

# Initial Equality & Community Impact Assessment

Relating to: Draft Library Strategy Proposals

Date: January 13<sup>th</sup> 2012

## Introduction

This Impact Assessment supports the County Council in meeting its legal obligations under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**, now contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Duty ensures that public bodies have due regard to the statutory needs referred to in section 149 when exercising their functions.

Section 149 provides that in exercising its functions an authority must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and others who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and others who do not share it involves having due regard (in particular) to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it involves having due regard (in particular) to the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding.

The Steps involved in meeting the needs of the disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities. Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but not if that would itself involve conduct which is made unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics to which the duty applies are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, also marriage and civil partnership but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

Having **due regard to** means consciously thinking about the statutory needs as part of the process of decision making, when the proposals are still at a formative stage, and before a decision is reached. This means that consideration of those equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies. The Equality Duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a condition criterion or practice is applied which would put people with one of the protected characteristics at a disadvantage, and the imposition of that condition, criterion or practice is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, i.e. it cannot be objectively justified.

It is important to understand and consider how different people will be affected by the decisions the Council makes, so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

This assessment will help you think about the potential impact your proposals will have on all sections of the community. Recognising these impacts early on in the process of developing policies will assist good decision making and ensure that the County Council delivers services appropriate to people's needs. Remember that the Equality Duty involves having due regard to the needs to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, as well as to eliminate discrimination and other conduct which is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

**1. Person responsible for undertaking this assessment:**

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## 2. Name and brief description of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function: (indicate whether new or revised)

### Gloucestershire County Council's Draft Library Strategy. This is a new strategy proposal

The Strategy will be the means by which the council proposes to meet its legal duties to provide a library service for the people of Gloucestershire as required by the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964. In developing the draft Strategy the council has had regard to the public sector equality duties and undertaken a research based analysis of need, assessed library use data and considered existing consultation and feedback from library users and communities. This has included reference to national research and national level data where local information has not been available. A period of further consultation will enable the council further assess the impact of the proposed strategy on residents and especially on people who share protected characteristics outlined in equality duties.

The draft Strategy proposes to provide a library service that encompasses different delivery mechanisms; through digital means and via the virtual library, through an outreach programme targeted to meet council outcomes for specific groups of people, and through a reconfigured network of libraries. The council will aim to deliver library services by working in partnership with communities and volunteers so that a tailored service can be developed to support the needs of people in different geographical communities and also people who may have specific needs that may affect their access to library services.

The draft Strategy proposes: Nine libraries strategically placed in towns in the different areas of the county each open for 6 day per week, 12 local libraries that will be in towns and rural areas of the county to improve accessibility in rural areas and cater for larger populations in towns; open 5 days per week. A further 10 libraries offering a basic core service provision and opening hours ranging from 12 to 21 but with participation from local partners and volunteers the aim will be to increase these opening hours. These 31 libraries and the virtual library and library outreach service is the means by which the council aims to meet its duties under the Public Libraries & Museums Act and its equality duty. A 'community offer' will be made in 7 communities so that with a package of council support these communities will be able to operate a community library facility that can be developed and tailored to the local needs in these areas. The council will also consult about interest in a public sector mobile vehicle that could include library services.

## 3. Briefly describe its aims and expected outcomes

**Access, Aspiration, Opportunity:** The aim is to provide a network of libraries that takes into account the geographic spread and rural nature of the county, the density of population in the main towns, socio economic factors that may impact upon people's needs for library services, and the demographic characteristics of people living in Gloucestershire including the specific needs of some individuals or groups of people sharing protected characteristics. This draft strategy for library service provision is part of the means by which the council will promote equality of opportunity so that all people living in

Gloucestershire will be able to participate in public life. We want to support individuals and local communities to achieve their aspirations by creating a vibrant, welcoming library service that provides access to books, information and learning opportunities in a variety of ways and settings, and in partnership with others

**4. Describe how this policy will impact on the Council's duty to:**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Identify what particular groups of people will be affected by this policy.

The draft Strategy is considered to have the **potential for negative differential impact** on some people in those groups with protected characteristics when compared to the impact on the wider population.

The draft strategy will potentially have an impact on **all** people who want to use libraries in terms of the reduction in opening hours at some libraries and with regard to the potential removal of mobile library services and in the 7 communities where a council operated service will no longer be provided.

