



**Libraries
Connected**

Library service recovery toolkit

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Introduction

The reopening of libraries will be permitted from 4 July onwards, subject to this being undertaken in a safe and COVID-secure manner.

This document has been prepared in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Library service guidance

This toolkit has been developed by Libraries Connected, working with Heads of Service and their teams. It is designed to supplement the government workplace guidance by addressing the additional library-specific issues and providing examples of good practice from the library sector across the UK and worldwide.

It should be used as a guide to help employers, employees and the self-employed and their users in the UK understand how to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, keeping as many people as possible socially distanced from those they do not live with. We hope it gives you freedom within a practical framework to think about what you need to do to continue, or restart, operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand how important it is to work safely and support the health and wellbeing of workers, users and visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic and not contribute to the spread of the virus.

The toolkit provides a set of resources to support Heads of Service and their teams in planning for service recovery as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Although it is designed to align specifically with the government guidance for England, many of the principles and good practice will relate to public libraries in other jurisdictions.

This toolkit is designed for statutory public library services, where recovery planning must align with wider local government planning. This is the case also for contracted and spun-out library services, as the statutory responsibility for libraries remains with the council, and contracted services and spinouts will also want to respond to the local priorities the council has identified. Where a statutory public library service includes community managed libraries, they should be an integral part of the library service's recovery plan.

Libraries must involve unions and workers in their risk assessments and recovery plans.

Many libraries are in co-located buildings or work with partners as tenants or to deliver services. The other organisations need to be involved in the library recovery planning to ensure plans are aligned and integrated.

Where a library service runs other services within its library buildings it should refer to other relevant government guidance documents on how to run these facilities safely: for example, it should follow the government guidance on cafes and restaurants:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>

or shops - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

Some activities that might normally take place within library buildings are currently not allowed – for example events involving gatherings of other 30 people live performances, activities involving singing or loud speech, etc (see Appendix E for more details) and library services should abide by and keep themselves updated on these restrictions.

Many of these principles may relate to other types of libraries, such as school libraries and those in universities.

Each library service is different, and each library branch is different, so the assessments of needs, risks and resources will need to take place at the local level and planning adjusted in response. However, this toolkit sets out a broad pathway that most library services will follow as they implement a phased recovery process.

Phasing in each library service will vary, depending on available resources and staff, risk assessments and priority community needs. However, the broad pathway for recovery is likely to be:

1. Digital and remote services offered plus some home delivery. Most staff working from home. No public access to buildings.
2. Digital and remote services, plus some home delivery and order & collect service. Many staff working from home. No public access to buildings.
3. Digital and remote services, some home delivery, order & collect, ticketed IT access. Some staff still working from home. Extremely limited public access to buildings. Library opening hours limited, and number of branches open limited.
4. Digital and remote services, home delivery, order & collect, ticketed IT access, browsing and self-service within libraries, controlled mobile libraries. Majority of staff working in libraries. Public access to buildings with key control measures. Increased number of libraries open and opening hours expanded.
5. Digital and remote services, home delivery, IT access, browsing, mobile libraries, events and activities, staff support and interaction. Staff working within libraries. Public access to buildings. Control measures in place but slightly relaxed (e.g. no limit on time public can spend in library). All libraries open for standard hours.
6. New services and offers developed in addition to the existing library offer - service transformation.

How to use this guidance

This document should be read as a supplement to the government guidance on Working Safely During Coronavirus for:

Shops and Branches <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

Offices and Contact Centres <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

Vehicles <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>

People working in, visiting or delivering to other people's homes

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>

This guidance follows the same format as the government workplace guidance and draws out risks specific to library services and suggests mitigations and good practice approaches. It gives practical considerations of how this can be applied in the workplace for workers, volunteers and library users. Therefore, each section of the government guidance should be read first, followed by the matching section of this toolkit. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors, library users, volunteers, visitors and other people, as well as your employees.

Local authorities will also need to consider their library service recovery planning in the light of their statutory obligations to deliver a library service, as set out by DCMS guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-libraries-as-a-statutory-service/libraries-as-a-statutory-service>

Libraries benefit from the support of many volunteers. Under Health & Safety law organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. The government guidance around working safely during COVID-19 should ensure that volunteers are afforded the same level of protection to their health and safety as employees and users.

What do we mean by 'libraries?'

This toolkit is designed for statutory public library services, which may include Community Managed Libraries as part of their provision.

Many of the principles may be applicable to other types of library.

A library service is a complex mix of services delivered from buildings, digitally and remotely. This toolkit will address all these different aspects of the service.

1. Thinking about risk

The relevant sections of the government workplace guidance should be referred to in detail. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

COVID-19 is a public health emergency. Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19, and in particular library services should consider the risks to their workers and users. As an employer, you also have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your library service addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. You should also consider the security implications of any decisions and control measures you intend to put in place, as any revisions could present new or altered security risks that may require mitigation. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. If you have fewer than 5 workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to. The Health and Safety Executive has [guidance for business on how to manage risk and risk assessment at work](#) along with [specific advice to help control the risk of coronavirus in workplaces](#).

Employers have a duty to consult their people on health and safety. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work and how you will manage risks from COVID-19. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously. You must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of your workers creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, see below for further steps you can take.

Where the enforcing authority, such as the HSE or your local authority, identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to socially distance, where possible. The actions the HSE can take include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

In addition to the issues set out in the government guidance, there are a number of additional issues for libraries to consider.

Libraries are public buildings, so the responsibilities set out in the workplace guidance extend beyond employees to include volunteers, service delivery partners, building tenants and library users.

Libraries must involve unions and workers in their risk and recovery planning.

Library buildings are a complex environment, presenting a mixture of risks that may not be immediately evident:

- Libraries bring a wide cross section of the public into a confined space, with close contact to staff and volunteers
- Library users include those in vulnerable and high-risk health groups, alongside children whose movements are difficult to control
- Libraries encourage people to stay within the space for a long time and move freely
- Libraries circulate resources including books, which may harbour the virus on surfaces, and encourage frequent touching of objects through browsing
- Libraries provide computers and study desks, which may be used by well over 20 different people or groups of people a day
- The public spaces have a lot of high-touch surfaces such as door handles and touchscreens
- There are cash transactions between staff and public
- Staff may work in confined office settings
- Many libraries provide toilets for public use, which are sometimes shared with staff
- Even large library buildings have 'pinch-points' such as staircases, lifts and narrow passages between shelves and may only have one exit and entrance
- Staff may work in more than one library building and with different teams of colleagues.
- Libraries are often co-located with other partner services, so these buildings need co-ordination and planning with other building partners e.g. a shared agreed risk assessment and approach.

Risk assessments may be carried out by colleagues from other corporate teams, such as Estates or Health & Safety. It is essential that library staff work closely with these colleagues to ensure the risks specific to the library environment are addressed.

Risk assessments should be carried out for each building and each service (e.g. Home Library Service, Order & Collect) within a library service and built into the service-wide recovery plan.

You should also consider the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations.

How to raise a concern

If staff or volunteers have concerns, they can raise it in these ways as appropriate:

- Contact your manager
- Contact your trade union if you have one (Libraries Connected has discussed this guidance with the national teams at GMB, Unite and Unison)
- Contact HSE at:
HSE COVID-19 enquiries
Telephone: 0300 790 6787 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 8pm)
Online: [working safely enquiry form](#)

The public and partners can also contact the local authority with responsibility for the library service.

1.1 Managing risk

In addition to the guidance in the relevant section of government workplace documents, there are some other issues to note for libraries:

- Library services are part of larger corporate entities – local authorities, cultural trusts and CICs. Risk assessments and recovery planning needs to be aligned with the wider corporate plan to ensure consistency of mitigation measures such as use of PPE.
- Books may be a vector for the virus. Public Health England has advised the virus risk on plastic is negligible after 72 hours, and on paper and card after 24 hours. Libraries should develop quarantine procedures for returned books and resources. Washing, cleaning or disinfecting books and resources is not practicable.
- Browsing and providing reference services and ‘dwell time’ in libraries may present particular risks as library users may be in close contact with books, furniture and other users for an extended time. Children and babies may chew books. Libraries can manage some of the risks by:
 - Asking users to wash or sanitise their hands on entry to the library
 - Rotating book stock so it can be quarantined at the end of the day
 - Moving shelves further apart
 - Removing chairs and tables
 - Limiting entry to the library to support social distancing. 2m (or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) are acceptable. You should consider and set out the mitigations you will introduce in your risk assessment. The government’s [Review of two metre social distancing guidance](#), contains examples of mitigations.
 - Allowing entry in limited time slots
 - Removing or limiting use of reference materials and study areas.
- Computer and IT services are heavily used throughout the day, and an essential service for many in the community. Demand may increase due to the increased number of people seeking work and benefits. Libraries can manage some of the risks by:
 - Moving computers two metres apart (or at least 1m with mitigations where 2m is not possible) and/or installing screens
 - Providing appointments for access, with space between appointments to allow for cleaning and queue management
 - Asking users to sanitise their hands on entry to the library.

- Asking users or staff to wipe down keyboards and mice before and after use.
- Libraries handle cash payments for fees and fines and can manage this risk by:
 - Accepting card and online payments (however, this may not be possible in many libraries and due to the small size of most fines and fees).
 - Suspending fees and fines. The impact on the library budget must be clarified with senior management before this step is taken.
- Libraries attract a wide range of people from across the community, many of whom may be in high risk or vulnerable groups. They can consider having opening times set aside for particular groups such as families or high-risk groups.
- Libraries deliver a wide range of services, including events and activities, and digital support that requires close contact with library users:
 - In most cases, libraries will not try to resume physical group events and activities initially. Instead, they will continue to develop online alternatives, such as #LibrariesFromHome.
 - New procedures should be developed for services that require close contact, e.g. online and remote assistance.
 - Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, libraries should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the library service to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff, users and volunteers.

The government workplace guidance largely focuses on the safety of employees. For the purposes of risk management, the same considerations should be given to volunteers.

Libraries also need to consider the risks to library users in general and specifically to those in higher risk and vulnerable categories including:

- People in high risk health groups including the elderly, BAME groups and pregnant women
- People with a range of mental health issues
- People with autism
- People with Alzheimer's and dementia and their carers
- People with special educational needs and learning disabilities
- Children excluded from school
- Digitally excluded people
- Homeless people
- Drug users
- People with limited or no English and other communication problems.

The risk assessment should help determine how to tailor services and communication strategies to best meet their needs. Equalities impact assessments should be undertaken for any new services.

1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You must share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. This will include sharing the risk assessment for each specific library building with the relevant library staff.

There may be a high level of public interest in the safety of the library environment. You should consider publishing your library service risk assessment as part of your corporate strategy for publishing COVID-19 risk assessments. You can also offer to make available risk assessments of each branch on request.

Below you will find a notice you should display in your workplace to show you have followed this guidance. This can be displayed at the public entrance as part of your communication with library users.

1.3 Enforcement

Where the enforcing authority, such as the HSE or your local authority, identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they are empowered to take a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to 2 years. There is also a wider system of enforcement, which includes specific obligations and conditions for licensed premises.

Employers are expected to respond to any advice or notices issued by enforcing authorities rapidly and are required to do so within any timescales imposed by the enforcing authorities. The vast majority of employers are responsible and will join with the UK's fight against COVID-19 by working with the Government and their sector bodies to protect their workers and the public. However, inspectors are carrying out compliance checks nationwide to ensure that employers are taking the necessary steps.

1.4 Collecting data for Test and Trace

Collecting user data for Test and Trace

Government will work with industry and relevant bodies to design a Test and Trace system in line with data protection legislation, and set out details shortly. The opening up of the economy following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. You should assist this service by keeping a temporary record of your users and visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your library, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. Many libraries may already have booking systems for recording users and visitors using certain services – e.g. use of IT equipment. If you do not already do this, you should do so to help fight the virus.

Collecting employee and volunteer data for Test and Trace

You should assist the Test and Trace service by keeping a temporary record of your staff and volunteer shift patterns for 21 days and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks.

