



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport

Report under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 for 2017/18

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

October 2018

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FOREWORD

I was appointed as Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism with responsibility for public libraries policy in England in January 2018. Between then and the end of March 2018, I was pleased to visit a range of public libraries and see their importance to the communities they serve. These include Abington, Cambridge Central, Coventry, Northampton, Woolwich where I attended a meeting of the Libraries Taskforce, and the new Oxfordshire County Library in Oxford which I was delighted to help formally open.

It is clear to me that libraries help people to improve their lives and opportunities, by providing access to books and information, and support for learning and development. They help to strengthen communities by bringing people together and removing social barriers. They improve health, wellbeing and digital literacy; provide support for those seeking jobs and developing businesses; and they enable people to enjoy culture and creativity. Thanks to the skills and enthusiasm of library staff, volunteers and partners, libraries are therefore as relevant today to a diverse range of people and communities as ever.

I take seriously the Department's role to superintend and promote improvement of public library services provided by local authorities in England. Library services face challenges to continue to meet the needs of the people they serve within available resources. We are investigating a number of complaints about whether library services are meeting their statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service, and we will take action if necessary.

However, many local authorities recognise the value of investing in libraries and what they deliver. We are working with local and central government to promote this sort of approach, to encourage them to think 'libraries first' in delivering services to communities, and ensure that there is recognition of the valuable contributions that library services make to their strategies and priorities.

During the period covered by this report, DCMS has worked with the Libraries Taskforce and its members to promote and support the work of public libraries. This includes the delivery of projects that received funding from our £3.9m 'Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone' innovation fund; support to councils to explore alternative delivery models such as public service mutuals; the Taskforce's good practice toolkits and masterclasses to help library services to develop and improve; and the Arts Council's funding of seven libraries organisations as new National Portfolio Organisations for 2018 to 2022, including Libraries Connected as a new Sector Support Organisation for libraries.

I am determined that, together with local authorities and the libraries sector, we will continue to support the delivery of strong and sustainable library services for local people.

Michael Ellis MP - Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Introduction

This report covers the period January 2017 to March 2018. This means that for the future it will align with the the annual reporting periods for other relevant libraries sector organisations and bodies, including the Libraries Taskforce, Arts Council England and the British Library. This report should therefore also be read alongside the progress reports published every six months by the Libraries Taskforce, about the range of activities undertaken by the Taskforce and by its individual member organisations.

Government engagement in libraries

There has been significant engagement with the library sector by Departmental Ministers during the period covered by this report.

From 9 January 2018 to 31 March 2018, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Michael Ellis MP, visited a number of libraries including Abington; Cambridge Central; Coventry Central; Northampton; and the British Library. He also formally opened Oxfordshire County Library in Oxford, and the co-located Post Office at Crayford Library in Bexley. In addition, he met with Kim Bromley-Derry (Chair of the Libraries Taskforce); and attended a Libraries Taskforce meeting at Woolwich Library.

The previous Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism from 14 June 2017 to 8 January 2018, John Glen MP, visited a number of libraries including Salisbury, Manchester Central, Hull Central, Liverpool Central, Library of Birmingham, Pimlico, Storyhouse in Chester and The Hive in Worcester, as well as the British Library. He also met with a number of library sector stakeholders including Neil MacInnes (President of the Society of Chief Librarians); Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Chair of the Local Government Association's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board); Nick Poole (Chief Executive of CILIP - the library and information association); Kim Bromley-Derry (Chair of the Libraries Taskforce); and Nick Serota and Darren Henley (Chair and Chief Executive of Arts Council England). In addition, he had meetings with Lord Low; Lord Bird; Peter Buckley (Lancashire Council Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services); and Richard Cornelius (Leader of Barnet Council) to discuss public libraries matters.

