

What are the library and information needs of carers?

Introduction

On two of the pilot courses, we looked specifically at the needs of carers. The following points have been taken from the North East and North West pilots – and thanks to all those who contributed to this.

Information needs

- Essential/Basic Skills needs
- Leisure reading
- Finding out which are good books for children
- Where libraries are and opening times – and are there other facilities available, such as a crèche?
- Child-friendly leisure activities
- ICT support (some authorities give every young person in care a computer, therefore carers may need help to be able to support them appropriately)
- How the education system works
- Modern teaching methods
- Health information and information about disability
- Legal information, especially around the care system
- Information about cultures and religions
- Support for their own study (many carers may be involved in schemes such as “Payment for Study”)
- Help to link with other carers
- Community information about other local agencies
- Help to make contacts with other cultural agencies (eg museums)

How are we beginning to meet these needs?

Examples of our provision include:

- Providing carers with PCs
- Running ICT courses in libraries
- Providing packs with information on children’s books, plus training sessions for carers
- Newsletter with information/education matters
- Specific stock in libraries (eg parents/carers collections)
- Stock specifically provided for carers/homes
- Story-times and other activities
- Meetings rooms and facilities for carers
- Family literacy/Family reading groups
- Homework support
- CD-ROMs to support National Curriculum subjects.

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