

**Inspire North West**  
**Cumbria Pilot Groups**  
**Consultant's Final Report**

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## ***Aims and Objectives***

This report presents findings arising from pilot group sessions which were conducted as part of the North West Inspire Pilot Project in Cumbria.

The Pilot Project aims were:

- *To create a seamless cross-sector pathway for learners to access learning resources across HE, FE and public libraries in Carlisle/ Penrith areas, Cumbria by April 04 so that the process is transparent, easy to use and open to all but managed in a way that benefits learners.*
- *To investigate the role that increased access to resources can play in enabling learners to continue their studies and (if applicable) progress on to Higher Education, hence supporting the achievements of DFES targets for increasing widening participation in HE.*

The key consultant objectives were as follows:

- *To work with up to 3 pilot groups of learners in order to assess their requirements in terms of what resources they need to help them with their studies, including access to information and physical spaces.*
- *To establish how the joint services of the libraries in the Cumbrian Partnership can be developed to meet these needs.*
- *To develop/ implement initiatives and procedures which will facilitate access to the joint services e.g. Marketing, staff training, open days, extended/ shared opening hours, outreach.*
- *To test the existing services and develop new joint services with a group of learners.*

## ***Generic Learning Outcomes and Learning Objectives***

Five Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) have been drawn up for museums, libraries and archives as follows:

- *Increase in knowledge and understanding*
- *Increase in skills: intellectual, practical, professional*
- *Change in attitudes or values*
- *Evidence of enjoyment, inspiration and creativity.*
- *Evidence of activity, modification of behaviour, progression.*

Using these GLOs, six learning objectives for the pilot groups were identified (the GLOs which each of these represent are listed in brackets after each objective.) The outcomes from these Learning Objectives are detailed on page 23.

### **1. Increased Knowledge and Understanding of HE, FE And Public Libraries in North Cumbria.**

Learners will know which libraries are available, the locations of those which are relevant to their studies, facilities on offer and how to access them.

(Increase in Knowledge and Understanding; Evidence of Activity, Behaviour, Progression)

### **2. Increased Knowledge about the Learners' Chosen Subjects**

Learners will have learnt new information as a result of the pilot projects.

(Increase in Knowledge and Understanding; Evidence of Activity, Behaviour, Progression)

### **3. Development of Research Skills**

Learners will have learnt how to find information relevant to their studies from the libraries. They will be able to use the Internet to search libraries' online catalogues, use catalogues in libraries, find books and other materials on the shelves.

(Increase in Skills; Increase in Knowledge and Understanding, Change in Attitudes and Values; Evidence of Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity)

#### **4. Development of Skills of Analysis**

By considering barriers to access of libraries and suggesting ways of overcoming these, learners will develop their skills of analysis and creative thinking.

(Increase in Skills; Evidence of Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity)

#### **5. Communication Skills**

Pilot groups will have an input into the development of accessible marketing and information materials. This together with interaction with library staff and others will help them to develop their skills of communication.

(Evidence of Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity; Increase in Skills)

#### **6. Sustainability**

Learners will plan to use libraries for their studies in future. Partnerships between pilot group organisations and libraries may have been forged.

(Evidence of Activity, Modification of Behaviour, Progression)

## ***Methodology***

The following programme was designed to achieve the consultancy aims:

### **Initial Library Visits**

Information gathering visits were made in December 2003 and January 2004 to the libraries involved in the initial Inspire Steering Group. The aim of these visits was to establish resources and facilities available in each library.

### **Pilot Groups**

Two groups of learners were identified to investigate the access agreement: Eden Rural Foyer in Penrith and SureStart in South Carlisle.<sup>1</sup> Over a period of several weeks, Eden Rural Foyer and SureStart learners visited libraries which are involved in the access agreement and gave feedback about their experiences.<sup>2</sup>

### **Focus Groups**

Three Focus Groups were conducted with learners from Eden Rural Foyer, SureStart and Open University.

### **Questionnaires**

Pilot Group participants completed questionnaires at the first and final pilot group sessions. Open University Students completed one questionnaire.

### **Sustainability Meetings**

Meetings have been set up between specified library staff, pilot group participants and relevant staff from SureStart and Eden Foyer to discuss future partnership working.

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<sup>1</sup> Further Information about the groups involved is detailed in Appendix One - Pilot Group Profiles

<sup>2</sup> More detailed information about the groups' activities can be found in Appendix Two - Key Pilot Group Activities

## ***Summary of Findings***

### **Barriers to Library Use**

The following barriers were identified by the groups

- Location
- Sense of belonging
- Lack of borrowing rights
- Previous bad experience of institution
- Library environment
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of knowledge of how to use a library
- Confusing catalogue systems
- No need to use libraries
- Lack of awareness of access agreement
- Staffing Issues
- Childcare
- Library systems

### **Suggestions to Increase Usage**

- Special Events
- Clear and comprehensive information
- Transport
- Links with community groups
- Staff training, increased profile of staff
- More welcoming building and ambience
- Better, more user friendly facilities
- Publicity
- Consideration of parent and child needs.

### **Outcomes from the Two Pilot Groups**

- Half of the pilot group learners found information relevant to their studies during library visits
- Half said they could have found the information they needed on the internet
- Half said that they would now use the public library for their studies (compared with none at the beginning)
- All of the learners said they had learnt something new from visiting other libraries
- All of them had learnt how to use a library catalogue
- Three learners had used the internet for the first time.
- Five learners had changed their view of libraries
- Seven said that they would now use libraries
- Two people said that they would use academic libraries in the future.
- Two people had used a library of their own accord to find information for their studies.
- Three people had changed their mind and were now interested in entering Further Education.