Until June 2017, the Minister responsible for libraries policy in England was the Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson, who visited libraries in Swindon, Hemel Hempstead and Watford. He also met with a number of stakeholders including Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Chair of the Local Government Association's Culture Tourism and Sport Board); Lord Low; Councillor Jennifer Mein (Leader of Lancashire Council); Councillor David Renard (Leader of Swindon Council); Councillor Richard Cornelius (Leader of Barnet Council); as well as representatives from Whalley library in Lancashire. In addition, Lord Ashton of Hyde visited Manchester Central Library.

DCMS officials continued to meet regularly with public library sector partners and those with an interest in public libraries including Arts Council England, Society of Chief Librarians (now known as Libraries Connected), Local Government Association, CILIP (The Library and Information Association), The Reading Agency and British Library.

Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964

The Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 (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 Digital, 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 - which can be commenced either on receipt of a complaint about whether a library service may be failing to meet its statutory duty, 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 takes the statutory responsibilities seriously and officials monitor and keep under review proposals by library authorities to make changes to their library service provision, providing advice to Ministers accordingly. [Further information](#) about the statutory duties on local authorities and the Secretary of State, and the Department's consideration of formal complaints under the 1964 Act are available on GOV.UK.

The process to consider a complaint includes Ministers making a decision indicating whether the Secretary of State is 'minded to' order a local inquiry, and inviting further representations before a final decision is made. Over the period of this report, Ministers issued 'minded to' decision letters on formal complaints to DCMS about library services in [Lancashire County Council](#) and the [London Borough of Barnet](#). In addition, following representations made to the Department raising concerns about changes to library services in Swindon, Darlington, Bedford and [Northamptonshire](#), Ministers wrote to the respective Councils to confirm that the Department is treating the representations received about each as formal complaints under the 1964 Act. Officials are gathering and analysing information to consider these complaints.

Following elections in May 2017, the previous Minister, John Glen, wrote to newly elected Members of Parliament and to the directly elected Mayors of Combined Authorities, to highlight the important contribution of libraries in their local areas and ensure awareness of the statutory requirement for library services to provide library services.

Libraries Taskforce

The Leadership for Libraries Taskforce was set up jointly by DCMS and the Local Government Association (LGA) in March 2015 in response to recommendations in William Sieghart's Independent Library Report. The Taskforce's 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 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 DCMS, and to the LGA and publishes six monthly progress reports. It published its [fourth in June 2017](#), [fifth in October 2017](#) and [sixth in April 2018](#). These highlight detail about the work, activities and achievements of the Taskforce and its individual member organisations.

The Taskforce has provided practical support to the public libraries sector in England, including through masterclasses and publishing toolkits and other data and research. The Taskforce also worked with DCMS to advocate about what libraries offer to central and local government. The Taskforce published an updated action plan to March 2020.

The Government also supported and worked closely with a number of the Taskforce member organisations to help develop and improve the sector. They included Arts Council England, the Society of Chief Librarians, British Library, and The Reading Agency, with examples of the work of these organisations provided at Annexes A to D.

Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone fund

In March 2017, DCMS and the Arts Council announced 30 [successful bids](#) would receive £3.9m to deliver libraries innovation projects in April 2017 to March 2018. A total of 46 local authorities benefited from this funding (around a third of the total number of library authorities in England) which aimed to help disadvantaged communities, including by promoting literacy and developing digital skills. DCMS and the Libraries Taskforce commissioned and funded the Office for Public Management (OPM) to undertake an independent evaluation of the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone programme. This will be published in October 2018.

Alternative Delivery Models for Library Services

The Government is committed to supporting development of new governance models within the public sector, including [public service mutuals](#). Four existing library service mutuals, plus Mutual Ventures, formed a consortium (Optimo) to bid for a DCMS contract to provide peer support for library authorities who wanted to explore alternative delivery options.

