

AGENDA ITEM 3**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****14th MAY, 2015****LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2015-18****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING.****Author:** Wendy Edwards, Head of Community Learning

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet Members with an opportunity to discuss the draft Library Strategy and Action Plan 2015-18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report
2.2 Consider and comment on the information provided
2.3 Approve the strategy so that it can be made publicly available.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Fifth Quality Framework for Welsh Public Libraries introduced in April 2014 requires that every public Library Service in Wales provides access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community (WPLSCE 17).

3.2 Once approval is given by Cabinet it is the intention to upload a bilingual version of the Strategy, Action Plan and Volunteer Policy onto the website and provide a hard copy of these documents for each static library and each mobile library.

4. RHONDDA CYNON TAF LIBRARY STRATEGY

4.1 The Strategy and Action Plan is included at Appendix 1. The key priorities are:

- Embedding libraries at the heart of communities
- Enabling residents to maximise their potential by ensuring they have access to a broad range of opportunities
- Managing the service through a period of change and renewal and continuing to investigate innovative models of delivery
- Working more effectively with reduced resources

4.2 Key issues of note include:

- The intention to undertake community profiling for all service points
- The introduction of volunteers to add value to the service
- Working in partnership with community managed libraries
- Skills assessment of staff and development of a workforce training plan to ensure the service has the necessary skills to deliver a high quality service in a rapidly changing environment
- Exploring new methods of delivering the Reference and Local Studies service
- Developing new approaches to stock control
- Continuing to take advantage of opportunities for regional collaboration

4.3 The proposed Volunteer Strategy (at Appendix 2) has been discussed with Human Resources and includes good practice identified by the National Library of Wales and other local authority areas in England that

have experience of using volunteers.

4.4 The Expression of Interest form (at Appendix 3) similarly is based on good practice in other areas.

4.5 Use of volunteers is included in WPLSQI 13. A requisite of using volunteers is that the service works towards Investing in Volunteers Accreditation.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The attached strategy indicates the direction of the Library Service for the next 3 years.

5.2 It is recognised that in the current circumstances it is difficult to predict the level of funding that may be available over the next three years. Therefore any strategy and action plan will need to be flexible and reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

5.3 It is suggested however that the themes identified will be relevant in a potentially challenging financial situation and the associated actions will facilitate the development of new models of service delivery that will ensure the provision of a 'comprehensive and efficient service' as required under s7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

Appendix 1

Rhondda Cynon Taf Draft Library Strategy 2015 – 18 and Strategic Action Plan

The Vision for Libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf 2015-2018

Libraries play a key role in communities. They provide community space that is free and accessible to everyone. They provide access to a wide range of facilities including free internet and computer usage, easy access to information and advice, books and learning activities and very importantly they facilitate social interaction.

It is difficult to measure their importance in financial terms but they are valuable and valued community resources.

Current provision

The Library Service currently has 13 static libraries located across the county including:

- 3 Area Libraries based at Aberdare, Treorchy and Pontypridd, and
- 10 Branch Libraries at Abercynon, Church Village, Ferndale, Hirwaun, Llantrisant, Mountain Ash, Pontyclun, Porth, Rhydyfelin, and Tonypany.

4 mobile libraries operate to serve communities and locations that are some distance from a local library building. The mobile libraries also visit sheltered housing units. All routes are fortnightly.

A Housebound Service is available to those who are unable to visit a branch or mobile library. Community Transport is also available to selected libraries for those who have difficulty in getting to a library. These services are subject to an assessment of individual needs.

A Schools Library Service offers a loan and advisory service to all primary schools within the county and organises initiatives and activities for children and young people such as the Summer Reading Challenge designed to promote improvements in literacy

skills and encourage a love of reading. A Teenage librarian works with teenagers at the service's specialist "e-teen" libraries to promote reading and literacy amongst young adults.

