



Public Libraries Universal Culture Offer

#LibsCulture

Core Offer

In a word

Imagination

In a sentence

People enjoy a quality and diverse cultural experience in libraries.

Our core offer recognises that:

In a picture:



- ✓ People can enjoy a quality and diverse cultural experience in every library service in the UK. All libraries provide the space for culture and enable creative enrichment, to inspire imagination. Library staff are catalysts for activity, empowerment and exploration.
- ✓ Public libraries are welcoming places where children and adults can immerse themselves in every form of art: learn from local artists; create their own art; watch theatre, music and dance performances; and learn about art and culture through books and reading. Public libraries are often the first place that children and young people experience art and culture, and being part of an audience, through library events, free taster sessions and through books.
- ✓ Public libraries understand what it means to facilitate and create a quality cultural experience and the lasting impact that has on people’s lives and the communities they live in. No other public body has the same reach into and across the UK’s diverse local communities, or the economies of scale and flexibility to respond to local needs. There are over 3000 public libraries in England and more than 225 million visits per year.
- ✓ Libraries reach people who do not normally participate in arts and culture and help them to develop a love of and appreciation of them. A significantly higher proportion of adults from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups use public libraries.
- ✓ Public libraries are a gateway to a community or region’s wider cultural offer, including museums, galleries, theatres, heritage projects, and the creative industries. Bridge organisations help libraries make the links to arts and culture organisations, while libraries provide a means for arts and culture organisations to reach local communities and people less likely to access the arts.

Our goal

More people have access to quality and diverse cultural experiences and events through libraries, especially those less likely to access arts and culture.

Our key outcomes

- Culture and creative enrichment
- Happier, healthier lives
- Increased reading and literacy

Our commitments

- To offer a quality and diverse cultural experience in public libraries through a clear, consistent, and accessible programme of cultural activities and events.
- To collaborate with arts and culture organisations to reach local communities and groups of people who do not usually participate in the arts.
- To ensure children, young people and their families are able to take part in a wide range of cultural experiences

Success measures

- Library visits
- Participation and repeat participation
- ACE Quality Principles & Metrics



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Core Offer

How we work

- Cultural programming. Producing a clear consistent and accessible programme of events and activities
- Opening up the library space for culture and creative activities to happen with the library acting as a supportive, hands-on facilitator-host to artists and organisations
- Regional collaboration. Library services sign up to and deliver a regional cultural offer
- Connected libraries. Providing a high profile cultural experience in a central library that is linked to a network of smaller events and activities in local libraries
- Targeted projects with specific groups
- Free universal access. Small charging for some events. Autism and dementia friendly

Cultural Space

- ✓ Computer labs and study areas
- ✓ Space to hire or use for cultural activities and events.

Cultural Resources

- ✓ Free books
- ✓ Multimedia collections
- ✓ Newspapers and supplements
- ✓ History and ancestry
- ✓ Computers and free wi-fi

What we offer

Cultural Activities

- ✓ Parent and toddler reading and writing
- ✓ Reading activities and group reading
- ✓ Arts and crafts
- ✓ Music activities
- ✓ Creative writing
- ✓ Board games

Cultural Events

- ✓ Events connected with books or writing (workshops, talks)
- ✓ Events based on an exhibition or displays.

Calendar Spikes*

- ✓ Summer Reading Challenge
- ✓ World Book Night
- ✓ Seasonal events and promotions
- ✓ World Book Day
- ✓ National Library Day
- ✓ Get Online week
- ✓ Celebrating Shakespeare
- ✓ National awareness days such as Mental Health Day, and Autism Awareness Day.

*This list is not exhaustive. Refer to SCL's full calendar programme

Partnership working: Library services should strengthen their existing relationships with the arts and cultural sector by working with regional Bridge Organisations and Local Arts services to make connections and explore joint opportunities as well with Heritage and local history sectors. Library services should be part of cultural education partnerships.



The Culture Offer (core and stretch) complements SCL's existing universal offers for public libraries, in particular the Reading Offer which includes tools to help libraries promote creative reading among its objectives.

Suggested evaluation framework: ACE Quality Principles and Metrics | Reading Agency Reading Outcomes Framework



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Stretch Offer

In a word

Animation

In a sentence

People see libraries as local creative hubs where exploration, experimentation, pursuing of cultural interests, and creative making are encouraged.

