



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport

Report under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 for 2016

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

February 2017

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FOREWORD

I was delighted, in July 2016, to take on responsibility for libraries policy in England. There are a number of synergies between my Civil Society work and what public libraries are trying to achieve, including in helping to improve people's lives and supporting a society that works for everyone. Libraries should therefore be recognised for the value they add in achieving important outcomes for individuals and communities.

Like many sectors, the library service faces challenges, and the way people use libraries and their expectations of public services are changing. I want libraries to be more resilient and better equipped to weather these challenges - to thrive, not just survive. Standing still is not an option. Many local authorities have been developing their library service provision to meet local needs and we want to support these. Furthermore there have been significant contributions from the Government and other key stakeholders to develop the sector.

In 2016 we saw the roll out of the Arts Council managed wifi programme across libraries in England. 99.3% of all static public libraries in England are now able to provide access to free, good quality wifi. This ensures libraries remain a vital and well-used service at the centre of the community for all members of society.

In addition, the Libraries Taskforce published [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021](#) on 1 December 2016 - this highlights the importance the Government attaches to the public library service. The Taskforce's most recent progress [report](#) focuses on the process of drawing up the strategy document, and the articulation of the 7 Outcomes that public libraries in England contribute to,

- cultural and creative enrichment
- increased reading and literacy
- increased digital access and literacy
- helping everyone achieve their full potential
- healthier and happier lives
- greater prosperity
- stronger, more resilient communities.

A number of local authorities continue to review their library service provision and it is essential that they are mindful of their duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. The Ambition document highlights a range of practical and innovative options they can explore to maintain and transform library services, including the potential to consider other library delivery models such as public service mutuals. We would like to see local authorities working with Government and their local communities to consider these options, and seek to ensure library services are sustainable for the long term, before they decide to make significant changes to their library services.

The Government believes that public libraries are a valuable resource for all members of the public. They are an important part of every community; entertaining and educating, acting as meeting places and are an important source of information.

There remains a strong library service in England, with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy annual library statistics indicating there were 3,036 libraries and

total net expenditure of £701 million invested by local authorities in 2015/16. Libraries are still popular and there are a large number of visits each year. In 2015/16 alone there were 177 million book loans and 211 million visits to libraries in England - more than the total attendance at English Premier League football matches, cinema admissions in England and the top 10 UK tourist attractions combined.

These are challenging times for councils and the library services they run. The way people use libraries and their expectations of public services are changing. Councils have to make important decisions about resource allocation, to meet local needs and also legal requirements and these decisions should be based on robust evidence. Councils should be gathering evidence about local needs, then actively discussing options to meet these with the community and library professionals. Complaints that councils do not appear to be meeting their statutory duties will be carefully considered and where needed action under the 1964 Act will be taken. However the Government would prefer to work with councils and support them to deliver strong library services for their communities.

The following detail in this Report provides information on developments in the library sector during 2016 that were undertaken by Government and a number of library stakeholders.

Rob Wilson MP - Minister for Civil Society

Government Engagement in Libraries

Departmental Ministers have undertaken a number of visits to libraries in the last 12 months. The previous Minister for Culture and Digital Economy participated in National Libraries Day by visiting Askew Road Library in Hammersmith and Fulham, and he attended the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge at the House of Illustration in Camden. He also visited Battersea Library for the launch of the Lloyds Banking Group and Halifax Community Bank scheme designed to match local branch staff with libraries to deliver basic digital skills training to adults in the UK. The previous Minister for Intellectual Property, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, visited Northcote Library in Battersea to help Wandsworth Libraries celebrate National Libraries Day.

Prior to her appointment the current Secretary of State formally opened, in May 2016, the Werrington Library and Wellbeing Centre, Staffordshire.

Since assuming responsibility for libraries policy the Minister for Civil Society visited a number of libraries in 2016 including Wokingham library, Bicester library, Farnham Common library, the Curve in Slough and Kent Library and History Centre. He has met with a number of library sector stakeholders including Paul Blantern, Chair of the Libraries Taskforce; Councillor Ian Stephens, Chair of the Local Government Association (LGA) Culture, Tourism and Sport Board; Neil MacInnes, President of the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), Nick Poole, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP); Darren Henley, Chief Executive and Brian Ashley, Director Libraries, Arts Council England (the Arts Council); Helen Milner, Chief Executive Officer, Tinder Foundation (now renamed the Good Things Foundation); Lord Bird; Councillor Mary Martin, Swindon Borough Council, and Justin Tomlinson MP; as well as library campaign representatives.

