



responsive

dynamic

potential

community

DELIVERING TOMORROW'S LIBRARIES

Principles and priorities for the development
of public libraries in Northern Ireland

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD



“It is important to ensure the library service continues to be the best we can provide and relevant to modern, changing needs.”

The public library is a rich source of independent learning, enjoyment, and inspiration. Libraries empower people and communities. They record our past, help us understand our present, and sow the seeds of our future.

The role that libraries have in society is becoming more multi-faceted, providing a community space, a learning space, a location for cultural events, a meeting place. Though their business is still based on books and information provision, the way these are made available and the activities flowing from them are changing, particularly in this electronic age.

It is important to ensure the library service continues to be the best we can provide and relevant to modern, changing needs. In October last year we set out Government's views on the direction of development of libraries in the consultation paper 'Northern Ireland's Libraries: a Framework for Change'. Over 1000 people responded to that consultation, by written submission or on-line, and we are grateful for the constructive comments we received, from individuals and organisations alike.

This document is the outcome of that process. It sets out firm guidelines and policy direction for the library service, towards the sort of service people want to use. As such it forms part of the Government's broader public service reform agenda.

As a result of the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, the structure and delivery of the library service will change in 2008, when we move to a single library service and delivery body. I am confident that the direction we map out within this report will provide a strong platform for the development of our library service as we plan for and embark upon these new arrangements.

Maria Eagle MP
Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure
July 2006

1. CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION..... Pgs 5-6

2 LIBRARIES' ROLE
AND VISION..... Pgs 7-9

3 ACHIEVING CHANGE Pgs 10-17

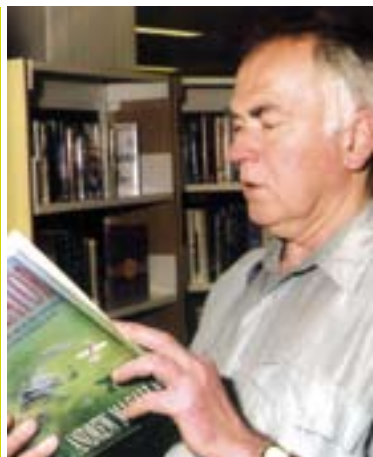
4 PERFORMANCE
MONITORING Pgs 18-19

5 FUNDING FORMULA Pgs 20-21

6 TAKING THINGS FORWARD Pg 21



1. INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The public library service exists to make available to all, free at point of use, books and information which provide opportunities for learning, knowledge and inspiration. It is a public resource which can contribute significantly to the quality of life in Northern Ireland. As such, it is in a position to make an important contribution to realising DCAL's vision of a "confident, creative, informed and vibrant community", as well as a wide range of other Government objectives. Libraries are part of our cultural infrastructure and provide a pathway for people to experience the full range of cultural assets by making available:

- new and old books for enjoyment, information and study;
- access to information through reference material, including on-line access;
- access to and preservation of out-of-print and old books, and other historic material;
- newspapers and journals;
- music and visual media;
- a wide range of community information;
- material on local and family history;
- a venue for arts events and creative activities; and
- skilled and experienced advice on books and information sources.

1.2 In 2001 the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) set up a review to create a future vision for the public library service in Northern Ireland. The resulting report, 'Tomorrow's Libraries – views of the Public Library Sector', published in 2002, underlined the continuing need for public libraries and the valuable contribution the service makes to the community, and outlined the current position and recent trends in the sector. DCAL acknowledged the need to bring together its response into a framework to provide guiding principles and priorities for the future development of the library service. As progress >>

“A flexible and responsive library service which provides a dynamic focal point in the community and assists people to fulfill their potential”

1. INTRODUCTION

<< toward that end it published a consultation paper in October 2005, 'Northern Ireland's Libraries: A Framework for Change', as a focus for debate.

1.3 The legislation governing the library service sets out the duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" service. Between 1999 and 2005 government funding achieved a substantial real terms increase of 22% in the library budget, and this investment enabled, amongst other things, the provision of Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (ELfNI¹), the electronic network which includes free internet access in all public libraries. During the last few years however, rising costs have made considerable demands on the library service. The Department has supported the efforts of Education and Library Boards to plan for a modern library service which meets peoples' needs and provides the best possible public value within available resources. This policy framework is intended to provide guidance and direction to this work.

