



Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport

# Report under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 for 2015

Report presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 17 of  
the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

December 2015

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## Executive Summary

The Leadership for Libraries Taskforce [six monthly report](#) highlighted that the library can be the buzzing heart of a local community, or a peaceful space for quiet reflection; it's a source of information, entertainment and inspiration; a gateway to literature and learning; the centre of a practical support network for those in need. It's free to enter and open to everyone.

Libraries have always been essential in supporting literacy, education and the acquisition of information and knowledge – and that core role has not and will not change.

However, the way libraries fulfil their role is changing dramatically, not least because what people expect from a library is changing. Most people still visit libraries to borrow books, but they also want to use their library to access the internet and online services, to take their child to a parent and toddler group, to do their homework or to ask a librarian to help them use a government web site or complete a job application.

The future direction of libraries is exciting, and challenges include ensuring that there is understanding of the changing expectations and needs of local communities and consideration of better ways of delivering a range of services from the public library so that they are fit for the present and beyond.

This report provides a review of library activity during the past 12 months by Government and a number of library stakeholders. It highlights many positive developments, including progress since the Independent Library Report for England was published in December 2014, in establishing, jointly with the Chair of the Local Government Association's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, the [Leadership for Libraries Taskforce](#) in March 2015 to provide leadership and help reinvigorate the public library service in England.

The Government believes that public libraries are a valuable resource for all members of the public. There is a strong library service in England, with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy annual library statistics indicating there were 3,076 public libraries and total net expenditure of £713.9 million invested by Councils in 2014/15. Libraries are still popular and there are a large number of visits each year. In 2014/15 alone there were 224.6 million visits to libraries in England and 191 million book loans.

Libraries are a hugely important cornerstone of every community and a fundamental part of the fabric of society. They entertain and educate, act as meeting places, and are an important source of local information. Public libraries are constantly modernising and innovating to stay relevant and meet the changing demands of their communities.

## Government Engagement in Libraries

DCMS Ministers have throughout the year visited public libraries and witnessed many projects being run by the library sector. The Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, Ed Vaizey, visited Nunhead library (Southwark) for the launch of free Wi-Fi, provided through the BT and Barclays programme of Wi-Fi and hands-on digital support in numerous libraries

and community centres in deprived areas across England. He also visited Peterborough Central Library to see their range of services, including the Open+ system, which allows the public to access the library out of normal opening hours.

In addition, the Minister for Intellectual Property, Baroness Neville-Rolfe visited Canada Water library (Southwark) where she launched The Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge and she also visited Stafford library to officially open the new £1 million library. Since the Stafford library moved into its new location on 9 September 2015, book borrowing has increased by 1.7%, new members have increased by 81.0% in comparison for the same period in 2014 and computer use has also increased by 10%.

The Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy also participated in National Libraries Day, and spoke at a number of library stakeholder events including, the launch of the joint Reading Agency and Society of Chief Librarians Reading Well on Prescription for Dementia, the Society of Chief Librarians Annual Seminar and the launch of the Society of Chief Librarians Universal Learning Offer. Furthermore the Minister spoke at the Westminster Hall debate on the Future of Harrow Libraries, visited the Public Lending Right office in Stockton, and presented the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society's Educational Writers' Award at the All Party Writers Group Winter Reception.

During 2015, DCMS Ministers and officials have continued to meet regularly with public library sector partners and those with an interest in public libraries including Arts Council England (ACE), the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), The Reading Agency (TRA), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) as well as other organisations such as Creators Rights Alliance and the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society.

### **Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 (1964 Act)**

The 1964 Act places a duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. Public libraries are funded by local authorities and they remain best placed to assess the needs of their local communities and design library services accordingly, within the requirements of their statutory duty to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service. The 1964 Act also places a duty on the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by local authorities in England and to secure the proper discharge of the statutory duties on local authorities. Under the 1964 Act the Secretary of State has the power to make a remedial order against a library authority following a local inquiry. A local inquiry can be commenced either on receipt of a complaint or of the Secretary of State's own motion. In determining whether to order an inquiry the Secretary of State carefully considers the relevant facts on a case-by-case basis.