Deposit collections of books are located at specific venues across the county including Integrated Children's centres and Residential Homes while computer facilities linked to the Library System are available in some locations such as Tonyrefail Leisure Centre.

The Service supports the work of community groups who have established library hubs or community libraries by using these locations as pick-up and drop-off points for books and facilitating access to other aspects of the service that may be of benefit to voluntary sector partners.

All libraries have computers with 137 public access computers being available across the service. These offer access to the Internet and Microsoft Office software as well as scanning and photo editing facilities. Wi-Fi is available at the 3 area libraries and 7 branch libraries.

In 2013/14 the Library Service:

Dealt with 1,222,614 visitors

Issued 786,885 books

Facilitated 3,924 learning events

Facilitated 8,856 community events

Provided a bespoke service to 85 primary schools

The financial pressures experienced by local authorities, has already led to a significant reduction in the number of static library points in Rhondda Cynon Taf. With no end in sight to the financial challenges facing local government it is vital that the Library Service continues to review its offer to communities to ensure it:

- remains relevant in an increasingly technological age,
- provides access to the range of opportunities required by residents,

- embraces change and adopts an innovative approach to problem-solving to ensure the service is fit for purpose for the longer term.

This strategy is designed to improve the sustainability of the service and to ensure it continues to provide a good service to residents in an increasingly challenging environment for libraries in Wales.

Guiding principles

The Library Service will be guided in everything it does by the core entitlements identified by the Welsh Government in the Fifth Quality Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-2017. These are:

- Ensuring that the Library Service engages with its customers and potential users, providing opportunities for individual and community development
- Ensuring that Library Services are delivered from buildings and facilities that are welcoming, inclusive and fit for purpose
- Ensuring that the Library Service provides a range of resources and services to meet people's needs
- Ensuring that the Library Service is professionally managed with adequate resources

Key priorities

The key priorities for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service are to
:

- embed libraries at the heart of communities
- enable residents to maximise their potential by ensuring they have access to a broad range of opportunities
- manage the service through a period of change and renewal and continue to investigate innovative models of delivery
- work more effectively with reduced resources

In order to achieve these key priorities it will be necessary to:

- be clearer about the current customer profile

- be smarter about assessing local needs by developing mechanisms for evaluating the success of the service
- continue to plan its workforce to provide for future needs
- improve the marketing of its services to the public
- continue to find ways to use technology to work more effectively and efficiently

Action Plan

| Themes | What do we want to achieve? | What actions are required to achieve the success we need? | Resources required | What are the key PIs that will demonstrate achievement? | Contribution to local, regional, national strategies. |
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| Embedding libraries at the heart of communities | Adopt and complete community profiling templates in order to gain a better understanding of local needs. | <p>Good practice template developed through collaboration with other regional Library Authorities. July 2015</p> <p>Dissemination to Senior Librarians for feedback prior to approval of the final version. August 2015</p> <p>Training of relevant staff on the use and interpretation of the community profiling template. March 2016</p> | Principal Librarian to lead with support from nominated staff April 2015 – March 2016. | PI templates developed to capture qualitative measures. | <p>Libraries Inspire: The strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16</p> <p>The Fifth Quality Framework for Welsh Public Libraries. – ‘Impact indicators; WPLPI 4.3</p> |
| | Community | Timetable for completion | Senior Librarian time. | Priorities, targets and | Libraries Inspire: The strategic |