DCMS and the Libraries Taskforce commissioned the Optimo partnership to develop a toolkit to support library services, council commissioners and others to consider the desirability, viability and feasibility of alternative delivery model options for their library services. The [toolkit](#), published in March 2017, helps councils undertake robust, objective and evidence-based analysis of the various options for moving to a different delivery model for their library services. In addition, DCMS and the Libraries Taskforce commissioned Optimo to run three masterclasses (24 and 28 March, and 12 December 2017) to share detailed information and advice about exploring alternative delivery models, including how they had made the most of the opportunities, and addressed the challenges, of becoming a public service mutual.

DCMS also established a Mutuals Interim Support Fund offering grants of up to £25,000 to organisations to purchase professional advice and support to help them consider, develop or grow a public service mutual. A number of library services successfully bid for grants for technical support and practical help in undertaking options appraisals. DCMS and the Taskforce continue to provide assistance to library services to explore alternative delivery options, including through DCMS's further [Mutuals Support Programme](#).

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

For a fifth consecutive year, DCMS provided funding (£47,000) to enable CIPFA to develop and publish a set of benchmark reports for library authorities in England for April 2016 to March 2017. The reports enable a local authority library service to be compared with a group of similar authorities, to allow them to consider like-with-like and pinpoint areas where they could improve performance. These reports are publicly available from the CIPFA website.

CIPFA also published its annual library statistics for April 2016 to March 2017 in December 2017, using data provided by library services. This indicated that in this period, library services in England had total net expenditure of £643m, with 204 million visits to and 165 million book loans from libraries in England.

Community Libraries

DCMS and the Libraries Taskforce 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 results of the project were published in September 2017.

Other Public Libraries Developments

Local authorities in England continue to invest in their library service with net expenditure in 2016-17 totalling £643m. In addition, there are numerous examples of local authorities investing in new libraries and the refurbishment of others to provide modern services and facilities. Some examples include:

- Halifax Central Library and Archives (Calderdale) - Officially opened in September 2017, the new library is next to the Calderdale Industrial museum and refurbished Piece Hall, which all together create a vibrant cultural, heritage and learning quarter for the area. The Piece Hall development and new Central Library and Archives have been recognised in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) National Awards for 2018.
- Storyhouse in Chester (Cheshire West and Cheshire) - This £37m development opened in May 2017 (with a formal opening in June 2018 by Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by the Duchess of Sussex). At the site of an former art deco cinema, Storyhouse includes a theatre, library, and cinema and arts space, with library book shelving incorporated throughout the building. In its first year since opening it has been successful as a cultural and community venue, with over one million visits, and has been recognised in the RIBA National Awards for 2018.
- Colliers Wood (Merton) - Opened in February 2018, the three floor library was designed in consultation with the public and by working with the Alzheimer's Society to make it one of the first dementia-friendly libraries in the country. Library staff and volunteers are trained as "Dementia Friends". Following the opening it has seen a

significant increase in visits and book borrowing compared to when the previous library for the area was open in 2015.

- Beeston Library (Nottinghamshire) - The library reopened in August 2017 following a £1m refurbishment, with extensive improvements including a new entrance and roof, and internally new flooring and heating as well as exhibition and meeting spaces.

National Libraries Week

Libraries Week (9 to 14 October 2017) was led by CILIP (The Library and Information Association), with support from the Libraries Taskforce, DCMS, the Society of Chief Librarians, and partner organisations across the country. Many public libraries across England took part - as well as academic, school, and prison libraries - providing a range of diverse activities around the call for local people to “discover something new”.

During Libraries Week, the Minister, John Glen, visited Pimlico Library as part of the Worlds of Possibilities festival at libraries in London. This was led by the Association of London Chief Librarians, with Arts Council funding, to showcase arts and culture activities in libraries.

Public Lending Right (PLR) Scheme

Rate per Loan

Following a recommendation from the British Library, which delivers the PLR Scheme, and a public consultation undertaken by DCMS towards the end of 2016, the PLR payment rate to authors for each loan of their books or audiobooks by public libraries in the UK was increased in February 2017 from 7.67 pence to 7.82 pence.

