

COVID ————— 19

SAFER LIBRARIES

Helping public places to reopen safely

Libraries are places that help to support and sustain the public life of our communities. This Covid-19 Safer Spaces guide is to support staff to understand how to adapt their library to enable safe reopening and operation.

Developed by architects IF_DO, in partnership with Libraries Connected and CILIP, this free-to-use guide sets out clear stages for how to safely reopen libraries across the UK. Visual diagrams illustrate the spatial adaptations required for services to begin to resume, and also offers ideas on how to create a welcoming environment for customers and the wider community.

As an architecture practice, IF_DO is focussed on the design of social infrastructure—places that help to improve lives for people and foster stronger and more resilient communities. These places will be critical to the social recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Covid-19 Safer Spaces project has been developed to provide expert guidance on how they can be safely adapted.

We are grateful for the support of numerous individuals who have contributed their time and expertise to the development of this guide. With thanks in particular to Isobel Hunter, CEO of Libraries Connected, Ayub Khan MBE, Head of Universal Services for Warwickshire County Council, and James Pearson and his team at Kent County Council.

Developed by

IF_DO

Funded by

Innovate UK

In partnership with



**Libraries
Connected**



The library
and information
association

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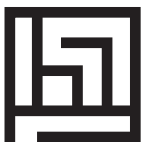
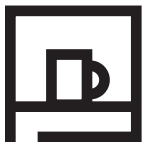
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Letting People In (to be included in version 2)

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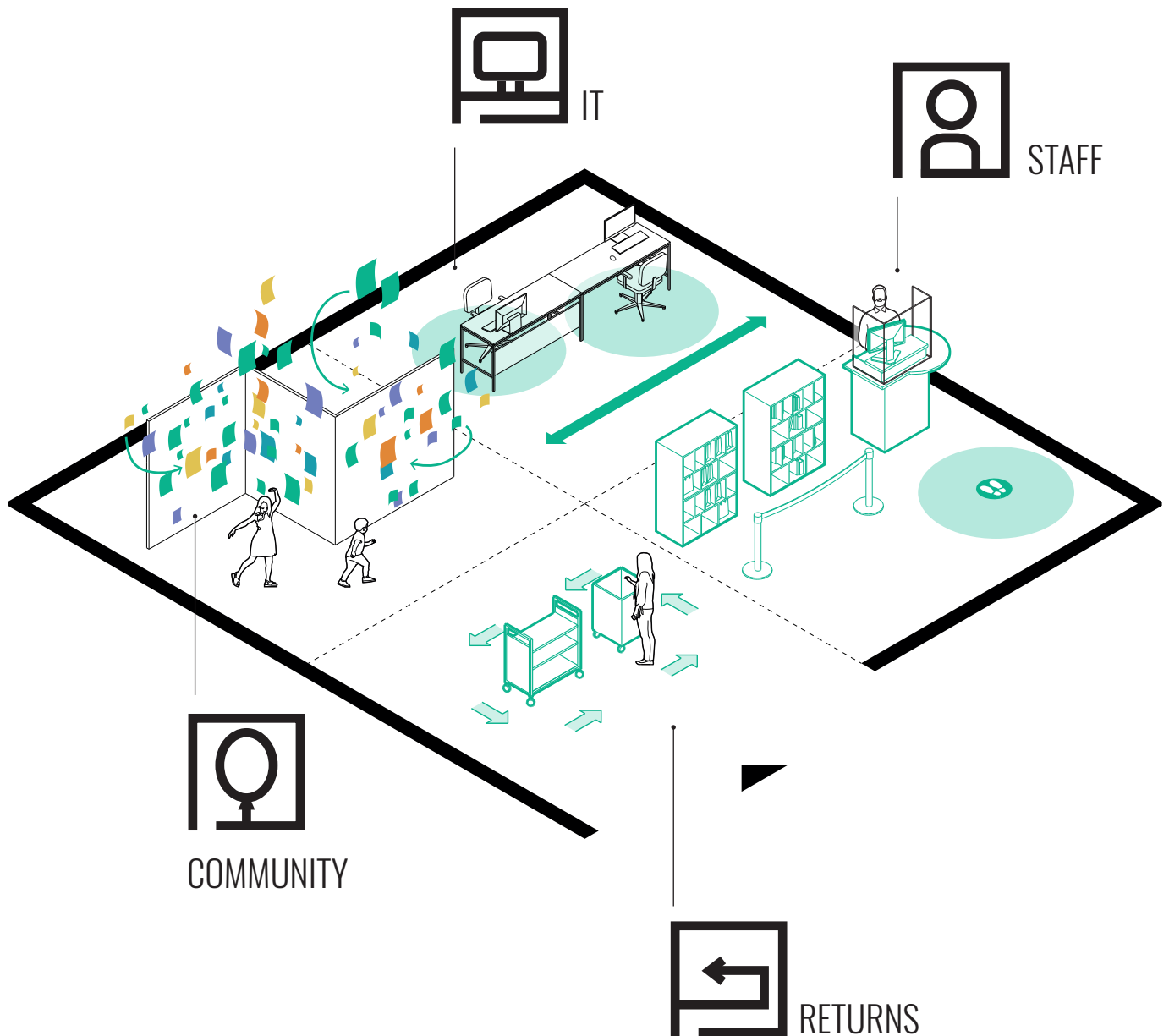
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OVERVIEW

The overview diagram below illustrates the core elements for the initial opening of libraries across the UK. The key details the graphical components used throughout the guide.



KEY



2m Distance Zone



Clear Signage



Control Barrier



Standing Space



Direction Arrow



Sanitising / cleaning point

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

01

Ensuring staff are safe and feel empowered at work. Encourage staff to return to work before the library is open to the public. This will allow them to become familiar with new protocols, and provide the opportunity to develop more safe ways of working.

02

Providing well ventilated spaces for staff and customers.

Filters on HVAC systems should be checked and replaced where necessary, and upgrade to a higher-rated filter where possible (consult with an HVAC professional for specific guidance). Windows should be kept open where possible, and if necessary, free-standing air-filtration units can be used.

03

Creating a clear and safe return and borrowing strategy. The reopening of book borrowing is an essential service provided by the library, so a clear return and borrowing strategy, using signage and quarantine protocols, will ensure both staff and customers are safe.

04

Opening up the library by removing soft seating. The removal of soft seating will not only discourage long dwell times in the library, but create more open space for other service to take place, such as quick choice shelving, wifi work spaces, and community displays.

05

Sustaining a welcoming environment. Window displays and a community art wall are two ways to create and sustain a welcoming environment for the community. The use of colour and clear signage will help communicate to the public the current and future services available to them.

06

Extending library services off-site and into larger spaces.

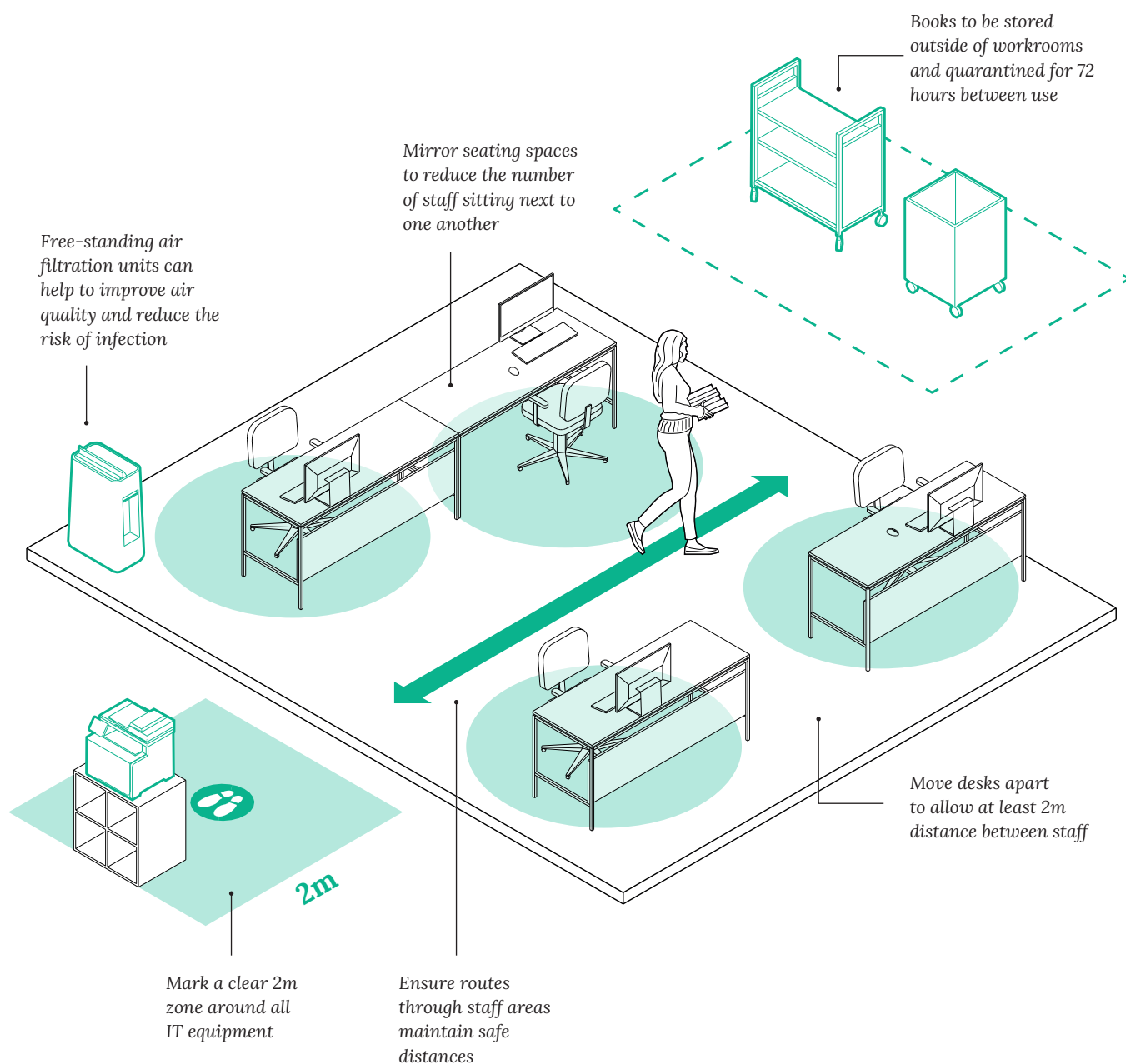
Staff should be encouraged to reach out to their local area and extend services off-site and into larger, more open facilities. Collective activities could take place in parks, as services from inside the library can be shared in open space.

