

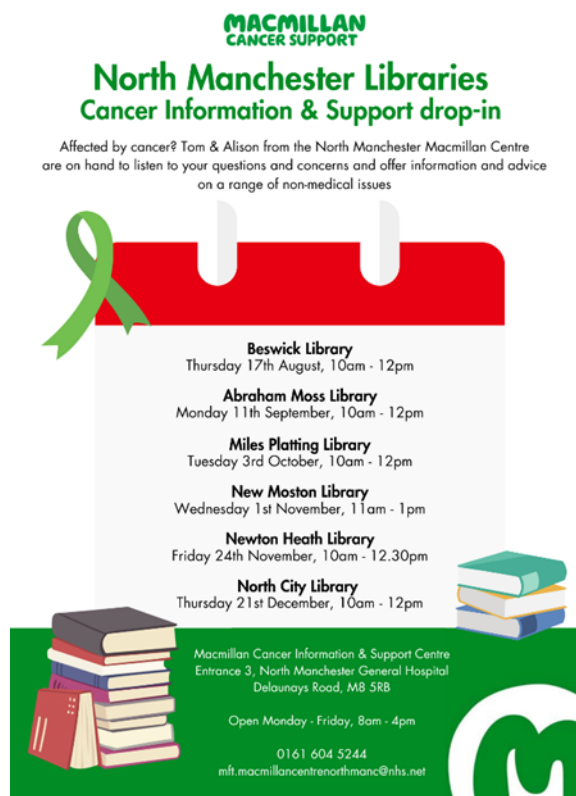
Appendix 8: Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Libraries offer a wide range of health and well-being activities that have a primary effect on improving people's health and also have a broader impact on well-being for the individual and the wider community.

Libraries are also key for residents receiving accurate health information, through digital access, health information and books on prescription and reading well collections. As community venues, libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions.

Direct provision of health promotion and support services

Libraries offer a range of health activities such as Be Well sessions, diabetic workshops, Staying Well this Winter events, armchair exercise sessions, COVID and flu vaccination sessions, blood pressure checks, dementia carer cafes and Macmillan advice sessions. The Macmillan sessions are offered across North Area libraries and are tied in with our age friendly coffee morning drop-ins.



**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

**North Manchester Libraries
Cancer Information & Support drop-in**

Affected by cancer? Tom & Alison from the North Manchester Macmillan Centre are on hand to listen to your questions and concerns and offer information and advice on a range of non-medical issues

Beswick Library
Thursday 17th August, 10am - 12pm

Abraham Moss Library
Monday 11th September, 10am - 12pm

Miles Platting Library
Tuesday 3rd October, 10am - 12pm

New Moston Library
Wednesday 1st November, 11am - 1pm

Newton Heath Library
Friday 24th November, 10am - 12.30pm

North City Library
Thursday 21st December, 10am - 12pm

Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Centre
Entrance 3, North Manchester General Hospital
Delaunays Road, M8 5RB

Open Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm

0161 604 5244
mft.macmillancentrenorthmanc@nhs.net

In September 2023, we teamed up with Heart Valve Voice to offer free heart checks at nine libraries across the city. As its primarily people over 50 who are affected by heart valve failure, we aligned the checks to our Age Friendly hour at most locations. Across nine libraries, the medics listened to 341 hearts, with 56 people found to have a previously undetected cardiac condition. Those people were given a letter to take to their GP to get further checks and advice and were followed up by the Heart Valve Voice team. We will explore other similar offers by health providers as this has demonstrated the value of having preventative health care checks in libraries as we are a neutral community-based

location.

Social isolation, loneliness and mental health support

Loneliness and social isolation are now recognised as having significant impacts on people's physical, as well as mental health. The recent Public Library User Survey showed that 80% of customers who feel lonely regularly, feel less lonely because of using the library. People of all ages feel lonely but can feel as a sense of belonging in libraries – this is the case for many young people. For older people, loneliness and

social isolation can be chronic issues - according to Age UK, more than a million older people go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. Being socially isolated is a key risk factor for older people in terms of dementia and other mental health conditions, and libraries can offer safe spaces for older people to meet others, and either engage in activities, or just have a chat and a natter. We have an Age Friendly hour and an Age Friendly space at all libraries to provide a friendly accessible space, and social activities for older people. Keeping the brain active in later years is known to reduce the risk of developing dementia, and reading can help prevent the onset of dementia by 35%. For people who are unable to physically access their neighbourhood library, the Books to Go service provides reading and listening resources direct to people's homes, with the visits of our staff also providing a small respite from loneliness and social isolation. For people who are digitally literate, our on-line services also provide 24 hour access to bibliotherapy books and music resources.

Making Manchester Fairer

Libraries play a key role in the Making Manchester Fairer programme to reduce health inequalities in the city. As free, welcoming, non-judgemental spaces, libraries are recognised as community venues that are crucial to supporting the aims of this programme. Libraries play a key role in all the Making Manchester Fairer kickstarter projects – particularly the early years kickstarter. Libraries are crucial to the Making Manchester Fairer Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Warm spaces

Throughout the winters of 2022/23 and 2023/24, all libraries across the city have acted as warm spaces, providing somewhere warm and a free brew for people who may be struggling with the cost of heating at home. This benefits health by helping keep people warm and socially active.