1.4 The development of the policy framework has been greatly assisted by the contributions of interested organisations, individuals and groups. During the consultation phase of 'Framework for Change', the then Minister held a series of meetings with political parties and with Education and Library Boards. Two public meetings also took place. When the consultation ended on 31 January 2006, over one hundred organisations or individuals had written or emailed their views, and nearly one thousand people made an on-line submission from a library computer. A summary report of these responses was produced². As part of this process, reports of the rural and equality impact were also produced, and these have been published on the DCAL website. Our thanks go to all those who took the time to participate in the debate.

¹ Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland- see ni-libraries.net for more information on the services offered, including an on-line catalogue, inter Board borrowing, free public access computer terminals and on-line research resources and archives.
² <http://www.dcalni.gov.uk> in the Libraries section

2. LIBRARIES' ROLE & VISION



2. LIBRARIES' ROLE AND VISION

2.1 The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) / UNESCO³ Public Library Manifesto 1994 states “the public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups”.

2.2 This remains the case. There was almost universal agreement during the consultation on 'Framework for Change' that the core activities of libraries remain fundamentally to do with books and information provision, the objectives of which are to:

- promote literacy, creative reading and lifelong learning;
- provide access, including electronic access, to information for a wide range of purposes; and
- preserve and provide access to cultural assets.

2.3 The core activities are offered in an environment where:

- there is a facility providing space, equipment and expertise;
- customers' use of libraries is voluntary and self-directed;
- the professional assistance of librarians and other skilled staff is available to offer advice, structure and direction as needed;
- access is free at point of use;
- there are no entry or eligibility requirements; and
- the atmosphere is welcoming and unpressured.

2.4 Libraries offer a universal service in an environment where public provision is increasingly specialised, and their business consists not of doing things for people but of helping people do things for themselves. They thus provide equality of opportunity and assist in combating social exclusion, with significant potential

“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups”

³International Federation of Library Associations www.ifla.org

2. LIBRARIES' ROLE & VISION



“The role of public libraries is changing, evidenced by lower levels of book borrowing and an increased role for information provision”

to address, with other cultural institutions, what the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has called “the poverty of aspiration” (‘Government and the Value of Culture’ DCMS⁴ essay, 2004). Their ability to promote and facilitate lifelong learning is especially significant for those who may have missed out on education opportunities, or who are uncomfortable in formal learning situations.

2.5 The unique combination of libraries’ core activities (2.2) and the way they are delivered (2.3) provides an ability to contribute to:

- lifelong learning, both formal and informal;
- addressing social exclusion and inequality;
- facilitating development of informed and responsible citizenship;
- building communities and fostering good relations;
- promoting creativity.

All these form key elements of government policies and priorities, and demonstrate that libraries contribute to and support educational, social, economic and artistic endeavour, and to the achievement of thriving communities.

2.6 But making the most of this contribution, enhancing the public value created by libraries, requires a clear focus for the service. Consideration of how the traditional role of libraries can be harnessed and developed most effectively to meet the needs of the twenty first century has been the subject of a number of contemporary reports and studies. These include “Framework for the Future” (2003), a report on libraries from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport⁵; and the House of Commons Select Committee report into public libraries published in March 2005. All accepted in varying degrees that the role of public libraries is changing, evidenced by lower levels of book borrowing and an increased role for information provision, in particular through electronic media and public access to the internet. The role of libraries in the broader social agenda, and their position in terms of community provision, has also been the focus of debate.

⁴Department of Culture, Media and Sport, www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/Government_Value_of_Culture
⁵ www.culture.gov.uk/libraries_and_communities/framework_for_the_future

2. LIBRARIES' ROLE & VISION



2.7 We are looking for a library service which, within available resources, is:

- centred on people and relevant to their current needs;
- responsive to local communities, and shows flexibility within its core activities to reflect new demands;
- provides space, stock and expertise to enable people to develop themselves, their families and their communities.

The library should assist people to develop interests, enrich their lives, and become effective citizens, parents and consumers.

