



## All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing

**Round Table on Libraries and Health**  
**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019, 4.00-6.00pm**  
**Committee Room 2A, House of Lords**

### Minutes

#### Welcome

Lord Howarth, Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW) welcomed all those present. The key purpose of this Round Table was to examine how libraries can be assisted to develop their current role in promoting health and wellbeing in communities across the country.

The APPGAHW was very pleased that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Rt. Hon Matt Hancock MP, had proved to be a committed and passionate advocate of the value of arts and culture in relation to health and wellbeing. This was illustrated in his speech at The King's Fund, which referenced the work of the APPG's [Creative Health](#) report. Lord Howarth read the following extracts from this speech:

*'What we're looking at is if more libraries can offer health services, and if we can expand the existing health services libraries already offer. Norfolk's Healthy Libraries Initiative is a great example of libraries being used for stop smoking and healthy living sessions. But if we can connect even more libraries to GP surgeries and primary and community care services, and increase training for librarians on social prescription referrals, then we could reach even more people, and make libraries even more vital and valued to their local communities.'* ([The power of the arts and social activities to improve the nation's health](#), 6<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018)

Building on this speech, the APPGAHW put the following questions to the 11 invited speakers (please see Annex I for speakers' biographies) in advance of this Round Table for their consideration:

- What are the opportunities and challenges for libraries to support the health and wellbeing of library users, including through supporting social prescribing?
- What support do libraries and librarians need if they are to develop such roles?
- How can GPs and local health providers engage with and help make this aspiration a reality across the country?
- What should the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) be doing to make progress?

An apology was noted from Dr Neil Churchill, Director for Experience, Participation and Equalities at NHS England (NHSE).

#### Introductory remarks

The Chair of the APPG on Libraries and a former librarian, Gill Furniss MP made some introductory remarks which included:

- Librarians have always responded to the needs and challenges of their communities. Such resilience to change has made them 'the superheroes of the past and the future'.

- Around 3,000 community libraries have played a vital part as community service providers, particularly for people living in relative deprivation. A third of the population have used a library during their life time increasing to half of the population in deprived areas.
- In some cases libraries have been an easy target for funding cuts and closures over the last decade of austerity. The APPG on Libraries is examining this area with a view to pressing the Government for more equitable funding.
- Matt Hancock's speech has created a huge opportunity to look at how libraries and the health and care system can be better integrated and responsive to address the vulnerable and socially isolated in communities.

#### **Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health, Croydon Council**

- Libraries must be viewed as key community assets within the wider system.  
‘We miss a trick’ by continuing to put resource into an NHS focused on secondary and tertiary prevention while ignoring that local government and the voluntary sector are at the heart of primary prevention. It is not sufficient to focus on the health sector at the local level, GPs and primary care, when central Government are asset stripping local government and the voluntary sector. She added that this was not about the public health ring fenced grant, rather it was about the fact that libraries across the country have been annihilated.
- There is ‘a postcode lottery’ around libraries as an asset within local communities. Often the areas where people are most articulate libraries remain whilst in areas where local people have no representation, or the ability to promote libraries they lose that community asset. This is particularly evident in communities where people do not have the support of their local politicians or the Directors of Public Health.
- In Croydon, the libraries were brought in-house last year. A few things are happening using Croydon's libraries as a community asset where different groups pull together (e.g. Best Start, Live Well Croydon, the children centres, oral health, the Museum of Croydon, Sugar Smart, etc) to try to change the conversation. The libraries welcomed 117 children and 82 adults to interact in a different space. They are really keen to get children school ready as well as supporting the parents with their everyday challenges.
- Libraries have represented a safe space, with digital zones for parents and a place for older adults to develop basic IT skills.
- Since the 1980s social prescribing has developed through an iterative process with the longevity of community assets at the core and how local government as a key decision maker has chosen to interact with communities.