## ***Main Findings- SureStart and Eden Foyer Projects***

### **First Questionnaire**

In the first session, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about themselves, their studies and their use and perception of libraries. The key findings from this are presented below. Key changes during the pilot project could then be highlighted through a second questionnaire in the last session. Key elements of these changes can be seen in “Outcomes” on page 20.

### **Demographic Information**

#### **Age of Participants**

All of the pilot group participants were aged below 45. The group from Eden Foyer were aged between 18 and 26 and the SureStart group from 25 to 37

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
18-24	3	37.5
25-34	3	37.5
35-44	2	25.0
45-54	0	0
55-64	0	0
65 and over	0	0

#### **Gender**

Three quarters of the pilot group were female. All of the SureStart group were female.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	6	75
Male	2	25

#### **Where they lived**

87.5 % of the group members lived in Carlisle or Penrith. None of the participants lived in a village.

<b>Town/ Village</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Carlisle	4	50
Penrith	3	37.5
Kirby Stephen	1	12.5

## Courses

### **Current Education**

Learners were studying for a wide range of qualifications at different levels and in a variety of subjects. Qualifications included National Vocational Qualifications at Levels One, Two and Three in Numeracy and Literacy, Communications, Catering, Childcare and Computers; GCSEs in English and Maths.

### **Where do you get information you need for your course?**

None of the participants said that they got information from libraries. Three of the Eden Foyer participants stated that they used the Internet to obtain information, whereas none of the SureStart group used this resource.

*“Internet, books”*

*“Learn Direct, internet”*

*“Internet”*

*“From college and from home”*

*“Books from friends or my assessor”*

*“Buy the books”*

### **Is there any information for your course you think you could get from a library?**

Several of the learners thought that they may be able to find information from a library.

<b>Information from Library?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	3	37.5
No	0	0
Maybe	2	25
Don't Know	1	12.5
DNA	2	25

## Knowledge and View of Libraries

Participants were asked about their use of libraries.

### **What does the word ‘library’ mean to you?**

All of the participants cited ‘books’ as the meaning of the word ‘library’.

*“somewhere to read books and do research”*

*“free book emporium”*

*“A place where you can borrow books”*

*“books, computers, reading”*

*“quiet place, daunting with children”*

*“books, boring”*

*“nothing, pile of books, computers”*

### When did you last go to a library? What did you go there for?

Over half (62.5%) of the participants had visited a library within the previous year. All the libraries last visited were public libraries.

Time Since Last Library Visit	Number of People	%
1 Week	3	37.5
1 Month	1	12.5
6 Months	1	12.5
1 Year	0	
2 Years	1	12.5
5 Years	1	12.5
10 Years	0	
20 Years	1	12.5

Only two people had used the library resources for their own purposes (to get books out).

*“get some books out”*

*“for a look around”*

*“books to read”*

*“meet my girlfriend”*

*“to change my youngest daughter’s reading books”*

*“return book for someone”*

*“books and videos for my children”*

### Which libraries do you use? What do you use libraries for?

When asked which library they used, three learners said that they did not use libraries at all, whilst one person said that they used Appleby library but only rarely. The remainder stated that they use their local public library or the library van. Of those who said they used libraries, two people said that they used the library to borrow books for themselves, one person only used the library for her children and one said that he used it as a meeting place.

### What libraries do you know?

In the first session, the only non-public library mentioned was the school library at Ullswater Community College.

*“Penrith, Ullswater Community Centre (sic)”*

*“Carlisle”*

*“Carlisle’s main one, Harraby”*

*“Just one”*

*“Penrith, Kirby Stephen, Appleby”*

*“Penrith”*

*“Harraby”*

## Aspirations

Participants were asked what they would like to do after their current course and where they would like to be in ten years time. The two responses from each participant are listed below.

<b>What do you want to do after the course?</b>	<b>Where would you like to be in 10 years time?</b>
<i>"Full time driver"</i>	<i>"Owning my own business to do with driving"</i>
<i>"Get a job"</i>	<i>"France living with my family"</i>
<i>"Next September I would like to try a psychology course basic level"</i>	<i>"I would love to be living abroad or be in a job that I enjoy."</i>
<i>"Work in a nursery or crèche"</i>	<i>"Working in a school"</i>
<i>"Haven't decided"</i>	(blank)
(blank)	<i>"To be a nurse"</i>
<i>"To get a high paid job that I will like"</i>	<i>"Down South with my family"</i>
<i>"Get a job/ go to university"</i>	<i>"Rich"</i>

## **Groups' Feedback**

### **Prior to Library Visits**

- Only half of the group were regular public library users before the pilot project.
- Half of those who used libraries did not use them for their own purpose.
- None of the learners used libraries for their studies.
- None of the groups had ever used Higher Education (HE), Further Education (FE) or Health Libraries.
- SureStart groups expressed concern about using libraries with children.
- Two of the learners said that they thought libraries were "boring".
- Several members of the group said that they would not have the confidence to use libraries, particularly college libraries.
- Two of the learners said that they bought all the books they needed for their course rather than go to the library.

### **Public Library Visits**

Participants all had a guided tour around either Penrith or Carlisle public library. Three members of the SureStart group also visited Harraby library. After the visits all of the learners said that they had learnt something new and several of them expressed surprise at the range of services available. Half of the group said that they would visit the libraries again, either for pleasure or for their studies. Access to the internet, videos and DVDs, "Books of the Week" and "Story Sacks" were all mentioned as positive aspects.