2.8 DCAL's vision for the public library service is:

“A flexible and responsive library service which provides a dynamic focal point in the community and assists people to fulfill their potential.”

Focusing the service to achieve this vision will impact on working practices, managerial culture and the ethos of the service. Ensuring the development and transmission of good practice across the service will be assisted by the establishment in April 2008 of a unified service and a single public library authority.

3 ACHIEVING CHANGE

3.1 The value of libraries arises from their staff, the stock, the buildings, and the activities developed from them. These provide the focus for action. To make the most of libraries' potential the service should, in its management, culture, and staff development strategies, focus on the **customer**. Though the individual self-motivated user will always be a key customer, in order to focus libraries where they can make the most difference, proactive **targeted action**, very often in partnership with other providers, should be developed. The third aspect of development activity is the need for increased **innovation and efficiencies** in delivery. These aspects are explored further below.



3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



CUSTOMER FOCUS

3.2 Libraries need to be attractive to visit, welcoming, responsive to their communities, and imaginative in meeting need. Focusing the service towards the customer calls for staff development and action in the areas of access, stock and buildings.

Staff

3.3 The support and direction provided by knowledgeable and motivated library staff is a cornerstone of the service which needs to be fully recognised and prioritised. In their information role, libraries depend on the expertise of their staff in navigating information sources, requiring a high level of knowledge among staff to assist others to find their way through the labyrinth of modern society. The skill of the staff member in gauging the level of support required is a key contributor to customer satisfaction. The changing demands of the public on library services mean that the traditional skills of library staff are being re-examined. As a service which helps people learn to help themselves, staff are increasingly requiring skills which build confidence and competence among users. Priorities are set out below.

- The need to be outward-looking, innovative and creative requires a 'culture change' programme. There needs to be a development and learning programme focused on current and future leaders of the service, a programme which incorporates appropriate formal training as well as on the job development.
- The quality of the relationship between staff and customers is paramount. The need for libraries to engage with particular groups in the community may call for skills relating to youth work, early years education or teaching. This will impact on recruitment, training and development of new skill sets. Study visits to libraries elsewhere which have developed best practice should be facilitated.
- A balance should be struck between management and support functions on the one hand and frontline services on the other,

3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



“Frontline functions should be prioritised, enabling the concentration of staff in roles which provide direct support to library users”

to ensure the service is provided on a cost effective basis. New initiatives and support strategies which develop the service in particular directions require leadership, and staff will be required to develop such programmes. Nevertheless, where possible, frontline functions should be prioritised, enabling the concentration of staff in roles which provide direct support to library users.

- This development may be assisted by the use of new technologies and innovations, for example through automated book issuing and improvements to the book supply chain, which could be used to release staff time.
- Library staff do not have access to information and librarianship qualifications locally, and can only pursue a course of study in Northern Ireland through distance learning. Ensuring professional development and keeping up with best practice is a challenge for library leaders. We welcome the ongoing developments with the University of Ulster on provision for continuous professional development programmes. Other sources of professional development, for example expertise in IT, should also be pursued.

Access

3.4 While recognising that there are resource constraints, it is important to ensure that the library service is available in the places, at the times, and in the ways that enable as many people as possible to use it. The main access issues are as follows:

- New library buildings should be located where they are most easily accessed by the communities they serve, in neutral locations, close to centres of population and other amenities.
- At the planning stage of new libraries, consideration should be given to co-location with a range of other facilities and services, such as health centres, education provision, and other community services, where such co-location ensures best access to libraries.
- The use of mobile libraries should ensure optimal access in rural areas, including to the internet, through strategically located stops, with the

3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



duration and frequency of stops according to the needs of the locality.

- Creative use of partnership working with other providers, and information technology, should be examined to ensure the library service reaches as many people for as much time as possible, particularly in rural areas. Consideration should be given to bringing the library to a building where this is feasible.
- The working week of libraries should include opening hours which extend beyond the normal working day, and include evenings and weekends, when people who work can most easily use libraries and when families can use them together. It is reasonable for users to expect town centre libraries to open all day on Saturdays, and Sunday afternoon opening for many should be seriously considered. This may require trade-offs, for example some libraries may not need to open every weekday morning. The views of the community, users and non-users alike, should be sought in determining opening patterns in local areas.
- There is an increasing need to create and deliver a 'virtual library' service using developments in communication technology and a digitisation programme. People are changing how they access information and the library service should be able to meet their needs in the way and at a time that suits them.
- There should be improved access to and promotion of special collections, a number of which are not easily accessed.
- Library buildings must comply with best practice in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act for particular groups, such as people with disabilities or visual impairment. It is also important to take into account the needs of mothers with young children and the needs of older users, to make the environment as welcoming as possible.