It is considered that the differential impact for some people in those groups with protected characteristics comes into effect mainly when combined with considerations about how easily, or not, it would be for people with a protected characteristic to **access** an alternative library service provision- ie, another library or via outreach services or via the digital library services. This is assessed in section 7 below.

Based on the evidence we have to date, we think that the particular groups most likely to be affected by the proposed draft strategy for library service provision are:-

**Older people** with mobility difficulties, people with **physical disabilities**, and to some degree those with **learning disabilities** and **mental health** related issues. These factors become significant when accessibility factors are added to this.

This may apply for those living in rural areas for those without access to a car or unable to travel easily on public transport and also to those living in urban areas not living within the immediate neighbourhood (within ¼ mile) of a library without access to a car or unable to travel easily on public transport. It should be noted that according to the 2001 census the percentage of households in some rural areas with at least one car is higher than the average for the county

and in the large towns this figure was lower than average. Access to library services has been a key element in the considerations in shaping the draft library strategy proposals and what is proposed has had regard to public transport availability. The county is also well served by community transport providers.

**Children** may be more affected if they live in families without access to a car or nearby public transport or if they do not live within walking distance to a library. This may be the case for **families with lone parents**, many of whom are **women**. There may be issues relating to costs of getting to libraries and the fact that libraries may be an important source of reading for children from poorer families. For women in late **pregnancy** access to a library may be more difficult, especially if they are single parents or affected by socio-economic deprivation factors.

Potential for **positive differential effect** of the change proposals include the following:

We currently provide services to people who share the protected characteristics and this will be **unaffected** by the change proposals. These services have been developed to ensure inclusion and access to library services for those that want to use libraries but who may in some way may find access difficult. They are intended to help people participate in public life through library services aim to advance equality of opportunity. These are:

**For people with visual impairment:** We subscribe to R.N.I.B services to provide talking books by post to the homes of people with visual impairment. Large print books and talking books and clear vision picture books for visually impaired children are also available in our libraries. We provide super nova and Browse Aloud software and training in their use to make it easier for people with visual impairments to use computers

**For people with mental health related issues:** In partnership with the health service we provide 'Books on Prescription', which are self- help and awareness books prescribed by GPs for people with mental health related issues.

**For older people and people with mobility difficulties:** We offer 25 Library Clubs and co-ordinate community and volunteer transport for older or disabled people so they can visit the library to borrow books and meet others socially, helping to reduce isolation for some. For people with mobility disabilities who prefer to stay at home but still want library books we have a pool of volunteers to take books to them. This support and assistance with transport to Library Clubs may mean that for older and physically disabled people it helps to extend the time they are able to access services as they age.

**For people in BME communities and people speaking other languages:** We provide books, newspapers and magazines in 4 Indic languages, 4 European languages and Mandarin. In addition to these we supply books in approximately 25 other languages each year through our subscription to 'Bright Books'

**For the LGBT community:** The Library stock policy ensures that books reflecting the experiences of the LGBT community are available. In Gloucester Library there is a Loud and Proud collection.

**For very young children and families:** The introduction to the library and books starts from birth when our Gloucestershire Registration service joins babies and their families to the library. We provide Baby rhyme sessions, story times and facilitate the delivery of the national Bookstart programme locally. We work with family learning tutors to provide Quick Read books for classes and activities. **For school age children:** The Library helps to support their school work whether this is for internet access or advice about information sources. The Summer Reading Challenge for 4-12 yr olds helps to sustain children's reading

ages. Over 9,000 children took part in 2011 including Looked After Children and disabled children and children living in areas of deprivation. **For parents and carers:** The library offers books and internet access to enable them to find help and advice, apply for jobs, housing and school places. We provide books on parenting and health, some of which are selected in partnership with the local NHS and works closely to tailor family support for lone parents and others.

**For job seekers** Gloucester Library is the venue for the Gloucestershire First 'job hub' and plans are being developed for a job hub in Coleford library. Plans are also being made for library services and venues to be made available for the delivery of a six week training programme for NEETs. This will include advice on how to use Library service resources.

Development of the digital library services such as E Books and E Audio that may make it easier for some people to use library services or extend access to some people who may not otherwise use library services, for example **carers**, and **disabled people**. National research also shows that **men** are more likely to use library services when they are 'digital' even if they never visit a library so this may advance equality of opportunity.