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| | profiling templates are completed for all service points by August 2016 (Year 2) | developed and agreed. | | activities identified in Library Delivery Plans. | development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 The Fifth Quality Framework for Welsh Public Libraries. – ‘Impact indicators; WPLPI 4.3 |
| | Attract volunteers to work in libraries in specific roles designed to add value to current provision. | Develop a Volunteer Strategy to increase community participation in local libraries by looking at good practice examples from other areas of Wales and the UK. March 2015 Identification of roles which will enhance the current offer in libraries and develop relevant job descriptions for those roles. May 2015 Uploading of the Volunteer Strategy and volunteer opportunities onto the council website once the documentation has been translated. July 2015 | Head of Community Learning time for development of the strategy and identification of good practice from other areas. Identification of a management role that will lead as a Volunteer Coordinator. Training of Branch librarians on ‘managing volunteers.’ (Training also opened out to Boards Members of Community Libraries. | Number of volunteers identified Number of volunteer roles filled. Added value to the service measured through participant feedback questionnaires. | Expert review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014 The Fifth Quality Framework for Welsh Public Libraries. – ‘Use of Volunteers’ WPLS 4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taff Voluntary Compact. |
| | A seamless service for local | Provision of a range of support for Community Libraries identified within | Identification of Link Officer allocated to each relevant community group. | Number of joint projects undertaken Number of reservations of | Expert review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014 – Sustainable Models of Service Delivery 157-174 |

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| | <p>residents so that they can continue to benefit from the services and initiatives delivered by the Public Library Service while using their local community managed library.</p> | <p>current funding constraints.</p> <p>Regular meetings established with relevant community groups to discuss issues of common interest.</p> | <p>Resources for specific projects and/or initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge.</p> <p>Identification of other potential joint projects.</p> | <p>stock through Community Libraries.</p> | |
| | <p>Implement a range of activities designed to raise the profile of Library Services in communities and encourage an increase in visits, use of IT and engagement in events (based on the results of the community profiles in</p> | <p>Annual engagement commitments are introduced with agreed targets and outcomes for each Library. June 2017</p> <p>A Marketing and Promotion Strategy is developed utilising a range of methods designed to attract users to library services. June 2017</p> | <p>Principal Librarian, Area Manager and Senior Librarian Mobiles and special services time.</p> <p>Financial resources for specific projects identified as priorities in each area (linked to the community profiling results).</p> <p>Allocation of funding for a marketing leaflet and other associated activities.</p> | <p>Annual events and activities figures.</p> | <p>Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (7. Attracting the audience)</p> |

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| | each library catchment area). | | | | |
| Enabling residents to maximise their potential by ensuring access to a range of opportunities | An improvement in literacy skills among children, young people and adults | <p>A 'Reading for Life' initiative to be developed. April 2017</p> <p>Continue to run the Summer Reading Challenge and seek opportunities to work with partners to develop activities that engage children and adults in reading for pleasure.</p> <p>Promote the development of Reading Groups including Alternative Reading Groups for those with visual issues.</p> | Area Librarian; Senior Librarian Schools and Youth; Area and Branch Librarians | Number of participants Borrowing figures | RCT Education Strategic Plan RCT Literacy Strategy and Action Plan |
| | | <p>Work with a range of partners to provide story-telling sessions for children.</p> <p>Identify and apply for relevant external funding as appropriate (e.g. Literature Wales; Night – Out).</p> | | Number of participants Number of participants that provide positive feedback on the impact of the event(s) | The Fifth Quality Framework for Welsh Public Libraries – WPLPI Impact Indicators |

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| | | Monitor the development of the ECALM programme May 2015 - ongoing | Principal Librarian; Senior Librarian Schools and Youth | | |
| | Access provided to a wide range of Essential Skills and IT provision in libraries across the county | <p>Work with the leading ES and IT providers on the Adult Community Learning Partnership to develop a programme of relevant provision in libraries.</p> <p>Jointly market the courses using appropriate marketing methods including liaison with Communities First Learning Leads, leaflets, posters and online marketing.</p> <p>Develop digital literacy skills among those seeking work and on benefits; those living in deprived communities; and those studying at School, Further Education, or</p> | <p>Head of Community Learning; Senior Essential Skills Officer.</p> <p>Community Learning Worker delivery time.</p> <p>Branch Librarian time.</p> | Number of courses offered Number of participants engaged that indicated a positive impact from the activity | <p>Libraries Inspire: The strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 – Skills for Life (5)</p> <p>Delivering adult community learning in Wales 2010</p> <p>Single Integrated PI – Prosperity (Education and Employability)</p> <p>RCT Education Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Fifth Quality Framework for Welsh Public Libraries – WPLPI Impact Indicators</p> <p>RCT Digital Inclusion Plan</p> |

