

# Annual Libraries Report 2022 to 2023

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

July 2023



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Department for Culture, Media & Sport



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## Foreword

I had the privilege of being the Minister responsible for libraries at the start of this reporting period, and was delighted to be reappointed in October 2022.

I remain a committed champion of our public libraries. I believe they have a unique and precious role in local communities, and a key part of my job is highlighting the vital role that libraries play in the lives of so many people.

During this reporting year, together with my Ministerial colleagues, I have continued to take opportunities to visit libraries across the country, and to speak at library sector events, meeting some of the dedicated and passionate staff and volunteers who keep our library network thriving. I look forward to visiting many more and seeing how they deliver for their communities.

Library services continue to rise to the challenges which have confronted every type of organisation. Our libraries have been a lifeline for many people while living costs have been rising, with many libraries becoming 'warm banks'. In addition to their core activity – encouraging reading and making a wide range of loan material available – they continue to provide a range of other services: free access to WiFi and public PCs, study spaces, and providing welcoming and trusted places where people can take part in group activities, or come together for a variety of purposes. They are an important part of wider civic infrastructure too, often providing access to other government or civil society functions.

I was delighted to attend the Libraries Connected Annual Seminar on 16 June last year; I took the opportunity to emphasise my views about the value of libraries and how they can contribute to levelling up, as well as to growth and the wider economy through the Business and Intellectual Property Centre network. It also gave me an opportunity to reinforce the importance of securing reliable data and information, and identifying the outputs and outcomes of libraries' work. Above all, it gave me the opportunity to thank library staff again for their hard work and to acknowledge their place among the most trusted professionals in the country – one of the reasons why many people across the sector were again recognised through the honours system.

In September, I appointed a colleague in the House of Lords, Baroness Sanderson of Welton, to help inform the development of a new Government strategy for public libraries. As we emerge from the pandemic, I wanted to ensure that we were capturing the widest possible range of insights and experiences to help ensure that our strategy is both ambitious and rooted in what's happening across the country. During this reporting year, she began her work engaging widely across the sector and with its partners to gather information and generate ideas. I was delighted to attend one of the seminars she has held across the country – in Islington Library – at the end of April, and look forward to receiving her review later this summer.

I was also thrilled to see a further 27 successful projects benefiting from £4.9 million of public funding in the second round of the Libraries Improvement Fund, which was announced on 20 March 2023. This builds on the 25 successful projects and £5 million awarded in the first year of the Fund, and confirms the Government's

continued investment in buildings and digital enhancements across England to help libraries adapt to the changing needs of users.

Throughout this period, the DCMS libraries team has continued to help me as I support the Secretary of State in her role to superintend and promote the improvement of public library services provided by local authorities in England. During this period the team has spoken to numerous councils to assist and provide guidance on issues such as local authority restructuring and its implications for library services, public consultations, new library openings, or potential new local strategies for public libraries provision. These conversations are invaluable to help the Department continue to provide the support needed, and I would encourage library services to keep us informed of their work. This report describes what we have done this year.

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay**  
**Minister for Arts and Heritage**

## Introduction

This report is on the exercise of the Secretary of State's statutory functions under the 1964 Act. It covers the period April 2022 to March 2023. It aligns with the annual reporting periods for other relevant libraries sector organisations and bodies, including Arts Council England, Libraries Connected and the British Library. More information on the work of these individual organisations during the period covered by this report is available in Annex C.

## Government engagement with libraries

The DCMS Libraries team supports the Secretary of State in her statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to superintend and promote the improvement of local authorities' provision of public library services in England. Additionally, the team works with the Minister for the Arts and Heritage to support the Secretary of State with those duties. The team also leads on policy areas including the Public Lending Right Scheme, and sponsorship responsibility for the British Library and, since January 2023, sponsorship of The National Archives. We work across government departments, on behalf of the libraries sector, to promote libraries' contributions to a range of important agendas and encourage a "libraries first" approach to government projects and policies.

The Secretary of State visited Manchester Library on 17 February (where the library service hosted and took part in a wider cultural roundtable event), and Colchester Library on 20 March 2023 (Essex County Council received the biggest award from Round 2 of the Libraries Improvement Fund, to carry out ambitious developments at the library). Lord Parkinson visited Gloucester Library on 11 November 2022 and the British Library at St Pancras on 26 January 2023. He spoke at the Libraries Connected annual seminar on 16 June 2022 and delivered the keynote speech at the Green Libraries conference at the Wellcome Trust (London) on 24 March 2023. He also attended the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge on 10 July 2022 and recorded a [virtual message](#) to support Suffolk Libraries' tenth anniversary on 1 August 2022. Additionally, he visited Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Books in Newcastle on 20 January 2023, and The Story Museum in Oxford on 17 March 2023.

