

A CURIOUS PUBLICATION

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# Libraries and the cultural education challenge





# Welcome

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Welcome to this publication, designed to advocate, inform and enthuse people across the North West about the contribution that libraries already make and can continue to make to the lives of children and young people. This publication was commissioned by Curious Minds and the case-study content was researched and presented by Heritage, Arts & Culture Consultant Emma Parsons in 2015.

In light of the CULTURAL EDUCATION CHALLENGE launched in October 2015 by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND, Curious Minds hope this publication will identify how libraries across the North West region are already responding, or how they are planning to respond to this important call to action.

The purpose of this publication is to:

- Further inform libraries about the Cultural Education Challenge
- Inspire libraries by sharing good practice
- Celebrate innovative work for children and young people in the sector
- Create an advocacy tool for libraries
- Map the Cultural Education Challenge against the 5 SCL (Society of Chief Librarians) Universal Offers
- Highlight the support Curious Minds can offer libraries working with children, young people and schools

This document will explore the opportunities that exist to link the Cultural Education Challenge to current library strategies. It will also champion case studies that have already mapped decisively against the approach and can be disseminated for future success.

# What is the Cultural Education Challenge?

For library managers and staff new to the principles of the Cultural Education Challenge, the definition below captures its intention.

From the Arts Council's website:

"The Cultural Education Challenge is a call for schools, arts and cultural organisations, music education hubs, local authorities, further and higher education institutions to come together to offer a consistent, and high quality, cultural education for all."

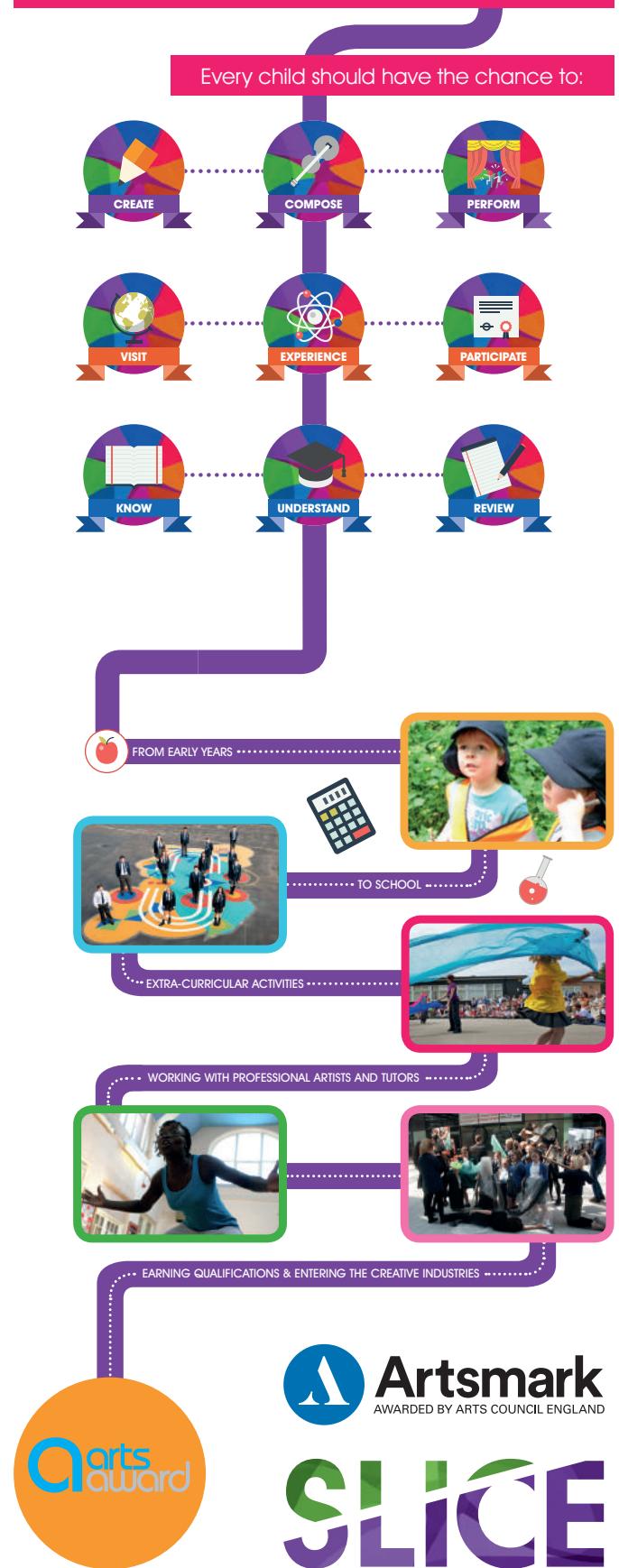
We believe that every child should be able to create, compose, and perform their own musical or artistic work. They should all be able to visit, experience and participate in extraordinary work, and be able to know more, understand more, and review the experiences they've had.