DCMS officials have also continued to meet regularly with public library sector partners and those with an interest in public libraries including the Arts Council, SCL, LGA, CILIP and The Reading Agency.

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 and run by local authorities and they remain best placed to assess the needs of their local communities and design library services to meet these needs, 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 provide advice to the Secretary of State accordingly. Over the period of this report Ministers have issued a 'minded to' and final decision letter to Harrow Council confirming that the Secretary of State had decided not to direct a local inquiry into their library service provision and have written to both Lambeth Council and Lancashire County Council to confirm that the Department is treating representations received as formal complaints.

Changes to library service provision in 2016 have included the establishment of a public sector mutual to manage the library service in Devon, new and refurbished libraries, communities and other local groups supporting or taking over the running of libraries. Data about local library service provision has been collected by the Libraries Taskforce in consultation with local authorities and is to be made publically available.

Public Libraries Developments

Local authorities continue to invest in their library service and this has included the development of new libraries and the refurbishment of others across England to provide modern and updated services and facilities - some examples include:

- Southam Library (Warwickshire) has been built on Tithe Place and opened in January 2016. It was formally opened by local MP and Attorney General Jeremy Wright, on 19 February 2016. It is in the same location as the former library and was part of a £12.4 million project which also included 75 retirement apartments and a neighbourhood police office. It offers more computers and versatile space inside for adults and children, reading groups and others who would like to use it.
- The Arcadia Library and Leisure Centre, (Manchester) - a brand new combined library and leisure centre in Levenshulme opened on 20 February 2016. The library is open 90 hours per week through the use of RFID, self service PCs and printing, supervised

by the leisure team with dedicated library staff presence for 30 hours a week. It is an integral part of the Centre with access to a wide range of library services and a suite of PCs as well as free wifi, an attractive children's library, comfortable seating areas and study spaces with a wide range of books for all ages. Use of the library has risen dramatically with the seven day offer and a joint programme is being developed to ensure healthy minds and bodies are promoted at Arcadia.

- Marcus Garvey Library (Haringey) reopened on 28 June 2016 as The Marcus Garvey Centre - Library and Customer Services. The new-look library boasts a more spacious layout, modern furniture, more computers and 22,000 new books. Customer service facilities have been introduced on the second floor with an enquiry desk and payment machines for services such as parking fines. There is also a brand new study area and a dedicated Afro Caribbean and Marcus Garvey section.
- Bicester library (Oxfordshire) was built as part of a multimillion-pound regeneration of the town centre. It started operating in April 2016 and was officially opened on 4 July 2016, attracting over 1,000 new members between those two dates. The site is shared with a hotel and local council services, as well as offices and retail units.
- Woolston Library (Southampton) is a new library that opened on 8 August 2016 and is part of the £500 million plans to redevelop the former Vosper Thornycroft site which will eventually see 1,600 homes built there. The new library features computers for community use and will host learning sessions for people to increase digital skills. The number of books available has increased while there will be full disabled access, including accessible toilets.
- The Curve (Slough) library and cultural centre opened on 2 September 2016. This is a £22 million replacement for the library that previously served the area. Its innovative design brings together the latest library services including study areas, wifi, computer and internet access as well as thousands of books, audio books, CDs and DVDs, alongside other community uses such as community learning, cultural activities and events, performance space, and exhibitions.
- The Word, "National Centre for the Written Word" (South Tyneside) opened on 22 October 2016. It is a new state-of-the-art cultural venue and is the jewel in the crown of the £100 million regeneration of South Shields town centre. The three-storey circular cultural centre overlooks the town's refurbished Market Place and incorporates a library which boasts over 70,000 books, and digital media space. It also boasts an impressive range of facilities including exhibition space, a computer gaming area, a FabLab with 3D printers and vinyl and laser cutters, digitised archives, meeting rooms, children's immersive storytelling area, OpenZone IT suite, café and a rooftop space and terrace providing stunning views over the river. It won 'Best Regeneration or Restoration' at the Living North Awards.
- Kent Elms Library (Southend) The refurbishment, completed on 7 November 2016, has created a fresh new welcoming area for customers as well as changes to the entrance to provide better access for those with mobility needs and pushchairs.
- Dartford Library (Kent) re-opened on 14 November 2016 following a £650,000

refurbishment. The guiding principle of the restoration was to ensure that the building maintained its heritage. Walls and flooring were redecorated, new furniture installed, and original listed bookshelves have been refurbished.