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| | | informally. March 2016 | | | |
| | Libraries that have the appropriate facilities and range of materials capable of supporting the learning needs of diverse communities. | <p>Ensure the effective implementation of the ICT Libraries Plan 2015/16.</p> <p>Evaluate the digital content currently available through County Borough Libraries. April 2018</p> <p>Continue to invest in an appropriate range of reading materials including E-resources and ensure effective use of the Book Fund.</p> | Principal Librarian/IT Manager | <p>Increased broadband width in each library.</p> <p>Wi-fi access at each library.</p> <p>Upgraded computers at each library by 20----</p> | |
| | An extensive digital archive which enables easy access to a range of materials that highlight the rich cultural heritage of the county. | Development of a community volunteer project to digitise relevant materials relating to the heritage and culture of Rhondda Cynon Taf. | Area Manager; Senior Librarian Information Services | Improved product range on the Library Service's website | Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (3.Resources for All) |
| Managing the service through a | The new service structure | Continue to review performance data to assess the impact of the | Head of Community Learning and Principal Librarian. | A clear staffing structure in place | Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (8 Delivering a quality |

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| period of change and renewal | introduced in June 2014 is embedded and reviewed to assess the impact of the changes. | changes and identify areas that may need further amendments. | | A balanced budget achieved after implementation of service reductions. | service) |
| | A workforce that is trained so that they are fully equipped to deliver library services in a changing environment. | <p>Undertake a Skills Survey to assess the current skills levels of staff. April 2017</p> <p>Identify areas of specialism that need to be developed if the service is to continue to meet the needs of residents in the future.</p> <p>Draw up a Training Plan for staff to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - areas of new work where all staff require training (such as Universal Credit and Jobmatch); - specialist areas that require some staff to develop their skills further for example support to obtain professional qualifications. | Head of Community Learning, Principal Librarian and Area Manager. | Number of staff trained in areas required for service development. | Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (6. Investing in People) |

| | | October 2017 | | | |
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| | A Performance Appraisal system that is relevant and practicable. | <p>Review of the current appraisal documentation is undertaken to assess for applicability in the changed circumstances. March 2016</p> <p>Amended documentation distributed to Senior Officers for feedback. June 2016</p> <p>Approved documentation highlighted to staff with appropriate training provide to those who will implement the system. September 2016</p> | Head of Community Learning and Principal Librarian; Senior Officers/Line Managers. | Number of Performance appraisals completed and training plans approved. | Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (6.Investing in People) |
| Working more effectively with reduced resources | An increase in the co-located services at libraries. | <p>Identify additional options for collaborative delivery with strategic partners.</p> <p>Work with Corporate Estates and the Legal Department to ensure that relevant options are consistent with any covenants/agreements relating to the use of</p> | <p>Head of Community Learning and Principal Librarian.</p> <p>Funding for legal/other associated costs.</p> | An increase in the number of shared library locations. | <p>Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (2.Sustainable Models of Service Delivery)</p> <p>Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014 (Sustainable Models of Delivery 157)</p> |

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| | | library buildings. Confirm arrangements with potential partners. | | | |
| | Strategically valuable partners to the Library Service have been identified – that can assist in delivering a shared vision. | Review/mapping of present partnerships and their value to the work of the Library Service and its future direction. October 2017 | Head of Community Learning and Principal Librarian | Partnership matrix produced. | |
| | Identify other areas for efficiency savings to meet budget requirements. | Explore new methods of delivering the Local Studies and Reference service October 2015 Explore new approaches to Stock Control through working with other Library Services and learning from good practice in other geographic areas. October 2015 Produce a report and recommendations as | Head of Community Learning and Principal Librarian. | Financial savings identified and implemented. | Medium Term Financial planning Strategy. |

