



SCL Leading & Managing
Public Libraries

Annual Report 2014/15

SCL Annual Report 2014/15

This report provides an overview of the Society's work during 2014/15.

It was a year that saw:

- The publication of the Independent Library Report for England in December 2014. The report was commissioned in February 2014 by Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy Ed Vaizey and Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis. William Sieghart, the philanthropist, entrepreneur and publisher who chaired an independent review into e-lending in 2013 was joined by a panel that included Janene Cox, the then President of SCL, together with Joanna Trollope, Sue Charteris, Luke Johnson, Roly Keating, Caroline Michel and Stephen Page.
- The establishment of the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce, to 'provide leadership; implement the recommendations and help reinvigorate the public library service in England' in response to the Independent Report. The Taskforce is chaired by Dr Paul Blantern, Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council and has dual accountability to the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Government Association (LGA). Representation on the Taskforce includes:
 - o Department for Culture Media and Sport
 - o Local Government Association
 - o Society of Chief Librarians
 - o The Reading Agency
 - o Arts Council England
 - o the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
 - o Public Health England
 - o British Library
 - o BBC
 - o Local authority chief executives – including Newcastle and Camden as well as Northamptonshire

Kathy Settle from Government Digital Services (GDS) was appointed Chief Executive of the Taskforce in March 2015. SCL is represented on the Taskforce by Ciara Eastell, current President of SCL

- At its first meeting in March 2015, the Taskforce confirmed that key Taskforce priorities for the first 12 months are to support:

- o **Digital enablement** – including the provision of universal Wi-Fi access, e-lending, digital shared network and quality content
 - o **Libraries adding value** – making stronger, strategic links between libraries and other policies such as health and wellbeing and business and economic growth
 - o **Sharing of best practice** – helping local authorities and library services through sharing and linking to existing/new best practice. Building sustainable long-term models for libraries/community hubs
 - o **Workforce development** – skills needed to help the library workforce to deliver these priorities and to take on new roles as part of wider service provision
 - o In achieving all the above, the Taskforce aims to develop a **positive narrative** around the power and potential of public libraries to support broader priorities and policies for central and local government.
- The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced funding of £7.4 million for the rollout of Wi-Fi to ensure universal access to Wi-Fi in public libraries. This funding will be rolled out in 2015/16. SCL worked closely with DCMS colleagues providing information to inform the business case for investment.
 - Meanwhile, at a local level, the financial challenges facing local authorities remained significant. Many library services are in the midst of fundamental change as new operating models are developed and implemented.
 - For SCL, the continued development and embedding of the Universal Offers remains a priority. SCL secured £222,500 funding from Arts Council England to support the Universal Offers and wider developments, including:
 - o Delivery of a programme of workforce development for 14,000 frontline public library staff
 - o Conducting initial research into the potential for a universal digital presence
 - o Development and delivery of a digital leadership programme which was piloted by 17 senior library managers
 - o Undertaking the initial research and development into a new Universal Learning Offer
 - o Working with ASCEL on the Children’s Reading Journeys research, building on the Automatic Library Membership Research in 2013/14
 - The delivery of the e-lending pilots which ran from February 2014 – March 2015. The pilots were funded by the British Library Trust with consumer research funded by Arts Council England. The steering group for the pilots was co-chaired by Stephen Page and Janene Cox. The pilot authorities were Derbyshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Newcastle and Peterborough. Results of the pilots are due to be published in Spring 2015.
 - The creation of 50 paid internships for young people in public libraries with £137,500 funding from the Arts Council’s Creative Employment Programme as a result of a successful SCL bid in partnership with the Creative Society
 - The launch of the Reading Well Books on Prescription Dementia scheme in January 2015, which was attended by over 180 invited guests and kindly hosted by the Wellcome Trust. Speakers included the Right Hon Norman Lamb MP (Minister for Care and Support), Sir

Peter Bazalgette (Chair of Arts Council England), Dr Charles Alessi (Chair of the National Association of Primary Care), Trevor Jarvis (Service user and Dementia Champion) and Debbie Hicks (from The Reading Agency). Ciara Eastell hosted the launch on behalf of SCL.

- The launch of the Digital War Memorial project at the BL in September 2014. This project was awarded £196,110 by Arts Council England in 2014 and involved 10 library services across the country.
- The development of a programme of events for SCL members focused on key areas of service development and change. Masterclasses in innovation and sponsorship and philanthropy took place during the year.
- SCL's engagement with the two main political parties around libraries in the run-up to the General Election and ongoing engagement with the library campaigners.
- The publication of 'Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Public Libraries' by Arts Council England in March 2015, which was researched by Simerica and demonstrates the economic and wellbeing impacts of public libraries.
- The launch of the Read On Get On campaign by Save the Children in September 2014. SCL continues to work with The Reading Agency and ASCEL to gain clear acknowledgement of the fundamental role of the public library service in any campaign which seeks to develop reading skills and improve access to reading opportunities, free reading materials, and advice on reading.
- Investment of £1,838,614 from the Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts for Libraries fund into 93 successful projects. The success rate of applications is currently 73%, up from just below 70% in 2013/14. By March 2018 the Arts Council will have ring-fenced £12m over 6 years for applications led by local authority library services. By then Arts Council England hope that library services will be confident applicants to the full Grants for the Arts scheme.
- The launch of Carnegie Library Lab by the Carnegie UK Trust. The new programme is aimed at enhancing innovation and leadership in public libraries. The programme launched in September 2014 and will run until late 2017. The programme has five elements for selected participants: learning programme, project funding, mentoring, creating a network and evaluation.

1. Advocacy/Positioning

SCL continues to work hard to position libraries positively in the light of continued austerity and the changing role of local authorities. SCL has proved itself a key player in terms of supporting the Independent Library Report and is already acknowledged as an important contributor to the new Taskforce. Internally, SCL works hard, particularly at a regional level, to provide peer-to-peer support for library services undergoing significant change

With a general election on the horizon, SCL engaged with the two main political parties around libraries. SCL maintained its dialogue with the Libraries Minister Ed Vaizey and engaged with

Helen Goodman MP, who, for a time in 2014/15, held the shadow brief for Libraries. Both were keen to gain SCL's views on the Independent Report. Other areas of discussion included:

- The role and value of the Universal offers
- The digital presence
- Health and wellbeing
- The need for investment to achieve universal Wi-Fi coverage

The Minister continued his engagement with SCL's work, speaking at the SCL Seminar in June 2014 and launching the Digital War Memorial at the British Library in September 2014.

