

**SUFFOLK
LIBRARIES**

**HOW OUR MODEL
INCREASES **IMPACT**
IN THE COMMUNITY**

**WHERE
I BELONG**



Community is at the very heart of Suffolk Libraries, its governance and delivery. Communities are represented at all levels, from the board down. Library managers and staff are actively engaged with local communities and are empowered to shape library services that truly reflect local priorities and need.

Suffolk Libraries plays an active role in local, regional and national networks and partnerships, contributing to bigger-picture priorities and strategic work.

This unique combination of hyperlocal engagement and wider strategic collaboration makes Suffolk Libraries uniquely placed to connect people to support, to opportunities and to each other.

Libraries are a key preventative mechanism that can stop people from needing an urgent intervention. Recent independent research showed that just three of Suffolk Libraries' core activities generated £2 million of social value per year, saved the NHS £284,000 annually and delivered an ROI of £8 for every £1 spent.

Free at point of access, through the combined assets of their spaces, content, programming and staff, libraries are inherently inclusive, ultimately reducing inequality.

More than ever, everyday life and access to key services is taking place digitally. Libraries are central to digital inclusion through the provision of free access to IT infrastructure and equipment. Additionally, through expert support and guidance to access digital services, **libraries build the skills and confidence needed to interact and connect with the digital world.**

Why libraries:

- Unparalleled geographic accessibility and reach
- 24/7 countywide access through digital resources and content
- Open to all ages, demographics and needs
- Trained and empowered expert professional staff
- Expertise in guiding people to information and support
- Tuned in to local community needs
- Tied in to wider local, regional and national social and health priorities
- Comfortable, safe social spaces
- Non-judgmental, non-stigmatised first points of access
- Strong connections and networks for signposting and handover





Impacts:

- **Connection and enrichment:** providing social, creative, leisure and learning activities and resources enriches lives and helps maintain connection, purpose and wellbeing.
- **Mental health and wellbeing:** helping to maintain and improve wellbeing and mental health through targeted activities and resources.
- **Employment and economic recovery:** providing support, skills and tools for people seeking employment, skills development and business start-up.
- **Financial wellbeing and guidance:** helping people live full lives at little cost, through free activities and resources. Suffolk Libraries also guides people to sources of financial advice and support.
- **Literacy and reading:** enabling people of all ages to benefit from the increased life and career opportunities that literacy and reading open up.
- **Inclusion and diversity:** engaging a diverse demographic of individuals and communities. They increase community connection, cohesion and understanding reducing inequalities.
- **Opportunity and mobility:** levelling-up has been at the heart of libraries since their beginning. They provide free access to resources, tools and skills that enable development and social mobility.
- **Environment and sustainability:** reusing and sharing resources creates clear environment and sustainability impact.

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By donating to Suffolk Libraries you can help us fund crucial additional services that reduce social, digital and rural isolation in our communities. For details visit www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/donate HMRC charity number: XT34476