“The views of the community, users and non-users alike, should be sought in determining opening patterns in local areas”

Buildings

3.5 The quality of the library estate directly influences the experience of the library user. Evidence shows that we respond positively to buildings and public spaces which are visually attractive, functional and efficient in use. Investment in good design produces social,

⁶ www.dcalni.gov.uk/allpages/allpages.asp?pname=arts

3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



“Libraries should be fit for the needs of 21st century users, and, like other public buildings, can attract additional use through good design, both exterior and interior.”

economic and environmental benefit. At the heart of government policy on Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland (June 2006)⁶ is a demand for change in the quality of design and construction of publicly funded buildings. Through good architecture, landscape and planning, our cities, towns and neighbourhoods can be made more welcoming and sustainable. Libraries should be fit for the needs of 21st century users, and, like other public buildings, can attract additional use through good design, both exterior and interior.

3.6 In designing new libraries, note should be taken of the aims of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)⁷ which encourage the development of well designed public buildings, including libraries. The Government initiative Achieving Excellence in Construction NI should be adopted in the procurement and construction of all new public buildings.

3.7 Public libraries should:

- according to size, have multi purpose, flexible space for computer learning, gallery or exhibition space and community meetings;
- have facilities and amenities for the public;
- have ‘quiet zones’ and space for study;
- reflect the needs of particular groups, including those with disabilities, in their design and fitting out;
- be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the layout reflects and prioritises users’ needs.

Stock

3.8 Libraries require up-to-date stock to attract and retain browsers and borrowers. The purchase of books to replenish stock is lower in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the UK. DCAL has set a target of £1.50 per head of the population in 2006-7, rising to £2.00 in 2007-8, and we will be looking to raise it to £3.00, subject to future budgetary processes.

- Stock should, where relevant, reflect community interests or

⁷ www.cabe.org.uk

3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



requirements, for example, ethnic minority needs or local history. It should pay due attention to the needs of people with disabilities, for example the visually impaired, to ensure the widest possible collection of stock in different formats.

- Access to computers and internet under the ELfNI project has been a highly successful development and includes adaptive technology to meet the needs of people with a range of disabilities. The access to and use of on-line material is likely to increase over the next ten years, and keeping up to date will be important.
- The special collections and out of print titles held in a number of libraries are a particular attraction. Such special collections, many of them of historical value and gifted in past years by local residents and collectors, should be made more widely known and more easily available.

TARGETED SUPPORT

3.9 Within a universal service, libraries are well placed to make a particularly effective contribution to those citizens who are, or are at risk of becoming, socially excluded. Because of their strong contribution to the lifelong learning agenda, libraries should be proactive in identifying opportunities to reach out to those who have least access to other services, or who are least likely to use a library. In many cases special measures to reach such people will be required, with the library taking its services beyond the designated library space. Increased awareness of best practice and innovative measures elsewhere which successfully bring the service to hard-to-reach groups are to be encouraged.

3.10 Various policy initiatives address the pressing needs of educational inequalities, disaffected young people, the needs of rundown housing estates, disadvantaged communities and the particular needs of rural communities. The library service can provide an effective support to such measures, and can enable other government departments to deliver their services in a more



3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



“Libraries working in partnerships can support and enhance cultural experience, neighbourhood regeneration, and economic development”

cost effective way. Many libraries already make special provision for pre-school literacy measures, primary school groups, and IT induction for older people. Such work should be built on, with sharing of best practice in particular to target the following groups:

- **Young adults;**
- **Children who need school or homework support;**
- **Literacy support for those lacking basic skills;**
- **Non-English speakers, those for whom English is a second language, and other support for ethnic minorities.**

INNOVATION AND EFFICIENCIES

Partnerships

3.11 Where they address the needs of specific groups libraries can be most effective operating in partnership with other organisations in joint projects. The current Reading and Writing (RAW) campaign with the BBC is a good example of a partnership where libraries add value to the work of others. In addition, the public library service has a supportive relationship with the schools’ library service, and is continuing to help deliver the Sure Start and Bookstart⁸ programmes.