The library service will also act as a 'front door' or portal to put people in connection with other public services and information and this may have a positive effect on people who share protected characteristics providing another avenue of access to information or other services

We also believe that by offering active community volunteering opportunities this will help people to participate in public life.

We are liaising with the council's transport team and community transport to make suitable arrangements for travel to libraries if we find as a result of the consultation process more people are affected. This would be targeted to people who may experience mobility access disabilities and who are unable to make their own arrangements and for people in groups with protected characteristics who may also be economically disadvantaged and thereby be affected indirectly. During the consultation period we will investigate the possibility for having a tailored library bus pass entitling people to 12 journeys per year to a library. We are also in discussions with the WRVS about how their volunteering services may be used. For example, if they visited an elderly or disabled person's home to deliver library books they would also be trained and able to provide other services- such as befriending. These may have additional positive effects.

## 5. Provide details of the evidence you have gathered in making this assessment, including data sources, consultation undertaken and the outcome/s of this.

In developing the draft Strategy the council has had regard to the public sector equality duty and undertaken a research based analysis of need, assessed library use data and considered existing consultation and feedback from library users and communities. This has included reference to national research and national level data where local information has not been available. The consultation on the draft Strategy will enable the council to identify and assess any

significant impacts that may not yet have been discerned. The consultation will engage especially with people in those groups with protected characteristics.

The websites of some key national level organisations representing people sharing each of the 9 protected characteristics were looked at in order to assess if there was anything in particular raised about access to library services for the people they represent or to see what the main issues might be for people sharing those protected characteristics.

**RADAR**, The Royal Association for Disability Rights “*The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that if you are a disabled person, you can use an organisation’s services as close as it is reasonably possible to get to the standard usually offered to non-disabled people.*” Radar is the UK’s largest disability rights campaigning network, with a membership of 800 organisations and individual campaigners.

Information from **Age UK** led us to conclude that for this group the issue with libraries will be about access to books, getting access to the library and the problems of mobility and being housebound. A research paper from 2005 commissioned by Help the Aged gathered together the literature about accessibility to local services for older people <http://celebrate.mtcserver4.com/images/cmsimages/media/publications/equality/accessibilityolderpeople.pdf> This indicated that a distance of a quarter of a mile or less was achievable walking distance for a healthy older person but that a distance of 200m would present problems for many especially as personal mobility difficulties began to develop and increase with age. At some point even this distance would not be possible. It also showed that older people are more reliant on public transport and that car transport use declines with age. The report drew attention to ‘distance decay’ which is when older people get put off travelling anywhere if the journey seems to be too far or too difficult. The most required services were shops, post offices or banks and GP surgeries but access to libraries was mentioned as a secondary factor in terms of participation in social activity.

**Press for Change:** Seeks respect and equality for all trans gender people in the UK. In the government document *Advancing Transgender Equality* there is a focus on, ‘*Opening up public services and empowering individuals and communities, by removing discrimination in accessing public services caused by their transgender status*’. No specific references to libraries.

**Runnymede trust:** Represents race issues and the key issue seems to be equality of treatment and access to services (and jobs). No mention of libraries.

**Church of England & Muslim Council of GB:** No particular mention of libraries but religious groups might have concerns about book stock. We considered that the issues for other religious groups were likely to be along similar lines and the consultation period will help us to assess this.

**Fawcett Society:** Focuses on equality between men and women. “We campaign on women’s representation in politics and public life; on equal pay, on pensions and poverty; valuing caring work; and the treatment of women in the justice system.” So for the library service we think the issue might be women in low paid jobs and poverty and access to books for this group.

**Stonewall:** A look at this site did not draw out any particular issues with access to libraries. As no national census has ever asked people to define their

sexual orientation, there is no hard data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people in the UK. The Government is using the figure of 5-7% of the population. It is difficult to see how sexual orientation would be affected by library changes but CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) says “*Libraries exist to meet the information, lifelong learning and leisure needs of all sections of the community, whether heterosexual, bisexual, gay or transgendered. It is essential that information professionals select stock that is relevant to the needs of their LGBT users.*”

**Gingerbread:** Single parent pressure group. This led us to consider that there may be issues for access to public libraries that relate to single parents and possibly child poverty. These may relate to costs of getting to libraries and the fact that libraries may be a source of reading for children from poorer families.