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

2. Who should go to work?

The relevant section of the government workplace guidance should be consulted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

In addition to the guidance set out in the government workplace documents, there are a few issues for libraries to consider:

- Libraries should work closely with their corporate HR departments and unions, to ensure their actions in relation to staff are in line with corporate policies and consistent with teams in other departments.
- People who can work from home should continue to do so. Employers should decide, in consultation with their employees, whether it is viable for them to continue working from home. Where it is decided that workers should come into their place of work then this will need to be reflected in the risk assessment and actions taken to manage the risks of transmission in line with this guidance. Recovery of the library service will require staff to be present in branches and in the community for services such as Home Library Services. Careful consideration needs to be given to the location of managers, who may be able to do much of their work from home but will also need to provide onsite management support to staff especially in the early phases of reopening services.
- Staffing shortages. Many libraries expect to have a reduced workforce available, and this will have an impact on their ability to reopen branches and run services, especially as COVID-19 processes may be more labour intensive. If staff resourcing is limited, each library service will need to make its own assessment on which branches and services to prioritise in recovery, taking into account community needs and their local authority's priorities. This may include having to balance the demands of staffing the physical library service and maintaining and expanding the digital offer which may remain the primary library offer for many users throughout the recovery period.
- Staff shortages may be due to a range of factors affecting the library workforce:
 - There is a high percentage of workers over 50, so may have more people than other workforces in high risk and shielding groups.
 - There is a high percentage of female workers, who may be disproportionately impacted by childcare responsibilities if schools remain closed.
 - Library staff have been redeployed to community support roles and may not be released back to the library service immediately.
- A large percentage of the library workforce is in front of house roles, so it may be challenging to find alternative work within the library service for those who need to remain at home for health reasons. Consultation with your HR department will be key for these staff in the medium/long term.
- Volunteers. Many library services benefit from support by volunteers.
 - However, a high percentage of volunteers are in the clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable groups, as they are over 70 or have underlying health issues so they may not be able to return to the library initially. This may impact on the delivery of specific services with a high level of volunteer involvement, such as home library services, and on the delivery of community managed libraries.
 - There may be an opportunity to recruit new volunteers from the cohort of community volunteers and mutual aid groups. Careful discussion with staff and unions is needed

to clarify this is not replacing paid staff roles, but they could be used to temporarily expand things like digital activities and home library services.

- Managers should pay particular attention to supporting the mental wellbeing of staff, not only on return to work but throughout the recovery process. They should ensure support that is available corporately is clearly signposted, and can also consult useful resources prepared by the charity MIND:
 - Mental Health at Work
<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/>
 - Transitioning back to work after lockdown
<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/transitioning-back-to-work-after-lockdown/>

2.1 Protecting people at higher risk

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Libraries should work closely with their corporate HR department to ensure their actions align with corporate policies.
- Libraries may have more employees than average at higher risk, as a significant percentage of the workforce is over 50 so are more likely to have underlying health conditions.
- Risk assessments should consider volunteers as well as employees. A high percentage of volunteers are over 70, some have underlying health conditions so will be in the clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable categories. The guidance for clinically vulnerable and extremely vulnerable employees should also be applied to volunteers.
- Library work has a high level of contact with the public, so risk may remain even when mitigations are in place.
- Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.
- If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on site roles, enabling them to stay 2m away from others (or 1m with mitigations where 2m is not viable).
- Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home.

2.2 People who need to self-isolate

The government guidance should be applied to volunteers and self-employed people as well as employees.

2.3 Equality in the workplace

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Equality considerations should apply to volunteers, self-employed people as well as employees.
- Covid-19 health and safety risk assessments are required to cover the whole of the workforce. This will include BAME workers and those with other risk factors including age, obesity and underlying health conditions.
- Equality considerations should apply to library users, in particular:
 - Physical access for people with disabilities and small children, including use of lifts, toilets and alternative to queuing arrangements
 - Communications and notices to take account of communication needs, including in other languages and needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired
 - Varying fees and charges so that financially disadvantaged people do not face barriers in accessing the service by, e.g., Order & Collect.

See Appendix C: Prioritising services and user groups for further insight into equality considerations for users.

3. Social distancing for workers

The relevant section of the government workplace guidance should be consulted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider.

- Risk assessments and mitigations must apply to public areas, as well as staff offices used by employees.
- Social distancing may be hard to maintain in a library because:
 - It is an openly accessible public space, where users move around freely. Clear communication with users is vital to explain the changes to the service and the impact this will have on their library experience.
 - Users include those with communication challenges, such as limited English and learning disabilities. They may not fully understand the social distancing guidelines.
 - Even large library buildings have ‘choke points’ such as corridors, stairways, lifts, and it may not be possible to install one-way systems.
 - Staff offices may be small, and many staff are part-time, so hot desking and desk sharing is common.

Libraries may need to fundamentally review the services they can offer if they are not able to maintain social distancing while delivering them. For this reason, most libraries are planning a phased service recovery, to focus first on services where social distancing can be maintained and limiting public access into the buildings and face-to-face services.

3.1 Coming to work and leaving work

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Avoid using public transport, and aim to walk, cycle, or drive instead. If using public transport is necessary, wearing a face covering is mandatory, unless you are exempt for health, disability or other reasons.
- Consider reassigning staff to a branch that is easiest for them to travel to safely. This will require discussion with the staff and unions.
- Consider changing opening and closing times so that both staff and users can avoid peak travel times.
- Safe use of public transport may be an issue for urban libraries.
- Consideration also needs to be given to volunteer as well as employee travel.
- Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes next to pass readers rather than touching them.

3.2 Moving around buildings and worksites

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Volunteers, as well as employees, need to be considered.
- Libraries are public buildings, and management of the public areas will be complex.
- Libraries will need to review how they deliver services, and what sorts of services they can deliver to limit close contact between staff, volunteers and users. It may be that the usual range of face-to-face services cannot be offered, or that they need to be offered from behind screened desks rather than on the library floor.
- Consider floor markings and queuing systems to manage entry into buildings.
- Introduce systems to control entry, so that two metre (or 1m with mitigations) social distancing can be maintained. To calculate the capacity of your buildings, as a broad rule of thumb you can use an allocation of 12.6 square metres
- Per person, which equates to a circle with a two metre radius.
- Consider one-way systems, if possible, or other processes to manage traffic through pinch points such as stairways and entrances.
- Move shelves further apart and install a one-way system for users to move through the aisles.
- Remove furniture such as easy chairs and desks to discourage people lingering in the library. Experience shows that users will move furniture back together if available within the library.
- Move computers and study desks further apart and consider installing screens between them or moving them back-to-back.

See Appendix A: Managing buildings and space for more suggestions and a checklist to support safe movement around the library.

See Appendix C: Prioritising services and user groups for further suggestions of how to review services.

The new processes and necessary adaptations will fundamentally change the experience of users during the recovery period, as they are used to a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Clear communication will be needed to manage user expectations.

See Appendix G: Communications with the public and advocacy with stakeholders for some suggested ways to manage your user communications

3.3 Workplaces and workstations

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Volunteers, as well as employees, should be considered.
- Library staff offices can be very crowded spaces, so the ability to move desks apart may be limited. The government guidance outlines other options, such as screening, moving desks back-to-back or taping them off.
- There are many part-time workers and volunteers, so there may be a lot of desk sharing and hot desking. If it is not possible to assign desks to a single user, then high hygiene standards must be maintained which include frequent handwashing, and with users cleaning the workstation before and after use with the appropriate cleaning materials.
- Where libraries have reception desks and pods for staff, consider installing acrylic screens and changing staff work practice from floor walking to being stationed at the desk or pod, and making the library as self-service as possible.
- In the public area, attention needs to be paid to desks and workstations provided for public use and which may be used by a lot of people throughout the day. Risk assessments may determine that it is not safe to provide study areas or relaxed seating while the COVID-19 risk level remains high.
- Hand washing and sanitising facilities should be provided, and users can be asked to clean or sanitise hands on entering and leaving the building. In most library services it is not practical to provide sanitiser throughout the library and next to every service point, computer or desk as the quantity would be prohibitive.
- Limit access to IT to essential use and within timed slots. This will allow cleaning before and after use by users and/or staff. PHE advises that IT terminals should be cleaned using alcohol containing wipes suitable for this purpose.
- Use of self-service machines will help limit interaction between library staff and users. However, the machines have touchscreens which will be touched by hundreds of people during the day. Users should be encouraged to sanitise or clean their hands when entering and leaving the building, and cleaning regimes introduced for the screens.
- Soft furnishings are hard to clean, so consider removing them from public and staff areas. Removal in public areas will also encourage people not to extend their visit.

3.4 Meetings

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Libraries often provide meeting rooms to external organisations, to support the community and to generate income.
- Planning will be needed to ensure these rooms can be used in line with the government guidance. Only absolutely necessary participants should physically attend meetings and

should maintain social distancing (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable). It may not be possible to offer meeting room venues while the COVID-19 risk remains high.

3.5 Common areas

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Staff accommodation may be quite small, and common areas such as kitchens and common rooms very small. Careful planning is needed to limit the numbers using these areas – e.g. changing staff break times on rotas.
- There may be areas that are common to library staff, volunteers and users – such as toilets and washrooms. Risk assessments should consider how to provide shared staff/public toilets safely and to ensure the needs are met of those with disabilities.
- Changing places and disabled toilets should be kept publicly accessible if possible.
- Many libraries are in shared buildings or co-located with other services. It is vital that risk assessments and recovery planning is aligned across the whole building and the different tenants and services.

3.6 Accidents, security and other incidents

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- The security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations.
- Library users sometimes display inappropriate or aggressive behaviour that needs to be managed by library staff and volunteers, including by removing them from the library.
- Library byelaws set out appropriate standards of behaviour for users, and actions libraries will take if users break the byelaws, including removal from the premises and banning. Byelaws can apply to users exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms who can be asked to leave the library. The byelaws should be publicly displayed, and available for staff to refer to if necessary.
- Whether you have enough appropriately trained staff to keep people safe. For example, having dedicated staff to encourage social distancing or to manage security.
- Staff training should cover in detail any revised procedures for providing assistance including First Aid, (see HSE advice - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/first-aid-and-medicals/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>) and managing security incidents and disruptive behaviour. They should be clear on how they can call in additional support if needed, and reporting systems should be in place so that any incidents can be reviewed, and processes revised if need be. Many libraries are introducing 'zero tolerance' policies for disruptive or unsafe behaviour.
- Users should be encouraged to behave safely, by displaying notices at the entrance asking them not to enter if they have any COVID-19 symptoms, to maintain social distancing and to clean their hands on entering and leaving.
- Following [government guidance on managing security risks](#).

4. Keeping your users, visitors and contractors safe

The relevant section of the government workplace guidance should be consulted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Managing users will be the most complex aspect of library service recovery, as libraries serve an incredibly diverse user base. This includes those in high risk categories and the vulnerable, such as people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, homeless, and those with substance abuse issues.
- Libraries have worked hard to be openly accessible, inclusive and welcoming places. Libraries in a COVID-19 environment will feel very different, with limited entry, reduced services, highly managed spaces and reduced levels of interaction.
- Careful communication is vital to manage user expectations, explain the new procedures and promote safe behaviour.
See Appendix G for further advice on communications and advocacy, including template texts to use in public messages and notices.
- You may want to consider reserving some entry times for high risk groups, and for small children and families.
- All children must be accompanied by an adult responsible for their behaviour. Libraries can determine their own age categorisation – but in practice many use age 12.

See also Appendix A for further advice and a checklist on managing the building and spaces, and Appendix C on Prioritising Services and User Groups.