DCMS officials continue to monitor and keep under review local authority proposals to change their library service provision and advise the Secretary of State accordingly. In the preceding 12 months the Secretary of State has issued a final decision letter to two local authorities - Newcastle and Sheffield - as well as issuing a "minded to" letter to one other local authority - Lincolnshire. Furthermore, DCMS is treating representations received as formal complaints under Section 10 (1) (a) of the 1964 Act that two local authorities - Harrow and Southampton - are failing to carry out their duties relating to the public library service imposed on it by or under the 1964 Act. The Secretary of State's decision on these Authorities will be published during 2016.

### Public Libraries Developments

The Department monitors local authority proposals for changes to their library service provision, including transfers of the running of a library to the local community. Other changes have involved local authority decisions to close libraries and while it is difficult to get a definitive measure, our estimate of static library closures, this calendar year, based on consulting a number of sources, is 12.

Local authorities continue to invest in their library service including considering improved ways of delivery. This has included the opening of new and refurbished libraries across England providing new and additional services and facilities - some examples include:

- Bromsgrove (Worcestershire) - this new library is the result of a £6.9 million joint enterprise project between Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Council. The site is also used by Bromsgrove Customer Service Centre, the Registration Service and the JobCentre Plus office. The new library includes an online service for free e-books and e-magazines, as well as continuing to offer free Internet access, children's activities and adult learning courses.
- Ledbury Library (Herefordshire) - this new library is housed in the fifteenth century Master's House, on St Katherine's car park, following a £2.9 million restoration, providing user-friendly lighting and signage, and brand new library facilities. The new facilities include a self-service machine which customers use to check-in their books and opening hours have also been increased.
- Stafford Library (Staffordshire) - the new £1 million town library facility, features include, the innovation suite, offering access to digital screens, tablets, 3D printing and Raspberry Pi to help children learn computer programming. The library is also one of the first in the country to offer Wi-Fi printing.
- Camberwell (Southwark) - the new library houses a brand new children's library, computer facilities and Wi-Fi, a wide range of new books and e-books, as well meeting rooms which hosts a number of regular community sessions such as job club, creative writing and homework club.

- Arnold Library (Nottinghamshire) - the library re-opened after a £300,000 refurbishment and now boasts £40,000 worth of new books, a gift shop, small cafe and a study section. The building has also benefited from new windows, solar panels and LED lighting throughout.
- Leytonstone Library (Waltham Forest) - following a £1.5 million refurbishment the modernised library holds 19,000 books, as well as flexible space to use including a theatre hall, upgraded ICT facilities, faster Wi-Fi, and dedicated sections for adults, teens and children.

In addition to the above, other new and refurbished libraries opened during the year including: Kingston (Milton Keynes); Bingham Library (Nottinghamshire); Newhaven (East Sussex); Towcester (Northamptonshire); Stourport (Worcestershire); Bolton-le-sands (Lancashire); Newburn (Newcastle), Palmers Green (Enfield); Heanon (Derbyshire); and Shoeburyness Library (Southend) - this latter library resulted from the merger of Thorpedene and Friars library.

### **Independent Library Report for England**

In February 2014, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Communities and Local Government jointly commissioned William Sieghart and a small expert panel to produce an independent report considering the current structure and role of public libraries, including community libraries, in England.

The [Independent Library Report for England](#) was published on 18 December 2014. Specific actions for central government include extending Wi-Fi, setting up a Library Taskforce, promoting libraries and considering how to extend e-lending.

### **Leadership for Libraries Taskforce**

Following the recommendations from the Independent Library Report for England, the Chair of the Local Government Association's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board and DCMS Ministers set up the [Leadership for Libraries Taskforce](#) in March 2015 to provide leadership, to implement the recommendations and to help reinvigorate the public library service in England.