#### **Angela Baker, Deputy Director of Health and Wellbeing, Public Health England Centre South East**

- The Government needs to have clarity over its ambition and vision for libraries.
- Libraries viewed as community hubs is an innovative way forward. Libraries should not only be about books, but also about community and connecting people.
- Libraries have a very strong sense of place and they serve a range of agendas from loneliness and social isolation to social prescribing.
- Gathering evidence on the processes around social prescribing could be improved. There is evidence that people who engage in the arts and physical activity with mental health issues absolutely benefit from these things and social prescribing is about a different way of getting people from a medical setting into a community setting with libraries in a very strong position to fulfil this role.
- Libraries could play a much more central role in addressing inequalities.
- A whole raft of training resources are available to librarians, such as, [Making Every Contact Count](#), [Dementia Friends](#) training, IT training. Libraries can also help people search for jobs.
- Local public health teams and local Directors of Public Health are ‘absolutely pivotal’ to forging connections between libraries and local health providers. There are numerous examples where health and libraries are already working together.
- An audit of libraries links with areas of deprivation would be welcome in order to support those areas slightly more than other areas. Case studies of different models of service that have overcome

financial challenges, such as third sector models of libraries could be really helpful. A 'how to guide' about how to do health in a library and evaluation of the current successful library services work would also be useful.

In response to these contributions, Gill Furniss MP welcomed the link between libraries and public health, and the growing awareness of this relationship among politicians. The APPG on Libraries would be particularly interested in exploring the proposal of more evaluation of library services in this area.

Lord Howarth noted the theme of 'place' raised by the first two speakers, a theme in the APPG's *Creative Health* report. As for evaluation of areas of deprivation, he confirmed that he would be proposing the introduction of a cultural poverty indicator in a short debate on social metrics in the House of Lords that evening.

#### **Actions:**

- **Gill Furniss MP agreed to present the minutes of this Round Table to the APPG for Libraries.**
- **Rachel Flowers invited the APPGAHW and the APPG on Libraries to jointly visit libraries in Croydon to experience first-hand their placed based approach. An external visit would be coordinated between the APPGs in due course.**
- **Lord Howarth to propose the introduction of a cultural poverty indicator in a short debate on social metrics in the House of Lords on 21st January (please see annex II for a brief summary of that debate).**

#### **Bob Gann, Health Librarian and Digital Inclusion Specialist, NHS Digital**

- Increasingly information and services have gone digital, sometimes exclusively available in digital forms. One in five google searches are for health topics. There are over 100,000 health apps and patients are actively encouraged to access information, and to do things for their own health online, such as booking appointments for repeat prescriptions and skype consultations.
- In the recently published [NHS Long Term Plan](#), digital is a major theme, picked up on by the press, as a massive opportunity but it also presents a very considerable equalities challenge.
- As many as one in five people are either not online at all or lack confidence and skills to make the most of those digital opportunities. The types of people include older people, unemployed people, people insecurely housed and homeless people – the same people who most need the health service. There is an emerging public health challenge around digital health inequality – a new inequality in society. Libraries are the most important partner in tackling this public health challenge in safe, non-judgemental spaces. NHS Digital have worked a lot with homeless populations.
- Libraries provide free access to technology and professionals could support people with IT skills. NHS Digital have worked with libraries as partners in England through a programme called [Widening Digital Participation](#), with the Good Things Foundation in Sheffield. They have trained people to get online for their own health and piloted a number of approaches to helping people to start using technology in ways they would never have imagined.
- In order to support libraries and librarians, there is a need to promote and network good practice through the [Online Centres Network](#). Also, support is needed for librarians to have the confidence to signpost members of the public to good quality health information resources, such as, using the [NHS Apps library](#) or [The Reading Agency's reading well lists](#).
- On social prescribing, NHS Digital have worked with GPs in Sheffield and in Swansea where they are referring patients to non-clinical sources of support including visits to local libraries to learn new skills and to get online to take control of their own health.
- Balance is needed between supporting and promoting central government initiatives like the Widening Digital participation programme and more energy on creating the right conditions to embed digital inclusion in mainstream local activities. Moreover digital equality and digital skills need to be embedded in local activities as a key public health intervention
- NHS Digital has provided short term funding to libraries and this needs to be up scaled.