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| | | <p>appropriate and if approved by CMT consult with staff prior to implementation.</p> <p>Continue working with other regional Library Authorities to maintain existing collaborative models of service delivery and consider, assess and if suitable implement new collaborative models of service delivery.</p> | | <p>Continued participation in existing collaborative schemes such as Books 4 U and the Consortium Purchasing Group.</p> <p>Collaboration with other regional library service in the all Wales library management System project leading to adoption of LMS by December 2018</p> | <p>Libraries Inspire – The Strategic Development Framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (2.Sustainable Models of Service Delivery)</p> <p>Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014 (Sustainable Models of Delivery 157)</p> |
| | <p>Maximise use of new technology to reduce costs and improve service delivery.</p> | <p>Support ICT during the process of upgrading of staff and public access computers by agreeing a timescale for implementation and a programme of locations with relevant dates.</p> <p>Provision of relevant training opportunities for staff through the use of RCT Source including development of training materials and courses to assist Library staff to assist customers with their digital</p> | <p>Head of Community Learning and Principal Librarian</p> <p>Time for development of training modules for RCT Source.</p> <p>Funding for potential ICT and Self-service point changes (likely to be introduced on a gradual basis across three years)</p> | | <p>Libraries Inspire : The Strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16 (Skills for Life – Promoting Digital Inclusion 5.3)</p> |

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| | | <p>support needs</p> <p>Explore the potential of self-service points at Area Libraries. January 2018</p> <p>Identify the most appropriate Authority supported social media platforms that can reach the widest customer base for future development/exploitation April 2016</p> | | | |
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Appendix 2

Volunteer Policy: Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service

What do we do?

Libraries play an essential role in contributing to the well-being and prosperity of individuals and communities. They offer education, entertainment, fulfilment and practical help to all sections of the community: They are public spaces that are open and accessible to all.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service is responsible for running:

- 13 static libraries
- a Reserve Stock Library that is open to the public on a daily basis
- 4 mobile libraries
- A Housebound Service
- A Schools' Library Service
- Deposit collection service

This Volunteering Policy sets out the broad principles for volunteering with the Library Service in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Why do we take on volunteers?

Volunteers can support and enhance our libraries and bring many benefits to library users, staff and local people. They are valued community spaces and increased involvement and participation by local people in the delivery of library services will ensure that they remain at the heart of their communities, meeting the varied needs of residents.

What is a volunteer?

Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the Library.

The minimum age of a volunteer is 16 and there is no upper age limit.

Parental consent will be required for a person under the age of 18 who applies to be a volunteer.

Younger people may be taken onto work experience placements when sponsored through a school or education establishment.

Recruitment of volunteers

Volunteering opportunities are advertised as they become available on the Rhondda Cynon Taf council website; at local libraries and other council venues. They will also be highlighted to the local Volunteer Bureau.

All potential volunteers will be required to:

- fill in an application form
- provide details of referees,
- attend an informal interview in,
- have a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- commit to a 6 week trial period during which time they will find out more about the role, arrangements can be clarified and suitability assessed.

In some circumstances volunteering may affect the payment of benefits received. All potential volunteers who are claiming benefits are advised to check their individual circumstances. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will not accept any responsibility for this.

Volunteer roles

There are many opportunities for volunteers within the Library Service.

Examples of activities that volunteers can get involved in include:

- Helping customers use the computers
- Helping with family history research
- Helping staff to organise library stock
- Hosting coffee and book chat sessions
- Helping with story telling sessions for pre-school customers
- Helping with the Summer reading Challenge

- Running reading groups
- Helping to organise sales of old library stock

Insurance

All volunteers are insured under Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Employer Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance.

