

'Library @ the Lightbox is home to a range of daily activities, health and support facilities and services that are accessible and easy for residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

To ensure that the library fulfils the name of 'community hub' residents and community groups were asked to engage with the libraries service to find out exactly what would suit everybody's needs in Barnsley.

It was decided as part of the initial building design that a 'Sanctuary Room' would be an ideal addition within the library. The space offers a calm and simple surrounding for people with autism who find themselves in crisis while in the town centre.

Based on feedback from service users, the Sanctuary Room is a private area that has little to no distractions allowing the user to remove themselves from any situation. Once open the Sanctuary room will provide comfortable seating and simple features to ensure senses aren't overwhelmed, creating a safe space away from the bustle of the town centre.

On the first floor next to the children's library, a nursing room has also been set up for a variety of clinics and support groups. This bridges the gap between communities and well-being by offering an accessible space for residents and partners, moving away from the clinical setting and providing a welcoming and relaxed environment for the services to be delivered. Access to warm water has been made available within the space, making it hygienic and convenient for the various clinics that take place. While still being a practical room to suit the needs of partners, the area has been made adaptable with electronic screens and seating, ensuring it is versatile and meets the outcomes of all users. It has been a great success so far, hosting baby clinics; counselling for loss and one to one support which has benefitted families who attend the clinics to also use the children's library's facilities next door.

The libraries digital offer utilizes technologies to help support residents with their health needs. Within the Events space on the third floor, the Tovertafel system opens a world of opportunity to those living with special care needs and dementia. As a way of stimulating conversation, short and long-term memory, coordination and social engagement, the Tovertafel provides a range of interactive games that is accessible for nearly anyone to participate in as only limited hand/arm movement is needed to engage with the Tovertafel. The

software is specifically designed to help people to get moving, have fun together and play, which can help contribute to their health and quality of life.

As part of the events programme, virtual reality software and kit is on offer to participants, unlocking a new dimension of fun and activity. Not only does this provide a unique way of keeping residents active and moving, but it also helps reinforce positive well-being and community spirit and engages residents with something new to explore that they otherwise might not have had the opportunity to try.

Through a combination of wonderful facilities and inspiring technologies, our brand new Library @ The Lightbox provides an array of activities and events for the residents in our borough. Aimed to target a variety of people, we are proud to host conversation cafes, writers workshops, readers groups, Dementia-friendly gaming and a music production project for young people. In addition we have hosted events delivered by our partners including Counselling for Loss, Childcare Surgeries and Dancing Town with many more planned for the future to highlight the brilliant opportunities available to residents in Barnsley. Alongside the obvious benefits these groups provide, the interaction and conversation that takes place within these spaces reduces social isolation and helps provide a better quality of life.'