Stuart Andrew, then Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and the Civil Society, visited Birmingham Library on 4 October 2022 during Libraries Week.

## Superintendence

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 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 councils in England and to secure the proper discharge of the statutory duties on local authorities. The 1964 Act also places a duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. Councils fund library services, assess the needs of their local communities and design library services to meet those needs.

DCMS officials monitor and keep under review any proposals by library authorities to make changes to their library service provision, and provide relevant advice to ministers accordingly. The process of superintendence involves informal active engagement by the DCMS libraries team with local authorities as well as consideration of formal complaints.

### *Engagement with local authorities*

We encourage councils to engage with the DCMS libraries team at an early stage about any proposals to make significant changes to their library services. This provides an opportunity for councils to inform the libraries team about proposed changes to their service provision; raise concerns they may have about their service provision; or to learn about good practice from other library services. It also provides an opportunity for the DCMS libraries team to gather insight about each council's policy on libraries; to follow up on media stories or public correspondence about changes to library services; and to remind the local authority of their responsibilities, and the guidance documents that are available.

In this reporting period DCMS directly engaged with 28 local authorities, involving 54 conversations, to discuss their library service provisions. In addition, DCMS presented at two Libraries Connected webinars, both of which focused on the Department's duty of superintendence. The first was to the East Midlands regional Libraries Connected group on 15 November 2022 (attended by around 15 representatives of local authorities and commissioned library service providers in the region) and the other on 2 December 2022 (which was attended by over 70 representatives from local authorities).

### *Formal complaints*

Superintendence also involves the consideration of formal complaints. Any representations received by DCMS that a local authority may be failing to meet its statutory duty are carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. Information about the [statutory duties](#) on local authorities and the Secretary of State, and how the Department will consider formal complaints under the 1964 Act is published on GOV.UK.

We consider a complaint in two stages. The first stage is a thorough analysis of the background and evidence relating to any complaint that the local authority is not meeting its statutory duty to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service. The analysis will consider the representations submitted by the complainant, including the specific issues which they believe makes the library service provision not comprehensive and efficient and the local authority not delivering its statutory duty under the Act. The analysis also involves consideration of detail provided by the local authority relating to these issues. Following this the DCMS libraries team puts advice and recommendations to ministers, resulting in a ministerial 'minded to' letter; this indicates whether or not the minister is minded to order an inquiry on the basis of the evidence considered. This letter is sent to the council and the complainant, and

is also published on GOV.UK. It gives the opportunity for anyone to make further representations in relation to the complaint.

The second stage follows careful consideration of any further representations from library users or other interested persons (which are new and/or additional, or bring up to date previous detail submitted in relation to the complaint) before a final ministerial decision letter is issued. All decision [letters are published on the libraries pages on GOV.UK](#).

DCMS Libraries team is continuing to investigate a complaint made to the Secretary of State about whether a council was meeting its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. DCMS will take further action if necessary.

### Public Lending Right Scheme

The British Library administers Public Lending Right (PLR), the scheme through which authors are remunerated by the government for loans made by public libraries. In its distribution of the fund, the scheme recognises the value of such loans to the reading public and the right of authors and other contributors to receive payments for them. The British Library also administers Irish PLR on behalf of the Irish Government.

Funding for the Public Lending Right was £6.16 million for the PLR Scheme year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. The 'Rate Per Loan' (RPL) was calculated in the normal way by using the previous year's national public library loans figures, which were impacted by a period of lockdown. This resulted in an unusual drop in demand; which subsequently caused the RPL to rise from the previous year's 11.26p per loan to 30.53p. Due to the way in which the statutory instrument distributes the PLR funding, this increase had minimal impact on the overall distribution of earnings. Overall, £6,164,456.59 was distributed to 21,034 rights holders as compared to 20,389 rights holders in PLR year 2020 to 2021. The expectation is that for the next PLR reporting year, the RPL is likely to return to levels more consistent with the pre-pandemic era.

Julia Donaldson was the most borrowed author, easing out James Patterson who had previously held the top spot. Other children's authors (including Daisy Meadows, David Walliams, Jeff Kinney, Roald Dahl and Adam Blade) also made a strong showing on the Most Borrowed Author list. On the Most Borrowed Titles lists, as in previous years, crime writers featured strongly in the top 10. Richard Osman took the first and second spots with 'The Thursday Murder Club' and 'The Man Who Died Twice', while Ann Cleeves had three titles featured in the top 10.

