

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CULTURE AND LEISURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on Library and Museum services performance and activities since the previous report in April 2021 and to share a new report that shows how Scottish Libraries supports Wellbeing.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The panel is asked to note the performance information and activities of the Library and Museum Service over the last six-month period from April 2021 to September 2021 contained in Appendix 1. The panel is also asked to note Appendix 2 which outlines how Libraries in Scotland support the Health and Wellbeing agenda.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Public library services are a statutory service.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	An update on performance against a range of key indicators is included in appendix 1.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Within existing resources.
VII Consideration at PDSP	A performance report for the service is presented to the PDSP twice each year.

VIII Other consultations

Not applicable.

D. Terms of Report

The report, attached as Appendix 1, includes a summary of the latest performance figures and key achievements over the past six months across the main service activities of Library and Museum services.

E. Conclusion

The service delivers on key outcomes of access to reading, learning and information and continues to work in an integrated way to deliver council information services in all our communities. The service operates in a customer focussed way and continues to take advantage of opportunities which will improve delivery.

F. Background References

None.

Appendices/Attachments: ~~One~~

Appendix 1 Library and Museum Services performance report

Appendix 2 Wellbeing in Scottish Public Libraries

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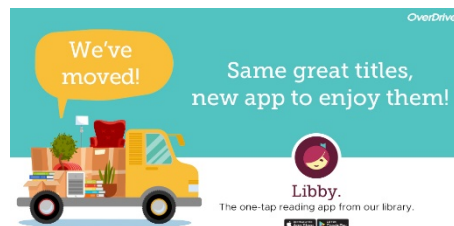
Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services

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Culture and Leisure Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel November 2021 Library and Museum Services



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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Library and Museum Services

West Lothian Council Library and Museum Services is part of Customer and Community Services which facilitates integrated working with colleagues in Customer Information Services, Community Centres, Partnership Centres, and Registration Services.

There is a statutory obligation on Scottish councils to provide a public library service, which makes books and information freely available to our customers. (The Public Libraries Consolidation Act 1887 established that library services should be free.). The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires that “a local authority..... shall have a duty to secure the provision of adequate library facilities for all persons resident in their area”. The self-assessment tool “How Good Is Our Public Library” defines how the service should be delivered.

The main services provided by Library and Museum Services are:

- Public Library Services
- Museum Services

- **Public Libraries Services – 15 Branch Libraries (one of which is the Local History Library)**

Libraries have an important role in society as providers of a range of services from book-lending and computer access to children’s activities, providing access to training courses and meeting space. They are portals to all of the world’s knowledge and are spaces where people of all ages can practice lifelong learning.

Public Libraries are in the frontline of delivery of information in communities by providing:

- access to reading and information both physical and digital
- a stimulating and motivating learning environment
- a sense of identity and pride in civic space in turn enhancing individual and community wellbeing
- digital inclusion through the provision of supported access to PCs and the internet;
- opportunities to improve literacy skills
- early years intervention through delivery of Bookbug sessions

As well as the above libraries are a vital part of social infrastructure. They are the one constant in an ever-changing world, central hubs for the future. They provide a safe and secure spaces especially for our most vulnerable as they enable, empower and equalise.

e-Services

West Lothian libraries offer **free** digital access to popular e-magazines, e-books and e-talking books for everyone to enjoy at home or on the go. There are currently 2,149 e-books and 1,439 e-talking books available and new stock is purchased monthly. There are over 3,709 e-magazines to choose from. For ease of access all e-resources are now also available to download to Apple and Android devices via the suppliers Apps.

Local History Library

The local history library holds a large range of books, maps and images about West Lothian's people and places. It offers help and assistance in accessing resources to allow customers to discover their local and family history using census and old parish records as well as photographs, maps, plans and book stock. The library works closely with the registration service and a family history centre operates from that location, assisted by volunteers who come from the West Lothian Family History Society.

- **Museum Services**

Independent and council museums in West Lothian make a major contribution to local culture, heritage, education and tourism. The service is responsible for the care and management of the Council's museum collections. It also manages three accredited Community Museums in Blackridge, Broxburn and Whitburn and a further community display space in Armadale Library. The service provides financial and curatorial support to the following independent museums: Bennie Museum and Linlithgow Museum and curatorial support to Linlithgow Union Canal Museum. In addition to this the council works with the Living Memory Association to operate the "Wee Museum of Memory" at Livingston Centre. We also deliver free museum handling sessions in West Lothian schools, a reminiscence box lending service and support for community heritage projects.

2. PERFORMANCE April 2021 to September 2021

The main purpose of this report is to update panel members on Library and Museum Services' activities and performance since the last report in April 2021 and to highlight notable achievements and developments. Key Performance Indicator results can be found at the end of this document.

Local Government Benchmarking Framework

The Scottish Local Government Benchmarking framework (LGBF) brings together a wide range of information about how all Scottish councils perform in delivering better services to local communities, including the cost of services and how satisfied citizens are with them. West Lothian Council is part of Family Group four within this benchmarking framework.

Across Scotland the libraries have strong and regular benchmarking/strategic meetings to ensure a national offer, where possible, across the country. The service meets monthly with the Association of Public Library Service (APLS – all 32 local authorities), the Fife, Lothian's, Edinburgh and Borders Group (FLEB) and uses the Libraries basecamp to communicate and benchmark on a regular basis.

2. KEY ACTIVITIES

2.1 Public Libraries Services – Branch Libraries

From April to September 2021 the library service has gradually remobilised to a full, pre covid position. This has been done following guidance from the Scottish Government, West Lothian Council's remobilisation processes and in a safe and secure manner in consultation with our colleagues in Health and Safety.

What Covid has highlighted is that public libraries have tremendous potential to support individuals and communities across a range of local authority priority areas. The service supports on

- Strengthening communities
- Employment and financial wellbeing
- Education
- Digital inclusion
- Physical & mental health
- knowledge and information,
- Cultural engagement
- Literacy
- Equality
- Diversity and inclusion.

Below are some of the ways in which we have delivered on some of the above priorities.:

- **Click and collect-** This service, introduced during lockdown, continues to be popular with library customers, they can reserve their books from home and be notified when they are ready for collection. The enhanced virtual book displays and the improved layout of the online catalogue ensures it is easier for readers to find material online and reserve with one click. 1,181 books have been requested through this service since April.
- **Bookbug.** Libraries have continued with an online programme of at least one Bookbug session per month, each library is taking it in turns to plan, film and edit a performance to be posted on our website on the first week of every month. This enables us to build up a library of sessions on our website that families can dip into whenever they choose. 8 sessions have been filmed since April with 1,792 views online. From September libraries are gradually reintroducing sessions in the physical libraries while following all Covid protocols. Seven sessions were held in libraries in September with 159 attendees.
- **Summer Reading Challenge- 19th June- 31st August-** This year, the theme was 'Wild world heroes' exploring nature and wildlife. Due to the restrictions still in place for Covid the library took a hybrid approach this year, with some packs available in libraries for children who wanted to take part in the traditional way and also a digital offer for children to complete the challenge online. To further support the challenge libraries encouraged children to be creative with online wildlife craft tutorials such as "Making a Bug House" and a "How to Make a Bird Feeder" with household recyclables. Library staff also got out into their local community and designed treasure hunts to get kids out and about while searching for book clues. In addition, we received funding from The Scottish Book Trust to deliver two wildlife themed storytelling sessions, Jane Mather a professional story teller from The Scottish Storytelling Centre held interactive story sessions at Polkemmet Country Park and Almondvale Country Park. This year 91 children took part in the challenge.