4.1 Managing contacts

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Order & Collect and Ready Reads (where books are pre-selected for users) services can be offered as an alternative to browsing and self-selection:
 - Users collect books and resources from the library entrance lobby or reception desk, where staff are behind an acrylic shield.
 - Some libraries may choose to quarantine books for 72 hours after being selected by staff, though this isn't necessary if staff have clean hands
 - Some libraries may choose to pack selected books into bags to make issuing quicker and easier
 - Staff sanitise hands regularly, while issuing the books
 - Returned items should be labelled with the date that they were returned, and placed in bins and quarantined for 72 hours before re-shelving or reissuing. Wheeled book bins, laundry bins and post trolleys can be used as they are easy for staff to wheel into the quarantine area and can be easily labelled. Workers must receive appropriate manual handling training.

- Queues are managed to support social distancing and to ensure they do not cause a risk to individuals, other businesses or additional security risks. For example, this could be achieved by introducing queuing systems, having staff direct users and protecting queues from traffic by routing them behind permanent physical structures such as street furniture, bike racks, bollards or putting up barriers.
 - Order & Collect allows users to make a selection via the library catalogue, email and phone. However, its operation will depend on stock availability. Some library services may not be able to fulfil requests if their usual stock logistics are compromised (branches closed, staff shortages, vans redeployed, considerable stock out on extended loans).
 - Ready Reads are pre-selected thematic book packs (e.g. crime, romance, children's - grouped by age/ability e.g. board books, picture books, early readers, longer stories, nonfiction lucky dip). This system does not provide full user choice but may be easier to fulfil if stock availability is limited. It may also be a way of introducing new material to readers.
 - Consideration needs to be given to fees and charges, as reservation and overdue fees may be a barrier to some people accessing the library service when the usual access is unavailable or very limited. If fees and charges do apply, then cashless payment is preferable.
- Home library services (HLS) will be an important way to serve shielding, vulnerable and housebound users and ensure they do not need to come into the library:
 - New procedures for no-contact HLS should be developed, where orders are taken over the phone or remotely, staff clean hands regularly while selecting the books, and books are left on the doorstep.
 - Some libraries may choose to quarantine for 72 hours after selecting books, but this is not necessary if staff have clean hands.
 - Returned books should be transported separately from the new books and quarantined for 72 hours.
 - Containers should be clearly labelled to avoid mixing quarantined and returned books.
 - HLS staff and volunteers should be provided with hand sanitiser and clean their hands before and after every delivery/collection.
 - Staff and volunteers must ensure 2m (or 1m with mitigations where 2m is not viable) distancing from householders and should not enter a person's home under any circumstance.
 - Safe procedures need to be developed for shared occupancy dwellings, such as flats and care homes.
 - If private cars of staff and volunteers are used, their vehicles must have appropriate insurance cover.
 - Plastic sheeting and crates can be used in cars and vans to provide protection, along with adequate cleaning after use.
 - HLS is about more than books, and the social contact they usually provide is vital. Consider offering keep-in-touch phone calls while the HLS remains in no-contact mode.

- Restoring full access to browsing and studying inside the library will be complex. However, some suggested measures can be taken:
 - Control entry into the library to facilitate 2m social distancing (or 1m with mitigations where 2m is not possible) social distancing. When assessing floor capacity, as a rule of thumb, you can use an allocation of 12.6 square metres per person (a circle of 2m radius). However, you also need to consider pinch points such as stairways, lifts and entrances.
 - Ask users to sanitise hands on entering and leaving the library.
 - Gloves do not need to be worn as hand washing is a more effective control measure (gloves may not be clean).
 - Provide sanitiser in multiple locations throughout the library if possible.
 - Limit user handling of books, for example, through different display methods, new signage or rotation of high-touch stock.
 - Consider discouraging extensive browsing and handling of books by users for the initial reopening period. Timed entry could be an option to limit users' time within the library.
 - Continue to offer Order & Collect and Ready Reads as an alternative to self-selection and browsing.
 - Remove comfortable seating, soft furnishings and study furniture to discourage extensive browsing and long visits.
 - Remove magazines and newspapers.
 - Provide separate a location for returning books that have been extensively handled (e.g. reference and study materials), so they can then be quarantined for 72 hours before being returned to shelves. Many libraries will provide wheeled book bins, laundry bins or post trolleys for returned books that can be easily moved to the quarantine area by staff.
 - Some booksellers will ask users to place any book they browse on a quarantine trolley. This may not be a feasible option for libraries that may only have one copy of each book title.
 - Move shelving further apart, if possible, and establish one-way traffic flow through the aisles.
 - Children must be accompanied by an adult who is responsible for their behaviour and following social distancing guidelines.
 - Change opening hours so staff can restock shelves and manage the library floor etc. when the building is closed.
 - Promote self-service issue and return to reduce interaction between staff and users. Asking users to sanitise hands on entering and leaving the building and cleaning the screens will reduce the risk from the touchscreen.
 - If self-issue is not available, install acrylic screens and queue controls at issue desks, and ensure staff can clean their hands frequently.
 - Install acrylic screens on enquiry desks and staff pods, and change procedures so staff do not floor walk to interact with and support users.

- IT and computer access is a vital service that libraries provide, and demand may have grown with more people seeking work and applying for benefits. It will be a service that libraries will want to restore as soon as possible:
 - Control access by a booking or queuing system, with timed slots. This will allow cleaning of workstations before and after use using alcohol containing wipes suitable for this purpose.
 - Users should be encouraged to sanitise hands when entering and leaving the library.
 - Move workstations apart or install screens to support social distancing.
 - Suspend face-to-face digital assistance. Replace with remote assistance, if possible, and help from staff at an enquiry desk behind an acrylic screen.
 - Staff supporting services such as photocopying, scanning, printing should also be behind a screen.
 - Self-service photocopiers, scanners and printers should have their touch-points cleaned between users with alcohol containing wipes suitable for this purpose.
 - Cashless payment is preferable for any charges for services such as photocopying, scanning and printing cashless payment is preferable.

See Appendix D for more detail on book circulation and browsing and Appendix C for more on IT services.

4.2 Providing and explaining available guidance

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- The post COVID-19 library offer and experience will be very different to usual, so clear communication is vital to manage user expectations.
- Most libraries will deploy a phased recovery, so communication, signage, etc, will need to be refreshed to reflect the changes.
- Reviewing external messaging to users to make sure it does not provide information that may present a security risk, such as the location of queues or the number of people permitted in a queue.
- Library bye laws should be displayed so staff can refer to them if needed to manage disruptive behaviour.
- Consider presenting a 'User Charter' to set out how users can protect themselves and others.
- Information and notices will need to be designed to take account of the varied user base and their differing communication needs, including people with limited or no English, visual impairment and learning disabilities.

See Appendix G for suggested wording for communications and notices and a draft User Charter.

5. Cleaning the workplace

The relevant section of the government workplace guidance should be consulted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>, as should the guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>.

There are a few additional points for libraries to consider.

5.1 Keeping the workplace clean

Libraries are openly accessible places, so it may not be possible to identify known or suspected cases of COVID-19 among library users.

Care should therefore be taken with the regular cleaning routine and provision of hand sanitiser for users at entrances and social distancing procedures.

Standard cleaning, as set out in the government guidance is sufficient and fogging (where a sanitising chemical is sprayed in a room) should not be needed. Fogging should not be used where there are rare or special collections in the library space.

Libraries should maintain good ventilation in the work environment. For example, opening windows and doors frequently, where possible.

5.2 Hygiene, handwashing and sanitation facilities

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- If toilet facilities are shared by staff and users, risk assessments need to consider how they can be provided safely.
- Use of accessible toilets and Changing Places should be maintained.
- Consideration needs to be given to alternative hand cleaning facilities including sanitiser, if toilets are closed to public use.
- Where toilets can be kept open you should ensure/promote good hygiene, social distancing, and cleanliness in toilet facilities and carefully manage them to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Steps that will usually be needed:
 - Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency and to avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
 - Consider the use of social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and the adoption of a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks).
 - To enable good hand hygiene consider making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand driers) are available.

- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
- Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate.
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
- Putting up a visible cleaning schedule can keep it up to date and visible.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.

5.3 Changing rooms and showers

Follow the government workplace guidance.

5.4 Handling goods and objects

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Advice from Public Health England is that the virus risk on plastic covers is negligible after 72 hours, and on paper and card after 24 hours. Libraries should develop procedures to quarantine returned and extensively handled books (e.g. reference and study materials) for 72 hours.
- Suspend book donations or develop quarantine procedures.
- Introduce cashless payment for any fees and charges.
- Pack books for Home Library Service, Order & Collect and Ready Reads in bags or crates. Some libraries may choose to quarantine for 72 hours before issue but this is not necessary if staff have clean hands.
- Encourage staff handling books and objects to wash or sanitise their hands frequently.
- Self-service machines have touchscreens, so users should be encouraged to sanitise hands on entering and leaving the building, and screens should be cleaned throughout the day.

See also section 4.1 for advice on book browsing and loans, use of IT and management of Home Library Services.

See Appendix D for further detail on handling books and resources.

6. Personal protective equipment and face coverings

It is important to follow closely the relevant section of the government workplace guidance, which covers PPE in detail <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Public health guidance on PPE, and the use of face coverings in particular, may evolve and so we will be reviewing this section of the toolkit regularly. Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. This includes hearing or visual impairments, learning disability and/or autism as well as other health conditions.

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Libraries provide a very personalised service with a high level of interaction with users. However, every effort must be made to revise procedures to sustain social distancing as set out in the government guidance.
- This may mean suspending some of the core services, such as digital assistance, if they cannot be carried out with social distancing.
- You may need to revise your normal ways of delivering services, for example:
 - When assisting users to access stock items. This happens more often in a library than in a shop setting. Alternative ways of help should be considered, e.g. asking the user to return later when the item will be available for them to collect.
 - Dealing with enquiries in sites without enquiry desks (many libraries have removed enquiry desks in recent years) and dealing with enquiries that occur on the library floor. Consideration should be given to installing temporary screened desks or pods.
 - Providing IT assistance. People using library computers for essential tasks such as applying for Universal Credit may also have low levels of IT skills, and digital assistance is a key role library staff provide. Consideration should be given to providing remote assistance, e.g. by control of PC terminals.
 - Managing queues and triaging users to different service points and managing pinch points such as stairways and lifts. Floor markings, signage and swim lanes etc can be installed to ensure staff can maintain a two metre (or one metre with mitigations) distance from the queues.
 - Cleaning IT kit, study areas etc between users. Appointment systems should be established to allow a space between users for cleaning to take place.
- Risk assessments must consider how to:
 - Manage disruptive users
 - Administer first aid.

7. Workforce management

The relevant section of the government workplace guidance should be consulted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

7.1 Shift patterns and working groups

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Library staff and volunteers often work across many branches, and personnel shortages mean that movement of staff between branches may need to increase rather than decrease.
- ‘Bubbling’ of staff may be considered, when possible. This is where staff work in the same location and with the same colleagues rather than mixing with all staff and several locations each day.
- Consideration should be given to lone workers and whether there is a need to draft in additional staff to support social distancing and the new more labour-intensive work procedures. This may mean limiting the opening times of specific branches.

7.2 Cars, accommodation and visits, and work-related deliveries

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- If the private cars of staff and volunteers are used for library work, e.g. home library service, the insurance must be adequate.
- Car drivers can be issued with plastic sheeting to line their boots when collecting returned books and provided with appropriate cleaning materials.
- Returned books should be collected separately from delivery of new books, to avoid cross-contamination.

7.3 Communications and training

7.3.1 Returning to work

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Ensure staff and volunteers are provided with effective training including awareness of risks and how to control them.
- Adequate time needs to be provided before services reopen for staff and volunteer training, to ensure they understand and can implement the new procedures as they will be significantly different to standard library operations.
- Attention needs to be paid to people’s emotional wellbeing. Many staff have been redeployed to emergency roles, while others may not have left the house very much during lockdown, and some will have had distressing experiences including illness and bereavement. People may be anxious about the return to work. Mental health support services for staff should be signposted.
- Delivery of a library service in this new environment will be very different to the normal service, and staff may need additional support to ensure they maintain social distancing and

other measures, as they may be motivated to transgress them as they want to provide their usual level of helpful and friendly service.