3.12 Partnerships with a range of other providers could usefully be explored, for example with health and education professionals, with advice providers and with others in the cultural field. Given the successful example of the Inspire Foyle⁹ project in achieving improved services to the customer in the north west, we would expect to see co-operation between public libraries, libraries in other sectors and other allied organisations spread to all parts of Northern Ireland. Libraries working in partnerships can support and enhance cultural experience, neighbourhood regeneration, and economic development.

⁸ www.Bookstart.co.uk

⁹ www.inspire.gov.uk/nireland.php

3. ACHIEVING CHANGE



Regional level activity

3.13 Existing co-operation across Education and Library Boards at regional level has produced benefits in book purchase, cataloguing and book recovery, and the management and development of electronic systems and access (ELfNI). Other activities that would be more effectively carried out at regional level are:

- Leadership in service development policies;
- Strategic planning of capital expenditure;
- Oversight of special collections;
- Staff training and development;
- Developing links with library services in the rest of the UK and Ireland to enhance professional development and best practice;
- Research on aspects of library services and organisation, on user requirements, and on the benefits of library use;
- Marketing and promotion of the library service (promotion of local events will still take place at local level);
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of service delivery;
- Developing partnerships.

The establishment of a single library authority for all Northern Ireland in April 2008 will provide the opportunity to achieve a strategic approach to these issues.

Marketing and Promotion

3.14 People and organisations are not sufficiently aware of the range of material, services and assistance that public libraries in Northern Ireland can provide. A developed marketing strategy is required, directed both at the public generally and organisations, including government departments. Marketing requires specific skills, and an opportunity should be sought as we move towards a unified library service to strengthen such skills.



4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING



“As a public resource which can contribute to the quality of life of citizens and communities, libraries should be assessed in ways which are meaningful to the public and reflect their views.”

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Standards

4.1 DCAL is introducing a set of minimum standards for public libraries. We consider that they are reasonable, sufficiently challenging at this point and that they reflect the minimum level of service that people in Northern Ireland are entitled to expect. The purpose is to:

- Ensure libraries meet minimum standards in key aspects of their work;
- Demonstrate how libraries are meeting the needs of their local communities;
- Help identify problem areas for immediate action;
- Help indicate priorities for the library service; and
- Ensure value for money is being provided.

4.2 The standards take account of those agreed by DCMS in March 2006, the original recommendations of the Library and Information Services Council (LISC NI¹⁰), and comments provided during the consultation on ‘Framework for Change’. Performance will be assessed against the standards every year and a report placed on the DCAL website.

4.3 We recognise that Education and Library Boards (in the delivery arrangements pertaining at the time of writing) are best placed to judge the precise needs of the communities they serve and that there may be local circumstances which need to be taken into consideration. We have tried to ensure that there is a degree of flexibility in the standards; there may be good reason why a particular standard should not apply in particular circumstances.

4.4 The standards will be reviewed every three years. They are presented in detail in the annex.

Activity Measurement

4.5 The performance of public libraries has historically been monitored by a narrow range of simple activity measures, notably levels of book borrowing and numbers of visits. The available data on libraries needs

¹⁰ www.liscni.co.uk

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING



expanding and improving, and requires a set of performance measures which reflects their wide role. As a public resource which can contribute to the quality of life of citizens and communities, libraries should be assessed in ways which are meaningful to the public and reflect their views.

4.6 At the level of the individual library, basic management information should be collected to include information on the extent of use of different aspects of provision, the number and type of enquiries received, where users live, and, where possible, further information on users. It is important to retain the existing measures of activity for continuity and comparison purposes, and this is best achieved by continuing to make use of the regular surveys of visits and book issues undertaken by CIPFA¹¹, but further work is needed to try and achieve uniformity in the way this information is collected. Information on the range of library activity should also be collected to demonstrate the extent to which libraries are underpinning community provision and government priorities.