Dr Paul Blantern is the Chair of the Taskforce, as well as being the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council, and Kathy Settle is the Chief Executive. They are supported by representatives from Arts Council England, BBC, British Library, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, Local Government, Public Health England, Society of Chief Librarians and The Reading Agency.

Taskforce priorities for 2015/16:

- **Digital enablement** – including the provision of universal Wi-Fi access, e-lending, digital shared network and quality content

- **Libraries adding value** – making stronger, strategic links between libraries and other policies such as health and wellbeing and business and economic growth
- **Best Practice** – helping Local Authorities and library services through sharing and linking to existing/new best practice. Building sustainable long-term models for libraries/community hubs
- **Workforce Development** – building the skills needed to help the library workforce deliver these priorities and to take on new roles as part of wider service provision
- **Communications** – promoting the value of libraries, highlighting innovation and good ideas.

The Taskforce published its first [six month report](#) on 26 November 2015. This highlights the key achievements from March to September 2015 and their future action plans.

The six month report also recommends that a document setting out Government's and the Taskforce's shared vision for public libraries in England would provide a shared direction and purpose by highlighting existing good practice and providing a focus for collaborative action.

The Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy strongly supports this recommendation and confirmed on 26 November that the Government has agreed to publish such a document setting out best practice around summer 2016.

### **WI-FI in Public Libraries**

At the March 2015 Budget, the Government made available funding to help the roll-out of free Wi-Fi at public libraries in England by the end of March 2016. This was reflected in the Conservative Party Manifesto 2015 commitment to help public libraries to support local communities by providing free Wi-Fi.

Arts Council England are administering the delivery of (on behalf of DCMS) this one-off funding programme to enable all libraries in England to provide free, good quality Wi-Fi for their users. In October 2015 awards were made to 68 successful local authorities who will receive a total of over £2.6 million funding to enable new installations in libraries without Wi-Fi and enable authorities which already have Wi-Fi to upgrade it to an agreed technical standard.

By the end of March 2016, once all Local Authorities meet the proposals in their applications, over 1,000 libraries will be providing Wi-Fi for the first time or will be upgrading current provision to make it faster and more easily accessible. Furthermore this will result in around 99% of public libraries in England providing access to free, good quality Wi-Fi.

### **E-lending**

In response to one of the recommendations of [An Independent Review of E-Lending in Public Libraries in England](#) legislation was revised on 1 July 2014 to extend the Public Lending Right to include rights holders of audio and e-books lent on-site from public libraries.

The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015 included the commitment that the Government will work with public libraries “to ensure remote access to e-books, without charge and with appropriate compensation for authors that enhances the Public Lending Right scheme”. The Government is working with relevant groups, including libraries, publishers, authors, booksellers and the Public Lending Right office to take forward this manifesto commitment and consider the options.

In addition, the Publishers Association and the SCL led a series of pilots with four local authorities from March 2014 to February 2015 to carry out research into the impact of e-book remote lending in public libraries on authors, publishers and the library service, in order to identify a suitable and sustainable model for all stakeholders. Their final pilot evaluation [report](#) was produced in June 2015, and this helped to build a greater understanding and improved relationships between publishers and librarians about e-lending.

Since then Leadership for Libraries Taskforce has worked with the Publishers Association, SCL and other partners on developing and expanding e-lending in a phased approach on a voluntary basis.

### **Public Lending Right (PLR) Scheme**

#### PLR and rate per loan

Following a recommendation from the British Library and a public consultation towards the end of 2014, the rate per loan payments were increased in February 2015 from 6.2 to 6.66 pence.

The British Library has since recommended to Government a further increase in the rate per loan for payments from February 2016. The recommendation has been subject to a public consultation, which closed on 7 December. The consultation responses are being considered and changes, if appropriate, to the rate per loan will be implemented in February 2016 by way of a Statutory Instrument. This will be the first occasion authors and other stakeholders will be reimbursed for the loan of audio books following changes to PLR legislation introduced on 1 July 2014.

