

COLLECTIONHQ SUPPORTS FIFE COUNCIL THROUGH LIBRARY REFORM



OVERVIEW

Serving a population of more than 365,000, Fife Cultural Trust manages Fife's library service on behalf of Fife Council. The service currently consists of 49 libraries and 3 mobile libraries, 2 libraries were closed at the end of March 2016. Similar to other areas of the U.K., Fife is faced with the prospect of a number of library closures over the 2016-17 financial year. To ensure that the collection is handled in the most effective way possible, the team at Fife Cultural Trust has used and plan to continue to use collectionHQ to target future selection and manage surplus stock effectively.

THE CHALLENGE

Before introducing collectionHQ, reports from the library's LMS (ILS) were used to analyse collection performance to help create supplier selection profiles and library stock profiles. Yvonne Melville, Service Development Team Leader at Fife Cultural Trust described this process as a time consuming task as she lacked "immediate access" to the reports and evaluation of the data had to be carried out manually.

Two small part-time libraries were closed at the end of March 2016 with a further 14 library closures currently being discussed. Should the proposed closures go ahead, it will leave the staff with masses of surplus items that need to be assessed and redistributed to the libraries remaining open. As part of the library service review process, Yvonne and her team will need to review the Stock Management Policy with the associated supplier selection instructions and standing order author instructions.

THE SOLUTION

Implemented at Fife Cultural Trust in 2011, collectionHQ has helped Yvonne and the team to use evidence to inform purchasing decisions and it will be used to support processes relating to items from potential library closures.

MORE INFORMED PURCHASING DECISIONS | collectionHQ has been effective in helping staff to select new titles based on evidence of demand. Yvonne uses collectionHQ Spending Plans in meetings with Service Development Officers to help the team make evidence based decisions on how to spend collection budget at the start of the financial year.

collectionHQ provides direction on which authors and how many copies of new releases to buy based on demand, in line with a set of pre-defined targets established by staff. All of this information informed the last standing order author review for Fiction buying and will be included in discussions for the next one. Yvonne commented: "The Overstocked and Understocked reports in collectionHQ's Evaluate module will be used to help us to shape and update our instructions to our supplier for Adult Non-Fiction stock."

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

KEY BENEFITS

The introduction of collectionHQ at Fife Cultural Trust has helped staff to:

- Match supply with demand
- Make more informed decisions about purchasing new titles
- Balance the collection



DISCOVERING NEW TITLES | In addition to helping with spending plans at the start of the year, Yvonne encourages Library Supervisors, who look after the full time libraries, to use collectionHQ's Discovery module on a regular basis to "track gaps" in their collection of popular authors, subjects, titles or series. Yvonne explains: "They can use Discovery to see what's doing well in other libraries across Scotland which helps to freshen up their stock and introduce them to authors they haven't thought about in the past, but who have been working well in other libraries. The Service Development Team has also been making good use of the Discovery module when they are purchasing items for the new Dunfermline Carnegie Library, it has allowed us to buy with some degree of confidence titles which we know are being borrowed in similar libraries."

STOCK BALANCE IN LIBRARIES | As part of Yvonne and team's review of the stock management policy, it is necessary to rebalance the collections in each of the libraries and she plans to use the Overstocked and Understocked tool to help with Non-Fiction collections. Yvonne explains: "It is inevitable that we will need to buy some more stock to fill identified gaps and we'll be making good use of the Non-Fiction and Fiction Discovery tools to help us buy top performing titles."

MATCHING SUPPLY WITH DEMAND | To manage surplus stock as a result of potential library closures, Yvonne plans to use a range of collectionHQ's modules. Overstocked and Understocked Non-Fiction tools will help to move relevant titles from a library facing closure to a new location. Yvonne explains: "If we know that Library A is understocked in a particular subject area, we can then move items from closure libraries to Library A. For Fiction stock, we have ensured that all items are available for library staff located in other libraries to choose from, ensuring the popular author tool can be used to relocate as much stock as possible." The staff will also use collectionHQ to efficiently identify all dead and grubby items that can be removed from the shelves at the libraries remaining open to make space for items moving from the closed libraries.

In addition to transferring current items, Yvonne says the library will continue to buy new titles despite the potential closures to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction. "We're hoping that all patrons will continue to use the service either by home delivery, mobile library or visiting one of the other 34 libraries. Therefore we still need the same volume of stock to deal with the number of customers making use of our libraries."



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