Libraries Taskforce

The [Leadership for Libraries Taskforce](#) was set up by DCMS and the Local Government Association (LGA) in March 2015 in response to recommendations from the [Independent Library Report](#). Its role is to enable the delivery of the recommendations from the Independent Library Report and to build upon, and add value to existing good practice, partnerships and other activities that are already supporting public libraries. It also promotes libraries to national and local government and to potential funders, and seeks to create a strong and coherent narrative around the contribution public libraries make to society and to local communities.

The Taskforce reports to Ministers via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Government Association (LGA). It published its [second six month progress report on 13 April 2016](#) and [third on 1 December 2016](#). These highlighted the key achievements from October 2015 to March 2016 and April to September 2016 respectively and its future action plans.

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

The first of the Taskforce's [six monthly reports](#) in 2015 recommended that there should be a document produced that set out the government's and the Taskforce's shared vision for public libraries in England. This year has seen the Taskforce develop [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016 to 2021](#). Its publication on 1 December 2016 followed an extensive [period of consultation](#) (23 March - 3 June 2016) that included an online questionnaire and the hosting of 13 regional workshops across England.

Taskforce priorities for 2016/17:

Following publication of the 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition' document, the Taskforce priorities, outlined in its Action Plan, are:

- Making the case for investment in libraries
- Raising public awareness of what libraries have to offer
- Identifying and showcasing good practice and supporting innovation
- Supporting workforce development
- Supporting development of the digital offer of libraries
- Monitoring and reporting on progress

Taskforce data collection exercise

In consultation with the local authority library services in England, the Taskforce undertook the first phase of a data collection exercise to understand the totality of static library service provision in each local authority area.

The data will be available as an open data set and it is expected that it will be used by

Taskforce organisations as a definitive source to which enquiries can be directed. The Taskforce intend to build upon this initial data to develop a core data set that councils can then use to help make strategic decisions, demonstrate the impact of libraries, meet user needs better, and improve day-to-day operation.

Wifi in Public Libraries in England

£2.6 million was awarded to 68 local authorities in October 2015 to enable new installations in libraries without wifi and enable authorities which already have wifi to upgrade it to an agreed technical standard. The programme was successfully managed by the Arts Council and on completion in April 2016 1,019 libraries in England had benefited, resulting in 99.3% of static public libraries providing free wifi access.

Opportunities for Everyone

DCMS and the Taskforce have set up a £4 million [Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone innovation fund](#), which is being managed by the Arts Council, to pilot library service projects that provide people with opportunities which they might not have otherwise. These pilots will help demonstrate which approaches are most successful, hopefully leading to wider adoption and investment in them.

Community Libraries

Councils are increasingly looking at different ways to provide library services, and to ensure that any delivery model they choose is sustainable and effective for the long-term. The Libraries Taskforce wants to ensure that a strong evidence base on the different delivery models is available to inform local authority decision making.

The Taskforce has already published a [Community libraries: best practice toolkit](#) to provide information that will be helpful for communities and heads of library services in establishing community libraries, so everyone involved can make informed decisions about the pros and cons of using this model, learning from others who have gone before. To further build the evidence base on community-managed libraries, the Taskforce and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned [SERIO](#), an applied research unit at Plymouth University, to conduct a national research project to understand more about how community-managed libraries operate, and what lessons or examples can be learnt and shared about their effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The research will be completed by the end of March 2017. The report will be published on GOV.UK and will include proposals for additions and improvements that can be made to the [Community libraries toolkit](#).

