

How can we support individuals and community groups to become more involved in delivering library services? And what challenges might this bring?

CILIP in Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Edinburgh Council consultation. CILIPS is the professional association for library and information professionals in Scotland, affiliated to the UK Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

The consultation cites the contribution that volunteers have made to library services and development in Edinburgh delivering over 17,500 hours of volunteer input over the last 3 years. Volunteers in libraries can add value where they are complementary/additional to existing staff and able to extend and enrich the services on offer. However, across the UK we have seen a rise in volunteers linked to reductions in paid staff. A recent [review](#) by SLIC concluded that volunteer run libraries are not a preferred approach in Scotland and the [National Strategy](#) recommends that guidelines be developed on the appropriate use of volunteers. CILIPS does not support the substitution of paid staff by volunteers and we do not support volunteers being used for delivery of core services. It would therefore be helpful to learn more about which services are under consideration for delivery by volunteers and whether the use of volunteers would be at the expense of paid staff.

What other ways can we make libraries be accessible and appealing to reach a wider range of people – for example through swipecard access to unstaffed facilities outside normal opening times? And what challenges might this bring?

The consultation refers to use of open library technology (i.e. self service access to users outside those hours which a library is staffed) to ‘mitigate impact of reduced opening hours’. CILIPS is aware that some Scandinavian countries have used such technology for some time. We believe that where open library technology is used to extend and improve an existing library service, it may have a useful role. However, in the context of this consultation it appears that open library technology is being considered to compensate for reduced opening hours and staffing. We would not endorse the use of such technology as a replacement for the core service tasks that library staff carry out on a daily basis. Libraries need to be accessible and safe for users who should have access to support from library staff. We would be concerned that those with special needs may struggle to use the service without such support. We would also seek clarity on how the question of unaccompanied minors would be addressed.

How would you like to access library services with other community services? And what challenges might this bring?

Community engagement forms part of the public library's 'core business'. Libraries, should, like all public sector services make the most of opportunities to work more efficiently and effectively with community partners. Public service hubs have proved a popular service delivery model. We would therefore agree, in principle, with the proposal to develop libraries as community hubs provided the library's core functions are retained. In a well thought out mix of services in an appropriate location services can gain from each other and bring increased efficiencies, integration of staff teams and encourage community involvement. The SLIC national strategy is supportive of the local aspect of libraries as community hubs and CILIPS would therefore urge Edinburgh to consider the synergies for delivery of coordinated activity and library core offer as recommended in the National Strategy.