But cultural education provision is still variable, excellent in some areas, in others much is fragmented, or lacks the profile to make it visible to schools, families and communities. There is great potential to do more to ensure that all children have access to great arts and culture.

The Cultural Education Challenge will encourage the formation of local 'cultural education partnerships' to ensure access to and participation in the arts for all children and young people, and make best use of the resources available."

The North West's lead agency for cultural and creative education

We believe that **all children and young people should be able to experience great art and culture.**  
Cultural education fosters creativity & innovation, unlocking vital skills that drive the creative industries.



# The Strategic Context for Libraries

Children and Young People are a priority for library services across the North West, reflecting the national context. Arts Council England (ACE) delivered 'Envisioning the Library of the Future' in 2014/15 which included consultation with children and young people on the potential of the service. This identified four priority areas for development by ACE and partners:



Place the library  
as the hub of the  
community



Make the most of  
digital technology  
and creative media



Ensure that libraries  
are resilient and  
sustainable



Deliver the right skills  
for those who work in  
libraries

The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) developed a 'Children and Young People's Promise in Public Libraries' in 2014:

- Every child and every young person visiting a public library (physically or digitally) is inspired by an exciting environment which makes reading for pleasure irresistible
- They will find a range of books and information resources to support growing confidence in literacy and formal and informal learning
- There are opportunities for participation and engagement with a range of fun reading and book-based activities
- They are actively involved in decisions about service developments
- The public library is accessible and welcoming to all children and young people



# What opportunities have been created for libraries by the Cultural Education Challenge and how can it support current library priorities?

Three regional experts offer their thoughts.

## Julie Spencer MBE

Head of Library and Museum Services

The Society of Chief Librarians and partners, including Arts Council England, are committed to keeping library services relevant and accessible. Together they have identified five key areas of service which today's users regard as integral to public libraries and developed a shared strategy for the future.

The Universal Offers cover the five key areas of service which are seen as essential to a 21st century library service. They are the reading offer, information offer, digital offer, health offer and learning offer

These Universal Offers are underpinned by the Children's Promise developed by ASCEL. The aim of each of the offers is to develop a core package of partnerships, resources and advocacy messages at a national level which can then be delivered locally and shaped to meet differing local needs. The work of public libraries with children, young people and their families, developed and promoted through the Universal Offers and the Children's Promise, is already a fundamental priority both nationally and locally. Public libraries provide a local gateway for children to make their cultural discoveries. They enable children to experience and participate in quality cultural events and activities often delivered in partnership with other local stakeholders, as well as providing that space for individual cultural exploration and study.

Public library services are an important element of any Cultural Education Partnership because of their delivery of the Children's Promise. This document highlights good practice within the region and I am sure will inspire new programmes of work going forward.

## Carl Clayton

Arts Council Relationship Manager for Libraries

Working with children and young people is integral to the role of public libraries and this aligns with our Goal 5 for every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries. In terms of the size and diversity of audience, libraries can be the most important cultural organisation in any community. As such libraries are central to cultural education and through the scale and diversity of their activities play a key role in developing literacy and reading for pleasure, encouraging creative writing, supporting and delivering Arts Awards, developing children's digital skills and a wide range of other activities.

Projects run by libraries - including Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts and Strategic Touring funded projects - have clearly demonstrated the impact that libraries can have on children and young people and show why we assert that there is a clear, compelling and continuing need for a publicly funded library service. Libraries are cultural and community hubs that help to develop strong communities and thereby help hard pressed local authorities to deliver their core goals in the most cost effective way possible.

It is our view that public libraries are major players in the Cultural Education Challenge and should be seen as key partners in Cultural Education Partnerships. We also encourage National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and major partnership museums that are working with children and young people as part our funding agreements to see libraries as partners in their work.

## Emma Parsons

Heritage, Arts & Culture Consultant

The role of libraries in the lives of our children and young people has never been more important than it is today. Libraries offer a place of discovery, a haven, a creative melting pot of fun and learning, of opportunity beyond our own experiences.