ELEMENTS

INITIAL OPENING STAFF

Staff & Work Rooms

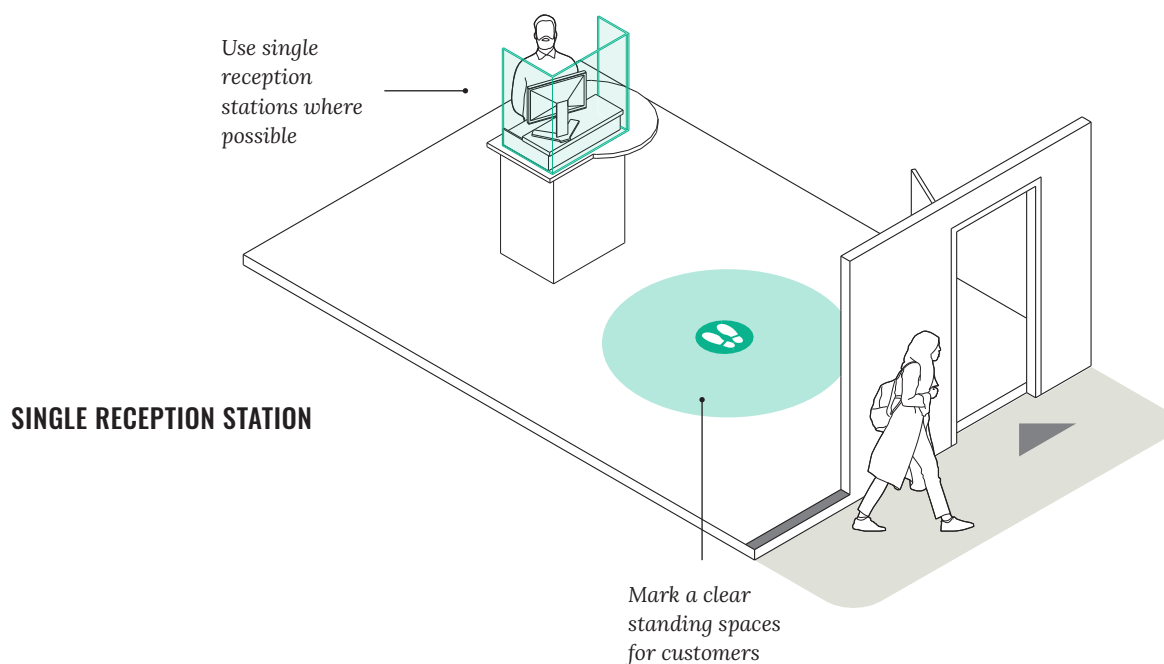
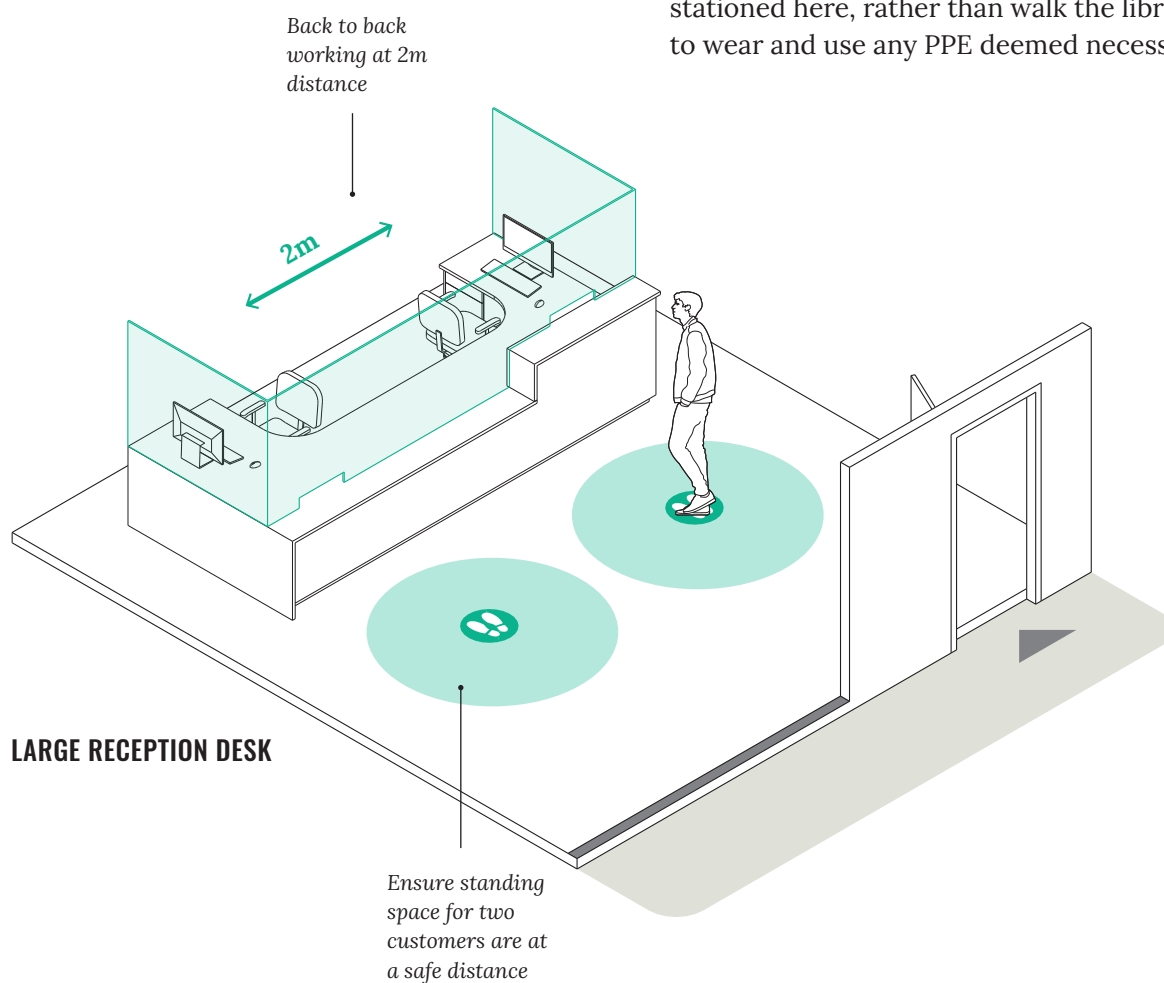
To ensure staff feel safe and supported, it is encouraged they return to work before the library is opened for public use - allowing them to become familiar with the new protocols, and provide opportunity to feedback with any comments. Staff shifts should be considered, as well as revised opening times to manage demand. Clear book quarantine areas, and a rota system, should be established to manage the safe control of stock. Please see general facilities section for small and large office arrangements.





Reception Areas

To minimise contact between staff and customers, the use of self-service machines is encouraged. Where libraries have reception desks and pods, Perspex screens should be installed. Desks are to be located close to the library entrance, and staff should be stationed here, rather than walk the library floor. Staff to wear and use any PPE deemed necessary.



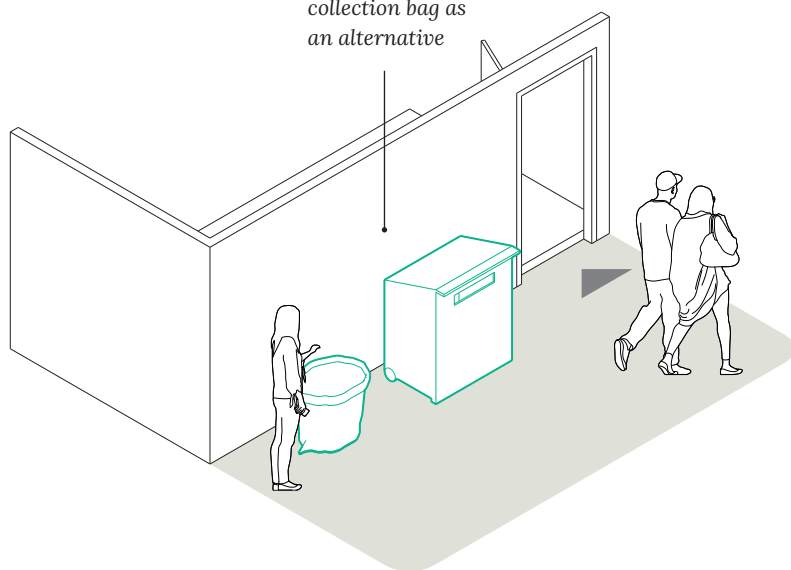
INITIAL OPENING RETURNS

Initial return of library stock

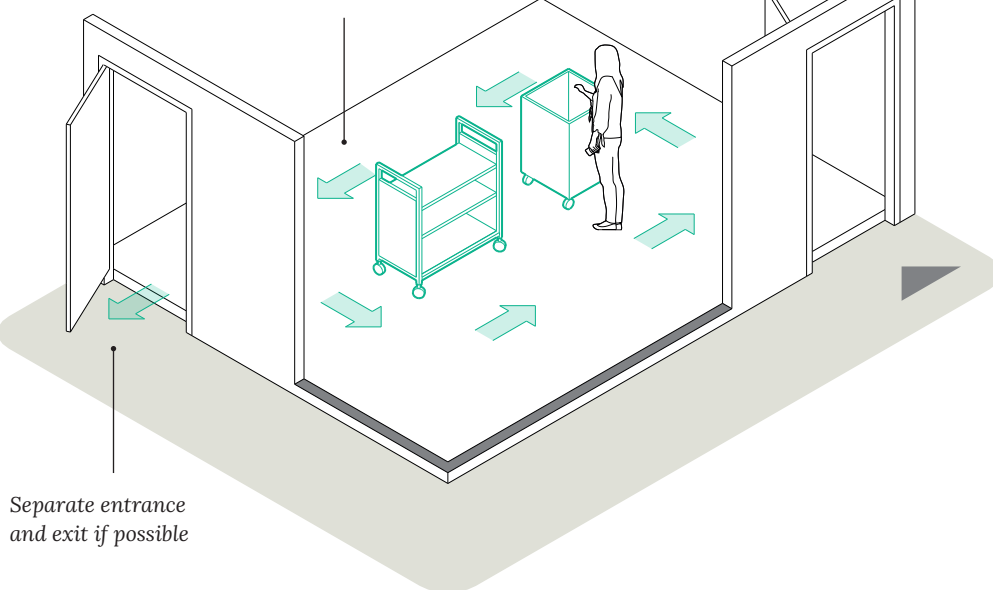
Where possible, the return of library stock should take place securely outside of the library, and be protected from the elements. Where this is not possible, an internal return system of bins or trolleys are to be clearly labelled for customer use. A clear walking route should be marked on the floor to ensure safe flow of customers through the space.

RETURNS OUTSIDE

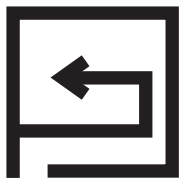
Use an external collection bin if possible, or a collection bag as an alternative