- **Reading Well for children-** Four book collections were purchased for Broxburn; Bathgate; East Calder and Whitburn libraries to support the mental wellbeing of junior readers. This ensures there is a collection in each Neighbourhood that can then be borrowed and moved accordingly. 'The Reading Well for children collection', provides quality-assured information, stories and advice to support children's mental health and wellbeing. Books have been chosen and recommended by leading health professionals in partnership with 'The Reading Agency' and co-produced with children and families. These books encourage children to talk about their feelings and explore ways to manage their emotions West Lothian libraries will be promoting the collections with local schools and families. Titles include, 'Sometimes I feel sad', 'The boy who built a wall around himself' and 'How are you feeling today'.
- **Tutti music-** This is a community project which aims to offer local people the opportunity to learn a musical Instrument through attending organised classes/groups, and to encourage participation in the community through music. Group attendees are afforded the chance to loan an instrument from a West Lothian Council Library for leisure at home. West Lothian Council's Customer and Community Services is working in partnership with Blackridge Management Committee and Armadale Management Committee. The project has received funding from Blackridge Community Fund – Foundation Scotland, Blackridge & Armadale Management Committees to support this project and to make it affordable to all.
During the second lockdown we started pre-school music classes for Blackridge residents online. We are now offering 3 pre-school face to face music classes a week to Blackridge and Armadale residents and now have 31 children and 28 parents/carers attending classes and loaning instruments. This number is growing every week. This project has just started and we are looking forward to adding adult music classes in the very near future
- **Lothian Lugs -** The 'Lothian Lugs' project is part of the Carnegie UK Trust, Engaging Libraries programme and is a collaboration between West Lothian Libraries and Heriot-Watt University. In March 2021 we reached out to our communities and asked them to complete the Lothian Lugs Community Survey. 595 surveys were completed and 210 local people aged 16-63 across all areas of West Lothian put their names forward to take part in Community Focus groups which we held in June.

Many interesting themes and topics emerged, allowing the team to shape an exciting programme of events called 'Borrow a Researcher'. Events will take place in West Lothian libraries throughout September and October and are specifically tailored to public interests. Events will explore subjects such as brain health, body representation, social interaction, robotics, artificial intelligence and many more!

For more information about the Lothian Lugs project visit our webpage: [Lothian Lugs - West Lothian Council](#)

- **Creative writing course -** Simpson Library ran a Creative Writing Workshop Programme. The programme aimed to create a safe, non-judgemental and creative space for adults to develop skills in creative writing. The course explored: creating characters, using real life to inspire fiction, story mapping and exploring space, place and people through writing. There were eight participants taking part online.
- **Kindness in Libraries –** During 'Kindness in libraries week' all 14 libraries displayed 'Kindness Trees' and free tags were displayed, we encouraged visitors to write kindness thoughts on a tag and place it on our 'Kindness Trees' for others to read and share. The trees soon filled up with lovely thoughts and remain on display. Kindness Bookmarks were designed by Lisa Battle, CSA at Almondbank library and these will

be available free for our customers to collect soon from all libraries. West Lothian libraries 'Kindness in Libraries' project is part of the Carnegie UK Trust - Creating Space for Kindness Initiative.

3.1 e-Services

- **BorrowBox.** Downloading of e-Books & e-Talking books has slightly decreased from April 2021. e-Books saw a 7.9% drop and e-Talking books an 8.1% drop. This is not unusual for this time of year and we expected a reduction in the usage of digital resources when our libraries fully reopening. However early indications show that a lot of customers who switched from physical to digital during lockdown are now borrowing both. Compared to the same period in 2020, when access to physical stock was limited, e-Book usage has still increased by 3.5% and e-Talking books by 13.9%. Since April 2021 Borrowbox membership has increased by 5.4%.

We continue to promote the service on the WLC social media platforms, website, leafleting customer's Click & Collect collection bags and sharing information with colleagues and partners. We have increased our social media marketing, promoting our campaign titles, new and featured collections and the generic Borrowbox resources and app throughout the month.

- **OverDrive/Libby e-Magazines.** On 22nd March 2021 our e-Magazine provider changed from RBDigital to Overdrive and our customers now have access to over 3,000 magazines. Customer feedback received has been mainly positive.
- Since April 2021 14,535 e-Magazines have been downloaded and there have been 199 new member registrations to this service.

The tables below show the performance of the e-service offerings.

e-Books

Months	Downloads	New Borrowers registered
Apr 21	1,669	28
May 21	1,664	33
June 21	2,113	35
July 21	2,466	33
Aug 21	2,891	48
Sept 21	1,360	44

e-Talking books

Month	Downloads	New Borrowers registered
Apr 21	1,497	Same figures as above. eBooks and eTalking Books are offered on same platform with customers registering once to access both.
May 21	1,490	
June 21	1,444	
July 21	1,464	
Aug 21	1,519	
Sept 21	1,442	

Digital Magazine Services

Month	Downloads	New Borrowers registered
Apr 21	4,700	64
May 21	1,286	40
June 21	1,213	33
July 21	1,282	23
Aug 21	1,322	22
Sept 21	1,354	17

3.2 Local History Library

- The local history library, which normally operates on a reference-only basis, has been closed since March. Since this time, the Museums Service have taken on responsibility for responding to local history enquiries received via social media although service commitments have not allowed the service to undertake enquiries involving in-depth research.

3.3 Museum Service

- Re-opening of Museum Spaces.** All of our Community Museum spaces have re-opened to the public and the community exhibition programme has been re-launched. The “Wee Museum of Memory” has also re-opened in Livingston Centre and partnership working means that the museum is now open five days a week.
- An exhibition celebrating “**A Century of Council Housing**” has being installed in Armadale Community Museum. This includes an objects display on housing interiors.
- An exhibition on “**The Story of Whitburn Band**” was installed at Whitburn Community Museum. This exhibition was produced by Whitburn Band with support from the Museums Service.
- Donations.** The Museum Service continues to develop the Council’s collection thanks to the generosity of the West Lothian public. Recent acquisitions include a printing press, a collection of WW1 letters and mining equipment.
- Online Talks.** The service is continuing to deliver an online talk programme. The most recent talk was delivered by Sir Geoff Palmer on the “The Story of the Windrush Generation.
- Re-engaging Our Schools.** The Museums Service has continued to work on this MGS funded project Museum Education videos have been created on a number of themes and final edits have been completed. New museum loan boxes have been developed including “Geology” and “The Romans” and more boxes are under development.