The dedicated staff in libraries are working hard to attract children and young people to the services on offer, and also to build up the evidence of the impact their service can have on individuals and communities. Nationally, the much wider use of libraries needs to be recognised and celebrated. Children and young people are using libraries to support their study, to gain qualifications like Arts Award, to meet friends and make new ones, to learn new skills and build confidence, to try out creative programmes, to hear live music and watch performances, to find their potential. Books are at the heart of libraries, but the borrowing figures are by no means the only way to measure their contribution to our lives."

"You (Blackpool Library) have been inspirational in encouraging our children's love of reading and to be enthusiastic about their own writing" – teacher feedback, Blackpool.

# Introduction

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The following case studies were gathered by Heritage, Arts & Culture Consultant Emma Parsons after a regional callout for contributions. They showcase the outstanding work already being delivered to children and young people by our North West Libraries. The case studies offer a diverse range of examples of how the Cultural Education Challenge might be translated in libraries of all shapes and sizes, with a range of budgets, resources and outcomes.

## **Theme 1**

Young people as leaders and decision makers

## **Theme 2**

Working with schools

## **Theme 3**

Going digital with young people

## **Theme 4**

Targeting communities and developing new audiences

Curious Minds have indicated as a footnote for each theme how we, as the Bridge organisation for the North West, can further support libraries seeking to develop this type of work or deliver similar ideas.

## CASE STUDY 1

# Involving young people in decision making

## i) Imaginators at Bolton Library & Museum Services

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### Aims

The Bolton team wanted to provide a year-round volunteering opportunity for young people, giving them the chance to complete a Bronze Arts Award. From previous experience the team knew they wanted the young people to be involved in the planning of the group, and in activities for their fellow teenagers, and to increase issues and library use by this age group. The ideas chimed with the Reading Hack programme run by the Reading Agency. They volunteer mainly at the Crescent building in Le Mans Crescent which houses the Central Library and Museum and occasionally at other locations.

### Approach

A group of volunteers aged 14-21 years were recruited and they came up with the name 'Imaginators' to emphasise their creativity and the idea for t-shirts to identify them as a team within the library. They plan activities for other young people and manage a delivery budget themselves. The Imaginators all had digital training to support them to develop content to use in their social media posts to promote the library to others. They have their own Twitter account (**@bltnimagine**rs) and have set up a WordPress blog. The team tend to meet on Saturdays and each has a specific role.

### Outputs and outcomes

- From April 2015 – February 2016 18 young people have volunteered for a total of 670 hours
- Activities delivered for other children and young people
- 1 member secured a 2-year apprenticeship with the service
- 2 members completed work placements with the service
- Strong content for college, university and job applications
- Contribution to Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Improved confidence and skills, team-work, event management, budgeting, working with the public
- New Young Ambassadors for the library

### Next steps

The Bolton team will be monitoring book issues to the target age group to see the effect of the project on overall usage. The Imaginators will continue to work towards Arts Award and deliver more programmes.

The Imaginators will be taking part in the 2016 Carnegie Shadowing Scheme, focusing particularly on any YA titles on the shortlist and producing content on featured titles for their blog. The group continue to take part in arts activities and workshops and will be taking part in a cyanotype workshop very soon.

## ii) St Helens Reading Activists

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### Aims

St Helens is in the Top 20 areas in the UK for deprivation. Unemployment and teenage pregnancy rates are all high. The library team wanted to reach out to young people whose life prospects are very low by setting up a Reading Activists group in the library.

### Approach

"Initially we struggled," says Kathryn Boothroyd, Community Development Manager. "Reactions varied between 'What on earth is that all about?' to 'Libraries are boring'. But we persevered, recruiting slowly until we had a group of about 12."

Kathryn and her team worked incredibly hard to get young people involved in the project. It wasn't easy, they were dealing with individuals who struggled to communicate with adults, said they weren't interested in reading or libraries and even displayed anti-social behaviour. A group of boys were getting in trouble outside the library and were known to the police. One of them was already on an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) which is a pre-cursor to an ASBO. Instead of banning the group, Kathryn and her staff decided to get them involved in Reading Activists. It wasn't easy, but bit by bit, they began to develop a good relationship. They noticed a real change in the entire group from never making eye contact to becoming actively engaged.