*"I'm going to come here all the time now to get kids' videos out."*

*"I learnt a couple of things- that I can use the internet for free and that there is a shelf of recently returned books"*

*"There's more stuff than I thought there would be."*

*"It has a good range- especially for children."*

*"Maps, phone books- I wouldn't have known about them."*

*"The one at Harraby Community Centre- I would find it easier to use with children. It was warm and welcoming."*

*"I am going to visit Penrith library to look up books on childcare. I will feel comfortable going in but I will get distracted as soon as I go in because I will think, oh videos."*

### **HE, FE and Health Library Visits**

The groups each visited three specialist libraries and gave feedback about these visits. (see subsequent sections).

*"It's made me aware that there are more libraries than Harraby and Carlisle libraries. I didn't know there were more libraries that anyone could use. If you had a topic that you wanted to totally focus on you could get more information"*

*"If you know roughly where things are kept you can go in on your own."*

*"I didn't know that the University libraries were there. I certainly didn't know how to use them. I probably still won't but at least I know I can."*

## **Access**

The location of the library within each establishment was generally considered not to be clearly marked. The participants said that this would prevent some people from using the libraries. Some libraries had physical barriers and one had a pass system.

*"It (pass system) would dissuade me from using it in the first place."*

The overall location of the library would also have a bearing on whether they would use it.

*"If it's half a mile away I might use it."*

## **Information Systems**

### Catalogues

Prior to visiting the Higher Education Libraries, the groups used the internet to look at online catalogues in order to find sources of information for their courses. Eden Foyer learners all use the internet for their courses. None of the SureStart learners were experienced internet users. The participants also used the catalogue system within each library and located relevant books by this method. All of the learners found the OPAC catalogues the most accessible format.

*"I found it quite easy to use. It's just like searching on the Carlisle library catalogue."*

*"Dead simple. Anyone could use it."*

*"They should all have one"*

However most of the learners said that they would not have felt comfortable using the catalogue without initial support.

*"If I had come to the library on my own, I would have had to ask someone how to find a book. I would need easy step by step instructions on how to use the catalogue and would need signs about how to use the library."*

### Library Guides

Some of the libraries had step by step guides to using the library and the catalogues. The simpler versions of these were very well received by those learners who used them. The groups particularly liked a colour-coded guide in the form of a wall chart in one library.

### Shelving System

Where the subject required was quite broad, such as childcare and HTML, the learners were generally able to locate relevant books on the shelves without using the catalogue. They found this particularly easy when subject titles were listed in large letters on the end of rows, and when information sheets were provided with the layout of each library. An open plan layout was also considered to be more accessible.

*"The books were set out nice, easy to find."*

### **Building and Ambience**

The design and atmosphere of the library as well as the amount of space and light was an important factor, particularly for the Eden Foyer group.

*"I felt welcome because it was open plan and big and had a café right next to it."*

*"The building was like an art sculpture. I liked the big windows with view."*

*"It was warm and welcoming"*

*"It had big light tables- nice atmosphere to work in."*

*"I found it inhospitable. It was not very friendly"*

### **Facilities**

The facilities available varied between libraries. Certain facilities and services were seen as useful- notably, refreshments, large study areas with views, availability of fiction books in academic libraries, access to computer catalogue and toilet facilities.

### **Staff**

The participants talked to staff in most of the libraries. The SureStart group in particular felt that the helpfulness and approachability of staff members was important.

*"I asked for information and she just looked at me. I think she was quite shocked that I wanted to know"*

*"She was really helpful."*

*"I expected the staff to be typical librarians but they were normal people. I thought they'd all be standoffish."*

## **Barriers to Using Libraries**

After the groups' visits to libraries in North Cumbria, the following potential barriers to using them were identified by the groups.

### **Location**

Some of the libraries were considered to be too far away and learners from both groups said that they may not use them for this reason.

*"The problem with that (using library in Carlisle) is you need transportation to Carlisle or Newton Rigg. If you have to go to Carlisle on the train it would cost nearly as much as the book would cost".*

*"I would only use college libraries if they were convenient."*

### **Sense of Belonging**

All the participants spoke about a sense of not belonging to some of the academic libraries

*"The library felt intellectual- it's more for the medical profession. I haven't got the brains to use it."*

*"I wouldn't go to those college libraries. You know when you get that impression that you shouldn't be there."*

*"It's weird when it's an actual college. People stare at you because you're not part of the school."*

*"I would not go through the doors of most of the libraries unless I was studying there. I would think- Oh God I'm not supposed to be here."*

*"If you don't look like a student you aren't anybody. When I go there I feel like I don't belong."*

### **Lack of borrowing rights**

Some of the learners said that they would not use academic libraries because they could not borrow books.

*"I wouldn't do work at a desk there. I would prefer to take books home. If I needed to find a book I would go to Penrith library and would get them to order me a book if it wasn't on the shelf."*

*"If there was a college library in the centre of Penrith I probably wouldn't use it if it was just a reference library."*

### **Previous bad experience of college**

One student had had a negative experience at one of the colleges, which would put them off using the library.

*"I didn't like that college because of bad memories. We went from school to look around and the students were all throwing snowballs at us."*

### **Library Environment**

The library building, layout and general atmosphere were important factors for the participants. Some said that they would like to have drink facilities, childcare facilities etc.

*"I wouldn't do work there because it's a bit clinical"*

*"I found that library inhospitable."*

*"When you went into the college you didn't know where the library was- there was no sign."*

### **Lack of confidence** (to go into a library or to ask for help)

Most of the participants said that they would not have felt confident enough to enter the academic libraries alone prior to the pilot group sessions.