#### Action:

- **Bob Gann agreed to send the APPG a short note of how NHS funding flows through to libraries.**

#### Dr Malcolm Rigler, GP

- As a GP, Dr Rigler has been passionate for decades about enabling people to take a greater responsibility for their health by having the opportunity for creative experience. He is delighted that the universal health offer is under review and that librarians are regarded as health professionals in the *Information Professional* magazine.
- He proposed a new book list called dissident doctors (including *Health is for People*, [The Death of Humane Medicine and the Rise of Coercive Healthism](#) and [Responsibility for One's Own Health No Thank You](#). Towards shared decision making he recommended an article entitled '[Shared Decision Making: the Pinnacle of Patient Centred Care](#)'.
- In a [recent interview on BBC Radio 4](#), civil rights lawyer, Petina Gappah, talked about leading the library in Harare, Zimbabwe. Gappah said that libraries are not about books, they are about stories and libraries should be the cultural centre of every place with fashion shows, poetry readings, times when people from the local neighbourhood can tell their stories.

#### Professor Nigel Sparrow OBE, Senior National GP Advisor, Care Quality Commission

- The opening remarks that librarians are resilient to change, by Gill Furniss MP, also applies to GPs resilience. GPs are one of the few constants in the NHS and they are part of the community like librarians, so it seemed natural that they should work together.
- Having practised as a GP for thirty years, Professor Sparrow has also witnessed social prescribing in various manifestations since the 1980s. He used to prescribe books to people.
- There is more to health than just absence of disease it is about social and emotional wellbeing. Patients that research their own health and follow guidance of their GPs might be more resilient to stressful periods of life.
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspects every General Practice in England and 95% of practices are rated good or outstanding. There has not been a great deal of work between GPs and voluntary organisations and much more should be done here. For example, GPs could signpost patients to the local library. Libraries could also run networked services such as weight reduction clinics, smoking cessation services and blood pressure checks.
- Despite general practice changing rapidly, there is still the registered list and the population health aspect. Each practice has a local focus and in larger networks could work in consistently.
- Professor Sparrow has a [weekly blog](#) with tips, MythBusters and a spotlight on areas of outstanding practice.
- Professor Sparrow agreed with Lord Howarth that CQC had the scope to revise its standards further on joint working between libraries and GPs, particularly with the Government's expected prevention strategy on the horizon. Professor Sparrow added that social prescribing and community care would be increasingly important with the move to primary care at scale.

#### Isobel Hunter, Chief Executive Officer, Libraries Connected

- Debates around the first public Libraries Act in the 1830s-50s demonstrated how libraries have been wired from their conception to help individuals and their wider communities to build a healthy mind and a healthy body. On this basis, Libraries Connected promotes the universal offer as core work that libraries have delivered on including the [Universal Health Offer](#).
- Echoing previous speakers, libraries are accessible, trusted places, uniquely placed along with GP surgeries as somewhere for people from all walks of life and all areas of the community to access health or support. Libraries empower individuals with skills and knowledge to understand and manage their health conditions.
- In Scotland, CILIP have worked with the NHS to distribute hearing aid batteries and test equipment as far afield as The Highlands and offshore islands. Other examples of innovative library services include the provision of non-slip slippers for older people through slipper exchanges to prevent falls in the home. Also libraries provide dementia reminiscence sessions, teenage mental health groups,

autism friendly spaces and much more. Arts Council England (ACE) funded research into the impact of baby rhyme time which improved maternal health.

- Libraries Connected have worked in partnership with CILIP, ACE and Carnegie Trust on improved national and regional structures for local library services so that national initiatives can be rolled out effectively whilst making sure that libraries have flexibility to work in response to the needs of their communities.
- Four key asks around how libraries could be better used:
  - A need for more convincing evidence (how is it collected in order to convince medical partners and funders and how to ensure that library staff know how to deploy it).
  - Day to day front line pressures have conflicted with ability to make meaningful, sustainable and systemic connections between libraries and General Practice.
  - Early consultation on system wide changes and a national policy forum from the grassroots.
  - More funding and new funding models with more flexible government contracts especially around delivering support on digital health work.