"One day, out of the blue, one of the group had an idea for a comic strip. "It will show off our creative language", he told us. We were amazed. 'John' had always claimed that he wasn't into reading. But now he had found something he was passionate about."

### Outputs and outcomes

- Change in attitude from anti-social behaviour to active engagement with the library
- One volunteer voted onto St Helens' UK Youth Parliament, visiting Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament
- Increase in confidence levels and social skills
- Mutual respect has grown between library staff and the young people
- New experiences - an invitation for the group to Faber Publishing in London as a result of comic strip project – a first trip to London for many of the young people (one had never left St Helens before)
- Full day roadshow at the library organised by Reading Activists with author Bali Rai, comics workshop, live performance by band Dutch Uncles (arranged by Get It Loud In Libraries), and digital skills workshop

### Next steps

Since the roadshow, the Reading Hack project has gone from strength to strength. They hold regular events which attract lots of people to the library, and most importantly, they have a lot of fun. The Reading Hack group have been a key Steering Group in the Cultural Hubs: Arts in Libraries programme in St Helens selecting some of the artists and performers that have worked in library spaces for young people. Although the original group have grown up and moved on, more young people are working with us which shows the legacy of the programme and the influence young people can have on their Library Service.

### iii) Halton Reading Hack

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#### Aims

Halton Library Services wanted to offer young people a contemporary platform where a number of interactive activities, with reading at their heart, could be developed. This could be anything from a poetry-themed DJ set or novel-inspired Minecraft, to book-related filmmaking or helping others to read. A key objective was to build a community for young people where new skills and experiences could be developed in a fun and safe environment.

#### Approach

There has been a teenage volunteering group (under various titles) at Halton Lea and Widnes Libraries for a number of years. The number attending has gone up and down over time but they have managed to keep it going. Volunteers are recruited from library users and from posters being sent around the local high schools. "We make it clear that the teenagers choose their own level of involvement coming to meetings, helping with events, helping with day to day tasks as much or as little as they want."

#### Outputs and outcomes

The group at Widnes is well established with the young people making friendships that keep them keen on attending. They meet every other week at Widnes and Halton Lea but the Widnes group quite often requests extra meetings. In December 2014 and February 2015 the Widnes group helped run two very successful events for children at Widnes Library, which strengthened their enthusiasm a great deal.

#### Next steps

The libraries intend to create further events for teenagers and hope it will give them the opportunity to encourage more young people to get involved with their groups.



## How could Curious Minds support libraries who wish to explore or develop their approach to young people as leaders and decision makers?

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- 1) **Curious Minds have** a number of ways that it can support libraries to share best practice. Curious Minds could work with you to; create a practice sharing event on this theme, to publish a case study or blog or to seek out more national examples and models to share with you.
- 2) **Curious Minds can advise** on and broker partnerships between libraries and local, regional or national organisations that specialise in youth leadership. Experts such as Young Advisors or the UFA (University of the First Age) for example.
- 3) **Curious Minds has a team** of Young Associates who can be commissioned by you to work with your staff, volunteers or service users.
- 4) **Curious Minds could advise you** how to use the Silver and Gold Arts Award as a framework for developing an existing or creating a new youth leadership programme.
- 5) **Curious Minds can deliver** a programme called 'Young Researchers and Evaluators' to your staff and to young people. This will enable them to act as consultants for you – particularly around the quality of your offer for children and young people.



## CASE STUDY 2

# Working with schools to improve literacy

### i) Tameside

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#### Aims

Knowing how important it is to evidence the benefits that libraries can bring to individuals, the library team at Tameside wanted to see if a partnership with schools could demonstrate an impact on the reading levels of the pupils involved.

#### Approach

Local school Ravensfield Primary were looking to build on their work using the Reading Recovery intervention scheme for children with reading difficulties. They approached their Neighbourhood Librarian, with whom they already had a good relationship, and discussed ideas together. The school wanted to improve reading levels, and the library were keen to encourage more children and parents to use their service to this end – a perfect start to working together.

The Neighbourhood Librarian started a programme of visits to the school, to talk to parents and children and give out information packs. She promoted the Summer Reading Challenge in assembly and the school encouraged participation by awarding house points to pupils completing the Challenge.

With greater numbers involved than ever before, this success was built upon and a library reward scheme was developed. A Ravensfield bookmark was left at the library each time a child borrowed books, and then the totals added up at the end of the programme with house points awarded and a celebration party for all the children involved.