- Walk-throughs and dry runs can help staff become familiar with and confident about new procedures before the service reopens to the public.
- Many libraries have had staff return to buildings weeks in advance of opening, to help design the new ways of working and safety processes, with adequate time for adjustments as plans evolve.
- Particular attention needs to be paid to training staff in how to respond to behaviour that does not abide by the rules, including disruptive people and those who may be displaying symptoms. Knowledge of the library bye laws should be refreshed and clear training given on processes for managing user behaviour and the back-up available.
- As service recovery will be phased, staff need ongoing training and support to support this.

7.3.2 Ongoing communications and signage

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Feedback systems need to be in place so that staff can report incidents and suggest ways processes can be revised and improved.
- Mental health support for staff should be signposted.
- Consideration needs to be given to communicating and training of part-time staff and those moving between sites.

See Appendix G for further suggestions on communications with staff and employees.

8. Inbound and outbound goods

The relevant section of the government workplace guidance should be consulted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

In addition to the issues set out in the government workplace guidance, there are a few additional points for libraries to consider:

- Books and resources should be quarantined for 72 hours after return.
- Books selected for home library service, Order & Collect and Ready Reads should be packed in bags or crates
- Some libraries may choose to quarantine for 72 hours after selection, but this is not necessary if staff have clean hands.
- When transporting books for Home Library Service and between libraries, separate returned books from clean books to minimise any cross-contamination risks or deliver these in separate journeys.
- Label containers to avoid mixing quarantined and returned books.
- Plastic sheeting can be used to cover car seats and boots, and appropriate cleaning materials should be provided to private car users.

Where to obtain further guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19): government guidance <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Cleaning of non-healthcare settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for employers and businesses
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Health and Safety Executive: working safely during the Coronavirus outbreak
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

APPENDICES

The appendices provide detailed suggestions and check lists for specific aspects of library operations.

- A. Managing buildings and public spaces
- B. Staff, volunteer and user safety and welfare
- C. Prioritizing services and user groups
- D. Book lending and browsing
- E. Restoring events and activities
- F. Sustaining the digital offer
- G. Communications with the public and advocacy with stakeholders

APPENDIX A: MANAGING BUILDINGS AND PHYSICAL SPACES

The table below provides a checklist of some of the key risks that need to be considered and suggested control and mitigation measures.

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
General social distancing to avoid contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to manage user numbers within building at any one time ● Need to manage user proximity to support social distancing ● Need to manage dwell times to ensure throughput of users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building capacity - limits to be identified as part of Risk assessment process- building by building. ● Queuing system outside – 1 in, 1 out. Different queues for different service offers where possible ● Assessment of capacity outside building for queues & liaison with neighbouring premises ● Staff to facilitate social distancing or, as identified, security on doors to manage entry ● One way system and separate entrances/exits where possible ● One way system in branches ● Remove or reduce seating and tables ● Phased reopening (e.g. ‘ready reads’ and or ‘order and collect’ service first alongside social distanced public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear advice and guidance advertised throughout buildings as per government templates e.g. advertise that risk assessment completed, and request users adhere to social distancing ● Fire safety risk and security assessment to ensure changes are compliant ● Demarcation of floor space at service points ● E.g. numbered raffle tickets or equivalent issued to users to support management of dwell times ● Regular review of 		<p>Communications to users in advance of visit – manage expectations (e.g. opening hours, dwell time etc)</p> <p>Staff training to what degree are staff required to champion/ police social distancing</p> <p>Back up available e.g. management, security, police depending on situation</p> <p>Involve unions and H&S in risk assessment process</p>

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
		<p>computer offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limit browsing time (e.g. half an hour) ● Limit public computer use by time and consider whether for essential activity only ● Enable staff to remote into public computers to provide remote digital assistance ● Remove newspapers/magazines ● Study tables – booked in advance if/when available ● Appointment system for access to specialist collections for research ● Specific opening hours for recovery phase with time closed for staff job time e.g. 9-1 for staff 10-12 public, changeover of staff shift then 1-4 open with 4-5 for closedown. 	<p>measures and adaptation /additional where needed</p>		
Protecting staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff to staff transmission ● User to staff (and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduction of hot-desking where possible ● Clear desk policy ● Limit staff to one location and/or a specific group of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow government guidance on social distancing, and hand sanitisation (section 6 of workplace 		<p>Early communications plan will be required for staff to ensure</p>

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
	<p>vice versa) transmission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff confidence ● Liability of staff and manager 	<p>colleagues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wipes used at beginning and end of day ● Staff issued with own keyboard and mice ● Shift working with gap at handover to avoid contact <p>Staggered use of staff areas e.g. kitchens & staffrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acrylic screens at help desks if advised and where they are able to be fitted ● Reduced opening hours (e.g. 10-4) to allow staff to work on shop floor when building is closed to users ● Limiting staff on the shop floor at all other times (self-service approach) ● Use of signage, help screens, online facilities etc to minimise need for staff/public interventions ● Phased reopening of services (e.g. Order & Collect first to get staff comfortable with people in the building first) ● Adequate control measures in place in advance in line 	<p>guidance) – and PPE where required following individual risk assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supply chain and prioritisation issues for sanitiser and other protective measures will dictate pace of reopening ● Regular review of measures and adaptation /additional where needed 		<p>that they are confident in the role they are being asked to take</p> <p>Liaison with Trades Unions to ensure consistent messaging</p>

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
		<p>with government guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment of travel to work safe options for staff. Relocate staff if needed to other branches 			
Minimising risk of contamination between different user groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Range of different age groups and vulnerabilities coming together in one space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Separate sessions (e.g. specific times for vulnerable groups – potentially after weekend decontamination and clean) ● Child friendly session (recognising that concept of social distancing may be more difficult in these age groups and this this is only likely to be offered at a later stage in the process) ● Encouraging single user access where possible 	<p>Clear signage and advertising within building; extensive communications to local communities</p>	<p>Targeted service offer to different user groups</p>	<p>Able to identify and communicate with targeted groups</p>
Minimising risk of contamination through object/surface handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General hygiene and cleanliness ● Stock handling while browsing ● Stock quarantine ● RFID/Touch screen ● Public access computers ● Toilets (Changing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sanitisation stations at entry points, with adequate provision of hand sanitiser ● No cash payments. Contactless payments if possible. Consider removing fines and payments if cashless system not possible. ● Enhanced cleaning regimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PHE guidance/COVID-19 guidance ● PPE requirements – if identified following individual risk assessments, supply chain availability identified 		<p>Book and resource handling Staff training in procedures.</p> <p>Contractual obligations by internal/externa</p>

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
	Place & other)	<p>(toilets/ touch screens/public access network)</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closure to the public or limits on use of toilets (need to be balanced with the need for hand washing) <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drop-boxes for returned stock, labelled with date to support quarantine period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advice and guidance on browsing/book handling ● Availability/access to enhanced and frequent cleaning 		1 cleaning companies
Maintaining required levels of statutory service while balancing with public health requirements and equalities impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Book lending enabled ● Research and study space limited in initial phase ● Community/group activity difficult to maintain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuation of enhanced digital services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DCMS support for phased approach 	Expanding online activities using skills staff have developed e.g. making videos, running virtual groups/ events	

Checklist

- ✓ COVID-19 risk assessment completed
- ✓ Library layouts assessed/changed for social distancing
- ✓ Cleaning/disinfection regimes in place
- ✓ Bookings system in place where needed
- ✓ User flow considered
- ✓ Control and protective measures for staff and users identified and in place
- ✓ Changes to opening hours and nature of offer clearly communicated to users in advance
- ✓ Appropriate staff support and training in place
- ✓ Equalities Impacts of changes adequately considered

Equalities considerations

Toilets – for users with disabilities and families with young children

Masks – not helpful for the deaf and hard of hearing. Social distancing is the main control measure

Space changes – need to be adequately communicated to blind or visually impaired

Time limits – may adversely affect users with disabilities, the elderly

Changed procedures & staff distancing – may confuse & distress users with mental health and learning difficulties

Reduced access to public PCs – may adversely affect users without own digital access

Mixed use premises

Where a premises delivers a mix of services, only those services that are permitted to be open should be available. For example, libraries should not host fitness classes.

Where a library service operates a shop, café or restaurant within its buildings it should follow government guidance on safe operation of these facilities

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

APPENDIX B: STAFF, VOLUNTEER AND USER SAFETY AND WELFARE

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
Managing user behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Users failure to understand service framework and social distancing ● User reactions due to inability to deliver certain service elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Library byelaws ● Union request – improve banning processes (we could have printed notices on display for staff to refer users to when they do not behave in a considerate and orderly manner) ● Clear comms prior to opening to state expectations/policy and consequences ● Staff confident in explaining policy and procedures to user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of internal processes to manage user behaviour ● Staff training ● Management presence and support- while the presence may be helpful to staff it could also compromise the numbers of people allowed into the branch – we should look at other ways we can support our staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunity to raise awareness of online/self-service options for users
Framework to assess risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For sites and activities – needs to be site specific ● Support from internal depts. i.e. facilities. These may have other priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Worked through with union reps ● H&S and Facilities support and sign off needed ● Dynamic risk assessments need to be made as well as daily assessments to adapt to change or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Union(s) collective endorsement of Toolkit ● Support from internal depts. - we can't afford to go ahead without their support but also need to be assertive and hold them to account. 	

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
		new issues		
How to manage social distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited user understanding ● Increase spread of the virus through staff and users ● Staff inability to manage the new service models ● Lack of protective equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff induction back into the workplace. ● Video of each site in the new layout with social distance measures ● PPE for staff- where identified by risk assessments ● Regular staff meetings (not necessarily face to face) and management presence (as long as this doesn't compromise social distancing and numbers allowed on premises) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff Charter ● Clear visible guidance on site showing the numbers allowed on site along with a crib sheet for staff to check at regular intervals, i.e. is the signage still visible, is there enough PPE (if applicable), are users/staff behaving correctly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunity to raise awareness of online/self-service options for users
Building staff morale and motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concerns over being off work sometime and limited understanding of social distancing ● Loss of skills or lack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send out clear guidance to staff identifying the steps put in place to reassure them and allow them to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Return to work briefings and re-immersions ● Clear and visible guidance on the procedures to follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If managed correctly, could lead to staff feeling empowered and more confident /competent

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of motivation Divisions between staff – those who have played a significant role during the lockdown and those who haven't 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comment Re-emphasizing how valued they all are – Ensure Members and Senior Leadership all saying the same thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at each site, must be easily accessible Regular briefings to staff to update them Identify roles and ensure staff all know they play a critical role in the team 	
Cleaning/toilets/staff cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to manage these spaces and keep clean Lack of equipment and supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure frequent cleaning of toilets Need support from Unions to clarify whether library staff or cleaning staff should undertake cleaning Ensure that sufficient supplies are on site and guidance given to staff Remove furniture (tables and chairs, soft furnishings) to minimise risk and prevent additional cleaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement from facilities teams or Ensure that there are adequate staff available to carry out the cleaning and guidance given to staff which is site specific where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary rearrangement of the library space may highlight new ways of working or a better library layout
Staff confidence/re-assurance/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced confidence in being in a work environment Concerns about virus 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgets to purchase required and additional protective equipment needed. 	

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
	transmission		Ensure that this is place and there is an easy procedure to follow to ensure we don't run out of supplies (local or corporate budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider new office and work place layouts in line with government guidance 	

Further reading

Mind offers useful resources and tools for employers and employees to support mental health and wellbeing in the workplace:

- Mental Health at Work
<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/>
- Transitioning back to work after lockdown
<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/transitioning-back-to-work-after-lockdown/>

APPENDIX C: PRIORITISING SERVICE AREAS AND USER GROUPS

Introduction

Libraries deliver a wide range of services to an incredibly broad swathe of the community. Many of these are delivered in an openly accessible manner, and others have been developed to meet specific needs of priority user groups. However, this inclusive and focused approach of library service delivery will not be possible during the initial recovery phase, and services will have to make choices of which service areas to recover first.

