

SCL ANNUAL REPORT

2016-17



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100%

of people thought that the seminar was a useful event



99%

of people said they would recommend the seminar to a colleague



93%

said they thought the seminar was a good development opportunity for other members of staff



20%

of respondents had more than one member of staff attending the seminar from their library service in 2016 which rose in 2017 to **44%**

INTRODUCTION

It's been an exciting time for SCL, with a year of groundbreaking work delivered by our members being crowned with our successful application to the Arts Council to become a sector support organisation.

As you are all aware, this award means that SCL is facing a period of significant change in order to deliver on our objectives and fully support the library sector. With our partners, we hope to build on our strengths, namely you, our members, with all of the expertise and dedication that you bring to SCL, and underpin this with a more robust structure by recruiting a new chief executive to help lead the organisation, supported by a small number of paid staff.

We are committed to consulting our members about all aspects of the upcoming changes and our future activities to ensure that SCL remains an organisation supported by the public library sector, for the public library sector. We will continue to need your ideas and support over the next four years in order to make our new role a success.

In the midst of all these changes, our planned work continued with the launch of our new Universal Culture Offer in October. Led by Sarah Mears, this new offer seeks to build on the excellent work already happening in libraries to bring new and diverse cultural experiences to local communities. Over the year, we worked with MetaValue who carried out the research and stakeholder analysis to help create the core and stretch offers. We know that the Culture Offer will play a significant part in libraries' development over the next four years and we are looking forward to the new partnerships and creative opportunities that it will provide.

We launched the Public Library Skills Strategy led by Alison Wheeler for SCL with CILIP, to help deliver our vision of a thriving future network of innovative virtual and physical civic spaces. The strategy will support the future development of the public library workforce in England.



We've also held two national seminars since our last report. In 2016, our annual seminar explored the challenges and trends in managing and delivering public library services during a continuing period of austerity, while in 2017, regenerate and revitalise was the theme. While attendance was down this year, due to its clash with the snap general election, delegates remain hugely positive about the value of both seminars as a networking opportunity, to share best practice and to be challenged to think differently.

These are all incredibly important building blocks for the future success of SCL. As we look to build on the strengths of our members and partners, and the exceptional work being achieved through the Universal Offers framework, I am confident that we will deliver improved support and benefits to library services across the country.

Neil MacInnes, President, SCL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil MacInnes'.

UNIVERSAL INFORMATION OFFER



Government digital services

SCL successfully applied and secured a place on the Government Digital Services (GDS) for the supply of Assisted Digital/Digital Inclusion services. This allows us to tender for paid opportunities to provide assisted digital and digital inclusion services for the public via the libraries network.

Almost all local authorities have signed up to the Memorandum of Understanding between SCL and their library service. The first contract awarded under this framework was the Assisted Digital pilot carried out by Isle of Wight library service for the Office of National Statistics who were trialling their new online census. The Isle of Wight successfully tested the 2021 census with 8,000 households to help local residents get online and complete the questionnaire.

From the end of September, SCL and library services across the UK will also be supporting applicants for in-country visas on behalf of UK Visas and Immigration. The project is led by We Are Digital, which is directing applicants to the most suitable routes for support. This support is provided in person via local libraries, in the applicant's own home by We Are Digital's visiting tutors, and by telephone from Migrant Help UK. Fifteen library authorities are currently taking part with more joining later in the year.

Other highlights

We have focused on maintaining and developing two important facilities throughout the year:

- The Information4living.org.uk information tool across English public library services. Curators maintain the links to national articles on benefits, business, health and wellbeing, jobs/careers/skills, rights and citizenship, and money; while local administrators add local authority data.
- The e-learning modules from SCL on the Learning Pool platform, updating content, training module curators and site administrators, and resolving any problems that users have with access.

We also produced a new online needs assessment to survey the digital and information skills of library staff and volunteers. The survey will update the 2013 national audit and explore changes in contact with the public, examples of good practice, and measure the impact of SCL's Digital Information Skills for Library Workforce e-learning modules.

UNIVERSAL READING OFFER



Celebrating Shakespeare 2016

To mark his 400th anniversary, Celebrating Shakespeare aimed to introduce younger children to Shakespeare in a fun way, to interest teenagers in a playwright who was arguably the rapper of his day, and to encourage adults to revisit his works.

The library programme included Shakespeare Week in March, Anniversary Saturday in April, which was a mass social media event, and arts events and activities through the Summer and Autumn.

