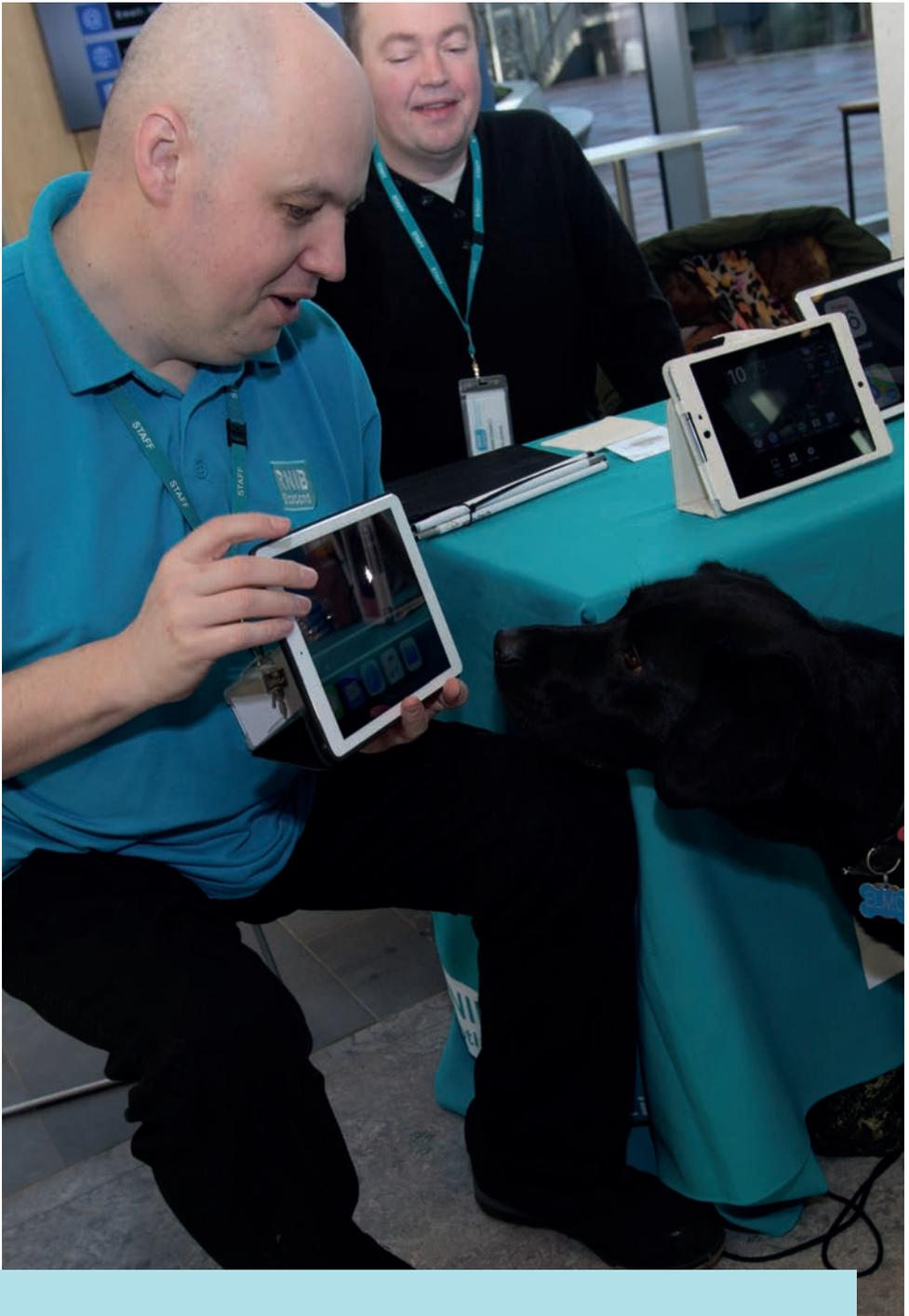




# A Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing

Libraries, Health and Social Care, and The ALLIANCE - Celebrating the Power of Knowledge



# Vision

This collaborative strategic action plan is the first of its kind. It sets out a national commitment to working together across libraries, health and social care, and the third sector to help transform Scotland's approach to health and wellbeing. It aims to celebrate and share the good practice and innovation in many parts of Scotland, scaling it up to national level.

We will develop libraries in local authorities, schools, the NHS and beyond as a national networked knowledge resource for health and wellbeing. This network will empower, enable and connect people across Scotland to access and share knowledge to:

- live well on their own terms with any conditions they may have
- take more control over their health and wellbeing and the external factors that influence it
- work as partners with healthcare professionals in making shared, informed decisions

## Strategic context

The action plan is supported by a new strategic partnership involving:

- the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), on behalf of libraries across all sectors;
- national policy leadership for health literacy and self-management, as key enablers of realistic medicine;
- the ALLIANCE, representing third sector organisations in healthcare.