#### Outputs and outcomes

- Completion of the Summer Reading Challenge at the school rose from 12% to 21% of pupils
- One child on the Reading Recovery programme improved his British Ability Scales word reading age from 7:1 to 7:10 after the summer activity
- Regular class visits to the library with follow-up work on display in the library to encourage parents to visit
- Strengthened relationship between Library Manager and Ravensfield School Literacy Coordinator

#### Next steps

The library team want to share this good practice across their Borough with a target to work in similar ways with a school in each of the four neighbourhoods in Tameside.

## ii) Blackpool – Wordpool Festival of Words

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### Aims

The team wanted to work with schools across the area to encourage participation in the Blackpool Wordpool Festival of Words. The Festival Steering Group includes community partners and is a key part of the Library and Arts team's engagement programme.

### Approach

Storyteller Dan Worsley created a story especially for Wordpool called 'The Blackpool Poolie', a tale of a mythical sea monster that lives under North Pier. Dan made visits to schools and worked with over 3,500 pupils in the lead up to the festival. He told the first part of the story during the school visits but to hear the ending, the pupils had to attend the Wordpool Family Day in Stanley Park.

Dan's story was also filmed and the link sent to every primary school in Blackpool so those schools he couldn't visit still had an opportunity to participate in the festival.

### Outputs and outcomes

"He was able to motivate even the most reluctant writers to produce a sparkling simile and a marvellous metaphor. There was a real eagerness from children and staff to continue the tale. We can't wait for July 4th at the park and for Dan's next visit" – teacher feedback.

Broden and Gabriel (year 5) "We thought it was great because Dan told the story with his hands. He made pictures with his hands so you could really imagine the story."



### iii) Rochdale – Literature & Ideas Festival

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#### Aims

The festival aims to inspire a passion for the written and spoken word amongst Rochdale's residents with an annual 3-6 days of literature, theatre, drama and visual arts.

#### Approach

The festival is a key part of the library's engagement programme and involves valued partners, sponsors and has on all but one occasion been supported by Arts Council Funding. It is funded by ticket sales and the Maskew Bequest. Running each year since 2013, the festival attracts a quality list of performers, speakers and presenters, with Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy giving out prizes in 2014.

For 2015, 50% of the festival events are targeted at schools, families and young people. Funding from the Local Education Partnership helped us to host events linked to the national curriculum, including author visits with schools, developing 'Bags full of Stories' for younger children, and an inter-generational project with Chetham's School of Music looking at text and music. Local storyteller Richard O'Neill ran pirate story workshops with older primary school classes to culminate in a Pirates Day in the town centre.

#### Outputs and outcomes

- Greatly increased engagement with libraries and reading in schools and at home
- Participation in literacy events
- Improved links with schools
- Creation of resources to use with schools and families
- Links across libraries and the wider arts and cultural offer in Rochdale

2016's festival will develop this engagement further.

### How can Curious Minds support libraries who wish to work with young people on digital projects?

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- 1) **Curious Minds can introduce** you to new school partners online, through events and brokerage.
- 2) **Curious Minds currently has opportunities** for you to work with schools and teachers to develop your role around supporting schools with creative writing.
- 3) **Curious Minds runs a Leadership Programme** for teachers (SLiCE). These SLiCE Leaders can be booked to work alongside your staff to share their curriculum knowledge and to help you navigate the current education landscape.
- 4) **Curious Minds can develop** targeted Arts Award activity to support the SCL reading offer within your library including Arts Award training for staff.
- 5) **Curious Minds can run a high quality regional event** where Tameside, Blackpool and Rochdale Library Services can share their learning and findings with other libraries.

## CASE STUDY 3

# Going digital with young people

### i) Oldham Instagram group

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#### Aims

- Encourage library membership and attendance at the library and promote other sessions and events
- To provide an activity exclusively for children aged 8-11 years old in the Limehurst area of Oldham
- To provide an opportunity for young people to meet each other and share experiences
- Give children the opportunity to discuss what they are reading and recommend books to others
- Share the reviews we create on our own Instagram page using photography

#### Approach

The Oldham team have been trying out many different approaches to targeting young people to use libraries including pamper nights, sleepovers, and Yu Gi Oh clubs (a Japanese trading card game). All of the ideas have come from consulting with young people themselves and are backed up with their two year participation in the Get it Loud in Libraries programme with live music gigs and digital producer opportunities for young people.

