

International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres

United Kingdom and Ireland Branch

founded 1953



Libraries deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016 – 2021

Response from IAML (UK & Irl)

IAML (UK & Irl) welcomes this document and the opportunity to contribute to the consultation. We are keen to ensure that the role of specialist collections, and music libraries in particular, is not overlooked in these plans for the future of public libraries.

In Section 3.2 the document refers to the ACE report ‘Envisioning the Library of the Future’ drawing attention to the ‘essential ingredients defining a public library’. These include ‘an excellent range of quality books, digital resources and other content’. Whilst it is recognised that this statement does not come from the authors of the report under consideration the phrase ‘other content’ covers a wide range of material, including printed music and audio-visual items, and it is suggested that in future reports the ‘other content’ should be listed so as to demonstrate the breadth of resources libraries can provide and not subsumed under a generic description.

The third of the essential ingredients listed in the ACE report is “well-trained, friendly people to help users to find that they want ...” We think this needs to go further and emphasise the need for specialist staff, e.g. local studies, children’s libraries and music libraries. This point is also pertinent to section 14.5 (Developing the library workforce).

Section 4.2 Libraries deliver impact. The document refers to libraries ‘helping us to engage with culture and creativity...’ In the provision of performance material, both for individuals and groups, and audio-visual media, music libraries have been fulfilling this role for many years. Taking the example of the loan of a set of vocal scores, one loan transaction might represent 40 vocal scores which are used for a concert given to an audience of 150 people. That one loan is not only helping up to 200 people to engage with culture but will support local communities and venues and may bring people into an area they would not otherwise have visited had it not been for the concert, thus benefitting the local economy.

Purpose 3: Health and wellbeing

Music can make an important contribution to health and wellbeing. For instance, participation in music-making is known to be beneficial and music is a recognised therapy offered through participation or hearing. Music libraries can support these activities by providing the printed music, recorded sound and a space to meet.

- *Barbican Music Library*. Exhibitions impact positively on wider social outcomes such as health and well-being, e.g. in the autumn of 2014 the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT) provided the library with an exhibition on the subject of their work, which raised public awareness about the benefits of music therapy. Furthermore a booklist of important titles on the subject of music therapy was requested from the Association, and this has been used to enhance the stock.
- *Hertfordshire Libraries: Music, Drama & Performing Arts Service* hosted a ‘Herts Health for All’ event, featuring well-being through singing.
- *Oxford Music Library* hosted a music therapist who introduced people to the general theory of music therapy and its benefits.

- *Somerset Performing Arts Library* runs twice monthly sessions called 'You can sing! For fun and wellbeing'. These are for people with memory loss, mental health difficulties, those who feel isolated or feel they would benefit from a group sing-along.
- *Surrey Performing Arts Library* is in the process of planning of a weekly 'Singing for the Brain' session for people with dementia.
- *Westminster Music Library (WML)* runs 'Humming in Harmony'. This is a collaborative group activity aiming to improve mental health using creative mindfulness and vocal exercises, listening skills and pitch recognition, and help develop correct breathing techniques. These sessions are suitable for all ages. One session – *Mind the Body*, a day of public health awareness activities focusing on music - was organised to coincide with mental Health Awareness Week. The day included interactive presentations by health practitioners, case studies, a film screening and Q&A session, and a creative 'Humming in Harmony' improvisation.
- Music libraries can support initiatives such as 'A Choir in every care home – sing more, live better!' by providing material for the facilitators and the participants¹

Purpose 5: Culture and creativity

Music / performing arts libraries have a key role to play in delivering this purpose and are already offering the type of provision that is envisaged in the Ambition for 2021 and the aims of the Culture White Paper.

These are examples of some the activities taking place across England, many of which are in partnership with other arts and cultural organisations, and would fit equally well as examples in Purpose 6.