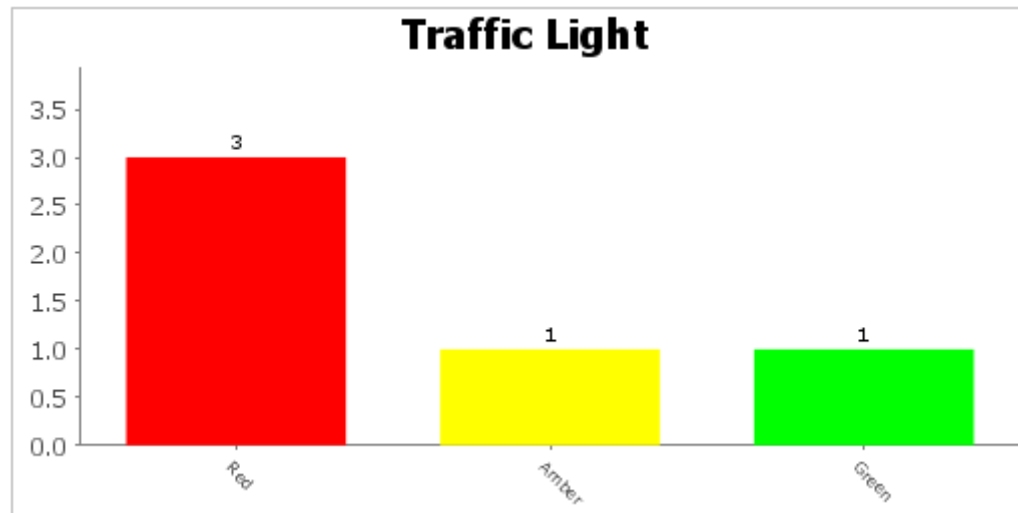
Library 6 Monthly PDSP Report

Data Label : OFFICIAL

Report Author: Anne-Marie Vance

Generated on: 19 October 2021 10:14

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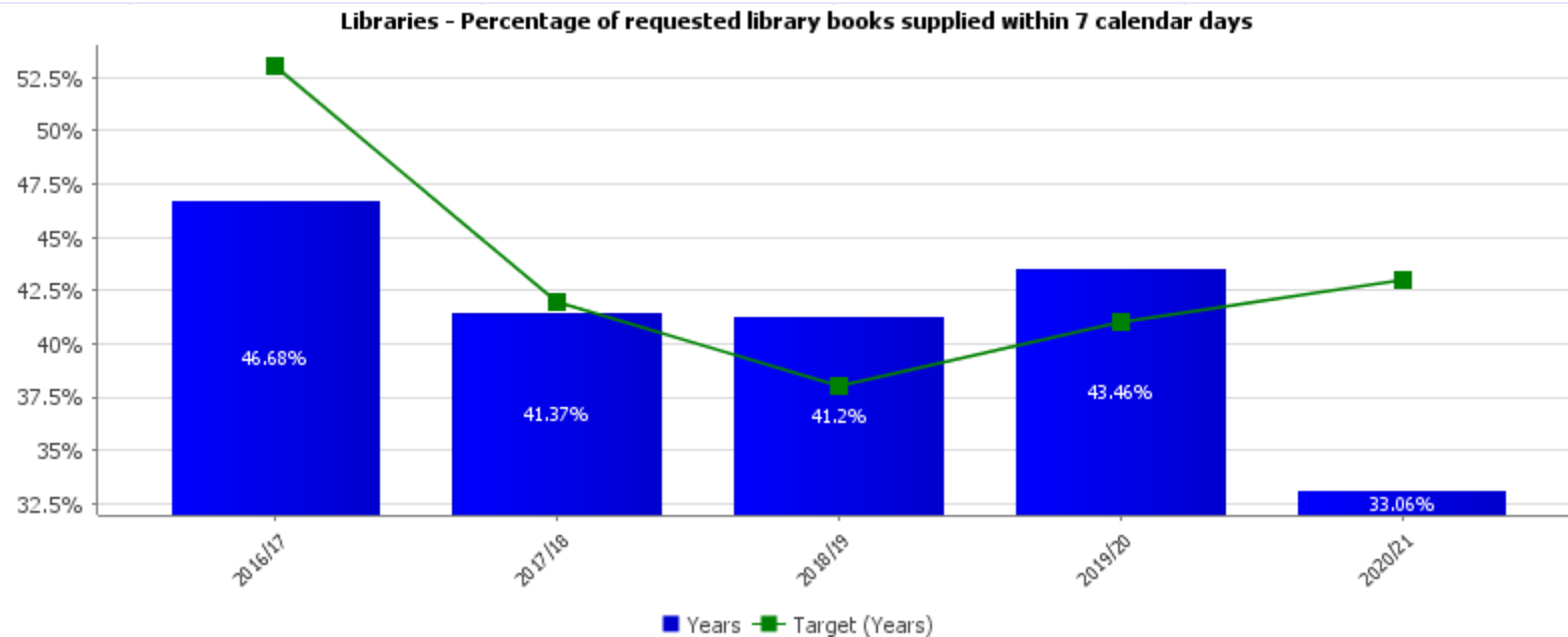


PI Code & Short Name

P:CuCS012_6b.5 Libraries - Percentage of requested library books supplied within 7 calendar days

Description

Library Services offer customers the ability to request books not immediately available. Requests can be made to the library staff or online via the library catalogue. Where possible the book will be sourced from another West Lothian library . We aim to fulfil the majority of customer requests within 7 days.



Trend Chart Commentary:

2021/2020 Target set at 43%

2020/2021 Target was set at 43% to reflect last year performance and to monitor the impact of the reduction in the book fund. This will remain challenging as cost to purchase books increases. Performance is recorded at 33.06%, this is due to customers not being able to return books to the library at all between April to July 2020. Six

libraries opened for returns at the end of July and in September all 14 libraries opened but customers were still reluctant to return during COVID 19. This reduces the stock we have to meet the request requested.

2019/20- Performance was recorded as 43.46% this is above the target of 41% and is an increase of 2.26% on the previous year. This is the results of a reduction in the book fund. We are unable to purchase the same number of copies of bestsellers so borrowers have to wait in the reading queue for longer. Also in March the libraries closed as a result of COVID 19 which pushed many customers online to use the eresources. This increased the waiting items for customers.

2018/19- Performance was recorded as 41.20% this is above the target of 38% and is a very small decrease of 0.2% on the previous year. This is the results of a reduction in the book fund. We are unable to purchase the same number of copies of bestsellers so borrowers have to wait in the reading queue for longer. We expected performance to decrease in 2018/2019 and worked to try and combat the impact of the drop. Most recently we reviewed allocation of the book fund and have made significant changes to what is being purchased. We have also increased the use of our "Collection HQ" system to increase the move of stock around the libraries creating the illusion of new stock within the library. We will continue to monitor performance going forward.

2017/18 - Performance was recorded as 41.37% this is a decrease of 5.31 % on the previous year and the results of a reduction in the book fund. We are unable to purchase the same number of copies of bestsellers so borrowers have to wait in the reading queue for longer. The target was dropped accordingly but fell short of the actual target of 42%. The bookfund will be reduced again in the next financial year 2018/2019 so the target will be reduced again to reflect this.