A way-in to encouraging 8-11 year olds to share their reading adventures was to use Instagram, the photo-sharing social media platform. A free event was arranged aimed at this age group who live or attend school in the Limehurst area. Activities include creating insta-reviews about books they have read which are then uploaded to share on our Instagram page. The team promoted group discussion about authors or titles, and delivered creative activities such as making bookmarks, taking photographs of books they would like to share and creating artwork related to books.

#### Outcomes

Comments from participants included:

***“I have enjoyed everything”***

***“I have enjoyed doing my book review, it was fun!”***

***“I loved making the bookmark it was fun”***

The group continues to develop content on Instagram.

## ii) Manchester Digital Journalists and Digital Content

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### Aims

- To improve digital literacy with children, young people and their families
- To embed digital technology across library spaces

### Approach

The redeveloped Central Library has used digital content to engage its users, from Archives+ interactive content and film pods, to the Media Lounge with Apple Macs with creative digital software and gaming consoles that are used mainly by young people.

The Archives Team have trained six young people as digital journalists to make content using film, audio and photography to support the team in promoting the service to other young people. They post content to Twitter, Facebook, WordPress blogs, Soundcloud, Flickr and YouTube.

The digital activity programmes on offer at Central Library include:

- Code Clubs run by volunteers. The children start off learning the basics of computer programming through the use of web based apps such as Scratch and move their way through to more advanced activities creating projects that support the learning of HTML and Python.
- Robogals - female electronics and computing students deliver one off Lego Mindstorm sessions to children and their families. The aim of their sessions is to introduce coding and electronics to children especially girls. Digital activity programmes for young people and families are now being developed at local libraries.

### Outcomes

- Young people and families develop their digital skills
- Reduced digital exclusion
- Libraries are seen as spaces where the community comes together to co-create and make things
- Helping young people reach their potential and improving skills for employment

### How Curious Minds can support libraries who wish to develop this area of work supporting and developing digital

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- 1) Curious Minds can deliver** digital development training to develop staff CPD across the region's libraries in partnership with NW digital social enterprise We Heart Tech.
- 2) Curious Minds can advise** on and broker partnerships between libraries and regional digital startups to promote cross sector working and mentoring opportunities for staff.
- 3) Curious Minds can disseminate** the 'Biblio Tech' learning document across the region delivered by Curious Minds partner We Heart Tech as promotion of best practice.
- 4) Curious Minds can develop** targeted Arts Award activity to support the Arts Council's priority for digital development including Arts Award training for staff.

## CASE STUDY 4

# Targeting communities and developing new audiences

### i) Cumbria ‘Sharing Stories’ with Children’s Centres

#### Aims

- Promote reading and the use of books
- Work with families to promote books and reading as part of home life
- Introduce families to libraries
- Target hard to reach groups – children who do not read or have access to books at home
- Improve children’s social skills and confidence
- Provide volunteering opportunities to young people

#### Approach

The library team targeted hard to reach families in disadvantaged areas who would not normally engage with library services and would be unlikely to have access to books in the home. The project ran in four areas in Carlisle between November 2014 and March 2015:

- Brampton
- Belah
- Morton
- Upperby

Families were selected by partner local schools and children’s centres and sessions were run jointly by library and children’s centre staff. Five hour-long sessions were held in each area, each consisting of an icebreaker activity, then a story with related craft and finishing with a second story. Children could then choose one of the books to take home and keep. Parents were encouraged to stay and participate fully in the sessions. Two young volunteers helped run the sessions.

#### Output and outcomes

Total attendance for the four areas was 69 children from 46 different families with the majority of families attending all sessions. Feedback from all four areas has been very positive. Parents spoke about children showing greater interest in reading and wanting to visit the library. One parent also said her son had gained more confidence in social situations as a result of the sessions. Several children attending the sessions had behavioural or learning difficulties and it was great to see them participate fully. The sessions have also had a knock on effect on some parents: one parent with literacy issues has now joined the library and is being helped to read by his daughter who attended the sessions. Another parent who struggles to read spoke about sharing the books from the sessions with her daughter.

#### Next steps

Carlisle West Children’s Centre have expressed an interest in building Sharing Stories into their Delivery Plan as a way to promote language and literacy, and Carlisle South are also keen to see it run again in their footprint. Newlaithes and Pennine Way Schools have expressed an interest in it running at their schools.

## ii) Stockport - work with Looked After Children

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### Aims

From 2004-2010 Stockport library service worked to develop engagement with looked after children, working with the adoption and fostering service.