The ability to prioritise which service areas will re-open first and which user groups have access, has a critical dependency on the ability to implement the necessary physical measures required to keep the workforce and users safe, and the availability of staff. Furthermore, it is likely that the pandemic has increased and created new areas of need in communities – for example, there will be increased unemployment and very high levels of isolation and mental health issues. So libraries will need to reassess need and reprioritise.

Some authorities have already re-opened Home Delivery Library Services, providing books and other reading materials to those shielding and/or over 70. Access to IT remains a priority for most services for those who don't have facilities at home. A phased approach, in line with corporate requirements will result in different Library Services prioritising according to need.

A key consideration for Library Service managers is that corporate conversations may be taking place around which services will **not** re-open again, be that buildings and/or service provision. Appendix G of the Toolkit addresses advocacy, and the steps libraries can take to protect themselves from closure by stealth and to secure any additional investment needed to meet the new community pressures.

A clear communication process should be in place to inform users exactly what will be on offer once the library doors re-open and when each of the defined user groups can access the library. The problems with anti-social behaviour will escalate if communication is weak, ambiguous or lacking in detail. The way the retail sector has dealt with this is useful to consider for Library Services.

Priority community needs

The pandemic has been an unprecedented global event, and its impact on society is now becoming evident. It is likely that there will be increased needs in local communities. Libraries should consider how they impact on their priorities, as libraries are well placed to respond to many of these challenges. These include:

- Rebuilding the local economy and high street
- Supporting people back into work and to secure appropriate benefits
- Tackling isolation and mental health issues, including among older and shielded people
- Supporting the bereaved
- Supporting students and children who have not had access to schools and university teaching and resources
- Tackling the digital divide to get more people online and build their digital confidence
- Rebuilding connectivity and trust between people and across communities
- Harnessing new volunteers into longer term volunteer programmes

Key user groups

One of the key values of libraries is that they are a universal service, equally accessible to all in the community. However, to ensure everyone's safety, there will need to be careful thought about different categories of user and what level of service can be delivered to them.

The following user groups have been identified:

- **Children and young people:**

- It is likely that restrictions will need to be placed on access to libraries by this group for some time following re-opening and while social distancing measures are still in place.
- Adhering to social distancing will be difficult for young children and most Library Services sometimes have to manage anti-social behaviour from young people in library spaces.
- Unaccompanied children should not be permitted entry into libraries unless a responsible adult is with them, and adults should be informed that they are responsible for children's behaviour (e.g. by a notice displayed at the entrance). Libraries can decide what their age bracket is, and in practice many libraries use under 12 as their definition.
- Events and activities for this group are unlikely to take place in the physical sense for some time, however online sessions are developing and will continue to grow in popularity. Many libraries are running enormously popular rhyme times and story times for small children, and some are now offering online events for young people which as homework support, writing clubs and creative sessions.

- **Adults with mental health problems:**

- Social isolation and the effect on mental health is likely to be an ongoing issue post-pandemic, and health services are reporting increased levels of stress and depression – including among those who have had previously good mental health.
- Library services have worked well on tackling this issue prior to the outbreak with targeted initiatives such as Reading Well, and importantly a wide range of activities to support people to connect, share, learn and enjoy.
- Re-opening services on a phased approach will begin to impact positively on those users who view the library as lifeline; however, access to group activities that help tackle mental illness will be restricted in the first phase after re-opening.
- The effect of the pandemic on mental health of library service key partners should not be overlooked and consideration should be given to how libraries can support partners who are key workers such as school staff.
- Frustratingly, in the reopening period and whilst current social distancing rules and restrictions on gatherings and events are in place libraries will probably not be able to offer the types of events and services they often provide to support mental health and wellbeing. However, some libraries have moved some of these online – like Knit and Natter Groups; and have established remote services like Keep in Touch phone calls.

- **Older people:**

- People over 70 may not be able to visit libraries for some time if the government continues to advise shielding and self-isolation for clinically vulnerable and extremely vulnerable people.
- The expansion of Home Library Services is helping to mitigate the lack of the public library in some cases. However not all library services will have the capacity to take new people onto the service. There will be issues with access to volunteers to run some of those services, particularly if the volunteers fall into this group themselves.
- Library services could consider providing sessions reserved for older people sessions for older people to visit the library. Those library services who have offered autism/SEN hours will be familiar with providing sessions for one group only, this process could be expanded across the board and be offered for different user groups.

- **Businesses, job and benefit seekers**

- Job seekers and benefit applicants will also be at higher levels, and many may need access to library computers, Wi-Fi and IT facilities to apply for jobs and benefits.
- This will be a priority for many libraries, and new procedures may be needed to allow social distancing and cleaning of equipment between use. For example, a booking system and timed access slots.
- Local businesses may have been hard hit by the lockdown. Libraries that provide support to SMEs, including via a Business Information and IP Centre will have a valuable role to play in supporting businesses to recover and for new ones to set themselves on firm foundations.
- It may not be possible to run the usual breadth of support for businesses, including events and coaching sessions. But consideration should be given to prioritising recovery of some elements of this service and developing an online programme

Prioritising services

The Universal Library Offers shape the way library services are offered and in normal times, ensure libraries deliver across a broad programme of services and activities. However, a phased approach will be needed to reinstate activity under each Universal Offer, with an initial focus on how they can be delivered digitally.

The following specific service areas were identified:

- **Books**

See Appendix D and section 4.1 for information about book and resource lending and browsing.

- **Archive Services:** Likely to be appointment only and numbers in search rooms restricted as social distancing is applied. However, attention needs to be paid to the safe preservation of collections and legal responsibilities for access to documents including under the Public Records Act. The National Archive has released guidance which will be useful to consider <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/our-archives-sector-role/coronavirus-update/our-coronavirus-response-and-guidance/>.

- **Buildings:** A recognition that the library building will be used in different ways. Community/meeting rooms will need a booking system and numbers restricted to allow social distancing. In some cases, meeting rooms may need to be used to quarantine stock and be taken out of use. This will impact not just on revenue but also on a library's community programmes.
See Appendix A for more detail on managing buildings and spaces.
- **Culture:** Arts Council England has provided extensive advice and support: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19>. This includes advice for NPO Library Services, and more information on this will be available via the Relationship Manager. Most library cultural activity has moved online with artists and performers adapting well to the situation and this is likely to continue for some time.
See Appendix G: Sustaining the Digital Offer for more detail on this.
In the recovery period, libraries could support the local arts and culture economy by employing artists and providing spaces for performance where the public will feel safe to attend.
- **Digital assistance:** The size of the digital divide has been brought into sharp relief by the crisis, and libraries have a key role to play in supporting more people to get online and develop digital confidence.
 - Supported by DCMS, DevicesDotNow (from FutureDotNow and Good Things Foundation) is targeting the 1.9 million households who don't have access to the internet, by campaigning for donations of tablets, smartphones, laptops, sim cards and other connectivity. Library staff can play a role in supporting, training and helping people to get online through this.
 - Access to IT will continue to be crucial and library services should be able to offer a booking system for PC use in libraries once consideration has been given to social distancing and layout.

Case study: Bridging the digital divide

Lancashire Library Service and digital inclusion

During lockdown Lancashire libraries have been working with colleagues to provide digital equipment and support in partnership with colleagues in the Education and Children's Directorate and the Vulnerable people cell. The first project, funded through the Department of Education, has been to support the purchase and allocation of thousands of laptops to vulnerable young people and year 10 students.

The second project aligns to the long-term Digital strategy for Lancashire County Council which sets out to ensure all of the people of Lancashire have the digital skills to access all the information and services they require. The project during lockdown is a pan-Lancashire Libraries one to provide digital devices and connectivity to those people aged 60+ initially and then to 18-30 year olds. One element of the project will be with The Good Things Foundation who will provide tablets that are data enabled through the DevicesDotNow campaign. A pilot will begin in June with library staff remotely supporting 50 people to utilise their free device and enabling them to be less socially isolated.

<https://futuresdotnow.uk/devicesdotnow/>

Case study: Providing managed IT access in Westminster

The situation

Many residents regularly use library PCs as they do not have access to home PCs or Wi-Fi connections (25% of RBKC residents). Some will be particularly disadvantaged or at risk by this due to their circumstances. Access to PCs could prove a lifeline for many during lockdown. A request was made to our Gold Board for approval to deliver a PC offer limited to complete essential tasks only and not for leisure activities. It was made clear that no access to any other library services would be on offer.

Considerations

- The area identified would need to be cleared of books, shelving and unnecessary furniture.
- Access to other parts of the building would need to be closed.
- PCs should be cleaned in between each use.
- The service would be run/organised by library staff/volunteers giving support to users with support from IT for set up; security to maintain queueing and social distancing.
- PC bookings be to be limited to 45 minutes a day with no advance booking.
- A risk assessment has been carried out. By taking precautionary measures, the residual risk is low if staff distance themselves from users and the PCs are cleaned between each use.
- Laptops were prioritised for the service to avoid additional IT work.
- Clear guidance to staff managing the service is needed.
- A pool of staff were identified to support and to be called on at short notice.

Requirements

The service would require the following to launch:

- Identify computer to be used (laptops recommended)
- IT staff required to support set-up of public access PCs
- Property support is needed to prepare the space
- Security staff to ensure social distancing when queuing for access and to control access to the PC area
- Cleaning equipment and hand sanitiser
- On site cleaner to clean computers in between user use and to carry out daily clean
- Communications to update website and include in other user channels

The operating hours are limited to Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm.

The service has been popular and the public are really grateful. The service has been used for applying for benefits, uploading documents, jobs searching, online shopping for items not available in supermarkets and communicating with close family and friends for those that have no other means of contacting them.

Further considerations

Up to now we have not provided printing, but there has been a request to do so, so we are currently risk assessing this can be managed. If this service is provided printing will need to be free of charge to avoid cash handling and the additional work of daily cash reconciliation. At present we are considering WIFI printing.

It is important to ensure that the space is clear of unnecessary furniture. This really helps staff to manage the space, keep it clean and alleviate social distancing concerns.

APPENDIX D: BOOK LENDING AND BROWSING

Introduction

Providing a public lending function is at the heart of library services yet it provides a significant challenge to deliver in our new environment.

During the lockdown, library services pivoted online, and there was a massive uplift in digital library membership and borrowing. However, e-lending is only ever a partial substitute for the full library offer for a range of reasons:

- It does not reach the digitally excluded
- The selection and availability of eBooks and e-audio is much more limited than the physical offer, due to the complexities of e-licenses
- The physical library supports a much richer exploration process, with browsing, displays, recommendations, events, reference and study.

How can libraries return to a safe way of reading and browsing in their buildings? Service recovery must take into account the social distancing and hygiene measures which will be required to be maintain according to government guidelines; it will need to engage both staff and user confidence of its safety; it will need to reflect the physical differences in many buildings.

Phases of recovering book lending and circulation

The library service risk assessment must include book lending, browsing and circulation as one of the key areas to consider.

Risk assessment must consider risks to staff, volunteers and library users. Particular attention should be paid to people in the clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable groups, such as older residents and those with health problems.

In the early stages of service recovery, it is unlikely that libraries will be able to restore full access to all library buildings with open access to books, browsing and long 'dwell times' because:

- The risk of virus transmission may be too high in the current phase of the pandemic
- Staff shortages may not allow a full service, especially as new safety procedures may be more labour intensive
- Some library lay-outs will not lend themselves to physical access within social distancing rules.

Each library service will have its own phased recovery plan, but it is likely that most will follow a broad pathway that looks something like this:

1. Digital and remote services, some home delivery, order & collect, ticketed IT access. Some staff still working from home. Extremely limited public access to buildings. Library opening hours limited, and number of branches open limited.
2. Digital and remote services, home delivery, order & collect, ticketed IT access, browsing and self-service within libraries, controlled mobile libraries. Majority of staff working in libraries. Public access to buildings with key control measures. Increased number of libraries open and opening hours expanded.