### **Abolition of Advisory Council on Libraries (ACL)**

As reported last year the Government undertook a public consultation on the proposed abolition of the ACL. Following publication of the Government response, Parliament's approval was sought to abolish ACL. The process involved two parliamentary debates, in February, one in the House of Lords, followed by another in the House of Commons, with both Houses agreeing to the proposal resulting in the ACL being formally abolished on 16 March 2015.

## **Booktrust**

In the last twelve months and following a small Machinery of Government change, DCMS took on responsibility, from the Department for Education, for policy for Booktrust and their Bookgifting programme. In practical terms this involved the transfer of the overall funding and the grant management, with the latter being administered by Arts Council England (ACE). The transfer of responsibility aligns with ACE functions for library and cultural development.

## **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) comparative profile library reports**

For a third consecutive year DCMS provided the funding for the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) set of benchmark reports for all Library Authorities in England for 2013/14 at a cost of £48,222. The reports compare a local authority's library service to a group of comparable authorities, known as their "nearest neighbours", to allow them to compare like-with-like and pinpoint areas where they could improve performance. These reports are publically available from the CIPFA website.

## **Model Library Byelaws in England**

Following discussions and consultation with the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) the model library byelaws were revised in March 2015 to better reflect how people wish to make use of public libraries. The revised model is intended to simplify the approval process and reduce the burden of administration. SCL have also produced voluntary guidance to assist the library workforce with definitions and practical examples.

## **Arts Council England (ACE)**

ACE is the development agency for public libraries in England and is funded by DCMS. They undertake this function by collaborating with others to advocate, invest and develop. ACE development support is framed by its strategy, '*Great art and culture for everyone*' and the research project undertaken in 2012/13, '*Envisioning the library of the future*'. All of the activity undertaken by ACE that benefits libraries is firmly based on the four priorities that emerged from this research:

- Place the library as the hub of the community
- Make the most of digital technology and creative media
- Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable
- Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

ACE is committed to supporting the development of the library service, recognising the importance of safeguarding a service that is fit for purpose now and in the future.

ACE is supporting the work of the Leadership for Libraries TaskForce. They are an active member of group and during the year, on behalf of DCMS, they administered the delivery of

one of the Taskforce's key priorities - Wi-Fi in public libraries in England. Furthermore ACE has provided funding directly to the Taskforce to secure the services of secondees to work on Taskforce priorities, as well as financial support to this group to assist work on evidencing and advocating how libraries can help deliver national and local outcomes across a wide range of policy areas.

ACE also invest directly in development activity and encourage and commission others to do the same including providing funding support to the Society of Chief Librarians, Local Government Association (LGA) and The Reading Agency, among others. Development activities they have supported include:

#### *Grants for the arts - £6 million fund for libraries*

ACE has extended this dedicated funding stream for a further three years from April 2015 until March 2018. The fund continues to support Library services projects across a variety of art forms, with arts and cultural activities becoming an established part of the menu of activities in libraries around the country. In the period from January to 7 November 2015, 35 awards have been made with a total value of £1,585,556.

#### *Libraries Development Funding*

This fund has supported a range of development activities in the past year, focusing closely on developing the resilience of the sector including delivery of the Society of Chief Librarians Universal Offers. This work in particular is vital in delivering ACE's development priorities of placing the library as the hub of the community, making the most of digital technology, ensuring libraries are resilient and sustainable and delivering the right skills for those who work in libraries. This and other examples of support include:

- *Supporting the Universal Offers*

Throughout the year ACE has continued its financial and professional support for the delivery of the Society of Chief Librarians' Universal Offers by funding ongoing work on the Health, Information, Reading and Digital Universal Offers and supporting the development and launch of the new Learning Offer. In particular this has included:

- *Further Developing the Information Offer*

Funding for 2015/16 to further enhance the e-learning modules for library staff and assist development and delivery of a new module on the universal credit. In addition, ACE is supporting consultancy work to support public libraries in bidding to become delivery partners on the GDS Assisted Digital and Digital Inclusion Procurement Framework.