The impact of the significantly improved PLR registration system resulted in many authors taking the opportunity to increase the number of books they had registered, enabling them to record a higher number of loans. An analysis of the top 50 contributors who had the biggest increase in earnings between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022, shows that 33 of those contributors had registered new interests during 2021 to 2022 and 13 were newly registered to PLR entirely.



## Other public libraries developments and advocacy

During this year DCMS has worked with colleagues across government on a wide range of issues – examples are:

[StoryTrails](#). Part of UNBOXED, StoryTrails was a national library-based touring experience delivered in 2022 across 15 UK libraries and constituted the UK's largest immersive storytelling project to date. It took library visitors on a magical virtual and augmented reality immersion into the hidden histories of those 15 places. Reaching 1.5 million people across the UK, StoryTrails saw library spaces become multidimensional sites for creative development, community collaboration and innovative exhibition.

The team worked with and across several other government departments:

- with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (later Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to understand the impact on libraries of increasing energy prices. Libraries and archives are one of the sectors now eligible for additional support under the [Energy Bills Discount Scheme](#), which was launched in April 2023.
- with the Department for Education on issues such as getting library involvement in their [Reading Framework guidance](#) and with the ["Hungry Little Minds"/ learning environment campaign](#).
- with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs officials and its Rural Stakeholder Forum to highlight the role of library services in supporting rural communities.
- DCMS also contributed to various initiatives of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on behalf of the libraries sector. On 18 January 2023, DLUHC [awarded](#) a share of £2.1 billion from its Round 2 of Levelling Up Fund to support six successful projects in Leek, Reading, Farnborough, Hackney, Harlow and Tendring which included funding to upgrade or build new libraries.

Libraries featured strongly as a priority at the launch of the [LGA Culture Commission report](#). It reports on the important contribution local culture can make to 'levelling up' and its role in responding to the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

The [Know your neighbourhood fund](#) was launched by DCMS on 13 January 2023. The funds allocated to libraries in target areas under Strand One will be managed and distributed through Libraries Connected. Applications to be assessed in summer 2023 with projects delivering for the remainder of the 2023 to 2024 financial year.

## New Libraries Strategy

In September 2022 the Government [appointed](#) Baroness Sanderson of Welton to chair an independent panel to help inform a new Government libraries strategy and to help generate new ideas to improve library service and provision. She visited a number of library services across the country during Libraries Week in October 2022 to find out about their work, and has had numerous discussions with the libraries sector, plus partners and others with an interest in their work.

Baroness Sanderson has also undertaken a series of deep-dive discussion sessions at libraries around the country, themed on different aspects of library services. The sessions undertaken during the report year covered culture and creativity, health and wellbeing, resilient communities, digital access and inclusion, learning, prosperity. Further sessions on reading and literacy as well as exploring governance and blue-sky thinking were completed in June 2023.

## **Libraries data**

Arts Council England published an updated basic [dataset](#) of static public libraries in England on 27 July 2022. The information was provided by library services and the details covered the number of static libraries in England (statutory and non-statutory) as at 31 December 2021. The next dataset, covering libraries as at 31 December 2022, is to be published in summer 2023.

CIPFA published its annual library statistics for the period April 2021 to March 2022 on 2 March 2023. CIPFA is not commissioned by DCMS to collect and publish annual library data, nor are library services required to complete the questionnaire. In 2021 to 2022 only around 40% of library services in England responded.

Libraries and libraries stakeholders (including DCMS) need robust and timely data about how libraries are operating, in order to carry out their work and provide appropriate levels of service. DCMS started working during this period with a range of other sector organisations to consider a suitable method of ensuring such data is collected – this work will continue next year.

## **Annex A**

### **New Year's and HM The Queen's Birthday Honours list**

Congratulations to the following library sector people on being awarded Honours during this reporting year in recognition of their contribution to libraries:

#### **KBE**

*New Year 2023*

Roly Keating. Chief Executive, British Library. For services to Literature.

#### **MBE**

*HM The Queen's Birthday 2022*

Catherine Mann. Head of Libraries and Arts, Staffordshire County Council. For services to Public Libraries.

Susan Williamson. National Director, Libraries, Arts Council England. For services to the Library Sector.

Susan Wills. Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and Culture, Surrey County Council. For services to Public Libraries.