We continue to have a positive working relationship with Arts Council England, nationally and regionally. SCL has been represented on several stakeholder reference groups on spending review priorities for ACE. We meet on a monthly basis with the Director of Libraries.

SCL continues to meet with library campaigners/stakeholders. Two meetings were held during 2014/15 and Ciara Eastell was an invited guest at the 'Speak Up for Libraries' national conference in November 2014. The campaigners SCL meets with remain supportive of SCL's work on the Universal Offers and interested in SCL's views on the Independent Library Report and Taskforce. At a time of significant austerity and pressure for public libraries, it remains important that SCL continues to meet with library campaigners and stakeholders, share our progress with the Universal Offers and listen to their concerns and respond as appropriate.

As an Executive, SCL has engaged with the following:

- The Independent Library Report –Nick Stopforth and Ciara Eastell were asked to meet with the panel and Janene Cox represented SCL on the panel
- Supporting the DCMS business case for Wi-Fi investment
- Contributed a response to the Home Office's Prevent consultation as part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill
- Arts Council's Post Envisioning Partnership.
- The Government Digital Services (GDS) networks, including their Digital Inclusion signatories' group and their Assisted Digital group.
- Save the Children's Read On Get On campaign
- LGA events and activities (supporting the delivery of member development and peer review)
- Roundtable of senior policy makers to discuss the Arts Council-funded Cultural Commissioning Programme and the potential for cultural bodies, including libraries, to be commissioned to deliver broader health and social outcomes
- The British Library's research on the potential for a new Membership Scheme
- The Reading Agency's consideration of an agreed framework for sponsorship for their programmes with libraries

- Arts Council's External Advisory Group on spending review priorities. Neil MacInnes represented SCL on the Arts Council funded work with Simetrica which considered the economic benefits of libraries' support for health and wellbeing
- Carnegie UK in their development of the Carnegie Library Lab programme
- Citizens Advice Bureaux in looking at opportunities for collaboration and co-location between library services and their local CABx.

SCL commissioned new photos to be available for SCL materials and for wider use by all library services. The brief was to create a bank of vibrant images, which reflect the wide range of audiences, activities and types of public libraries. A Universal Offers poster for 2015 was also created and distributed.

2. Partnerships

Partnership and collaboration remain critical to the development of vibrant and sustainable library services. The Independent Library Report highlighted the huge potential of public libraries to have a positive impact on individuals' lives and local and national priorities. It also signaled that no single organisation can deliver the change and transformation that public libraries continue to need.

With that in mind, SCL has maintained and increased its partnership activities, continuing to develop its long-standing partnerships whilst also looking for new partners to deliver greater impact.

The following section highlights our work with key partners.

2.1 The Reading Agency

With new Chief Executive Sue Wilkinson at the helm, we have continued to work very closely with colleagues across The Reading Agency (TRA).

TRA continues to be a key partner in the development of the Reading and Health Universal Offers. We are defining our partnership working more clearly on a case by case basis, and increasingly regard each other as partners of choice. We are also working in a complementary way with TRA in our joint support for the Save The Children Read On, Get ON (ROGO) campaign.

2.2 Arts Council England (ACE)

We continue to have a positive working relationship with Arts Council England, nationally and regionally. SCL has been represented on several stakeholder reference groups this year.

SCL's work on the developing the Universal Offers would not have been possible without the support of Arts Council. £222,500 was provided to support SCL's work and Arts Council Relationship Managers participated in the procurement and development of key pieces of Universal Offer development. In addition, £15,000 was secured for the Shakespeare Week

project from the Grants for the Arts Libraries fund and a further £137,500 from the Arts Council's Creative Employment Programme for SCL's Internship programme. We look forward to working with ACE during 2015/16 and supporting their work on the distribution of funding for Wi-Fi installations.

2.3 ASCEL

SCL continues to work very closely with ASCEL and welcomes the participation of Sarah Mears as Chair of ASCEL on SCL's Executive. SCL has contributed to ASCEL's work on children's use of digital and on the Children's Reading Journeys work, both of which were funded through the Universal Offers funding from the Arts Council. ASCEL has worked closely with SCL and TRA as part of the Read On Get On campaign. In 2015/16 we expect to be working closely with ASCEL on scoping the potential for new e-learning resources for library staff in engaging positively with children, young people and families and in growing the potential for children's use of digital in libraries.

2.4 British Library

Our relationship with the British Library goes from strength to strength. The BL's new strategic plan *Living Knowledge*¹ was published in January 2015 and gives prominent focus to the BL's long term ambitions to work with public libraries, expanding the BIPC network to 20 libraries across England.

Ciara Eastell became a member of the BL's Advisory Council in May 2014 and was able, through her role on the Advisory Council, to feed in comments on public libraries as *Living Knowledge* was drafted. Previously there had been annual meetings between the BL and SCL and at our annual meeting in November 2014 it was agreed that there would be mutual benefit in meeting every six months. Key areas for discussion with the BL have included:

- The potential alignment between the BL's strategic priorities and the Universal Offers
- The development of digital services
- The potential for collaboration around planned exhibitions
- The planned growth of the Business and Intellectual Property Centres (BIPCs) in major public libraries.

Several SCL Exec members contributed to the BL's work to research the potential for a new membership scheme which could potentially involve public libraries.

2.5 Local Government Association

¹<http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/foi/pubsch/pubscheme3/living-knowledge-2015-2023.pdf>

SCL continues to work closely with the Local Government Association to exchange information and provide advice. The partnership looks set to grow as a result of much closer working arising from the Taskforce.

2.6 Booktrust

Over the last few years SCL has worked hard to develop our relationship with Booktrust. We, along with TRA, believe we now have a closer understanding of how we can best complement each other and ensure that Booktrust's contribution to the Universal Reading Offer is properly articulated and recognised. We look forward to continuing to develop the partnership, and to building a close working relationship with the new Chief Executive Diana Gerald.