Ensure a clear one way system is marked on the floor

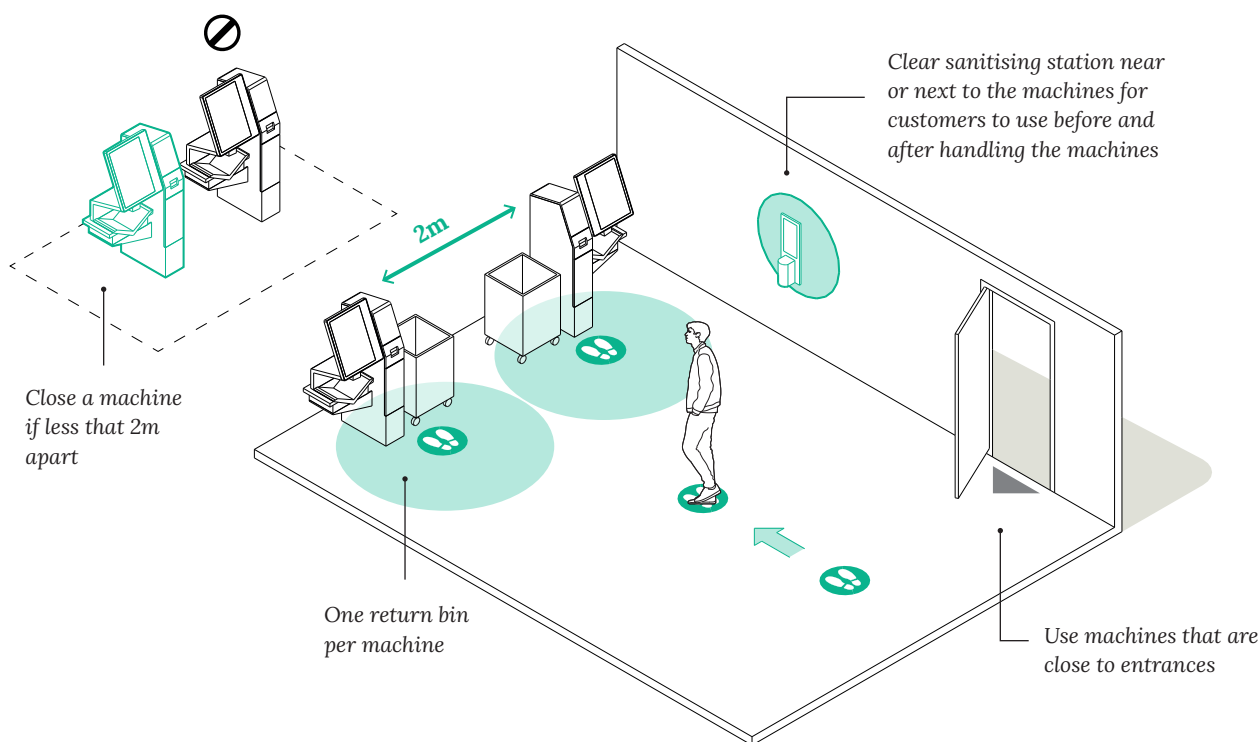


RETURNS INSIDE



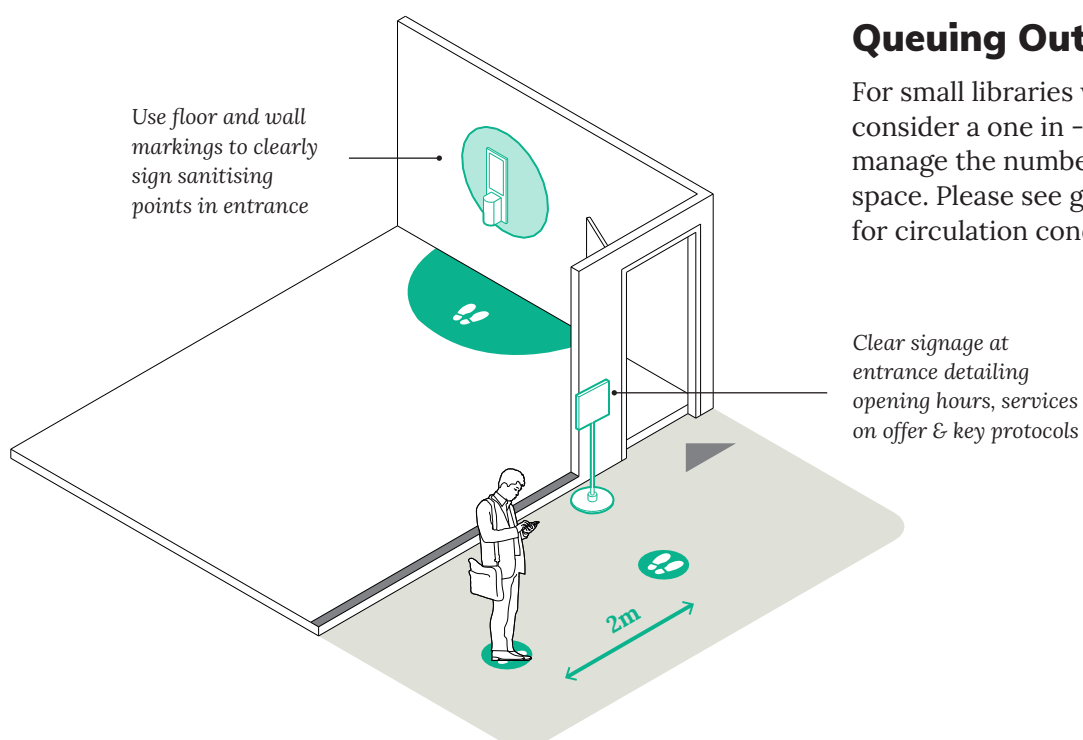
Safe Machines

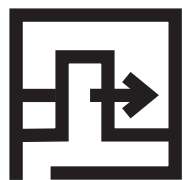
Self-service machines will help limit interaction between library staff and customers. To ensure the machines are used in a safe way, a clear hand sanitising station should be located next to the machines for customers to use before and after. A cleaning regime should be introduced for the screens.



Queuing Outside

For small libraries with a single entrance, consider a one in - one out policy to manage the number of people within the space. Please see general facilities section for circulation conditions.



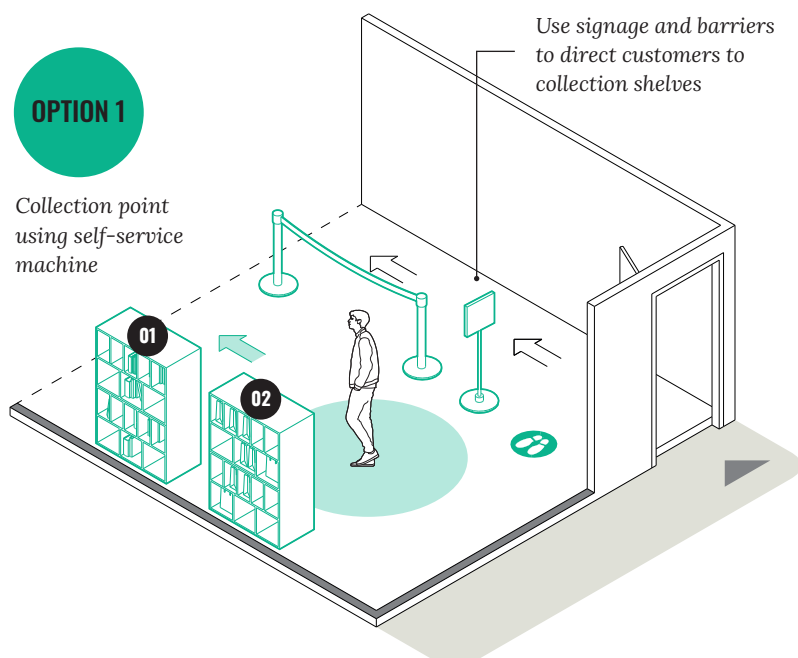


INITIAL OPENING

COLLECTIONS

OPTION 1

Collection point using self-service machine



Click & Collect

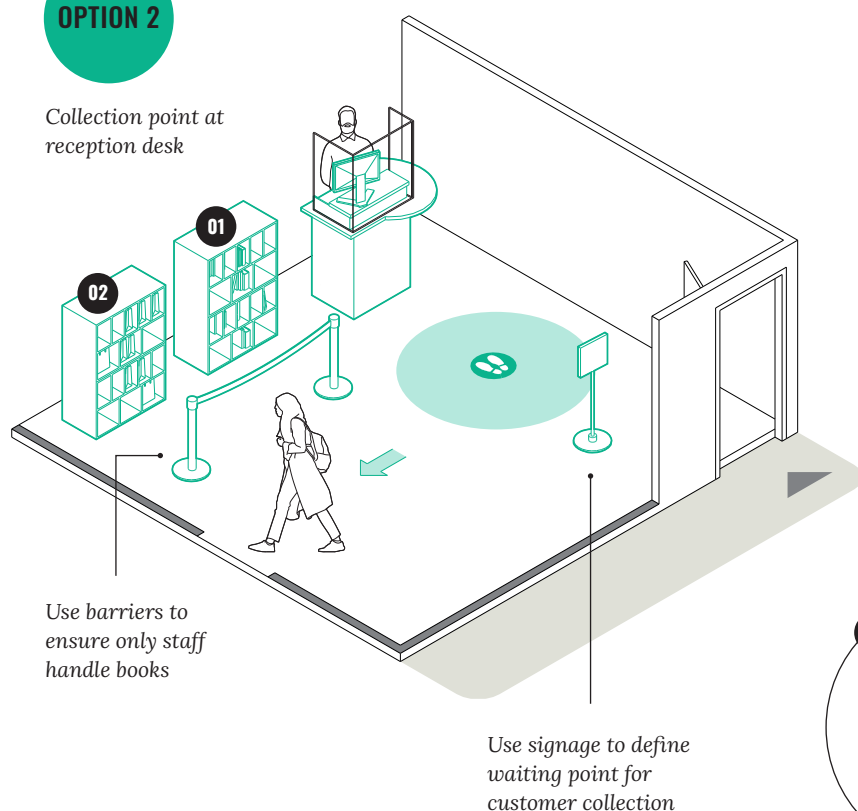
An initial collection system of click & collect allows customers to choose specific books online and collect at the library. Books are to be packaged securely in a dedicated area in the library. A collection date and time should be given to the customer to manage flow throughout the day.

Grab & Go

Broader reading opportunities can be facilitated through a Grab & Go system. A selection of books can be chosen by the librarian upon request (telephone or online) of a specific genre or author. Again, a collection slot should be given to the customer to manage flow.

OPTION 2

Collection point at reception desk



Collection Points

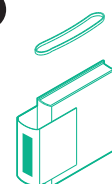
Option 1 - Self-Service:

Customers locate their order on dedicated shelves with A-Z customer surnames, and check out the order using self-services machines.

Option 2 - Reception Point:

Staff control the shelves and check out the order before handing the books over to the customer. Staff to wear and use any PPE deemed necessary.

01



A4 paper wrapped around book stating customer surname

02

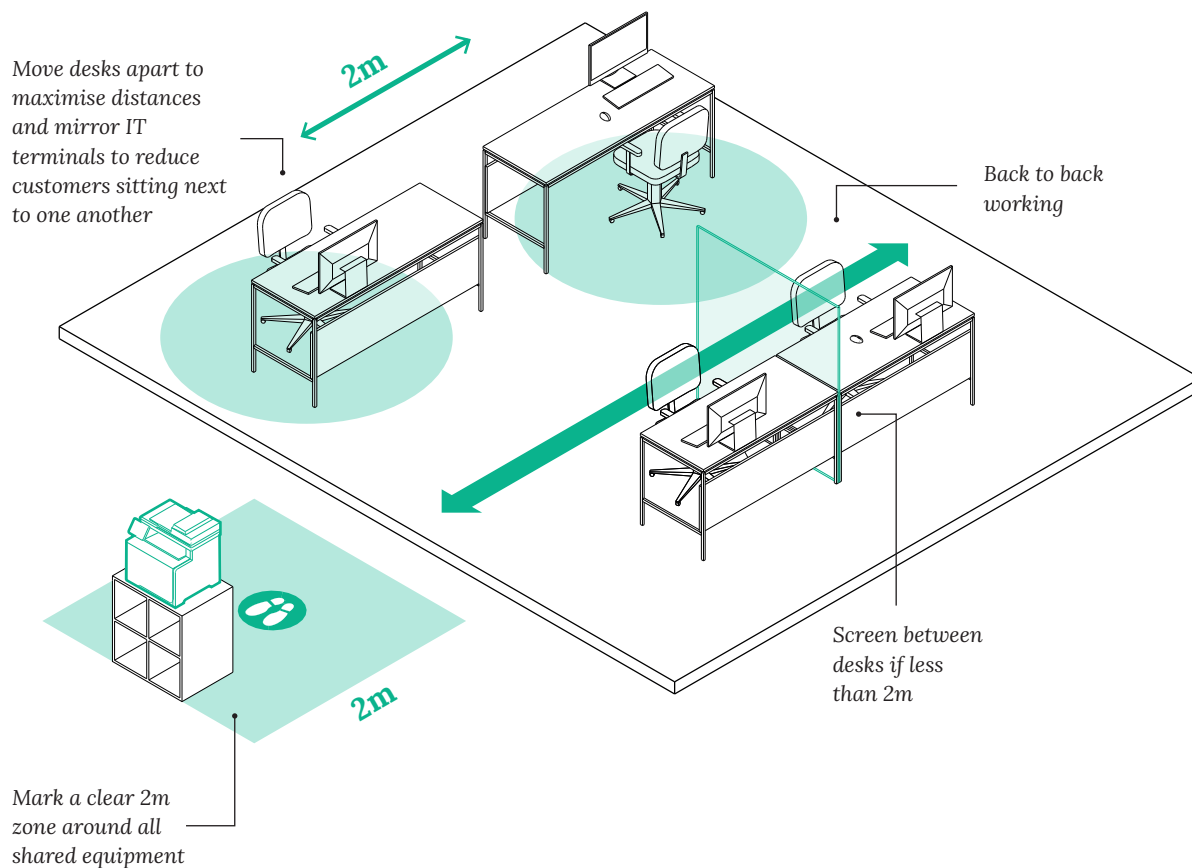


Bag of books with clearly labelled customer surname

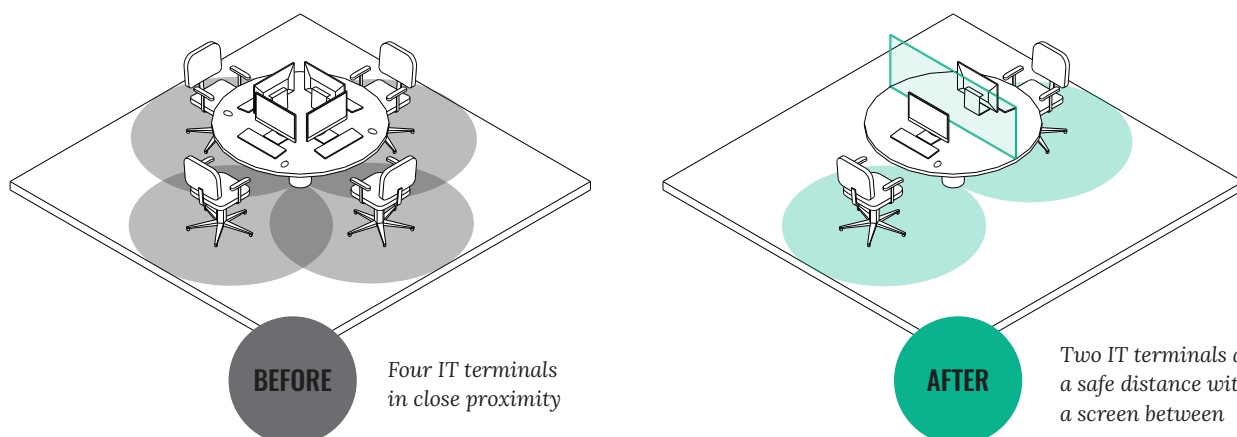
Working Safely

The safe use of IT equipment is to be carefully managed through timed appointments. Each work station should be cleaned between use, either by library staff or by the customer, using a cleaning point as detailed on page 13. The cleaning point is to be located next to IT work stations with clear signage.

