

ACCESS POLICY

Policy Statement

Introduction

1. Wiltshire Libraries is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for the whole community, and aims to provide premises, vehicles and services that can be fully accessed by all.
2. For the purposes of this policy, disability is considered in its widest sense, and any physical or mental condition that affects a person's day-to-day activities is included, and reflects the definition found in the Equalities Act 2010.

Aims of this policy

3. The aims of this policy are to ensure that:
 - Accessibility is integral to the planning and management of library premises, vehicles and services
 - Library services are planned and managed so that they can be delivered in a flexible way to suit the needs of the individual
 - Library services are planned and managed so that they provide equal access irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation or social class
 - Members of staff receive appropriate training on disability awareness and equality and diversity issues

Buildings and vehicles

4. The policy is intended to ensure that library premises and vehicles are fully accessible. Users will find that where possible:
 - Library premises all provide level or ramp access
 - Automatic doors are fitted in larger libraries as part of planned refurbishment
 - Libraries on more than one floor have accessible lifts
 - All signs and guiding are designed to be easily seen by those with a visual impairment
 - Hearing loops are fitted around enquiry desks and on Mobile Libraries

- Mobile Libraries all have lifts suitable for wheelchairs
- Premises and vehicles are regularly inspected for access compliance

Services for People with Disabilities

5. Library services are planned to be fully inclusive and our policy is to continually check and revise our systems to that end.
 - Enrolment – a joining system has been developed that does not require form-filling and so helps people with a physical, mental or learning difficulty
 - Borrowing concessions – it is our policy to maintain borrowing concessions which facilitate library use for people with a disability. There are three categories of borrowers which allow concessions on fines and hire fees. These are: Visually Impaired (restricted to those who are officially designated), Talking Book Exempt (restricted to those with a visual or learning difficulty) and Assisted Reader (available for users with a disabling condition).
 - Alternative formats – information, forms and leaflets are provided in large print as required

Access technology

6. The library service will provide support and equipment where possible to enable people with a visual impairment to make full use of the library. This includes:
 - Dolphin Supernova software – installed on 10 public computers in the largest libraries in the county. The remaining computers have Microsoft narration and magnification software.
 - Library staff support for people with visual impairments enabling them to access the internet and the Your Reading Choices tool on the Reading Sight website.

Services to People who are Housebound

7. The Library Service makes provision in three ways:
 - a) The Library Home Service is for those who have no relatives or friends who are in a position to help. The service is

provided by Library Volunteers, but managed by local library staff. The service can be short or long term. Recipients may have a physical or mental impairment, they may have an illness or be recuperating from an operation; they may be carers who are unable to leave home or unable to visit the library due to frailty.

- b) The Assisted Reader category can be assigned to people unable to visit the library for themselves as a result of disability. Where they do have friends and relatives who can choose books for them, this allows the borrowing concessions as previously outlined.
- c) The Homes Mobile Library visits Residential Homes and sheltered accommodation on a four-weekly schedule. Residents can choose to use the mobile for themselves or use the deposit collection of books that is left in the Homes and exchanged on each visit.

Stock

- 7. The Library Service allocates at least 13% (previously 15%) of its stock budget annually to providing stock in 'alternative' formats. The aim is to provide as wide a range of stock in large print, and talking book as possible.
 - About 80% of the stock is purchased to be circulated around the libraries and the mobiles
 - Regular surveys are undertaken to check that the material provided meets with users' satisfaction
 - Items of large print that are not in stock may be requested and will either be purchased or borrowed from outside the County
 - Books in Braille or Moon are not held by the Library Service, but may be requested and borrowed from the National Library for the Blind or other agencies on behalf of users
 - Stock of particular interest to BME and LGBT groups, as well as foreign language fiction, is procured and circulated on a regular basis as collections of interest, as well as being purchased to form part of regular library stock.

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