

# Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee



Library services provision – Support for employment and careers update  
12 January 2023

# Neighbourhood Services Overview

The Council's Neighbourhood Services section delivers community and library services to people who live and work in Leicester City.

- A network of 27 facilities, including 9 Multi-Service centres:
- 16 library service points
- 15 community centres offering room hire
- Ward & Community Engagement Team



# Library Employment Support: national and local strategic context

Neighbourhood Services are committed to the Universal Offers developed by Libraries Connected and supported by Arts Council England:

- **Information & Digital** – Goal: “To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online”

Other Universal Offers are linked:

- **Health & Wellbeing**
- **Culture & Creativity**
- **Reading**

# The National Context:

## DCMS Libraries Deliver:

“libraries help individuals into work. They run job clubs, back to work programmes and facilitated sessions with partner agencies such as Adult Learning and Skills, Jobcentre Plus and local organisations. They also provide training and support for digital skills and lifelong learning to prepare people for successful and productive careers...

Increasingly knowledge is becoming a driver of productivity and economic growth. Library information and knowledge management professionals help people understand and become part of the knowledge economy, to boost business competitiveness locally and nationally.”





# Arts Council England Report, June 2022

## **“Helping Job Seekers Help Themselves”, June 2022**

- Nationally 39% of library users are job seekers (7% more than within the population as a whole)

### **Recommendation 1**

- ✓ Actively coordinate the support provided to jobseekers by library services with other forms of jobseeker support through a formal partnership between Jobcentres and library services as critical social infrastructure

# Arts Council England Report, June 2022

## **Recommendation 2**

- ✓ Invest in quality and consistency. Individual library services should consider how they can increase the benefit to jobseekers by making the resources and activities identified by this research much more widely available and actively promote this support.

## **Recommendation 3**

- ✓ Reinstate human help for jobseekers which has been paused due to the pandemic. Individual services should use the evidence in this report to inform decisions about how to reinstate provision – in particular CV-writing, careers advice, and training courses – which are most likely to have been paused.

# Advice and support sessions in Leicester libraries



# Work Coach Sessions

- Partnership with DWP developed during pandemic
- Work coach sessions trialled in 3 libraries Autumn 2020
- Service rolled out to 3 more libraries in Summer 2021
- Final rollout to BRITE Centre and Belgrave Library spring 2022 – 8 libraries across city
- Weekly sessions
- Call or visit the local library to book



# Work Coach Sessions – support available

## **EMPLOYABILITY**

- CV writing
- Supported job search
- Interview skills and tips
- Individual action plans
- Virtual jobs fair
- Redundancy support
- Direct link to vacancies

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Sector specific training, including:

- Health and social care
- SIA (Security Industry Authority)
- CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme)
- In-work retraining support
- Direct links to adult education, training providers
- and support for young people

## **MONEY ADVICE SERVICE**

- Benefit support
- Better-off calculations
- Charitable applications
- Debt advice

## **SPECIALIST SUPPORT**

- Health issues/disabilities
- Childcare responsibilities
- Language barriers
- Ex-offenders
- Translation services available where required

# Work coach sessions available at:

- Beaumont Leys Library (0116) 299 5460
- Belgrave Library (0116) 299 5500
- BRITE Centre Library (0116) 299 5476
- Highfields Library (0116) 299 5494
- New Parks Library (0116) 229 8200
- Pork Pie Library (0116) 299 5480
- St Barnabas Library (0116) 299 5450
- St Matthews Library (0116) 222 1045

# Case Study #1

## **New Parks Library, Djeneba's story**

“As a frequent user of New Parks Library I first met with Jay, my work coach, in early February '22 having seen the poster about Work Coach support. As a Universal Credit customer since January '21, and a lone parent of three children I was keen to move forward. I felt my IT skills and my confidence in job searches needed improving.

Jay initially addressed my IT issues, giving guidance on emails and navigation of jobsites.

She supported me with job search and advocated on my behalf to employers, one of which was a care sector position. Jay explained how the hours on offer could work around childcare however I was concerned about pre/after school arrangements and costs.