**At a local level:** The council’s research team provided a full range of data and information about the demographic characteristics of the population including socio- economic deprivation and about the distribution of the population in terms of the 9 protected characteristics where this was available. This was matched directly on to the library catchment areas. Much of the information came from MAIDeN, the multi-agency database for neighbourhoods in Gloucestershire. The Inform website was also used to assess other information <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/> and in particular the Gloucestershire Story, especially with regard to Older People and Rural Gloucestershire <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/index.cfm?articleid=94018>

The last two public library users surveys for Gloucestershire; adults in 2006 and children in 2007 were also analysed for information that might inform our knowledge about library use by people sharing the protected characteristics, mainly disabilities and travel distances and children’s use of libraries. The feedback from the former strategy consultation indicated that there was concern expressed about the reduction in opening hours and the impact if a library was transferred to the community or a mobile library service withdrawn. Although this consultation recorded people claiming to have a disability no detailed analysis was undertaken about impacts on them and as it was a self completed survey the figures could not be seen as representative of library users.

Patterns of library use from data extracted from the Library Management System (Talis) were also assessed for any evidence. This showed us that a third of the child population of the county borrow books from libraries and that issues of children’s books was high even in places where the demographic pattern may indicate more older people resided. We do not gather information about people’s ages (other than children), or their disability status when people join the library

The ‘Context & User Needs Assessment’ document provides a detailed analysis of information gathered for the purpose of reviewing the library strategy.

**Forthcoming Consultation:** The period of consultation will focus on gathering information from groups with protected characteristics most likely to be affected by these change proposals in order to find out more information about the impact on them.

6. Is this Policy affected by, or will it have an impact on other Meeting the Challenge proposals? Yes/No. (If yes, please specify relevant project and indicate how it is affected).

Some potential for impact on the transport review and the last phase of this project.

7. Where any particular group is affected differently by the policy in either a **negative** or a **positive** way, if you identify a negative impact, explain what actions you have undertaken or you plan to undertake, including consideration of any alternative proposals, to lessen or negate this impact.

	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Evidence	Mitigating actions where a negative impact has been identified	How will the mitigating action be monitored/evaluated, including who will be responsible for monitoring.
<b>Age</b>	✓	✓		See more detailed section below	See more detailed section below	See more detailed section below
<b>Disability (indicate different impacts on different types of disability)</b>	✓	✓		See more detailed section below	See more detailed section below	See more detailed section below
<b>Gender reassignment</b>			✓	We have no reason to believe that the proposals in general would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of gender re-assignment.		Consultation and analysis of this will test this assumption

			✓	We have no reason to believe that generally these proposals would have greater or lesser effect on this equality strand	.	Consultation and analysis of this will test this assumption
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>						
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	✓			Pregnant women may find access to libraries more difficult in later stages of pregnancy  Please also see 'Sex' section	Online library services could be provided.  A volunteer could deliver books to the home if required.	Consultation will seek to assess if this is a significant problem Please cross reference with 'sex' section
<b>Race (including Gypsy &amp; Traveller)</b>			✓	We do not believe that there are any particular issues in general to be aware of as the majority of the population from different ethnic groups will be living in areas where the 2 main libraries are located and no change to the library services tailored to their needs is proposed- ie in terms of stock opening hours  We do not know whether the gypsy and traveller community use the county libraries. Tewkesbury has the largest number of traveller and gypsy caravans – 2/3 of county total	We will still use the schools mobile to provide outreach activity to traveller sites in school holidays	Consultation and analysis of this will test these assumptions
<b>Religion or</b>			✓	We have no reason to believe that generally these proposals		Consultation and analysis of this will test these assumptions

<b>Belief</b>				will give a greater or lesser effect on people on account of their faith		
<b>Sex</b>	✓			<b>See chart below</b>	<b>See chart below</b>	<b>See chart below</b>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			✓	We have no reason to believe that the proposals in general would have any greater or lesser effect on people on account of sexual orientation		Consultation and analysis of this will test our assumptions
<b>Indirect Discrimination</b>			✓	None have been surmised		We will re-assess this following further consultation
<b>Other groups: e.g. rural isolation, long term unemployed, health inequality, carers</b>	✓	✓		<p>Potential in terms of rural access</p> <p>Long term unemployed may make more use of libraries &amp; use PCs for job application</p> <p>Carers –may be some impact in terms of access to libraries to fit around caring responsibilities if opening hours are less.</p>	<p>Please see references under other categories of age and disability</p> <p>This will still be available in 31 libraries and PCs would also be provided to community libraries.</p> <p>Some carers may find digital library services more convenient</p>	We will re-assess this following further consultation
<b>Socio-economically deprived</b>	✓			This may mean that people cannot afford to travel very far to a library or other services and they may not have books or	People living in areas that are described as being in the in the top 20% of the country's most deprived will have	We would intend to monitor this as part of the agreement with the partner. It would be monitored by the