Equal opportunities

The Council values diversity among its paid staff and volunteers and is committed to actively encouraging applications from a wide cross section of backgrounds and experiences and to ensure that differing ideas, abilities and needs are valued. Volunteering opportunities are widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to a diverse range of people.

Welsh Language

In accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 and Welsh Language (Measure) 2011 the council is required to meet statutory standards in respect of the Welsh Language. Accordingly some volunteers will be required to work through the medium of Welsh and English.

Training and development

The Council will ensure that all volunteers are made to feel welcome and an informal induction process will be required for all roles. This may be before, or on the first day of, volunteering and will cover all essential information, policies and procedures in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their role competently and safely. Depending on the project, training can be one to one on-the-role training, or via an intensive group training day.

Supervision and support

All volunteers will have a named member of staff to provide regular support and supervision. In most instances this will be the on-site Branch Librarian.

Expenses

Volunteers will be paid expenses when the use of a car is essential to the volunteering role. Travel expenses are processed through the Council's Finance department. Travel expenses are paid at current Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council rates and will be reimbursed after submission of the appropriate form. To be able to claim travel expenses when using your own car you will need to have business insurance.

The Volunteer Supervisor can provide more details of claiming travel and other pre-agreed role related expenses.

Health and safety

The Council is committed to providing and maintaining a safe environment for its volunteers. Volunteers will receive appropriate health and safety training as part of their induction and training.

Volunteer supervisors will carry out risk assessments on all activities undertaken by volunteers. Volunteers also have a duty of care for themselves and others around them.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are bound by the same rules for confidentiality as paid members of staff. Details of the council's confidentiality policy will be provided during the induction.

Information Protection and Communication

Personal information recorded about volunteers will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality and the Data Protection Act.

Volunteers will be expected to donate to the Library any original copyright works they may produce while volunteering and will be asked to sign a copyright agreement for important projects.

If volunteers are asked for an opinion or comment by the press or other media source, volunteers should refer them to their Volunteer Supervisor. All press and media communication should go through the Council's Press Office.

Settling Differences and Finishing as a Volunteer

The Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Volunteers can expect their views to be heard, noted and acted upon promptly, with the aim of reaching a positive and amicable solution. Any grievance raised will be dealt with in accordance with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's policy and guidelines.

The Council recognises that volunteers are free to end their involvement at any time. Volunteers are invited to complete an informal exit interview for future benefit to the volunteering programme. Any council equipment, property, ID passes etc must be returned.

The Council can also end the volunteer arrangement at any time should the project come to an end or if the arrangement is no longer deemed to be mutually beneficial.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Volunteers' Charter

The Council expects volunteers to:

- Work with us to achieve our aims and objectives to the best of their ability
- Work independently and without supervision when necessary
- Be reliable
- Carry out their role to the best of their ability as set out in the role description
- Treat volunteering as a mutually beneficial activity to both parties

- Give reasonable notice, wherever possible, if unable to undertake agreed activities
- Respect confidentiality, equality and health and safety requirements
- Act under the direction of the volunteer supervisor.
- Attend relevant induction, training, feedback and support sessions
- Project a positive image of the Council at all times
- Tell the Council in advance if they want to stop volunteering
- Share any concerns that involves their work as soon as possible with the appropriate person

The Council recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is (and is not) expected of them
- Be given tasks that they are capable of and that are of benefit to the service
- Be treated fairly and equally
- Receive useful and appropriate induction and training
- Receive support and supervision with a point of contact at all times when working on site
- Receive relevant, agreed out of pocket expenses
- Be insured

Appendix 3

Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service Volunteer Expression of Interest Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Tel.no. _____

Email address: _____

Age if under 18 _____

Which volunteer role(s) are you applying for? Please check the website for current volunteering opportunities.

Have you had any previous experience of volunteering or working with the public? Please give details

Please tell us of any skills, qualifications or experience you have had which would support you to deliver this volunteer role.