Our stretch offer recognises that:

In a picture:



- ✓ Creative commissioning, experimenting, animating, piloting and ‘trying things out’ leads to a quality and sustainable cultural experience, especially where people and communities are empowered to create and lead cultural events and activities (e.g. Fun Palaces, literature festivals). This contributes to a wider range of benefits including health and wellbeing and social mobility.
- ✓ Libraries have a strong track record in supporting the development of emerging artists and providing opportunities for more established artists. Public libraries are becoming more confident at securing external funding and commissioning creative projects, while arts and culture organisations and artists feel that libraries are becoming more receptive cultural partners.
- ✓ Almost two thirds of library services organise the following events yearly or more than once a year: film screenings, events involving digital, video or electronic art, dance performances, music events and theatre performances. An emerging 40 per cent are part of cultural education partnerships and have digital partnerships in place, while a quarter of library services are developing economic partnerships with creative businesses. Libraries are working with creative industries to generate growth and prosperity.
- ✓ Going to the cinema or attending live music are the most popular cultural events in the UK, while the Warwick Commission found that there is a "passion for music" in the UK. National arts and culture organisations see the benefits of strategic partnering and investment outside of London and could work with public libraries to extend their reach and impact into local communities, particularly more rural communities.

Our goals

- More people have access to quality and diverse cultural experiences through libraries.
- People see libraries as local creative hubs
- Libraries are seen as active partners with professional and emerging cultural and arts sector
- Libraries provide the space and information for emerging and established artists to develop.

Our key outcomes

- Culture and creative enrichment
- Increased reading and literacy
- Happier, healthier lives
- Improved digital access
- Stronger, more resilient communities
- Greater prosperity

Our commitments

- To offer a quality and diverse cultural experience in public libraries through a clear programme of cultural activities and events, **based on a wider range of cultural experiences** (music, performance and dance, film and photography, literature festivals and Fun Palaces), **which promotes cultural leadership and creative making.**
- To partner with the professional and emerging arts sector **to co-create cultural programmes and projects.**
- To ensure children, young people and their families are able to take part in a wide range of cultural experiences.

Success Measures

- Visits
- Participation and repeat participation
- No. artists supported
- No. groups and orgs using the space creatively.
- ACE Quality Principles & Metrics



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Stretch Offer

Library services should deliver a clear, consistent, and accessible programme of cultural activities and events, *based on a wide range of cultural experiences (e.g. music, performance and dance, film and photography, literature festivals and Fun Palaces)*, which *empower staff, people and communities to experience and co-create cultural enrichment*. Library services delivering the stretch offer will be working with a wider range of partners, including the arts, heritage, education, social care and the creative industries to draw in funding to co-create projects, and reach new audiences, especially those who do not normally access arts and culture.

How we work

- Cultural leadership. Empowering artists, friends' groups and other organisations to lead on cultural events and activities
- Creating cultural volunteering opportunities
- Libraries as cultural hubs and creative making places
- Creative Commissioning
- Experimenting, proto-typing, piloting and 'trying things out'. Empowering staff to commission culture
- Co-creating projects with arts sector (museums, galleries and theatres), education (schools, FE, HE and Universities), and heritage and history
- Broadcasting and touring out to a network of local libraries
- Targeted programmes and projects
- Delivering on health and wellbeing agenda
- Clearly defined brand and offer

What we offer

Cultural Space	Cultural Resources	Cultural Activities	Cultural Events	Calendar Spikes*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Computer labs and study areas ✓ Space to hire or use for cultural activities and events. ✓ Artists in residence ✓ Creative workspace ✓ 'Maker space' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Free books ✓ Multimedia collections ✓ Newspapers and supplements ✓ History and ancestry ✓ Computers and free wi-fi ✓ Music lending service (scores and playlists, streaming) ✓ Business support for local creative businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parent and toddler reading and writing ✓ Reading activities and group reading ✓ Arts and crafts workshops ✓ Music activities ✓ Creative writing ✓ Board games ✓ Arts Award ✓ Performance and dance ✓ Film making ✓ Photography ✓ Digital making ✓ Arts residences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Events connected with books or writing (workshops, talks) ✓ Events based on an exhibition or displays. ✓ Film Screenings ✓ Events which include digital, video or electronic art ✓ Dance events ✓ Plays/Drama, Theatre ✓ Concerts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Summer Reading Challenge ✓ World Book Night ✓ Seasonal events and promotions ✓ World Book Day ✓ National Library Day ✓ Get Online week ✓ Celebrating Shakespeare ✓ Mental Health Day, Autism Awareness Day. ✓ Fun Palaces ✓ Literature and Family Festivals ✓ Make a noise day

*This list is not exhaustive. Refer to SCL's full calendar programme

Suggested Evaluation Framework: ACE Quality Principles and Metrics | Reading Agency Reading Outcomes Framework