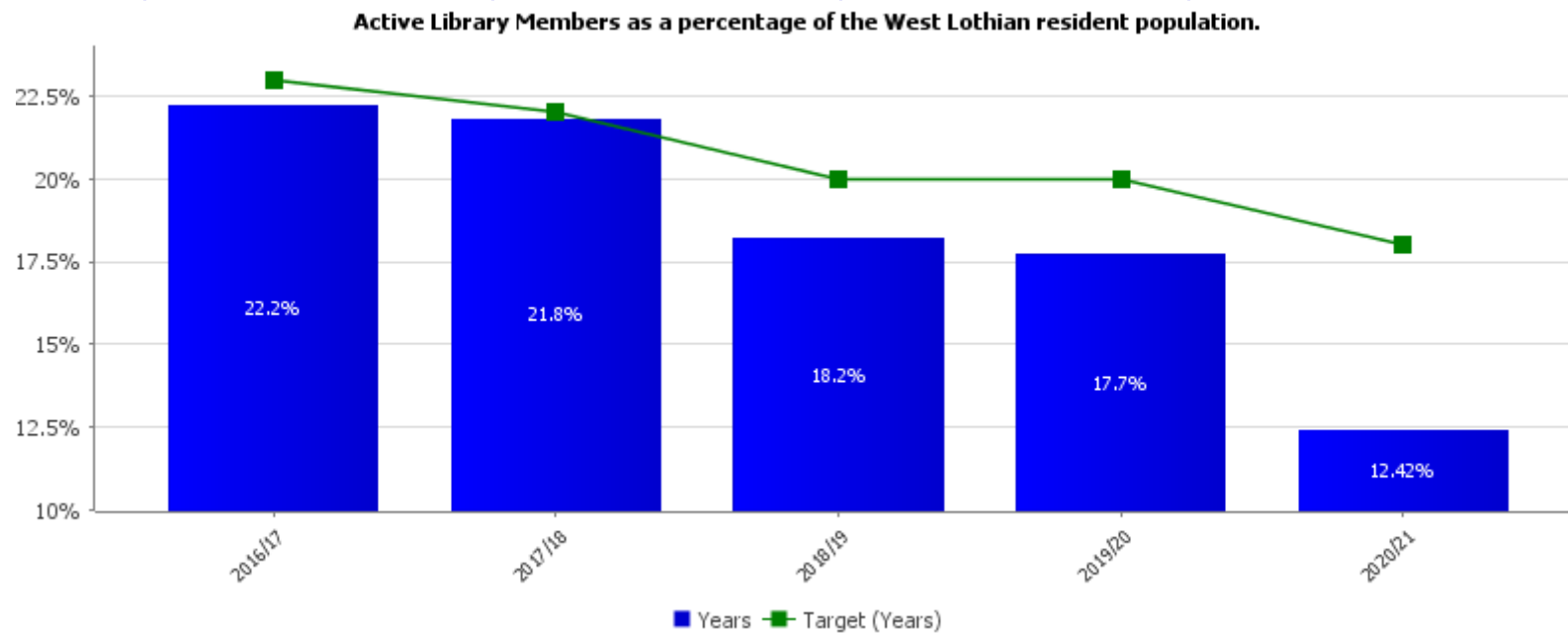
2016/17 - Performance was recorded at 46.68%. This is a decrease of 6.42% on the previous year and is 6.32% below the target for the year. There were no stock deliveries from suppliers between December 2016 and February 2017 in preparation for the new Library Management System being implemented . This contributed to the decrease.

PI Code & Short Name

P:CuCS027_9b.2a Active Library Members as a percentage of the West Lothian resident population.

Description

This performance indicator measures the total number of active members who have either borrowed an item either physically or through the eresource service, or who have used a computer in a library over the previous twelve months. An active borrower is a customer who has borrowed a book, downloaded an eresource or used a public access library PC in the previous 12 years. This indicator does not count the people utilising libraries for learning and information purposes and using stock within the libraries. The calculation is an average percentage of the 12 monthly percentages. This includes active high schools and college members.



Trend Chart Commentary:

2020/2021 - Target is set at 18% for 2020/21

2020/2021 - Target is set at 18% for 2020/21 to reflect the increase in population. Performance is recorded at 12.42%, this is due to reduced customer use as libraries closed for a period of time during COVID 19. Libraries opened in July 2020 for a click and collect service bringing many customers back but some were still reluctant to attend the library or go out in public.

2019/20- Performance is recorded as 17.70% which is below the target of 20%. This is a result of the population of West Lothian increasing to 182,410 and the loss of the last week of business in March from COVID 19.

2018/19- Performance is recorded as 18.20% which is 1.8% below target. This is the result of Blackburn library being closed for relocation into the new partnership centre in June reducing both physical issues and public access PC usage. It is also the result of public access PCs reducing in certain areas of the service. Whitburn Library changed from 8 pc's to 5 due to CIS move. Linlithgow Partnership Centre reduced from 10 to 7 pc'.

Population is recorded as being 181,310.

2017/18- Performance is recorded as 21.8% which is a slight reduction of 0.4% on last year. This is the result of a reduction in library borrowers at Linlithgow, Armadale, and East Calder libraries while they were closed for relocated into new Partnership Centres and an increase in population. Population is recorded as being 181,310.

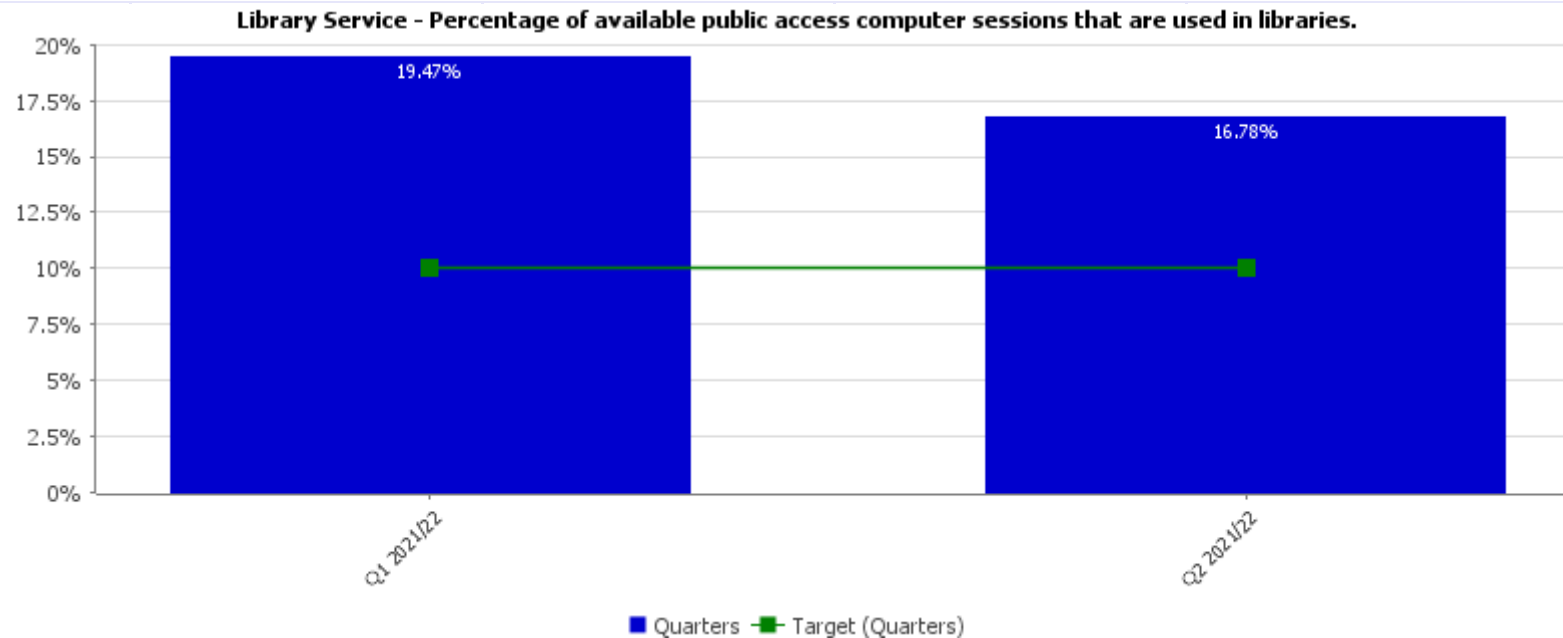
2016/17 - Performance has been recorded at 22.2% which is a slight decrease on 2015/16. This is a result of the West Lothian population increasing to 178,550.