### **Nick Poole, Chief Executive Officer, CILIP**

- Librarians are undoubtedly healthcare professionals with a natural alignment with the roles of health professionals. Last year, in partnership with ACE and Libraries Connected, CILIP held the first [Libraries Week](#) on the theme of health and wellbeing. This engaged with 13.5million people with a particular focus on community choirs in libraries up and down the country.
- Huge opportunity for librarians to empower the public to take ownership of their health and to be active participants in their own health rather than passive recipients of healthcare services. Librarians can also improve health literacy, to inform and educate the public about issues like microbial resistance or overprescribing, so that they can be empowered to make better choices for themselves about their own health.
- An opportunity to empower and train library staff to move on from this slightly informal role in community engagement in to healthcare interventions that could make a real difference.
- The evidence for health interventions in libraries must be strengthened with evidence-based practice adopted not only by information professionals in health, but also by the wider public library staff. CILIP's members have called for more skills training on how to engage as non-clinical staff with people who have complex health, mental health and social care needs.
- Highlighted a really fascinating proposal around health services working with public libraries to improve the quality of information in the waiting room of General Practice. CILIP have been talking to the Sepsis Trust about whether they can broadcast their video on the subject of sepsis in public libraries as a place of public information. Other conversations have taken place between CILIP and Macmillan Cancer Care about how to put cancer care information into public libraries. CILIP have had discussions with Wellcome and the Carnegie Trust about a interventions including Teddy Bears picnic as a healthcare intervention.
- The key challenges include time, money and capacity.
- CILIP would like to establish libraries as part of the infrastructure of health and social care provision in the UK with sufficient funding. DHSC and DCMS should work collaboratively with the Department for Communities and Local Government in order to recognise that public libraries are a platform for access to learning, to health and to a wide range of other interventions. CILIP would also like to see Arms-Length Bodies thinking libraries first when constructing plans and priorities. We would love to have been part of the NHS long Term Plan and certainly looking ahead we would love to be part of that dialogue. We would also like to Government to consider the public health impact of libraries when evaluating our performance against the UN sustainable development goals and with universal access to health and information as two central goals.
- For many years the public library card has been a passport to learning, information, knowledge and books. CILIP would like the library card to become a passport to health in 3-5 years.

### **Sue Williamson, Director of Libraries, Arts Council England**

- Libraries have delivered a wide range of health and wellbeing services including bibliotherapy, bringing self-help and supportive groups together, delivering messages such as the importance of exercise and healthy eating and for tangible initiatives such as blood pressure testing or cancer screening which can be done through an I-van on library premises or close to library premises. Some library services are experimenting with working with therapy dogs to help children who have mental health or anxiety issues.
- Libraries can also act as research portals enabling the testing of initiatives and the introduction of new resources and they provide verified and verifiable information. Libraries also play a key role in the preventative agenda such as the home delivery service that libraries offer where staff and volunteers act not only as befrienders of the housebound but also as an early warning system by observing changes that they can pass on to relevant practitioners.
- A key challenge is to define common areas that all libraries can deliver on to support central government health objectives and to gain recognition of the national role they can play.
- The other key challenge remains the financial impact of austerity which has led to reduction in hours, in closures, in lack of adequate public transport for rural areas and a reduction in staffing levels in libraries. The final challenge that libraries have is one of advocacy of convincing those in government who make policy that modern day libraries are hives of activity which already operate in the public health arena with potential to do so much more.
- In terms of support libraries need resource both human and financial to build capacity and to enable training such as dementia friends training. Also making libraries relaxed venues is a key to cater for people on the autism spectrum. One area that is crucial is helping libraries to manage and refresh programmes for the technology they will need to deliver on objectives. After initial funding from central government to introduce the People's Network the responsibility to maintain and refresh that technology lies with local authorities and is a clear financial burden. Planned obsolescence needs to be factored in as the digital agenda grows.
- On GPs and local health providers engagement, the four collections of Reading Well Books on prescription enabled through the public libraries services has illustrated the potential of working with GPs while also highlighting the barriers. To build a good working relationship with GPs, libraries need to have the opportunity to showcase what they can do to support them and to work with them on wider preventative and public health agendas.
- DHSC and DCMS could see the potential that public libraries offer to help central government deliver the wider preventative and health agendas, to support people in accessing health information services and factor libraries into the planning of how central government can address the issues of major concerns in health. Secondly, they could commission library services to deliver on outcomes that government identify as appropriate in a more consistent, targeted and joined up way. Thirdly, libraries need to be seen as a major part of the solution and not as part of the problem due to their financial cost. This advocacy is crucial as library services are still being reduced year on year as local authorities struggle to balance the books.
- Lord Howarth asked about the nature of the working relationship between ACE and NHSE following the Culture Secretary's speech. In reply, Sue Williamson confirmed Dr Neil Churchill from NHSE sits on the national Libraries Taskforce set up by DCMS (running until 2020) and also a member from Public Health England (PHE). Libraries Connected have also been in discussion with public health representatives on the universal offers delivered by libraries.