Package for Val

We know that women and girls in our communities are facing period poverty. According to a representative survey of 1,000 girls and young women aged 14-21 by Plan International UK, in the UK, 1 in 10 girls can't afford to buy menstrual products, while 1 in 7 have struggled to afford them. Manchester Central Library has been trialling #APackageForVal campaign for the last year, which supplies anyone that asks with 2 sanitary towels in a discrete paper bag, with no questions asked. Using £3500 of Public Health funding we have rolled out Package for Val across 18 of our neighbourhood and community libraries in early 2024.

Domestic abuse training

We have worked with the Domestic Abuse Team to develop bespoke training for library staff to be delivered in 2024 on how to best assist people fleeing domestic abuse who ask for help.

Manchester Libraries – Becoming Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries are absolutely committed to making sure that we provide services that meet the needs and aspirations of our older customers. Alongside other local facilities and services, libraries are seen as an important and crucial feature of an Age Friendly neighbourhood. In partnership with Age Friendly Manchester we agreed and adopted a set of Age Friendly standards - attached below - which set out how we ensure that our services and buildings are Age Friendly. We were audited by older people against these standards and are proud that all Manchester Libraries have been designated as Age Friendly since June 2022



Age Friendly Hour and Age Friendly Spaces



Since we re-opened after the pandemic, we have been offering an Age Friendly Hour at all our libraries offering social activities and a brew. In most places, we've timed this to be directly before or after our toddler storytimes, to enable inter-generational crossover - watching the children singing and enjoying their storytime can give a positive boost to older people who may be feeling a bit lonely. We also know how important it is for people to stay connected so in most libraries, we have created vibrant Age Friendly areas with new seating and refreshment trolleys, offering older people a safe, enjoyable and positive experience when they visit, with comfortable places to sit and enjoy the company of others.

Age Friendly Notice Boards

We know how important it is for people to have easy access to information in different formats, so in addition to our online information we have made sure we have an Age Friendly noticeboard on display in all libraries. Our noticeboards are kept up to date, are easy to see and read, and ensure that we are promoting activities and information across the community. They are also portable so that they can be on prominent display in coffee mornings or Grand Day Out sessions. During lockdown, libraries were used by partners as a means to cascade vital information regarding COVID and Health matters to everyone in the local community.

Age Friendly Audits

As part of the age friendly designation process, library staff conducted a detailed self-assessment for each of our libraries, covering the physical space as well as our service offer. These assessments highlighted some areas for change around

seating, signage and activities offered which we acted on. This was followed up by Customer Service audits, carried out by older people who engaged with other older service users, listened to their feedback and produced an action plan specific to each library.

From June 2022 all libraries in Manchester were given 'Age Friendly Libraries' status and now proudly display the new Manchester Age Friendly Library logo, which was specially designed for us, and reflects our commitment to welcoming and supporting older people within each of our libraries.

Staff Training

All library staff are aware of our age- friendly aspirations and of the issues that can affect people as they age. We developed a bespoke Dementia Friends session, and this is part of our induction for new staff. Workshops have also taken place training staff in how to set up and facilitate Age Friendly groups, activities and events.

Age Friendly employer

Manchester Libraries commit to supporting Manchester City Council becoming recognised as an Age Friendly Employer. Nearly 60% of library staff are aged over 50. We have supported staff who want to reduce their working hours or take flexible retirement, and we have a number who have retired but keep working for 7 hours a week with us – giving them a continued small income and interest, whilst retaining their skills and experience within the service. Since 2020, through open recruitment events, we have taken on a number of new staff over the age 55, with several new starters being well into their 60s, and bringing the benefit of their experience to our service.



Manchester Libraries Age Friendly Standards

We are Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries have committed to a Set of Age Friendly Library Standards which clearly defines the level of service older people can expect from their library.

Our Age Friendly Manchester Libraries offer the following commitment to older people using our service. **We will:**

1. **Ensure you feel welcome.** Our staff will ensure your visit is a safe, enjoyable and positive experience. Services inside the library will be well signed for better wayfinding. This is your Library, please do let us know how we can help you.
2. **Encourage Social Engagement.** We offer a diverse range of activities, some are aimed specifically at older adults. Our libraries are comfortable places in which to sit, socialise and enjoy the company of others.
3. **Be accessible.** Our libraries are well lit and clutter free with no services only accessible by stairs. We will pay attention to the needs of those with mobility issues by offering: supported access through doors, flooring that is even and clutter free and an accessible counter service.
4. **Have places to sit.** You will find a sufficient range of seating throughout each of our libraries and we will ensure seating is always available near entrance points where you may need to rest or await transport.
5. **Offer volunteering opportunities.** We want to hear about the skills you have that you want to share with others.
6. **Have large print books, talking books and e-books.** We will ensure our stock is age appropriate and meets the broad needs and tastes of Manchester's diverse communities. We will promote our Books to Go Service to those not able to get into the library.
7. **Support you with your computer use.** Our staff and volunteers will patiently support those who need additional IT support. Our "IT Drop Ins" are designed for new users. We will work with partners to offer additional IT training.
8. **Provide information.** Where we cannot support you with your enquiry we will signpost you to someone who can help.
9. **Display leaflets and posters.** We know how important access to information is. We will keep our notice boards up to date and relevant. They will be easy to see and interact with. We will promote our activities across the community.

10. **Have toilet facilities including accessible toilets.** These will be checked regularly for cleanliness and supplies.