

Libraries and librarians offer the most democratic means of providing citizens with access to **knowledge.**

Dear Candidate,

We write to ask that, if elected on 5 May, you show continuing support for sustained investment in Scotland's libraries over the life of the next Scottish Parliament. We also ask that you support the specific policy proposals contained in this manifesto.

We ask you to support and call for the full implementation the National Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland: Ambition and Opportunity 2015-2020; that you work to ensure that all learners in school and further education have on site access to full time professional library staff; that you support the development of a new national strategy for school libraries and that you work closely with local government to ensure that all libraries are fully supported.

We ask this because of the unique range of contributions that our libraries make to the life of Scotland – and because they offer the potential to do still more.

Scotland's libraries are the inspiration for our nation. We hope that this short document will make it clear to you exactly why that is.

Yours,

[The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland \(CILIPS\) on behalf of Scotland's librarians.](#)

Why libraries?

Libraries contribute to outcomes across all of Scotland's public life.

Libraries are excellent value

£1 = £8

For every £1 invested in our public libraries, they deliver up to £8 worth of benefit.

Libraries and librarians offer the most democratic means of providing citizens with access to knowledge, and one of libraries' most essential roles is acting as the nexus between writers and the public, placing literature at the heart of every community, accessible to every citizen.

Libraries improve digital skills

30%

of the Scottish population do not have these essential skills. Throughout Scotland libraries and librarians in communities, schools, colleges, prisons and other settings are supporting digital access and helping citizens learn how to become active in the digital world.

Libraries touch the lives of our citizens

28 million

Over 60% of the population use public libraries, with 28 million visits every year, and that doesn't take into account the vast numbers who use libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

Libraries support digital inclusion

20%

of households in Scotland do not have access to the internet.

Libraries help close the attainment gap. A quality school library can contribute to reducing the achievement gap and enabling vulnerable students to improve academic success.

"In this digital age and in the present economic climate libraries and librarians are absolutely crucial."
Theresa Breslin, Carnegie Medal Winning Author and CILIPS President

Libraries are award winning

No.1

Scottish libraries have been named 'Library of the Year' for the past 4 years and a Scottish library service won the prestigious 'Libraries Change Lives' Award in 2015.

Libraries are at the heart of communities, schools and colleges and can combat the effects of deprivation.



Library services help deliver Scotland's key outcomes. Developing digital skills can increase employability, improve access to benefits, build social contacts and enable someone to find essential health information. Reading for pleasure can boost attainment, promote literacy, build self-confidence, stimulate mental well-being and build social networks. It is this cross-cutting contribution, coupled with the unique reach of libraries, which makes investing in them such good value for Scottish society.

These are some of the key contributions made by Scotland's libraries:



Literacy

- Libraries provide Bookbug and storytelling events, reading programmes, book festivals, books in community languages, services to homebound residents.

- Libraries support reading and literacy for all sectors and for all ages and support Government initiatives such as Read, Write, Count.

- Libraries offer e-books and online learning.

- The National Library of Scotland is the world's leading centre for the study of Scotland and the Scots and is a major European research library.

- Libraries make available space for literacy and other learning, enabling users to make their own reading journey, develop their own skills and creativity.

- School Libraries can positively impact on literacy, learning, health and wellbeing and promote reading for pleasure.

- School Libraries promote an understanding in the use of online information via projects such as IRights.

- Our public libraries lend more books than are bought in Scotland every year.

- Library services offer lifelong benefits from promoting carer/child bonding through increasing attainment to reducing social isolation in older people.



"I felt very isolated and alone after I gave birth and moved to a new area. Bookbug has now given me my confidence back. Little one now picks up books and asks to be read to numerous times a day. She is a very happy little chatterbox. Thank you, Bookbug!"

Equality

- Libraries actively contribute to promoting digital inclusion by offering access to computers and supporting users in gaining the skills to use them.

- Some libraries provide 3D Printing, makerspaces and other technologies which empower users in entirely new ways.

- Libraries are accessible, free-to-use, neutral spaces within communities and education establishments.

