

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS AGED UNDER 16

Policy Statement

Introduction

1. This policy statement refers to the provision of library services to children and teenagers (aged 0 to 15) in Wiltshire public libraries.
2. This policy complies with Wiltshire Council corporate goals and national agendas such as the national library offers and current government priority outcomes for children and young people.

Background

3. There are 28,000 active users of Wiltshire Library Service aged 0 to 15, representing 28% of all active users (any age).

Overall Aim

4. Wiltshire Library Service's aim for under 16s is to encourage the enjoyment of books and reading for pleasure, as well as to help them become informed and feel supported in their homework and leisure pursuits.

Objectives

5. To provide attractive and welcoming areas in each library devoted to under 16s and, dependent on the size of the library, to have designated areas for certain ages.
6. To offer a range of books and other resources for all ages and interests, which match the needs of the community.
7. To host activities and promotions throughout the year organised locally and also linked to national programmes such as Bookstart (see point 57) and the Summer Reading Challenge (see point 58).
8. To provide staff to assist under 16s in their reading choices and information needs.

Spaces

9. The county consists of 33 libraries which are divided into levels based on the size of the community - the smallest libraries being Level 1 (mobile libraries) and the largest being Level 7.
10. Dependent on the size of the building, children's resources are found either on individual shelves, small areas or large sections. The larger spaces often include comfortable seating, table and chairs for study, PCs, and other equipment/furniture especially for children/teenagers.
11. Books and other resources are presented in a way to maintain interest and stimulate use, with displays and promotions that regularly change.
12. Where feasible libraries provide a separate area for teenagers with informal seating, display and study facilities. The purpose of these is to offer a bridge between the adult and children's collections and to recognise their need for separate space. The resources in these areas will reflect the special interests and concerns of young teenagers - taking into account their different levels of emotional, social and educational development.

Books

13. Every library is allocated a fund for children's resources, the amount depending on their level and this fund is used to buy books and talking books. The fund for books is spent on a mixture of newly published books, replacements of older popular stock, stock gaps and requests from the public.
14. Newly published children's books are bought monthly by our specialist children's library supplier and by the county children's librarian. The supplier is given a budget and specification to ensure there is good coverage of titles across the county.
15. The rest of the funds are spent by the community or children's librarians for the libraries in their areas.
16. Care is taken in the selection of titles and many new books are read and reviewed by the children's specialists, especially those for teenagers.

17. Books are also circulated across the county to increase access for the public and to make best use of the books.
18. All children's books and talking books may be requested free of charge from any library in the county. Books which children and young people may be studying at school that are deemed 'adult fiction' including classics will incur a request fee.
19. Films and TV programmes on DVD are bought centrally by a specialist team, and are aimed partly at enhancing the book collection but also to create revenue for the service.
20. Some libraries may also stock language courses for children (books and CDs).
21. For further information about general stock purchasing, including adult stock see "Public Library Stock Policy 2018".

Children's Fiction

22. Fiction is chosen to create a balance between books of literary merit and the more popular titles and series. As well as developing literacy skills it is hoped these will also support imaginative and emotional development. Copies of many of the major award winning children's books are purchased.
23. There are a number of special categories for children's fiction which aid the identification and location of these books e.g. Picture Books for Older Readers, Legends and Fairy Tales (see A4 posters on display in children's areas).
24. We also provide books to appeal to children who are reluctant to read - both those who can read (but choose not to) and those who find it difficult e.g. they have dyslexia. The staff will be able to advise or refer to our 'Children's Book Information' folder (found in children's areas).
25. The county maintains a central store of classic and literary children's fiction - these items may be requested with no charge. Some of the older, classic children's titles may not reflect modern society's generally accepted viewpoints, but many still have an ongoing appeal and are important in the development of children's literature. Although not condoning certain out dated views, it is

important they are taken in the context of the era in which they were written.

26. We do not as a general rule stock the reading schemes that are found in many schools, instead we provide a range of individual titles which help to develop reading skills and further the enjoyment of reading. Some of these may include titles that are produced by publishers specifically to aid reading progression, and may be found in some schools.
27. Some libraries also have small collections of foreign and dual language stock.
28. The county also has a collection of multi-sensory stories for children with various learning difficulties. These consist of story boxes, containing a story script and various objects relating to the story (which can be interacted with). These can be reserved for free and borrowed like a 'regular' book. More information is in our 'Children's Book Information' folder (found in children's areas).
29. For more information about books for children including recommendations and FAQs about reading, the staff will be pleased to help; there is also a 'Children's Book Information' folder which can be referred to (found in children's areas).