Sharing experiences and learning is particularly important for community managed libraries, where resources are often limited and volunteers may have limited knowledge on establishing and running a library. Supported financially by [The Power to Change Trust](#), the Taskforce, Society of Chief Librarians, Locality and Upper Norwood Library Trust have set up a [peer network](#) for community managed libraries to support the sharing of good practice, and to ensure the development of sustainable community managed library business models.

Public Sector Mutuals

The Government is committed to supporting the development of new governance models within the public sector, including in particular public service mutuals. In the libraries sector, during 2016, Devon libraries spun out to form a new public service mutual, [Libraries Unlimited](#). The Ambition document announced that, during 2016/17, DCMS would provide dedicated support for library services to explore and, where it is right for them, spin out into a public service mutual model. It will build on the experience of trailblazing public libraries mutuals, and previous government support programmes.

The Government has launched an Interim Mutuals Support Fund to support public sector organisations to spin out and existing public service mutuals. The fund underpins our ambitions to grow the Public Sector Mutuals sector, and help put libraries on a more sustainable footing. In addition the Government has launched the provision of Peer Support for library authorities to explore the mutual model. This Peer Support is being provided by Optimo, a consortium comprising of York Explore, Libraries Unlimited, Suffolk Libraries, Inspire in Nottinghamshire and Mutual Ventures.

Longer term, in addition to continuing support as part of a wider government programme supporting mutuals, DCMS will also discuss with the sector the benefits of establishing a more permanent body at national level to support public sector mutuals across all sectors to assist shifts to new ways of working; for example, franchising support services to enable economies of scale and speedier spin-out.

E-book Lending

The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015 included the commitment that the Government would 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 [PLR] scheme”. Libraries are increasingly providing remote e-book lending (in 2015/16 over 3 million e-book loans were made) so readers have the opportunity to borrow e-books as well as physical and audio books. The Department has been looking at options for how to implement the manifesto commitment and compensate authors appropriately for remote e-lending, including by extending the PLR to include remote loans of e-books. In doing so, we have engaged with representatives of authors, libraries, agents, publishers and booksellers as well as the Public Lending Right Office.

The Minister for Digital and Culture confirmed at the Report stage of the Digital Economy Bill in the House of Commons on 28 November 2016 that the Government intends to legislate as soon as possible to extend PLR to include the remote lending of e-books. A Government amendment was tabled at Report stage of the Digital Economy Bill in the House of Lords.

Public Lending Right (PLR) Scheme - Rate per Loan

Following a recommendation from the British Library which delivers the Public Lending Right Scheme and a public consultation towards the end of 2015, the payment rate for each loan was increased in February 2016 from 6.66 pence to 7.67 pence.

The PLR Advisory Committee and British Library Board, has since recommended to

Government a further increase in the Rate Per Loan for payments from February 2017. The recommendation was subject to a consultation, which closed on 25 November. The consultation responses were considered and the revised Rate Per Loan was implemented in February 2017 by way of a Statutory Instrument.

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

For the fourth consecutive year, DCMS provided the funding for CIPFA set of benchmark reports for all Library Authorities in England for 2014/15 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.

Work undertaken by library sector stakeholders

In addition to the work undertaken by Government to support the libraries sector, the Government also supports and works closely with a number of key library stakeholders to assist the development and improvement of the sector. They include Arts Council England, Society of Chief Librarians, British Library, Local Government Association and The Reading Agency. Details of the programmes and initiatives delivered during the period of this report are contained in the following annexes.

Arts Council England ('the Arts Council')

Arts Council England is the development agency for public libraries in England funded by DCMS. They undertake this function by collaborating with others to advocate, invest and develop. The Arts Council 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

The Arts Council 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. This includes promotion of increased usage of libraries, improved engagement of users and tackling digital exclusion.

- Arts Council Investment 2018-22

In October 2016, the Arts Council published further details about their [investment approach for 2018-22](#). For the first time, libraries are eligible to apply for all of the Arts Council funding programmes, wherever the proposals meet ACE published aims. This means that, in addition to being eligible for the Arts Council open access [Grants for the Arts \(GftA\) fund](#), libraries will now be able to apply for longer term investment as National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) for arts and museums activity, and will be eligible for all strategic funds. The application period opened on 26 October 2016 and decisions will be announced by the beginning of July 2017, to allow time to negotiate the funding agreement before activity starts in April 2018.