*New Year 2023*

Sue Crowley. Strategic manager for Library and Registration, Somerset County Council. For services to Public Libraries.

#### **BEM**

*HM The Queen's Birthday 2022*

Christopher Clarke, Company Secretary and Treasurer, Jesmond Library. For services to the Community Managed Library Network and the community in Jesmond.

Christine May, Head of libraries at Bradford Council. For services to public libraries.

Susan Comitti, Libraries and heritage services manager, Hackney Council. For services to public libraries.

Lesley Davies, Senior Development Manager, Communities. Sefton Library Service. For services to Sefton Library Service and the Sefton community.

Sorrelle Clements, Service Development Manager at Coventry Libraries. For services to Libraries.

*New Year 2023*

Zoey Dixon. Library Hubs Manager, Lambeth Council. For services to public libraries.

Sylvia Knights. Vice Chair, Suffolk Libraries. For services to libraries

Hilary Marshall. Past Treasurer, The Association of Senior Children's and Educational Librarians (ASCEL). For services to Children's Libraries.

Christopher Garnsworthy. Community Library Services Manager, London Borough of Hackney. For services to Public Libraries.

## **Annex B**

### **New and refurbished libraries**

Local authorities in England continued to invest in their library services. There are a number of examples of councils investing in new libraries and the refurbishment of others to provide modern services and facilities. Some examples include:

**Alexandra Palace (Haringey)** – the library reopened on 27 February 2023 following a £1 million refurbishment. This includes a new lift, accessible toilets, new lighting, IT upgrades, a new children’s library and redecoration of all interior spaces. A new electric piano has also been installed as part of Haringey Council’s partnership with Casio to introduce electric pianos in all the borough’s libraries.

**Clevedon Library (North Somerset)** – the library reopened on 14 October 2022, following a £215,900 refurbishment funded by the Libraries Improvement Fund. It is one of the busiest libraries in North Somerset and the improved facilities include extended access, self-service technology, energy efficiency improvements to heating and lighting and a new accessible community space and meeting room for events and activities.

**Killamarsh Library (Derbyshire)** – the relocated library reopened to users on 26 October 2022 following a £1.9 million refurbishment of the local leisure centre (Killamarsh Active). The library is located on the ground floor of the centre near the new café area. All library services including computers for customers to use and the book ordering service remain the same. Benefits to the library move include portable book racks which can be moved out into the café area during the library’s opening hours, creating a more relaxed setting where people can browse books and get a drink and snack or meet with friends, putting it at the heart of the new facility.

**Tunbridge Wells library (Kent)** – the Amelia Scott Centre officially opened on 28 April 2022. It combines the Tunbridge Wells Museum, art gallery, library and Adult Education Centre into a single building with an additional space for live events. The £20 million project was funded by the Borough Council in partnership with Kent County Council, the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England.

**Wokingham library (Wokingham)** – the library relocated to the Carnival Hub in September 2022. It brings together a large leisure centre and a new home for Wokingham library. The library provides all the usual services as well as areas for those wishing to study or carry out research in the library, including group study spaces and a bank of individual study booths to give people more privacy. There is also soft seating and breakout areas with tables and chairs for those looking to relax whilst they read, along with a new area specially designed for teenagers to enjoy.

## **Annex C**

### **Library sector partners**

Organisations with which DCMS engage regularly and that undertake activities to support the public libraries sector include Arts Council England, Libraries Connected and the British Library. These organisations provided a summary of their activities during the year.

### **Arts Council England**

Arts Council England (ACE), is the development agency for libraries in England and invests in public libraries, through strategic and other funding programmes.

Reflecting its strategy, [Let's Create](#) and in its role as national development agency, ACE [supports libraries](#) as venues where arts and culture happen through their national portfolio funding, project grant funding and a grant in aid budget.

ACE continued chairing its English Public Library Group (EPL) to deliver leadership and support for developments in the sector.