<p><b>groups</b></p>				<p>computers and internet access at home The library consultation 2010-11 did appear to reflect a perception that reduction in library facilities/ opening hours may impact on learning opportunities for people who may be disadvantaged but we have no evidence about this.</p>	<p>access to a county service partnership library and services will be developed with local partners to support the specific needs of people living in these areas. Opportunities for active community volunteering may offer 'work' experience.</p>	<p>relevant Group Manager  Consultation process will provide feedback from people who may be affected by changes</p>
<p><b>Community Cohesion</b></p>	<p>Provide details of any ways in which the proposed activity would promote equality in the community between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and how it would promote good relations between such groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there equality between those who will and won't benefit from the proposal?</li> <li>• Are there strong relationships between groups and communities in the area affected and will the proposed action promote positive relationships?</li> <li>• Does the proposal bring groups/communities into increased contact with</li> </ul>			<p>We do not think that the draft library strategy proposals will on balance lead to any diminution in current levels of community cohesion.</p> <p>Initially people maybe concerned about the changes to library availability and it may mean some resentments between communities</p>	<p>We think that the models of both partnership libraries and community libraries may help to bring people together with a shared aim.</p> <p>They may not otherwise have met so this may foster better understanding of each other.</p>	<p>We will re-assess this following further consultation</p>

	each other?			
<b>Human Rights</b>	Are there any particular areas for attention?	Human rights implications are closely allied with public sector equality duty and will be considered as part of this overall context.		We will re-assess this following further consultation
<b>AGE</b>				
<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Mitigating actions</b>		<b>How monitored &amp; by whom</b>	
<p>Most likely reason for impact is reduction in opening hours, potential removal of 3 community mobile libraries and Homelink mobile library service. The outcomes from the community library offer will also require consideration.</p> <p><b>Older people</b> The assessment of evidence has shown that in terms of numbers, higher numbers of older people live in towns but in rural areas of the Cotwolds especially, a higher % of the local population are 65+. (Painswick, Minchinhampton, Chipping Campden in the case of the library catchment areas).</p> <p>We do not know how many of our library users are 65+ as we do not record this information. However, from the evidence assessed so far it would appear that some older people are more likely to want to use a library for borrowing books and also as a social activity.</p> <p>In both cases, (rural and town) older people may find access to a library more difficult if they need to undertake a journey by public transport or if a longer</p>	<p>We will continue to provide Library Clubs and transport to these clubs for people with mobility difficulties. These clubs may have a <b>positive</b> impact in terms of enabling older people to participate in public life for longer than they would otherwise have done and it may reduce social isolation.</p> <p>For those who can still travel independently alternative libraries will be open and travel by public transport or community transport will be available to them if they do not have a car. Older people also have concessionary travel passes.</p> <p>For those older people who reach a point of not being able to leave their homes volunteers can take books to them if they want this service. This includes taking books to people who may live in elderly people’s residential homes. Discussions with WRVS should help to develop this service further. Boxed book collections could be provided to elderly people’s residential homes from a nearby library if there was a demand for this should the Homelink mobile be withdrawn. The consultation period is being used to investigate interest in a re- configured public service mobile vehicle and this may mean</p>		<p>Many of these actions are integral to provision of library services and are monitored by library service managers.</p> <p>We will re-assess this following further consultation</p>	