*"It's quite daunting to go in on your own. It's OK if you're familiar with the place. It's just the unknown isn't it?"*

*"I wouldn't have gone in on my own."*

*"If I was on my own I wouldn't approach her (the staff member)"*

### **Lack of knowledge of how to use library**

Some people had not used a library previously because they said that they did not understand how the library system worked.

*"I didn't know how to get a library card."*

*"I didn't know where to get a book on Latvia."*

### **Confusing catalogue systems**

Having tried different catalogue systems, the groups felt that some were easier to understand than others.

*"Other (none OPAC) catalogues were harder. It was confusing."*

### **No need to use libraries**

Some of the participants felt that they could get all the information they needed from local public libraries or else did not need to use libraries at all.

*"I have bought all the books I need."*

*"I still have no need to use the library. I read Mills and Boon books and I buy those from the charity shop"*

*"I can get what I need from the Internet or from Penrith library."*

### **Lack of awareness of access agreement (don't know you can use the academic libraries)**

None of the learners were aware that they could use other libraries before the group sessions. They felt that there should be more publicity of public libraries.

*"I didn't know that you could go in those libraries before."*

*"They should make it more obvious you can go in them."*

### **Staff**

If staff are seen as unapproachable, unhelpful or not obvious, this would deter some of the participants from using libraries.

*"The woman showed us but didn't give anymore information when I had specifically asked. She didn't have time for us."*

*"The staff should know about the access agreements. Staff need training."*

*"You only see staff walking around with a trolley of books. They are always busy"*

### **Childcare**

The SureStart group raised a number of issues specific to carers, such as lack of childcare to enable studying in academic libraries and difficulty of using public libraries for own purposes when they have to supervise small children.

### **Library System- Fines, opening times and length of loans**

Some of the participants were concerned about using public libraries because of the systems.

*"I would be worried in case I forget to take books back and get stupid fines."*

*"Three weeks is not long enough. It takes me longer to read them."*

*"They need to check computers for fines. I get fines when I shouldn't have them. When you are on benefits, it makes it difficult."*

*"They are not open on Wednesday afternoons or Sundays."*

*"We weren't allowed to use the computer"*

## **Suggestions to Increase Library Usage**

The groups made many suggestions about how the libraries visited could be made more accessible and appealing for them to use for their studies, and in general.

### **Location and Accessibility**

- Provide transport to libraries on certain days.
- Alternative ways of accessing library information such as the facility to ask for specific information to be photocopied and sent through to local public libraries from distant academic libraries.
- “Passport” system for libraries within the AddLib<sup>3</sup> scheme.
- Encourage more people to go through the door by holding special events etc. (see “Events” below).
- Large clear signs to show where the library is within each institution.
- Simple step by step guide specifically for visitors showing how to use the library, catalogue, photocopier etc.
- Work with different community groups to encourage use.

### **Information Systems**

- Clear easy to use guides to using the library
- Standardised catalogue system
- Clearly labelled shelf system.
- Charts on walls and handouts showing where to find books on specific subject areas.
- Floor plans on handouts.

### **Staff**

- Staff training on AddLib agreement and how to help people to find information
- Uniforms or badges so that library users can identify who they can ask for help
- Volunteers wandering around the library with a badge on to help people.

### **Building and Ambience**

- Comfortable areas with big sofas
- Bright colourful interior
- Huge windows with space and light.
- Plenty of plants

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<sup>3</sup> The new access agreement between HE, FE, Public and Health libraries in Cumbria

## **Facilities**

- Café or drinks machine
- Area to eat sandwiches at lunchtime.
- Smoking area
- Toilets with baby changing facilities (in public libraries)
- Borrowing rights
- Large open study areas
- Fiction books in academic libraries
- Computer and internet access in all libraries
- Computer games, DVD watching areas etc for breaks during study time.
- Visitors' books for comments etc.
- Slides and art available at all libraries.
- Parking

## **Events**

- Open days
- Training sessions on how to use libraries
- Tours of the libraries for individuals and adult groups.
- Courses and workshop such as internet courses, storytelling course, art workshops using books in libraries for inspiration.
- Celebrity book signing sessions.
- Quizzes and other competitions such as chess matches.

## **Publicity**

- Publicise the fact that everyone can use the libraries
- Bright coloured leaflets and posters advertising the access agreement.
- Advertise through the press
- Freebies such as fridge magnets, pens, bags, key rings, bookmarks,
- Information and displays in public libraries

## **Parent and Child Needs**

- Boxes of toys
- Toilet and baby changing facilities
- A gate in children's sections so that children cannot run off
- Bibs for children with electronic tags available
- Computers and CD ROMs in children's sections
- Bookable crèche facilities once a week or month so that parents can study or find information in peace.
- Craft sessions for children
- Some books for parents in children's section

## **Outcomes**

In the final session, participants assessed their attitudes, views and progress at the end of the projects.

### **Course Information**

- Half of the participants said that they had found information relevant to their studies during the library visits.
- Half said that they could have found the information they needed on the internet.
- Several students said that they could find everything that they needed in the public library.
- Four people now said that they get the information for their course from their local public library. At the beginning, none of the learners had mentioned libraries in this capacity.

### **Progression of Learning**

Every participant said that they had learnt something new from visiting other libraries.

- All of the participants could name at least three new libraries at the end of the project
- All of the participants had learnt how to use a library catalogue.
- One woman had learnt how to use the internet
- One of the participants said that the visits had helped her with her NVQ in Communication Studies.