- *Barbican Music Library* People's Pianos Project is now in its third year. This is the result of a collaboration between Barbican Music Library, Barbican/Guildhall Creative Learning, and Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Keyboard Department, whose students provide a course of ten free lessons to retired City Residents using one of the Library's keyboards. As well as improving relationships between the participating generations, providing social opportunities for local residents and enhancing their appreciation of music, the project aims to make local people feel at home in the Barbican Centre and contributes to their health and wellbeing. It also supports education, with teaching experience being an essential requirement for undergraduates. The scheme is oversubscribed, and feedback from participants has been very positive.

"This project has brought enormous pleasure to me as I rediscovered my love of playing the piano which I had not done for 60 years".

"...Our age difference simply disappeared during the lessons and we got on with the task in hand. We both put in a lot of work - and had a laugh as the same time. I always looked forward to our weekly hour."
- *Barbican Music Library*. 'Unsigned London' promotes music by artists without a record deal who are based in the London area by stocking their CDs in the library. Music of all genres is accepted and it provides an easy way of promoting music and attracting new fans as the public can borrow the CDs for free.²
- *Barbican Music Library* has worked with a range of organisations including the National Jazz Archive, the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT), the BBC Music Library, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Fusilier Museum London, the Museum of Army Music at Kneller Hall, Rockarchive, and the Strad magazine. With some organisations, such as the National Jazz Archive and Rockarchive, the library has built on-going relationships which enable it to keep abreast of developments in a particular field of music, to exchange ideas in relation to other potential exhibitors, and to explore the possibilities of collaborating in the future.

¹ <https://achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/>

² <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/our-libraries/Pages/Barbican-Music-Library.aspx>

- *Bournemouth Music Library* has been developing opportunities for musical performance within the Library. This has included a full day of music and dance performances and piano and song recitals for National Libraries Day in previous years. These have been partnership events with local groups such as Pavilion Dance South West and the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus (the Library houses the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra archives). The library has also hosted performances by other ensembles and organises an annual Christmas concert with attendances of one hundred or more each time.
- *Get it Loud in Libraries*. Over the last nine years the live programme has drawn an audience of over 28,000 people into libraries across the UK. Through live music, it has created exciting opportunities for young people to lead, participate, volunteer and excel in artistic and cultural activity.³
- *Henry Watson Music Library (Manchester Libraries Galleries & Culture)* provides instruments and technology for use in the library, including 3 digital pianos, 2 drums kits, 2 acoustic guitars, 1 electric guitar and 1 bass guitar and associated equipment. These may be used for individual practice or group sessions, the latter taking place in the Music Hub, Twice a week there is a pre-arranged jamming session – comments from one of the volunteers who helps to run these sessions are included in Appendix A.
- *Henry Watson Music Library (Manchester Libraries Galleries & Culture)* has a significant input into 'Library Live' events at the Central Library, e.g. BBC Music Day event
<http://www.librarylive.co.uk/event/jamming-in-the-library/>
<http://www.librarylive.co.uk/event/manchester-beethoven-orchestra/>
- *Hertfordshire Libraries: Music, Drama & Performing Arts Service* has been actively involved in two 'Raise your voice' singing workshops which enabled the library to promote its services to delegates.
- *Oxford Music Library* is a partner with organisations such as the Oxford Folk Festival and Oxford Lieder which enables it to host music performances in the library.
- *Somerset Performing Arts Library* hosts a small group who meet weekly. Initially they were learning basic music theory but as they progressed they formed themselves into a composers and arrangers group. They have just finished their First Symphony and hope to have this performed and published in the near future.
- *Somerset Performing Arts Library* is engaging with schools across the county to compose a 'Song for Somerset'. This is a piece to be written by an individual or group to be performed at the Christmas concert of another community group at Yeovil Music Centre.⁴
- *Surrey Performing Arts Library* works with a range of partners including Surrey Arts / Surrey Music Hub, Mole Valley District Council Arts Alive Festival and Leith Hill Music Festival.
- *Surrey Performing Arts Library* staff run an extremely popular and lively weekly Rhymetime (songs and stories for the under 5s).
- *Westminster Music Library* 'Behind the Lines'. Following a successful grant application to Arts Council England, WML was awarded funding to deliver a First World War Centenary project 'Behind the Lines – the music and composers of the First World War' - a programme of intergenerational participatory events in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO). The programme used the centenary of the First World War as the inspiration for a series of interactive workshops and creative projects catering to adult, family and school participants, from local communities across Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, encouraging them to engage with the Library and its collections. The aims of the project were:

