Public Libraries Information Offer

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Universal Information Offer for Public Libraries

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Public Libraries Working Together

Public Libraries Universal Information Offer:

• Example of PLAs working together across the country to enhance the Public Library Offer

• The new national approach will, for the first time, clarify what the public should be able to expect from their library
SCL Universal Offers

The offers –

• Health
• Reading
• Information
• Digital

Are the four service areas which modern users regard as integral to public libraries.
Public Library Universal Information Offer

The PLUIO seeks to position public libraries so that they are seen as one of the natural places to offer support to citizens to access government information and services, and so result in the commissioning of public libraries by Government to deliver ‘Assisted Digital Services’.
Assisted Digital Services

- The term used to describe a range of developments, strategies and actions to ensure that no one is left behind
- Services for the “coulds” (those identified as being capable of using digital services if offered such support, but not currently doing so) to overcome barriers to them accessing online information and services
- Development of their capacity to do so on their own in future
Government Information and Services

- Single ‘gov.uk’ website launched end 2012
- Government services ‘digital by default’ by 2015
  - Digital services that are so straightforward that all those who can use them will choose to do so whilst those who can’t are not excluded

- Local authority channel shift
- Role for public libraries
https://www.gov.uk/
Universal Information Offer: Aims and Objectives

- Enhance public libraries’ role as trusted information, advice and guidance hubs and as gov.uk on the High St.
- Enhance public libraries’ role in supporting customers to develop skills and confidence in using digital information resources & undertaking online transactions
- Develop role of public library staff as digital champions
- Develop public library collaboration with local and national partners
- Development and piloting of online toolkits to improve customer access to information and public library staff skills and knowledge
- Testing and evaluation of models for national roll out
- Identification of range and extent of a Universal Information Offer that public library authorities could all deliver
Public Libraries

• Are a natural and effective route through to government information and services
• Have a track record in enabling access to wide ranging life essential information
• Are well placed to bring together the local sources of information, services and support
• Are able to help the public access this information and services
Universal Information Offer Pilot Outcomes

- Supports role of public libraries in assisted digital services
- Demonstrated high levels of trust that citizens put in information accessed through libraries, mediated by library staff
- Users value the resources offered, find them helpful and relevant, and welcomed the support of library staff
Universal Information Offer Pilot Outcomes

• Users said the online support and information had improved their level of understanding, knowledge and skills
• Mix of local and national resources is necessary to meet users needs
• Public libraries are ideally placed to broker the gathering of appropriate information resources at the local level
• Partnership working added real value
Key Components of the Offer

• National information sources to an assured standard are made available
• An assured standard of workforce skills and knowledge to meet expectations is reinforced
• That the technology used will support easy access to the information and be available through public libraries across the country and be sustainable.
Way we are working

• Steering group:
  SCL, ACE, CILIP/LSIS, GDS

• Working groups:
  Advocacy, content, IT, workforce development

• National workshops

• Involvement from PLAs across the country
Current Work Streams

Four strands of work supported by working groups:

• Advocacy
• Workforce development
• Infrastructure
• Content development
• In addition a research strand
Advocacy - Update

- Universal offers launched by Minister January 2013 - national press coverage
- Presentations/discussions at all regional SCL meetings
- Disseminated in ACE through relationship managers
- Shared with some partners e.g. GDS, OCLC, TRA
- National press release following publication of the evaluation report
- Information sent to CILIP for inclusion in publications
- Shared with CILIP Information Literacy group and presented at a CILIP seminar
- Shared with Scottish and Welsh colleagues
- Links to Enquire development & online reference group
- Links made to Health Information Project and TRA
Workforce Development Objectives

- Identify the skills and qualities needed to support people finding and using information and services online and develop their capacity to do so on their own in future.
- Undertake a national information skills survey
- Develop and implement a national programme of workforce development for staff and volunteers
Workforce Development - Progress

- Mapping exercise of the skills and competencies required against the LSIS/LARMIS National Occupational Standards
- CILIP work on Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB) has also inform the skills analysis
- Framework of knowledge, skills and behaviours for the customer facing workforce drawn up
- Skills audit took place in December 2012 and the results have just been published
Skills Audit

• 1st major audit of the public library workforce since People’s Network over a decade earlier

• Survey focused on competence and confidence of the workforce, drawing on the knowledge, skills & behaviours identified in the agreed framework

• Over 8,550 people from 120 authorities (69% of Public Library Authorities) completed the survey.
Skills Audit

- Partnerships and community networks are public library strengths
- Good levels of confidence in enquiry skills
- Identified areas for improvement particularly around digital service delivery
- Collected baseline information from which a national development programme can be developed
Skills Audit Recommendations

- Develop a national training programme
- Work with partners to make use of existing good practice, eg Enquire, UKOnline, etc
- Use the concept of an assured standard to develop a model standard of service
- Reinvigorate the information role of public libraries and enthuse staff
- Manage customer expectations
Infrastructure and Content - Objectives

- Develop a framework of content that allows for national support and quality control to determine and provide local resources to meet local needs
- Identify the technical requirements and platform to deliver this
- Develop guidelines for the development of information portals that take into account the needs of more reluctant and less experienced users of digital resources
Infrastructure & Content - Progress

- Written specification for infrastructure
- Implemented through Bookmark website
- Identified and written content for ‘national’ pages
- Local links being identified by local authorities
- Workshop with GDS and GOV.UK as ‘critical friend’
- Bookmark public launch in January 2013
Your Money

Are you looking for help in managing your money? These websites may help you with issues such as saving money, ensuring tax and pension contributions are correct, or dealing with debt. Some offer free services as well as advice information.

High quality subscription sites, such as Which?, are also available online or through your local library service, but are not linked here. Please go to your local library service for free access to Which?

Bank safe online
You get advice on online banking and how to spot scams. The site reassures you about security measures in place and recommends care and vigilance.

Citizens Advice
There is plenty of useful advice on a range of issues and there FAQs and Fact sheet sections on Consumer and Debt and money matters. You can find out what best to do in a number of difficult situations. The Tax section includes information on inheritance tax and in Civil Rights in the Law and Rights section you can find out about the ombudsman service, including financial ombudsman.

Income tax
All you need to know from Gov.UK rates and allowances, relief and refund.
Research – Objectives and Progress

• Further work to provide more evidence of role of library staff in supporting others to use digital resources.
  – Aim: to develop evidence base: customer journeys and outcomes for people from support provided in libraries
  – Product: Literature review and report, stakeholder consultation and review of outcomes from pilot case studies and other relevant case studies
Local Library Authorities

- Work with local partners to identify the most useful online resources to meet local needs
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of external partners
- Involve frontline staff
- Ensure local IT compatibility
- Ensure online training package is embedded in local training programmes
- Build PLUIO into marketing strategies and communications plans
Partnerships Critical to Success

• The success of PLUIO is dependant on the involvement and co-operation of partners to develop and maintain the content, and to promote its use

• Partners include: SCL, Arts Council England, Government Digital Service, Public Library Authorities, local and national service providers such as health authorities, community and voluntary sector advice providers
Next Steps

• Development of national training programme to enhance staff skills to meet the new challenges

• Working in partnership with ACE, OCLC, OCF and others in the context of Envisioning to embed the online information and services role of public libraries