



The Death Positive Library Project unites libraries in Newcastle, Kirklees in Yorkshire and Redbridge in London, with a research team from Northumbria University.

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## Northumbria research team celebrate library project award win

A collaborative research project which promotes libraries as compassionate spaces to support conversations around death, dying and bereavement, has been recognised with a [national health and wellbeing award](#).

The Death Positive Library Project unites libraries in Newcastle, Kirklees in Yorkshire and Redbridge in London, with a research team from Northumbria University made up of [Dr Stacey Pitsillides](#) in the [School of Design](#) and [Dr](#)

[Claire Nally](#) in the Department of [Humanities](#).

The project treats death and dying as a health and societal issue and works to engage the wider public in the concept of using libraries as ‘death positive spaces’ and their collections of books as trusted resources that push people to consider their own mortality.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic the team adapted the project, which was built for physical library spaces, into one suitable for an online environment. Their efforts were recognised at the first ever awards event hosted by Libraries Connected, an organisation which promotes and represents libraries as important resources at the heart of communities.

The health and wellbeing award was presented to recognise the work of the project during the pandemic at a time when, more than ever, safe supportive spaces were needed where people could come together and share their stories, hopes and fears in relation to loss. This was achieved through a series of online author events, film screenings followed by question and answer sessions, and virtual cafés.

Dr Pitsillides, explained: “These events provided that safe space to share stories, memories, opinions, questions and curiosities about death at a time when that is very much needed.

The project is all about supporting people to explore mortality in a new way, especially before they reach a point of crisis or loss.”

The award was one of six presented to projects across the country after [Libraries Connected](#) received over 100 nominations.

Carol Stump, President of Libraries Connected, said: “I am so proud of the award winners and all that they have achieved for their library services. However, this work is just a snapshot of all the fantastic work that has been delivered at libraries around the country over the past 18 months.”

Councillor Irim Ali, Newcastle City Council cabinet member for Community Services and Public Engagement, said: “We are delighted to see that the work of Newcastle libraries staff, Dr Pitsillides and Dr Nally from Northumbria University and colleagues from Redbridge and Kirklees libraries, has been

recognised with this award.

“Libraries are important community hubs and the Death Positive Libraries project is a powerful opportunity to connect with residents on an important topic which affects us all.”

The recognition coincides with another milestone for the project with the launch of a digital experience, in the form of a new digital experience called *Tickets for the Afterlife*, in collaboration with [Death Positive Libraries](#).

“*Tickets for the Afterlife* will take people on a journey, using a series of questions, to identify their own ticket for the afterlife from the past, present, and future” said Dr Pitsillides.

“The experience also recommends books to help you learn about your choice. It aims to inspire debate, discussion and reading on topics of mortality.”

The website version can be accessed [here](#) or as part of the installation within libraries in Newcastle, Kirklees and London, which will be available between Wednesday 27 October and Friday 19 November.

*Tickets for the Afterlife* is funded by the Wellcome Trust, Carnegie UK, and The Wolfson Foundation, Engaging Libraries Phase 2.

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