

**Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**  
Library and Resident Contact (L&RC)

# ACCESS POLICY

This policy is applicable to Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library & Resident Contact Service

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Managed by: Angela Huisman	Responsible position: Library and Resident Contact Lead	Version: 8.1
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**REVISION RECORD**

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## **1. TITLE**

Library and Resident Contact Access Policy

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

As a library authority, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has a statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act to provide a public library service and to ensure that it is comprehensive and efficient. "It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof..."

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75>

## **3. PURPOSE**

This policy covers all aspects of accessibility to the Library and Resident Contact Service including location, opening hours, ICT, physical access, furniture and equipment, stock and services, access to staff and adequate space; and sets the standards against which individual users and communities can measure their needs, rights and expectations.

## **4. SCOPE**

### **4.1 Location policy**

Currently the 11 fixed site libraries and the Container Library at Wraysbury cover all the main centres of population in the Borough. The Select and Deliver / Home Library Service visits around 10 sites including residential settings and 90 customers in their own homes. The Select and Deliver / Home Library Service aims to ensure all residents are able to access library services regardless of mobility, disability, distance from a static library or any other barrier.

Pop-up library options are established where demand arises such as at Sunningdale.

## **5. OBJECTIVE**

### **5.1. Location standards**

- 95% of households to be within two miles of a public library
- 84% of households to be within one mile of a public library

- Communities with up to 1,000 people to be served at least by a Select and Deliver / Home Library Service

## 5.2. Opening hours standards

- Communities with populations between 1,000 and 5,000 to be served by Container, Pop-up or Home Library Services.
- Communities with a population of 5,000 or more to be served by a static library open not less than 13 hours per week.
- Communities with a catchment area of more than 40,000 resident population to be served by a statutory central library open not less than 35 hours a week.
- Proportion of planned time that service points were not available to visitors because of emergency closure of central and branch libraries and proportion of planned time that mobile service points were not available to visitors because Select and Deliver stops were cancelled to be monitored.
- Opening hours to be reviewed every two years to ensure a comprehensive and efficient library service and consider usage, issues and effective provision.

## 5.3. ICT standards

- 100% of static service points open more than 12 hours a week to have access to electronic resources, public PCs and wifi.
- All static libraries to have appropriate hardware and software to enable access for disabled users and currency of accessibility hardware and software to be reviewed every two years.
- The ability for customers to print, scan and photocopy should be included in the ICT provision.

## 5.4. Physical access standards

- Parking areas are required at all libraries with reserved parking for library users and mother and child/disabled parking to be incorporated where possible.
- Street guiding is required for ease of locating all library buildings. Ideally this will be from town/village centres/local transport links
- Adequate signing for all library buildings, well placed and well lit with clear script and contrasting colours and background to include opening hours information.
- Level access from the approaches and within the demise of the library to allow free and unobstructed passage for wheelchairs and pushchairs
- Entrance access to be ramped with rails where appropriate; steps where provided to be low and deep with the edges highlighted and handrails to be provided.
- Doors should be automatic and main entrance doors should be double doors or wide enough for double pushchair or wheelchair access. They should be glazed or partially glazed especially if outward opening. Spring closures should be avoided where possible and only delayed action type should be used. Minimum pressure should be required to open and close any manual doors and thresholds should allow unassisted access by wheelchairs.
- Lobbies inside an entrance door should provide sufficient turning space for wheelchairs and pushchairs and any mats should fit into a well and be flush with the floor.
- Lifts should be provided in all buildings where there is more than one floor level and should allow independent use by wheelchair users. Sufficient turning space and mirrors for

reverse exits must be allowed where it is not possible to turn in the lift or dual doors are not feasible.

- Corridors and passageways should be sufficiently wide to allow wheelchair access and where possible to allow pedestrian passing of wheelchairs. Seats or perching areas should be provided if the corridor is longer than 10 metres
- Non-slip flooring should be used in all areas with carpeting in public areas unless there is a wet play provision for the children's section when suitable linoleum or equivalent should be used. Short pile carpeting should always be used with anti-static properties.
- Lighting design should allow as much natural light as possible and where artificial lighting is used it should be to a level of 300-500 lux. Lighting should be positioned to avoid shadows falling on shelves or dazzling customers when browsing, and glare on ICT equipment from all sources is to be avoided. Areas of poor natural light should be given types of lighting that mimic natural light where possible. Poorly lit areas should have large areas of wall covered in light, reflective colours and ceilings should be covered in light, reflective colours to maximise the light available.
- At least one ICT space per static library should be large enough to accommodate a user plus carer