through creative partnership work to promote Westminster Music Library as an outstanding public library resource which will inspire children and adults to engage with culture and libraries, increase footfall and provide a platform for their personal and future development;

³ <http://www.getitloudinlibraries.com/>

⁴ <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-and-heritage/libraries-facilities/performing-arts-library/>

to facilitate innovative and creative activities which are freely available to members of the local community, and which use the materials held in the collection at Westminster Music Library;

to provide opportunities for children and adults to work with world class musicians from the RPO to develop their musical skills and cultural understanding, through practical and inclusive workshops, projects and performance outcomes;

to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War and raise public awareness of the music and composers of, or directly influenced by these events.

Purpose 6: Communities

Many of the activities listed as examples under Purpose 5 are also relevant to this Purpose. Music libraries already support local communities in many ways, including providing space for community activities and frequently running such activities.

- *Westminster Music Library* has been running a project called 'Joint Force Singers' which is a twelve-month long choral collaboration between Westminster Music Library and Westminster's Armed Forces, funded by The Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Scheme. Using resources held in the Music Library collection, the aims were to raise awareness of Westminster Music Library, Westminster's Armed Forces, and to encourage collaboration and engagement with the local community. To achieve these aims, WML recruited a musical director, accompanist and project officer, and devised a programme of musical activities which have taken place between October 2015 and June 2016. These activities have included concerts involving a number of local community organisations, and celebrations to commemorate Armed Forces Week.⁵

Purpose 7: Learning

Music libraries have an important role to play in supporting learning for all ages. A good local music library provides opportunities for children and adults to explore a wide repertoire. Music libraries can also link into national initiatives such as the BBC's 'Get Playing', ensuring that there is no financial barrier to learning⁶.

14.2 Service delivery

There are several examples of music libraries working together to deliver services particularly for the provision of performance sets.

- *SEPSIG (South East Performance Sets Interloans Group)*. This consists of a group of library authorities in the South East that loan and borrow performance sets from each other for free, and in turn each contribute a set sum per annum to a fund that is used to buy sets for the group.
- *Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service* which is the music and drama sets lending service for Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland⁷.
- *ENCORE! The British Union Catalogue of Music Performance Sets* which is a long-standing project run by IAML (UK & Irl) to provide a database of orchestral and vocal sets available for borrowing.

We welcome the proposal for further developments in this area but also point to the need to ensure that shared services are established on a secure footing, noting the recent situation of the Yorkshire Music Library⁸.

⁵ <http://www.westminstercommunityinfo.org/content/joint-force-singers>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/getplaying>

⁷ <https://secure.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/PerformingArtsLibrary/>

⁸ <https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/news/yorkshire-music-library-saved-once-again>

14.3 Evidence-based planning

As indicated in the comment in section 4.2 the statistics relating particularly to the loan of music and drama sets need to be interrogated carefully. One loan of a choral set could be going to any number of singers in a choir; one loan of an orchestral set may be used by up to 80 players in an orchestra. As a Branch we have identified the need to gather statistics on the number of loans of performance sets, together with the numbers of registered groups and the numbers of participants involved in each of those groups. One of our members is planning to undertake a survey covering the period August – October 2015; however, this will provide only a limited picture and we would welcome the opportunity to participate in any evidence gathering undertaken as part of future planning.