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

Following the successful first phase of the fund, a second phase was launched in April 2015 with a further £6 million allocated until March 2018 - [Grants for the Arts Libraries fund](#). Library services have undertaken projects across a variety of art forms, with strengths emerging in art, literature and digital arts engagement and arts and cultural activities becoming an established part of the menu of activities in libraries around the country. From March 2016 to 24 October 2016, 24 awards were made to a total value of £658,913.

- Libraries Development Funding - £984,000

The Arts Council has funded a range of development activities in the past year, focusing closely on developing the resilience of the sector, supporting the activities of the Leadership for Libraries Task Force and delivery of the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) Universal Offers. This includes:

- *Building evidence of best practice and innovation*

The Arts Council invested £300,000 in November 2016 to develop a suite of reports that research and demonstrate best practice around libraries' contribution to a wide range of strategic priorities: placemaking, diversity, older people, creative readership and community hubs. These reports will strengthen libraries' evidence base and enable the sector to highlight excellence in existing work and support innovation through new, targeted, pilot projects. They will also provide valuable resources to allow library stakeholders to better make their case to policy makers, partners and planners.

- *Impact of 'Rhyme-time' programme on parental mental health*

Shared Intelligence and Essex Libraries received a grant in November 2016 to develop an innovative pilot project to explore the potential for library Rhyme Times to be used as a deliberate and wide-reaching non-clinical intervention for mental health, especially maternal mental health and post-natal. Rhyme Times are a free and informal music and song session for babies, toddlers and their parents that runs under various guises in the majority of English libraries. The pilot will receive £83,000 funding over two years with the project report and outcomes delivered in 2017/18.

- *Delivery of Universal Offer programme*

£600,000 funding is being provided to SCL over two years to support delivery of their two year strategic development plan that includes organisational change and developing the Universal Offers framework. The Universal Offers cover the key areas of libraries' work, including health, reading, digital, information and learning. The funding will also enable the development of a sixth offer focused on culture.

- *Delivery of the Universal Health Offer*

In June 2016, SCL were awarded £120,000 of funding over two years to further develop this Offer. This was supported by match funding from the Wellcome Trust. The work includes increasing the scope, reach and sustainability of the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme, working with public libraries to extend and develop the delivery of the programme and adding new evidence to strengthen the national evidence base of impact and learning.

- *Leadership for Libraries Taskforce*

Funding of £100,000 was provided in 2015/16 to the Taskforce to fund the secondment of public library staff to work on Taskforce priorities. In addition, £74,000 of funding was provided to support work in evidencing and advocating how libraries can help deliver national and local outcomes across a wide range of policy areas and to provide consultancy support for the Society of Chief Librarians in developing their bid to become a supplier on the Government Digital Service's Digital Training and Support Framework.

Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)

SCL is a key partner to the Government and the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce and it continues to work in partnership with the Arts Council, The Reading Agency, the BBC and the Wellcome Trust to develop its five Universal Offers for public libraries. Arts Council England has provided funding of over £360K in 2016 to enable the development of the offers. The development of the Offers is led by a member of the SCL Executive with some project management or consultancy support.

- Universal Learning Offer

The Offer was launched at the end of 2015 and was followed by “Cracking the Code”, a learning and showcase event for public library staff that was held in Clapham Library in March 2016. The event was aimed at library professionals with an interest in developing digital making services. A second event took place at Manchester Central Library on 8 November.

Partnerships continued to develop, with the BBC on their ‘Make It Digital’ and ‘Weather Watchers’ campaigns. In 2016 the BBC distributed its micro-computer, the Micro:bit to all year 7 students and SCL developed a set of online resources to support libraries in delivering Micro:bit sessions.

SCL’s partnership with Code Club continued to grow and they now have more than 300 affiliated clubs being hosted by libraries.

- Access to Research

93% of library services are signed up to provide the service which allows public library users to access licensed academic journal articles from leading publishers for free, via public-access computers in local public libraries. Following a 2 year pilot, publishers are prepared to extend the arrangements and SCL are continuing to work with the Publishers Licensing Society to promote and develop the service.