Arts Council funded SCL to enable libraries to commission artists, writers and performers for their Shakespeare celebrations. The project ended with a grand finale event in Stratford upon Avon in December.

- Nearly 12,000 people attended Shakespeare Week activities - three times as many as the previous year
 - 'Selfie Saturday' generated more than 6,000 tweets to #shakespeare16 and was shortlisted in two categories of the Public Sector Communications Awards 2016
 - Over 700 libraries delivered exciting and varied programmes of Shakespeare-themed arts events which were attended by 29,200 people.
- We supported the Roald Dahl themed Summer Reading Challenge in 2016 and the Animal Agents challenge in 2017. A survey after the 2016 challenge showed that 67% of parents/carers agreed their child felt more confident about reading after the challenge.
 - Over 7,500 young people in England and 135 in Wales volunteered as Reading Hackers for the 2016 Big Friendly Read Summer Reading Challenge to help inspire other young people to use their local libraries and to read for fun.
 - Our review of reader development in libraries was completed by 95 library services. We found that while reader development is a high priority for most, there is a lack of training. This review led to the development of a volunteer reader development training package with Leicestershire libraries and an e-learning reader development module.
 - We have commissioned 'Opening the Book' to develop an online reader development module which will be ready to launch in 2019.

Other highlights

- SCL was a key partner in the BBC's #LovetoRead campaign which brought together a range of literary partners to encourage reading for pleasure and create a national conversation about books. Our online poll to find the nation's favourite book received almost 2,000 votes and the #LoveToRead Harry Potter inspired recommendations resulted in 128,000 page views over just three days.



UNIVERSAL DIGITAL OFFER



Single Sign On

Single Sign On is a joint project between Jisc and SCL to solve the problem of users having to repeatedly sign in when they move from one set of subscription-based resources to another.

This project has the potential to improve the user experience and uptake of public library online resources by simplifying the user journey and bringing the catalogue and digital resources together into one authentication system.

Three pilot library authorities are now live and nine more have signed up. The pilot will now continue until November and a final evaluation report will be available in the New Year. Jisc has co-funded a promotional video which demonstrates the benefits of single sign on for library services and their users.

We are also working with Jisc on a national discount deal for online subscription services, which could save the library sector around £1.4 million and we will look at other ways we might work together, to buy collectively and save money.

Other highlights

- The Digital and Learning Offer leads have joined forces to run a series of nine regional roadshows beginning in October 2017 and featuring new Family Learning resources and hands-on demonstrations of digital kit for frontline staff
- We're working closely with the Library Taskforce to support the British Library-led project looking at the potential to create a Single Library Digital Presence, which is basically libraries using the same systems and software to create a unified national network for easier customer journeys
- We continue to work with suppliers to find improvements such as making library holdings more accessible through Google and developing a new spec for what a modern library management system should deliver
- We are also exploring the potential to lend out not only ebooks but also devices to read them on, perhaps with government funding so watch this space!

UNIVERSAL LEARNING OFFER



Family learning report

Our new report, The Experiential Library explores the wide range of family learning currently happening in libraries and suggests ways to improve and increase this work. Storycise, where families act out stories to improve their fitness in Bournemouth, a digital literacy course for 3-4 year olds in Norfolk and a Big Draw arts workshop in Kirklees are just some examples of the range of family learning taking place in local libraries.

The benefits of family learning include increased confidence, improved communication, new life skills and better relationships with teachers and other professionals for both adults and children. Family learning can also help to address digital divides, not only between those who access the internet and those who do not, but between those who primarily use technology for entertainment and those who use it to develop their skills and knowledge as well.

Written by Common Vision for SCL, and funded by the Arts Council, the report goes on to outline a six-step approach for libraries that are looking to develop their family learning offer.

The roadshows described on p6 are the first outcome of this research and we will continue to build on the findings over the coming months.

Other highlights

- Following on from the success of the first Cracking the Code event in London a second Cracking the Code was held, this time in Manchester Central Library to extend opportunities to develop digital making activities to libraries in the North of England
- Libraries continued to support the BBC Make it Digital campaign through their work with Weather Watchers and the rollout of the BBC micro:bit
- For the first time, SCL offered six bursaries to library staff to attend MozFest in 2016, the world's leading event for and by the open Internet movement, which takes place annually in London
- Our partnerships with CoderDojo and Raspberry Pi Foundation continue to grow and we now have over 450 Code Clubs in libraries.