- *Delivering the Digital Leadership Programme*

Funding for 2015/16 to deliver this programme to two further cohorts of 15 library leaders and aspiring library leaders.

- *Developing the Universal Health Offer*

Funding to continue and expand this offer, to include increasing the Reading Well programme to deliver a children, young people and families mental health scheme and the development of schemes around long-term health conditions and healthy living.

- *Universal Learning Offer*

Funding to support the development and launch of the Universal Learning Offer.

- *Developing an innovation network of library leaders*

Funding to provide opportunities for participants on the digital leadership programme and regional trainers on the assisted digital training programme to network and further develop their skills as a resource for change for SCL and the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce.

- *Children's Library Workforce Development project*

Funding to support the development of four e-learning modules to link into the 6 Children's Promise vision statements. SCL are working with ASCEL, The Reading Agency and the CILIP's Youth Libraries Group and Booktrust.

Further examples of activities supported by the ACE Libraries Development fund include:

#### *Leadership development*

With funding from ACE, the LGA provided library leadership development to portfolio holders through:

- Delivery of two library leadership seminars to 31 portfolio holders in February and September to share good practice amongst elected members and to enable them to explore the challenges and opportunities they face
- Offering three library mini-peer challenges to local authorities in England to help authorities to address the key issues facing the library service.

#### *Economic contribution of public libraries*

Further to the evidence review on the economic contribution of public libraries published in June 2014 and referred to in our Libraries Annual report 2014, ACE commissioned a further

piece of research to investigate wider areas of impact. The report; [The health and wellbeing benefits of public libraries](#) was published in March 2015.

### *Enterprising libraries*

Since 2013 ACE, the British Library and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have funded projects across England with libraries using their role as community hubs to help local people set up businesses. Enterprising libraries supports local economic growth by using library spaces for the development of business ideas, providing coaching, advice, and IT support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.

The funding for this programme was due to finish at the end of March 2015, however DCLG and ACE announced in March 2015 that they would dedicate a further £400,000 funding to support the British Library's ambition to transform UK city libraries into hubs for small businesses and entrepreneurs. The British Library also made a contribution of £253k in cash and non-cash resources.

Between April 2013 and March 2015 the Enterprising Libraries have together created a total of nearly 1,700 new businesses and 4,200 new jobs (predicted to rise to 22,000 jobs by 2017).

### *Libraries and Reading*

ACE continues to provide funding to organisations such as The Reading Agency and the Book Trust which is used to support reading development activity across England. This includes well established initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge, the Six Books Challenge and Book Start.

### **Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)**

SCL are a key partner to the Government and the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce. SCL has contributed as an active member of the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce and to Taskforce's discussions on workforce development, data and automatic library membership.

### *Universal Offers*

In the last 12 months SCL has continued to develop and deliver the Universal Offers for public libraries, working in partnership with The Reading Agency and a range of organisations with funding from ACE. The Offers were extended this year with the addition of the Universal Learning Offer, which was launched by the Minister for Culture on 5 November 2015.

The Universal Offers continue to provide a framework to enable national programmes and partnerships to be developed which can be implemented within library services in response to local needs. All Universal Offers have sign up from over 90% of the country's library services. SCL have developed the Universal Offers through:

- Developing a range of e-learning resources made available to library staff across the country. The Digital Skills training developed by SCL was delivered to 14,000 public library staff
- Recruiting over 30 young people as interns to enable young people to develop their skills and interest in a future career in libraries
- Developing improved partnerships with the BBC by becoming a partner in the BBC's Make It Digital initiative and on the BBC's Get Reading campaign planned for 2016
- Developing a new partnership with the Wellcome Trust to support the Books on Prescription scheme and working with a wide range of health partners to highlight the important role of libraries in supporting positive health and wellbeing
- Preparing plans for libraries' contribution to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016
- Working with the Department for Work and Pensions to enable library services to provide improved support around Universal Credit
- Securing substantial resource from ACE to further develop the Universal Offers.