3. Digital and remote services, home delivery, IT access, browsing, mobile libraries, events and activities, staff support and interaction. Staff working within libraries. Public access to buildings. Control measures in place but slightly relaxed (e.g. no limit on time public can spend in library). All libraries open for standard hours.
4. New services and offers developed in addition to the existing library offer; service transformation.

This appendix will explore in more detail how a Home Library Service and book collection service can be offered in this new environment, and then go on to explore steps that need to be taken in the next phase as browsing and access into library buildings is restored.

Home Library Service

Home Library Service is a cornerstone for most libraries and is a valued service for recipients that brings measurable health and wellbeing impacts. The service is very personalised, where materials are selected to meet individuals' interests, and the social contact is as important as the books. However, Home Library Service will feel very different now, and clear communication with the service users and their families is essential.

See Appendix G on Communications with the public and advocacy with stakeholders for advice and key messages.

Key points to consider are:

- May only be for limited priority users if resources are tight.
- Staff and volunteers must be fully trained in new handling procedures to ensure they are confident and competent.
- Consideration needs to be given to who will deliver the service. Many services use volunteers – but the usual volunteers may not be available so staff may need to be redeployed or new volunteers recruited. Conversely, some services may have to draft in volunteers to expand the work of the core staff. IN all cases, clear communication with staff and volunteers is essential to clarify the distinction between core staff roles and the additional work of volunteers.
- Social distancing, hand hygiene and frequent cleaning of frequently touched surfaces are the key risk control measures.
- Selection of books and resources may be more limited than usual, so it may not be possible to offer the standard personalised service, but to provide more generic packs of books and resources.
- Quarantine books and resources 72 hours before and after collection.
- There should be no or extremely limited contact with the users – with books left on doorsteps and 2m social distancing observed at all times (or 1m with mitigations where 2m is not possible). There should be no entry into households.
- The inside of vehicles and any crates etc should be thoroughly cleaned after return of materials.
- If using staff or volunteers' cars, the boots can be lined with disposable plastic sheeting. You must ensure that individual's vehicles are covered by your workplace insurance.

- Can you deliver a service of ‘keep in touch’ phone calls to sustain social contact with Home Library Service users?

Order and Collect services

There are a few ways libraries can offer a no-contact or limited contact lending service:

- Order & Collect: User places an order by phone, email, website and collects their books from the library
- Ready Reads: Library staff create packs of themed books for users to collect
- Grab & Go: Users allowed access to a limited selection of books in a managed time slot to select their own books.

There are a few considerations when offering these limited access services:

- Equality of access. Not everyone can access and confidently use the library catalogue to select and order their materials:
 - Can you provide alternative ways to select materials – e.g. by telephone support, staff suggestions or review of users’ borrowing history?
 - Does a pre-selected Ready Reads system meet the needs of those not able to interrogate the catalogue?
 - Will reservation fees apply, as these will impact disproportionately on many in your community and may be a barrier to borrowing?
- Availability of stock may be limited: buildings closed, vans redeployed, staff shortages and a lot of popular titles out on loan:
 - Can your LMS filter the selection to stock available in specific branches?
 - Offer pre-selected Ready Reads alongside or instead of user choice.
 - If possible, purchase additional stock before re-opening. Some libraries are considering buying a tranche of their most popular titles, especially those not available as eBooks.
 - Encourage users to return books that have been on loan during lockdown.
 - Do you need to limit the number of items each person can borrow and change the loan period?
- Fines and charges vary between library services and during lockdown most services suspended these:
 - Clarify when and if overdue fines will be reinstated and ensure clear communication to users.
 - Consider whether reservation fees will apply for the pre-ordering service, as this will impact disproportionately on the more disadvantaged in your community and may be a barrier to borrowing.
 - Can you take payments by card or online to avoid cash handling?
- Staffing. Staff may still be redeployed to emergency roles, be shielding or isolating or on sick leave:
 - Running collection services will require a high level of staff experience, familiarity with library stock and reader habits. It’s more complex than getting books off a shelf!

New equipment

To deliver these services safely, you may need to procure new equipment such as:

- Acrylic screens for reception areas and staff desks.
- Bins for the return and quarantining of books. Ideally, these will have wheels and be of a size that can be easily moved into a quarantine area and can be clearly labelled with the date. If book bins are not available from suppliers, explore alternatives such as laundry bins or post trolleys.
- Physical spaces for storing the bins of quarantined books and clear date/time labelling. It may be that areas of the library need to be used for safe storage and circulation of returned books
- Crates and plastic sheeting for vehicles in Home Delivery Service.
- Bags and labels for Order & Collect, Ready Reads and Home Delivery services.
- Tickets for timed entry for managed browsing services.
- Hand cleaning supplies for staff, PPE (if need is identified by risk assessments)
- Posters and signage to explain systems to your users.

NB the government has issued a policy to support urgent procurement by local authorities during the COVID-19 crisis, with an easement of some of the usual regulations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19>

You should agree clear policies for suspending the service if any of the essential equipment is unavailable due to supply chain problems.

Browsing and access into the library

Public Health England has advised that the virus risks on plastic book covers will be negligible after 72 hours, and on paper and card after 24 hours. Libraries will therefore institute a 72-hour quarantine period for returned books.

However, managing browsing is more complex than managing lending, as readers move around the library, picking up and putting down an unlimited number of books. It is different to browsing in other types of shop, where a shopper may only hold an item for a short time. A browser may hold a book for an extended period, even sitting down with it for half an hour, and small children may put books in their mouths. Furthermore, reference books may be in a user's hands for a considerable period as they are not able to take them out on loan.

In order to restore browsing, a range of control measures are needed and it may be a very different user experience.

Most libraries are not planning on restoring any form of user browsing in their first phase of recovery. Having a gradually phased recovery will:

- Build staff confidence and familiarity with new processes and safety procedures
- Help support users to become familiar with the new processes and safety procedures, and build their confidence in returning to the library

- Allow more time for planning strategies to manage the buildings, including ploughing in any lessons learned from the initial recovery phase
- Allow more time for staff to be released from redeployment and shielding
- Allow more time for stocks to be replenished by returned loans, new purchases and consolidating stock from closed libraries
- Expand services as the government lowers the COVID-19 risk level.

The phases many libraries are planning in recovering their book browsing are:

- Grab & Go service:
 - Public access to a limited selection of stock – e.g. a few shelves in the library lobby
 - Controlled numbers are admitted within a timed slot
 - Cleaning is possible throughout the day and shelves can be replenished or stock swapped over.
- Appointment service:
 - Public given access to books within the library with some form of appointment service to manage numbers within time-limited slots
 - ‘Dwell time’ not encouraged, and seating removed.
- Managed entry – ‘one in, one out’ depending on size and layout of the library
- Reference service reopened, with spaced out desks and careful consideration about cleaning/quarantining of books after extended contact with readers
- Dwell time reintroduced, with spaced out seating.

Control measures

Once access to the library book stock has been recovered, there are some control measure you may want to implement:

- Control entry into the library to facilitate two metre (or one metre with mitigations) social distancing. When assessing floor capacity, as a rule of thumb, you can use an allocation of 12.6 square metres per person (a circle of 2m radius). However, you also need to consider pinch points such as stairways, lifts and entrances.
- Ask users to sanitise hands on entering and leaving the library.
- Gloves do not need to be worn as hand washing is a more effective defence (gloves may not be clean).
- Provide sanitiser in multiple locations throughout the library if possible.
- Limit user handling of books, for example, through different display methods, new signage or rotation of high-touch stock.
- Consider discouraging extensive browsing and handling of books by users for the initial reopening period. Timed entry could be an option to limit users’ time within the library.
- Continue to offer Order & Collect and Ready Reads as an alternative to self-selection and browsing
- Remove comfortable seating and study furniture to discourage extensive browsing and long visits.
- Remove magazines and newspapers.

- Provide separate a location for returning books that have been extensively handled (e.g. in reference and study collections), so they can then be quarantined for 72 hours before being returned to shelves. Many libraries will provide wheeled book bins, laundry bins or post trolleys for returned books that can be easily moved to the quarantine area by staff.
- Some booksellers will ask users to place any book they browse on a quarantine trolley. This may not be a feasible option for libraries that may only have one copy of each book title.
- Move shelving further apart, if possible, and establish one-way traffic flow through the aisles.
- Children must be accompanied by an adult who is responsible for their behaviour and following social distancing guidelines.
- Change opening hours so staff can restock shelves and manage the library floor etc when the building is closed.
- Promote self-service issue and return to reduce interaction between staff and users. Asking users to sanitise hands on entering and leaving the building and cleaning the screens will reduce the risk from the touchscreen.
- Install acrylic screens on enquiry desks and staff pods, and change procedures so staff do not floor walk to interact with and support users.

Risks/operational issues

This table sets out some of the key risks you will need to address and some suggested mitigations and actions.

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
Is browsing possible in the new world?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross contamination ● Challenge of maintaining social distancing ● Physical space in libraries – lack of capacity due to restrictions in size ● User perception ● Reduction in stock available to users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Survey users to see what services they would like restored? Tailor recovery based on this? ● Stock one side of shelves only in order to help direct flow and keep social distancing. ● Change layout to enable flow ● Set a time limit people can browse for ● All stock face on? ● Use of PPE (only if required following individual risk assessments) ● Volunteers to assist ● Not all areas of stock available? ● Some form of order & collect or ‘staff selection based on users reading preference’ as a first step- see below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to test out on users whether they actually want to browse. ● Liaise with supermarkets – how are they handling users browsing and handling stock 	<p>Changed stock and furniture layout. Development of new services such as Ready Reads</p>
Would we offer an Order & Collect or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● User and political expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of booking system to manage collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investment but could be shared across more 	<p>Question - How is this managed – only</p>

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
Ready Reads service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff capacity ● Managing method of delivery ● Reduction in breadth of stock available to users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteers to assist ● Collection point outside the building or in the lobby where possible? If outside the building, other considerations may need to be taken into account e.g. licences for Highway use, etc. 	than one authority.	reservations collected or genres and staff pick?
How do we manage handling of stock?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross contamination ● Back office storage ● Staff capacity ● Continual circulation of stock ● Donated stock ● Reduction in stock available to users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Books being left for 72 hours before using or putting back on shelves ● Suspend accepting book donations ● May need to use areas of libraries to house surplus or quarantined stock ● Volunteers to assist 		
How do we deal with non-book materials – e.g. Newspapers, magazines etc		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remove magazines and newspapers ● Develop careful strategy for managing access to and use of Reference Collections 		
Can we maintain request services and Inter Library Loans/Music & Drama Loans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Movement of stock between different areas of country ● Staff capacity ● Transport Fees and cash handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suspend fees and charges ● Accept only card and online payments to avoid cash handling ● Offer limited services in these areas, as staff and other resources allow 		

Question considered	Identified risks	Proposed mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Any opportunities for service development?
<p>How can we provide a safe lending service?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Size of family groups ● How family group browsing is managed ● Shorter periods of opening hours ● How to manage time users spend in libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider offering different times for different user groups. ● Keeping separation between different areas of library. ● Some areas not available if not suitable for social distancing ● Ensure parents understand their responsibility for social distancing and behaviour of their children ● Implement time limits on browsing – e.g. 30 mins? ● Manage numbers entering library with systems like Queuematic, use of coloured bands, or paper tickets ● Possible use of a booking system to manage numbers (e.g. Registration system) ● Direction arrows on the floor ● Volunteers to assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expenditure on systems or physical barriers to keep social distancing Management of any queuing time management system. 	

Checklist

- ✓ Phased strategy agreed for the gradual reintroduction of lending, browsing and reference services
- ✓ Protective measures/screens in place where needed
- ✓ Library layouts assessed/changed for social distancing
- ✓ Assessment of level and types of stock to be made available, and number of loans per user
- ✓ Identification of areas for stock rotation/quarantine
- ✓ Cleaning/disinfection regimes in place
- ✓ Bookings system in place where needed
- ✓ Time limiting considered
- ✓ Needs of different age and user groups considered, with due regard to equalities
- ✓ Clear communications and signage to manager user expectations
- ✓ Provision of additional equipment

Further reading

NB regulations and recommendations in different countries vary. In the UK, libraries must comply with the guidance of the relevant national government and health bodies.