This action plan builds on the commitments under the health and wellbeing strategic aim of the refreshed national public library strategy, *Ambition and Opportunity*<sup>i</sup>. This strategy highlights the need to strengthen partnerships between libraries, health and social care and community planning; to build the role of libraries in addressing social isolation; and to develop the role of public library staff in supporting people with long-term conditions, through health literacy self-management. From the perspective of health and social care policy, this action plan positions libraries at the heart of cross-sectoral partnerships to deliver the goals of *Practising Realistic Medicine*<sup>ii</sup>, *Personalising Realistic Medicine*<sup>iii</sup>, *Public Health Reform*<sup>iv</sup>, *Scotland's Digital*

*Health and Care Strategy*<sup>v</sup>, *Making It Easier*, a health literacy action plan<sup>vi</sup>, and *A Connected Scotland*<sup>vii</sup>, Scotland's strategy for addressing social isolation and loneliness.

Libraries are uniquely positioned to support the common call across all these strategies to empower and enable people and communities through accessing and sharing knowledge. In this way, libraries will help to change the balance of care between health and care services and the people they support. This shift in relationship is crucial to transform the way we deliver care to meet changing needs, to reach and support the most vulnerable in society, and to create healthy, thriving communities.

# Spreading success

This action plan seeks to scale-up and spread current good practice and innovation in collaborating across libraries, health and third sector. Examples include:

## Supporting long-term conditions, self-management and health literacy

- The ALLIANCE collaborating with NHS libraries to deliver training in health literacy and self-management to public libraries.
- The ALLIANCE and Health Scotland working with Health and Social Care Partnerships and service users to co-design new support for young people at risk of mental health issues and people experiencing social isolation.
- Books on Prescription services in many public libraries, providing self-management resources approved by NHS colleagues for physical and mental health conditions.
- Macmillan Cancer partnerships with many public libraries to provide people affected by cancer with trusted spaces in their community to access information and support.
- NHS libraries raising awareness of health literacy skills and providing health literacy training for healthcare staff so that they can better support people to make shared, informed decisions about their health.

## Reading and writing for mental health and other therapeutic purposes

- Reading for Wellbeing services in Midlothian public libraries. This involves supporting people's health and wellbeing through one-to-one and group conversations accompanied by self-management information resources and creative literature.
- Shelf-Help in secondary school libraries in Kirkintilloch engages teenagers in reading for pleasure for good mental health, accompanied by tailored mental health coaching.
- Scottish Poetry Library and Lapidus Scotland leading a 'Creative Words for Wellbeing' project, working with libraries, health and social care, third sector and creative arts organisations to develop a national network of services that support reading, writing and storytelling for therapeutic purposes.



- NHS and public libraries in Lanarkshire collaborating to support people on long hospital stays for renal dialysis to benefit from the therapeutic effects of reading by using the public library's digital books and magazines.
- Memory Boxes service in Angus – a public library reminiscence service for older people in care home and homecare settings.

## Managing the wider determinants of health

- Public libraries as the main national network delivering the Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug programme, funded by the Scottish Government Maternal and Child Health Directorate. This supports children to build the literacy and learning skills that contribute to wellbeing and thriving in adulthood. It also helps to combat social isolation and mental health needs among parents.
- Public libraries working with local anti-poverty action groups to run awareness-raising events, raise funds and encourage volunteering.

## Future partner roles

These examples of current good practice illustrate the mutually supportive roles that the different partners will play in delivering the collaboration proposed in this action plan.

**Public and school libraries** – community resources accessible to all, providing:

- Quality assured health and wellbeing information
- Expertise in navigating the health information landscape
- Facilitating therapeutic use of reading, writing and storytelling
- Safe spaces for reflection and social interaction
- Focal points for public engagement to influence public health and health service development

**NHS libraries** – providing:

- Training and awareness-raising in health literacy and shared decision-making tools and techniques among health and care professionals
- Raising awareness among health and care professionals of how public and school libraries and third sector organisations can support their patients and the public with health literacy and self-management, so that they can signpost people to these services
- In-depth evidence and expert knowledge that health professionals can use to support shared decision-making with patients

**Health and care sector:**

- Engaging with libraries as key partners in self-management and health literacy
- Building the role of libraries into joined-up health processes and ways of working to strengthen self-management and support in the community



- Connecting libraries and navigating / signposting roles in health, including Link Workers and Care Navigators
- Providing expert advice on quality assurance of health information sources

