

“From donations to distribution network: A story of organic growth of user and community engagement.”

Through a co-production project of an academic and a public library, both services have improved their profile, demonstrated the benefits of their services, and increased user and community engagement.

Introduction:
This poster describes a co-production between a specialist health library service and a public library service in a remote and rural area.

- Highland Scotland covers in excess of 9,906 sq. mi (25,657 km²) - comparable to Belgium
- Based in Inverness, the Highland Health Sciences Library (HHSL), is a specialist academic health library, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands.
- It is also the information source for, NHS Highland
- Highlife Highland Libraries provide the public (local authority) service for the same area

Aim:

- Utilise free space secured by hard copy journals going electronic, and a significant re-design of the library space
- Improve staff life/work balance through development of an ‘Honesty Library’ consisting of a range of stock, including novels, CDs, DVDs
- Test co-production with local authority, i.e. the local public library service
- Wider community engagement began when an NHS Highland Board Member involved in dementia care asked if Honesty Library materials could be utilised in the hospital setting.

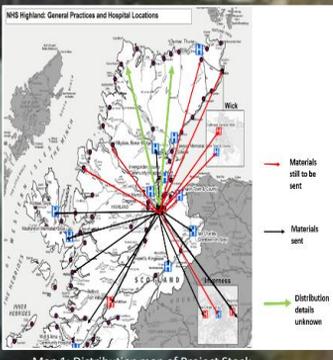
Methods:
Promotion of the Honesty Library came via signage, and word-of-mouth. Material deemed suitable for dementia use in the hospital ward includes:

- Local/historical for reminiscence therapy
- Large print for aged eyes,
- Short length, to aid concentration,
- Higher percentages of visuals – photos and illustrations for the connectivity of imagery,
- Items popular through the patient’s lifetime, also for memory cues.

To support this growth in the project, the collection required more stock, and more pertinent materials. The local library service (Highlife) was contacted. They have significant throughput of materials and were extremely willing to engage with the project.

With the potential this provided, the project has grown to support further NHS Highland sites beyond the Dementia Ward.

Both organisations have widespread internal distribution networks and these have been utilised to distribute materials.



Map 1: Distribution map of Project Stock



A portion of the Honesty Library



The entrance to the Highland Health Sciences Library (HHSL)



Article in local newspaper, Inverness Courier

Feedback:
Feedback on the project has been extremely positive:
Comment from parent of long stay child in the Children’s Unit: “fantastic resource, helps make a long day shorter”.
Comment from Lead Nurse Children’s Unit: “great idea, staff are now getting involved, bringing in their own books to add to the collection. Also very useful replacement source for books we have to destroy after children are in isolation”
Feedback from Ward Nurse Manager, New Craigs Hospital: “the books are being well used by the patients and their addition has improved the general ward environment”.
Feedback from The senior charge nurses at the Migdale Hospital in Sutherland and the Portree and Broadford Hospitals on Skye: “our present collections are old and tatty – this will help improve the quality of life for our patients”



Presentation of donations to Children’s Ward, Raigmore Hospital. Photo taken for use by local newspaper, Press and Journal



Belford Hospital, in Fort William has received books stock through this project

Results:
Map 1 shows current distribution. From the HHSL materials have been distributed throughout the area:

- Raigmore Hospital (the main district general hospital for the region) has had material supplied to a Dementia Ward and to the Paediatrics Department.
- The main psychiatric hospital, New Craigs has had materials sent to all units (save for dementia).
- HM Prison Inverness has seen increased involvement with the academic partners of UHI via the project.
- To the east: Nairn, Kingussie and Grantown.
- To the south: Mallaig, Strontian, Fort William, and Fort Augustus.
- To the west: Portree and Broadford

There have been some locations approached who have declined materials, citing reasons such as infection control, lack of space, or a wealth of materials already.

The local newspaper picked up on the project, as has the UK Industry Body (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals – CLIP) with their publication, “The Information Professional.”

Discussion:
This project meets a range of aims of both co-production partners. For e.g. for Highlife Highland, goals of recycling, reducing disposal costs, and exploring further avenues for community engagement and benefit. A number of elements have emerged:

- The co-production partners are working well together
- NHS Highland engagement has improved greatly,
- Highlife Highland have been nominated for a Highland Council Internal Services award relating to this project.

It has grown from a small start to an ongoing project. There is every potential for further growth, however this is not guaranteed, and requires close monitoring and management.

Conclusion:
This project started from a modest foundation and limited objectives, but has developed to meet a range of objectives common to library services. It has:

- Been efficient and creative with resources
- Demonstrated value to both users and stakeholders
- Engaged co-production partners in supporting communities
- Connected both services further into a range of local networks
- Strengthened presence in and awareness of our support roles within the community.

The project continues to grow and staff look forward to see what other avenues it takes and how these develop. It all bodes well for the slogan “Sharing the power of knowledge”.

References:

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Acknowledgements:

- The background image on this poster is from the Kelvingrove Art Museum. Thanks go to [Glasgow Life Museums](#) for permission to use this image of a leadlight window ‘tree’, a part of the ‘White Dining Room Screen’ from Miss Cranston’s Lunch and Tea Rooms, Ingram Street, Glasgow.
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