>Research shows that reading can reduce stress levels by 67%</p> <p>Reading, especially fiction, supports and develops empathy</p> <p>Support for learning skills and employability contributes to wider determinants of health and wellbeing in the community</p> <p>Come Correct pilot at ISW and ISCS – distribution of condoms in a safe and non-judgmental environment</p> <p>Ability to borrow books anonymously</p>
<p>Being an adult in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compared to London, Tower Hamlets has: the third highest premature death rate from circulatory disease, the highest death rate 	<p>Support for learning skills and employability contributes to wider determinants of health and wellbeing in the community</p>

<p>Tower Hamlets</p>	<p>from cancer and the fifth highest death rate from chronic lung disease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tower Hamlets has the fifth highest admission rates for mental health reasons in London and is significantly higher than the London average • 68% of the adult population do not do the recommended level of physical activity of 30 minutes of moderate activity at least five days a week • 88% of the adult population do not consume the recommended level of fruit and vegetable consumption of five portion a day compare to 70% nationally • In general, higher levels of behavioural risk factors are associated with higher levels of deprivation, lower educational attainment, higher unemployment, literacy (either first language or English), living in social housing and having mental health problems 	<p>Research shows that reading can reduce stress levels by 67%</p> <p>‘Book break’ groups run in partnership with the Reader Organisation a standard offer at all sites. Mental health benefits of these therapeutic book groups documented by university of Liverpool.</p> <p>Book groups act as social connectors, breaking down isolation.</p> <p>Access to information about health can contribute to earlier diagnosis and treatment of health conditions. Late diagnosis of health conditions a reason for highest death rate for cancer in London.</p> <p>Free access to online information (NHS choices, booking appointments, finding a GP)</p> <p>Staff assistance in accessing online information and in navigating through 100,000 health-related websites</p> <p>Books on health and health conditions well signposted</p> <p>Ability to borrow books anonymously</p> <p>Range of free activities throughout the year has therapeutic benefits</p> <p>Range of Idea Store Learning classes</p>
<p>Growing old in Tower Hamlets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56% of 65-84 year olds report long term limiting illness compared to 48% nationally • Although it is expected that around 7% of 	<p>Research shows that reading can reduce stress levels by 67%</p> <p>Reading ‘can prevent the onset of dementia by 35%’¹⁴</p>

¹⁴ ‘Paying the price’, The King’s Fund 2007/Leisure activities and the risk of dementia in the elderly, New England Journal of medicine, 2003

	<p>the 65+ population would have dementia only around 2% are on dementia registers indicating significant under diagnosis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of older people (65+) in Tower Hamlets live below the poverty line • A higher proportion of older people in the borough live alone (47% compared to 33% nationally) • 80% of older people do not meet recommended physical activity levels 	<p>Book groups act as social connectors, breaking down isolation.</p> <p>Book groups' contribution to wellbeing is evidenced by extensive research at the University of Liverpool</p> <p>Access to information about health can contribute to earlier diagnosis and treatment of health conditions.</p> <p>Free access to online information (NHS choices, booking appointments, finding a GP)</p> <p>Staff assistance in accessing online information and in navigating through 100,000 health-related websites</p> <p>Books on health and health conditions</p> <p>Golden Time and other activities</p> <p>Formal classes</p>
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