2.7 Government Digital Services (GDS)

SCL is working with Government Digital Services (GDS) which is part of the Cabinet Office, to develop the role of public libraries in providing Assisted Digital services to support access to government services online for those who most need it. SCL is represented at the GDS stakeholder reference group, and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tinder Foundation and CAB to make a partnership bid for any Assisted Digital commissioning that is expected to take place this year. With the appointment of Kathy Settle, Deputy Director of GDS, to the Chief Executive role for the Libraries' Taskforce, we can expect to see a growth in our relationship with GDS in the coming year.

2.8 Creative Society

SCL has developed a new partnership with Creative Society, a social enterprise based in London which is focused on developing apprenticeships and internships for young people in the cultural sector. SCL worked with Creative Society on a successful bid to the Arts Council's Creative Employment Programme which secured £137,500 to create 50 internships for young people in library services across the country. We hope to continue to grow our partnership with Creative Society in 2015/16.

2.9 Carnegie UK Trust

Carnegie UK continues to be a positive supporter of SCL's work. They provided £3,000 funding towards the cost of SCL's seminar in June 2014 and sought SCL's input and advice as it shaped the Carnegie Library Lab programme. We are grateful to Carnegie for their ongoing interest and support for SCL's work and look forward to working with them throughout 2015/16.

2.10 Booksellers Association (BA)

During September 2014 Ayub Khan and Janene Cox presented to the Booksellers annual national conference. It was widely accepted within this forum that there would be benefits to SCL and the BA working more closely particularly on key events which form our spikes within the Universal Offer reading calendar

This proposition was agreed by the Booksellers Association Executive Board and a small working group has been formed to begin to take the partnership forward.

Initially we are exploring 4 key areas:

- Opportunities to enhance the celebration of World Book Day within public libraries.
- Building an effective relationship with local bookshops
- Opportunities for Bookshops to engage more effectively with the Universal Health Offer
- Generating some best practice case studies of joint working

2.11 Other SCL partners

Other partners SCL has worked with this year include:

- **Share the Vision** – who continue to work with SCL on the Six Steps promise.
- **Publishers Association** – through the development and management of the e-lending pilots.
- **Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)** – we look forward to working with the new Chief Executive Nick Poole in 2015/16.
- **Wellcome Trust** - SCL is pleased to be developing a positive partnership with Wellcome around the Universal Health Offer.
- **Citizens Advice Bureau** – we look forward to continuing to work with CAB in 2015/16 to look for opportunities for local and national collaboration.
- **Publishers Licensing Society** – as part of the Access to Research Journals pilot.
- **The BBC** – we look forward to growing our relationship with the BBC in 2015/16.
- **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT)** – SCL has valued the new partnership we have developed with SBT as a result of this year’s Shakespeare Week project.

We are grateful to all our partners for their support this year.

3. Transformation

3.1 Universal Reading Offer (led by Tony Durcan)

During the last year, the Books and Reading Group (which drove the development of this offer with TRA), has reviewed its membership, involving regional ‘reading representatives’ or other officers as standing members of the group. The Reading Agency also provides key members and the Arts Council Libraries Relationship Manager attends whenever possible.

There is now a broader discussion about the Group’s ambitions and priorities and the Group is conscious that it needs to develop a strategy to support the URO’s further development and to build a stronger evidence base for public libraries work with readers and reading, especially reading for pleasure. We already have a good but historic evidence base (developed with TRA and the Arts Council) to build on. We are now supporting TRA with its innovative, collaborative project to develop an outcomes framework for the reading sector. The framework will guide measurement of the impact of interventions that encourage reading, moving beyond programme-by-programme evaluation to a shared outcomes-focused approach for use across the sector.

Other areas that we want to develop further include:

- Review, and if appropriate refresh the URO's position in relation to the other Universal Offers e.g. the Children's Promise, the new Learning Offer;
- Investigate new, audience targeted programmes to support the URO calendar;
- Explore the URO's potential role in the reading for pleasure agenda in schools, and the schools book club initiative;
- Develop links with BBC priorities. The planned 2016 focus on reading and literacy will help populate the Reading Calendar:
- Look at potential links with BL's future programme:
- We would also like to explore whether this group becomes the practitioner group for reading developments/related steering groups?

But a significant, and unexpected, priority for the Group has been SCL's involvement in the Save the Children Read On, Get ON (ROGO) campaign. Members of the Group and ASCEL, with TRA, are working hard to influence the campaign planning. In particular we want to gain clear acknowledgement of the fundamental role of the public library service in any campaign which seeks to develop reading skills and improve access to reading opportunities, free reading materials, and advice on reading.

Shakespeare Week

Shakespeare Week started in 2014. Co-ordinated by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT), the annual national celebration aims to introduce primary school-aged children to Shakespeare's life, works and times in a fun and engaging way. In 2015 SCL - working in partnership with the SBT, CILIP, ASCEL and TRA - successfully bid for funding from ACE funding of nearly £15,000 to promote and support library involvement in Shakespeare Week. SCL chaired the steering group which developed, managed and monitored this very successful project. Evaluation survey results are still being processed but, for now, figures suggest at least 2,232 children and 980 adults experienced Shakespeare in libraries during the Week (16 - 22 March), and libraries from 42 different areas ran at least 123 events for families and 46 for schools. So we exceeded the target of 50 separate activities by some margin. Plans are already being made for bigger and better celebrations in 2016 - the 400th anniversary of the Shakespeare's death. New partners - the BBC, British Library and Booksellers' Association - have joined the steering group and a funding bid is being prepared.

E-Lending

During May 2015 the outcomes from the e-lending pilots were shared with all of the key stakeholders.

A complete report will be available during June 2015 at which point the management of the outcomes for public libraries will transfer to the taskforce.

The pilots were a key recommendation of the Sieghart Review into e-lending in public libraries and began in March 2014.