In Autumn 2017, the British Library Board recommended to Government a further increase in the rate per loan. The recommendation was subject to a 4 week consultation with authors, libraries and others with an interest. This closed on 24 November 2017 and following consideration of the consultation responses and ministerial approval, the revised rate per loan of 8.20p was implemented in February 2018 by way of a statutory instrument.

Extension of PLR to include remote e-lending

The Government committed to ensuring that authors are recognised for e-lending by public libraries. In April 2017, DCMS secured, through the Digital Economy Act 2017, a provision to extend the PLR to include remote e-lending, so that when brought into force, authors of e-books and e-audiobooks lent remotely by public libraries would be eligible to receive payments from the PLR fund as they can for lending of physical books and audiobooks.

During January 2017 to March 2018, DCMS worked with the British Library, and consulted with representatives of authors, libraries and others, about changes to the PLR secondary legislation needed to ensure that the extension of PLR to e-lending had proper effect when brought into force. Subsequently, DCMS consulted on technical amendments to secondary legislation, and following consideration of the responses the Minister, Michael Ellis, signed and made the statutory instruments to commence the extension of PLR to include e-lending from 1 July 2018.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England (the Arts Council) is the development agency for public libraries in England and is funded by DCMS. It carries out 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 to 2013, 'Envisioning the library of the future'. All of the activity undertaken by the Arts Council that benefits libraries is 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

Arts Council Investment 2018 to 2022

The Arts Council announced in June 2017 that its 2018 to 22 portfolio would include seven libraries organisations as new National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), which will receive funding totalling £1.6m a year. They are the Society of Chief Librarians (now called Libraries Connected), and library services in Barking and Dagenham, Cambridgeshire, Devon, Nottinghamshire, St Helens and Suffolk. NPO status will enable the library services to support strong arts and cultural offers through their libraries, building on their existing track record delivering Grants for the Arts projects.

These NPOs also contribute to delivering Goal 5 of the Arts Council strategy, "[Children and Young People](#)". This includes programmes such as Cultural Education Partnerships, Quality Principles, and the libraries' Children's Promise. Inclusion of library services also strengthens the capacity of the portfolio to reach people not currently highly engaged in arts and culture.

Grants for the Arts

The [Grants for the Arts Libraries fund](#) invested National Lottery money in projects delivered by public libraries or library authorities working in partnership with artists and cultural organisations across all art forms. The fund aims to inspire innovative partnerships between libraries, cultural and art organisations. Library services undertook a variety of projects, with strengths emerging in art, literature and digital arts engagement. These resulted in arts and cultural activities becoming an established part of activities in libraries across England. From January 2017 to March 2018, 37 awards were made with a total value of £1.28 million.

Libraries Development Funding

The Arts Council has funded a range of library and support development activities, including:

Living Knowledge Network

The Arts Council provided funding to the British Library for a two-year pilot to develop and support the Living Knowledge Network. This is a nationwide partnership between the British

Library and major libraries in UK cities and towns, including National Library of Wales and National Library of Scotland. The Network combines local expertise and national organising power to share knowledge, resources and activities. See Annex C for further details.

Single Digital Presence (SDP)

A recommendation of the Independent Library Report for England was to develop a single digital presence for libraries. It was announced in August 2017 that with funding from Arts Council and the Carnegie UK Trust, the British Library would lead an 18-month scoping project to establish the demand for and possible shape of a single digital presence for UK public libraries. See Annex C for further details.

Rhyme-time programme on parental mental health and well-being

The Arts Council provided a second year of funding to enable Shared Intelligence, in collaboration with Essex Libraries, to work with Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) to conclude the project that began in 2016 and to produce recommendations from the findings. Rhyme times for babies and toddlers are offered in almost every public library in the country. They are usually free and are delivered by library staff, volunteers and partners. They may include other activities but generally involve parents, grandparents, carers and very young children learning, singing and sharing rhymes and sometimes simple stories together.