### **Attitude towards and Use of Libraries**

At the end of the project,

- Five out of the eight participants said that they had changed their view about libraries.
- Two of these said that they had changed their view that libraries were “dull and boring”
- Seven of the learners said that they would use libraries.
- Two of the SureStart group and none of the Foyer group said that they would use academic libraries in the future.
- People would not use academic libraries predominantly because they did not belong to that institution, because they felt “too thick” or because they did not need to.
- Two people said that they had used a library on their own accord to find information for their studies.

*“I would go to St Martins if I couldn’t find information for my course from my local library or the Internet.”*

*“I would feel comfortable going in there on my own now”*

*"Before I didn't know how to get a library card. I would go on my own now to get videos and stuff."*

*"I thought libraries would be daunting but they weren't."*

*"I have bought all my books. In the future I wouldn't go out and spend money on books. I would borrow them."*

*"It's been good for me because now there is more chance of me going to a library than ever before."*

*"I have learnt that libraries are not just boring things."*

*"I am reading books which are not sci-fi or fantasy because I have looked at different sections of the library."*

*"I feel more comfortable because I have been there a few times now."*

*"For the last few years I have only used the library for my children. Whereas now I will look for my own needs. I got books out of Carlisle on Saturday for my childcare course. I didn't really have to look because I knew where to find them. I could remember from when we had been, so it made it easier."*

### **Overview of Project**

Pilot group participants were asked to comment on the project as a whole. Most of the group had found it a very positive experience.

*"Different- something I wouldn't have done before."*

*"It's been good."*

*"Interesting"*

*"I have really enjoyed it. I think it's been great."*

*"There's nothing I haven't liked"*

*"I think it should have carried on for more weeks."*

*"It gives you confidence because I wouldn't have gone in alone. I wouldn't have gone anywhere alone."*

*"I've gone places I wouldn't have gone. I have learnt stuff."*

*"It was too early to get out of bed." (11.30 am)*

### **Other Outcomes for Individual Participants**

- One of the learners is being trained in web design and is helping to build the AddLib website.
- Three people used the internet for the first time during the project.
- Three people had changed their mind and now wanted to enter Further Education.

## **Learning Objectives**

This section examines to what extent the learning objectives for the project (listed on Page 4) were met.

### **1. Increased Knowledge and Understanding of HE, FE And Public Libraries in North Cumbria.**

Each learner involved with the pilot projects visited at least one public library and two HE and FE libraries. They examined the facilities and subject matters in detail and were aware of any special arrangements for accessing them, such as pass systems or need to telephone in advance.

### **2. Increased Knowledge about the Learners' Chosen Subjects**

All of the learners found some information relevant to their studies as a result of the pilot projects. Half of these said that they had used the information.

### **3. Development of Research Skills**

All of the participants used the internet to search libraries' online catalogues, learnt to use the catalogues in the libraries and, using these and other methods were able to find books, slides and journals on the shelves.

### **4. Development of Skills of Analysis**

Each learner involved with the project contributed to discussions about barriers to access of the libraries and suggested ways to overcome these.

### **5. Communication Skills**

- The learners held discussions about the marketing of the AddLib project, including leaflet design, free gifts and special events.
- One of the learners is helping to create the AddLib website.
- Some of the learners spoke to library staff about the project.

### **6. Sustainability**

- The majority of the learners now plan to use (mainly public) libraries for their studies in the future.
- Four meetings have been set up between SureStart and Eden Foyer, and libraries to discuss future partnership working. Learners from the pilot groups will attend these meetings.

## **Open University Student Discussions**

The views of three Open University students were gathered in a small focus group with two people and a one to one discussion. The following is a brief list of the key points from these discussions. (for more information about this group see "Pilot Group Profiles" in Appendix One )

### **Knowledge**

- None of the OU learners had heard of CHELPS<sup>4</sup>
- One person knew about the online library catalogues, two did not
- None of the students were aware that they could currently use the FE/ HE libraries

### **Study Needs**

- Two of the students tend to buy their books on the Amazon<sup>5</sup>, or second hand from eBay<sup>6</sup> and then sell them on.
- Course information is largely provided by the Open University. To pass exams and answer questions they do not *need* to use other materials
- Most extra course information is available on the internet.
- All of the students use public libraries and the online Open University library for their studies. They also use other databases and online libraries.
- Cumbrian university libraries were not mentioned in the Open University induction (other libraries *were* mentioned).

### **Use of Libraries**

- All three learners use public libraries regularly for books, talking books, DVDs, and with their children.
- One of the students uses libraries for private study space, two do not.
- Disabled access was essential for one student. She had had no problems with public libraries.
- Distance from the library limits use for one person.
- All three students said that they would not be comfortable using university libraries- two because of their age and one because of the perceived attitude of students.
- Attitude of library staff was relevant for one person.
- All three felt that an AddLib Passport scheme may break down barriers to access but one person thought that people may feel that they could not go into these libraries without an AddLib card.

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<sup>4</sup> Existing access agreement for users of HE and FE libraries.

<sup>5</sup> [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk): online retailer

<sup>6</sup> [www.eBay.co.uk](http://www.eBay.co.uk) online retailer

### **Outcomes from Discussions**

- All of the students said that they will look at academic libraries catalogues on the internet to find information in the future
- Two people said that they will now visit HE and FE libraries
- All three students had learnt about the agreements between libraries and the ease of access.