Examples of work include:

- Announced results for the National Portfolio investment programme on 4 November 2022, with an additional 10 library services joining the portfolio for 2023-26 - bringing the total to 16 (over 10% of all library services in England);
- Gave grants to all library services in England for preparations to celebrate the King's Coronation;
- Agreed a framework for, and explored capacity to deliver, an Accreditation scheme;
- Administered [National Lottery Project Grants](#), with its bespoke tailoring to the four Universal Library Offers, continues to fund significant library projects, such as [Ask for a Book](#) or [World of Stories](#); and strategic funded projects focussing on stimulating reading for pleasure, from [Reading Sparks](#) to [The Big Jubilee Read](#);
- Consolidated, refreshed and published the [Basic Data set for Libraries on 27 July 2022](#);
- Funded research into: Library user & non-user motivations including [libraries support job seekers](#);
- Supported CILIP and Libraries Connected to strengthen workforce skills;
- Supported the [Peer Challenges and a cross-cultural Senior Officer programme](#) of leadership essentials and networking delivered by the LGA;
- Invested in [Get Ready for Business Growth](#), a BIPC national programme developing the sustainability of SMEs, supporting the Summer Reading Challenge and Future Funding – building local capacity to diversify income streams;
- Worked with and provided funding to the [Green Libraries Partnership](#), a project that brings together CILIP, the British Library, Libraries Connected and

Julie's Bicycle. This multiyear research and development programme aims to enable public libraries in England to actively reduce their carbon footprint and increase awareness of environmental issues for the wider public by providing accessible resources. Public libraries are hubs of sustainability – already reusing and recycling books and providing information to communities to underpin their own climate action.

- Signed a collaboration agreement with The National Archives in March 2022, which became operational from April 2022 and runs until 2024. The agreement is to promote a comprehensive cultural public offer foregrounding the rich diversity of arts, museums, libraries and archives. There are annual meetings with CEOs from both organisations and the agreement will be reviewed annually.

## The British Library

The British Library is a non-departmental public body sponsored by DCMS. As a legal deposit library, the British Library is required by law to receive, preserve and maintain copies of all books produced in the UK. Since 2013, these legal deposit requirements have extended to maintaining copies of non-print works, including e-books, e-journals, and the UK web archive. The British Library is also the national repository for recorded sound.

The Library also plays an important and active role across the public libraries sector, including administration of the Public Lending Right scheme.

The Library's network of [Business and Intellectual Property Centres](#) (BIPCs), based in libraries across the country, provides entrepreneurs and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) across the UK with free access to databases, market research, journals, directories and reports. This year the Library achieved its ambition to grow the Network to 20 Centres in public libraries outside of London, opening in Southampton and Carlisle in November, alongside 80 'BIPC Locals' (smaller hubs providing further local reach and access across their localities). By working in partnership with local libraries, these Centres offer a range of support and information for entrepreneurs and small business founders across the country.

Within London, the BIPC launched four more BIPC Locals in Lewisham, Greenwich, Wandsworth and Bromley, alongside the existing Waltham Forest hub. As part of this, it secured funding through JP Morgan Chase to launch a new programme of delivery, [Kickstart Your Business](#), in March 2023.

In September 2022, the Library's long-term ambition to deliver services nationally was realised with the launch [Get Ready for Business Growth](#), funded by Arts Council England. Delivered online, small businesses across the creative and cultural sectors in England and Scotland are taken through a programme of nine modules, delivered as webinars or tailored one-to-one support, as well as gaining the opportunity to network with other high-growth, scale-up business owners.

The BIPC concluded its delivery of the [Reset.Restart programme](#), which launched in 2020, to help small businesses navigate the pandemic; covering subjects from

product and service innovation, to marketing, finance and business models. This year, Reset.Restart attracted almost 7,500 attendees, of which 62% were women and 42% from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background.

In total this year, over 42,000 entrepreneurs were supported across all BIPC services, either online or through face-to-face workshops, one-to-ones, and networking activities.

The Library's work with Arts Council England and public library partners to develop a new digital platform to connect people and public libraries took further significant steps this year, with the launch of the [LibraryOn](#) identity and a new beta (work in progress) website. In March 2023, a £1.1 million grants programme opened to applications from library authorities for projects to improve or innovate in their online offers.

The [Living Knowledge Network](#) (LKN), launched by the Library in 2019, is a UK wide partnership of over 30 national and local libraries which enables collaborative working to increase their impact – creating unique services and memorable experiences for the Network's audiences, improving knowledge exchange, and sharing skills and resources for professional development.

The Network has continued its responsive skill sharing and professional support programme for library staff. During the reporting period, 15 [webinars](#) were held, which received a total of 1,636 views. Topics included Libraries and Social Media, Building Confidence with Funding Bids and Improving Sustainability. [The Breaking the News exhibition](#) opened across 65 Living Knowledge Network library sites, including three prison library sites, and reached audiences of over 760,000. Partner libraries used panels produced by the British Library and added their own collections and programming to reach local audiences. 55% of staff across the sector involved in this initiative noted new or revived partnerships with other organisations including museums and archives, and 101 events took place in libraries across the UK. One in four attendees of the exhibition and programme reported that they rarely or never attend cultural events.

