

Moray Council – Consultation response from CILIP in Scotland

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS)ⁱ welcomes the opportunity to comment on your 2018 budget proposals. CILIPS is the Scottish arm of CILIP, the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers.

We understand the very difficult choices being faced by Moray Council because of significant financial pressure but we are extremely concerned by the proposals to reduce the number of school librarians by up to 50% in the area.

The proposal to remove school librarian posts runs counter to national initiatives aiming to support and enhance literacy and will inevitably lead to a poorer overall educational experience for pupils. Recent reports and PISA rankings have highlighted the falling literacy rates in Scotland's schools over recent yearsⁱⁱ and a body of impact studies highlight the contribution of school librarians to improved attainment and achievement.ⁱⁱⁱ

The school libraries and librarians across Moray run a wide range of vital projects such as paired reading schemes, literacy programmes, book clubs, study skills groups, reading with dogs and much more. These projects are only possible with a dedicated school librarian in every school. The school librarians in Moray have an excellent reputation across Scotland having been nominated for^{iv} and received national awards^v. The school library at Elgin Academy was also praised by the Deputy First Minister John Swinney at a recent Parliamentary Committee meeting^{vi}.

In 2017, a CILIPS delegation met with the Deputy First Minister to highlight the need for a national school library strategy and the importance of having a school librarian in every school. The Minister has since asked for a strategy to be developed and this is intended to be launched in August 2018^{vii}. We urge Moray Council to wait for this to be published before making any decisions.

School libraries are a safe and supportive learning environment where all pupils have equal and equitable access to curriculum related learning resources, both physical and digital, practical support, and information for educational purposes. Pupils can be guided by a standard of excellence set by classroom teachers in collaboration with information professionals who are based within the school.

Studies have also found^{viii} that reading for pleasure is more important to a child's educational achievement than their family's wealth or social class. Reading for pleasure can best be cultivated in a school through the work the school librarian does in partnership with teaching staff. This can include author visits, participation in national reading awards and events such as Book Week Scotland. Professional librarians develop and support a whole school reading culture and are expert in the ever-expanding genre of teenage and young adult literature.

We firmly believe that school libraries should be the central resource of the school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian. Therefore, CILIPS urges you to reconsider the proposals in relation to making cuts to school library services in the area.

ⁱ www.cilips.org.uk

ⁱⁱ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-39856284>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1211/impact-of-school-libraries-on-learning-2013.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.sla.org.uk/slya-2017.php>

^v <https://twitter.com/IMRGU/status/921331639246041090>

^{vi} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36NzZX1h1Qo> (53 minutes in)

^{vii} <http://www.cilips.org.uk/development-school-library-strategy-begin-autumn/>

^{viii} Sullivan, A. and Brown, M. (2013) [Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: The role of reading.](#)