

REVIEW OF ABERDEEN CITY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

- **QUALITY INDICATOR 3: LEARNING CULTURE**



**HOW GOOD IS OUR
PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE?**



FINAL REPORT: MAY 2016

REVIEW OF ABERDEEN CITY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

This report is the Self-Evaluation and Peer Review of Aberdeen City Library and Information Services into the following quality indicator:

- QI 3 – Learning Culture

The Self-Assessment was undertaken by members of staff within Aberdeen City Library and Information Services with quality indicator three being led by the HOPLS team consisting of: Learning Development Manager, Service Development Manager, Lifelong Learning Librarian, Local Studies Librarian, Central Services Librarian and Community Librarian.

PEER REVIEW

The Peer Review visit took place at Aberdeen Central Library and Airyhall Library on 28 April 2016 and was conducted by a Convener and two other assessors. There were no observers in attendance. The assessors met with a variety of stakeholders including partners during the lunch session. The Peer Assessment team split up to undertake visits to Central Library, Cove Library and Tillydrone Library.

RESULTS

The Peer Review Panel commend Aberdeen City Library and Information Service for conducting a mature, reflective and succinct self-assessment and for the excellent presentation given to the peer evaluation team which covered all points raised before the visit in an in-depth and valuable way. The peer assessment team were assured that the self-evaluation was rigorous. The self-assessment team gathered greater awareness of their understanding of what impact meant for their service over the process. The peer assessment team felt that much of the evidence showed a service performing “better than routine”. The team were also impressed with the learning environment approach developed for staff training and witnessed a team whose enthusiasm was built and who delivered beyond the confines of their own posts.

QUALITY INDICATOR 3: Learning Culture

The evidence presented in the self-evaluation demonstrates that there are some notable strengths in provision here, including:

- Establishment of the post of Lifelong Learning Librarian which brings a clear focus to the delivery of learning outcomes for the library service and work with partners
- Use of library facilities by external partners;
- Technical IT infrastructure including assistive technology in libraries;
- Wide range of learning resources;
- Marketing the learning offer through the marketing brand “Learning in the Library”; consistent with wider library marketing materials.
- Creation of the digital Staff Resources Manual, and the associated training, support and development opportunities associated with this
- Active Partnerships with learning partners including partnerships to support children with additional support needs; these active partnerships are supported by sustained, strong engagement by Library and Information Service staff across council departmental boundaries and with external providers. They have enabled easy entry points to learning and progression routes which are not curtailed by organisational silos.
- Local and Family History “invisible learning”;
- Maker Space project
- Excellent volunteer programme, which adopts a formal and fully supported approach to managing volunteers, ensuring that their own learning objectives are mapped and delivered upon.

The Peer Review Panel endorse the Self-Evaluation Report and with the rating given by the Library Service.

Quality Indicator 3 (Learning Culture) is LEVEL FOUR (GOOD)

- Important strengths that have a positive impact.
- Few weaknesses, and ones that do not have a substantial adverse effect.
- Some examples of good practice.

- Services seeking to raise performance further and addressing areas of improvement.

The Peer Review Panel agreed with the service in their rating for the component parts of Quality Indicator 3:

	Self-Evaluation rating (1-6)	Peer Review rating (1-6)
3.1 Stimulating and motivating learning environment.	4	4
3.2 Lifelong Learning opportunities in the library and in partnership with others.	4	5
3.3 Provision and support for all learners.	3	3

Quality Indicator	Self-Evaluation rating (1-6)	Peer Review rating (1-6)
QI3 – Learning Culture	4	4

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Peer Review Panel endorse the Improvement Action Plan for Aberdeen City Library and Information Services Service (Self Evaluation Report p12) and summarized below:

Quality Indicator 3 – Learning Culture

- Widen the provision to fully meet the strategic aims and objectives of local and national agendas.
- Develop Lifelong Learning strategy for libraries in line with Ambition and Opportunity.
- Widen the distribution network of all promotional material to partners and community outlets.
- Research further the impact of using social media on customer engagement.
- Increase presence of library in target communities.
- Gather and assess feedback on changes as a result of refurbishments.
- Monitor success of training through evaluation to identify further development needs.
- Further develop partnerships with key providers.
- Complete planned support material for library ICT sessions.
- Gather robust feedback from participants.
- Ensure staff awareness and confidence in referral routes for learners.
- Further develop Silver City Vault to add learning content.
- Develop partnerships in early learning to increase library membership.
- Ensure active and informed participation in Early Years Collaborative theme groups.
- Expand the volunteering offer to adults.
- Extend the use of the Performance Management Toolkit for all initiatives.
- Support or foster economic growth in the community.
- Work with Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership to develop offer for adults.

KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Peer Review Panel, while endorsing the Improvement Action Plan for Aberdeen City Library and Information Services, make the following additional key recommendations:

- The variety of ways that the service can measure impact against strategic outcomes, should be clearly set out in the project planning and delivery methodology documentation. Where possible impact should be benchmarked against other public library services.
- The library service delivers such a broad range of excellent services, it would appear that staff often fail to fully recognize this breadth and quality. As such, opportunities to recognize the impact being made by each individual member of staff are missed, and the service would benefit from staff having a greater awareness of this impact.
- The service should challenge themselves in articulating the “so what” of service delivery, which at times was perhaps missing from some of the self-assessment documentation
- Service staffing should be aware that many of the services they are delivering are better than routine and work towards further improvements as specified in the plan.
- Include service users in planning service delivery if possible, including service users from partners’ services.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Peer Review Panel wish to express their thanks to all members of staff at Aberdeen City Library and Information Services for preparing the self-assessment report and for their engagement on the day of the Peer Review visit. We would also thank all stakeholders who met with us.