The objectives of the pilots were to:

- Resolve outstanding concerns that publishers, libraries and booksellers have over digital lending
- Explore whether an increase in digital lending leads to an increase in digital purchasing

The headline results are as follows:

- Remote e-lending did attract new users in each of the pilot authorities, however e-lending remained less than 5% of the total lending.
- Overall customers considered it a 'great new development'.
- Across each of the pilots there was very little use of the 'click to buy' button.
- Remote e-lenders reported buying fewer printed books compared to other library users
- Remote e-lenders were less likely to visit their library or borrow a printed book than other library users.
- Librarians believed that remote e-lending can help them better serve existing customers

3.2 Universal Digital Offer (led by Nick Stopforth)

Digital Leadership Skills

In 2014/15, SCL developed and successfully delivered a pilot digital leadership skills programme to 17 library leaders. Funded by ACE and delivered by Shared Intelligence, the primary objectives of the pilot programme were:

- To inspire and create action: activate individuals to create the changes they would like to see.
- To help participants identify the links between the needs of their service, digital technology, and their own actions, and to understand the interdependencies between these.
- To build participants' understanding of leadership and of digital technology from horizon-scanning to the basics (e.g. MOOCs and Wi-Fi as examples).
- To enable each participant to identify leadership skills that they need to and are able to develop in order to create the libraries of the future.

The evaluation undertaken by Shared Intelligence demonstrated how their approach of using a mixture of learning tools and opportunities meant that these objectives were met and that participants could see clear progress and further opportunities for development. Over ten weeks the course looked at leadership using the contextual information and challenges that arise from digital technology. To give an example of tangible actions which occurred as a result of the course, participants have:

- made changes in how social media streams are managed
- begun negotiations to set up new FabLabs
- started investigating new wireless printing services for users
- purchased and installed new Wi-Fi equipment to increase number of users who can connect
- learned about then adopted new equipment for users with sensory impairment
- installed new software on library devices for educational coding

This programme is aligned to ACE's Envisioning themes of Leadership, Resilience and Sustainability, and Digital Hubs, and forms part of SCL's digital strategy to proactively lead on digital advancements in the sector, workforce skills and sustainability. It forms part of a wider strategic intent for SCL to demonstrate thought leadership within the context of public digital skills and resources. We expect to support 2 further cohorts of digital leaders in 2014/15.

Universal Digital Platform

Commissioned by SCL and funded by ACE, Bibliocommons were commissioned in January 2015 to research the customer needs, journeys and opportunities provided by a universal digital platform, a single digital front entrance to online library services, data and communities; as Bibliocommons state: "a software integrated with each library website that helps join them to one another and to their customers and partner organisations. The platform takes on the cost of enabling these diverse parties to then coordinate more easily. It creates common places to meet, and common rules of exchange. It translates the many languages used by existing library software. Through this, it can amplify the work of one person, one library, or one organisation so it benefits all the others".

Bibliocommons have presented to a number of stakeholders and forums, including at the first meeting of the national libraries Taskforce, and the next step of the project (subject to securing the required funding) will include commissioning work to develop the wireframe and build a finance and governance model. Bibliocommons are currently concluding their stage one research and will present to SCL members at the June Seminar.

GDS (Government Digital Services) Digital Charter Signatory developments

Initial digital partnerships between library services and tech companies, third sector organisations and other public sector organisations are being developed, following the GDS stakeholder forums in November 2014 and January 2015. An initial 21 pilots are in the early stages of development and a further report will follow later in the year. Whilst at an early stage of development, these partnerships, brokered by GDS, have a significant potential to bring increased resourcing and skills to public libraries, and therefore for public libraries to increase their capacity to focus on digital services and skills for the public.

The Cabinet Office's Digital Friends programme was launched on the 25th March and SCL have signed up to support this initiative. Digital Friends aims to recruit potential volunteers who can encourage friends, family and neighbours to get online, with a particular focus on supporting the over 55s and other hard to reach groups. Potential volunteers will either be corporate/partners' employees or individuals from the general public. The initiative focuses on engaging informal/spontaneous volunteers rather than seeking commitment to formal volunteering activity.

Desired outcomes from the initiative include:

- Encouraging people informally to volunteer to increase digital skills with friends, family and neighbours using digitalskills.com, Digital Unite and BBC and other resources
- Increasing awareness and encouragement for people who haven't previously thought of passing on their digital skills to informally share their skills with friends, family and neighbours.
- Signatories to encourage their workforce to volunteer informally to increase digital skills with friends, family and neighbours using digitalskills.com
- Organisations to encourage their own customer/client base to volunteers to improve their peers' digital skills

SCL will be working with library services across the network to find innovative and creative ways to extend and utilise the skills bank within its workforce to reach the friends, families and colleagues who are not digitally skilled or confident.

Libraries Wi-Fi

As part of the digital charter signatories work led by GDS, (and supported by DCMS), BT and Barclays announced in March 2015 that they would team up to deliver free Wi-Fi and hands on digital support at libraries and other community sites in deprived areas across in the UK.

Barclays are underpinning the investment in Wi-Fi with a commitment to provide workforce volunteer hours in libraries. BT are currently working with the library services set to receive free Wi-Fi installations, with the project set to run for 2 years, and which will study specifically the take up and impact of Wi-Fi for residents living in areas of deprivation. BT and Barclays have included a number of other types of community sites in the project to ensure that there is a reach in mix of urban and rural areas and demographics reached. This work will continue in 2015/16.

This is at the same time as the announcement of £7.4m secured for the investment of Wi-Fi for libraries which do not currently have it installed. This funding will be rolled out in 2015/16.

The Digital Library framework agreement (formerly Reference Online) (led by Ayub Khan and Janet Wood)

A second round of procurement in autumn 2014 has brought the number of suppliers on the framework to 13, offering a broad range of online content. Annual expenditure through the framework is around £1,700,000.

A programme of roadshows to raise awareness of the framework was held in November 2014, visiting each of SCL's regions. The roadshows were aimed at senior library staff and those who make stock-purchasing decisions. They were an opportunity for suppliers to showcase their products and help their customers to get the most from them, and also for interaction and conversation between suppliers and librarians. The events were well attended (by over 150 librarians in total) and received very positive feedback, from both suppliers and librarians.

The framework agreements will be renewed for a further two years from April 2016.

3.3 Universal Information Offer (led by Sally McMahon)

This was an incredibly busy year for the Information Offer and the large network of local, regional and national representatives engaged in taking the Information Offer forward.

