



Wellbeing in Later Life Programme (WeLL)

Conversation Café March 16th 2022

KEEP LEARNING

Café participants checked in by sharing what Keep Learning means to them:

Opportunity to discover new things

Curiosity and being open to new ideas

Hunger to keep learning

Meet new people and learn new things

Having an enquiring mind

Ideas and things – are there possibilities?

Thank goodness for the internet – I am a quizzer

Elsa Foley from Strathclyde University's Learning in Later Life (3Ls) Student Association highlighted the range of activities on offer to the 50+ 'younger people of older age'. These include Club programmes, Lunchtime Talks, social outings, walking groups and events. She emphasised the important social aspect, meeting new people and trying new things. In response to the pandemic, 16 3Ls Clubs transferred online. Working virtually brought new challenges in learning new skills but opportunities to maintain interests and continue to meet new people. The 3L's also have a choir which supports health and wellbeing through singing and lots of fun! Check out the website at <https://3ls.website/>



Every day is a Lifelong Learning Day

Life long learning becomes a joy when you do it for pleasure not work

Elsa's introduction to the 3Ls was through an open day followed by a German language introduction course four years ago. She later joined a learn to draw class with the ethos of 'everyone can be taught to draw' and created pencil and charcoal portraits.

WeLL participants also reflected on their experience of the University of the Third Age (u3a) – a UK-wide collection of 1000+ charities that provide the opportunity for those no longer in work to come together and learn for fun. Each u3a manages their own membership and sign-up process that includes an annual membership fee. More than 430,000 members are exploring new ideas, skills and interests.

Learn more about u3a: learn, laugh, love: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

The group concluded that lifelong learning opportunities need to be accessible and affordable for all as 'the cost of classes could be prohibitive for some people.'

Dr Ann Wales, Programme Lead, Knowledge and Decision Support, Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre (DHI) introduced the **Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing Action Plan**.

<https://scottishlibraries.org/advice-guidance/frameworks/a-collective-force-for-health-wellbeing-2021/>

Launched in February 2022, the action plan aims to build collaboration between libraries, schools, health and social care and voluntary organisations, to make libraries the go-to place in communities for:

- ◆ trusted information for health, wellbeing and recovery
- ◆ health literacy skills
- ◆ facilitated reading for wellbeing.



The Scottish libraries network has over 500 venues and remains the most popular local government service – with pre pandemic footfall of over 40 million visits per annum.

Watch the following video to learn about access to libraries and how learning and wellbeing are related: <https://vimeo.com/680276499/9800b1b812>

The Action Plan is jointly led by DHI, the Scottish Library and Information Council and the ALLIANCE.



The Covid 19 pandemic inspired libraries to be more creative - for example facilitating reading groups, supporting wellbeing or reading needs one to one, helping citizens develop skills to access health information through [NHS Inform](#) or condition websites like [Diabetes UK](#), or supporting people to access digital solutions such as [Near Me](#). Library staff are piloting a reading for wellbeing course that will be rolled out across Scotland in due course. Ann described examples of library community outreach, for example delivering books accompanied by a teabag and a biscuit to enjoy whilst reading. She invited WeLL participants to encourage their communities to express interest as Pathfinder sites to implement the Action Plan to promote Active independent living; Early intervention; Self management and wellbeing; and Right care, right place, right time...

South Lanarkshire Seniors Together reported they have resumed their bibliography group, facilitated by a retired librarian, in a room at their local library. They gave another example of libraries supporting wellbeing through access to replacement hearing aid batteries which negates having to travel to the audiology clinic.

Reading Groups: the talk aspect is SO important

Group suggested the possibility for libraries to explore and support late / evening opening

This brings back memories – the smell of libraries, the books and the quiet

I just read all the time

There is a message to address stereotypes and assumptions – there is so much more to libraries

Port Glasgow libraries online Chatty Cafes are an opportunity to meet and blether about topics on crafts, gardening, reading and climate. As services and libraries opened up, the 'Books on wheels' service delivered books to people's own homes, supporting them cope with isolation. Alison Bunce of Inverclyde Cares spoke about their 'no one grieves alone' initiative which includes supplying easily accessible books on bereavement. The WeLL Café prompted the idea to include a leaflet about what is on offer from libraries in Compassionate Inverclyde's Back Home Boxes.

WeLL Café participants took a moment to **reflect and share their take home messages:**

- ◆ In the 20th Century libraries were thought of as a building – now virtual library experiences are supporting us to rethink possibilities.
- ◆ How can we bring generations together through reading/libraries?
- ◆ Libraries are a hub that have potential to support lifelong learning and intergenerational work.
- ◆ Libraries are SO important, I'm impressed about libraries and interested to learn more
- ◆ I am going to spread the word about libraries and their benefits for health and wellbeing
- ◆ Engaging with our communities and taking our health and wellbeing messages out to libraries
- ◆ The opportunity for libraries to support intergenerational reading would be great
- ◆ Getting together and sharing information – saves us reinventing, supports partnership working, helps the third sector be recognised more and supports the role of the volunteer
- ◆ Libraries have a key role in connecting communities
- ◆ No access to reading material would be torture!

WeLL Co-Lab report and flash reports are available at:

https://integratedcarefoundation.org/ific_hub/ific-scotland-programmes

Additional Resources

The Six Steps Promise: designed to improve public library access for blind and partially sighted people:
<https://scottishlibraries.org/advice-guidance/frameworks/the-six-steps-promise/>

Digital Health & Care Innovation (DHI) Centre: <https://www.dhi-scotland.com/>

Museums Galleries Scotland: <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/>

Generations Working Together: open access and free intergenerational online courses:
<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/training/online-training>