Universal Information Offer

- Workforce Development Digital Skills Training Programme

With Arts Council funding, the Universal Information Offer working group worked with Learning Pool to increase and update e-learning training modules, including information on Universal Credit. The modules went live at the beginning of February 2016 and around 4,000 modules have been completed to date. A national network of library staff monitor the content and usage to keep the modules up to date and relevant.

- *Assisted Digital and Digital Inclusion*

SCL successfully secured a place on the Government Digital Service's (GDS) Digital Training and Support Services framework for the supply of Assisted Digital and Digital Inclusion services. This allows SCL to bid on behalf of public libraries to provide services and receive funding under the Framework.

The Libraries Taskforce and Arts Council provided funding for support from consultants to work with SCL to consider the framework requirements in 2015/16. ACE awarded a further £50,000 funding (as part of the overall package of funding for the Universal Offers) in 2016/17 to enable SCL to put Memoranda of Understanding in place with library services across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to set up advice and guidance infrastructure for library services on delivering GDS contracts, and to contract an external provider to supply interim bid and commercial (including legal) management services.

- *Information4living*

This national platform of local and national resources for staff and public provides postcode searchable database of links to essential information areas; covering benefits, business, health, jobs, money, and rights and citizenship.

Library services ensure that the links to local and national information are kept up to date and add new content. The initial work was commissioned through NHS funding. A report on usage and recommendations for future evaluation, promotion, and expanded role was completed in May 2016. A soft launch to the public took place towards the end of 2016.

Universal Health Offer

A key component of this Offer is the Reading Well Books on Prescription (RWBOP) scheme which has developed further over the last year. Through the partnership with The Reading Agency the Health Offer combines national development with local delivery to bring new community health interventions to local communities. The work is further supported through other national partners namely the Wellcome Trust and the Arts Council. Developments this year include:

- *Reading Well for young people – 'Shelf Help'*

This book list was launched nationally on 12 April. It provides quality assured reading to support the health, well-being and emotional resilience of young people. It also includes recommendations for conditions such as anxiety and depression, as well as bullying and exam pressures. It includes fiction and personal stories alongside information and advice, book based therapy and self-help support.

- *Long-term conditions list*

A new RWBOP list to help people understand and manage the physical and mental health symptoms of long-term conditions such as diabetes and heart disease is being

developed ready for a July 2017 launch. SCL held a roundtable on 20 September, bringing together health experts to discuss the first-stage mapping and research for the new list as well as the next steps of its development. Book selection and co-production work started in October.

- *Mood-boosting Books*

A new Mood-boosting Books list was launched online in January 2016 and a young people's Mood-boosting Books list was developed to coincide with Reading Hack activity in libraries for BBC #LovetoRead.

- *E-learning Module*

A RWBOP e-learning module for front line staff as part of SCL's wider e-learning workforce development package was launched at the regional SCL roadshows which showcased all the universal offers to library staff.

- *Childhood Obesity*

In conjunction with ASCEL (Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians) work has started to develop a children's strand to the Universal Health Offer including support to provide autism friendly libraries and the development of a childhood obesity activities toolkit.

- *The Arts Council and Wellcome Trust*

Arts Council and the Wellcome Trust each provided £60,000 in 2015/16 to support core development and delivery of RWBOP. The Wellcome Trust's partnership with public libraries will facilitate the innovative ideas in public libraries to support public participation around health and wellbeing. This scheme will be launched in 2017 and will drive innovation, create new partnerships and add to the evidence base.

Universal Reading Offer

- *BBC #LovetoRead*

SCL is a key partner in the BBC's #LovetoRead campaign and works closely with the BBC and other partners, including The Reading Agency, to ensure libraries have been able to play a full part in the programme of reading events that the BBC planned.

SCL agreed that libraries would support three areas of the campaign - Shakespeare, 400 years after his death, the centenary of Roald Dahl's birth and #LovetoRead weekend.

SCL received £5,000 from Arts Council England to support activity across the #LovetoRead weekend. More than 650 libraries took part in the #LovetoRead selfie weekend of 5 - 6 November.

SCL are also working with the Publishers Association to recruit frontline library staff

and volunteers to the Reading Ambassadors programme. To date just under 1,000 of their staff have enrolled.

