

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(Please note, this will form part of a public facing document. If you have any questions about this, please contact Equality@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Title: What are you completing an Equality Impact Assessment on?
The new Wiltshire Library Strategy 2025 – 2030. This is being taken to Cabinet on 10 December 2024.

Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (please tick any that apply)			
Proposed New Policy or Service	Change to Policy or Service	MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy)	Service Review
✓			

Version Control				
Version control number	V1	Date	28/10/2024	Reason for review (if appropriate)

Risk Rating Score (use Equalities Risk Matrix and guidance)		
**If any of these are 3 or above, an Impact Assessment must be completed. Please check with equality@wiltshire.gov.uk for advice		
Criteria	Inherent risk score on proposal	Residual risk score after mitigating actions have been identified
Legal challenge	6	2
Financial costs/implications	4	2
People impacts	6	3
Reputational damage	8	4

Section 1**Description** of what is being analysed

The library strategy document outlining the direction of travel for the service over the next 5 years.

Developed through engagement with stakeholders and based on community need and both council and national priorities for public libraries.

Section 2People or communities that are currently **targeted or could be affected** by any change

People of all ages living, working or studying in Wiltshire.

Those people with the following protected characteristics have also been considered:

- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy/maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Marriage or civil partnership

Work has been ongoing in recent years to reach non-users, particularly those who may struggle with rural isolation, be on low incomes or from marginalised groups. This work will enable better evidence based decision making and in turn more targeted needs based services.

Section 3People who are **delivering** the policy or service that are targeted or could be affected (i.e. staff, commissioned organisations, contractors)

Staff, volunteers, internal and external partners.

Section 4

The underpinning **evidence and data** used for the analysis (Attach documents where appropriate)

Wiltshire Council has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service' for all those who work, live or study in the county as described in the [1964 Libraries Act](#).

Library membership data has been used to develop the strategy, including age, postcode, lending and visitor data. This has helped inform customer need and identify potential gaps in provision.

A variety of engagement exercises were completed, including a Local Government Association Peer Challenge, focus groups, meetings and surveys. The public have been involved in user and non-user activities. Library staff, volunteers and other council teams have also been integral to developing the ambitions

Partners representing hard to reach groups have also been involved in the creation of the strategy, including those who work with military families, boaters, areas of deprivation including the community conversation areas.

Section 5

Conclusions drawn about the impact of the proposed change or new service/policy

The aim of the strategy is to ensure regardless of any protected characteristic people living, working or studying in Wiltshire have a library service whose purpose is to:

- Deliver free and inclusive access to friendly, welcoming library spaces and reading for pleasure to deliver better health outcomes
- Enable people to meet, access books, information and culture, use digital services, and develop their skills to improve social mobility
- Act as a Council interface with communities, working with residents and partners to provide a range of interventions and opportunities to build strong and cohesive communities
- Be a vibrant high street presence boosting footfall and helping to improve the quality of life for communities

Research and data have enabled the creation of a series of ambitions to ensure library services reflect the changing needs of users over the five-year course of the strategy. Those relating to people with protected characteristics include:

Age (older people)

- Increase the reach of the Home Library Service so those who are unable to visit the library in person due to frailty, disability, SEND or health conditions still benefit from library services
- Ensure those without skills or access to the internet are not left unsupported due to the move online by organisations and businesses
- Support people to use and access technology to stay in their homes for longer, reducing care costs for the council, in partnership with the Adult Social Care Teams

Age (younger people)

- Improve the creative digital and cultural offer to encourage more 13 – 19 year olds to use the library. Developing their confidence and skills in areas such as science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) to support the economy
- Redesign of larger libraries young people's area developed in collaboration with young people and youth professionals to ensure they meet the needs of the target group
- Work with key partners to listen and understand the needs of children with autism and/or SEND to support them to continue using libraries as they reach adulthood

Disability

- Continue concessionary memberships, accessible reading formats and other support for those with physical and/or sensory disabilities or SEND to help ensure equality of access to library services

Pregnancy and maternity

- Toilet facilities are provided in some libraries, with further consideration given to improvements as part of refurbishments and new build libraries

Sex

- Encourage flexible use of library buildings through increased access outside of office hours, either through co-location, a building management system or self-service

Rural isolation

- Library services in rural communities via our mobile libraries and Home Library Service, reaching people in and close to their homes reducing the need to travel to access library services.