EBLIDA newsletter with round up of library recovery strategies in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands <http://www.eblida.org/news/april-newsletter-special-issue3.html>

European public libraries: spreadsheet of approaches to reopening and book circulation: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qWCVvKA237aL0sql1H7c6yard1DjXL-KoamGmsBPNqE/edit#gid=2004666357>

IFLA Public Libraries Section international round-up <https://www.ifla.org/covid-19-and-libraries#reopening>

Australian Libraries re-opening checklist <https://read.alia.org.au/australian-libraries-responding-covid-19-checklist-reopening-libraries>

Guide to Social Distancing on Re-opening: Guide for Bookshops <https://booksellers.org.uk/Special-Pages/Guide-to-Re-opening-Bookshops.aspx>

States of Jersey draft advice to retailers <https://jerseychamber.com/storage/app/media/pdf/draft%20retail%20guidance.pdf>

'We don't have plexi-glass with little frost!': blog on reopening a library in Finland <https://akepike.fi/ei-meilla-pleksit-ihan-pienest-huurru-eli-noutopalvelua-pika-asiointia-ja-take-awayta-pike-kirjastoissa/?fbclid=IwAR0fQNORnybtCMrgrevLTEcjCmRFBYA5XobTCI0OIviawShqQuSY69QFzFM>

Running a pick-up service in Belgium: blog on the practicalities of a collection service in a small library <https://www.naplesisterlibraries.org/libraries-in-times-of-coronavirus-the-case-of-public-library-of-pittem-belgium/>

There is a crack in everything – that's how the light gets in: blog on reopening libraries in Denmark <https://christianlauersen.net/2020/05/10/experiences-with-reopening-libraries-in-the-age-of-corona/>

Curbside pickup service at Madison Public Library, USA: webpage with information and order forms for the public <https://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/library-cards/curbside-pickup-service>

APPENDIX E: RESTORING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Introduction

As Libraries begin to re-open their doors, keeping staff, volunteers and users safe will be a key priority. Social distancing and hygiene will be paramount. We believe it is unlikely that there will be many opportunities for physical events and activities in the short term.

There is an understanding and an ambition that the future will not see a return to the pre-COVID-19 period, but that we use the learning we've all experienced over the last few weeks to create a new library service where physical and digital work in much more integrated fashion reaching new and different audiences. Libraries want to retain new online audiences and aim to convert some of them to physical library users too. However, library services are also very aware of the importance of their physical offer and the importance of social spaces to communities and supporting their existing loyal users.

This appendix therefore covers the continuation and development of digital events and activities and suggestions for a gradual return to physical events and activities.

We suggest that events and activities recovery may take the following phases:

- Phase 1: Concentration on opening libraries for basic services with a focus on continuation and development of digital events and activities
- Phase 2: Very limited group activities in libraries with strict social distancing and maintaining a vibrant online programme, and use of outside spaces
- Phase 3: (Recovery). A wider range of quality physical activities for groups and events and an integrated well established quality digital programme which reinforce each other.

We recognise that every library and library service is different and will have different needs.

Large/mass gatherings

People should limit their social interactions to two households (your support bubble counts as one household) in any location; or, if outdoors, potentially up to six people from different households. It will be against the law for gatherings of more than 30 people to take place. Premises or locations which are COVID-19 Secure will be able to hold more than 30 people, subject to their own capacity limits, although any individual groups should not interact with anyone outside of the group they are attending the venue with - so in a group no larger than two households or six people if outdoors.

Those operating venues following COVID-19 Secure guidelines should take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place. At this time, venues should not permit live performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience.

Individual businesses or venues (including libraries) should consider the cumulative impact of many venues re-opening in a small area. This means working with local authorities, neighbouring businesses, and venues to assess this risk and applying additional mitigations. These could include:

- Further lowering capacity - even if it is possible to safely seat a number of people inside a venue, it may not be safe for them all to travel or enter that venue.
- Staggering entry times with other venues and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas.
- Arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues.
- Advising patrons to avoid particular forms of transport or routes and to avoid crowded areas when in transit to the venue.

Local authorities should avoid issuing licenses for events that could lead to larger gatherings forming and provide advice to libraries on how to manage events of this type. If appropriate, the Government has powers under schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to close venues hosting large gatherings or prohibit certain events (or types of event) from taking place.

Performances

Venues should not permit live performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience. This is important to mitigate the risks of droplets and aerosol transmission - from either the performer(s) or their audience. There will be further guidance setting out how performing arts activity can be managed safely in other settings, for instance rehearsing or broadcast without an audience.

Shouting/loud music

All libraries should ensure that steps are taken to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other – for example, singing chanting or conversing/speaking loudly. This includes - but is not limited to - refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting, including if played at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult. It will also apply to activities such as rhymetimes or storytimes. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission - particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission. Government will develop further guidance, based on scientific evidence, to enable these activities as soon as possible. You should take similar steps to prevent other close contact activities - such as communal dancing.

Limiting gatherings to social distancing rules

Making users aware of, and encouraging compliance with, limits on gatherings. For example, on arrival or at booking. Indoor gatherings are limited to members of any two households (or support bubbles); while outdoor gatherings are limited to members of any two households (or support bubbles), or a group of at most six people from any number of households.

This appendix provides guidance for phase 1 and phase 2

Phase 1 Continuation and development of digital events and activities

Area of need	Actions	Support from Libraries Connected and partners
Ensuring online events provide a quality experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build staff skills support the skill development of library staff including where appropriate those shielding at home who may have some capacity to develop activity ● Less is more - plan to provide a quality unique offer rather than a packed programme ● Be brave – try things out and stop activities that aren't very good or don't engage users 	<p>Library staff across the country have been working with Libraries Connected to develop content for the #LibrariesFromHome pages. This includes creating guidance and support based on learning from libraries. There will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Top tips on quality rhyme-times and story-times ● Top tips on online Lego clubs, ● Top tips on setting up quality adult reading activities ● The team are now also looking at top tips for online safety from a presenter's point of view ● A second team are writing how to guides- best practice for Facebook live, podcasts etc. (links to all these)
How do we monitor participation and evaluate impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor participation and understand audience engagement locally and sharing nationally. ● Telling the story around engagement will be important in terms of planning content, understanding audiences and identifying groups not engaging 	
Developing content – starting to build a programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look at the balance of the programme – a recent snapshot showed that 76% of online library activities are for children. This may change when school resumes, so it would be good to think about more adult content? 	<p>A team from Libraries Connected/CILIP etc. are working towards blanket publishers' permissions for adults and children for a short period of time/ regularly reviewed (Many that we have now run out in June)?</p>

Area of need	Actions	Support from Libraries Connected and partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are there key adult events that could be run to reach targeted priority audiences or address locally identified needs - e.g. wellbeing, job clubs etc? ● Ensure the programme is scheduled and runs at regular times ● Use partnership with other cultural providers to create unique, innovative online activity. NPOS commission artists to develop online as well as physical content ● Work through partners to engage audiences ● Share more live and recorded events between library services regionally or nationally to create an inspiring programme? ● Invite the community to collaborate with you on events and programming ● Explore how you can build interactivity into online events – e.g. feedback on Facebook Live etc 	<p>Ensuring libraries continue to celebrate the big national events book and cultural events - including working with partners – Libraries Connected will work with national partners running events to create simple toolkits and social media assets</p> <p>Libraries Connected is creating our own national content and event opportunities to make available to libraries?</p>
<p>Equalities and access issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider areas where broadband functionality might be an issue and determine which platforms will be easiest to access ● Think about formats is some material better in just audio – moving away from so much screen time ● Addressing digital exclusion. 		

Phase 2: Initial preparation for small scale physical activities

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
Ensuring Events can be run safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events bringing people together brings social distancing challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events only taking place in the largest libraries to begin with, and only where social distancing can be maintained. If space does not permit this, could libraries consider delivering events in larger local venues where it would be safer Keep events small scale and run them in closed libraries. All events pre-booked and ticketed – limiting numbers to ensure social distancing, Timed entry, avoiding anything that involves sharing equipment Using outdoor spaces when the weather allows for borrowing and some activity? If events remain online, can they integrated with a physical offer e.g. – doing SRC online, borrowing physical books from the library even by order and collect 	Developing and sharing effective strategies for integrating online and physical activities and promotions	

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Book displays in libraries that people can borrow as part of regular library visits to complement events online 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Different groups have different vulnerabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid bringing groups into libraries together ● Different opening times for different people ● Unaccompanied children – some libraries are temporarily raising the age limit for this 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider who the priority groups for events should be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should libraries prioritize events and activities that support specific groups in need – e.g. should they be events that focus on supporting people with mental health issues, and economic/job seeking/small business challenges? 		
Equality and access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can libraries support isolated people – still shielded, or unable to get to libraries, or to bring small scale, number-limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a plan to integrate small scale physical events with live streaming or filmed events so that other people can join in remotely ● Is there learning from the Reading Friends initiative in Staffs? Etc. to 		

Question considered	Identified risks	Suggestions for mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
	events to a wider audience	make contact with people who are still at home		
Many people will want and need to take part in physical events but will be concerned about safety	Lack of community confidence	Ensure all safety measures are adhered to	Work on national promotional campaign	Govt guidance on safe reopening

APPENDIX F: SUSTAINING THE DIGITAL OFFER

Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis and the associated closing down of libraries has been a catalyst for rapid development of libraries' digital offers. This has been a great opportunity to bring in virtual and digital alternatives for existing services – such as child focussed events through Facebook, as well as introducing a large number of people to existing digital services, such as the digital content offer through eBook and eAudio aggregators.

Key challenges to consider

The key challenges ahead include:

- Accessibility – there are still 1.5 million people without access to the internet in their homes. While there are projects in place (Devices.now for example) the scale does not come close to meeting the need. There is also likely to be a significant overlap between the people without access to digital services and those who are more vulnerable both in terms of social vulnerability and health, and it is likely that they may have their movement and access to physical spaces restricted over a significant period of time – months and potentially years.
- Staff skills to create digital content and to support users in accessing content.
- The broadcast nature of a lot of the digital offer – while there has been an explosion of library content that members and wider users can access over the past weeks, the level of two way interaction and digital engagement has been slower to increase. This is understandable as this takes more time and planning, so has not been a focus in the initial crisis response, there is a need to consider this as we develop further.
- Coherence of digital and physical offers as the physical space reopens – how can the digital offer complement the physical offer and provide an integrated experience for users, and how can this be used to minimise use of physical spaces while there are restrictions on capacity because of social distancing and staff availability.
- Funding impacts – particularly with digital content as a significant part of physical purchasing has been redirected to spend on digital content and delivery. This increased digital spend needs to be maintained as a significant proportion of library use will still need to be outside the physical spaces – so the expected cost of delivery over the year is likely to be higher while there is an identified loss of income from the library closures.

Risks/operational issues

Operational issues have been broken into the following areas:

- Digital content – specifically eBooks / e-audio / e-comics / e-magazines.
- Online activities – the Rhyme-times on Facebook / virtual book groups etc.
- Online resources – for example Access to Research and Ancestry.com – how/can we provide home access to these.
- Accessibility – ensuring that people can access the service – equipment / connectivity / skills.
- Discoverability – how do people find the content (this aspect may merge with Single Digital Presence at some point)?