Workforce Development - Digital Skills Training Programme

The SCL Information Offer team, with funding from Arts Council England, commissioned Tinder Foundation and Learning Pool to design the Digital Skills Training Programme. Beginning in September 2014 Regional and local trainers in library services throughout England ensured that the programme was delivered.

The training programme was evaluated by Oakleigh Consulting and their report was published in March 2015. The report was informed by a 360° appraisal, with inputs from 22 external and internal stakeholders; 4,432 staff responding to a staff survey; 41 of 54 trainers delivering the programme; opinions from 32 customers; and an assessment of the feedback on the e-learning modules staff had undertaken. They concluded that the programme was an overall success with clear indication of increased confidence and capabilities of library staff, with potentially significant impact on library customers.

By April 2015, nearly 14,000 people – 80% of staff – had used the e-learning modules and 90% of those who participated said they were better placed to help customers meet their online needs.

The evaluation highlighted the need for this good foundation to be further embedded and extended to ensure that the libraries workforce has the digital skills needed in the future. Some useful observations and recommendations were included in the report for SCL to consider going forward.

Information4living – web-tool

The development of a web-tool for staff and public to use to help find relevant 'life essential' information was completed this year, by Lift. The initial prototype was developed with NHS funding via Tinder Foundation, and trialled focusing on health related information in two English regions. The prototype was then expanded to have the potential to include information in the other core information areas identified in previous research.

The web-tool is now ready for populating by local library services and those identified with maintaining the national web-links in each of the subject areas. Information4living enables users to find relevant online information and services in their local library service area, together with links to the most useful national sources of information and support.

Regional training events have taken place to create a national network of lead library people to support the roll out of Information4living. Briefings have been sent out via the regional network and to Heads of Services to raise awareness of this part of the Universal Information Offer and its aspirations. By sharing the work of identifying and quality checking national sources of information in the six core information areas across the whole country's library services, efficiencies can be made and quality information referral assured. By adding the local links to this database, it brings the national and local resources together in a simple accessible way. It is designed to be easy to maintain and use and cost effective for resource squeezed library services.

Regional Network Development

Funding was received from Arts Council England to further develop the network of 54 regional trainers that worked so successfully in the roll out of the digital skills training. SCL commissioned external consultants in Nov 2014 to develop and nurture the network to ensure sustainability of this key resource:

- 6 regional workshops were delivered: *Nurturing the Network*
- Internal document of key messages was drafted and formed part of the update of 2014-15 Information Offer activity in March 2015
- 2 national meetings were held to review and plan the rollout of the Information4living tool as it moved from prototype stage which focused on Health and Well-being sources to those key life essential areas across the country.
- Plans to populate the information4living web-tool using the developing infrastructure of the Regional Network are in place following training with the developer on March 20th 2015. Rollout, through cascade training, of the final work has been agreed for end of June 2015

Assisted Digital

SCL is working with Government Digital Services (GDS) to develop the role of public libraries in providing Assisted Digital services to support access to government services online for those who most need it. SCL is represented at the GDS stakeholder reference group, and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tinder Foundation and CAB to make a partnership bid for any Assisted Digital commissioning that is expected to take place this year.

An Assisted Digital libraries working group has been established with representatives from English regions to take forward the development of the libraries Assisted Digital offer. The group have met twice. The first meeting in December 2014 reviewed the latest Government Digital Service (GDS) AD triage model; the SCL/Tinder/CAB AD delivery model (the 'triangle'); and the results of the survey of SCL members on library services' readiness to deliver AD services. Using funding from Arts Council England, SCL commissioned research into public libraries involvement in Universal Credit and the production of good practice guidance for library services in the light of the SCL involvement in Assisted Digital procurement. The Libraries Assisted Digital

group met for a second time in March 2015 to discuss the results of this research and to input to the final report, which is due to be published round the time of the SCL Annual seminar.

3.4 Universal Health Offer (led by Martin Burton)

The Health Offer has enabled public libraries to make a major impact on the public health agenda both at national and local level. The survey on the Reading Well Books on Prescription (Common Mental Health Conditions) carried out in 2014 found that around 275,000 people had benefitted from the scheme.

In January 2015 we launched the Reading Well Books on Prescription (Dementia) with a high profile event sponsored by the Wellcome Trust supported by key Government ministers and leaders of dementia policy in England. The event was considered an enormous success by partners attracting an audience of over 180 people and a balanced mix of health professionals, authors, publishers, library representatives and people with lived experience. It also achieved good coverage in the media and the professional press representing the health and library sectors.

The national launch has been replicated across the country and from feedback and case studies we have received it is clear the scheme is being very well received across England. Library sign up has been strong with 87% of English library authorities delivering the programme. If we combine engagement levels for Reading Well Books on prescription for dementia with the common mental health conditions list, the scheme is now available in 96% of library authorities making it a truly universal programme. Following the launch in January, there has been an uplift in borrowing of 286%, with titles such as 'Still Alice' and 'Grandma' performing particularly strongly.

Data from a recent launch survey shows that almost 50% of English library services have secured additional health funding for the programme. This has mostly come from local authority public health departments and has been allocated for the purchase of leaflets, additional book stock and events. In some places, it has also added additional capacity by funding posts and staff time.

This strengthening of the local business model for Reading Well Books on Prescription has been replicated at national level. Following the success of the launch, the Wellcome Trust has expressed interest in working with The Reading Agency, Society of Chief Librarians and Arts Council England to support the future development of the programme. Various approaches have also been made to other Trusts and Foundations to help strengthen the funding mix and build future sustainability. Work is also underway to develop the potential for new publisher marketing models based on The Reading Agency's successful Reading Partner's framework. This framework of potential support is being carefully developed to ensure that it does not

undermine the clinical integrity of the scheme. We are very grateful to ACE for their continued support for the Health Offer which has enabled the development by The Reading Agency of the various strands.

Other related work includes E-lending discussions with core list publishers to increase the range of material available from the lists for e-lending in libraries and work is underway to support work force development and build library staff confidence and competence at delivering the scheme through the creation of an e-learning module.

We are currently working on a children and young people's mental health scheme using the model developed. We are working closely with ASCEL on this scheme and hope to launch in January 2016.

Following the launch of the dementia scheme in January, we have focused on delivering the research and development phase for the new mental health list for children, young people and families.