Low income

- Free SIMS and mobile data, in partnership with the Good Things Foundation, to people in need via the National Databank scheme
- Deliver 3rd year of a warm and welcome winter offer to support those impacted by the cost of living

Hard to reach groups

- Develop a strong marketing strategy and programme of outreach promoting the relevance of libraries and encouraging greater use by targeted groups. With particular reference to military families, Boaters, Gypsy, Roma, Travellers, those with caring responsibilities, autism and SEND.

Action applicable to disability, gender reassignment, race and sexual orientation

- Ensure recruitment processes encourage diversity, so the workforce reflects the demographics of the local communities served

Section 6

How will the outcomes from this equality analysis be **monitored, reviewed and communicated?**

Developing a high-level action plan with measurable outcomes is the next stage in delivering this strategy. This will be incorporated into the annual library service plan and other associated project planning documents. This work will be led by Rebecca Bolton, Head of Libraries, with support from the Library Senior Management Team.

The strategy is a living document guiding every aspect of library service delivery. It will be embedded within service planning and the individual objectives of all library staff. Progress will be reviewed and communicated to stakeholders on an annual basis.

***Copy and paste sections 5 & 6 into any Committee, CLT or Briefing papers as a way of summarising the equality impacts where indicated**

Please send a copy of this document to Equality@wiltshire.gov.uk

Completed by:	Rebecca Bolton	
Date	28/10/2024	
Signed off by:		
Date		
To be reviewed by:		
Review date:		
For Corporate Equality Use only	Compliance sign off date:	

Equality Impact Issues and Action Table (for more information on protected characteristics, see risk assessment document)

Identified issue drawn from your conclusions (only use those characteristics that are relevant)	Actions needed	Who is responsible	Date	Expected outcome
Age				
Older people – increase in those over 65 of 43% by 2040	Increase the reach of the Home Library Service so those who are unable to visit the library in person due to frailty, disability, SEND or health conditions still benefit from library services	Peter Waterman	Mar 2030	Increase in Home Library customers of 10% from 2024 baseline
	Ensure those without skills or access to the internet are not left unsupported due to the move online by organisations and businesses	Kathryn Preston	Mar 2025	Provision of 650 digital support sessions in 2024/25
	Support people to use and access technology to stay in their homes for longer, reducing care costs for the council, in partnership with the Adult Social Care Teams	Peter Waterman	Mar 2026	New partnership established, working with Reablement Team to cross promote the services of each team
Younger people – drop in membership from age 13	Improve the creative digital and cultural offer to encourage more 13 – 19 year olds to use the library. Developing their confidence and skills in areas such as science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) to support the economy	Sarah Hillier	Mar 2030	Increase in 13 – 19 yr old memberships of 10% by the end of the strategy
	Redesign of larger libraries young people’s area developed in collaboration with young people and youth professionals to ensure they meet the needs of the target group	Sarah Hillier	Mar 2026	Annual attendance at a Youth Council meeting and new partnership established to promote children and young people’s services through advocacy by their peers
	Listen to the voices of young people with autism and/or SEND to support their transition from using the children’s library to adult provision.	Sarah Hillier	Mar 2028	Work in partnership with those who support young people to ensure the learning from young people with autism and/or SEND is used to help inform provision of library services and facilities to reflect their needs