PI Code & Short Name

P:CuCS031q_9b.1c Library Service - Percentage of available public access computer sessions that are used in libraries.

Description

This Performance Indicator describes how much the computers in libraries are used against the total availability. A key indicator for public libraries is how much engagement is provided in terms of digital literacy for the West Lothian wide population. This performance indicator covers all libraries and includes libraries located within partnership centres. The indicator gathers the number of available hours of 104 PCs and the number of issues of PCs in libraries and a percentage is calculated from this. There are a number of reasons for this which include the requirement for jobseekers to prove their online job hunting activities and the requirement to find house swap opportunities because of the changes in the welfare system.



Trend Chart Commentary:

2021/2022 Target set at 10%. This has been reduced to reflect the pandemic. Only 5 libraries piloted the return of PA PCs on the 26th April. On the 17th May all other libraries opened the PA PCs but they were reduced by more than half to the public remained safely Socially Distanced.

2021-22

Quarter 2- Performance is recorded at 16.78%. This is a reduction in the first quarter as there were IT challenges around the PA PCs as we remobilised taking one site off line for a period of time.

Quarter 1- Performance is recorded at 19.47%. Public access PCs only became available to use in all libraries on the 17th May.

2020-21

Quarter 4- All PA PCs in libraries remain closed due to the pandemic, therefore no information displayed.

Quarter 3- All PA PCs in libraries remain closed due to the pandemic, therefore no information displayed.

Quarter 2- All PA PCs in libraries remain closed due to the pandemic, therefore no information displayed.

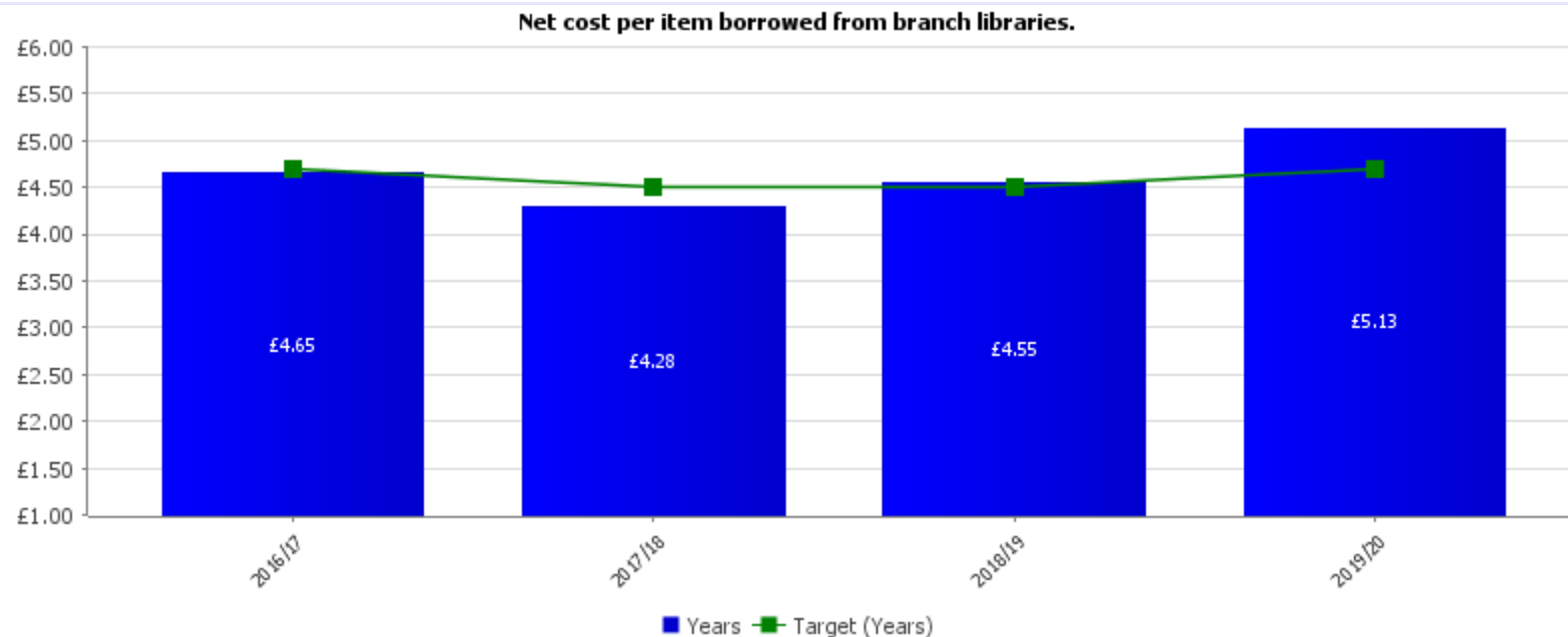
Quarter 1- All PA PCs in libraries remain closed due to the pandemic, therefore no information displayed.

PI Code & Short Name

P:CuCS050_9a.1a Net cost per item borrowed from branch libraries.

Description

This indicator is designed to show the efficiency of Library Services by taking the annual libraries budget and dividing it against the total number of books issued, this includes electronic issues, secondary school and West Lothian College issues as they come through our Library Management system. This figure is an annual average across all branch libraries. The issues sent to CIPFA does not include schools or college and that is why the issue figure differs from the CIPFA returns.



Trend Chart Commentary:

2021/2022 - Target rational is set around changes in service delivery and previous performance.