Public Library Skills Strategy

CILIP and the the Society of Chief Librarians received funding from the Arts Council to develop a Public Library Skills Strategy 2017 to 2030, which was published in July 2017. The strategy has been created to support the development of the public library workforce in England, ensuring they continue to meet the changing needs of today's audiences.

Society of Chief Librarians

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), which became Libraries Connected in June 2018, is a member of the Libraries Taskforce and works with the Arts Council, The Reading Agency, the BBC and the Wellcome Trust to develop [Universal Offers](#) for public libraries. SCL also works with ASCEL on the [Children's Promise](#), and Share the Vision on a [Six Steps Promise](#) for blind and partially sighted people.

SCL also successfully bid to become an Arts Council Sector Support Organisation, and will receive £500,000 a year over the four years 2018 to 2022. SCL and CILIP launched a Public Library Skills Strategy in July 2017 (see Annex A for further details).

Universal Learning Offer

With Arts Council funding, SCL commissioned Common Vision to produce [The Experiential Library](#), about family learning in libraries and bringing forward ways to improve and increase this work. Examples include acting out stories to improve fitness in Bournemouth, a digital literacy course for 3 to 4 year olds in Norfolk, and a Big Draw arts workshop in Kirklees. The report also outlines steps for libraries looking to develop their family learning offer.

SCL supported the BBC Make it Digital campaign, including work with Weather Watchers and rollout of the BBC micro:bit. SCL partnerships with CoderDojo and Raspberry Pi Foundation continued to grow with over 450 Code Clubs in libraries.

Universal Information Offer

We Are Digital led a project enabling SCL and library services, from September 2017, to support applicants for in-country visas on behalf of UK Visas and Immigration, through the Government Digital Services framework for the supply of Assisted Digital / Digital Inclusion services. Support is provided in person via local libraries, in the applicant's home by We Are Digital's visiting tutors, and by telephone from Migrant Help UK.

SCL has maintained and developed Information4living.org.uk for public library services in England. This provides links to national topics of benefits, business, health and wellbeing, jobs/careers/skills, rights and citizenship, and money, and to local authority data.

Universal Health Offer

SCL continued to promote [Reading Well: Books on Prescription](#), including through an e-learning module for front line staff. SCL also supported The Reading Agency in pilots for its new reading befriending programme, "Reading Friends". See Annex D for details on both.

Universal Reading Offer

A [review](#) by SCL found that while reader development is a priority for most library services, there is a lack of current training to support this. The review led to a volunteer reader development training package, co-produced with volunteers and Leicestershire libraries, with

support from Staffordshire and Warwickshire libraries. SCL also commissioned an e-learning training module for staff.

SCL supported other reading activities including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Shakespeare Week 2017, involving activities, events and competitions. SCL was also an active partner to BBC campaigns focusing on Jane Austen and Harry Potter.

Universal Digital Offer

Single Sign On is a joint project between Jisc and SCL to improve the user journey by removing the need to repeatedly sign in when moving from one set of subscription-based resources to another. This has the potential to boost uptake of public library online resources by bringing the catalogue and digital resources together into one authentication system. An evaluation report of the pilot was published in March 2018.

SCL also worked with Jisc on a national discount deal for online subscription services, and will look at other ways to work together, to buy collectively and save money. SCL ran regional roadshows from October 2017, with new family learning resources and hands-on demonstrations of digital kit for library frontline staff.

Universal Culture Offer

SCL launched this Offer in October 2017 at the Central Library in Hull, 2017 City of Culture. It was developed after consultation with the sector and stakeholders, building on libraries work to bring new and diverse cultural experiences to local communities.

Children's Promise

The Children and Young People's Promise for libraries developed by ASCEL sits with the Universal Offers and Six Steps Promise. It sets out expectations every child can have of their library service. A toolkit of resources, Bump Booster, was launched in October 2017 to support library staff and volunteers to work with parents-to-be. Following pilots, learning has been published by ASCEL.

