



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport

Government response to a consultation on the Public Lending Right rate per loan

November 2018

payments from a central fund in relation to public lending of their physical and audio books by public libraries in the UK. In relation to the 2018-2019 PLR Scheme year, the PLR will

also extend to include the remote lending of e-books and e-audio-books from public library services in Great Britain. Payments are made annually to eligible authors, calculated on the basis of a rate per loan figure, by the British Library, which has managed the PLR Scheme (“the Scheme”) since October 2013. The British Library recommends to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport the rate per loan for each financial year, taking into account the size of the central fund available that year and the number of qualifying book loans from a sample of public libraries in the UK in a preceding sampling year.

DCMS ran a four week public consultation on the Board’s recommendation to increase the rate per loan from 8.20 p to 8.52p for the 2017-2018 PLR Scheme year. The consultation ran from 1 October to 29 October 2016. A consultation letter was sent to major groups representing the interests of authors, public libraries and other key stakeholders related to the public library sector in the UK, and to the Devolved Administrations. A copy of the consultation letter was made available on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Eight responses were received, and the six that expressed a view were supportive of the proposal to increase the PLR rate per loan to 8.52p. Two responses noted the consultation without expressing a view on the proposed increase. A number of organisations took the opportunity to raise other issues, not related to the scope of the consultation on the rate per loan, and these are summarised in the table below.

Organisation	Yes	No	Other comments
Society of Authors	X		Urge Government to ring-fence and increase PLR Fund in any future spending review, including in relation to the Government’s welcome extension of PLR to include remote lending of ebooks and audiobooks, while maintaining frictions. Urge Government to include volunteer-run libraries within the PLR scheme. Urge Government to protect and maintain library services and ensure a “comprehensive and efficient” service.
Welsh Government			No comments.
Department for Communities - Northern Ireland	X		No comments.
The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society	X		Government should protect and maintain library services and ensure a “comprehensive and efficient” service. Government should include volunteer-run libraries within the PLR scheme.

			Urge Government to maintain the PLR Fund in any future spending review.
The Booksellers' Association	X		<p>Concern about library services' expenditure on book stock, and impact on provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service.</p> <p>Welcome Government and British Library aiming to ensure PLR payments are made to authors before the end of December – considerably earlier than in previous years.</p> <p>In future years, it would be beneficial if the British Library's statement to each author of their PLR payment could include information about the numbers of their physical books and e-books borrowed.</p> <p>Would be helpful if the method of sampling and grossing up the PLR data in making PLR calculations could be reviewed in the future, to assess whether it was still fit for purpose.</p>
Arts Council England	X		<p>Note that an increasing proportion of public libraries (such as those volunteer-run and outside of a library service's statutory provision) are outside scope of PLR data sampling, so PLR data will not reflect true position of library loans to the public.</p> <p>Welcome the inclusion in the PLR of remote e-lending from 2018-19, and since this is a growth area suggest that an increase in the size of the PLR fund in future years might also be welcome.</p>
CILIP - the library and Information Association	X		<p>Welcome progress by DCMS to correct the PLR Scheme to ensure that UK authors are not excluded from registering for PLR when the UK exits the EU, while also maintaining position where authors resident in EEA states are eligible to register for PLR.</p>
Scottish Government			No comments.

Having considered the consultation responses, the Minister has concluded that stakeholders welcome the proposed increase to the rate per loan and has decided to vary the Scheme to increase the rate per loan from 8.20p to 8.52p.

Other points raised in responses to the consultation

As noted above, some of those who responded to the consultation took the opportunity to raise other points about the PLR and public libraries. Although such matters fall outside the

scope of the consultation, the government's position in relation to each of these issues is as follows.

Volunteer-run libraries and the PLR Scheme

The PLR is applicable to loans made from libraries falling under the statutory control of the relevant local authority. In the majority of cases, such libraries will be both controlled and managed by that authority. Where a library is managed by volunteers or community groups, the local authority may decide that the library remains within its statutory responsibility and ultimate control, and that PLR would apply to loans from the library.

Protect and increase the PLR Fund

The British Library administers the PLR for the Government, and receives funding for PLR within the Grant-in-Aid provided to it by DCMS. The 2015 Government spending round confirmed that the funding for the PLR was to be retained at same level in cash terms until 2020. The Government will consider future funding levels for the PLR, as part of the British Library's funding, at any future spending review.

Comprehensive and efficient public library service

Public libraries policy is a devolved matter in respect of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, library authorities are responsible for providing "comprehensive and efficient" local public library services. They are expected to provide public library services (including by making decisions relating to provision of bookstock) while taking into account local needs and available resources. DCMS is committed to supporting a sustainable long-term future for public libraries in England, and DCMS Ministers take seriously the statutory duty to superintend and promote the improvement of library services in England, and to ensure that library authorities in England meet their own statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

PLR operations

DCMS will continue to work with the British Library, which administers the PLR, to consider the potential for future improvements to how the PLR operates. This includes whether amendments could be made to the PLR Scheme in relation to the collection of loans data and calculation of the PLR rate per loan and payments; and whether PLR information could be shared with authors about the number of loans of their physical books and e-books.



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport

4th Floor, 100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ
www.gov.uk/dcms