- *Celebrating Shakespeare 2016*

SCL received £95,500 from the Arts Council's Grants for the Arts programme towards library celebrations to mark Shakespeare's 400th anniversary. The project aimed to introduce younger children to Shakespeare in a fun way, to interest teenagers and encourage adults to revisit his works with a fresh eye.

SCL worked with a number of high-profile partners to ensure maximum reach and impact: the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, ASCEL, The Reading Agency, CILIP, BBC Learning, Booksellers' Association, British Library and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Nearly 12,000 people attended Shakespeare Week activities and Selfie Saturday generated more than 6,000 tweets to #shakespeare16. More than 700 libraries ran exciting and varied programmes of Shakespeare-themed arts events through to the end of November.

- *Universal Digital Offer*

Significant progress has already been made including digital skills training for 14,000 frontline staff, as well as savings secured through national discount deals negotiated for a wide range of online subscriptions.

- *Digital Leadership training*

With funding from the Arts Council, Shared Intelligence delivered a 10 week digital leadership training programme for senior library staff and emerging leaders that completed in March 2016.

The programme helps individual participants develop leadership skills, gain an enhanced understanding of the nature and role of digital technologies, and strengthen relationships and effective networking among library leaders and emerging leaders.

- *Partnerships with Halifax and Barclays*

SCL worked in partnership with two High Street banks on collaborative projects designed to assist libraries in offering digital support to people in terms of the provision of free wifi and basic IT skills training.

A two-year BT and Barclays wifi in Communities project was launched in March 2015 providing free wifi and hands-on digital support at 57 libraries and 13 community centres in deprived areas of England. In addition, 'Digital Eagles' - specially trained members of Barclays staff - have provided free technology advice at the 80 locations.

In January 2016 more than 2,000 Halifax staff-members pledged to become 'Digital Champions' supporting library IT taster sessions. They have supported SCL in helping

people to gain or improve basic skills such as getting online, sending emails, connecting with their families via the internet, or using social media for the first time.

- Single library digital presence (SLDP)

In 2015 BiblioCommons were commissioned by SCL, with funding from the Arts Council, to research the potential for a single digital presence for libraries. Their report, '[Essential Digital Infrastructure for Public Libraries in England: A plan for moving forward](#)' was published by SCL in January 2016. SCL worked with the British Library to host a major engagement workshop for library partners and stakeholders to consider the early findings of BiblioCommons' research.

The Bibliocommons report argued for a single, standards-based digital platform and co-production of services involving library authorities and staff, national and local partners, and end-users. SCL is now working with the Taskforce and other partners to take forward the potential for developing the single digital presence.

- Children's Promise and Children's Library Journeys

During 2016 ASCEL (The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians) has been developing programmes which support libraries to deliver the Children's Promise and ensure a quality offer throughout children's library journey.

SCL held a workshop with library staff and partners looking at the first stage of the children's journey - the library offer for parents-to-be. With £7,000 funding from the Arts Council, they are now commissioning a toolkit to support libraries and they will also be funding and evaluating some pilot projects in 2017.

In June 2016, SCL launched [Autism Friendly Libraries](#). With £7,000 funding from the Arts Council they worked with social care partner Dimensions UK to create a 10 minute film and a suite of resources for library staff to enable library staff to learn more about the needs of children and young with Autism and their families.

With funding from the Arts Council and ASCEL, SCL developed, and made available from August 2016, a four module children's services e-learning package to assist the library workforce and support their skills and confidence to work with children.

- SixSteps Promise

With funding from the Arts Council, SCL has been working with Share the Vision to update resources, develop new training and update the Six Steps Promise. This has enabled the Six Steps Promise to be relaunched, alongside new marketing materials.

Over two thirds of English library authorities have signed up to the Promise and a promotion to encourage the rest is planned. The Six Steps Training module is now complete and undergoing testing prior to its release on the SCL Learning Pool platform.

The British Library ("the Library")

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom. As a legal deposit library, it receives copies of all books produced in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It also works closely with the public library network to help deliver on a number of issues, principally:

- British Library Business and IP Centre network

This year the Library's Business & IP Centre has continued working with the existing network of Business & IP Centres in six public libraries, delivering support services to entrepreneurs and SMEs across the country. Following a pilot phase which began in 2015, a further Centre in Exeter became fully operational in November 2016, and another in Northamptonshire is due to be fully operational in February 2017.