### Approach

In 2004 Stockport Libraries decided to eradicate the need for identification and parental signatures for under 18's. This resulted in an 18.5% increase in membership in the first year and was particularly welcomed as easing and simplifying joining for looked after young people.

All residential settings for looked after young people were regularly visited with collections and a newsletter was sent out at least twice a year. Library staff attended foster carers' coffee mornings to highlight library services and this information was incorporated into new foster carers' induction programmes.

All Year 3 and Year 5 looked after children in Stockport were funded to receive Letterbox Club parcels, to which Stockport Libraries promotional material was added. For the three years it was running, all looked after children in Stockport were invited to a library event. In year 3 it featured author illustrator Lynne Chapman; a temporary tattoo artist; face painter and ball pool. The event attracted a wide age range between 10 months to 17 years. Each child received a goodie bag and chose a book to keep from the bookshop (run in conjunction with Border Books).

### Outcomes

Six months after the main event the number of attendees who used the library increased by 4.6% to 56.6%. The level of overdue or non-return decreased by 33%, which in a group who can experience greater mobility than average and rapid change, is particularly pleasing. Library Services increased amongst this group throughout the programme. The work reaped huge benefits but had to end when funding ended in 2010.



### iii) Warrington's Rugby Reading Champions for boys

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#### Aims

The programme is aimed at pupils with lower than average reading expectations and particularly boys. In a rugby-mad town it is a response to popular interest linked into reading. The idea for the latest group is that they will become school ambassadors for reading and will help run the project next year. The library team also wanted to build better links between Penketh High School and the local library.

#### Approach

The programme was launched on World Book Night at the Halliwell Jones Rugby Stadium when Warrington Wolves players gave books to the pupils from Penketh High School. The boys involved in the project had seven sessions, beginning with choosing a group name, choosing a book to take home, and then building confidence and skills. In the third session the rugby players joined in a discussion about reading and books, in the fifth session they led the boys on a stadium tour, and the seventh session was a match day experience. Throughout the sessions the boys' reading choices were developed, looking at poetry and fiction, creating a short film on Vine, and continually updating their skills log and evaluation.

By the end of the programme, the boys were all invited to become Summer Reading Challenge volunteers and the staff followed up with termly visits to the school.

#### Outputs and outcomes

- Increased confidence in reading and in reading aloud amongst boys
- Increased book borrowing by teenagers at Penketh Library
- Positive role models in rugby players to engage boys in reading
- Digital literacy skills developed

***"I am more likely to use the library because the things people have talked about have made it more likely I could get into reading.***

***Rugby players read so I want to do that."***

– Mason, project participant.

## iv) Cheshire West & Chester 'Dad's Den'

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### Aims

The library team wanted to engage with a new audience and encourage them to use the library service and for parents and carers to read with their children. The project targeted dads and male carers and their children.

### Approach

The project was developed with partners Action Kids, Neston Children's Centre and Neston Town Council. The programme was delivered at a community centre near to Neston Library and offered craft and sports activities to dads and male carers of young children. Library staff attended the session which was finished off with a story time to tie in with the earlier activities. The story was accompanied by tea and toast for a change of pace and to encourage the children to focus.

### Outputs and outcomes

- Showing dads and male carers the importance of sharing stories with children and having quality time together
- Reaching an audience that doesn't automatically use the library
- Visits to the library afterwards – dads now make it part of their Saturday routine

## How can Curious Minds support libraries who wish to develop work with new communities of young people?

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- 1) **Curious Minds can broker** partnerships with cross sector organisations and agencies to develop new library audiences and participants.
- 2) **Curious Minds can utilise** its fundraising expertise to produce successful funding applications to allow this kind of partnership working to develop successfully.
- 3) **Curious Minds can keep you updated** with the trends and opportunities within the cultural sector that might signpost libraries to innovative future partnership opportunities.
- 4) **Curious Minds can promote** and market your work through its social media channels to increase the geographical reach of your work.

# How are libraries already contributing to the Cultural Education Challenge?

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## Outputs

Collections & resources; welcoming spaces that are creative, safe and free; events; activities; reading programmes; volunteering; work experience; Arts Award; performances; Youth Boards.

## Examples of events

Learning to code; sleepovers; live music; Lego club; pamper nights; filming and interview techniques; photography; after school clubs; early years story and rhyme time; Warhammer club; cinema nights; book clubs; talks from authors; baby massage and yoga; family and literature festivals.

