

Torbay Library Services

Policy Statement for Services to Children and Young People

Aim

The overall aim of the service is to foster and nurture a love of books and reading that will remain with children throughout their lives so that children and young people will view the library as a resource to support lifelong learning and reading for pleasure.

Background

Library services to children and young people aim to encourage children (0-16) to become well-informed and literate individuals through the promotion of quality fiction and a comprehensive range of information books and materials in other formats (e.g. DVD, CD and e-resources)

In Torbay, children and young people make up approximately 19% of the population. (Source: *Office for National Statistics, 2002 MYE*) Through its professionally qualified Young People's Services Librarian, Torbay Library Services will address the intellectual, social, cultural and leisure needs of all young people and their parents and carers throughout the Bay.

Service Take-up

Use of services for children and young people will be assessed through the Children's PLUS (*Public Library User Survey*).

Profiles

In relation to young people's services, we will consider the individual communities that each library serves. This may include:

- Young people as a percentage of the whole community population
- Numbers of children in each age group (e.g., Under 5s, 5-11, 12-15)
- Number of children who are members of the library and have used the library in the last year, as a percentage of the number of children in the library's catchment population
- Groupings of children: after-school clubs / childminders / family workshops / parent and toddler groups / playgroups / private nurseries / schools
- Disadvantaged children, including special needs groups and holiday schemes
- Activity clubs, including cubs, brownies etc.
- Youth centres
- Before and After school clubs
- Holiday play schemes
- Issue figures, stock levels and trends

Space

Each library will have a clearly defined space for children and young people with appropriate signing and guiding. This area will adjoin the adult library and not be isolated. It should allow ease of access by all its users. Teenage provision will be separate, preferably within the main library.

The Children's area will provide a bright, comfortable and welcoming environment, with furniture and equipment reflecting the needs of the wide age-range of clients. Advice regarding provision is detailed in the Library Association publication *Guidelines for Services to Children and Young People*.¹

To meet the recommendations of *Investing in Children*,² the stock level should be in proportion to the percentage of 0-16 year olds in the population.

The stock should contribute towards the intellectual, psychological, social and emotional development of the child and will cater for their cultural, leisure and homework

requirements. The needs of particular groups will be given special consideration (e.g., under 5s, disadvantaged and ethnic minorities).

The stock should be divided into the following categories:

- Picture books, including board books
- Younger readers
- Story books or fiction
- Information books or non fiction
- Picture books for older readers
- Teenage reading
- Family or parents/carers material, where appropriate
- Reference / homework / study collections
- Spoken word CDs
- DVDs for children
- E-resources

The Young People's Services Librarian will work towards a comprehensive IT policy for children and young people along with Reference and Information Services, identifying quality software for homework support and packages for children beginning to read. Open access computers are available in the children's sections of all libraries.

Criteria for stock selection are detailed in the Stock Selection Policy. An annual stock count and assessment of its level in relation to population figures will be carried out and details entered into the branch profile.

Materials Budget

The materials budget for services to children and young people should be in line with usage and population statistics. This will usually constitute 19% of the library's total materials budget and will achieve or exceed the IFLA standard of 2 books per inhabitant.³ The budget will be allocated at the beginning of the year across the stock categories which, in turn, will reflect the make-up and needs demonstrated by the community profile.

Generally, the breakdown will follow the following recommendation:

- Picture books 35%
- Younger readers 15%
- Children's stories 20%
- Teenage 15%
- Information books 15%

This balance may not be achievable in any given year, but should be evident over a 3-year period.

Enquiry Work

Staff who work with children and young people should be experienced in helping this group with their enquiries. They should develop questioning skills to assist young people to identify what they want. Work with children and young people will be included in staff training programmes each year.