Finally I would like to thank Debbie Hicks and the staff at The Reading Agency for all their hard work and dedication on this scheme, it has been a very successful partnership. I am also grateful to SCL Health Group for their support, the group provides practical feedback and communication to and from the regions which is invaluable.

3.5 Universal Learning Offer (led by Alison Wheeler)

In September 2014 SCL began work on a new universal offer on learning. This work was supported by ACE, and Red Quadrant were appointed in November 2014 to work on behalf of SCL to scope out the potential of the offer, build on the baseline of services everywhere and identify areas for development and experimentation.

Red Quadrant completed their work in March 2015. They carried out stakeholder and SCL members discussions, held two customer workshops and explored on SCL's behalf a number of potential partners to work on some stretch offers to complement the universal offer. These include Future Learn, The Reading Agency, NESTA and the National Literacy Trust.

Red Quadrant presented their findings to a small group on 5/3/15 and provided the summary of their research, exploratory conversations and ideas. This presentation was developed into a written report which will be received and agreed at the SCL Executive in June 2015. The full report will be available after 4 June 2015 and work will take place over the summer to engage SCL regions before a launch planned in autumn 2015.

The work carried out by Red Quadrant suggested two key dimensions to learning in libraries.

- o The attitude to learning
- o Awareness of libraries

If there is disengagement with either of these, it will affect the take up of the product range (offer) so marketing and advocacy must address them both.

As many organisations are associated with learning, the library USP must be clear and it is suggested this is that libraries support everyone wherever they are on their learning journey, in ways which are inter-generational, informal, lifelong, self-selected and self-directed, in local settings.

Development and experimentation

Many ideas were evaluated, using a matrix which included USP factor, innovation, resource implications and funding opportunities. Three emerged as front runners

- MOOCs (partners could include NESTA, and Future Learn)
- Coding Clubs (partners could include Coderdojo, ACE and NESTA)
- Working with families (partners could include the BBC, NLT and a commercial sponsor)

SCL is also committed to bringing together a new broader learning group to:

- Build support for and take up of the new offer
- Identify areas where pilot projects might flourish

We will continue the discussions with NESTA, FutureLearn, the Reading Agency and ACE to prepare for an autumn launch when we hope to promote the new offer and announce the plans for the flagship projects.

We have secured funding from ACE to continue this work during 2015/16 and plan to establish the pilots once the parameters are agreed.

Access to Research

Access to Research (A2R) is a service that enables public libraries to provide all of their users with access to a vast range of academic articles and research free of charge. SCL was an enthusiastic supporter of this initiative.

The service was launched in January 2014 in response to recommendations from the Finch committee convened by the Government to explore how access to publicly funded research could be expanded. One of the main recommendations of this committee was that the major academic publishers should grant public libraries a licence to provide free access to their journals.

These publishers have now provided access to over 8,000 journals and 10 million articles across a wide range of disciplines. Development of the service has been led by the Publishers Licensing

Society and the platform has been provided by Proquest. More than 90% of local authorities have now signed up to the scheme.

The initiative has been enthusiastically received: for example, the then Universities and Science Minister (David Willetts) said at the launch "This will connect people ... to a wealth of global knowledge - maximising its impact and value".

The service is running as a 2 year trial (and is thus scheduled to finish in December 2015). In June 2015, the PLS and SCL have undertaken to carry out a full evaluation of how the general public have engaged with the service.

There is considerable interest in the impact of the service both nationally and internationally. National stakeholders include the Government (particularly, BIS and DCMS); library services and publishers. The evaluation will to be carried about by an independent 3rd party using rigorous research methods. This will be carried out between July and October 2015.

3.6 Six Steps/Share the Vision (led by Mark Freeman)

2014 has proved to be most challenging with a period of huge change at RNIB being the most significant factor in the work of Share the Vision. Throughout the year, the process of closing down the Stockport office and relocating and recruiting to a new team in Peterborough has meant a period of adjustment for us and for the development of the Six Steps approach.

With the new team at RNIB now in place, Clive Gardner, Mark McCree and Julie Gibson are already proving to be valuable colleagues and they are working hard to support STV. The new RNIB downloadable audio service offers real potential for connection to our own Overdrive services and we are now starting to work together on a number of shared projects.

Throughout 2014, Share the Vision continued to collaborate with The Network to deliver a number of Workshops with John Vincent. We have gained useful feedback about the Six Steps and as part of "Make a noise in libraries" fortnight this year, we will run a major survey to gather a much wider view of what is important in libraries to people who are challenged by sight loss.

Share the Vision has, with the help of David Owen, continued to issue fortnightly Bulletins with helpful information about issues surrounding sight loss and print disability. Share the Vision has contributed to a wide range of consultations as well as both national and international debates including the new disability exceptions adopted by national governments following the Marrakesh agreement, the Sieghart Public Library Review and the consultation around Welsh Standards.

We were represented at the IFLA Library Services for Print Disabled People group's Satellite Conference in Paris in August 2014. In August 2015 we will be delivering a paper as part of the Public Libraries and Workforce Development Group's session at the IFLA conference in Cape Town focusing on the work that we have undertaken in recent years to implement Six Steps across the UK.

During this year we will employ an SCL intern to work in Brighton and Hove and assist in updating the Six Steps Promise. The intern will gain valuable experience in working in a busy public library service as well as dealing with the needs of people with sight loss. We are also exploring new methods of providing workforce development in the field of print disability through digital means as well as a further series of workshops with John Vincent.

3.7 Children's Promise (led by Sarah Mears for ASCEL)

ASCEL have focused this year on two key pieces of research funded by Arts Council England as part of "envisioning the library of the future" supporting our work to position children's library services securely at the heart of a modern library service. The first piece of research was led by Shared Intelligence working with ASCEL members to explore children's use of digital technology². The resulting report made a series of recommendations about how libraries can better support children's technological development. The second piece of research has resulted in a Children's Library Journeys framework, setting out the key interactions / interventions public libraries should have with children as they grow. We hope that all library services will adopt the framework. There are new elements in the Journey that will require partnership and funded developments. As a result of the Children's Library Journeys work we have revised the Children's Promise which clearly articulates our offer to children and young people.

