



# Invitation to Tender: Impact and Evaluation in public libraries in the East of England

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries Connected are coordinating a project to investigate the social return on investment in activities in public libraries in the Eastern Region. This tender is seeking a research specialist to help measure, manage and evidence the impact of social connections in libraries. The following details are outlined in this document:

- The service to be provided
- The information to be provided by tenderers
- The terms of business relation to the award of any contract
- Anticipated timetable for the programme
- Stated outcomes and expectations of the work

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 About Us – Libraries Connected

Libraries Connected is a charity partly funded by Arts Council England as the Sector Support Organisation for libraries. We are also proud to remain a membership organisation, made up of every library service in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable, and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK. We work to promote the value of libraries; broker national partnerships share best practice and drive innovation in the sector.

We:

- Represent the public library sector to communicate the value of libraries
- Connect partners to local libraries by brokering national relationships with a wide range of organisations and individuals
- Improve library services by developing and sharing best practice, providing training for library staff, and facilitating a network of library leaders in the UK
- Drive innovation and new thinking on the role of libraries in a modern society.



## 2.2 About Us – Libraries Connected East

Libraries Connected East is the regional grouping of the following library services:

- Bedfordshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Central Bedfordshire
- Essex
- Hertfordshire
- Luton
- Norfolk
- Peterborough
- Southend
- Suffolk
- Thurrock

The region includes a range of library governance models, including local authorities – both County and Unitary, and various charitable independent models.

For the purposes of this tender, the group is working together to commission the work, contribute to the research and assess the outputs. Several of the group have contributed financially to the project.

## 2.3 About Us – Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for public libraries and is supporting this work with a regional grant.

## 3. DELIVERABLES

We are seeking to work with an organisation/s or individual who can provide a credible replicable, and recognisable methodology and final report that is able to articulate the impact of social engagement with public libraries, providing figures and assessments for return on social investment and supporting the case for pan-public sector developments.

The aim is to achieve a report that can be used with key partners and stakeholders, funding bodies and commissioners working in the local area e.g., demonstrating the ways in which public libraries tangibly affect the prevention or reduction of financial burden on intervention services such as those provided by the NHS, DWP, Adult Services, Childrens Services or Public Health etc.

Libraries Connected East will be able to offer venues, locations and access to activities and participants for the collation and creation of primary data to inform the report and will provide access to relevant existing data (some of which may give longitudinal context) for the completion of the research.

In some cases, significant desk research is available, and an example is included in Appendix One for Children's Literacy and associated outcomes.

Tenderers should be able to evidence how the report will assist the evidence base for libraries wishing to suggest a counterfactual outcome i.e., that library engagement has affected a different / better outcome for the individual.

The ambition is to:



- Reach a recommended methodology with credible measures; ideally designed and carried out in accordance with the [HM Treasury Green Book](#)
- Create a modular design that would provide a transferable and replicable framework – potentially in the form of a toolkit – that makes this a sustainable and adaptable piece of work for the public library sector
- Articulate a return on investment, providing an economic value of social engagement in key areas of activities
- Provide a monetised assessment of impacts that can inform a wider conversation with commissioners

### 3.1 Scope of the project / target audience

- **Digital Inclusion:** the impact of providing free access to digital skills and devices on adults and families
- **Health, wellbeing, and independent living:** the impact of providing activities and events for adults in libraries, including the significance for social prescribing models
- **Children’s literacy and associated outcomes:** the impact of targeted library programmes for children and young people that supports literacy recovery following Covid

### 3.2 Assumptions

Libraries Connected partners will be fully engaged throughout the process. Specific library authorities (identified sample sizes to represent the region) will support in detail.

The project will move at pace and be agile in its approach. Tenderers will be willing to shape the work and deliver to time, working with partners and customers to ensure adequate evidence is gathered for a robust and reliable, published piece of work.

The partnership is collaborative in its approach to solutions and will share / publish the findings nationally for adapted use locally. Each service has contributed what it can afford and all services in the region should benefit from the work.

Tenderers will work across multiple authorities to gather evidence and complete research.

The project will work in good faith, in confidence and with a shared purpose.

Tenderers and partners will work to minimise costs and maximise results.

## 4. OUTCOMES

- A published report identifying methodology, process, contributory partners, and financial assessments of engagement
- The ability for Libraries Connected and partners, to use the research in a full communications plan, including conference and webinar presentations
- The report will include details of the methodology in such a way that it could be replicated by other library services in assessing their own activities



## 5. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The contract will be managed by Iain Moore, Commercial Director at Libraries Connected, and Jill Terrell, project lead for Libraries Connected East and Head of Norfolk Library and Information Service.

This project will report to Libraries Connected East and Arts Council England.

## 6. WORKPLAN AND MILESTONES

We envisage the project will follow this workplan, but proposals can set out an alternative timetable to meet the deliverables.

### Activity Time Period

- Tender issued and reviewed: May 2022
- Completion and sign off ITT: June 2022
- Stakeholder engagement and research period: July – Oct 2022
- Final report: Oct/Nov 2022

## 7. BUDGET

£80,750.00 including VAT and travel and expenses.

Whilst many of the stakeholder engagement meetings can be conducted virtually, there is an expectation that tenderers will visit on site to review in person events, in several of the library services in the eastern region.

Library services will absorb localised costs such as catering, venue hire as part of an existing activity that is being observed as part of this work.

Travel, accommodation, sustenance, and any other reasonable costs incurred by the tenderers as part of project should be costed in the overall budget.

