**DEMONSTRATING MARKETING EXCELLENCE**

**Health Libraries - Winner**

Marketing Excellence Award entry by: Sue Thomas, Health Promotion Librarian

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Category Entered: Health Libraries

Project Title: A rough guide to sourcing health information

Context:

A rough guide to sourcing health information: developing and delivering a training course for staff in public libraries in Wales.

The Society of Chief Librarians (Wales) is currently developing a health and wellbeing offer which will clearly demonstrate and establish public libraries as community hubs for the provision of trusted health and wellbeing information and support.

From the start of this work the key role of front-line library staff in successful delivering this offer was recognised. Front-line staff would need to receive training in understanding health information enquiries, how to respond to them and the sources of information available to which they could signpost their customers.

This was a need identified in the South East Wales Partnership training plan and also for other services being developed such as the ‘Life Hub’ in Pembroke Dock library.

As a senior member of the Health Promotion Library team, Sarah Davies senior library assistant immediately realised the lead role that our service should take in this work, and enthusiastically put forward a proposal to take this training on. Sarah not only recognised that this would extend the courses provided by the service, but would also meet a target in our annual plan for marketing the services more widely to different groups.

The target in the plan April 2014-March 2015 has two relevant objectives ‘To actively promote membership and increase membership so that a wider range of customers have easy access to integrated information on health and wellbeing.’ ‘To target hard-to-reach groups and individuals who do not routinely use our library service.’

Through attending the Macmillan Cancer Information Steering Groups, and other work with public libraries, Sarah knew that many front-line library staff were either not aware of the Health Promotion Library, or were not making sufficient use of the services we offered.

With the full support of the South East Wales Partnership, Sarah enthusiastically set about researching and developing this training course. In doing so she was able to build on work carried out several years previously on consumer information which was successfully delivered with colleagues from NHS Direct Wales in support of a Health Challenge Wales initiative.

Sarah investigated other courses provided such as that delivered by Nia Morris Clinical Librarian John Spalding Library Wrexham Medical Institute, Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board, and used ‘customer journey mapping’ to understand the issues and challenges from the library staff’s viewpoint.

The training was initially delivered to four staff in the Pembroke Dock library where it was well received, and evaluation showed that this was useful, improved their knowledge, making the staff more confident in responding to health enquiries, and with a greater understanding of the work of the Health Promotion Library.

Based on this, Sarah delivered the training course for the South East Wales Partnership in Cwmbran library (January 2015 – with fourteen staff attending).

For this course, Sarah felt it to be vital to include two colleagues with extensive experience of managing the Macmillan Cancer Information Services, and both readily agreed to be part of the half-day course.

As with the training in Pembrokeshire, positive feedback has been received from the evaluation (final results are being analysed).

Following this course, Sarah has been asked to deliver similar training for staff in Monmouthshire public libraries, and will be working with colleagues from Macmillan in taking this forward.

There were considerably challenges to be met in leading on this work. Sarah needed to understand the requirements of front-line staff working in a very different environment from the specialist service with which she was familiar, as well as having to provide training resources without an allocated budget. As the accompanying handouts show these are well designed, professional, easy to use, and also have the added benefit that they can be printed and photocopied.

It is fully recognised that the numbers involved in this work are relatively small, but these training courses were pilots to see whether the course as developed by Sarah and the accompanying handouts were useable, would work and would meet the objectives for front-line library staff.

Clearly the evaluation and informal feedback received to date demonstrate that these objectives have been met and that this course could be used more widely.

Based on this feedback, Sarah is now working up future plans for this training so that it can be offered to other services across Wales as part of our national role. It will also be a main feature in our training guide which is being revised in 2015.

Sarah is also looking to work with colleagues in health libraries including the Royal College of Nursing to see whether there is an easy and low cost way of making this course available online so that the service can offer online training and support.

Future plans also include linking the training course to other elements of service development such as the ‘HealthInfo4Life’ signposting guides so that ‘the gateway to quality health and wellbeing information’ the Health Promotion Libraries’ strap-line becomes a reality.