LINEAR DESK CONDITION



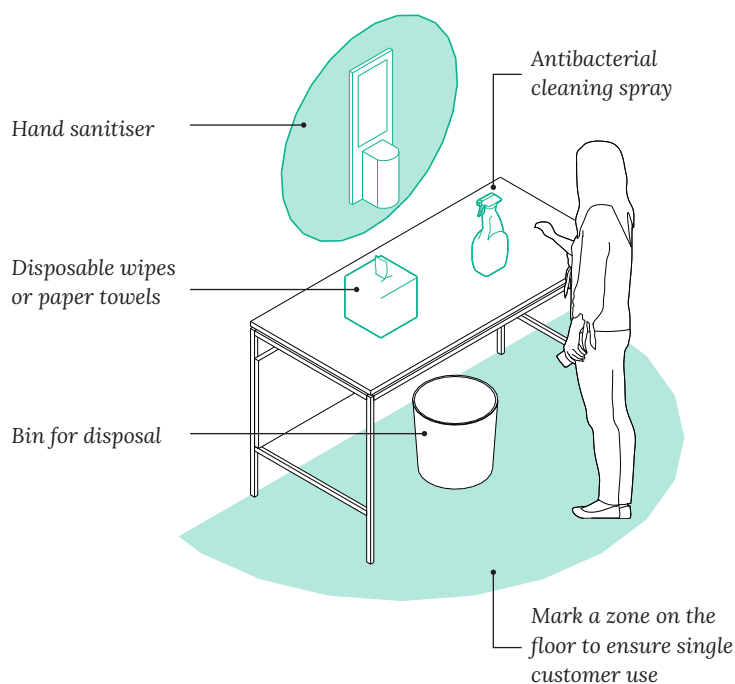
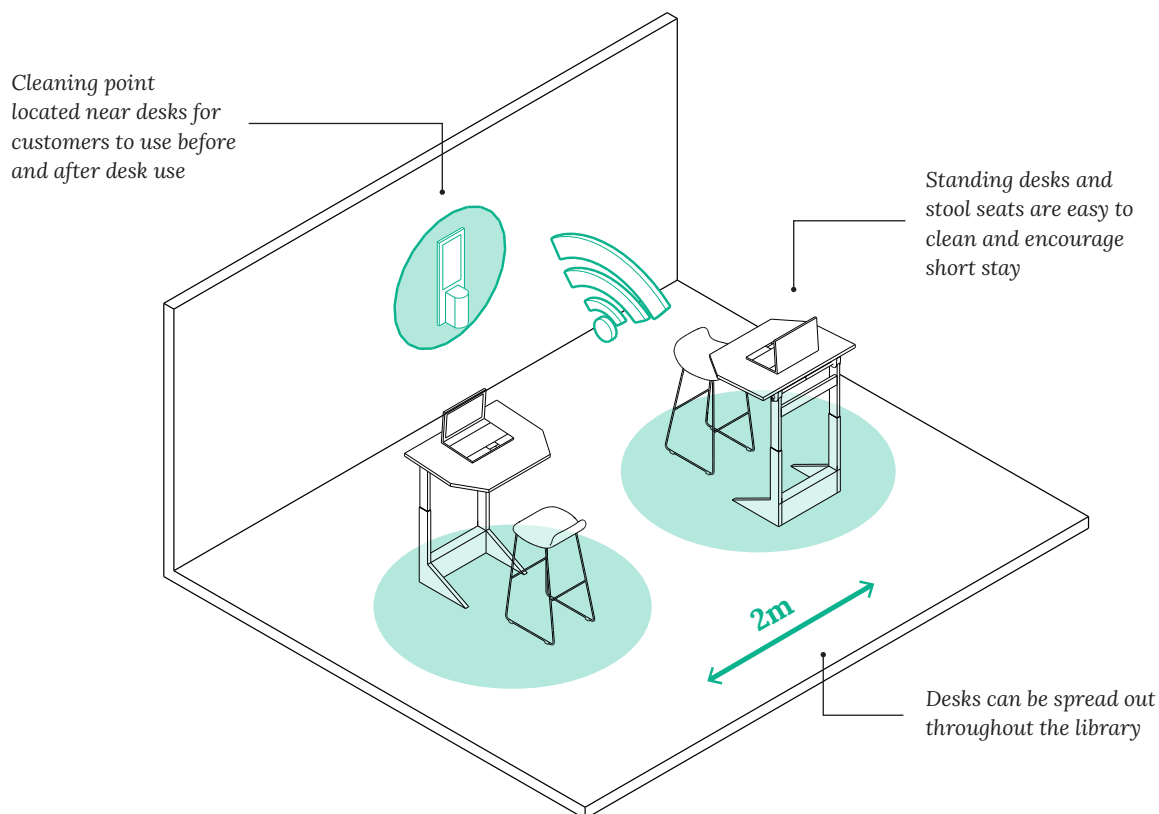
ROUND IT POD CONDITION





Wifi Spaces

To limit the use of shared IT equipment, wifi desk spaces can be created within open areas in the library. Customers can book time slots to access the internet connected through their personal laptop. The compact standing work stations take up less room, and provide a greater service to customers.



Cleaning Point

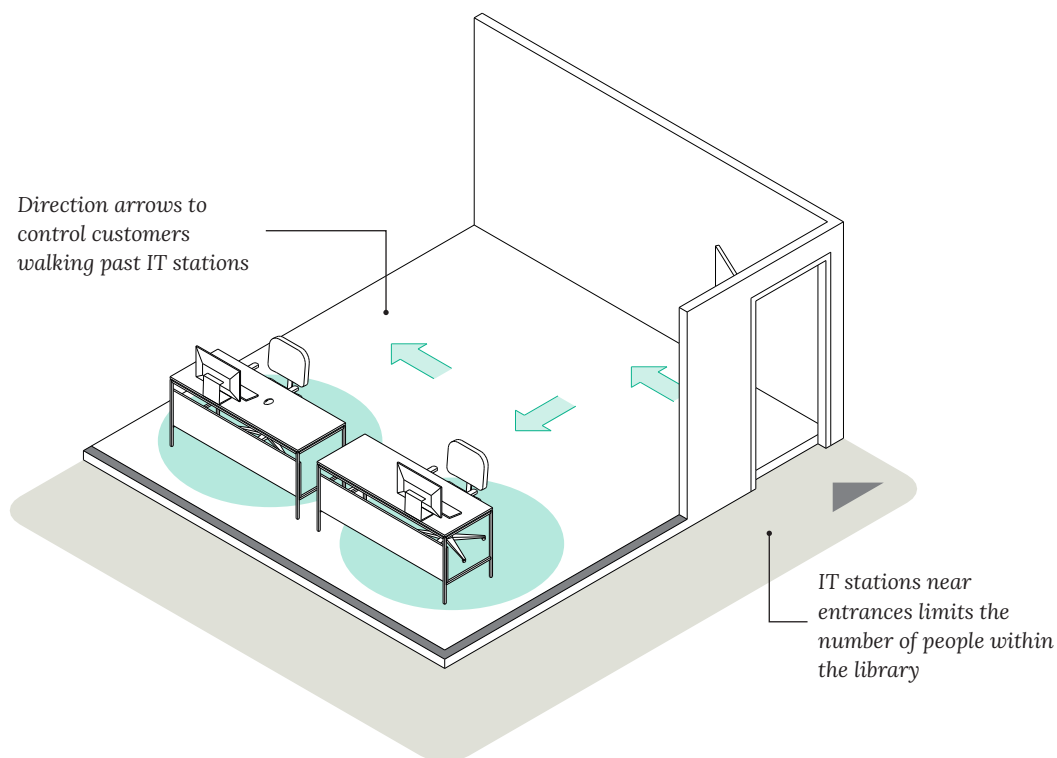
Cleaning points are to be located near IT equipment for customers to use before and after their allocated time slot. Clear signage on the walls and floor will help the customers identify the station and use it in a safe way.



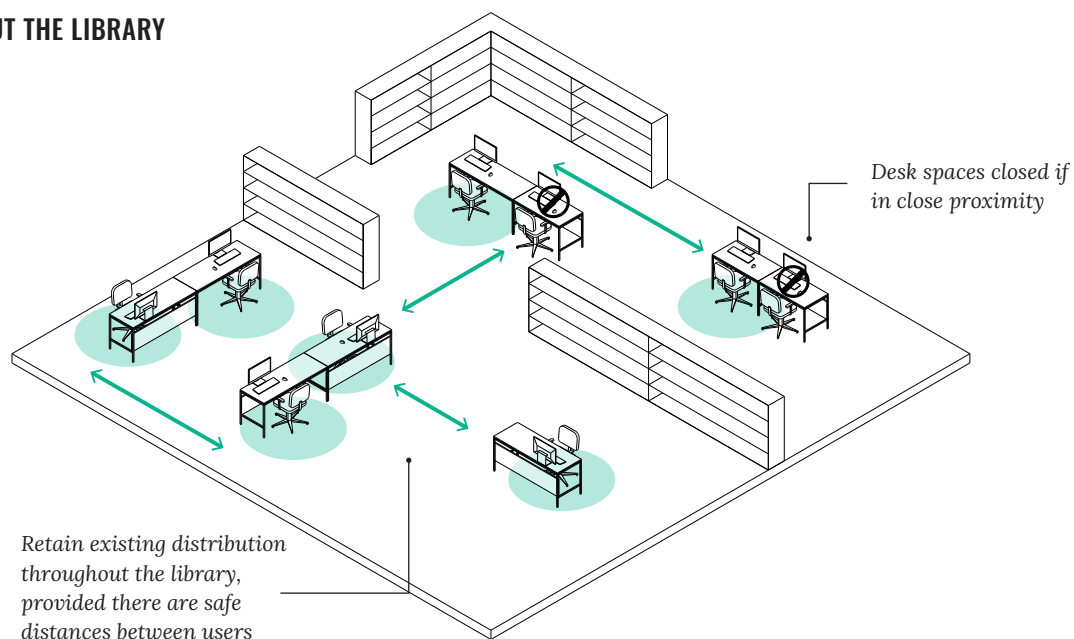
IT Distribution

The first IT desk spaces to be opened for public use should be located near the library entrance. This approach controls the number of people in the space, yet provides visibility to show that the library is open for use. The second stage is to allow access to IT facilities across the library. These spaces are often distributed throughout the library, and should remain in existing locations. IT terminals that are in close proximity should be closed to enable social distancing.