- Libraries are used and valued by citizens from all communities and ages.

- Libraries offer information, learning and inspiration that can change people's lives.

- Library staff support citizens in finding, evaluating and using that information.

- Libraries deliver minority language classes, celebrate minority cultures, run projects with the homeless, offer space for advice clinics, provide online and physical access to self-help information, homework clubs, heritage projects and so much more.

- Libraries support inclusion, create community networks, build partnerships and make everyone welcome.

Skills and Employment

· School and Further Education libraries offer careers information and safe spaces where young people can research their future and be supported in doing so.

· Access to IT in libraries assists people to apply for jobs, develop CVs and prepare for interviews, as well as maximising their benefits and saving money through online shopping.

· Libraries host job clubs and information clinics, provide information on, and opportunities for, volunteering and are sources of advice and support for small businesses.

· Libraries often work in partnership with other agencies and organisations to deliver services to Scotland's citizens.

Health and Wellbeing

· There is a significant association between frequent library use and reported wellbeing.

· Libraries support Scotland's hospital and healthcare staff in their day to day work via services such as the Knowledge Network.

· Mindfulness, reiki, and tai chi sessions are examples of activities which make good use of libraries as accessible spaces.

· Libraries make available books on prescription and collections of material to support those with chronic conditions, including mental health problems.

· Libraries work with health services and others to empower patients through information and social contact.

· Libraries work in partnership with other agencies to support wellness, bringing together skills and resources within communities to provide help, advice and support.

This is the briefest snapshot of the contribution Scotland's libraries make. There are many more, from children's coding classes to reminiscence work with our older people. They all share libraries' common purpose – to empower and inspire through access to knowledge, information and creativity.

“Free and easy access to information can improve life chances and help people from all backgrounds make the most of their potential.”

John Scally, Scotland's National Librarian

What can you do?

Scotland's librarians are acutely aware of the financial pressures on today's public services. We know very well the difficulties involved in securing funding.

We believe that backing Scotland's libraries represents an excellent investment in Scotland's people and their future. Libraries already provide outstanding value for money and are working hard to increase that further.

They have unparalleled reach into communities, schools and colleges, extensive networks and a wealth of solid partnerships.

Every £1 spent on a library goes a very long way.

On behalf of Scotland's libraries, we ask that, if elected to the Scottish Parliament, you recognise their value to our national life and that you work to ensure that they are properly funded.

1. We ask that you support and call for the full implementation of the National Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland, agreed last year with the Scottish Government and COSLA. It includes:

– Taking forward a national reading strategy with libraries at its heart

– Rolling out and sustaining the every child a library member project

– Providing high-speed wifi in all community libraries

– Rolling out a national digital skills programme with shared resources

– Developing local, regional and national partnerships to support employability

2. We ask that you work to ensure that all learners in school and further education have on site access to full time professional library staff.

3. We ask that you support development of a new national strategy for school libraries which recognises their vital role in supporting pupils' literacy and research skills.

4. We ask that you work closely with Local Government to ensure that all libraries are fully supported.



We also invite you to come and see for yourself. CILIPS contact details are on the back cover of this document. We would be very happy to talk to you and tell you more about the exciting, innovative work going on across Scotland's libraries. Visit your local library, in communities, schools and colleges, talk to the staff and the customers there. Find out what they get from being in a library. We think you will be amazed. And inspired.



“I never thought that a library, a kettle and comfy sofa would play such a vital part in my cancer treatment, but they have.”

Placing literature and learning at the heart of every **community.**

CILIP in Scotland supports the principle of equality of access to information, ideas and works of the imagination, as fundamental elements of Scotland's economy, democracy, culture and civilisation. CILIPS is a registered charity affiliated to CILIP, the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers.

CILIP in Scotland Charity Number: SCO38532

For further information on our campaign:

Telephone: 0141 353 5637

E mail: admin@cilips.org.uk

Twitter: @CILIPScotland

#inspirationforthenation

For all reference sources and photograph credits, please visit www.cilips.org.uk/manifesto-references