<p>are Hesters Way, Matson and Quedgeley for 0- 4s and Wotton, Bream and Quedgeley for 5-16s. The actual numbers are relatively low at Bream. Largest actual numbers of children live in the main towns.</p> <p>The user survey of children seems to indicate that most children are reliant on a parent or carer to visit a library or they visit with a school party. At Hesters Way &amp; Matson there was a higher % of unaccompanied children.</p> <p>Library issue data about book loans indicate that a significant proportion of all loans are of children's books. About 30% of the population under 16 use libraries</p> <p>Children may be more affected if they live in families without access to a car or nearby public transport or if they do not live within walking distance to a library. This may be the case for <b>families with lone parents</b>, many of whom are <b>women</b>.</p> <p>Increased walking times to a library may be a barrier. There may be issues relating to costs of getting to libraries and the fact that libraries may be an important source of reading for children from poorer families.</p> <p><b>Young people</b> not in employment, education or training (NEETs) may not be able to use libraries or library computers for job applications as frequently as they would like.</p>	<p>be used in school holidays for outreach to traveller sites and other areas for book related outreach activity.</p> <p>LSE also provides a service to post children's books directly to them if they have a specialist interest and books on the subject are not available in the library they visit</p> <p>The library service outreach activity for children and to children's centres will still reach children. This includes Looked After Children and children with disabilities at special schools. Community library services will also cater for the needs of children and families people and many people will be satisfied with using their community library services. The People's Network PCs will be provided by the council to these community libraries and this will give access to county book stock via online reservations and book delivery to the library. Community libraries may be able to focus their services to cater more for younger people and families in their area if that is what is relevant to that community</p> <p>For young people wanting to use computers for study or to apply for jobs online they can book a computer to use when a library is open.</p> <p>Glos' youth support service are providing training programmes for NEETs and running them in libraries where there is most evidence of need.</p>	
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<b>Disability</b>		
<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <p>Most likely reason for impact is reduction in opening hours and potential removal of 3 community mobile libraries. The outcomes from the community library offer will also require consideration</p> <p>The assessment of the evidence available to date has been in terms of adult care service users with disabilities and in terms of children with specific education needs (SEN). The highest proportion and numbers of adult care service users are in the Gloucester library catchment area, followed by Cheltenham.</p> <p>There seems to be evidence for higher levels of children with SEN (more than 100) in Gloucester, Hucclecote, Stroud , Cirencester and Quedgeley. In terms of the proportion of children in the in the library catchment areas Matson, Hesters Way and Cinderford showed some significance</p> <p>For adult care service users with disabilities in the most significant areas with a higher proportion in the local population were found as follows:</p> <p>Physical disabilities – Tuffley, Stow, Painswick</p> <p>Learning disabilities - Gloucester, Stonehouse ,</p>	<p><b>Mitigating actions</b></p> <p><b>Positive:</b> We will continue to provide Library Clubs and transport to these clubs for people with mobility disabilities These clubs may have a <b>positive</b> impact in terms of enabling people to participate in public life /library use and it may reduce social isolation.</p> <p>For those who can still travel independently alternative libraries will be open and travel journey by public transport or community transport will be available to them if they do not have a car. The Blue Badge scheme means people can park next to some libraries for easy access. Disabled people also have concessionary travel passes for public transport.</p> <p>Investigations into a tailored library travel pass may help to improve access to libraries for some disabled people Library outreach services connecting with special schools and provision of clear vision picture books for visually impaired children will continue.</p> <p>Libraries will continue to be part of the ‘keep safe scheme’ for people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>We will continue to offer the range of services to people with visual impairment. As part of this talking books can be posted to them. Libraries will also provide talking books and also large print books. Digital E Audio books are also downloadable at home for people with the Internet.</p>	<p><b>How monitored &amp; by whom</b></p> <p>Nationally, disabled people have more groups representing their rights than many others. This suggests there may be special distinctive groups within this category which need to be addressed through further consultation</p> <p>The information we gathered does not tell us what the specific impact of library services changes might be and this needs to be assessed as part of the consultation</p> <p>The consultation period will help us to identify if it would be helpful to have a group of people to consult on a regular basis about library changes that may affect them.</p>