In November 2017, ASCEL launched a framework for testing library Rhyme Times using Arts Council England's 7 Quality Principles for Children and Young People. This involved 11 library services, using Arts Council funding. ASCEL also hosted a seminar in February 2017 to support the development of a children and young people's strand of the Culture Offer.

Six Steps to library services for blind and partially sighted people

During 2017, SCL promoted the Six Steps Promise, for providing library services to blind and partially sighted people. Most library services in England have signed the promise. Share the Vision and partners also developed "Library on a Shelf", alternative format reading products and approaches that support blind and partially sighted people to continue to read.

The British Library

The British Library (BL) is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It is an arm's length body of DCMS, from which it receives grant-in-aid funding. BL provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. As a legal deposit library, it receives copies of all books published in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

BL's [Living Knowledge](#) vision is to make the nation's intellectual heritage accessible to everyone, for research, inspiration and enjoyment. A key part of delivering this vision is the work BL does in collaboration with the public library sector, principally:

Living Knowledge Network

The [Living Knowledge Network](#), funded by BL and Arts Council England is a nationwide pilot partnership between BL and a number of major public libraries in cities and towns across the UK. Founding partners of the network include the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales. It aspires to strengthen the collective ability of public libraries across the UK to deliver world class library services to diverse communities, with a combined audience of 46 million library users.

During 2017, 30 live screenings of BL events were streamed to other libraries in the network, with highlights including talks by Michael Palin, Joan Bakewell, and Vivienne Westwood. In addition, 6 skills sharing days were held, bringing together staff to spread ideas and knowledge throughout the network.

The Harry Potter: A History of Magic exhibition provided a major opportunity for the network to collaborate and share cultural content with their cumulative audiences. 20 member libraries across the UK participated in this major exhibition from October 2017, making it a truly national event, combining local collection items and engagement activity with a core set of panel displays shared by BL from the London exhibition. The network member libraries extended this reach by collaborating with other local libraries in their area, meaning that 40 libraries participated overall. BL will seek to build on the successes of the Network in 2018, transitioning to a sustainable funding model.

British Library Business & IP Centre network

In 2017 BL's Business & IP Centre continued to work with the network of [Business & IP Centres](#) in 11 public libraries across England, delivering support services to entrepreneurs and SMEs across the country. In April 2016 to March 2017 the Network supported 16,500 individuals, 59% of service users were women and 35% identified themselves as BAME. In 2017, new Centres opened in Northampton, Hull and Norwich, adding to those those already in London, Birmingham, Exeter, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield.

BL's ambition is to extend the network to cover 20 cities outside London by 2020. It has a particular focus on supporting start-ups to survive and thrive, creating a pipeline to growth

and supporting the next generation of innovative scale-ups. In September 2017 the Network ran a national 'Start-up Day' campaign, delivering over 170 workshops and events on one day to over 2,000 individuals across the UK. In the first half of the 2017-18 financial year the Network supported 9,825 individuals - 68% being start-ups or early stage businesses.

Single Digital Presence

In August 2017, it was announced that BL would lead an 18-month scoping project with funding from Arts Council and the Carnegie UK Trust, to establish the demand for, and possible shape of, a '[single digital presence](#)' for UK public libraries.

The project will undertake market analysis, stakeholder interviews, workshops and other research, leading to a draft set of options and emerging findings within the first year as well as recommendations on how this might be taken forward. It will involve key stakeholders from across the home nations, assessing the potential and scope for a UK-wide platform providing access to local collections and services.

Public Lending Right (PLR) Scheme

BL delivers the [PLR Scheme](#), and following their recommendation and public consultation, undertaken by DCMS towards the end of 2016 and 2017, the payment rate for each loan was increased in February 2017 from 7.67 pence to 7.82 pence and in February 2018 to 8.20p, by way of statutory instruments.