UNIVERSAL HEALTH OFFER



Reading Well

Reading Well is designed to help people to understand and manage a range of health conditions. Last year saw the launch of 'Shelf Help' designed to support the health, wellbeing and emotional resilience of young people. This is being delivered by 93% (141) of English library authorities and is about to be rolled out in Northern Ireland.

Five Reading Well author events took place around the country as part of the Reading Hack activity in the young people's festival in libraries for BBC #LovetoRead. To accompany this promotion a new Mood-boosting book list was produced with young people and shared on the Reading Well website.

- Since its launch in 2013, Reading Well has reached over half a million (635,000) people with self-help reading
- Around 73% of people surveyed used the scheme as a first step to getting help.

The University of Westminster is completing an evaluation of Reading Well for young people at a school in Hertfordshire and the University of Exeter is about to publish research into the impact of the adult common mental health conditions list. Both reports are due later this year.

We've also worked hard to promote the benefits of the Reading Well programme:

- A Reading Well e-learning module was launched for front line staff
- Reading Well for young people supporting materials will be going out to 138 Prince's Trust Centre's in England
- SCL and The Reading Agency submitted a joint report on Reading Well Books on Prescription to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry into the role of the arts in health and social care.

Other highlights

- Reading Friends is a new reading befriending programme for vulnerable and isolated older people, led by The Reading Agency and supported by SCL. Four test projects have been selected across England (West Sussex, Oldham, Newcastle and Sheffield) and Scotland and Wales are in the process of selecting one test site each.
- Engaging Libraries aims to support library authorities to experiment with different types of public engagement activities on a health or well-being theme. Led by the Wellcome Trust and Carnegie UK, 14 projects across Britain will receive grants of up to £15,000.

SIX STEPS PROMISE



We were sad to lose our friend and colleague, David Owen, in February. He died suddenly and it will be hard to replace the vast amount of experience and knowledge that he brought to us.

- Throughout 2016, Share the Vision in partnership with SCL has been developing the Six Steps Training module which is now live and in use across the country.
- We have run a series of face to face training events in four English locations. These workshops have been designed to help frontline staff and Six Steps Champions. Two Scottish workshops will be delivered by the end of 2017.
- RNIB National Library Service, in partnership with Share the Vision has developed a Library on a shelf collection which will be tested with 12 services across the UK and will also link to the four English authorities who are part of the Reading Friends project.
- On the Learning Pool we now have an introduction to the Six Steps Promise materials and resources.



CHILDREN'S PROMISE



- ASCEL commissioned Diane Dixon Associates to create a set of resources called Bump Booster to support library staff and volunteers in their work with parents-to-be. The toolkit includes key messages about the importance of parents sharing rhymes and talking to their 'bump' as well as a collection of rhymes to share.
- Working with Dimensions UK and funded by the Arts Council, ASCEL launched a suite of resources to help staff and volunteers to create a more positive library experience for families with children and young people with Autism.
- Testing quality principles in library Rhyme Times has resulted in a framework and supporting documents that will provide an evidence base for demonstrating the impact of Rhyme Times. These are currently being tested and will be launched in the Autumn.
- ASCEL commissioned The Reading Agency to research the development of a children and young people's strand of the Universal Health Offer. The report was launched at the SCL Seminar in June. ASCEL hosted a seminar with Bridge Organisations to support the development of a children and young people's strand of the new Cultural Offer.



LIBRARIES NI SCL WALES

In May 2016, Libraries NI became an Arm's Length Body within the new Department for Communities. Despite a difficult funding environment, building work was completed on Castlewellan Library, began on Lisburn Road Library and is planned for two others. In addition:

- Partnership work with the government resulted in increased funding for Health in Mind activities in rural areas and facilitated the continuation of job clubs in many libraries. A key focus of partnerships this year was to enhance the service offer to people with disabilities or life changing conditions.
- Health in Mind, a five year-project, led by Libraries NI, in partnership with Action Mental Health, Aware, Cause and MindWise and funded by the Big Lottery, ended in January having reached almost 200,000 people.
- A series of letters written to and from the Belfast Chief Librarian by library staff who volunteered, The Library Men of World War One, were digitised and made public. We worked in partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Big Ideas Company to creatively commemorate the Commonwealth war graves in NI.
- The Easter Rising was commemorated in partnership with Dublin City Public Libraries, through 'Two Cities One Book'. Inspired by events in Dublin and France in 1916, 'The Fallen' by Lia Mills was used to explore the cultural, political and social history of the period and focus on the work of other female authors and novels of the time.
- Libraries NI signed a partnership with BBC NI. BookweekNI was the first joint event which ran in November and featured a number of author events and activities.