2020/2021 - Performance figures will be available in November 2021 as the accounts close and figures are calculated. Benchmarking is carried out with other local authorities of similar size in November once the cipfa results have been released. West Lothian libraries also engage with other local authorities to look for service improvements where possible around all library issues. This is done by using a basecamp address that all local authorities ask questions on and respond to allowing us to compare information. We also attend quarterly Association of Public Library meetings to discussion performance.

2019/2020 - The net cost per items borrowed increased to £5.13. In 2019/2020. 392,316 books were issued and it cost £1,915,717 to run the service + £96,878 book fund. There was 336,475 physical books issued and 55,841 digital issues. This is an increase of 0.58p on last year . Book issues decreased by 34,882 as the result of libraries being closed at the end of the year due to Covid and the result of the number of books the service can purchased being reduced as the book fund decreased in 2018/2019. The cost to run the service also increased due to an increase in support costs. This comes in at year end. Finance provide the cost to run the service and this figure reflects the cipfa returns.

2018/19 - The net cost per items borrowed increased to £4.55. In 2018/2019 427,198 books were issued and it cost £1,852,283 to run the service + £95,000 book fund. This is an increase of 0.27p on last year . Book issues decreased by 4,438 as the result of Blackburn libraries being closed for relocation and the result of the number of books the service can purchased being reduced as the book fund decreased by 50.5%. The cost to run the service also increased due to an increase in support costs. The cost to run the actual service has actually gone down but the support cost allocation has gone up. This comes in at year end. Finance provide the cost to run the service and this figure reflects the cipfa returns.

2017/18 - The net cost per items borrowed decreased to £4.28. In 2017/2018 431,636 books were issued and it cost £1,660,013 to run the service + £188,000 book fund. This is an decrease on last year of 0.37p . Book issues decreased as the result of a number of libraries being closed for relocation and severe weather. The cost to run the service also decreased due to staff reductions. Finance provide the cost to run the service and this figure comes from the Cipfa returns. In 2017/2018 we have also included the book fund as this is a library cost. This has not been included previously but will be included going forward.

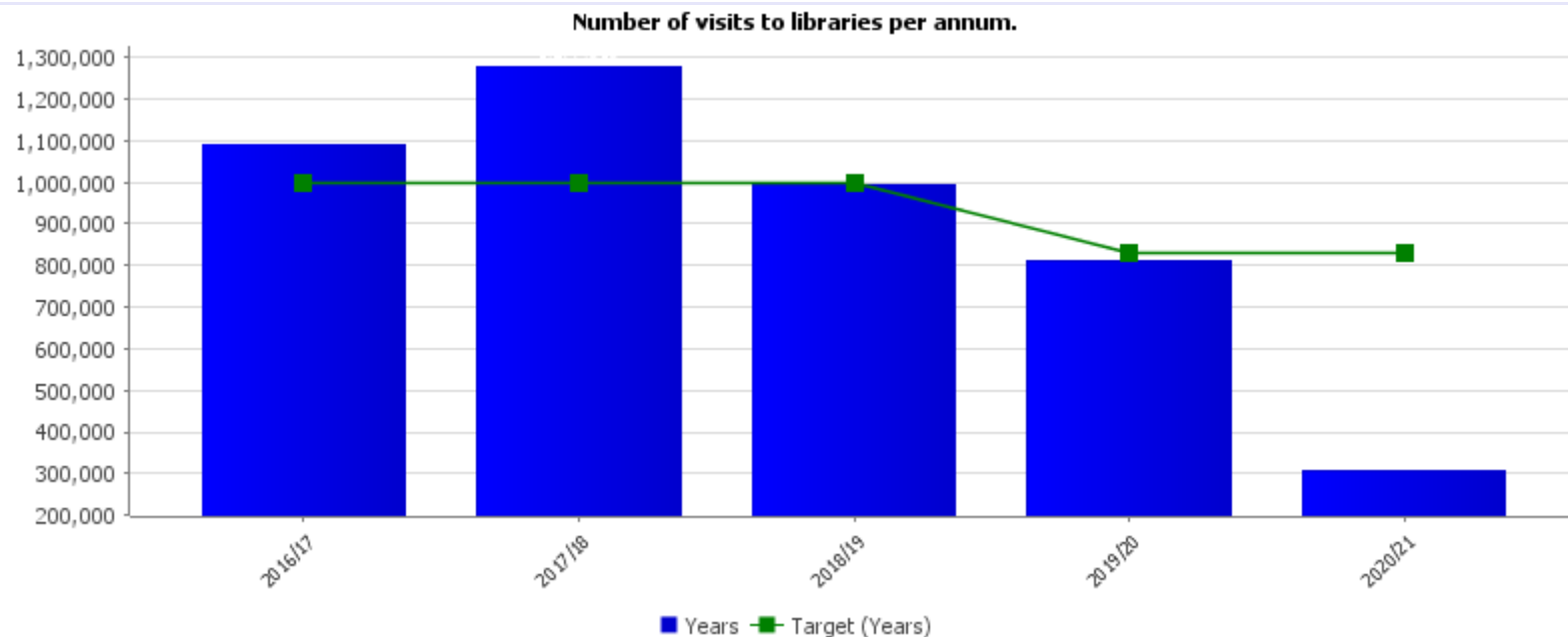
2016/17 - The net cost per items borrowed increased to £4.65 in 2016/2017. In 2016/2017 449,472 books were issued and it cost £2,093,051 to run the service. This is an increase on book issues on the previous year but the cost to run the service has also increased due to the restructure that took place on the 1st April 2016. We no longer have specific library staff so finance have taken a % average of who would work in the library. This is the reason for the increase in net cost per item borrowed.

PI Code & Short Name

P:CuCS230_9b.1c Number of visits to libraries per annum.

Description

This indicator aims to maximise the number of visits to libraries by West Lothian's population. This indicator counts both physical and online visits to the library service including the Local History Library. This information is obtained from the fifteen libraries in the West Lothian council area. Data is collected on a daily basis using footfall counters and is used when benchmarking with other local authorities and also to monitor people accessing the library service and to drive improvement by using engagement programmes to improve performance.



Trend Chart Commentary:

2021/2022 - Target has been set at 350,000 as visits to libraries were by appointment only at the beginning of this period and had very limited numbers during this period to ensure the safety of customers.

2020/21 - Target was set to 830,000 in line with previous performance. Performance is recorded at 305,072, this is virtual visits only as all libraries were closed 2020-21 due to COVID 19. Virtual visits have increased by 72,106 from the same period last year.

2019/20 - Performance is recorded at 809,534. There was 576,568 physical visits and 232,966 virtual visits. Physical visits are down as a result of the libraries being closed at the end of March due to COVID 19 and in July 2019 the service also modified some of the visitor percentages to libraries as they were too high this new way of counting gives a more accurate gathering of the visits per year. Virtual visits are also down as we are now only recording unique visits. This means that only one visit to the website is recorded per person per visit, whereas before every page customers clicked on, even when just navigating the webpages were recorded as separate visits. There was a National agreement with all Scottish libraries that this is how we would start to count virtual visits so that when we were benchmarked we were counting like for like.