Teenage Fiction

30. A black sticker with the letter "T" on the spine of books identifies books for of appeal to young and pre-teens (ages 11-13). Books with stickers "T+" are more suitable for older teenagers and young adults, aged 14 plus.
31. The content and range of teenage fiction aims to reflect the requirements of the local community. As well as popular series with themes such as horror, romance and fantasy, there is also an appropriate selection of more literary titles, classic books and those dealing with specific modern teenage issues. Copies of many of the major award winning books for teenagers are also purchased.
32. Some of the teenage books chosen will deal with emotive issues, and some may contain a degree of sexual behaviour, violence or bad language - as appropriate to the story. It is not however, our

intention to buy books which have gratuitous sex, violence or bad language for these collections.

33. We provide books to appeal to teenagers who are reluctant to read - both those who can read (but choose not to) and those who find it difficult e.g. they have dyslexia. The staff will be able to advise or refer to our 'Children's Book Information' folder (found in children's areas).
34. Some libraries also offer graphic or comic book novels in their teenage collections and some may also have adult fiction in these collections as an introduction to this material.
35. Although these collections are arranged by approximate age, it is ultimately the responsibility of parents to ensure their teenagers borrow material which they consider to be suitable for them.
36. The county also has a collection of multi-sensory stories for teenagers with various learning difficulties. These consist of story boxes, containing a story script and various objects relating to the story (which can be interacted with). These can be reserved for free and borrowed like a 'regular' book. For more information refer to our 'Children's Book Information' folder (found in children's areas).
37. For more information about books for teenagers including recommendations and FAQs about reading, the staff will be pleased to help, there is also a 'Children's Book Information' folder which can be referred to (found in children's areas).

Children's Information Books

38. Information books are bought for leisure and homework purposes. We aim to provide books that are accurate, up to date, unbiased and appropriate to the child's age.
39. All libraries have collections of information books varying in range and content depending on the library size and local community needs. A small number of these books may be reference only (for use in the library) e.g. encyclopaedias.

40. There is a large collection of local studies materials available to borrow through libraries and also Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre.
41. Children's information books can be reserved for free from any library.

Teenage Information books

42. In larger teenage sections we may have a limited number of information books specifically aimed at teenagers. These will cover subject areas of particular interest to teenagers such as relationships, careers, body issues, safety, drug use. The quantity and coverage will depend on the library size and demand.
43. Teenagers are welcome to borrow information books from the larger adult and children's sections. Some study guides may be mostly located in the adult collections.
44. There is a large collection of local studies materials available to borrow through libraries and also Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre.
45. Information books categorised as 'young teenage' or 'teenage plus' can be reserved for free from any library.

Other Resources

Audio-Visual Materials

46. Talking books are chosen to encourage a love of stories and reading, and include CDs, both unabridged and abridged. There are also book and CD packs which can help those who are reluctant or have difficulty reading.
47. Many libraries also have rhymes and songs on CD that may be popular with younger children.
48. DVDs are selected for entertainment and instruction - the overall aim of these is to encourage children to enjoy using libraries.
49. Music is primarily located in adult libraries but may be hired by under 16s.

Information Services

50. We offer a range of information resources for children, young teenagers and their parents/carers such as leaflets and posters on local clubs and activities, parental advice, schools information and book lists.
51. The library pages on the Wiltshire Council website offers free online resources, including newspapers and reference books: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/artsheritageandlibraries/librarieshome/libraryonlineresources.htm.

Use of PCs and the Internet

52. There is free internet access and use of PCs by under 16s in Wiltshire, though permission is sought from parent/carers before a child can use this service. Wi-Fi is available in all libraries.

Promotions and Activities

53. The purpose of our promotions and activities is to encourage under 16s to use the library, be enthused about books and reading, and to ultimately become confident and keen readers. These also form part of the Universal Reading Offer.
54. With the purpose of introducing libraries and books to children from the youngest age, parents automatically receive library cards for their baby when they register the birth. The card comes with information about library services for families with young children and an invite to come into the library to activate the card.
55. Many libraries have regular rhyme times for babies and toddlers and some have combined rhyme/story times for 0-4s. They are intended for parents and carers and their young children to take part in together. They are fun, free and informal sessions where children can learn language and movement skills and interact with other young children. Parents/carers can learn rhymes to share at home, enjoy a rewarding experience with their children and meet other families.
56. We will promote these regular rhyme/story sessions in the library and the community, but reserve the right to stop or change the day/time of these if we do not have a reasonable attendance level over a period of time.