For the past year, much of the work of SCL Wales has been focused on the delivery of the ongoing Welsh library management system project. Following the successful implementation of Phase One which saw six authorities going live in August 2016, a further six authorities are now using the system, with the next phase due to begin in December.

All 22 Welsh authorities should be using the new management system by the end of 2019. Adopting a single system across Wales will allow authorities to work collaboratively and improve customer access to services across local authority boundaries.

Other highlights

- Working with the Welsh Government, the Reading Agency and SCL to prepare a re-launch of the Book Prescription Wales Scheme, which will crucially include Welsh language translations of a number of the key texts.
- Working with Data Unit Wales to prepare a new draft National Performance Indicator for libraries in Wales. The draft is based upon performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards and therefore gives a more complete picture of the achievements of Welsh Libraries rather than just visitor numbers.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SCL as a membership organisation is committed to working in partnership with other agencies to deliver tangible benefits to library services. We would not have accomplished all that we have this year without the efforts and expertise of our partners. We would like to thank you for all of your support this year and look forward to our continued partnership.

- **Arts Council England**
- **The Association of Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)**
- **BBC**
- **Booksellers Association**
- **Booktrust**
- **British Library**
- **Carnegie UK Trust**
- **CILIP**
- **The Reading Agency**
- **Share the Vision**
- **Wellcome Trust**

SCL could not have achieved what it has without the help and support of our members across the country.

First, we would like to highlight the work of the Universal Offer and Promise leads:



- **Health: Julie Spencer (Bolton)**
- **Reading: Janene Cox (Staffordshire)**
- **Learning: Julie Griffiths (Halton)**
- **Information: Medi Bernard (Bournemouth) and Lesley Sim (West Sussex)**
- **Digital: Ayub Khan (Warwickshire)**
- **Culture: Sarah Mears (Essex)**
- **Children's Promise: Sue Ball (Staffordshire) and Sarah Mears (Essex)**
- **Six Steps: Mark Freeman (Stockton)**

Thanks are also due to:

- **The Executive, for their insight and guidance over the past 18 months**
- **The Regional Chairs, who play such a crucial role in ensuring key messages from SCL are shared with colleagues across the regions**
- **Ciara Eastell, our Past President, for her dedication and her tireless work helping us transition to a sector support organisation**
- **Simon May for his work as SCL's Treasurer and Medi Bernard our Treasurer Elect**
- **Library colleagues involved in the Universal Offer working groups for contributing to their ongoing development**
- **Our colleagues in Northern Ireland and Wales, who generously share their own experiences of developing library services**
- **Member local authorities and library services for their co-operation in releasing officers to carry out work on behalf of SCL**
- **To everyone who has represented SCL and engaged in its work throughout the year**
- **Elizabeth Elford, Helen Drakard, Katie Pekacar, Marsha Lowe and Alison Hilton.**

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

SCL membership gives you access to a skilled network of library professionals that helps you and your team to improve and develop your local library service. Benefits include:

- **Universal offers:** These are unique partnership, promotion and funding opportunities brokered centrally by SCL and locally by library leaders
- **Learning pool:** An evolving platform of training on digital skills, working with children and young people, Reading Well Books on Prescription, the Six Steps Promise and reader development
- **SCL national seminar:** An opportunity to network, reflect and improve practice
- **Funding support:** Pursuing national and regional tenders that benefit library services across the country
- **Link to leadership:** Members are able to directly influence and contribute to the national agenda via the SCL executive
- **National influence and advocacy:** SCL is the national voice for libraries, with direct access to senior decision makers
- **Workforce development** for library leaders and their teams, including bespoke training courses and bursaries
- **Forum** to share best practices regionally and nationally
- **Commissioned research** on a range of issues to help develop best practice and support new initiatives
- **Access** to relevant news and information and research
- **Communications:** Valuable communications and advocacy resource that also gives members the opportunity to collaborate on national campaigns
- **Promotion** of local library initiatives on SCL website and part of a growing library advocacy movement on social media.