2018/19 - Performance is recorded at 994,136 which is 5,864 below target. There were 651,514 physical visits and 342,622 virtual visits. This is the result of no longer subscribing to the Driving Test Theory Test and Ancestry. The community can still access Ancestry via the Family History Society and the Driving Test Theory online for free. Blackburn library was also closed for relocation in June which reduced number of physical visits to the Library. Benchmarking data will be available in November at the Chartered Institute of Public finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) returns come out.

2017/18 - Performance is recorded at 1,277,515 which is an increase of 185,866 on last year. This is a 17% increase on the previous year and 27.8% above the target. A significant increase especially as several libraries were closures to enable relocations into new partnership centres and the severe weather over the winter months.

2016/17 - Performance is recorded at 1,091,649 and is an increase of 9% on the previous year and is 91,949 above the target for the year. Physical visits are recorded at 615,504, while virtual visits increase to 476,145 due to new online resources such as Ziptales, Comic plus, and the increase of the use of Zinio - the online magazines.

Wellbeing and Scottish Libraries



Social Cultural Economic Health

Wellbeing and Scottish Public Libraries: making a difference every day

Scottish libraries are social spaces, physical and virtual, where people learn, share, participate and create; where everyone is equal and everyone is welcome; and where improving our shared wellbeing is at the heart of the service.

1. What is wellbeing?

We can understand wellbeing as how well we are doing as individuals, communities and as a nation. There are different types of wellbeing; the main ones are:

- social
- economic
- cultural
- health

Wellbeing is increasingly important in policy planning, evaluation, and understanding the impact of public services on people's lives. Local and national governments, third sector organisations and other bodies such as the Office for National Statistics all include wellbeing in their work.

Public libraries contribute to all aspects of wellbeing as part of their daily activities and services.

2. Scope of document

This summary document supports the wellbeing infographics developed by APLS (Association of Public Libraries in Scotland) in association with SLIC (Scottish Library and Information Council). It provides a little more detail behind the facts and figures of the infographics.

This document celebrates the impact libraries have on people's wellbeing. It outlines the many ways libraries contribute to social, cultural, economic and health wellbeing.



3. The power of Scottish public libraries: size matters

One of the strengths of the Scottish public library service is the network of physical access points, mobile and outreach visits, and digital spaces provided across Scotland by all 32 local authorities, either directly or by Trusts.

The reach of this **nationwide network** means that:

- There are **1.9 times more public library visits than there are to the top 10 free visitor attractions** in Scotland each year
- Annually are **6.3 times more visits to public libraries than to the men's Scottish Premiership games**
- The **number of people** who have been to the library at least once in the last 12 months could **fill Murrayfield 22 times**.

- If all the **physical books borrowed from Scottish public libraries in one year** were laid down end to end, they would **go up and down Ben Nevis 2,074 times**.

Scottish public libraries reach children, young people, adults, families, older people, New Scots, the digitally excluded, rural communities, city dwellers, in person and online. They provide services and activities during all life stages, and often work in partnership with other organisations and charities to reach even more people.

4. Social wellbeing: people, place, & participation

For many people, interacting with staff, taking part in activities, and feeling part of a community in a welcoming and non-judgemental space, are all key social wellbeing benefits of public libraries.



The **knowledgeable and friendly staff** are highly valued by customers. Whether it's helping someone get online for the first time, tracking down an elusive book, or running a club or activity, they make people feel welcome and involved.

Although reading is often a solitary activity, all 32 public library services offer **reading groups** where people get together to read, talk about the books and the bigger themes.

Reading together for health is also increasingly important, and **bibliotherapy groups** can be beneficial for people with mild to moderate mental health issues.

"[Group creative bibliotherapy] does lead to curiosity about other books, it does broaden the mind, it does challenge your perceptions...it's gone a long way to conquering social anxiety...it's made me feel as if I've got a voice, that I do have an opinion to give." (Midlothian Council Library Service, 2018)

The **Bookbug** sessions for babies and toddlers aim to inspire a love of stories, songs and rhymes from birth.

"The brain develops faster than any other time between the ages of zero and three. Because of this, it's important to foster literacy during the early stages of life." (Scottish Book Trust, 2021)

Libraries are **inclusive, free and welcoming spaces**: all ages are welcome, with more library staff becoming Dementia Friends, and autism-friendly library spaces also being developed.

Within the physical and virtual library spaces, people can take part in a wide range of **activities**. These not only create opportunities to improve or learn new skills, but are social occasions which have been proven to improve people's confidence, their sense of community and reduce feelings of loneliness.

"[The events] are keeping me sharp and are staving off my depression. I thoroughly enjoy the social camaraderie. Long may they continue!"

"I really do appreciate all the library does for both me and the young people/groups I support - you are LEGENDS!"

5. Cultural wellbeing: communities and creativity

Libraries are cultural centres which create a sense of place, a sense of community and bring the world to the library user.



Research has shown that **reading for pleasure** can have a big impact on how people feel, and can create a sense of community, connecting people locally and globally.

People who read for just 30 minutes a week are 18% more likely to report relatively high self-esteem and greater life satisfaction, and non-readers being 28% more likely to report feelings of depression. (Billington, 2015)

With access to books, magazines, newspapers and more in **physical and digital formats**, library users have the world at their fingertips.

51% of boys said that listening to audiobooks has increased their interest in reading (National Literacy Trust, 2020)

“Reading can transport us to places and ideas that we wouldn’t dream of ourselves.”

“It’s amazing to have access to so much pleasure and knowledge, absolutely free.”

Libraries create a **sense of place**, where discovering languages and histories brings an understanding of local communities. **Creative opportunities** inspire people, be it words, music, art, crafts or technology.

“Soon after I moved here I came to a local poetry night and was totally enchanted to hear the

richness of the local dialect."