ENTRANCE / LOBBY CONDITION



THROUGHOUT THE LIBRARY





INITIAL OPENING

QUICK CHOICE

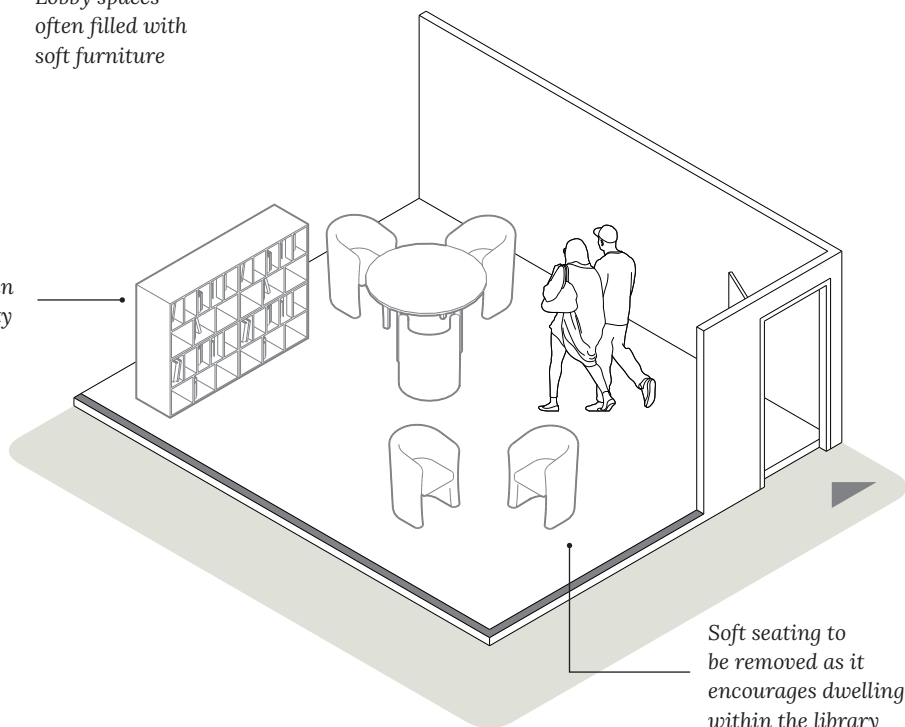
Preparation & Space

Quick choice offers customers access to limited stock for borrowing. Soft seating should be removed from lobby spaces with the space allowing for mobile shelving. Access to this small library can be controlled by timeslots, and books can be borrowed using self-service machines. Books handled by customers but not borrowed should be quarantined for 72 hours.

BEFORE

Lobby spaces often filled with soft furniture

Book shelves often located in close proximity to seating

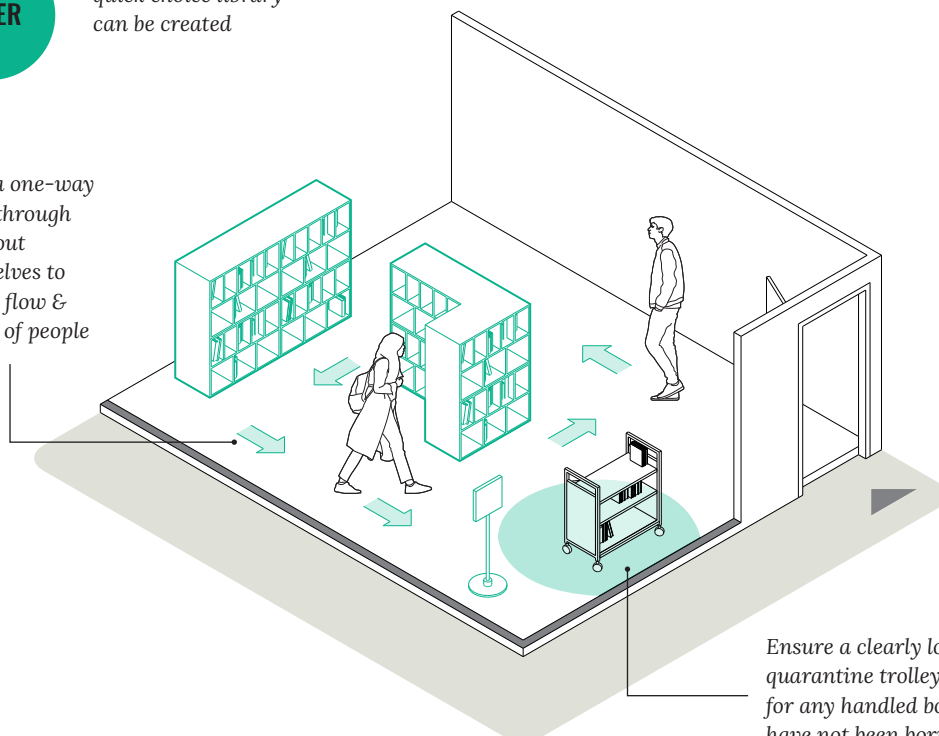


Soft seating to be removed as it encourages dwelling within the library

AFTER

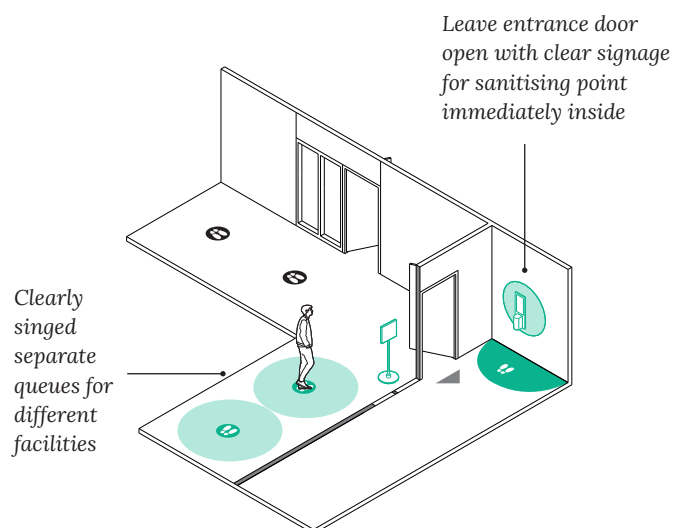
Once removed, a quick choice library can be created

Create a one-way system through spaced out book shelves to manage flow & number of people

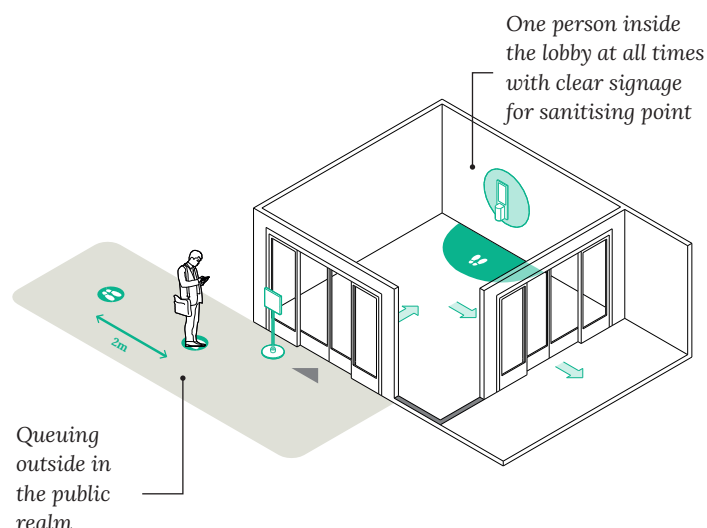


Ensure a clearly located quarantine trolley is provided for any handled books that have not been borrowed

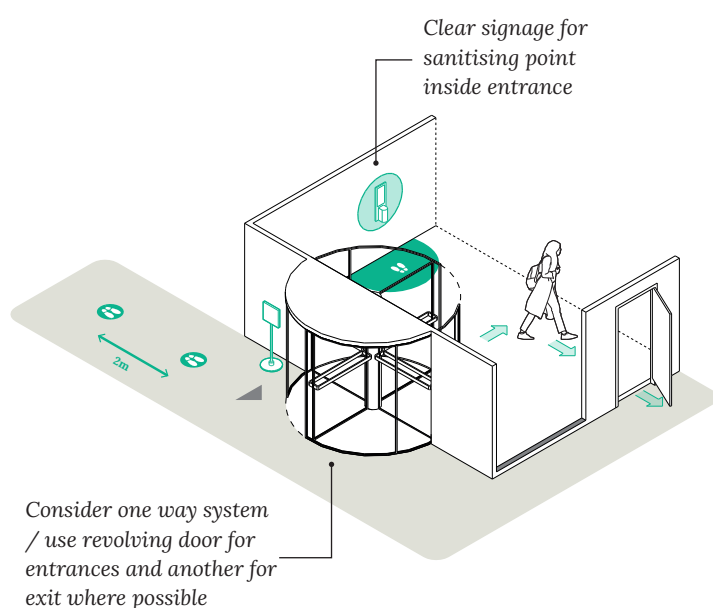
GENERAL FACILITIES ENTRANCES



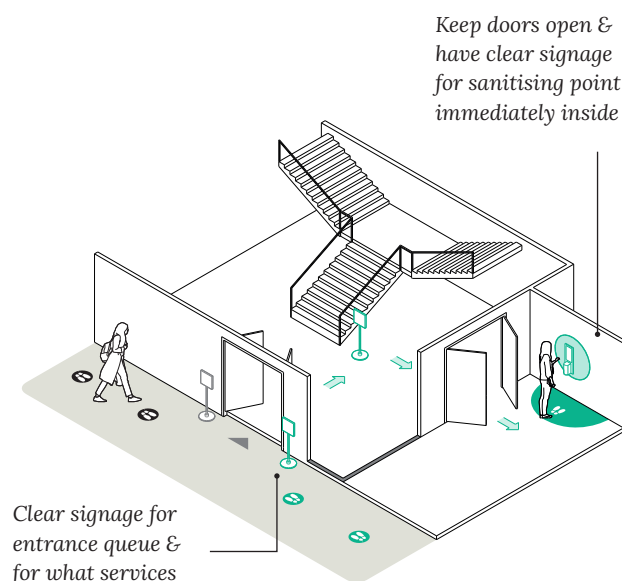
Single Door without Lobby



Automatic Door with Lobby



Revolving Door one-way Route



Shared Entrance & Atrium



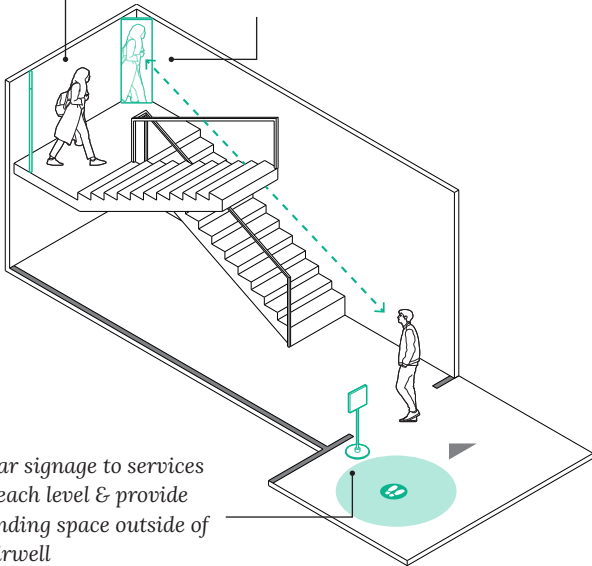
GENERAL FACILITIES

CIRCULATION

One way system on staircases where possible

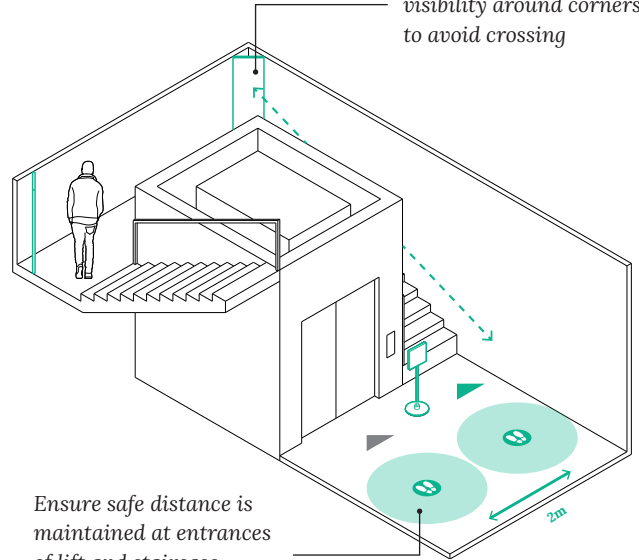
Use mirrors to increase visibility around corners to avoid crossing

Clear signage to services on each level & provide standing space outside of stairwell