**The ALLIANCE and third sector organisations:**

- Voice of people living with health conditions and their carers
- Support and expertise in health conditions, self-management and health information
- Connectors across professionals, patients, libraries and other community services
- Advocates for partnership models that engage people in healthcare decisions

# Outcomes: what could the future look like?

**By October 2022:**

- Senior managers, health and care professionals, third sector organisations and the public recognise libraries as valued partners in health and wellbeing, and key enablers of self-management and health literacy.
- Public and school libraries have an established role across Scotland as access points for quality assured health information and support from the health sector and third sector. This includes NHS inform, ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) and volunteer and professional support from voluntary health organisations, including Macmillan and others.
- Public and school library services have access to:
  - At least one librarian in their area trained as a health champion
  - Words for Wellbeing services, i.e. using reading, writing and storytelling for therapeutic purposes
  - In-depth evidence and expertise in health information from NHS libraries.
- Libraries in all sectors cooperate and share good practice and resources through a national network.
- Within Health and Social Care Partnerships, stakeholders in health, public, NHS and school libraries, and third sector, come together as partners to jointly develop the role of libraries in health and wellbeing.
- Libraries play a growing role in facilitating public engagement to influence public health developments, and health service design and provision.



---

By October 2029:



*The following story illustrates how this partnership across health, libraries and third sector could help people in the long-term.*

Rose is an 85-year old lady with type 2 diabetes causing chronic pain in her foot. She also has high blood pressure, heart disease and mild depression. She is taking more than 10 medicines every day. She feels sleepy and dizzy a lot of the time, so has stopped going out to see friends and attending church.

Rose's daughter Elaine is concerned that her medicines may be causing these side effects. When she makes an appointment for her mother at the local GP practice to review her medicines, the receptionist tells her that the practice pharmacist encourages people to visit their local public library first so that they can come prepared to the medicines review.

As part of the collaborative action plan for libraries supporting health and wellbeing, public, school and NHS library staff, primary care staff and local voluntary organisations have undertaken joint training and developed joint processes to support health literacy and shared decision-making. Public library staff are aware of key information resources and approved decision aids.

After listening to Elaine and Rose's story, library staff share with Elaine and Rose an approved decision aid, which sets out key questions about what Rose wants out of her medicines and points to discuss with her healthcare professional. Library staff also show them an NHS Scotland Medicines Review shared decisions mobile app and website. This highlights risks and benefits of different medicines, and signposts other treatment options offered in their area, for example, talking therapies for pain management, and community support groups. Through this app, they put Rose in contact with a local training course for pain self-management, run by one of the pain voluntary organisations.

Library staff also direct Rose and Elaine to their collection of self-management books approved by NHS experts in chronic pain. Learning that Rose has been suffering mild depression and hearing how worried Elaine sometimes feels about her mother, library staff also mention their Reading for Wellbeing services.

---

# Action and Impact

Appendix 1 outlines the action plan to deliver these outcomes. Implementing this action plan will support the triple aim of the Health and Social Care Delivery Plan<sup>viii</sup>.

## Better Health - by:

- Building self-management and shared decision-making into the way we manage health and care.
- Strengthening our focus on preventing ill-health.
- Providing new ways to reach and support the most vulnerable in society and to address the social determinants of ill-health.
- Helping to build thriving communities which nurture people's wellbeing in the fullest sense.

## Better Care - by:

- Making it easier to make safe, evidence-based decisions that focus on the outcomes that matter to the individual.
- Facilitating coordination and collaboration based on knowledge across health and care services and partner agencies in local authorities, education and third sector.

## Better Value - by:

- Empowering citizens with more timely, complete, better quality information about health and wellbeing and treatment options. This will contribute to gaining best value for public money by reducing over-use and under-use of health services.



# Appendix 1: Action plan

We have identified the following actions to progress towards this vision over the next five years.