### **Suggestions**

- Public libraries could buy more specialist books (as long as these books have some wider appeal.).
- Librarians could specialise in certain subjects and may then be able to inform users about location of and access to resources pertaining to these subjects.
- Open University students could be given borrowing rights to relevant libraries.
- Libraries and museums could form partnerships to widen access to their collections.
- Specialist CD ROMS, such as museum collections, could be made available.
- Libraries may be able to obtain books from other libraries nationally (through interlibrary loan schemes) for Open University students.
- Many Open University students struggled to find resources in the first year because subjects studied were so diverse. Courses on how to use the catalogue and access resources would be beneficial. This could take the form of a yearly induction into using libraries.
- Sunday/ evening opening times would be useful.
- Students would be prepared to pay for courses to show them how to use the library.
- The AddLib scheme should be marketed extensively
- Some public libraries could provide more seating.
- Wireless Broadband access at public libraries would be useful for students from rural areas to download documents on to a laptop. Students may be prepared to pay for an account through the library.

## ***Key Recommendations***

During the course of the pilot groups, a wealth of suggestions were made about how libraries in Cumbria could be made more accessible for learners. The recommendations below are based on the project findings. Some of them may not be practical or feasible but are presented as items for future discussion.

### **1. Encourage Users Through the Doors**

The majority of the pilot group members said that they would not have gone into academic institutions alone. HE and FE libraries should look at ways of encouraging individuals and groups to enter their libraries in the first place. Some possible ways are:

- Induction sessions into library use for schools, Open University students, the general public etc.
- Introduce a passport system and publicise it widely (especially through public libraries).
- Publicise the AddLib project widely in an accessible form.
- Open days and special events such as artist in residence, craft sessions etc.
- Launch the AddLib scheme publicly.

### **2. Establish Local Links**

Pilot group members said that they would be unlikely to travel far to use libraries and also that they did not have the confidence to go into libraries alone. Libraries could forge links with local community groups, adult education centres, residents' groups in the areas where the libraries are located (as well as with those groups whose subject areas match those of the libraries). Examples of potential activities are:

- Guided library tours.
- Training in how to use the library.
- Special local events such as exhibitions of art from the local art class; local history talks; meet the staff sessions with cheese and wine.
- Wider consultation with specific groups around their needs with regards library use.

### **3. Create User Friendly Library Systems**

Good signs and clear information were highlighted as ways of facilitating access. The following possibilities could be considered:

- Clear signs showing location of library and within library.
- A clear step by step guide visitors using the library outlining asking for help, computer catalogue, location of different sections, photocopying facilities etc.
- Where possible, standardised information between libraries.
- One stop website with links to access library catalogues.

#### **4. Nurture a Sense of Belonging**

At the end of the library visits, the majority of the learners said that they did not feel they belonged in the academic libraries and some of them would not use them. In order to encourage learners to access and continue to access libraries and their facilities, libraries could:

- Have information, signs and procedures aimed at and welcoming visitors
- Increase staff awareness of AddLib and of the resources available in each library- through training, special partnerships, staff interlibrary visits, joint working
- Provide widespread staff training in meeting the library needs of community learners
- Ensure that staff are easily identifiable and approachable
- Look at ways of making the ambience as friendly as possible (open study areas, refreshments etc.)
- Consider extending borrowing rights to partner agencies such as Open University, community groups etc or special rate external membership for community organisations, U3A groups etc.
- Work with groups of learners to implement some of these changes (to encourage ownership)

#### **5. Key Role for Public Libraries**

Half of the learners in the pilot groups did not use public libraries prior to their involvement in the Inspire project. All of them said that they would use or would consider using them in the future. None of the learners had used academic libraries and the majority said that they were unlikely to use HE and FE libraries at the end of the project. In order to encourage more community learners to access HE and FE libraries, a “stepping stone” approach, whereby learners are encouraged to use public libraries first, would be a possibility. Public libraries could then act as a conduit to academic libraries where appropriate. Public libraries could consider some of the following:

- Encourage wider membership of public libraries (community links, special events etc. as indicated in 1 and 2 above).
- Advertising the AddLib scheme.
- Facilitate use of online academic library catalogues through training, staff support, advertising etc.
- Use community profiles to target ‘hard to reach’ groups.
- Consultation around needs with specific groups such as SureStart.

## **6. Partnership Working between libraries**

A co-ordinated approach between libraries is necessary to ensure that learners in Cumbria can access the vast range of resources available in the libraries in Cumbria. The continuation of the AddLib Steering Committee and the joint website should facilitate this. Libraries may wish to consider other initiatives such as:

- Joint events
- Joint training
- Special partnership arrangements
- Interlibrary visits.

## Appendix One- Pilot Group Profiles

### Summary of Statistics (all three groups)

- In total, eleven learners were consulted- ranging in age from 18 to 71
- There were seven females and three males
- Two learners were registered as disabled
- All of the learners were white British
- Five people lived in Carlisle, three in Penrith, one in Kirby Stephen and two in Eden Valley villages
- The groups visited six Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) libraries and three public libraries.

### Eden Rural Foyer

Eden Rural Foyer Project is based in Penrith and managed by Impact Housing. It provides accommodation for young people who are in housing need, a community cyber café open to the general public and education opportunities including basic skills courses and National Vocational Qualifications for young people who have had difficulties with formal education. The Foyer also rents rooms and desk space to outside organisations such as Shelter, housing associations and voluntary groups. It is part of the Foyer Federation, an international body which provides:

*“a stable and secure community in which young people can support one another and achieve independence; help with finding appropriate employment, training or education to make this possible; training in basic skills and independent living skills; help with finding permanent accommodation and ongoing support when the young person has left the Foyer.”<sup>7</sup>*

Four young people completed the project. Three members of the group were enrolled on Entry to Employment (E2E) courses at the Foyer, although studying various subjects and one member was studying for an NVQ Level Three in Computers and Key Skills.