### **Jan Holden, Head of Libraries and Information, Norfolk County Council Library and Information Service**

- Most of the 47 libraries across Norfolk make use of self-service technology. There has been some investment in technology in libraries across the county to allow seven-day opening. The focus for libraries is reading for pleasure, raising literacy and digital skills as well as offering activities and information to enable people to live the best lives that they can.
- One of the determinants of poor health outcomes is literacy and so this has become a key focus in Norfolk. Adults can get ACE funded support to learn how to read using the Norfolk Reading Pathway

in libraries working alongside volunteer coaches. So far 300 people have been taught to read in the last 18 months under this scheme.

- The library service in Norfolk, supported by public health, had delivered a programme called [Health Libraries](#) as a way of reaching a wider community. This has included for example baby weighing services in every library, the 'tricky period' programme offered to women and girls as way out of period poverty. The libraries have also worked with local pharmacies to do blood pressure testing, HIV testing and finger prick testing for diabetes.
- Social prescribing it is quite a new area in Norfolk. The Council has funded a dedicated social prescribing service for the whole county with community connectors. It is strongly supported by health bodies with Clinical Commissioning Groups involved in planning. The programme has been in operation for less than a year and it is primary care that makes the most referrals in the county. Alongside this, the council has also set up a service to tackle social isolation based on a partnership model with life connectors to help people to build confidence, get out more and get involved in local activities.
- The local partnerships take time, challenging the traditional role and view of libraries by health professionals and others including people who work in the Council. It has required investment in staff training and they have started thinking about the public health level 1 qualification.

#### **Debbie Hicks, Creative Director, The Reading Agency**

- Evidence from Reading Agency's programmes and from wider research has shown the powerful wellbeing intervention of reading. It has proven effective in building literacy and health literacy, in providing access to CBT and book based therapy, in providing stories of lived experience and as an escape from the pressures of everyday life and as a way of connecting people socially and emotionally.
- Since 2011, the Reading Agency have been working closely with Libraries Connected on the Universal Health Offer. Reading sits at the heart of this shared vision for libraries as community health hubs and it is a vision built on those unique health assets of trusted space, community expertise, free access to a huge richness of physical and digital resources. It is a vision delivered through successful national interventions such as the quality assured [Reading Well Books on Social Prescription programme](#). These books are based on clinical guidelines, developed by experts by profession and with lived experience. It is supported by health partners including Royal College of General Practitioners, PHE and NHSE's IAPT programme. It is specially curated book lists available on a referral or self-referral basis in all public libraries. The programme has already given over 1 million adults and young people help to understand and manage long term conditions, dementia and mental health. Over 80 per cent of young people said in a recent evaluation that the shelf help scheme for young people had helped them to manage their mental health better.
- The Big Lottery funded reading befriending programme, [Reading Friends](#) works with volunteers and uses reading to start conversations that connect lonely and isolated older people. 88 per cent of people taking part in this scheme said that they made new friends as a result and it had given new meaning to their week.
- From well-funded research there is potential to develop community led peer champion models that help with signposting and increasing engagement with programmes such as Reading Well through animation activities and community led events.
- The Library Health Offer delivers quality assurance and cost efficiency alongside the value of local delivery by local library services working with local partners who understand the needs of their communities. There are however challenges to achieving the potential and one is demand and supply. Often people who borrow a book, borrow it before they need to go to a doctor so it is helping in that early intervention and prevention agenda. 89 per cent of practitioners who use the scheme say it is helpful but the reach of the programme is restricted by library budgets which are under pressure. The programme has been rolled out in Wales funded with core government health funding and this has made a huge difference in building health sector partnerships, increasing library books stock. The Reading Agency would really welcome consideration of the same Government funding model here in England.

