

Dear Candidate,

We are the professional body for Scotland's librarians (www.cilips.org.uk) and are writing to ask you to pledge your support for Scotland's libraries. As we face rising inequality and recover from the challenges of COVID-19 and the protracted impact of the pandemic, the indispensable role of libraries is more critical to communities than ever before.

Libraries support education, digital and information literacy, health and wellbeing, and provide equitable access to books and IT. Libraries support economic wellbeing and create long term economic benefits, offering a return on investment and by being a preventative spend. Libraries aid community cohesion, reduce loneliness, provide lifelong literacy and tackle prejudice by empowering minoritised communities, as well as being places of welcome and belonging.

Recent campaigns by both the public and in national media have shown that communities care and they want to know that their candidates care too. Libraries rose to the challenge of lockdown, but communities want physical library services to return to what they were. This is backed up by the new National Strategy, highlighting why libraries are all about people, place and partnership.

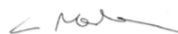
A strong economy needs libraries. They have a key role in tackling misinformation, promoting information literacy and engaging communities with the stark reality of climate change. School libraries are creating safe spaces of inclusive learning, neurodiversity, and creativity.

Therefore, we would ask that you be vocal about and agree to:

- Provide consistent funding to all libraries to ensure they can continue to support the above.
- Empower libraries to deliver the new National Strategy for Public Libraries and to ensure that quality library services are a key part of future community planning.
- Ensure that school libraries are properly resourced so they can be key components of curriculum delivery and that all learners have access to a trained librarian.
- Value and support libraries and information professionals in their vital role in combatting misinformation, which is damaging society and eroding democracy.

You can see the evidence and read more about why Libraries Are Essential here on our website www.cilips.org.uk/advocacy-campaigns/librariesareessential. Please show your support on social media by using #LibrariesAreEssential. I'm sure that you agree that libraries are essential to a brighter future for Scotland's communities, and we wish you every success in your campaign.

Yours Sincerely



Sean McNamara, Head of CILIP Scotland