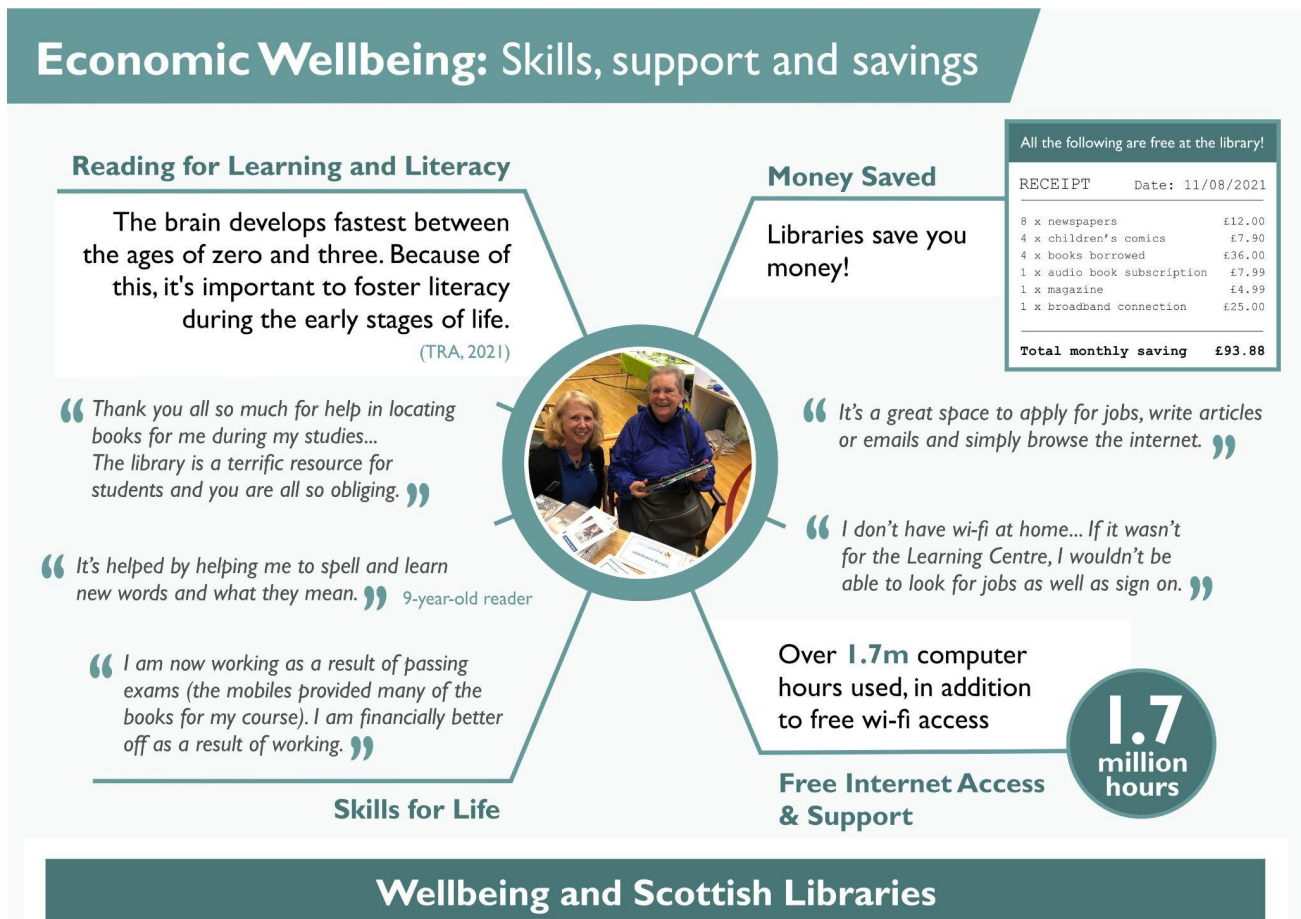
"It is our wee community's link to the world of literature, culture and craft."

Meeting spaces in libraries, either formal and informal, are used by local groups and foster a **sense of connection** with other people and develop **communities of shared interest**.

"Books open up worlds of possibilities."

6. Economic wellbeing: skills, support and savings

The economic value and impact of libraries may be hard to quantify, but every day thousands of people benefit from their free internet access and opportunities to learn, read and develop new skills. All of these create better life opportunities for individuals and improve local communities.



Using libraries also **saves people money**.

"You save me and my family an awful lot of money, but you also give us things money can't really

buy.”

Reading is essential. It is a skill that unfortunately many struggle with, and research shows that people have poorer life chances if they have lower literacy skills. Libraries help with **reading for improving literacy** (children and adults), as well as **reading to help with learning, education and pleasure**.

“...reading for pleasure was found to be more important for children’s cognitive development between ages 10 and 16 than their parents’ level of education. The combined effect on children’s progress of reading books often, going to the library regularly and reading newspapers at 16 was four times greater than the advantage children gained from having a parent with a degree.” (Centre for Longitudinal Studies, 2013)

The internet has been referred to as an essential ‘utility service’. Digital exclusion exists across Scotland and can include not having broadband at home, not having the necessary equipment, and not having digital skills to use the internet.

Currently in Scotland:

- 11% of the Scottish population are non-users of the Internet (ONS, 2019)
- 15% are estimated to face digital inequality in Scotland (Inspiring Scotland, 2020)
- **It is thought that 19% (c.1 million) of Scottish people do not know how to use digital technology** (Inspiring Scotland, 2020)
- Over a third of Scottish households in lower income brackets do not have any internet access at all. (Inspiring Scotland, 2020)

Libraries contribute to **digital inclusion** - essential when access to education, public services and welfare support is increasingly online.

“I don’t have broadband partly because I can’t afford it but partly because I always get stuck trying to do things online. I am getting better but having your helpful staff on hand is so reassuring.”

Libraries are essential for many who use them for **free internet access and support**. This was particularly highlighted during coronavirus pandemic lockdown periods when physical library spaces were closed.

“Staff helped me get that [job] application in just in time. I was nearly crying because I couldn’t get logged in, what a relief!”

As well as learning digital skills, library users can take advantage of organised and informal courses, classes and clubs in order to improve a wide range of **skills for life**. Attending a CV clinic, Job Club or simply printing their CV can be the difference between someone getting a job or not.

“Finding jobs, obtaining benefits and government services are users’ most frequently desired outcomes from library PC use. CVs are the most commonly printed items.” (Lorensberg, 2021)

7. Health wellbeing: self management and signposting

Using a library can be an incredibly powerful activity, particularly in the area of health and wellbeing.



Library usage is associated with higher life satisfaction, higher happiness and a higher sense of purpose in life. (Arts Council England, 2015)

Research also shows that **reading**, whether for pleasure or to learn, has a significant impact on wellbeing.

With rising mental health issues particularly since the pandemic, reading could be promoted as a simple, low-cost yet effective way to change people’s lives by **improving their mental health**.

“Children and young people who are the most engaged with literacy are three times more likely to have higher levels of mental wellbeing than children who are the least engaged” (National Literacy Trust, 2018)

"I have been able to borrow books on mental health when I have needed them and healthy eating recipe books."

Reading alone or together, in reading clubs or formal bibliotherapy groups, brings a wide range of benefits. Yet all it requires is access to a library.

"After reading this book I felt a new sense of well-being." (SLIC, 2020)

"Bibliotherapy is a great project because it benefits my happiness, improves my mood, it's what I look forward to through the week, and it improves my employability...it's right there in the middle benefitting me in all sorts of directions." (Midlothian Council Library Service, 2018)

Libraries also help people improve their health through **provision of trusted, quality health information, signposting** people to appropriate resources and organisations, and with **health events** often in partnership with other groups.

"Reading extensively maintains my health and well-being and learning. I have been able to borrow books on mental health when I have needed them and healthy eating recipe books."

"[I] use library cookery books for inspiration for healthy eating."

The *Health on the Shelf* report estimated that **public library usage saves NHS Scotland £3.2million every year** as a result of people using public libraries.

The more people who use libraries, the more money saved and the greater the wellbeing of the Scottish population.

#LibrariesAreEssential

8. Find out more

SLIC: Scottish Library and Information Council scottishlibraries.org

Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025 (Published August/Sept 2021)

APLS: Association of Public Libraries in Scotland

CILIP Scotland www.cilips.org.uk

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