Libraries Connected will be able to provide some administrative support for engaging partners with the process.

## 8. PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

### 8.1 Procurement timetable

- Invitation to tender sent out 13 May 2022
- Deadline for Questions 27 May 2022
- Deadline for proposals 20 June 2022
- Selection interviews 27 June 2022 (TBC)
- Appointment and initiation 1 July 2022

### 8.2 Proposal content

The proposals should outline:



- Understanding of the project and deliverables
- Experience suited to the project subject and proposed methodology
- Names and experience of individuals assigned to the project, to clarify their involvement with each phase or unit of the work
- Costs, including breakdown for costs of each phase or unit of work, day rate of each team member and other costs or expenses

### 8.3 Proposal submission

Please email proposals to [info@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:info@librariesconnected.org.uk) by 5pm on 20 June 2022

### 8.4 Evaluation of proposals

We will evaluate proposals using these criteria:

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Extent to which proposal demonstrates and understanding of the brief and evidence of ability to deliver to timelines across multiple partners	25
Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including an understanding of policies, strategies, and relevant literature within the scope of this work	25
Quality of methodology and experience in relation to development of strategy and programmes through a process of consultation	25
Proposed team composition and management	15
Cost	10

## 9. FURTHER INFORMATION

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Iain Moore [Iain.Moore@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:Iain.Moore@librariesconnected.org.uk)

Jill Terrell [jill.terrell@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jill.terrell@norfolk.gov.uk)



## Appendix One – example of desk research

Children’s literacy and associated outcomes. There is a strong body of longitudinal evidence in existence; this work may focus on the post-Covid picture of impact for public libraries and focus on a representative sample or initiative to illustrate impact.

We need to be able to fully evidence the positive contribution engaging with public libraries can have on a child’s school readiness and levels of literacy.

- The pandemic has had a profound impact on young children in numerous ways, including speech and language development, literacy, social skills and general school readiness.
- Public libraries are ideally placed to support families and children with their literacy needs post-covid recovery in this area, but, there is a lack of hard data in this area.
- It is estimated that around 16% of adults in England have “very poor literacy skills”, whilst the UK government estimates that a further 10% of adults have a condition such as dyslexia. Mencap also estimates that at least a further 2% of adults and 2.5% percent of children have some form of learning disability. ( A & B)
- For both children and adults these issues can have a serious impact on their self-esteem as well as their ability to access information that can have a serious impact on their life chances - adults with poor literacy skills may be locked out of the job market, have less access to health information, and, as a parent, they may not be able to support their child’s learning.
- The Library Service will build people’s confidence in reading and writing by providing a safe and comfortable space where people can develop their literacy skills. The Service will focus on expanding opportunities to work with people who would benefit from additional support.
- Libraries are inclusive and open to all.
- They provide free access to books, IT, events, and activities that inspire people to engage with reading and information as well as enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Libraries are knowledge hubs and support residents to connect with other service and organisations

We know that there are some generally acknowledged benefits;

- Baby and Toddler Rhymetimes and storytimes – Speech, language and communication development (increasing vocabulary, improving speech), physical development (actions that accompany rhymes), numeracy (counting songs), social skills (being around other children), literacy (sharing stories) <sup>1 & 2</sup>
- Reading for pleasure – Libraries give children access to a wide range of books to encourage reading for pleasure and children who read for pleasure have a higher educational attainment <sup>3 & 4</sup>. The government published a new reading framework for schools earlier this year putting reading for pleasure at the heart of the reading journey <sup>5</sup>.
- Encouraging families to read together – there have been several campaigns to encourage families and children to read for 10 minutes a day <sup>6,7 & 8</sup>, but many families still do not do this. Additionally, many families seem to be unaware of the benefits of continuing storytimes with older children <sup>9</sup>



A. Adult Literacy Trust <https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/>

B UK Government [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding\[1\]disabilities-and-impairments-user-profiles/simone-dyslexic-user](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding[1]disabilities-and-impairments-user-profiles/simone-dyslexic-user)

1. <https://www.pacey.org.uk/news-and-views/pacey-blog/2019/october-2019/the-importance-of-nursery-rhymes-in-early-childhood/>
2. <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2018/november/rhymes-in-early-childhood/>
3. <https://www.explorelearning.co.uk/blog/reading-for-pleasure-inspiring-children-to-read/>
4. <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/The%20Impact%20of%20Reading%20for%20Pleasure%20and%20Empowerment.pdf>
5. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1050849/Reading\\_framework\\_Teaching\\_the\\_foundations\\_of\\_literacy\\_-\\_July\\_2021\\_Jan\\_22\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1050849/Reading_framework_Teaching_the_foundations_of_literacy_-_July_2021_Jan_22_update.pdf)
6. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/blog/reading-children-so-powerful-so-simple-and-yet-so-misunderstood/>
7. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/communities/manchester/take-10/encourage-your-child-take-10/>
8. <https://wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/take-10-to-read-every-day/>
9. <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/blog/carry-on-reading-aloud-the-benefits-of-sharing-books-with-older-children/>

Other articles on Covid impact and recovery

- <https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-is-literacy/covid-19-and-literacy/covid-19-and-literacy-discussion-analysis-and-recommendations/>
- <https://www.earlyyearseducator.co.uk/features/article/school-readiness-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-school-readiness>
- <https://post.parliament.uk/impact-of-covid-19-on-early-childhood-education-care/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-in-early-years-providers-autumn-2021/education-recovery-in-early-years-providers-autumn>