- DHSC and DCMS can help to advocate libraries value, connect cultural and health networks, build and share evidence of impact, raise awareness of new models of care such as Reading Well. The development of a new National Social Prescribing offer is an exciting opportunity to bring these approaches into the mainstream.

**Response: Sheila Bennett, Head of Libraries, DCMS National Libraries Taskforce**

- DCMS set up the [Libraries Taskforce](#) in 2015 and leads on policy and advocacy across Government while other responsibilities have been passed to ALBs. One of the Taskforce’s strategic outcomes has been a focus on healthier and happier lives rather than illness.
- DCMS is keen to support the sector to position itself to work effectively with health at various levels according to local contexts. DCMS welcomed Matt Hancock’s King’s Fund speech and this has been reinforced by comments by DCMS Ministers at the [Select Committee hearing on the social impact of participation in culture and sport](#) and in the [Value of Culture Speech](#) about how libraries have a real role to play in social prescribing for the future.
- DCMS and DHSC officials have started work together on social prescribing policies in consultation with ACE, NHSE and PHE. NHSE have led on the social prescribing task group and DCMS and ACE are involved with a strong library presence at all the meetings.
- DCMS and DHSC are looking at further opportunities over and above social prescribing to ensure libraries are really tied into the health and care system. A key aim is to get libraries formally recognised as part of the health and care service.
- On health inequalities, the strategic planning guidance that the Libraries Taskforce put out, which was drawn up substantially by DCMS and the LGA, has laid a very strong emphasis on the use of evidence to identify local needs and to build future libraries plans around them.
- On place-based studies, the Libraries Taskforce strongly promoting and trying to share evidence of best practice. Libraries Connected has taken the lead on this area.
- DCMS have looked at signposting the work that libraries do to local health providers and some advocacy material was drawn up with NHSE, PHE and various library representative bodies.
- DCMS have led on the establishment of digital skills partnerships at the local level with libraries involved from their inception.

**Comments from the wider audience**

John MacMahon, Senior Policy and Research Manager for ACE said that NHSE expected to publish a social prescribing summary guide with a draft outcomes framework at the end of the month.

Nick Wright, CEO of Books Beyond Words, said that the charity’s Chair, Baroness Hollins, had sent her apologies. The charity has produced wordless books for people with learning disabilities and autism which are delivered through book clubs in about 50 libraries nationally. A key aim was to reduce inequality and over half of the books were about healthcare.

**Action: Lord Howarth agreed to follow up with Baroness Hollins as an active participant in the APPG AHW.**

Gilly Angell, an expert patient at UCL Hospitals Cancer Centre, said that she was setting up a new Lived Experience Network.



## Annex I – Speaker Biographies

### Biographies of Contributors

**Angela Baker** is an experienced Public Health Consultant who has worked within the NHS, Local Government and Public Health England. By background, she is a paediatric nurse, with additional school nursing, mental health and adult nursing qualifications. Currently, the main focus of her work is on the Health and Wellbeing agenda leading on relationships with Local Authorities across the South East of England for Public Health England. She is also the workforce development lead for the South East. She is involved in developing local and national strategies, working in partnerships and creating vision and direction. During her career she has covered most areas of public health, from BME populations and partnership working to working closely with primary and secondary care professionals, to partnership working with councillors and community development colleagues.

