

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016–2021

LIBRARIES
TASKFORCE



From a simple idea to the creation of a thriving business, libraries can help budding entrepreneurs to make their dreams a reality. They can also play a crucial role in helping people to find their ideal job, and give them the tools to succeed.

Greater prosperity

Libraries are helping businesses across the UK to flourish by providing access to information and expertise. In turn, this is helping to improve the prosperity of local areas – crucial for residents' wellbeing and quality of life. But, as well as supporting businesses and increasing their productivity, libraries also help individuals into work by running job clubs, CV surgeries and facilitated events with partner agencies. They also provide training and support for digital skills and lifelong learning to prepare people for successful careers.

Only 22% of UK businesses are owned by women and only 5% by black and Asian-minority ethnic groups.

Department for Business Innovation and Skills Small Business Survey (2016).

CASE STUDY

Business support 'on every high street'

The Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) National Network is a collaboration between the British Library and ten library authorities in England to deliver the government's Industrial Strategy to make the UK the best place in Europe to innovate, patent new ideas and set up and expand a business.

The BIPC National Network is a unique initiative that takes advantage of the existing public library infrastructure to provide critical business and IP information not available from any other business support provider. Centres – based in London and across the ten authorities – provide physical, shared spaces with wifi, PCs, and friendly staff, where people can find:

- Free access to market intelligence/insights on sectors, trends and consumer behaviour, UK and global company information, UK/global patents, trademarks and registered designs
- Free or discounted library-led workshops
- Events delivered by private sector partners on setting up and running a business, marketing, finance, and much more
- One-to-one coaching on IP and business research, and clinics with local partners.

Since launching in 2006, the British Library BIPC has supported thousands of entrepreneurs and small businesses. In 2017/18 the network supported 18,700 individuals, 59% of whom were women, and 35% from black and Asian-minority ethnic groups. An evaluation of the Arts Council funded 'Enterprising Libraries' programme demonstrated a strong return on investment – generating £25 for every £1 invested (March 2018).

The National Network will continue to reduce the high failure rate of businesses and will continue to connect with the wider library network to make the best use of existing expertise, resources and buildings – with the aspiration for there to be business support on every high street.



PROSPERITY



**Libraries
Deliver**

Help
with job
searches

Physical
spaces for
people to
work from

Free access
to business
expertise
and data

Opportunities
for people to
broaden their
skills

Ways
for partner
organisations
to help
people

Support
for CV
writing

CASE STUDY

The Glass Box in Somerset

An innovative town-centre project in Somerset is demonstrating how the ambitions of BIPCs can be complemented and supported at a local level. Taunton library's 'Glass Box' offers an engaging space for budding business owners and entrepreneurs, where they can find resources such as company data, market reports and equipment. Glass Box has a key focus on 'digital inspiration' for younger visitors and has provided the following since its launch in 2016:

- Google Digital training for over 100 local businesses (pictured above)
- Social media workshops
- The Somerset Digital Skills Academy – aimed at children in years 9 and 10
- 'Meet the Expert' with The Federation of Small Businesses and Somerset Business Agency
- Showcasing the innovative HP Sprout Pro
- Code Clubs and digital making.

The project continues to be successful – with more than 20,000 visitors in the last 12 months.



NEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Encourage funding for libraries to develop BIPCs or similar free services for aspiring business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Local councils to consider taking advantage of library resources when developing economic growth strategies.
- Work with partners, such as Jobcentre Plus, to refer people to free library services which can help them get back into work.

CASE STUDY

Helping job seekers in Solihull

Job seekers in Solihull have been getting expert IT training and advice thanks to a partnership between the library service and a local charity.

Solihull Libraries teamed up with ReCom, a local charity set up to help individuals, the community and organisations by running computer clubs for the over 55s, and IT training – all with the goal of bringing people closer to employment.

Demand for the service has grown steadily since its inception – with 598 appointments, providing one-to-one support, offered in just a three-month period.



“I feel my computer skills have really improved, that’s why I am confident to attend the group job search sessions now.”

Job seeker in Solihull.

“I used the British Library to research trademark registrations and the world of intellectual property – a critically vital area for any business but especially for consumer brands and businesses with their own designs and innovations.”

Paul Lindley, Founder of Ella’s Kitchen.



**Libraries
Deliver**

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England:

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 www.gov.uk/government/groups/libraries-taskforce

Our blog libriestaskforce.blog.gov.uk

Twitter @LibTaskforce

Contact the Libraries Taskforce team:

Email: libriestaskforce@culture.gov.uk

NEXT STEPS

- Get in touch with your local libraries to see how you can work together
- Read the Libraries Deliver: Ambition report
- Talk to small business networks about partnership working
- Liaise with your local growth hubs or Chamber of Commerce to see how you could work together