Outreach and Promotion

The service will aim to achieve the following targets:

- Each library will provide at least 3 reading/library-use based activities for children and young people and/or their carers each year
- Each library will take part in the summer activities programme
- Every playgroup will be contacted annually and stock will be sufficient to provide deposit collections or other book arrangements for all of them
- All other educational establishments will be contacted annually and will be entitled to at least one visit to their local library, or one visit from a member of library staff, per year
- A degree of outreach work will be focused on the needs of children and young people in the community not using the library. Data to support this work will be derived from the annual Children's PLUS survey.

A planned outreach programme can only be successful if carried out in liaison with other service directorates in Torbay Council. The Young People's Services Librarian will continue

to foster and nurture relationships with relevant providers within Torbay Council and beyond, and will represent the library authority on a range of statutory and voluntary committees of organisations dealing with children and young people.

Story Times

Story Times will be held on a weekly basis at static service points if they are attended by at least 5 children for 3 consecutive weeks. If numbers drop, the event should be re-evaluated and redesigned if appropriate.

Reading Promotion Scheme

Torbay Library Services' reading development scheme - *Book Quest* - will be promoted during normal opening hours at static libraries, except within 20 minutes of closing. The scheme will not be offered whilst a children's activity is in progress, or at times when adequate staffing is unavailable. The initiative will be monitored and its success reviewed on an annual basis.

Staffing

Services for children will be delivered by a professionally qualified young people's librarian together with trained, competent staff within the 4 static service points and 1 mobile library in Torbay.

Staff within service points will be well informed on issues relating to children and their carers. Hence, staff likely to work with children and young people will be enabled to develop the following skills:

- Knowledge of children's books and related materials
- Knowledge of educational trends
- Ability to work with, and relate to, child-centred groups

Communication with individual children

To help achieve this, there will be effective communication and co-operation between the Public Library Service and the School Library Service.

Training

There will be at least one in-house training course per year specifically related to children and young people's service issues. General training courses will include references to work with children and young people where appropriate.

The Young People's Services Librarian will actively update her professional awareness by attending Youth Libraries Group training days and other seminars as appropriate. These activities will underpin her responsibility to ensure that she keeps up to date with developments within the field of children's librarianship.

Staff training opportunities will include:

- Matching the book to the child - understanding the particular needs of the individual
- *Book Quest* - making the most from child contact
- Special Needs and Multicultural service provision
- Introducing children to the library - library research skills and training
- An introduction to the National Curriculum
- Storytelling to under 5s
- Family Literacy Groups in libraries - organising workshops
- Display workshops
- Promoting the service
- IT skills development

Reading and Literacy

Libraries throughout the service will house promotional collections of books to encourage young people to become independent readers. Through work with outside agencies, such as Community Education, the Young People's Services Librarian will actively promote literacy development in family groups with the aim of encouraging parents to read with their children and, at the same time, improve their own basic literacy skills.

Working with external organisations such as play networks and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, the Young People's Services Librarian and library

staff will build on and explore new ways in which to take books, stories and related arts activities out to children who do not have ready access to books or libraries.

The Young People's Services Librarian will keep up to date with the government's National Literacy Strategy.

Parents and Carers

While the majority of this area of work is focused on children and young people themselves, the Library Service will endeavour to support parents and carers with stock and information as appropriate.

Young People's Services Plan

The Young People's Services Librarian will regularly set objectives with the aim of improving and developing services. These objectives will be reviewed regularly through consultation with the Professional Services Librarian and will be affirmed by the Head of Library Services and Library Management Group with a view to inclusion in the service's Annual Library Plans.

Notes

¹ Catherine Blanshard, ed. *Children and Young People: Library Association Guidelines for Public Library Services*. 2nd ed. The Library Association 1997. 185604209X.

² *Investing in Children: The Future of Library Services for Children and Young People*. Library and Information Series No.22. Department of National Heritage/HMSO, 1995.

³ The IFLA standard uses the word "inhabitant," which clearly includes children: International Federation of Library Associations, *Standards for Public Libraries*. Munich, 1973, p.24. The Library Association concurs, recommending a total book stock of "no less than 2 volumes per capita of resident population": *Model Statement of Standards for Public Library Services*, The Library Association, 1995, Section 3.3.2.

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