### *Reading Offer*

- Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge is the UK's biggest reading for pleasure programme and encourages children aged 4 to 11 to read six books during the long summer holiday. It is a prioritised programme within the SCL's Universal Reading Offer, is embedded within ASCEL's Children's Promise and 99% of local authorities across the UK take part every year.

The 2015 Challenge, run by The Reading Agency, was launched in England by Baroness Neville-Rolfe at Canada Water library. A total of 786,547 children took part in libraries across the UK, with over 62,000 children joining a local library as a result and there were also more than 18 million children's loans made over the summer. Areas of growth included the number of toddlers who took part: 22,726 under-4s participated this year, 55.4% more than in 2014 (14,621) and the number of young people who signed up as volunteers also increased by 15% to 9,366.

- Shakespeare Week

SCL ran a pilot project to enable libraries across the country to take part in Shakespeare Week in March 2015. They linked with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, ASCEL, CILIP, the BBC and the British Library and with funding from ACE, the project enabled 42 library services across the country to provide activities and events to promote Shakespeare Week to families in their communities. The project reached over 2,200 children and almost 1,000 adults.

### *Health offer*

The Universal Health Offer provides a range of services including public health information and promotion, sign posting and referrals as well as creative and social reading activity. Working with The Reading Agency and with funding from ACE, SCL has continued to develop the Universal Health Offer this year.

- Books on Prescription

The first national Books on Prescription scheme in England has now reached around 445,000 people, with book-based therapy and helpful reading. Reading Well Books on Prescription is available for free in 97% of public libraries and has played an important role in helping to meet the public need for support with understanding and managing their mental health and wellbeing.

A new Books on Prescription scheme focused on dementia was launched in January 2015. The Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia scheme has already had a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of its users with 92% having found it to be helpful, while 79% of carers of people with dementia and 73% of people with dementia report that self-help reading has helped them understand more about the condition.

- Partnership with the Wellcome Trust

SCL and The Reading Agency has developed a new partnership with the Wellcome Trust, securing funding of £60,000. The Wellcome Trust's support will allow creation of a sustainable platform of growth for Reading Well Books on Prescription and build a new scheme to support children, young people and families' mental health as well as future developments focused on long term health conditions (such as diabetes, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and healthy living (such as diet, obesity, alcohol awareness and addictions).

### *Information Offer*

SCL announced in April that their Digital Skills training had been delivered to over 14,000 frontline library staff, representing over 80% of the library workforce and is the largest rollout of training since the People's Network was rolled out over 10 years ago. With funding from ACE a new Universal Credit e-learning module has been developed and will be rolled out to library staff in 2016.

### *Learning Offer*

The Universal Learning Offer was launched on 5 November 2015 by SCL. The launch included the publication of Code Green, a digital making guide for library services and Lightbulb Moments, a film to advocate libraries and learning

### *Digital Offer*

With funding from ACE, SCL and The Reading Agency appointed BiblioCommons, to scope the potential development of a unifying digital presence for public libraries across the country. The report, due to be published in December 2015, has involved engagement with library users, non-users and a wide range of stakeholder organisations, including the BBC, the British Library and Tinder Foundation.

SCL has worked with Government Digital Service (now DCMS) on its digital inclusion agenda. Pilots with a range of different private and third sector organisations have developed throughout the year and library services have been signing up to support the Digital Friends initiative.

Following a pilot of the Digital Leadership Programme in early 2015, which attracted 18 library leaders, the programme, with ACE funding, has been extended to two further cohorts which will result in over 50 library leaders having taken part in the programme by the end of March 2016.

### *Access to Research*

This innovative service was jointly developed between public libraries and academic publishers. It allows public library users to access licensed (i.e. charged-for) academic journal articles from leading publishers for free, via public-access computers in local public libraries, with 93% of library services signed up to provide the service. SCL commissioned Shared Intelligence to carry out a research study to inform the future development of the initiative. The evaluation report is due to be published in January 2016.