The LKN also [live streams](#) events to public library partners. This year, 42 individual screening events were held across 23 sites. This year's programming put national and international conversations into libraries, with stand-out events for the Platinum Jubilee, Worldwide Day of Ukrainian Literature and Lunar New Year. Library staff also now have access to 90+ pieces of curated content and recorded events to enrich their cultural offer through the bespoke LKN website.

## **Libraries Connected**

Libraries Connected is a membership organisation and charity open to every library service in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

In this reporting year its focus shifted from support for pandemic adaptation to post-pandemic work including ongoing service recovery and response to the rising cost of



living. In addition it delivered a core programme of work addressing leadership, service improvement and innovation and financial resilience.

Libraries Connected supported post-pandemic recovery with a monthly survey to track recovery and shared the analysis through monthly webinars. It also supported libraries to remobilize to tackle the new challenge of the rising cost of living, with knowledge sharing and a briefing sheet on the work libraries can do to support their communities. This evolved into a campaign around [Warm Welcome](#) work over the winter where it secured significant national media coverage for the vital role libraries were playing.

Libraries Connected's other major development programmes included:

[Leading Libraries](#): Following a successful final conference and [evaluation report](#), Libraries Connected was contacted by Research Libraries UK (RLUK) who were interested in running a similar programme with diversity at its heart. Libraries Connected is carrying out scoping which is being conducted by a partnership from Evidence Base at Birmingham City University and the Leadership Institute at Birmingham University.

[Future Funding](#): This is a programme to develop libraries' income generation capacities. Libraries Connected is delivering an additional programme to 30 attendees, bringing the total number of library leaders participating to 76. It has developed a Guide to Income Generation that will be launched in 2023.

[Digital learning modules](#): In May 2022 Libraries Connected launched two new Digital, Media and Information Skills online modules. The Key Digital Skills module is underpinned by the Essential Digital Skills Framework and Media and Information Literacy module. By 31 March 2023 over 2200 library staff had enrolled on the courses. Both modules are freely available to people working in public libraries in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

[Accreditation](#): Libraries Connected supported the Arts Council to review how to implement a new accreditation framework for English public libraries. This builds on work in the previous year when the framework was scoped, developed and tested. It aims to support the development of good quality services that meet the needs of their communities. The framework was developed in consultation with the library sector and stakeholders including LGA, CILIP, British Library.

[Peer Reviews](#): Libraries Connected worked with the Local Government Association, who with funding from DfE conducted a series of eight peer reviews in local authorities looking at the strategic impact of integrated working between Children's Services and Libraries. The report was published on 27 July 2022.

[Annual Seminar](#): Libraries Connected annual seminar "Redesigning the Future", held on 16 June 2022, explored the evolving needs of communities as public libraries emerge from the pandemic into an uncertain economic environment. The event was attended by over 180 library leaders and partners. The keynote speech was delivered by Lord Parkinson, Minister for Arts.

[Events](#) & Webinars: Libraries Connected ran a varied programme of webinars throughout the year focusing on data, opportunities, service development and strategic insight, and held an online [Universal Library Offer Seminar](#) attended by over 500 public library staff. The year also saw the return of the Innovation Gathering, a physical event which brought public library staff together from across the UK to showcase their innovative work, create new connections and think collectively about how to improve their services to local communities.

[Ukraine](#); Libraries Connected supported Ukrainian newcomers and developed a relationship with Ukrainian public libraries. In autumn 2022 it developed a partnership with Kafshi's Children. This charity produced 2000 dual language Ukrainian and English picture books and distributed them to libraries. These books have been presented to Ukrainian families across the country via local libraries and their partners.

[Public Libraries and Literacy Recovery](#): This report, published in June 2022, was produced in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust. The report explored the role of public libraries in supporting children whose literacy and enjoyment of reading for pleasure had been adversely affected by multiple lockdowns and disrupted time in school. The report was well received by heads of service who have used it for advocacy and evidence of the central role public libraries can play.

[UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services](#) Libraries Connected continued to deliver the service via a network of fifteen libraries, and received an extension to the service through to October 2024. The revenue earned from this service across all libraries in 2022/23 exceeded £2.6million and libraries served around 100,000 applications. The service provided a platform to demonstrate to Ukrainian visa applicants the access to local services afforded through the library services.

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