## 5.5. Furniture and equipment standards

- There should be access for wheelchair users both as visitors and staff.
- There should be no shadowed areas, which impedes lip reading, and hearing loops should be included.
- Internal signs should be of a professional standard with no hand written notices, and in the 'house' style. They should have contrasting lettering and backgrounds in lower case. They should be at eye level with easy access for close viewing and glare should be minimised. A clear plan of the building, stock and services should be prominently displayed and symbols should be used where possible.
- Equipment must be safely housed at an appropriate height with no trailing wires. Reading tables should be provided to suit the height of the chairs provided whilst being appropriate for wheelchair users. Wheelchair spaces [900mm x 1400mm] should be allowed for at tables and PC's. A variety of seats should be provided at a range of heights with and without arm rests and they must be stable, clean and in good repair. Suitable seating should be provided for ICT use in the appropriate areas. Perching seats should be available where people may have to wait, and where there are separate floors additional seating should be provided.
- Shelving should be no higher than 1500mm from floor level and no lower than 250mm from floor level, especially for Large Print stock, with the exception of the children's area. Here shelves should be no higher than 1200mm from floor level for older children, 600mm for under 5's and no lower than 250mm from floor level. There should be space around shelving and desks sufficient to allow wheelchair and pushchair access, with no protruding feet into the aisles. Where format is appropriate A/V stock should be displayed on shelving as above. Some formats may need to be shelved on tiered display units, in such cases the maximum / minimum heights should be as for books but the 'rake' of the shelving from front to back should be no more than 600mm.
- WC facilities, where provided, should be accessible to all and this should include provision for assisted transfers and emergency help. Nappy changing facilities should be provided with access for men and women.

## 5.6. Staffing standards

- The training plan will include customer care and related training on an ongoing basis to ensure that new and existing members of staff have the skills they need.
- Disability awareness training will also be made available for staff

## 5.7. Space standard

- The net floor space in square metre per 1,000 population of the library buildings to which the general public shall have access to shall be at least 23 square metres per 1,000 population, subject to an absolute minimum of 200 square metres.

# 6. POLICY DETAILS

## 6.1. Opening hours policy

- Length of opening hours are dependent on the size of the library and are intended to reflect local needs and interests whilst maintaining the widest possible access by the whole community. Currently libraries open across 7 days per week and only close on bank holidays.
- Opening hours are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the community. Library closures for whatever reason should be kept to a minimum, as should cancellation of Select and Deliver provision.

## 6.2. ICT access policy

- Access to ICT is fundamental in promoting equal opportunities of access to information and services. Libraries should be a major vehicle for providing affordable access to ICT.
- One of the main aims of the Library Service's ICT strategy is to increase access for customers and staff to information and services through the use of ICT and to bridge the gap between the information rich and the information poor. Public Internet use in all borough libraries is governed by the Public Internet Access acceptable use agreement. The library service also aims to maximise the benefits of ICT in enabling access for disabled users to library facilities, as well as those affected by sensory, intellectual and cultural access barriers. Appropriate means of accessing ICT for these users is provided at all service points.
- Catalogues and key documents should be available on-line via the Internet. The library service is accessible outside opening hours through the library website. This provides the opportunity to check the library catalogue, join the library, renew items, make reservations, check borrowing details and be informed of events, activities and other library information online.
- A 24-hour automated telephone renewals and information line should enable library members to renew items or access library information from anywhere and at any time.
- Library members can also access a host of electronic information resources provided through the library web pages from basic reference tools to newspapers online.

### 6.3. Physical access policy

- It is important that library buildings are easily accessible and have a welcoming, professional image. Clear external and internal signs and guiding, facilitating self-help are essential, together with appropriate furniture, lighting and equipment. The library service is also required to meet all relevant legislation requirements including health and safety standards, Equalities Act 2010 provisions and section M of the building regulations.

### 6.4. Access to Stock and Services

- Libraries provide a unique mix of resources and services - they are a community resource, giving local access to networks but global reach to knowledge and opportunities to extend horizons.
- The Library and Resident Service will ensure that people who have difficulty using facilities are not financially penalised or otherwise disadvantaged and that the service is accessible to the low paid, unemployed and other excluded groups. Information about services should be available and should increase public awareness and promote a positive image of the service. The [Accessibility Library card scheme | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead \(rbwm.gov.uk\)](https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/accessibility-library-card-scheme) ensures that customers with special needs such as Dementia and autism are able to use the library service as much as possible. This includes longer loan periods and access times with staff available to assist outside of normal opening hours.

### 6.5. Access to Staff

- Staff and volunteers will provide help and support in a non-judgemental way and will be trained in all aspects of customer care to ensure equality of treatment. All staff will be trained up to or proficient in using relevant ICT programmes so that they can confidently use, and help customers to use the ICT and Internet facilities.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following roles are responsible for the implementation of this policy within the relevant strands of the Service:

- Library & Resident Contact Lead
- Library and Resident Contact Team Leaders

## 8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- Library and Resident Services Management Team and the Lead Member responsible for Libraries will review the implementation of the standards

## **9. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

- L&RC – Library & Resident Contact