### *Children's Promise and Children's Library Journeys*

SCL continues to work closely with the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) on the development of the Children's Promise, which underpins all the other Universal Offers. In the spring of 2015, ASCEL redesigned the Children's Promise resulting in 6 vision statements which reflect the significance of new digital activity and the role of libraries in supporting health and wellbeing, alongside great reading opportunities, inclusion and access. 90% of library services across the country have now signed up to the Children's Promise.

### *Six Steps*

SCL is working with Share the Vision to update the Six Steps Promise, which underpins all the Universal Offers and ensures library services are accessible to people with visual impairments.

## The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is a registered charity, an ACE National Portfolio Holder receiving funding from ACE and is an active member of the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce. They work with publishers, schools, colleges, trade unions, prisons, health professionals and the public but have a strong partnership with public libraries. They are a partner for two of the Universal Offers (Reading and Health) and their Summer Reading Challenge programme runs in 99% of public libraries in the UK.

Details of other Reading Agency partnership activity in the library sector is covered earlier in the report however additional details include the following:

### *Department for Education (DfE) - Literacy Initiative*

In March this year the DfE published a new plan, *Reading: the next steps* aimed at schools and setting out the Government's ambition for reading. Among the new measures was the requirement to create at least 200 new book clubs across the country and an ambition to urge all primary schools to arrange library membership for all their year 3 pupils (age 7-8). The child literacy campaign was formally launched by the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP and David Walliams on 19 August.

The programme to create the new book clubs is being delivered by The Reading Agency based around their popular Chatterbooks scheme. In addition, The Reading Agency is working with schools to get more year-3 pupils enrolled at their local library - helping more children get into the library habit early.

The Chatterbooks Reading Clubs in Schools project is up and running, with training sessions complete in all regions. To date, The Reading Agency has recruited 190 of the 200 schools, and most schools are due to run their clubs over the period January to March 2016.

### *Reading Ahead (Six Book Challenge)*

This programme supports young people and adults by changing their perception of reading, opening up opportunities and building their confidence. It is run through public libraries, adult learning organisations, colleges and workplaces and invites participants to pick six reads and record, rate and review them in a diary in order to get a certificate. During 2015 total participation was 48,000 people. The impact report on the 2014/15 Challenge indicated that 92% of survey respondents said that they were more confident about reading after taking part and that this proportion was even higher among 16 to 19 year old (93%) and 20 to 24 year olds (96%). In addition, data also shows that the scheme is increasingly valued with 89% of participating public library authorities including it in their action plans.

### *World Book Night*

This is an annual celebration which sees a wide range of partners coming together to gift 250,000 books to people across the whole of the UK. World Book Night 2015 took place on

23 April with 7,300 individuals, distributing 131,400 books, and 2,700 institutions, from prisons, libraries, colleges, schools and homeless shelters, distributing 118,600 books. Furthermore, 2,103 libraries and 578 bookshops acted as collection points this year and 98% of all local authorities took part.

In 2015 The Reading Agency commissioned research to focus on evaluating the impact of World Book Night. Over 5,000 people have been involved and some key findings include:

- 98% of recipients said they were pleased to receive a book – many being motivated by the fact that they were someone chosen by a volunteer to receive a book
- of those who never read or read infrequently, 80% said they had read more since World Book Night and 85% had talked to others about books more since receiving a book.

### *Reading Partners*

The Reading Agency work with over 90 publishers and literary prizes to deliver imaginative and fun reading activities in libraries for adults and children to inspire library-users to discover new books and continue with their reading journey. This year they worked on over 150 promotions with library partners with highlights including: the first Harry Potter Night celebrated in libraries; and arranged for packs of promotional material to be sent to libraries to create displays for Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*.

The Reading Agency also engaged the library network in a variety of literature programmes to support readers. They signed-up 109 library authorities to receive material to promote the 2015 Quick Reads titles for people who struggle with reading, and 145 authorities registered to receive material for World Book Day to celebrate children's books.



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