4.7 During the consultation, people were asked about measures of activity and effectiveness. Areas where performance measurement was suggested are set out in the table:

Books	IT	Education	Community & Partnerships	Customer Service
Book stock and stock quality	Digital resources	Reading initiatives for: - children - young people - adults	Involvement with community groups	Customer satisfaction
Number of loans and reference consultations	Internet use and website visits	Provision of study space	Integrating with the community	Ability to deal with routine enquiries
	IT learning/Classes	Homework assistance	Staging of events and exhibitions	Ability to deal with specialised requests for information
			Number and nature	Lapsed users /non users

¹¹The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (www.cipfa.org.uk) collect and publish public library data every year

5. FUNDING FORMULA



“This work will ensure that there is a firm basis for customer and community-focused development of the public library service both in the immediate term and by the new regional library authority”

4.8 We agree with these. However, in order to measure performance in these activities, new information is needed. DCAL is devising a short questionnaire which will capture as much as possible of the required information on a quarterly basis. The value of this development will be kept under review.

4.9 In addition, surveys of the public should be used regularly to gain user views and insight into why some people do not make use of public libraries.

Impact Measurement

4.10 The measurement of the effect of involvement in library activity on those who undertake it is more challenging. Work in England by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA¹²) on measures to show the impact of the library service at individual and community level is continuing and will inform work on the development of this area in Northern Ireland.

5. FORMULA FOR THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

5.1 It is a Government priority to achieve equity of library provision across Northern Ireland. A new formula to allocate the budget according to a statistically based and transparent system is being phased in from 2006-07. The formula is based on home population projections which are updated annually, and includes skewing of 10% of resources on the basis of social need. The multiple deprivation index has been modified to increase the weighting of the ‘education deprivation’ and ‘access to services’ factors. This development will provide an equitable distribution of resources across Northern Ireland.

¹² www.mla.gov.uk

6. TAKING THINGS FORWARD

TAKING THINGS FORWARD

6.1 Over the next months, the Department, working with the library service, will devise a plan to implement these guidelines, through specific actions and targets. This will allow monitoring of progress. Applying the standards set out in the annex, and reviewing the achievement of them and their continuing usefulness will be an important part of the performance management process. In certain cases, particularly in respect of developing appropriate performance measures, further work will be needed.

6.2 This work will ensure that there is a firm basis for customer and community-focused development of the public library service both in the immediate term and by the new regional library authority.



ANNEXSTANDARDS

STAFF:

Appropriate levels of suitably qualified trained front-line staff should be employed. We consider that the best way of measuring this is in the satisfaction of library customers.

Public Library Standard 1 - Percentage of users reporting (a) staff knowledge and expertise and (b) staff helpfulness as very good or good.

Target - 95% of adults (over 16) and 95% of children (16 and under) who are surveyed each year.

These should be measured from CIPFA PLUS which all Boards will need to use for both adults and children.

ACCESS:

Static libraries should be located and designed so as to provide suitable access, mobile libraries should serve people where there is no static library, and opening hours should meet the needs of users.

Public Library Standard 2 - Percentage of households living within a specified distance of a static library or a scheduled mobile stop offering a range of library services open to the general public.

Target - 85% of households should have access to a library service within 2 miles.

This encompasses the mobile library service so that 85% of households are within 2 miles of a library, either mobile or static. A mobile stop should be for at least half an hour and call at least every 2 weeks. All types of service outlets will be calculated on the basis of postcodes returned by library authorities.

Public Library Standard 3 - Opening hours outside working day

Target - Larger libraries serving significant population centres should be open at least 2 evenings per week to at least 8pm, and all day

Saturday. Smaller libraries should be open at least 1 evening per week up to at least 8 pm, and at least part of Saturday. All static libraries should be open for a minimum of 7 hours weekly outside 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The purpose of this standard is to ensure that library authorities bring into effect the wish of the public to have library facilities available outside the working day. Each Branch will report on the number of hours it is open outside 9-5 Monday to Friday. It allows the opportunity for even small libraries to regulate opening hours in order to have 7 hours outside 9-5 Monday –Friday. Boards will be expected to demonstrate a sound basis for any deviation from this target. The pattern of opening should reflect local community opinion and circumstances. The definitions of ‘larger’ and ‘smaller’ libraries will be refined in consultation with the Education and Library Boards.