<p>Newnham</p> <p>Mental health- Stonehouse, Brockworth, Mitcheldean</p> <p>However, we do not know to what degree this is reflected in library use by people with disabilities.</p> <p>Some information was also gathered from the library user surveys. People had a choice whether they wanted to record a disability and it is not possible to gauge accurately what % of those surveyed actually responded to this. Of the ones that did respond it was to record mainly mobility disabilities/ difficulties getting around but also to a lesser degree sight, hearing and mental health</p> <p>We believe that for mobility related disabilities the issues for some disabled people will be similar to those for the aged. Some types of disablement will be about access to services such as the internet for employment and educational information.</p> <p>Some disabled children and their families without access to a car or nearby public transport may find it more difficult to access a library service</p> <p>Some people with <b>learning disabilities</b> may experience more difficulties if they have to travel further to access a library service and may need additional support to understand the changes and what options are available to them</p> <p>Some people with <b>mental health disabilities</b> may experience more isolation if they have to travel further to</p>	<p>Development of digital library services may be more accessible for people with physical and hearing disabilities if they have the Internet at home.</p> <p>Community library services will also cater for the needs of people who may have disabilities and many people will be satisfied with using their library services. The People’s Network PCs will be provided by the council to these community libraries and this will give access to county book stock via online reservations and book delivery to the library. Community libraries may be able to focus their services to cater more for people with specific disabilities in their area if that is what is relevant to that community.</p> <p>In partnership with the health service we provide ‘Books on Prescription’, self- help and awareness books prescribed by GPs for people with mental health.</p> <p>We will continue to offer the Summer Reading Challenge and other outreach activity to special schools and encourage school visits.</p>	<p>We would like to know in what way library services can be made more accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>Library Service Managers will monitor any mitigating actions required</p>
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a library service and it requires visiting a new place		
<b>Sex</b>		
<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <p>The analysis of the demography of the county and library catchment areas did not show evidence of a bias towards women or men and numbers were roughly equal. The outcomes from the community library offer will also require consideration</p> <p>The national research about library use indicates that there is a slight bias towards more female users of libraries. We do not gather information about people's sex when they join the library. Local anecdotal observation would suggest that women do appear to be the larger group of users in the smaller local libraries but that at the larger ones, and Gloucester and Cheltenham especially, men may be the larger group. This may be related to use of PCs and reading of newspapers and magazines supplied.</p> <p>We believe that it is in terms of issues of <b>accessibility and affordability</b> that might mean for <b>young women accompanying children</b> to libraries this may be of significance. This would be especially so for <b>lone parents</b> who are mostly women, or for families living in areas of deprivation or in poverty. (Women appear to accompany children to the library more than men).</p> <p>Increased walking times to a library may be a barrier for</p>	<p><b>Mitigating actions</b></p> <p>In terms of access to affordable travel to a library the investigations into a tailored library travel pass may help to improve access to libraries for some families on low income and pregnant mothers.</p> <p>Library outreach services to children's centres - whose services are focused on providing support tailored to meet the needs of pregnant mothers, parents and young children - will be provided to support access to books and reading. This could include sessions about sharing books with children and storytimes.</p> <p>Community library services will also cater for the needs of people who may have disabilities and many people will be satisfied with using their library services. The People's Network PCs will be provided by the council to these community libraries which would mean that the family has access to computers for homework and other needs. Via reservations they could also access to county book stock via free online reservations and book delivery to the library.</p> <p>LSE also provides a service to post children's books directly to them if they have a specialist interest and books on the subject are not available in the library they visit. This may help lone parent families.</p> <p>Opportunities for active community volunteering may offer 'work' experience for lone parents seeking to return to work and</p>	<p><b>How monitored and by whom</b></p> <p>We will re-assess this following further consultation</p> <p>Library Service Managers will monitor any mitigating actions required</p>

<p>some. There may be issues relating to the costs of getting to libraries and the fact that libraries may be an important source of reading for children from poorer families. Lone parent levels in the library catchment areas at Hesters Way, Gloucester and Matson were the most significant from the analysis.</p> <p>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity may also be relevant to library use, as in late pregnancy physical access may be more challenging and mothers are often responsible for looking after babies and young children and this could make access more difficult especially if mothers are single parents and experience economic or social deprivation.</p>	<p>improve skills.</p>	
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**Declaration**

We are satisfied that an Assessment has been carried out and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been or will be developed to lessen or negate this impact where possible. No very significant impacts which cannot be mitigated have been identified such that we should consider not to proceed with the proposals. However if any such significant impacts are revealed during the consultation then we will consider whether to go ahead or to re-formulate the proposals.

We understand that the Equality and Community Impact Assessment is required by the County Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed by: Sue Laurence Date: 13.01.12

Role: Library Services Manager (Strategy)

Countersigned by Director Learning & Libraries : ..... Jo Grills Date:

Name of relevant Portfolio Holder/Cabinet Member: ..... Mark Hawthorne Date:

I confirm that I have examined and understood the potential impact of the proposal and confirm that I have had due regard to the needs set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010..

..... Portfolio Holder/Cabinet Member Date: .....

Please forward an electronic copy to the Equalities Team by emailing [equalities@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@gloucestershire.gov.uk)