In addition, in April 2016, Hull library and Norfolk libraries became members of the network. The Library is currently supporting them in developing their services, branding and marketing, building partnerships and training staff.

The Library has successfully negotiated a number of discounted license agreements with business database publishers, enabling each public library to take up subscriptions to new resources or make substantial savings on existing collections.

The Business & IP Centre Network supported over 3,500 entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs in the first half of the 2016-17 financial year. 53% of service users were women, and 29% were from a BAME background. The Business and IP Centre in London celebrated its 10th anniversary in September 2016. Over 500,000 people have used the network in that time, creating over 5,000 business and 12,000 jobs.

- Living Knowledge Network

In September 2016 the Library officially launched the Living Knowledge Network, a nationwide pilot partnership between the Library and 21 major public libraries in cities and towns across the UK. The National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales are founding partners of the Network.

The Network, funded by the Arts Council and the Library, has been established to enable knowledge exchange, encourage collaboration on cultural activity and content for library users, and build partnerships on initiatives such as funding applications and evidence gathering. It aspires to strengthen the collective ability of libraries across the UK to deliver world class library services to diverse communities. It has a combined audience of 13 million library users.

In the first few months of operating, examples of the network's activities included co-ordinated live screenings of events hosted at the Library in Exeter, Leeds and Middlesbrough, opening up the Library's cultural programme to whole new audiences across the UK. The Network also enables staff development across the member

libraries; in December representatives from the network convened in Portsmouth for a skills sharing day designed to spread ideas and knowledge.

Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA is the national voice of local government. They work with councils to support, promote and improve local government. They are a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of 350 English councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.

- Leadership for Libraries Taskforce

The LGA is co-sponsor of the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce, set up to take forward the recommendations of the Independent Library Report for England. In addition to reviewing the terms of reference, work programme and resources for the Taskforce, the LGA has taken an active role in developing and sharing learning from the Taskforce with other local authorities, including the launch of Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in 2016-2021.

- Leadership programmes for elected members

In June, the LGA convened a workshop for portfolio holders for libraries to share thinking, identify new service models and inform the LGA's improvement work on libraries. A session on libraries was also held at the LGA's annual culture, tourism and sport conference in February.

The LGA has received grant funding from the Arts Council to deliver culture improvement activity, including on libraries, for 2016-17. This has included two Leadership Essentials Culture programmes which took place in November and December 2016, four culture peer challenges and the development of an online culture good practice toolkit.

The LGA also agreed an updated [Shared Statement of Purpose](#) with Arts Council England. This sets out their shared vision for the contribution that arts and culture, including libraries, can make and how they'll work together to realise it.

Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is a registered charity and an Arts Council NPO. They work with publishers, schools, colleges, trade unions, prisons, health professionals and the public but have a strong partnership with public libraries which is celebrated in a Memorandum of Understanding which is reviewed annually. Their programmes reached 1.6 million people of all ages across the whole of the UK in 2016. Three examples of these programmes are outlined below:

- Summer Reading Challenge

The Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge is embedded in the SCL Universal Reading Offer. The 2016 Big Friendly Read aimed at 4-11 year olds (a celebration of the writing of Roald Dahl) was delivered in libraries across England and Wales. 647,085 children in England took part in the main challenge and an additional 20,981 under 4's in England took part in the pre-school mini challenge.

Over 64,400 children in England joined a local library and there were more than 14.4 million children's loans made over the summer in England.

- Reading Friends

The Reading Agency secured £2.1 million Big Lottery funding to work with a wide range of partners including SCL over the next 4 years to roll out Reading Friends (a reading befriending programme for vulnerable and isolated older people).

- Delivery of national reading programmes and support for reading development

The Reading Agency received £140,000 from the Arts Council in March 2016 to further support national reading programmes and reader development work. Through this programme of work they are supporting the Libraries Taskforce reading and literacy Outcome as well as delivering a wide range of other programmes including supporting over 4,000 adult reading groups and 400 children's reading groups. These all help to promote the social reading aspects of the Universal Reading Offer. They are also managing the Youth Libraries Board which is designed to foster debate and support activity aimed at encouraging young people to use their libraries as part of the Reading Hack programme.



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