Single Staircase

Use mirrors to increase visibility around corners to avoid crossing

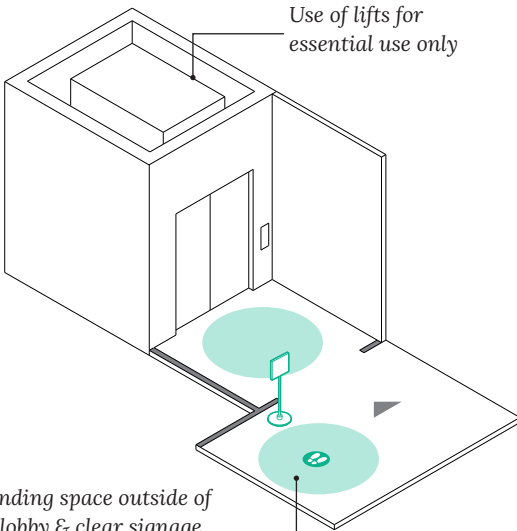


Ensure safe distance is maintained at entrances of lift and staircase

Lift & Stair Core

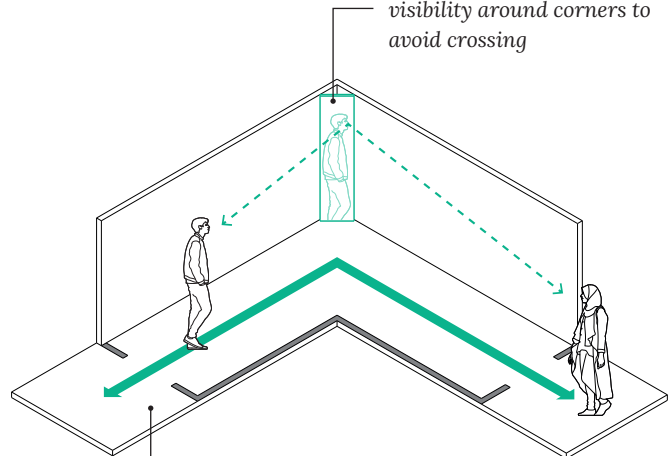
Use of lifts for essential use only

Standing space outside of lift lobby & clear signage stating use of lift for essential use only



Lift & Lobby

Use mirrors to increase visibility around corners to avoid crossing

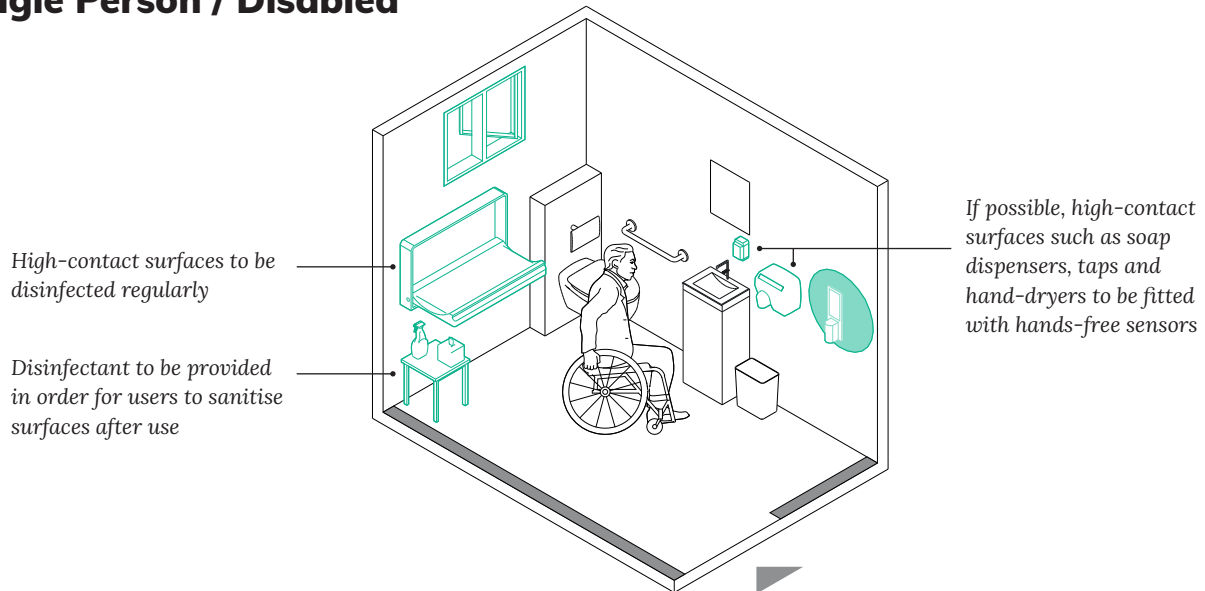


If corridors width less than 2m, consider one-way system

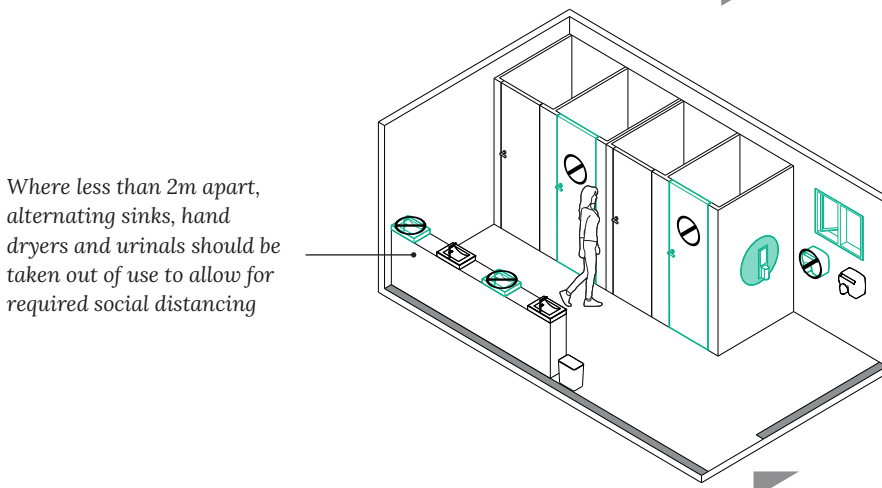
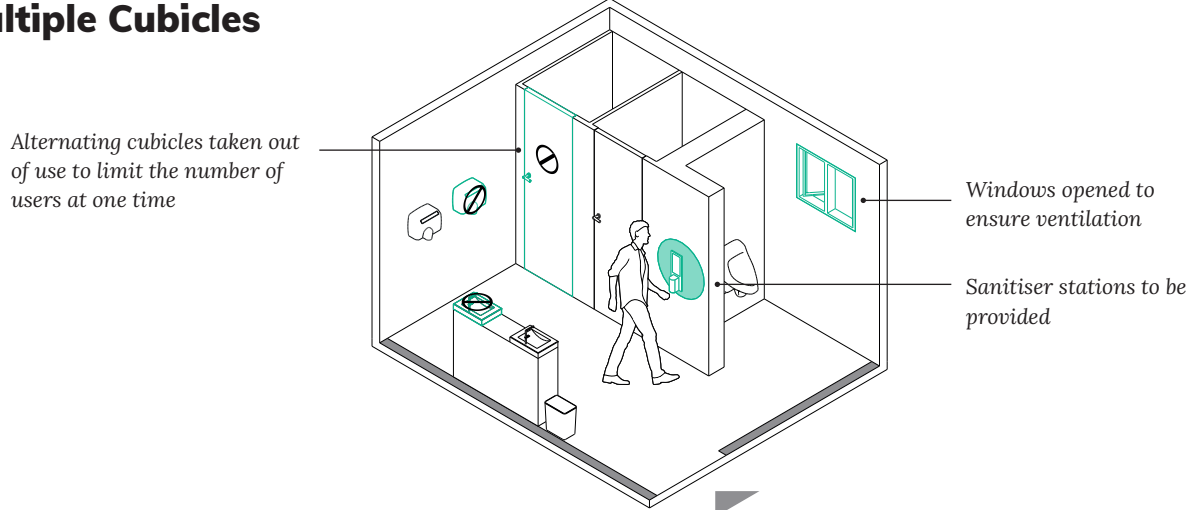
Corridors

GENERAL FACILITIES **TOILETS**

Single Person / Disabled



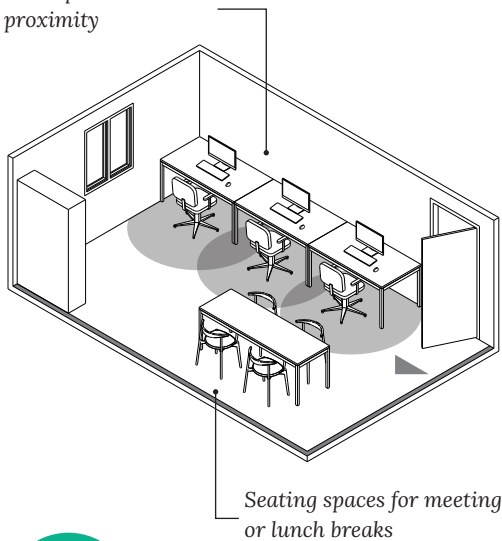
Multiple Cubicles



BEFORE

Small/Medium Office

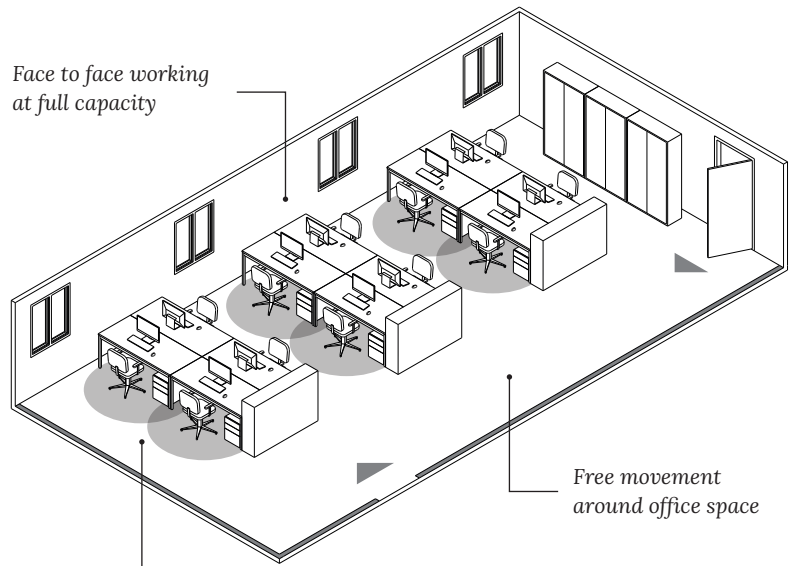
Desk spaces in close proximity



Seating spaces for meeting or lunch breaks

Medium/Large Office

Face to face working at full capacity

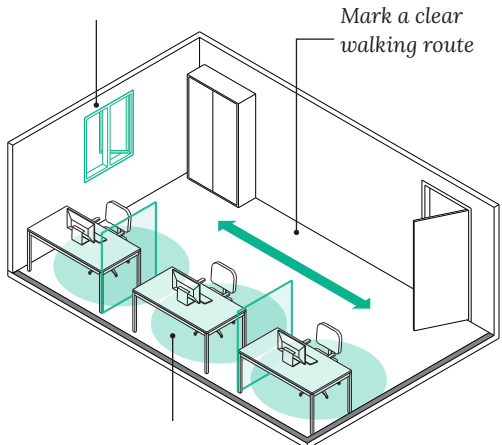


Desk spaces in close proximity

Free movement around office space

AFTER

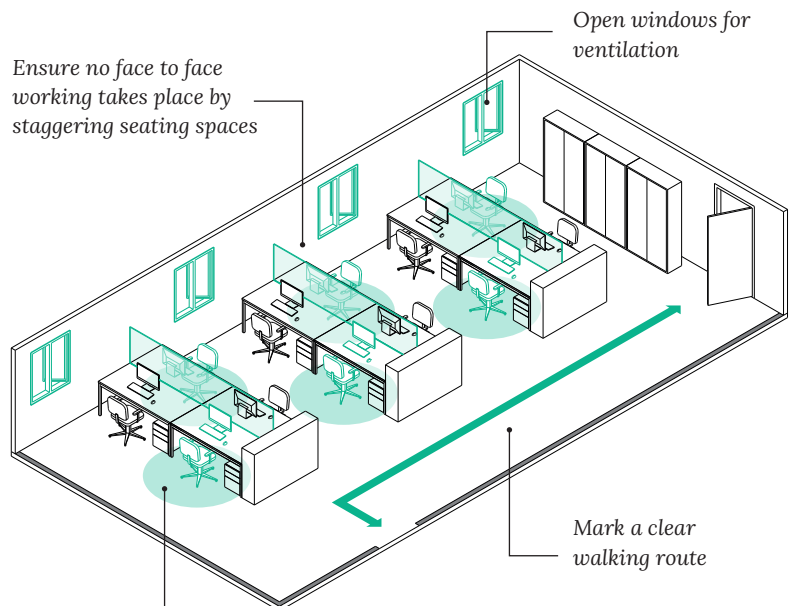
Open windows for ventilation



Mark a clear walking route

Ensure minimum 2m between desks or install screens between desks where this is not possible

