

About the Library Service

As a Library Authority, Hampshire County Council is required by law¹ to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' Library Service for those who live, work and study in Hampshire. There is no specific definition of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service – it is for each authority to judge based on, among other things, local needs and available resources – see paragraph 66.

As part of the legislation, there is a requirement for the County Council to provide free lending and the facility to access books and resources. However, other regulations enable the County Council to act under its own discretion to apply charges for the provision of certain services including:

- reservation of items;
- fines for late returns; and
- material which requires an 'electronic device' to access.

The Library Service comprises:

Public Library Service – currently delivered through a network of 48 council-run libraries, four community-managed libraries, and an online library – which includes book and magazine lending, other lending e.g. CDs, DVDs, music and drama sets, audio books, and reference materials. Council-run libraries also deliver child/ adult learning, leisure activities, events, special collections (such as Naval in Gosport; Military in Aldershot; Aviation in Farnborough; Railway in Winchester and Jane Austen in Alton) and local studies.

Libraries are categorised into four tiers:

- Tier One libraries (including three Discovery Centres) are the largest and busiest libraries, providing the widest range of services. They have a catchment population of over 50,000, tend to be found in the biggest towns and are open longest - usually six days a week, including some evenings.
- Tier Two libraries are found in medium sized towns and are open on five days each week. They have a catchment of around 30,000 to 70,000 people.
- Tier Three libraries are located in smaller towns and villages and are open fewer days each week. Typically, they are small spaces (when compared to Tier One or Tier Two libraries) in a community building often with partners co-located. Tier Three libraries have a catchment population of around 10,000 – 40,000 people.
- Tier Four libraries (known as 'community-managed libraries') are managed by volunteer community organisations. Typically, the community is responsible for: the building management and costs; health and safety; staffing, which the County Council supports through a regular visit by a paid member of Hampshire Libraries staff; and the provision of books, self-service terminals, Go-Online public computers and free public Wi-Fi (all paid for by the County Council).

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-libraries-as-a-statutory-service/libraries-as-a-statutory-service. Statutory Instrument: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/contents

All Tier One, Tier Two and the majority of Tier Three libraries have print and copying facilities and free public IT – including Go-Online public computers and free public Wi-Fi.

School Library Service – A subscription-based service (all costs are fully covered by the subscription) for schools to support children’s learning and education. As of July 2020, 470 schools buy into the Service which includes 21 independent and/or out of county schools.

Home Library Service – A service coordinated by library staff and delivered by volunteers to vulnerable and isolated customers who are unable to visit a library in person. The service is free for customers that cannot get to the library due to ill-health, disability or caring responsibilities.

Online Library Service – Customers can download a wide range of free resources including eBooks, eMagazines, eAudio Books and eResources onto their eReader, desktop, laptop or mobile device. In addition, customers can reserve and renew books and make payments online.

Learning in Libraries – National Adult Learning grant funding (£423,586 for 2019/20) supports a year-round schedule of events and classes in council-run libraries. These are open to people of all levels of experience who wish to get involved and learn new skills.

Ready Reads – The Ready Reads service was launched on Monday 8 June 2020, in response to the first phase of the Library Services move to re-open libraries in Hampshire as safely as possible following the Covid-19 pandemic. *Ready Reads: We Select You Collect* is a new book collection service, where the Library Service select books, according with the customer’s preferences, for collection from the customer’s chosen library. Customers can express their preference by calling a central phone number, or via a form online. Customers are given a collection time when either they or their nominated collector can visit the library to collect the book selection. Books are held for a maximum of 7 days before they are returned to the library shelves.

Group membership – Existing Group memberships include

- **Carer Memberships** – care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups are among the groups that can benefit from this group membership. The group can borrow up to 100 items from a library at one time, audiobooks are free to borrow and up to 10 items can be reserved at one time for free. There are no overdue charges.
- **Good Neighbour scheme** - Is available to customers unable to visit the library in person. This scheme will allow a nominated person to be responsible for a customer’s book loans and returns. Library staff can assist the nominated person in choosing books for the customer. The group can borrow up to 30 items from a library at one time. There are no overdue charges.

More information about types of membership and services can be found at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/resources/homelibraryservice>

Definitions:

- **Active User** – total number of library members using a specific library within the past year, includes renewals and loans
- **Unique User** – total number of library members who only use one library branch
- **Catchment** – An area around a library where a population of active users live who have used a library in the past 12 months
- **Issue** – an item from the library collection that is borrowed, including renewals
- **Community Need** – Information about income, employment, education, health, crime, living environment and barriers to housing and services to measure the needs of a specific community. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (known as IMD) is a standard and universally used Central Government measure of relative deprivation for communities in England published in 2019. All areas in England are ranked from the most deprived to the least deprived and are then split into 10 equal groups called deciles. Decile 1 contains the most deprived areas and Decile 10 the least deprived.