

# Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021

LIBRARIES  
TASKFORCE



**Millions of people use public libraries: the ~3000 public libraries in England were visited 225 million times in 2014/15 - more in total than visits to Premier League football games, the cinema and the top 10 UK tourist attractions combined.**

Library services do not stand alone. They support other public services to achieve outcomes that are needed for individuals and communities to flourish. We want commissioners to consider 'Libraries First' when planning vital services within their communities. DCMS has set up a £4 million libraries innovation fund to demonstrate how libraries can provide people with opportunities they might not have otherwise.

Protecting frontline library services requires radical thinking. Strong, local leadership is vital. The Taskforce will support this by nationally co-ordinated initiatives, including investing in advice and support to councils that want to find more effective ways to run their library services.

## Outcomes libraries deliver

Tinder Foundation's Digital Inclusion Fund supported 1,630 digitally excluded people to improve their basic digital skills. 827 were supported to access health information online and develop their digital health literacy skills to enable them to better manage their own health.

**Cultural and creative enrichment**  
 £6.6 million invested in 141 projects through Grants for the Arts Libraries fund since 2013

**Increased reading and literacy**  
 755,208 children took part in Summer Reading Challenge in UK libraries in 2016

### Libraries Deliver

**Improved digital access and literacy**  
 26 million hours of internet access provided in 2014-15

**Helping everyone achieve their full potential**  
 10 million academic journal articles provided free across the UK

**Healthier and happier lives**  
 £27.5 million saving to NHS per year through public library services

**Stronger, more resilient communities**  
 224.6 million visits in 2014-15. More than visits to Premier League football games, the cinema and the top 10 UK tourist attractions combined

**Greater prosperity**  
 £38 million in added value to UK economy in 2013-15 by Enterprising Libraries alone

**"A play like this would be something we would usually have to go to Liverpool or Manchester to see so it's amazing to have a quality production like this in my local library."**

St Helens Cultural Hubs

**"I wasn't the biggest fan of reading. But when I started the Record Breaking Summer Reading Challenge, reading is now my best friend!"**

Comment from a child (from Summer Reading Challenge Family Impact Evaluation 2015)

**"Capturing the best traditions of the library movement and education sector but presenting them in an exciting way". An innovation that turned an unpopular library service into a thriving one.**

Idea Stores, Tower Hamlets

**"The Business & IP Centre is a great place to start because you have access to a wealth of information and services such as patent searches, which are excellent and would be so expensive ordinarily."**

Rowena Johnson (user of Leeds BIPC)

In a countywide drive to promote health and wellbeing, staff in Norfolk's libraries are being trained in understanding health improvement and mental health first aid. This is so they can offer information, advice and healthy activities, as well as signposting customers to find further help.

Norfolk's Healthy Libraries

**Foleshill library: in the heart of the community. Foleshill Festival Celebration Days and contributions to the Positive Images Festival reflect the area's diversity. From Cook and Eat Well sessions, to health checks, meditation, careers advice, Antakshri and much more: you'll find it all at this library.**

## How we'll achieve this

### What we will do nationally

- Develop common promotional messages and activities to boost public awareness of libraries and increase use
- Support people from disadvantaged backgrounds through the £4 million *Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone* innovation fund
- Provide dedicated support for library services to explore and, where it is right for them, spin out into a public service mutual model
- Produce a toolkit and a benchmarking tool to help library services better plan to meet the needs of their communities
- Ensure libraries have the data they need to manage and improve their services
- Continue to pursue opportunities for national funding, partnerships and/or support in kind for major programmes

### What are we asking you to do?

- Adopt 'Libraries First' thinking - for all the services you want to deliver into communities, libraries can help save costs and simplify access for local people
- Use the communications messages and assets we're developing - if we say it together, the message will be stronger
- Co-design library services with local people, using shared learning and evidence to inform long term planning
- Exploit opportunities for joint working with other councils and partners, including community groups

**Public libraries have strong support - 90% of respondents to a 2015 [online poll](#) felt their library service should be protected, whether or not they themselves were a regular user.**



Department  
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## Libraries Deliver

### What you can do next.....

- Read the report
- Discuss it with your head of library service
- Talk to other local services and partners about how libraries can help them
- Involve your community in your planning process

**“In Stockton, what is essential to the wellbeing, education and cohesion of our communities? I believe our libraries are. They are not just a nice thing to have.”**

Councillor Norma Wilburn, Stockton-on-Tees Council

**“Libraries play an important role in delivering our stronger communities agenda, ensuring that we reach individuals and communities who need our support and assistance. They are also about more than just books. They are trusted and safe places where people seek advice, meet friends, learn new skills and enjoy cultural and creative activities and events.”**

Nick Page, Solihull MBC Chief Executive

**“Libraries meet a wide range of needs within local communities and, in Devon as in many parts of the country, have developed their role in recent years to support key agendas for the local authority such as health and wellbeing and economic growth..... we are clear that libraries are a key resource we want to see nurtured and further developed rather than as a cost.”**

John Smith, Head of Services for Communities for Devon County Council

### Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021)

### Follow progress on our Action Plan via:

Our website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/libraries-taskforce>

Our blog: <https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk>

Twitter: @LibTaskforce

### Contact the Libraries Taskforce team:

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