In June 2017, BL wrote to 25,000 PLR registered authors and stakeholders outlining intentions to introduce improvements to how the PLR service is provided. This included the intention to include remote lending of eBooks in the PLR in future when legislative changes by DCMS were completed; delivery of service improvements by replacing the underlying IT architecture; and moving the PLR operation from Stockton-On-Tees to BL's site in Boston Spa, Yorkshire. Plans are underway to implement these changes by 2019/20.

The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency (TRA) is a registered charity which successfully bid to retain its status as an [Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation](#) in 2017. It delivers reading programmes across the whole of the UK for people of all ages, who:

- are dealing with mental health issues;
- struggle with reading or who have lost interest in it;
- are isolated and lonely;
- live and work in marginalised communities;
- want to build their skills and confidence in reading; and
- want to share their enjoyment of reading and support others.

Its programmes are developed and delivered with a wide range of partners including public libraries. 1.4m people took part in their programmes during 2017.

TRA works with SCL and with ASCEL; and together with these it delivers two of the SCL universal offers: books and reading, and health.

Children

The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) is the UK's biggest reading for pleasure programme, with the SRC website seeing 3,410,199 page views recorded in 2017. The 2017 SRC was launched at the British Library, with a theme of Animal Agents. Across the UK, 734,552 children between ages 4 to 11 years participated in the SRC at their local library; and 27,206 children under 4 took part using specially produced SRC pre-school materials.

Young People

Reading Hack

This programme for young people, funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, involves 53 local authorities and engaged over 10,700 young people aged 13 to 24 during 2016 to 2017. An [evaluation](#) conducted by OPM of the 2016 to 2017 programme was published in May 2017.

TRA also developed a pilot [GirlGuiding Reading Hack challenge](#) with the North-West England region. Young people designed a badge and co-produced hacks around 3 themes (developing their own reading, helping others to read, promoting positive mental health). In addition TRA developed a Beyond Libraries Week pack to support libraries to continue to engage young people - after the summer, during National Libraries Week, half term and Halloween. The Pack was promoted via ASCEL, CILIP, and the Reading Hack newsletter.

Adults

World Book Night

This annual celebration of reading and books takes place on 23 April each year. Books

donated by publishers are given away in public libraries and other organisations with the aim of reaching and engaging people who don't regularly read. A [survey](#) of the 306 organisations who took part in World Book Night 2017 showed a positive response to the initiative.

Reading Ahead

The programme is aimed at adults who struggle with reading. 45,000 adults took part in 2016 to 2017, with activity for Reading Ahead 2017 to 2018 running through to June 2018. TRA also partnered with National Literacy Trust and Manchester libraries to help deliver the [Read Manchester](#) campaign. Reading Ahead has been used as a way of getting parents, carers and other family members involved in reading in support of all the work they are doing with children and young people.

Reading Friends

With funding from the Big Lottery of £2.1m over four years, TRA will deliver, with public libraries, local communities and voluntary organisations, a new [reading befriending programme](#). Run in England, Scotland and Wales by TRA, Scottish BookTrust and Literature Wales, it aims to empower, engage and connect older people who are vulnerable and isolated, people with dementia and carers by starting conversations through reading. TRA are [piloting](#) the programme in Conwy, Newcastle, Oldham, Sheffield and Stirling in 2017 to 2018. The test projects will adopt a range of social reading models including one-to-one befriending and reading groups to connect older people in different settings including libraries, care homes and sheltered housing.

Reading Well: Books on Prescription

Funded by Arts Council and Wellcome, this [initiative](#) is delivered by TRA in partnership with SCL as part of the Universal Health Offer. In 2017, TRA launched a booklist to provide information and support for people living with long term health conditions, and their carers. TRA also developed a Reading Well for mental health booklist (launched June 2018).

Quick Reads

New [Quick Reads](#) lists were launched in February 2017 and 2018. These are books selected as being shorter, easier to read, and more accessible for less confident adult readers.



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