Jay completed a “Better Off Leicester” in-work benefit calculation advising me not only of in-work benefit entitlement but also costs towards breakfast and after school clubs. I submitted the application and on interview was offered the position.

My joy however was short lived as the employer stated my right to work checks had failed. Jay intervened by utilising Direct Gov and on speaking with the employer overcame another barrier, securing the role for me!

My new role has proved life changing for me, giving positivity to both myself and children. I would absolutely recommend this support to other city residents.”



# Case Study #1



Djeneba with  
work coach Jay  
and a staff  
member at  
New Parks  
Library

# Case Study #2

## **Pork Pie Library: Parvin's story**

Single parent Parvin made an appointment with work coach Nipa Naik at the Pork Pie Library and is now £71 a week better off as a result.

Parvin was determined to work and be a role model for her children, but she was worried about how she could manage parenthood and a job.

Nipa was able to show Parvin the financial difference part-time working would make. She showed Parvin how to use a benefits calculator so she can keep track of what's she is entitled to if her circumstances change.

Nipa then helped her with a digital job search and reassured Parvin that they would find something to suit her. Nipa spoke to an employer and arranged an interview for Parvin on the basis that she would work only in school hours, if successful.

Impressed by Parvin's interview, the employer offered her a role immediately and she is now in work, which has helped her to gain confidence as well as improving hers and her children's lives.



# Case Study #3

## Highfields Library: Shamima's story

"I am a lone parent with a wonderful 4 year old child. At the time I was on Universal Credit and whilst I had previous work experience as a teaching assistant, I was struggling to get paid work in this field.

The work coach at the Library helped me to update of my CV however I lacked confidence in selling myself in job interviews.

Jay supported me with interview preparation and mock scenarios resulting in an offer of a job interview for a Teaching Assistant position. She helped me prepare for interview with potential questions. She gave me confidence, recognising a passion in me that employers would value.


Whilst I was pleased with my interview the resulting job offer was just fantastic. Jay's support and preparation were important and my increased awareness of in-work support with childcare costs makes things so much easier.'

I would like to thank the work coach and Leicester City Council library staff for their support. It's been life changing for me to gain this role."

# Case Study #3

Shamima with  
Work Coach Jay  
at Highfields  
Library





# Support for Skills Development and access to Information

# Access to Computers & the Internet

- Trained staff to support general IT use
- Provision of 166 public access computers in 16 libraries (bookable, free of charge) – renewed 2020
- Public access Wi-Fi in all 16 libraries (free)
- High quality printing – rising demand
- Wi-Fi printing from your device – new service
- “Leicester Connected” device loaning scheme
- Adult Learning IT training suites at 5 neighbourhood centres





# Learning: Beginners IT sessions

- Library sessions recommenced spring 2022
- “Learn my Way” sessions running for over 10 years
- Resources from Good Things Foundation
- For complete beginners
- Learn at your own pace
- Self-led courses with staff to support for confidence
- Topics covered include:
  - Mouse/keyboard
  - Internet safety
  - Filling forms
  - Universal Credit
  - Health online
- Offered at Central Library Mon – Fri, and at high demand community libraries

**Are you taking part in  
Get Online Week?  
We are.**



 brought to you by  
 Good Things  
Foundation

## Computer Skills for Beginners

- Are you a complete beginner with computers?
- Are you worried about using them?
- Have you heard scary things about the internet?

*Don't worry we are here to help!*

We have sessions at libraries across Leicester  
so there is one near you.

• Beaumont Leys Library	• New Parks Library
• Belgrave Library	• Highfields Library
• Leicester Central Library	• Rushey Mead Library

Session days and times vary, please contact  
the individual library for further information.