*“E2E is targeted at a diverse range of young people all of whom will be suffering from a level of disadvantage or at risk of becoming disaffected or disengaged. Many E2E learners will fall into the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training Group)”<sup>8</sup>*

The subjects being studied by the pilot group members were Computers, Communications, Childcare, Hospitality and Catering and Key Skills. The majority of the learners’ work was carried out online in the Eden Foyer computer suite. The group members were all competent at using Computers and the Internet

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<sup>7</sup> [www.foyer.net](http://www.foyer.net)

<sup>8</sup> Rathbones. E2E: A Quick Guide

## **SureStart South Carlisle**

SureStart is a government initiative.

*“(SureStart) aims to achieve better outcomes for children, parents and communities by increasing the availability of childcare for all children, improving health, education and emotional development for young children and supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment.”<sup>9</sup>*

The organisation helps service development in disadvantaged areas alongside financial help for parents to afford childcare. SureStart in North Cumbria operates courses in computers, art and crafts, story telling and other subjects in community centres across South Carlisle for parents with pre-school age children. Initial discussions were held with Linda Mark, from Carlisle SureStart, who identified four parents who were willing to take part in the project. The group agreed to hold five three hour morning sessions. A crèche was provided by SureStart for the participants' children and paid for by NWMLAC. The participants were enrolled on a variety of different courses including childcare, GCSE English and Maths, Computer courses and a storytelling course. The majority of the women had little or no knowledge of the internet.

## **Open University**

The Open University is the UK's largest university, with over 200,000 students and customers. It provides undergraduate and post graduate courses. The Open University representative in Cumbria, Christine Cathrow was approached as a potential pilot group contact. In a meeting with the Inspire Steering Committee, library staff had expressed an interest in working with Open University (OU) students, who library staff felt may have difficulty accessing information for their studies. Christine explained that Open University Students do not usually need to use academic libraries for their studies because all the information they require is included in their study packs. She said that the majority of OU students do not have time to go to the library.

It was agreed to hold one or two short sessions with OU undergraduate and post-graduate students from North Cumbria to explore this further and to discuss whether access to libraries for this group can be facilitated. An evening focus group was held in March 2004 for undergraduate Open University students based in North Cumbria. Out of the initial six students who agreed to take part in the group, only two attended the focus group. One other person met with the consultant on a separate occasion to discuss his views and use of libraries. Broadly the same subject areas were discussed in both meetings with Open University students. The students who took part in the focus groups were studying History and Psychology.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)

## **Appendix Two- Key Pilot Group Activities- SureStart and Eden Rural Foyer**

### **Introductory Session**

The first session for each of the two groups took the form of a general discussion of the pilot group process, the group members' experiences and aspirations. The group members also identified a subject which they would like to find further information about in libraries. At the end of this session participants completed a short questionnaire about their use of and views on libraries.

### **Public Library Visits**

In session two the Eden Rural Foyer and SureStart group each visited a local public library –Penrith library and Carlisle library. They were given a tour of the library by a member of staff. Some of the SureStart group used the internet facility in Carlisle library to search the online academic library catalogues for resources pertaining to their subject areas. The Eden Foyer Group used the internet facility at the Foyer to search these catalogues. (In a subsequent session the SureStart group also visited Harraby library, which is the local library for some of the women.)

### **Academic Library Visits**

The two groups each visited three academic libraries. In each case, library staff had been contacted prior to each visit. Each group attempted to find resources with minimum assistance. In some cases they located information through use of online catalogues, in some cases by searching the library shelves, and in some instances with assistance from library staff. The learners used information and help booklets and notice boards where these were available. After each visit, the groups discussed the experience, analysed the positive and negative aspects of each library and suggested ways that access could be made easier for them. The libraries visited were as follows: Eden Foyer Project visited Carlisle Institute for the Arts, University of Central Lancashire( Newton Rigg) and University of Northumbria (Carlisle Campus). The Carlisle SureStart group made visits to the libraries at St Martin's College, Carlisle College of Further Education and Cumberland Infirmary.

### **Focus Group Sessions**

In the final session group members took part in a focus group, where they discussed their experiences and made recommendations for the future. (see Appendices Five and Six for focus group discussion areas)They also completed a final questionnaire which would highlight changes in their knowledge and views, when compared with the first questionnaire.

### **Sustainability**

Group members were asked to be involved in a meeting with staff from a public and academic library as well as a key contact from their organisation to look at future partnerships between libraries and SureStart and with the Eden Foyer. These meetings are due to take place in April 2004.

## ***Appendix Three -First Questionnaire***

### **Some Questions about You and Libraries**

#### About You

What is your name?

How old are you?

Which town or village do you live in?

What do you like doing?

What do you want to do after the course?

Where do you want to be in 10 years time?

## About Libraries

What does the word '**Library**' mean to you?

What can you do in a library? What is there?

When did you last go to a library? What did you go there for?

Which libraries do you use?

How often?

What do you use libraries for?

What libraries do you know?

Do you know which libraries you can use? If so, which?

About your Course

What course are you studying?

What subjects are you doing at the moment?

Where do you get the information you need for you course?

Is there any information for your course you think you could get from a library?