Action	Timeline	Lead responsibility
<b>1. Establish cross-sectoral steering group to lead, support and monitor developments</b>	January 2020	SLIC, Health Literacy Policy Lead, ALLIANCE
<b>2. Build a cohesive cross-sectoral network that integrates libraries with health and care services</b>		
<b>2.1</b> Engage citizens, health and social care, third sector and libraries in testing and implementing dynamic new networked services that support self-management, health literacy and shared decision-making.	August 2020 (sharing of results from pilot led by ALLIANCE and Health Scotland)	ALLIANCE, Health Scotland (and successor organisation Public Health Scotland), HSCPs
<b>2.2</b> Explore and develop coordinating and connecting roles at local, regional and national levels to maximise integrated working and spread of good practice.	Initiate by October 2020	SLIC
<b>2.3</b> Provide a shared online resource to enable staff in libraries, health and third sectors to access information, training resources, case studies and other support material for health literacy, self-management and shared decision-making.	December 2020	SLIC, Health Literacy Policy Lead
<b>3. Strengthen the role of libraries in all sectors as sources of quality assured, evidence-based health and wellbeing information</b>		
<b>3.1</b> Promote quality assured resources, such as NHS inform, ALISS and other sources set out in the Going in the Right Direction toolkit <sup>8</sup> , to citizens, health and community staff through libraries across all sectors.	Review progress April 2021	NHS 24, ALLIANCE – promotion Steering Group – review of progress
<b>3.2</b> Strengthen mutual support between libraries that focus on health research evidence, e.g. NHS and academic libraries, and those that focus on citizen-facing services. This will help citizens to access research evidence when needed and will help to signpost professionals to local sources of information for clients and service users.	Initiate pilots - October 2020	SLIC, participating libraries
<b>3.3</b> Continuously update and expand the Going in the Right Direction toolkit.		ALLIANCE, Steering Group

Action	Timeline	Lead responsibility
<b>4. Consolidate libraries as a health and wellbeing support service, with a therapeutic support role</b>		
<b>4.1</b> Promote and expand library services that support reading, writing and storytelling for wellbeing, in partnership with the third sector, creative arts, health and social care. These services use the creative and therapeutic power of reading, writing and storytelling to shift ways of thinking, develop new insights, strengthen social participation and enhance personal wellbeing.	April 2020 – share results of Scottish Poetry Library mapping project.	Scottish Poetry Library and Steering Group for Creative Words for Wellbeing project
<b>4.2</b> Raise awareness among professionals in health and care, education and other community services of the evidence of impact of these services on mental and physical health, social isolation and personal resilience.	August 2020	Scottish Poetry Library and selected members of Creative Words for Wellbeing Steering Group
<b>4.3</b> Provide training and support to develop library staff in public, school and NHS libraries as key facilitators and educators in health literacy and shared decision-making for citizens, and for professionals in health, education and wider community services.	October 2021	SLIC, ALLIANCE, Health Literacy Policy Lead
<b>4.4</b> Build the role of libraries in partnering with health and care to signpost and support use of quality assured digital tools for health and wellbeing.	October 2021	Steering Group
<b>5. Maximise the community health and wellbeing function of libraries</b>		
<b>5.1</b> Promote the unique space within the library as a creative hub for health and wellbeing support. Existing examples of using this space include health literacy and self-management education; community pharmacy and optometry advice sessions; counselling and support services from health and the third sector. A key role of the library is as a space for healing respite and reflection, and for reducing social isolation.	Initiate first set of demonstrators – October 2020	Steering Group, demonstrator libraries
<b>5.2</b> Engage libraries in all sectors in contributing to and promoting use of ALISS, NHS inform and complementary directories that signpost to community health and wellbeing support services.	October 2021	ALLIANCE, Steering Group

Action	Timeline	Lead responsibility
5.3 Develop the public health role of libraries. This may involve, for example, facilitating local people to articulate public health priorities in their communities; influence health service design and provision; and support the work of community health councils, and of community groups, that will help address the social factors that impact on health.	Initiate first set of demonstrators – October 2020	Steering Group, public health leads on this Group
<b>6. Provide tailored support for health and social care priorities</b>		
6.1 Combine the tools and approaches listed above to develop and implement library action plans that support local and national health priorities. For example, there are significant opportunities for libraries to contribute to the prevention and early detection of mental health issues; empowering people with long-term and multiple conditions; promoting healthy lifestyles; and supporting vulnerable people at risk of exclusion from health and care.	Start programme of support for library action plans – November 2020, following completion of current ALLIANCE-Health Scotland project.	SLIC, Steering Group

## References

- i <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/2423/ambition-and-opportunity-refresh-2019.pdf>
- ii <https://www.gov.scot/publications/practising-realistic-medicine/pages/12/>
- iii <https://www.gov.scot/publications/personalising-realistic-medicine-chief-medical-officer-scotland-annual-report-2017-2018/>
- iv <https://publichealthreform.scot/>
- v <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-digital-health-care-strategy-enabling-connecting-empowering/>
- vi <https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-easier-health-literacy-action-plan-scotland-2017-2025/>
- vii <https://www.gov.scot/publications/connected-scotland-strategy-tackling-social-isolation-loneliness-building-stronger-social-connections/>
- viii <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/HSC-DeliveryPlan>
- ix <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Going-in-the-Right-Direction-Toolkit.pdf>



**SLiC** Scottish Library &  
Information Council

Suite 5.5, Turnberry House,  
175 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 2LB

info@scottishlibraries.org  
0141 202 2999



Registered company number: 129889