**Dr. Neil Churchill OBE** is Director for Experience, Participation and Equalities at NHS England. His brief includes insight and feedback, patient participation in decision-making, improvement programmes on cancer, learning disability and support for carers and national partnerships with volunteers and the voluntary sector. Neil joined NHS England in 2013 after a 25-year career in the voluntary sector at organisations including Barnardo's, Age Concern, Crisis and Asthma UK. Neil has been a Non-Executive Director for NHS South of England, an appointed member of the National Information Governance Board and a trustee of a number of charities across the UK. Neil is a member of the Executive Board for the Beryl Institute, a change agent from the School for Change Agents and a member of Q, the quality improvement collaborative from the Health Foundation.

**Bob Gann** trained and worked as a health librarian, and is now an independent consultant, specialising in digital inclusion and combating digital health inequalities. He is currently Digital Inclusion Specialist for NHS Digital and has recently carried out an independent review of digital inclusion and health in Wales for Wales Co-operative Centre and Carnegie UK Trust. He is a Specialist Advisor in Digital Health to the Care Quality Commission and Visiting Professor in Health Informatics at Plymouth University. Previously in his career Bob has been Director for the NHS Widening Digital Participation programme, Director of Strategy & Partnerships at NHS Choices and Director of New Media at NHS Direct.

**Debbie Hicks** is creative director and a founder member of The Reading Agency, a national charity tackling life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. She is an experienced reading activist specializing in reading for health and well-being, work with public libraries and health sector partnerships. She has led national research, policy development and programme delivery in this area. She manages the Reading Agency's work with Libraries Connected on the Public Library Health Offer including the delivery of Reading Well Books on Prescription and Reading Friends, the new Big Lottery funded reading befriending programme for lonely and isolated older people. She was awarded an MBE in the 2019 New Year's Honours list for her work promoting the power of reading.

**Rachel Flowers** has been Director of Public Health for Croydon Council since February 2016. Committed to reducing inequalities she is interested in the wider determinants of health, the prevention agenda, challenging stereotypes about health issues and working across the system to improve health and close the inequality gap. Starting her career as an environmental health officer Rachel has also worked across the system at local grass roots level including nearly a decade in community health development officer with a place-based focus as well as working at regional and national level. After over twenty years in local government she started work in the NHS in 2003 and in 2009 she became the joint Director of Public Health for Newham working across the NHS and Local Authority, the first EHP to attain this role. Her five-year stint included the wonderful experience of

being a DPH in one of the main Olympic boroughs during the 2012 Olympics. Prior to Croydon Council she worked as a Senior Civil Servant for Public Health England around organisational development as well as a part time secondment within the GLA advising on health and planning. Rachel is one of the London representatives for the Association of Directors of Public Health and will soon be starting a three-year term as one of the three general council members elected to the Faculty of Public Health Board.

**Jan Holden** has worked in libraries in London, Sheffield, South Wales and now is the Head of Libraries and Information at Norfolk County Council where the service focuses on reading for pleasure, raising literacy, improving digital skills and offering information to help people live independent, happy and fulfilled lives. Jan has developed a partnership with Public Health to improve the delivery of health information, encourage healthy lifestyle choices and offers a range of activities to support social prescribing and reduce social isolation.

**Isobel Hunter** is the first Chief Executive of Libraries Connected. She was formerly Head of Archives Sector Development at The National Archives where she serves a national constituency of 2,500 archives. She believes that libraries are central to people's lives and communities across the country and is committed to working with members to help develop and advocate for the public library sector.

**Nick Poole** was previously CEO of the Collections Trust and was responsible for the strategic direction and management of the organisation. In this role, Nick has been responsible for developing UK and international standards for information management, advising agencies on digital programmes and leading partnership initiatives with a range of leading digital companies. Nick was elected to the Board of Wikimedia UK on 25 July 2015 and is the former Chair of the Europeana Network and provided representation to the European Commission. Prior to joining the Collections Trust in 2005, Nick held a number of roles at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), including responsibility for Regional policy development and as a National ICT Adviser. In addition to his role within CILIP, Nick is a former Councillor of the Museums Association and the former Chair of the UK part of the International Council of Museums. Nick served as a Trustee of CILIP between January 2010 and November 2014, he was CILIP Treasurer for 2012 and 2013.