Ensure no face to face working takes place by staggering seating spaces



Open windows for ventilation

Mark a clear walking route

Stagger staff working patterns to minimise numbers



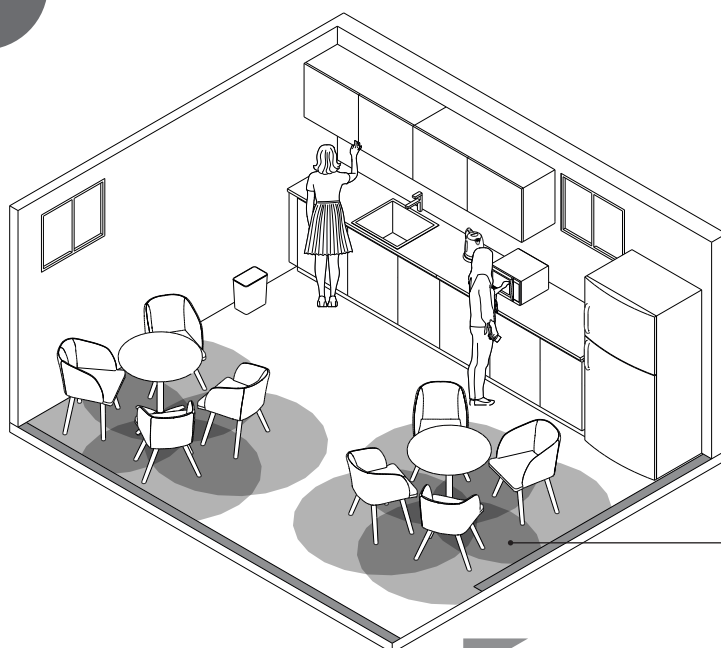
GENERAL FACILITIES

STAFF AMENITY

Staff Kitchen

Limited to essential use with limited capacity determined by size of room.

BEFORE



Existing arrangement of furniture does not comply with social distance guidance

AFTER

Sanitizer stations to be mounted in key areas

Windows opened to ensure ventilation

Disposable paper towels to replace tea-towels

High-contact surfaces to be disinfected regularly

Furniture reduced to ensure social distance upheld





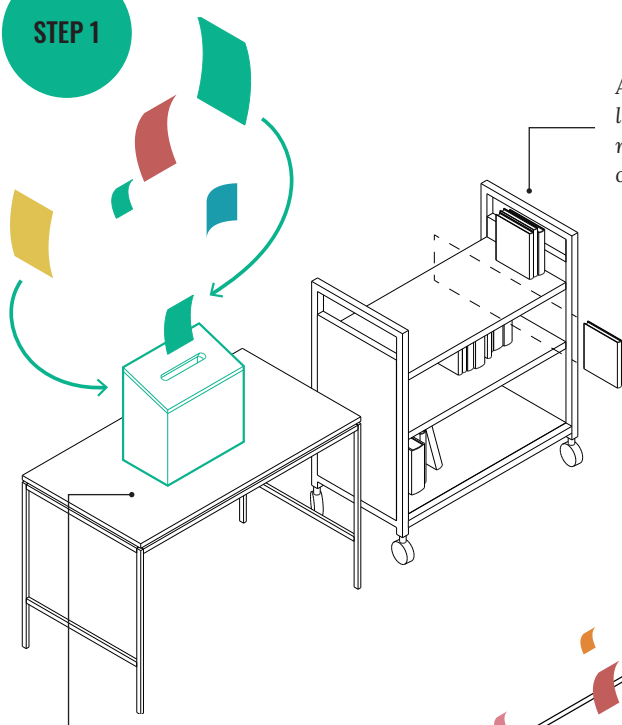
COMMUNITY

A WELCOME ENVIRONMENT

Community Art Wall

To ensure a welcome environment is created and sustained throughout the reopening of the library, a community art wall could be created with the local people. This board can be displayed in the lobby area of the library, creating a colourful street presence, and encourage those in the local area to contribute.

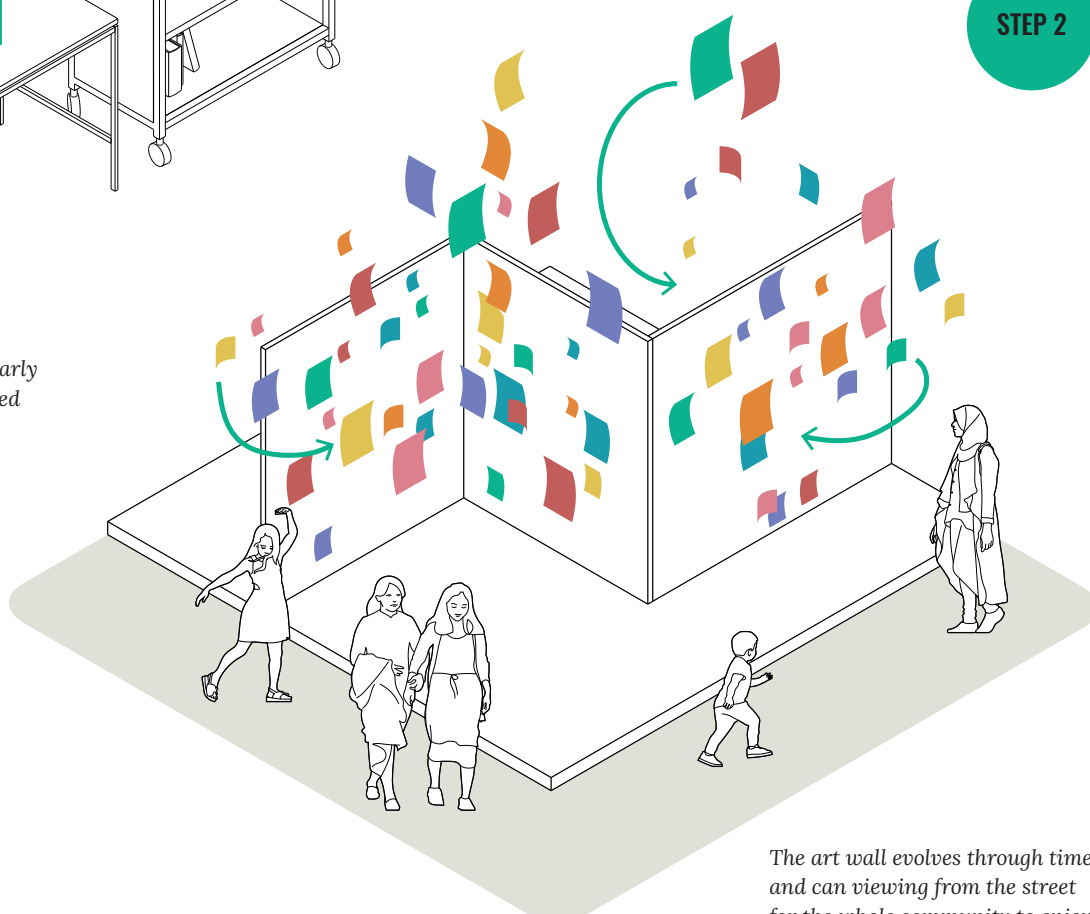
STEP 1



A collection box can be located next to book return area in the lobby of the library

Collection box to be clearly labelled and quarantined for 72 hours

STEP 2

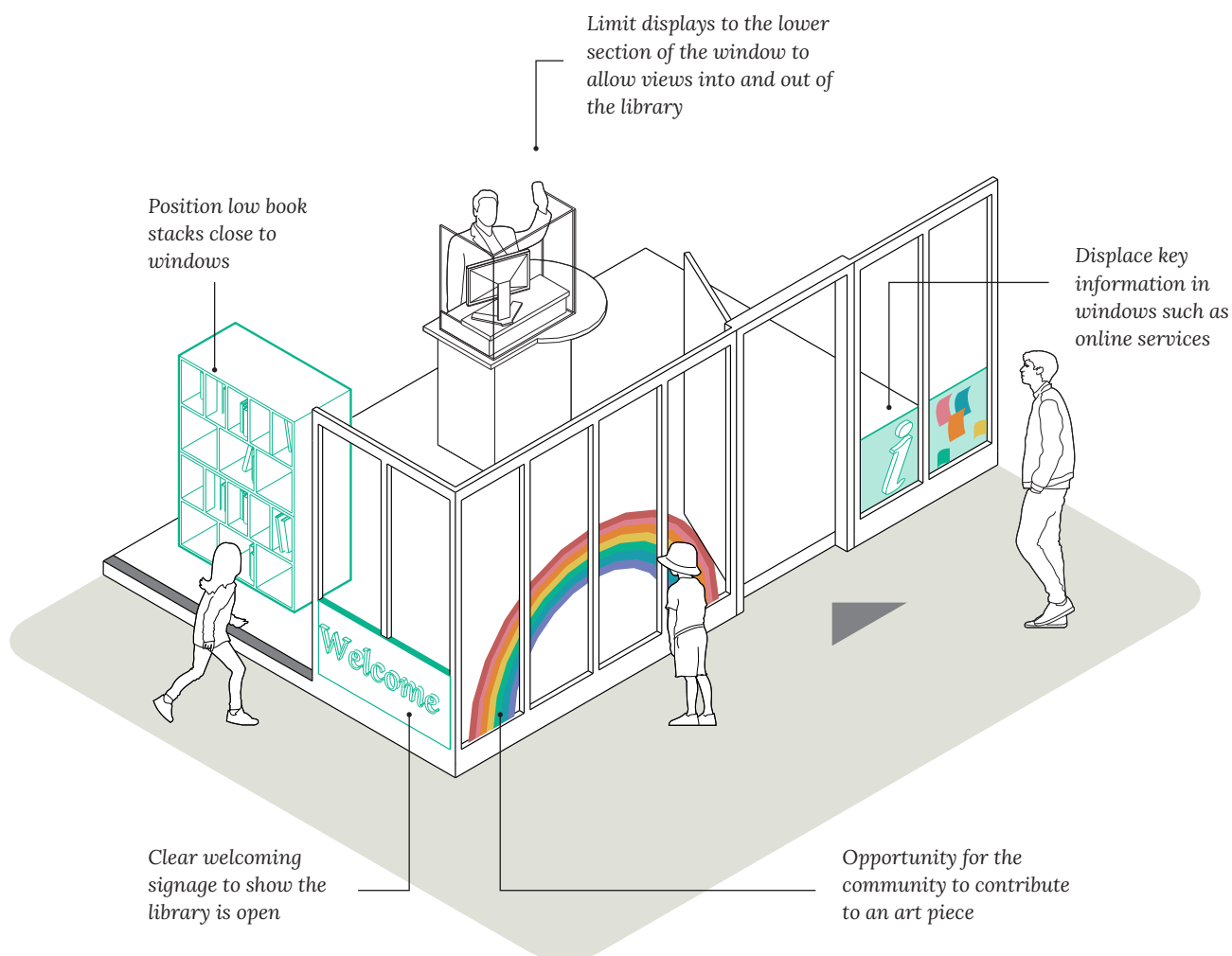


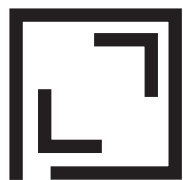
The art wall evolves through time and can viewing from the street for the whole community to enjoy



Window Displays

A colourful, welcoming street presence can increase people using the services available at the library, and help prevent loneliness within the community. Windows should be used to display books, as well as community art projects, and clear information on the services currently being provided.