**Please tick the reasons why you may not use libraries to find information to help with your studies.**

Too far away/ difficult to get to

Not open at convenient times

Don't have materials I am interested in

Don't have enough detail in my area of interest/study

Don't know how to use a library

Don't need to use libraries

Can't afford to pay charges

Don't have the confidence to use a library

Other. Please Specify

Of these the main reasons are

1.

2.

3.

**Thank you for your help**

## ***Appendix Four- End of Project Questionnaire***

### About You

What is your name?

What do you want to do after your course?

Where do you want to be in 10 years time?

### About Libraries

What does the word 'Library' mean to you?

What can you do in a library? What is there?

When did you last go to a library of your own accord? What did you go there for?

Which libraries do you use?

How often?

What do you use libraries for?

What libraries do you know?

Where do you get the information you need for your course?

Is there any information for your course you think you could get from a library?

**About your library visits during the project**

Do you feel you benefited from using other libraries?

Yes – a lot  Yes, some  Not much  Not at all

Having used other libraries, how would you rate the following:

Gaining access to library

V.good  Good  Ok  Not good  Unsatisfactory  n/a

Staff helpfulness

V.good  Good  Ok  Not good  Unsatisfactory  n/a

Ease of finding materials

V.good  Good  Ok  Not good  Unsatisfactory  n/a

Borrowing privileges

V.good  Good  Ok  Not good  Unsatisfactory  n/a

Ease of using the catalogue

V.good  Good  Ok  Not good  Unsatisfactory  n/a

Please add any specific details:

**Please complete the following sentences:**

Now that I know I can use other libraries, I intend to.....

The sessions have helped me .....

Using other libraries has helped me.....

I've changed my mind about.....

**Please tick the reasons why you might not use libraries to find information to help with your studies.**

Too far away/ difficult to get to

Not open at convenient times

Don't have materials I am interested in

Don't have enough detail in my area of interest/study

Don't know how to use a library

Don't need to use libraries

Can't afford to pay charges

Don't have the confidence to use a library

Don't have enough study space

Other. Please Specify

Of these the main reasons are

1.

2.

3.

Please use this space for any other comments.

## **Appendix Five- SureStart and Eden Foyer Focus Group Notes** (devised by Helen Greenwood, LISU Evaluator)

### **The Library Experience**

As part of your involvement with this project, you have visited several libraries.

How do you feel about these visits?  
Did you find what you were looking for?  
What was good about the experience?  
What wasn't so good or was difficult?

### **Progression of Learning**

How has access to more information affected your studies/ assignments?

Have you benefited from using other libraries? How?  
What have you learnt about using libraries (catalogues/ finding books etc.)

### **Knowledge and awareness of services available**

If you are working on an assignment and you can't find enough information about your subject on the Internet, your own books or the local library, what would you do?

Would you feel confident to do this or do you have some reservations/ things you're unsure about?

### **Increased use of HE libraries**

This project included a visit to a University library.

What were your expectations of this?  
How did you feel about this experience once you'd been?  
Would you go to this library again? What about other university libraries?  
Do you have any plans to enrol on Higher or Further Education Courses?

### **Barriers to using other libraries**

Why didn't you use other libraries before this project?  
Have you had any problems using other libraries?  
For what reasons might you still not use other libraries?

### **The Future**

Do you think you will continue to use libraries in the future? How and why?

### **Communications**

Some of you have been involved in the development of marketing tools for the project. How do you feel about this?

## **Appendix Six- Cumbria Open University Focus Group Notes** (devised by Helen Greenwood, LISU Evaluator)

### **About using libraries**

What's good about the library/ies you use?

What's not so good?

Explore the reasons why they use a particular library e.g. proximity, best resources etc

Have you discovered any services elsewhere which aren't in the libraries you use/what would you like to see on offer?

Have you received any training in the use of learning resources e.g. from academic staff, library staff?

### **Progression of learning**

How could access to more information affect your studies/assignments?

Do you think you could benefit from using other libraries? How? (E.g. learning new things, reading more widely, assistance in studies etc)

### **Knowledge and awareness of services available**

Are you aware of any access agreements (e.g. CHELPS) to allow you to use other libraries?

*[Get group to think about how access arrangements/ability to use other libraries could be promoted]*

If you are working on an assignment and you can't find enough information about your subject on the Internet, your own books or the local library, what would you do?

Would you feel confident to do this, or do you have some reservations/ things you're unsure about?

*[Opportunity to explain how access could be facilitated under the INSPIRE initiative, access to online catalogues of other libraries etc]*

### **Barriers to using libraries**

Why don't you use libraries?

Have you had any problems using libraries? E.g. physical access, staff unhelpfulness, lack of access to electronic resources & the Internet

For what reasons might you not use libraries?

What would encourage/assist you to use libraries?

### **The future**

Now that you know you can use xxxx libraries, do you think you will make use of them in the future? For what purpose?

### **GLOs from session(s) – Brainstorming at end**

After coming today, I've learnt that .....

After today's session I intend to .....

Today's session has helped me ....

I've changed my mind about .....

## ***Appendix Seven- Inspire Project- Preliminary Library Visits***

### **Questions for Staff**

What resources do you have available? (Books/Internet/Magazines/Archive Materials etc.)

What broad subject areas are covered?

Particular Strengths?

Current ease of access to library resources- (physical access/ opening times/ childcare/ staff to help/ easy to find relevant info?)

Any ideas on groups of learners who would benefit from access to your library?

How could they use the library? (study/ internet/ journals/ borrow books etc)

Possible barriers to access?

Ideas of resources which your library could put in place to facilitate access?  
Are these ideas feasible?