Operational area	Specific issue	Risk	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
Digital content	Ongoing demand for eBooks	Cost of meeting demand not feasible Range of titles limited		Improve licensing model Pressure on publishers to increase access	Work together to develop a systematic approach to data gathering. Permission and disclosure from aggregators	eBooks group
Online activities	Maintain local angle	Loss of local connection with library members as	Ongoing local content plan – possible regional coordination	Support to individual libraries – each Regional group to discuss whether to coordinate there	More workforce development	
	National content	Loss of national coherence and big name' or high-profile events	National plan	Libraries Connected developing a national offer and content to support libraries, shared events and promote libraries events	Move into a systematic programme	
	Engaging people	Become broadcast rather than engagement	Increase engagement on existing services where possible Develop innovative services that have	Build staff skills and good practice in two-way engagement Skills development Creative digital skills	As above	

Operational area	Specific issue	Risk	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
			two-way engagement built in	and informational digital skills		
Online resources Making them available at home as well as in the library	Access to Research, Find my past Ancestry	Loss of access – immediately as library opening is limited, and long term as more vulnerable people unable to get to libraries in person	Identify which resources are not currently available from home and determine potential value of negotiating for more access	Discuss with #Librariesfromhome team		
Accessibility	Content consumption	People do not have access to devices	Framework for planning supply and support of devices. Devices.now model but with wider sources of eqpt. Managed by regional groups in a shared way to ensure access in areas of greatest need	Framework to be developed – IM to draft		
		People do not have skills to access				
		Staff do not have skills to support the public in using devices				
	People do not have necessary network connections	Libraries Wi-Fi networks available remotely	Possibly addressed in above framework			
	Content engagement	Supporting people to engage digitally with	Need to be able to do this remotely by			Employment and skills

Operational area	Specific issue	Risk	Suggestions for mitigation	Actions needed to be support mitigation	Opportunities for service development	Dependencies
		services in libraries	exploring remote access to pcs			
	Content creation	Staff do not have skills or resources needed to deliver classes on digital creation				
Discoverability		Loss of information / consistency across the different aggregators	Aggregators of information: Libraries at Home Libraries from home (Libraries Connected)			
		Learning from #Librariesfromhome and local digital offers lost as SDP developed parallel to this programme	Clear and structured links with SDP team and support their engagement with libraries. Share learning from #LibrariesFromHome			
			Comms plan –links to comms group Thinking about advertising – maybe on TV to reach the widest audience			

Checklist

Equalities considerations

Accessibility:

- ✓ Access to devices
- ✓ Access to networks
- ✓ Access to skills where needed
- ✓ All platforms accessible to screen readers and other assisted devices
- ✓ Appropriate levels of web accessibility for LA websites and any aggregators of information

Further reading

<https://www.librariesathome.co.uk/>

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/librariesfromhome>

APPENDIX G: COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PUBLIC AND ADVOCACY TO STAKEHOLDERS

Purpose

In the face of the COVID-19 crisis, libraries have rapidly redesigned their services for a society in lockdown. However, the success of these digital activities, combined with the economic stresses facing local authorities, have the potential to place many aspects of the previous library offer at risk. The purpose of this plan is twofold:

1. To give library managers and workers the tools they need to manage their communications with key stakeholders.
2. To outline the key areas of advocacy for libraries, based on the Universal Library Offer framework, to help us to recreate a comprehensive and valued service to meet the new challenges facing our communities.

Advocacy overview

Goal

To position libraries as a critical local and national partner in the re-establishment of communities across the country.

Priority areas:

- **Economic recovery** – Information and Digital Offer
Job seeker support, business skills, training, volunteering, apprenticeships etc.
- **Education support** – Reading / Digital and Information Offer
For students who struggled to learn at home and SEND students.
- **Digital inclusion** – Information and Digital Offer
Supporting residents with little or no IT skills and/or no access to the Internet.
- **Isolation mitigation** – Health and Wellbeing Offer
Combating the harmful effects for vulnerable groups and tackling loneliness.
- **Cultural ecology** – Culture and Creativity Offer
Helping local artists and cultural organisations to reach an audience.

Audiences

- Local politicians and decision makers
- National government
- Funders and partners
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Library staff
- Library volunteers
- Library users
- Health services
- Schools and colleges
- Local cultural organisations

Key messages to decision makers and national partners:

- Libraries are an essential part of the UK's economic, academic and cultural recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.
- The physical library space is vital for effectively meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged and isolated in our communities.
- Our digital services, especially for ebooks, must be improved if social distancing remains in place indefinitely.

Our approach

1. We will consult library users, staff and volunteers on their concerns, expectations and aspirations for libraries.
2. We will gather case studies and data on the impact of libraries in the priority areas.
3. We will negotiate with publishers and partners to improve ebooks licensing.
4. We will work in partnership with other sector organisations to advocate for libraries.

Communications for reopening

1. Key principles:

- Make sure you involve your local authority's or corporate communications team as soon as you begin to think about a communications plan for your service.
- Consult your staff, users, and partners throughout the process of reopening to ensure that you keep on top of any emerging issues or concerns.
- Ensure you have staff monitoring your public communications channels frequently and respond quickly to questions
- Create a page on your website where you put all your re-opening information and link to it in the bio of all your social media accounts.
- Really think about what you want your audience to get out of your communication and almost as important, how you want them to feel as a result e.g. confident, competent, reassured, etc.
- Less is more. People get hundreds of notifications every day so keep your messages succinct, relevant, and easy to digest quickly.
- Keep your messages consistent. For maximum effect, settle on a few sentences as your core message or talking points and repeat those on all your channels. Your audience will miss some of your communications so it's important to keep reiterating the key messages below and any that you agree within your local authority.
- Tailor your approach to the channel you're using but try to keep your tone professional but light, where appropriate.
- For social media, post your message at varying times of the day to make sure that it's seen by as many followers as possible.
- If you are introducing a new service offer (e.g. a preselected book ordering service) think about how you will brand it to ensure users understand and take up the offer.
- Consider posting photographs online of what your venues look like with the changes made, to enable people with additional needs (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder) to prepare for their visit.

- Think about the equalities impacts of the changes made and what advice or guidance you will need to provide for users who might be adversely impacted.
 - Proofread!
2. **Key messages to staff, volunteers, users, and local partners:**
- The safety and health of our staff, volunteers and users is our primary concern.
 - We will reintroduce our services gradually, in line with the latest public health advice.
 - Together we can recreate our services to meet the challenges of our new reality.
3. **Communications lines about services to users (these can also be used for social media)**
- These lines and those in the next section are designed to ‘pick and mix’, so that you can use the messages that are relevant to your service now but also have some that may come into play at a later stage.

General

- Where possible, we will prioritise the reopening of services which can address the inequalities caused or amplified by the lockdown (e.g. digital exclusion).
- Our libraries might look and feel quite different when they reopen. These changes have been made to protect the safety of our staff, volunteers and users.
- Please check our website for the latest information before you visit.

Browsing and loans

- We know that one of the joys of libraries is being able to browse our shelves and discover new books. However, we must put your safety first which means that we are only able to issue reserved/preselected books at present.
- Reserving items in advance allows us to make sure that these have been quarantined and sanitised, in line with public health advice, to help limit the spread of the virus.
- However, quarantining may also lead to delays in your reserved items becoming available so we are asking you to be patient if your books take a bit longer during this time – we are committed to making sure that you and our staff are safe.
- We cannot quarantine or sanitise newspapers, magazines, and some reference materials so these will be unavailable until we can be sure that they do not risk spreading the virus.
- Books can be reserved online or on the telephone and during these early stages, these can be picked up at a single collection point in the library.

Browsing and social distancing

- We’ve only been able to reopen library buildings on the condition that social distancing measures are put in place to help keep everyone in our community safe, in line with the latest public health advice.
- As a result, we’ve had to alter the layout of the library to allow people to remain 2m apart (or 1m with mitigations where 2m is not viable) and close some areas where it’s just not possible for people to maintain this distance.
- We also have to limit the number of people who are in the library at any given time and which may lead to some queues outside, and limits on browsing time inside, during busy periods.

- If you have additional needs (for example you are unable to stand to queue for a long period or cannot complete your browsing within the allocated time) please speak to a member of our team who will be happy to help you.
- Unfortunately, some of our libraries are simply too small to reopen at this stage because people will not be able to maintain a safe distance from each other.

Events and activities

- We will continue to bring you our programme of online events and activities as we gradually reintroduce services in our buildings.
- We are working to provide live events and activities again as soon as we can be sure it's safe for everyone involved.

The future

- The COVID-19 situation is evolving all the time and we will continue to shape our response to meet current needs and safety requirements, in partnership with our communities.

Libraries have been serving their communities for a long time and we have a proven track record of rapidly adapting to ensure that local people and communities receive the support they need.

4. Communications lines about services to staff

PPE and sanitising

- We know that coming into greater contact with the public is a significant concern for us all. Full risk assessments will be carried out with workers and unions, and control measures established as identified in the risk assessments.
- If individual risk assessments identify that PPE is necessary, it will be provided and support given to staff to ensure it is used correctly and that the other control measures are also observed.
- The COVID-19 virus can remain on items covered in plastic for up to 72 hours and a cardboard or paper cover for up to 24 hours. So, all returned items must be isolated for this period before being reissued.

Social distancing

- We will ensure that all browsing can be strictly managed within social distancing guidance through limiting the number of people who enter the library and the time they spend inside.
- We will alter and manage our computer and IT space in line with current social distancing guidelines.
- We have no plans to introduce group activities until, in consultation with you, we are sure that these can be managed safely.

Risk assessments

- Risk assessments will be carried out by management, agreed corporately and published.
- However, it is important that all staff can carry out dynamic risk assessments when necessary as senior members of the team may not always be available. We will make sure

that you are given the information and training that you need to be able to do this but do remember to check first if there is an existing one in place.

- We will be working closely with our health and safety team and as services are gradually reintroduced, we will have regular weekly reviews with you about how things are working until you are satisfied that these are no longer needed.

5. Charter for staff

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and users at all times. We all have a part to play to ensure that our libraries can remain open safely to serve our community.

- We will not come into work if we are unwell or if we should be self-isolating after being exposed to someone with the virus, in line with public health guidance
- We will go straight home if we feel unwell
- We will always respect and maintain social distancing when in and out of work
- We will leave workstations clear and wiped down at the end of the day
- We will regularly wash our hands for 20 seconds, in line with NHS guidelines
- We will ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place, adhered to and that these are shared and reviewed regularly
- We will keep these steps under review, and if any of us have concerns, or ideas for improvement, we will raise them appropriately
- We will follow the latest guidance on quarantining books and other loaned items and sanitising computers and other IT equipment
- We will respect and value each other and follow this charter
- If we have any concerns about anyone not following these rules, we will let our manager know.

6. Charter for users

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and users at all times. We all have a part to play to ensure that our libraries can remain open safely to serve our community.

- I will not enter the library if I feel unwell or if I should be self-isolating after being exposed to someone with the virus, in line with public health guidance
- I will always respect and maintain social distancing both in and out of the library
- I will wait to be called forward when I'm at the start of the queue
- I will wash or sanitise my hands when I enter the library
- I will not remain in the library longer than the set time
- I will not enter any area of the library that is closed off to the public
- I will follow any other instructions from library staff that aim to keep us all safe
- I understand that I may be asked to leave the library premises if I do not follow the guidelines.

7. Managing difficult situations

When people fail to behave as asked by library staff, trying to reason with them should be your first step unless of course you feel threatened, or in any way at risk from the person or people concerned. In that instance, please follow your normal library procedure for dealing with potentially violent or dangerous situations. Managers should remind staff of these procedures.

However, if you feel able to manage their behaviour, begin by showing some empathy, restate the health and safety message and then politely ask them to either obey the rules or perhaps move on somewhere else.

For example:

- **Empathy**

I understand that you may not have seen your friends for some time / that it's really difficult when your child has been cooped up for so long / that you've been queuing a long time and it's really frustrating how long everything takes now, etc.

- **Health and safety**

However, our main concern is keeping everyone as safe as we can so that we can remain open for you and everyone else.

- **The rules**

So I'd be really grateful if can you sit at least two metres/one metre apart [whichever is relevant]/ keep your child close to you so that they don't bump into other people / choose your books quickly so that others who are waiting outside can come in, etc.

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