COMMUNITY

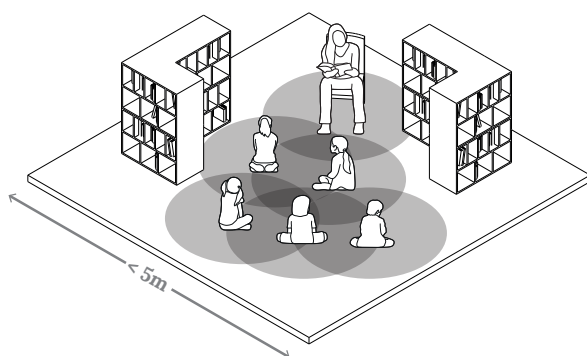
UNFOLD THE LIBRARY

Outside Space & Activities

The library need not be confined to its walls. There are opportunities elsewhere that can begin to adapt to provide services for the library, such as larger buildings, community halls, shops and sports centres. Staff should be encourage to reach out to the local area and extend their services off site. Group numbers must not exceed current government guidelines of up to six people from different households.

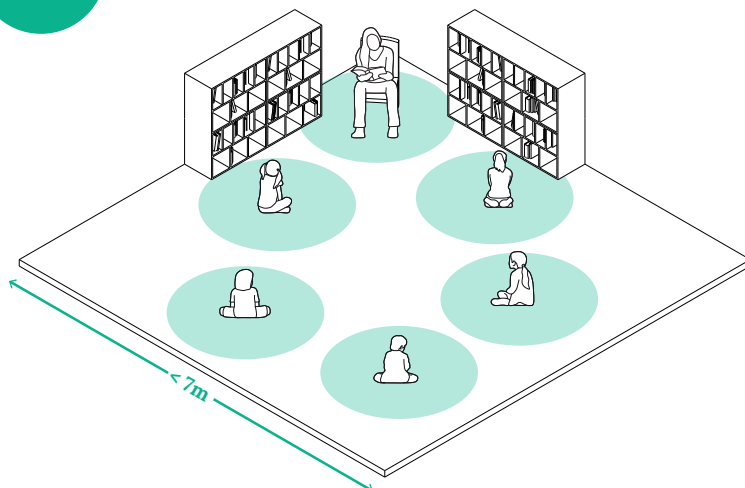
BEFORE

Children's rhyme time happening in an small part of the library

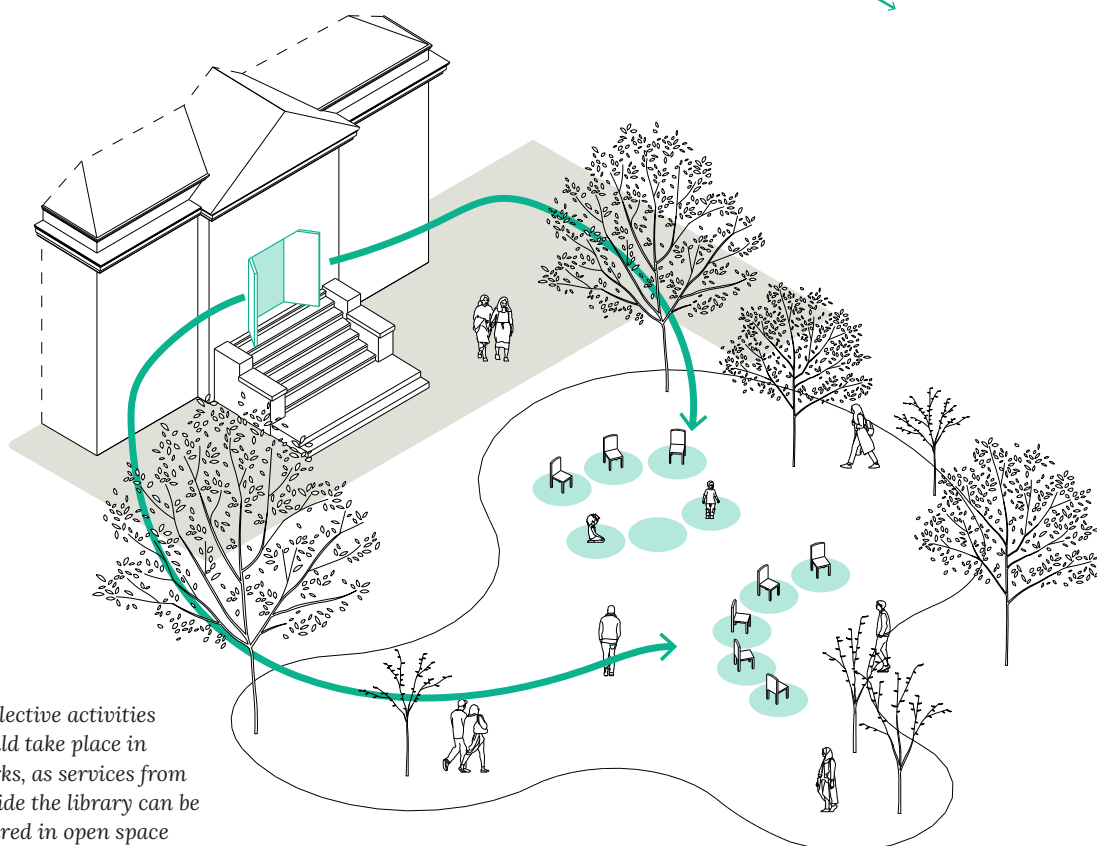


AFTER

Relocated rhyme time in a larger, more open space



Collective activities could take place in parks, as services from inside the library can be shared in open space



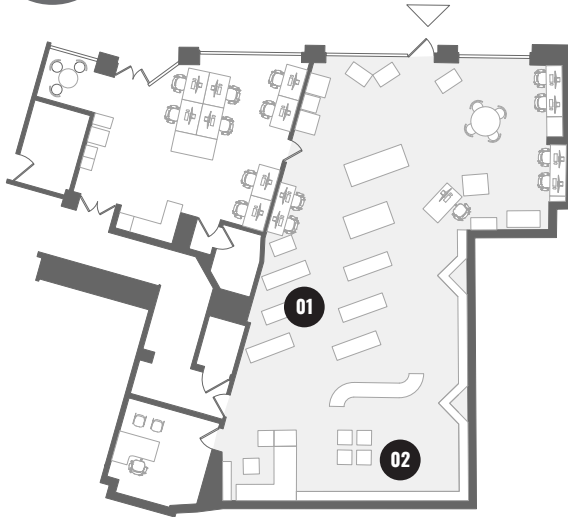
CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY

SMALL-MEDIUM

Example of a Retail Unit Library

BEFORE



01

Book shelves are movable, allowing the space to adapt

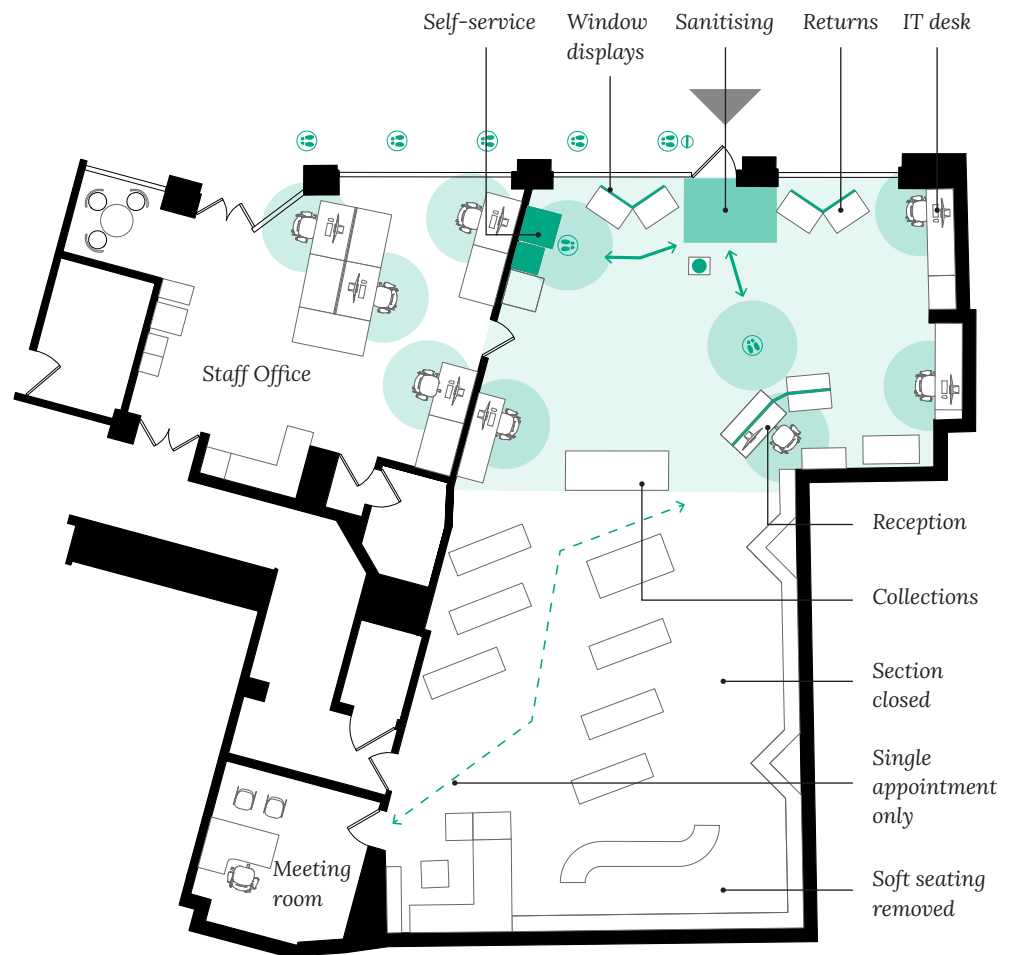


02

The children's library at the back of the library has soft seating

AFTER

This small retail unit library has large windows for displays, and a clear single point of entry. A sanitising station is located directly inside the entrance, and clear signage direct customers to the services available. Books can be returned on the shelves in the windows, and collections are made from the shelf parallel to the reception desk. Books are checked out using the self-service machines. Soft furniture has been removed and stacks moved back to create an open lobby. It is only this front section of the library that is open.

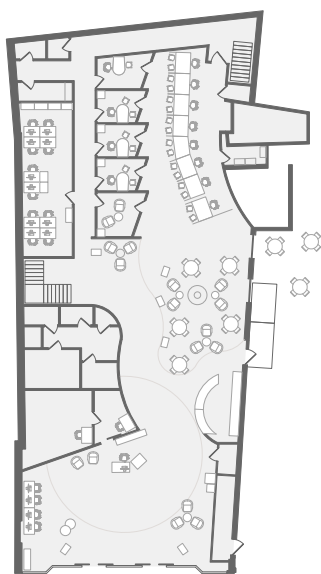


CASE STUDY

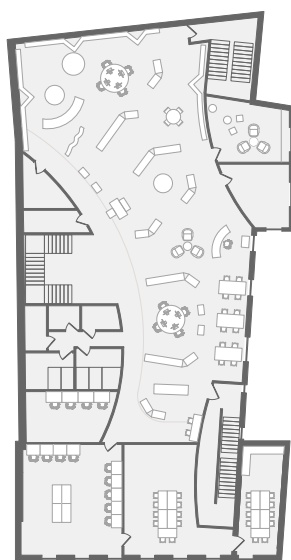
MEDIUM-LARGE

Sheerness Gateway
38-42 High St, Kent

BEFORE



01



01

Image from outside shows the shared entrance space to access library facilities and gateway services

AFTER

This large gateway library has a number of services, each sharing a main entrance. The two sliding entrance doors have been used to create a clear entrance and exit flow into the library, with a sanitising station within the lobby. Book collections are made at the reception desk. The soft furniture section has been removed and replaced with a quick choice library, where the customers check-out using the self-service machine by the exit.



This document has been developed with and should be read alongside the Libraries Connected Library service recovery toolkit, and all relevant Government guidance. Please note that knowledge of Covid-19 and best practice guidelines in response to it are evolving, and that this document may be updated to reflect ongoing learning.

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COVID ——— 19
**SAFER
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