ASCEL are working closely with SCL and The Reading Agency on the forthcoming Children and Young People's mental health lists and have also been working with TRA as they formulate their approach to sponsorship. ASCEL also worked alongside the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and SCL and other partners to write a bid and develop the library celebrations for Shakespeare Week 2015. ASCEL have also joined the Read On Get On coalition alongside SCL.

ASCEL's annual conference in 2014 focused on our cultural offer and during the conference we ran a future forward session where we identified the support that ASCEL members require to take them forward, particularly in terms of the digital offer. Our work over the next year will respond to this. We also sponsored three places at the conference for emerging leaders and we have followed this up by offering these colleagues other opportunities over the year. We will be evaluating this offer in the autumn and looking at further ways to support leadership development.

ASCEL continue to benefit from partnership with SCL and are deeply grateful for the continuing support of our SCL colleagues.

4. Workforce Development

4.1 SCL Seminar 5th - 6th June 2014

'Re-imagining the Public Library Offer' was our very successful seminar in 2014 attended by 136 delegates.

²<http://www.ascel.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Children's%20Digital%20Needs%20-%20ASCEL%2017%2011%202014%20FINAL%20w%20ACE.PDF>

During the first day Ed Vaizey, the Minister for Libraries and Lord Bichard were welcomed as keynote speakers and delegates attended two series of workshops focusing on 'service transformation 12 months on' and 're-imagining an aspect of our service'. We also heard from Nic Bottomley who talked about Mr B's Emporium of Reading, a talk which proved to be the highlight of the seminar for a number of people, and Matt Baker from the Grimsey Review who gave a fascinating presentation about putting libraries at the heart of the high street.

On day two delegates explored the new challenges and opportunities facing rural and urban areas with talks from Rob Francis, OPM and Angela Forster, Newcastle City Libraries. Delegates heard from Campbell Storey and worked in groups to prepare their own 'elevator pitch'. We also heard from Sir Peter Bazalgette, Neil Schneider, CEO of Stockton Council, Debbie Hicks from The Reading Agency and a very inspiring talk sponsored by Carnegie UK from Corinne Hill, Director of Chattanooga Public Library. The costs of bringing Corinne from Chattanooga were met by welcome funding from the Carnegie UK Trust.

Overall the evaluation of the seminar was extremely positive. Examples of comments received were:

"I always find the Seminar useful, but this year seemed particularly relevant and practical."

"It was the first time I have attended an SCL seminar and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I learnt so much and was very inspired by some of the speakers. The venue is excellent and it was great to meet so many colleagues from other authorities."

"A time to think. Reflect. Discuss challenges with colleagues and be exposed to new ideas and opportunities."

The seminar evaluation showed that:

100% of people thought that the seminar was a useful event.

98.73% of people said they would recommend the seminar to a colleague

4.2 Masterclasses

In 2014/15 we worked in partnership to run two masterclasses.

On 1 September 2014 in Manchester Central Library we worked with Carnegie UK to run a masterclass looking at 'innovation'. Delegates found out more about the Carnegie Library Lab – Presentation from Jenny Peachey and Douglas White, Carnegie UK and heard Mark Robinson speak about innovation and adaptive resilience and Sue Lawson talk about Manchester's Digital Laboratory. The event was attended by 60 delegates and feedback was very positive.

Comments included,

“Enjoyed the whole day and each section was useful, exciting, interesting and/or enjoyable. Learnt quite a bit and the library is fantastic”

“Challenging. Lots of things to think about in relation to the ‘Library Lab’, but also delivery of our service and engaging with staff and customers”

On 15th January 2015 in Newcastle City Library we worked with The Reading Agency to run a masterclass on ‘Sponsorship and Philanthropy’. The event was attended by 56 people and the evaluation showed that it had been very successful. In workshops delegates explored the impact of sponsorship and philanthropy on public libraries and discussed the effective partnership working with sponsors and donors. They also heard from a number of speakers including Clare Titley, Director of Philanthropy and South West at Arts Council England, Amina Shah, CEO, Scottish Libraries and Information Council and Peter Hughes, Head of Corporate Responsibility, Pearson plc.

We will continue to develop a programme of events and masterclasses for 2015/16 on areas which support change and transformation of library services and exchange of good practice.

5. SCL Wales and Northern Ireland

5.1 Wales

A separate report from SCL Wales will be circulated.

5.2 Libraries NI

2014/15 was another year of change for Libraries NI, both within the internal and external operating environments.

The installation of the new hardware and software for the e2 project was completed during 2014. This £26m IT contract with Fujitsu has delivered new services to all 98 library locations across Northern Ireland including a new library management system, free Wi-Fi and new HR, finance and payroll solutions. New Creative Labs, a Virtual Learning Environment and additional self-service kiosks were also included in the project.

Professor Bernard Cullen was appointed as the new Board Chairperson in November 2014, replacing Nigel Macartney who had led the Board with distinction for a number of years.

Several strategic partnerships were initiated or further developed in 2014/15. Libraries NI now has formal partnership agreements in place, with annual action plans, with the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department for Agriculture and

Invest NI as well as Macmillan cancer Support, The Macular Society and other non-statutory organisations.

The draft budget for 2015/16 includes a 7.5% reduction for Libraries NI, much less of a cut than most other arm's length bodies received, as the Minister, with support from the Executive, gave Libraries 'a measure of protection' on condition that no libraries would close. This cut will be delivered through a 5% reduction in opening hours following public consultation on an opening hours policy and proposals which received almost 4,000 responses.

Capital developments continued during 2014/15 with one new library opening and work progressed on a number of major refurbishments and extensions.

April 2015 saw the creation of 11 new councils in Northern Ireland replacing the 26 that had existed since 1973. They have greater powers than previously but still substantially fewer powers than in England, Wales and Scotland. Libraries NI engaged with the shadow councils and will work closely with the new councils, particularly in the context of community planning.

It was also announced that the number of Local Government Departments in Northern Ireland will be reduced in April 2016 from 12 to 9. Libraries NI will be an arms length body of a new and much larger Department for Communities from the Department for Culture Arts and Leisure. This Department will also contain employment, support for councils, housing, social security, community cohesion, culture and heritage services so it presents a number of opportunities for libraries.

6. REFLECTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2014/15 has proved a busy and demanding year for SCL. We have made significant progress in a number of areas. I would particularly highlight:

- The enormous achievement of delivering the digital skills workforce development programme to 14,000 library staff. SCL has never delivered anything on such an ambitious scale before and it is testament to all the hard work of Sally McMahon, Eve Jarvis and the broader project team, the regional trainers and individual library services that we were able to deliver such a successful initiative at a time of stretched capacity within the sector. It has demonstrated the huge desire of public library services to meet the changing needs of their customers and communities.
- The cumulative impact of all the digital offer work – from working with GDS and Digital Inclusion signatories, to the initial research which has shown the significant potential impact a single digital presence could have on public libraries' usage and profile through to the capacity building work on developing digital leadership skills. Together these pieces of work put SCL in a strong position to respond to the opportunities and challenges set out by William Sieghart in the Independent Report.

- The tenacity of SCL Exec and ASCEL members and Reading Agency colleagues to ensuring libraries' potential is fully recognised as part of Save the Children's Read On Get On campaign.
- The successful work to develop a new Reading Well Books on Prescription list focused on dementia. This continues to attract strong media interest along with increasing support and recognition from local public health teams. The usage statistics demonstrate the Reading Well model is having significant impact on individuals who might not otherwise seek help with these conditions.
- ASCEL's progressive leadership in continuing to develop high quality library services for children and young people. Their work on children's digital was ground breaking and their Children's Reading Journeys research points the way towards a new approach to sustaining children's use of libraries and love of reading throughout their childhood and adolescence.

Austerity continues to put huge pressure on Councils' abilities to adequately fund library services and this remains a major concern for SCL members and for many other partners and agencies, who recognise the value and potential public libraries have in supporting key policy agendas such as self-help and early intervention; economic growth and skills development.

Austerity too brings opportunities for re-thinking library services and looking for new solutions which help to sustain vibrant library services able to support their communities. SCL is well positioned to respond to these opportunities and we increasingly find ourselves in situations where it makes sense to collaborate and work together, sharing skills and resources to create something better together. With the arrival of the Taskforce, I think we can expect to see even greater opportunities for national and regional collaboration in the future.

I am deeply grateful to SCL colleagues who have supported me in this first year of my Presidency. It is challenging to combine a demanding day job alongside the commitment and responsibilities of the Presidency but having such supportive and committed colleagues makes it much easier and enjoyable. I'm very grateful to those Exec members who have taken a lead role in each of the Universal Offers and I'd particularly pay tribute to those Exec members who are standing down at the AGM from their lead roles: Tony Durcan (Books and Reading), Sally McMahon (Information) and Martin Burton (Health). They have worked very hard in recent years to develop their respective Universal Offers into compelling and innovative propositions.

Other thanks are due to:

- All the partners we have worked with this year and who have added such value to SCL's work.
- Suppliers and contractors, including Tinder, Learning Pool, Shared Intelligence, Eve Jarvis, Oakleigh and Red Quadrant who have worked closely with SCL this year to develop our work.

- The regional trainers for the workforce development programme, who demonstrated significant commitment to ensuring the programme was a success. They give us all confidence that the sector has many committed, ambitious library managers and leaders.
- Library services who have supported SCL's work in different ways, including hosting meetings, events and training courses; piloting new services; filling in questionnaires and requests for information and for supporting their staff to engage with SCL programmes.
- All Exec members for their ongoing support and willingness to represent SCL and to regional Chairs and Secretaries for their support in ensuring SCL's vital network of regional meetings helps disseminate best practice and key SCL activities.
- Simon May for his ongoing contribution as SCL's Treasurer
- Colleagues in Northern Ireland and Wales who are so willing to share their experiences from their own respective home nations.

My personal thanks to Janene Cox for supporting me so well in her role as Past President and for her ongoing commitment in supporting e-lending progress at a national level. Thanks are due to Elizabeth Elford for so ably supporting SCL's communications and advocacy work and to Helen Drakard, who has proved an enormously effective new Executive Officer.

Finally, an enormous thank you to SCL colleagues who are – or who already have – stepped down from SCL Exec. These include Michelle Alford, Ian Watson, Sally McMahan, Sue Laurence, Irene Campbell and Brian Gambles. All have contributed to SCL's success in recent years and we wish them well for the future. Tony Durcan also steps down from SCL Exec after more than 10 years actively involved in the leadership of SCL. We thank him for his long-term commitment and his work as President in reshaping SCL into a forward looking and proactive organisation.

7. Looking Forward

I have no doubt that the coming year will prove as busy and demanding as 2014/15. The outcome of May's election was more decisive than most people anticipated and Ed Vaizey has returned as Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy. The continuity for the Libraries' Taskforce will hopefully enable it to prove its potential as a body that can support the continued modernisation and transformation of libraries; re-position libraries within the local authority landscape as a significant asset for the local authority and, as a result, build a confident, positive narrative about the future of public libraries. SCL will continue to play its part in supporting the Taskforce and will continue to ensure its own Universal Offers programme is having an impact on enabling library services to develop and innovate.

In 2015/16, we can particularly look forward to:

- Seeing the rollout of Wi-Fi investment and using that as a platform for innovation and partnership development on a national scale

- A renewed focus on the importance of library services for children and young people, with new work commissioned by ASCEL, with SCL's full involvement, to enable frontline staff to receive e-learning opportunities to develop their confidence and skills in engaging with children and young people. Alongside this, the anticipated launch of the next Reading Well list which will be focused on children and young people's mental health will support positive mental health amongst this age group.
- Further development of the proposition to develop a single digital presence. This has huge potential to be a resource that can attract greater use of libraries by existing users and to act as a shop window to draw back lapsed or attract new customers. It will require significant investment and it will be a key role for SCL to build the case for investment and to work with the Taskforce and others to find potential sources of funding.
- Working with Taskforce colleagues, particularly the likes of the BBC, Public Health England and the British Library, to build new alliances and opportunities for libraries. We also look forward to a new alliance with the Wellcome Trust.

I look forward to working with Neil MacInnes in the coming year in his role as President Elect.

Finally, I look forward to working with you all in SCL over the coming 12 months to make these and many other activities a reality for public libraries.

Ciara Eastell
President, SCL
May 2015