[www.leicester.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/libraries)  
Tel: 0116 454 3540



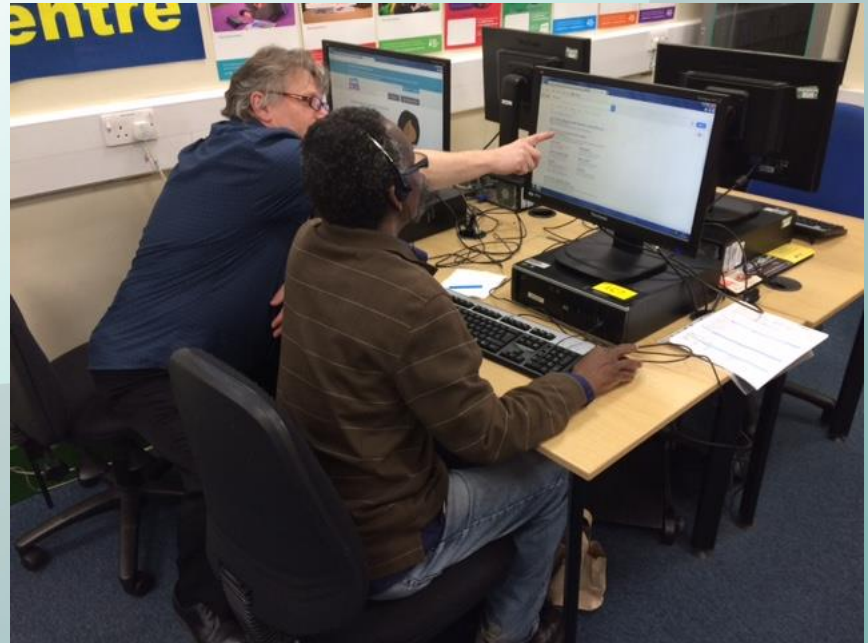
Leicester  
City Council

# Learning: support from library staff

Library staff routinely provide basic signposting and support to computer users

Most common customer support request areas\*:

1. Printing
2. Scanning documents
3. **Job search**
4. **Online forms**
5. Email (including set up)
6. Search engines
7. Browsing the Internet
8. Microsoft Word
9. Accessibility
10. Privacy settings



\*Source: "Capture IT" survey in Leicester City 2019/20



# Adult Learning in Neighbourhoods

- IT suites developed at 5 neighbourhood centres to support the LASALS programme at accessible community venues
- Classrooms available in Libraries and Community Centres
- Sessions include ESOL, basic IT and maths skills

Adult Learning enrolments in neighbourhoods	Aug – Nov 2022	Number of courses planned
African Caribbean Centre	244	26
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	422	44
Beaumont Leys Library	8	4
Brite Centre	153	44
Central Library	39	7
Fosse Centre	0	3
Highfields Library	92	11
New Parks Library	68	16
Pork Pie Library	117	21
St Barnabas Library	207	18
St Mathews NC	130	25
Tudor Centre	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>222</b>

# Customer Survey Results

- Undertaken February 2021
- Across all Neighbourhood Services facilities
- Lockdown restrictions still in place
- “How has your visit helped you?”
- % of all visitors on the day who responded:
  - 6% Directly job related
  - 19% Getting online
  - 21% Answering a query
  - 35% Study / learning

# Workforce Development in Neighbourhood Services

# Kickstart roles

- Neighbourhood Services provided Government funded “Kickstart” roles in libraries and community centres during 2022
- The scheme was open to 18-25 year olds
- Offering an opportunity to develop skills in community settings
- 2 customer facing roles, in different areas of the city
- Both Kickstarts have now successfully applied for positions within the service

# T-Level Placements

- T-Levels offer students aged 16 – 18yrs a practical approach to further education
- Courses have a mandatory placement
- Neighbourhood Services are working directly with colleges to offer 3 placement opportunities for admin & business students
- 45 days over 1 year – can be a block project or 1 day / week
- Introduces students to benefits of working for the Council
- A divisional priority, to support young people in their career development and positive for the Council's future recruitment programme

# Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships are funded through the Apprenticeship Levy (paid by all larger employers)
- Supports career development and a “grow your own” approach
- Neighbourhood Services are offering up to 4 apprenticeships in “Library & Information Skills” for front line staff.
- A crucial route for developing in house library & information skills
- Benefits of investment and staff development include greater staff retention and growing next generation of library workers



Any Questions?