



Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of the budget proposals and consider mitigating action.

Outcome	Children and young people in Southampton get a good start in life
Code	CYP 7
Name or Brief Description of Proposal	<p>Changes to Libraries Service to enable extended opening times with less staffing.</p> <p>This proposal is for the introduction of Open Use Systems in suitable libraries, installing a pilot scheme at Woolston library and extending the scheme to appropriate library locations to enable the library to be open for pre-registered users without a staff presence. The library will be open for the basic functions of book browsing, borrowing and returns, computer use and leisure use. Other locations to be proposed are: Bitterne Library and Shirley Library.</p> <p>Self-service hours are likely be first thing in the morning and later hours in the evenings but would be determined on usage patterns. The scheme is operational in a number of library services across the country including Peterborough City Council.</p> <p>Reduction in staffed hours would provide a more accessible but diminished service.</p>
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>Southampton Library Service: Libraries represent a core part of Southampton’s information, skills and learning offer. They provide free and universal access to books, information, the internet and informal learning. They provide support for families and individuals through</p>	

reading and training programmes and by promoting life skills, readiness for economic activity, digital literacy and well-being.

The service consists of 11 libraries across the City incorporating 5 community led libraries which are not staffed by Council staff.

Services:

- Books, CDs and DVDS for loan in a range of formats and languages.
- A range of e books, audio, newspapers and magazines.
- 12 major online databases as well as major encyclopaedias and dictionaries and a free language learning course with over 60 languages.
- 300,000+ visits to the libraries web last year for information, library catalogue and electronic resources. 24 hour online access to library catalogue, account management and information sources.
- Information Services - skilled library staff answered 200,000 queries on diverse information issues in the last year.
- Free public internet, Wi-Fi and email access in every library from 150 computers.
- Books, support, and spaces for reading groups across the City including children, young people, visually impaired.
- Innovative ways of reaching parents and children via work with the Sure Start projects.
- Partnerships with specialist business and health information and advice (Southampton CAB, Macmillan, Small Business).
- Learning Centre offering a full range of online courses, guidance and tutor support and a Local Studies library and staff helping people discover their local and family history.
- Year round programme of events and activities, including reading promotions, author visits, Summer Reading Challenge, craft and reading activities, library clubs; and opportunities for those who want to learn with their children, including rhyme times, family reading groups, baby signing, Southampton Favourite Book to Share Award.
- Study space, meetings rooms and library spaces for hire.
- Volunteering and work experience programmes.

Customers:

- Over 1 million visitors per year.
- Over 1 million items borrowed and over 220,000 uses of the computers. Southampton was in the top quartile of Unitary Authorities for loans of books per 1000 population.
- 43,000 active users of the libraries (active library user is a person who has borrowed an item, or used the public network (PN) at least once).
- 57% of active users are female compared to 43% male (58% female, 42% male for regular users).

- Of the active users, 74.6% use one library compared to 55% for regular users.
- 24% of respondents from the 2012 Library Satisfaction Survey (PLUS) described themselves as having a disability and 16% of customers are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Summary of Impact and Issues

Open Plus enables a limited library service to operate without any staff being present and has the potential to:

- Maintain opening hours and achieve savings in staff costs.
- Extend opening hours without additional staff cost.

Key features of Open Plus are:

A library member applies for Open Plus membership and is enabled and identified as someone who can gain access to library services after staffed hours. This will be open to people aged 18 and over.

Staff will brief the customer of services available after staffed hours, how the library will operate and close and how the customer will be informed through visual and spoken messages.

Customers will be informed of safety procedures and responsibilities of the Open Plus use. This briefing will be critical for the success of the project and safety of users.

How Open Plus works:

- Controls the locking and unlocking of entrances via a library card and PIN and turns lights on or off.
- Starts up and shuts down self-service equipment and PC's.
- Provides public announcements to advise borrowers of the library's status, particularly when closure is imminent.
- Operates a CCTV option which photographs and video records all triggered events such as entrance, exit, and attempt to access non-library areas.
- Provides a safe and secure library environment although this would be retroactive - it is not envisaged that they would be viewed live.

Issues include:

Having a library local to you and open for as long as possible is important to library users as shown in previous consultations. This proposal would result in retained and longer opening hours for local Council run libraries. An increase in opening hours would result in a positive impact on all library users.

Open Plus is a method of making libraries available for public use without the need for staffing. This would be installed in key libraries maintained by the Council and would enable residents to use libraries, and to borrow

and return stock outside of current opening hours.

For safety reasons those under the age of 18 would not be registered/permitted to use libraries during unstaffed hours, unless accompanied by a responsible adult. This has the potential to result in a negative impact for younger people. In mitigation of this, people will be encouraged to use libraries during staffed hours. People under 16 years are proportionately more likely to use libraries during the staffed hours after school hours or at weekends. Many younger users also visit libraries with adults.

There is no local data for us to use in respect of gender impacts of Open Plus however, information from other authority areas using Open Plus is that Males are more likely to use libraries during unstaffed hours. This group is slightly underrepresented currently.

Library staff would also be available and on duty to provide support and help to users at programmed and advertised times. However no staff support will be available during extended hours. This will limit the support which is offered for computer use, support for benefits and information queries or activities for children.

Once the weekly staffed hours are determined, the actual opening hours would be determined following analysis of current busy / quiet periods.

The solution has been rolled out in many libraries in UK and Europe, including London libraries and Oxfordshire libraries.

Potential Positive Impacts

Having a library local to you and open for as long as possible is important to library users as shown in previous consultations. This proposal would result in retained or possibly longer opening hours for local Council run libraries.

An increase in opening hours would result in a positive impact on all library users.

Previous reductions in library hours have made it difficult for working people and families to visit the library frequently as libraries open later in the morning and close earlier in the evening. This option will positively impact on those unable to visit a library during current opening hours.

Responsible Service Manager	Linda Francis Service Lead - Libraries, Registration & Bereavement
Date	14 October 2016
Approved by Senior Manager	Mitch Sanders Service Director - Transactions & Universal Services
Date	14 October 2016

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	Persons under the age of 18 will not be able to enter the library during unstaffed hours.	Encourage access during core staffed hours.
Disability	Access will be available for people with disabilities but staff assistance will not be available.	Encourage access during core staffed hours.
Gender Reassignment	No identified negative impacts.	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No identified negative impacts.	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	No identified negative impacts.	N/A
Race	No identified negative impacts.	N/A
Religion or Belief	No identified negative impacts.	N/A
Sex	Information from other authority areas using Open Plus is that males are more likely to use libraries during unstaffed hours. This group is slightly underrepresented as library users currently.	Potential positive impact.
Sexual Orientation	No identified negative impacts.	N/A
Community Safety	Risk of library misuse, crime.	A process of registration of users with a briefing on responsibilities will be in place. CCTV will be available for identification of misuse.
Poverty	Extending hours will support people to use free computers facilities and books in their local library for longer.	Potential positive impact.
Other Significant Impacts	No identified negative impacts.	N/A