57. As part of the national “Bookstart” programme, library staff work with health professionals, children’s centres, pre-schools and other partners to promote reading with parents of 0-3 year olds. Bookstart packs (containing free books and information) are gifted to babies and 3 year olds. The Bookstart Bear club run in many libraries encourages children to collect ‘stamps’ and certificates every time they visit the library, borrow a book or take part in an activity.
58. The national Summer Reading Challenge is our main annual promotion to encourage children to read for pleasure. It supports children aged 4-11 to keep reading throughout the summer holidays (when there is often a dip in reading progress). The challenge is to read 6 books over the summer (8 weeks) and the children are given prizes throughout to keep them motivated - including stickers and a medal plus certificate on completion. It is free and open to all children who have a library membership. In 2013 96% said taking part in the challenge had improved their reading 'a little' or 'a lot'.
59. Libraries may offer school holiday activities including stories and simple crafts, drop in activities and competitions. Some of these activities may only be suitable for children within certain age ranges (as stated in publicity). Children’s activities in libraries are free.
60. Chippenham and Trowbridge libraries offer activities for teenagers, for example, Chippenham has a reading group ‘Thrillseekers’.
61. Libraries continually work with pre-schools, schools and other partners across the county to promote library services to under 16s.

Volunteering in libraries

62. Where there is capacity we may offer young people various volunteering opportunities, including Summer Reading Challenge volunteering and the volunteering element of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
63. The library service is a registered Arts Award supporter, which means that we promote our resources, facilities, activities and

volunteering opportunities to young people to use as part of their Arts Award accreditation.

Wiltshire and Swindon Learning Resources

64. This is the school library service for Wiltshire and Swindon. It is an advisory and loan service to schools supporting the national curriculum through loan of books and other resources as well as helping schools in creating and managing their libraries.
65. The public library service also works with schools, but has a much broader brief to promote a love of books and reading for pleasure as well as for educational improvement.

Promoting Equalities

66. In the provision of our services and resources, Wiltshire Library Service aims to reflect the various diversities that exist in Wiltshire in order to help children understand and respect their own and other cultures and differences.

Racial/Ethnic Groups

67. Wiltshire Library Service has a growing collection of books – both dual and single language - for children with a first language that is not English. Librarians also promote dual language books to families with babies and young children through the Bookstart programme (see point 57).

Gender

68. Wiltshire Library Service aims to provide a range of stock and services that appeal to boys and girls both together and separately. We are aware that boys may be less likely to be keen readers – especially of fiction and especially as they move into their teens, and we seek stock that will be of particular interest to them.

Disability

69. The Library Service has a small collection of Multi-sensory stories which are particularly beneficial for children and young people with learning difficulties, language delay, visual impairment and on the

autistic spectrum. Each story is in a large box, containing a simple story and objects which children can see, touch, move, smell or hear. They may be borrowed by parents/carers from any library for 3 weeks and renewed if required, just like a “normal” book. There are no fines or reservation fees.

70. Wiltshire Library Service provides talking books which can be hired for free by all children, including visually impaired children.
71. Special Bookstart packs (with free books and information for 0-3 year olds) are available for visually impaired and hearing impaired children (called Booktouch and Bookshine respectively). See point 57.
72. There is also a special category of fiction “Reading Unlocked” for children with learning difficulties or with reluctance to read. These are interfiled with main fiction sequence, but identified by a “padlock” sticker on the spine.
73. Materials for the Summer Reading Challenge (see point 58) are available in a large size and Braille versions.
74. The Library Service has a special category of membership - Junior Assisted reader - which avoids certain penalties for children who are unable to access library resources on their own.

Sexual Orientation

75. Wiltshire Libraries stock books in our teenage sections, both fiction and non-fiction, which may help younger teenagers to explore their thoughts and feelings about sexual orientation.

Religion/Belief

76. Books are stocked in Wiltshire libraries to support the learning of all children about different faiths and religion; these are not generally promoted to any specific community, although there may be displays of such items during festivals to promote general cultural awareness, e.g. Ramadan.

Age

77. Children have different needs and wants dependent on their age and stage of development. Wiltshire Library Service aims to reflect this fact in the stock bought, how it is presented, and any promotions and activities that are age specific.

Staff

78. The County Children's Librarian and the Children's Selection, Promotions and Operation Team advises and recommends library policy for services to under 16s, buys and maintains stock, creates promotions and activities and trains other library staff in this area.
79. Wiltshire library staff welcome all children, teenagers and their parents/carers into the library and are encouraged to attend specialist training courses to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.

Children's Views

80. Wiltshire Library Service welcomes comments from under 16s on any aspect of our services. Feedback is also collected from regular and seasonal activities and occasional focus groups may be held for specific projects. The Library Service also holds a Children's Public Library User Survey every 3 years as part of a national survey.

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