Disability				
Increase in number of those with physical and/or sensory disabilities, autism and SEND – support to continue access to flexible, inclusive and accessible services	Continue concessionary memberships, accessible reading formats and other support for those with disabilities, autism or SEND to help ensure equality of access to library services	Basil Nankivell	Mar 2025	Review of concessionary memberships completed
Staff and volunteer recruitment – workforce to reflect the community they serve	Ensure recruitment processes encourage diversity, so the workforce reflects the demographics of local communities	Claire Dow	Mar 2027	Processes reviewed and monitored to ensure library services attract a diverse potential workforce for interview, resulting in the recruitment of staff and volunteers who reflect the community they serve
Gender Reassignment				
Staff and volunteer recruitment – workforce to reflect the community they serve	Ensure recruitment processes encourage diversity, so the workforce reflects the demographics of local communities	Claire Dow	Mar 2027	Processes reviewed and monitored to ensure library services attract a diverse potential workforce for interview, resulting in the recruitment of staff and volunteers who reflect the community they serve
Marriage and Civil Partnership				
No impact was identified at this stage of strategy development – this will continue to be reviewed				
Pregnancy and Maternity				
Consistency of accessible changing provision	Toilet facilities are provided in some libraries, with further consideration given to improvements as part of refurbishments and new build libraries	Rebecca Bolton	Mar 2030	Review of facilities at any refurbished and new libraries or as budget allows
Race (including ethnicity or national origin, colour, nationality and Gypsies and Travellers)				
Staff and volunteer recruitment – workforce to reflect the community they serve	Ensure recruitment processes encourage diversity, so the workforce reflects the demographics of local communities	Claire Dow		Processes reviewed and monitored to ensure library services attract a diverse potential workforce for interview, resulting in the recruitment of staff and volunteers who reflect the community they serve
Religion and Belief				
No impact was identified at this stage of strategy development – this will continue to be				

reviewed				
Sex				
Under representation of men aged 20 – 50 using library services compared to women and the general population	Encourage flexible use of library buildings through increased access outside of office hours, either through co-location, a building management system or self-service	Rebecca Bolton	Mar 2030	Marketing of services of interest to men launched and delivered through programme of outreach with impact monitored Review opportunities for increasing opening hours with any refurbished and new libraries
Sexual Orientation				
Staff and volunteer recruitment – workforce reflects the community they serve	Ensure recruitment processes encourage diversity, so the workforce reflects the demographics of local communities	Claire Dow	Mar 2027	Processes reviewed and monitored to ensure library services attract a diverse potential workforce for interview, resulting in the recruitment of staff and volunteers who reflect the community they serve
Rural isolation				
Large areas of Wiltshire are isolated with lower levels of car ownership and reduced public transport options	Library services in rural communities via our mobile libraries and Home Library Service, reaching people in and close to their homes reducing the need to travel to access library services.	Peter Waterman	Mar 2030	Introduce three new mobile library vehicles to ensure a reliable and effective service can be delivered to rural communities
Low income				
Reduction in the number of people able to afford access to the internet	Free SIMS and mobile data, in partnership with the Good Things Foundation, to people in need via the National Databank scheme	Kathryn Preston	Mar 2025	135 receive free data SIM card enabling them to continue accessing the internet to job seek, claim benefits and keep in touch with family and friends for example
Increase in unaffordable energy costs	Deliver 3 rd year of a warm and welcome winter offer to support those impacted by the cost of living	Peter Waterman	Mar 2025	Total of 450 warm and welcome activities delivered in libraries across the county
Hard to reach groups				
Lack of awareness of library services and the benefits of use. Key target groups identified include carers, military families, Boaters, Gypsies & Travellers, those with SEND and autism	Develop a strong marketing strategy promoting the relevance of libraries and encouraging greater use	Rebecca Bolton	Mar 2025	Marketing strategy developed and delivered, including mechanisms to ensure new military families are made aware quickly on arrival of the library services available to them Work in partnership with those who support

				hard to reach groups to improve the data held on current take up or otherwise of library services, to better understand their needs and target services accordingly
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