STOCK:

Stock should provide choice and topicality in books and materials and in a range of formats that meet needs in their local areas. The range should include adult fiction, adult non-fiction, children’s materials, reference materials, large print books and spoken word materials to assist those users with visual impairment.

Public Library Standard 4 - Annual stock budget per head of population

Target:	2006/07	£1.50
	2007/08	£2.00
	2008/09	£2.50

A minimum of £3 per head of population spent on stock is desirable in order to provide a sustainable and attractive stock for library materials in a variety of formats. In the present funding climate this will be difficult to achieve quickly and therefore we intend to work towards the ultimate target of £3.00 per head. Boards should budget to provide these figures from their initial allocation and must not expect extra funds to be made available to them in-year. Therefore these figures will be taken from final RAPS, but they will exclude any exceptional sums for stock that the Department may make available to Boards in-year.

Public Library Standard 5 - Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan.

Target: 8 ½ years

Lending stock means all books and other items available on open access or available for loan. Special collections should be excluded. 'Time taken to replenish' is the number of years it would take to restock the entire lending stock (including replacement of old with new titles). This will be measured by open access lending stock (as reported to CIPFA) divided by the number of lending acquisitions per year. Annual items added should include 'books' and 'other items' (including audio-visual materials, electronic publications and other formats) but should exclude collective subscriptions to electronic publications, newspapers, periodicals and other materials.

ICT PROVISION:

There should be equality of access to digital skills, information and electronic government services.

Public Library Standard 6 - The total number of electronic workstations with access to the Internet, including the libraries catalogue (including both static and mobile provision) available for users per 10,000 population.

Target: at least 6 public access workstations per 10,000 population

This will be calculated using CIPFA figures for public access terminals per 10,000 population.

PERFORMANCE, USAGE AND SATISFACTION

The use of the library service should be encouraged. It should ensure satisfactory services for the issuing and reserving of books and otherwise provide a high quality service to users.

Public Library Standard 7 - Requested items will be supplied in a timely manner

Targets:

- i) 50% of requests for books met within 7 days
- ii) 70% of requests for books met within 15 days
- iii) 85% of requests for books met within 30 days

This will be measured via reports from the Galaxy Library Management System on a Board by Board basis as reported to CIPFA, based on counting the period from when reservation was made to the time when the borrower was informed that the item was available.

Public Library Standard 8 - Increasing number of actual visits per 1,000 population

Targets: Increase by 1% per annum the numbers of visits to libraries

Increase by 1% per annum the numbers of active borrowers

Increase percentage of library users to 45% of population by 2008

For static libraries there will be a count of actual visitor numbers, for mobile libraries there will be an annual survey of one week's numbers. 'Active borrower' figures (proportion of resident population who have borrowed a book within the last year) to be measured via reports from the Galaxy Library Management System as submitted to CIPFA. Library users to be measured using the Continuous Household Survey.

Public Library Standard 9 - Increasing the use of public access computers

Target: Increase by 1% per annum the aggregate number of hours the public access computers are in use.

This information will be collected from the ELfNI system on a Board by Board basis

Public Library Standard 10 - Percentage of library users (children and adults) who view their library service as very good or good.

Target: 95% of adults (over 16) and 95% of children (16 and under) who are surveyed each year

These should be measured from CIPFA PLUS which all Boards will need to use for both adults and children.

¹³ The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (www.cipfa.org.uk) collect and publish public library data every year. The 'CIPFA PLUS' survey is a survey of library users, and is additional to the basic information they CIPFA collect and publish.

¹⁴ Resource Allocation Plans- library budgets the Boards submit to the Department

¹⁵ This is the Electronic Library Management system which has a comprehensive book catalogue for all of Northern Ireland and can be used to order any book in any library in NI for any user.



If you require further copies of this document, or would like to request it in a different (accessible) format, please contact:

Libraries Branch
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Interpoint
20-24 York Street
Belfast
BT15 1AQ

Tel: 028 9025 8927
Text Phone: 028 9052 7668