**Dr Malcolm Rigler** Following nearly five decades of work as a practicing NHS GP Dr Rigler has retired from the NHS and now works as a Project Volunteer with The Patients Association. Early in his career he realized that responding to the information and learning needs of patients and carers had been neglected by those responsible for the development of Primary Care Services since the inception of the NHS. Influenced by Dr John Macdonald, Department of Education, Bristol University he came to understand that alongside GP Practice there needs to be a "huge and sustained educational programme if patients are to be fully engaged with their treatment and care". Following two decades of experimentation in this area of work with the support of West Midlands Arts and Dudley Education Services whilst lead GP at Withymoor Village Surgery, Dr Rigler came to realize that only a well-funded partnership between NHS GP Services and our Public Library Services can lead to the improvements that are so urgently needed.

**Professor Nigel Sparrow OBE** is Senior National GP Advisor and Responsible Officer at the Care Quality Commission, Visiting Professor at Lincoln University and chair of the Target Ovarian Cancer GP Advisory Board. He was a GP for 30 years and a Deputy GP Dean. He was previously Medical Director for Revalidation, chair of the Professional Development Board at the Royal College of General Practitioners and vice chair of RCGP council. He was a member of the Standing Commission on Carers for 7 years and is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of General Practitioners. He was awarded an OBE for services to primary care in 2015.

**Sue Williamson** is the Director for Libraries for Arts Council England. A professional librarian, she has many years' experience in a variety of roles in public libraries, her previous role being Head of Library Services for St. Helens Borough Council. In her time there, the Library Service was in the People's Department of the Council and specifically within Public Health, an excellent fit. Sue is a vocal and enthusiastic advocate for public libraries and the benefits and possibilities of their role at the heart of the community. In her work in public libraries, Sue has experienced the positive results of programming events and activities that support the wider health agenda and in her previous role, she helped organise a conference with CILIP about Libraries and Health.

## Annex II – House of Lords Short Debate on Poverty Metrics

Conservative Peer, Baroness Stroud secured a short debate on the Government's progress measuring UK poverty in light of the [report](#) from the Social Metrics Commission (SMC). The Peer was instrumental in creating the non-partisan, independent SMC three years ago explaining 'it was my observation of how Governments behave in Budgets and spending reviews...When it came to the big economic decisions, it was quite obvious that the OBR and the IFS played a significant role in driving the accountability of Treasury decisions. However, there was no such equivalent for social policy decision-making.' Since then, the SMC's work has led to two key positive impacts: they can better identify who is living in poverty, and they can provide a greater insight into the nature of that poverty and wider life experiences. The old measure was purely of income. Building on this the Peer asked the Government to commit to exploring how the UK's measurement of poverty could be improved by using the SMC's metrics which could be adopting as official government metrics.

The APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Chair, Lord Howarth, contributed to this debate. He praised the work of the SMC seeking not only to understand material poverty but to take account of the lived experience of poverty such as, social isolation and mental and physical ill health. As the SMC develops its methodology, Lord Howarth hoped that the SMC will consider adding an **indicator of cultural poverty**, "which has a profound effect on well-being, thence health, thence material poverty".

Responding to the debate on behalf of the Government, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions, Baroness Buscombe, said Lord Howarth's point about the lack of indicators for cultural poverty was "a very good point, because it emphasises the reality that the possibilities for how we approach the way we measure poverty are, if not quite endless, enormous." While the Peer said the Government are unable to make any commitments to the SMC now, they will want carefully to consider the detail that underpins the methodology that the commission has employed when this is made available to us. The Department for Work and Pensions is also keen to be involved in the stakeholder discussions on some of the critical and more complex issues associated with the SMC's measure."

To read the full debate, please follow the [link](#).