## Examples of programmes and services

Summer Reading Challenge; Chatterbooks; Bookstart library card and pack for new-born babies; books on prescription; Reading Hacks volunteers; study venue for home tutors and excluded children; homework clubs; careers service; book awards; poetry competitions; looked after children membership schemes; braille and large print children's books.

## Outcomes

- Increase in reading and literacy skills
- Access to expertise and information to inspire children and young people
- Opportunities to get actively involved, make decisions and drive libraries forward
- Feeling part of a local community
- Increase in confidence amongst children & young people, their parents and carers
- Learning new skills and an individual's potential
- Engaging with the digital world and learning to develop content
- Improvements to health and well-being through knowledge, confidence, social skills and activity programmes
- Library staff develop new skills, knowledge and confidence
- Working effectively with partners to engage new people with libraries

# How else can libraries get involved in the Cultural Education Challenge?

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## Libraries and Arts Award

Arts Award is a nationally recognised accreditation that offers young people an inspiring arts journey, whether the art form is film, photography, dance or fashion design. Arts Award is a qualification that supports young people to develop as artists and arts leaders.

Libraries can engage with Arts Award and implement its delivery as part of its services to young people. It can be readily badged against current arts and cultural activity to allow young people accreditation for their participation.

Curious Minds can offer Arts Award training to library staff to support their development delivering Arts Awards in their venues and can signpost libraries to local arts organisations to support their activities.

Libraries can also become Arts Award Supporters by signing up for free:

[www.artswardsupporter.com](http://www.artswardsupporter.com)

## Libraries and Artsmark

The Artsmark Award celebrates schools who value the arts. Schools can work towards the Award at either silver, gold or platinum level, and they are encouraged to work with cultural partners as part of their journey.

Libraries can support schools to achieve Artsmark by working in partnership to invigorate whole school approaches to creative writing, or enabling schools to use the arts to improve literacy.

Libraries are a fantastic resource for schools to use when aiming for Artsmark, and libraries themselves can develop offers which will be of specific interest to Artsmark schools.

All schools who register for the Artsmark Award attend a Development Day which is run by Curious Minds and co-hosted by cultural organisations. We'd love to hear from libraries interested in recruiting schools for Artsmark and hosting a Development Day at your venue.

## Libraries and work based learning opportunities for young people

Libraries have an important part to play in offering work-based learning opportunities for young people. Over the past 12 months we have seen libraries successfully host Trailblaze placements where the young person has planned and delivered activities for other children and young people to engage with their local services. Libraries across Greater Manchester have worked successfully with PANDA ([www.panda-arts.org.uk](http://www.panda-arts.org.uk)) to pioneer new models supporting young entrepreneurs to establish a new creative business.

If you are interested in knowing more about how work-based learning could work in your library please contact [holly.ball@curiousminds.org.uk](mailto:holly.ball@curiousminds.org.uk)

## Libraries and Local Cultural Education Partnerships

Arts Council believe that one of the most important ways to meet the Cultural Education Challenge is through the set-up of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs). An LCEP is a multi-sector partnership group, including representatives from culture and education, who will work together to create a plan to join-up and improve cultural education with children and young people in their area. Curious Minds has been given key focus areas by the Arts Council including Manchester, West Cumbria, Pennine Lancashire, Chester and Cheshire West, St Helens and Preston. However, any area can set up an LCEP.

Libraries have a key role to play in the development of LCEPs. If you are interested in being part of an LCEP in your area and would like to work with education leaders and arts organisations to improve your offer to children and young people, please fill in an Expression of Interest form on Curious Minds' website or give us your thoughts on the proposals:

[www.curiousminds.org.uk/im-curious-about/local-cultural-education-partnerships](http://www.curiousminds.org.uk/im-curious-about/local-cultural-education-partnerships)



# APPENDIX – HOW WE GATHERED THIS INFORMATION

In spring 2015 Curious Minds began work to deliver this report, aiming to gather information from all the 25 library services in the NW of England to showcase the range and quality of work they do with children and young people.

A questionnaire was developed to gather content, and approval sought from the NW Society of Chief Librarians (NWSCL) who would provide the information. At the same time, Curious Minds were delivering training to many of the region's library services on Audience Development and Digital Content. This support and training activity gave libraries the encouragement and opportunity to send in content.

A total of 19 library services returned the questionnaires and also sent additional information, images and case studies for the report. This forms the content for this report.

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