14.5 Developing the library workforce

We suggest that specialist skills should be added to the list of those to which excellent public library services should have access. It is recognised that the list is not exhaustive but specialist skills are important for providing some library services and also link to the need to for skills which will be required in other sectors.

15.1 Striving for Excellence

We should like to draw attention to our own ‘Excellence Award for Music Libraries’ which was instituted in 2010 and has been awarded twice yearly since then. The awards acknowledge activity in music libraries which demonstrates sustained good work and good practice with the potential to be adopted and adapted by others⁹. The details of the criteria for the award are in Appendix B.

Expectation set

In our response to the Sieghart review we included the following statement of what a public music library service should include and we re-state that here, to be read alongside the criteria outlined for the Excellence Award, as the benchmark of excellence.

The core public library service should provide:

- Sheet music
 - For all types of music
 - For all ranges of abilities
 - For music groups (chamber, orchestral and choral)
 - Tutors [books and DVDs] for people learning to sing or play an instrument
- Performance sets to support local music [one set of 40 vocal scores can benefit 40 performers and an audience of 150]
- Recorded music for all tastes, cultures and interests
- DVDs – music related (operas, musicals, etc.)
- Books on music for loan and reference
- Online music resources (e.g. Oxford Music Online, Naxos Music Library)
- Information about local music groups and concerts
- Knowledgeable staff who are able to manage the stock and assist users to find what they want, and who network with other music librarians in order to provide the best possible service to their users
- A gateway to other libraries and their stock
- Spaces where musicians can perform and practice
- Spaces where people can listen to music

⁹ <http://uk-irl.iaml.info/awards/excellence.html>

- A focal point for local music societies – where they can explore a wide variety of music and meet to network and gain/enhance new skills
- Facilities that can be used by organisations for courses, exhibitions and events
- Music resources that reflect and support the local community

15.2 Evidence-based decision making

We should be pleased to collaborate on designing a basic model data set for music library provision.

16.2 Media profile

The Branch already works with the organisation 'Making Music' who are actively involved with ensuring that music library services are retained. Further engagement in relation to improving the media profile would be welcome.

16.3 Making the case for libraries

We are in agreement with the position taken in this section

Annex 2

Focus on public benefit

We should be pleased to contribute to the statement on public benefit if this would be helpful.

England-wide offer

We have experience of working with other libraries and also cross-sectorally and should be pleased to work on developing the principles.

Build on success

We have examples of good practice from the submissions to the Excellence Awards and from individual libraries and would be pleased to develop them into case studies.

Appendix A

Henry Watson Music Library jamming sessions – feedback from a volunteer

“I am a Geophysics student at Liverpool University. I am about to enter my third and final year of the course and over the last two summers I have volunteered in the Henry Watson Music Library.

The time I have spent here has been extremely rewarding for me as a musician but I have also learned a lot in terms of communication skills and interacting with the public.

I think every library should have musical instruments and sessions where people are encouraged to play together. Having the opportunity to play with other musicians is not always easy to come by, so seeing absolute beginners learning to improvise and forming bands here in the library has been wonderful.

People are always amazed when they see all of the instruments free to play. It’s great to see parents bringing their children to have a go on the drum kit or teaching them some guitar. On some of the busiest days we have had all the instruments being played together and even had some vocalists join in.

Music tuition can be expensive and I feel the library offers a place where people can come and learn from each other for free. Some regulars who come in every week, playing with different people, in different styles and sometimes with an audience. For musicians this is invaluable as it is similar to playing in a gig or busking, which both require a lot of confidence and ability.

I have enjoyed talking to people about music and seeing other people turning up to the sessions to watch, talk, play or look for possible band mates.

Lots of people who work in the area around the library will come to the sessions on their breaks to relax in a creative way. Others who are studying in the Reading Room also take breaks from writing essays or reading to have a jam. I have heard lots of sad stories of instruments being stolen or people having to sell their guitars. The library offers them a place where they can still express themselves without having to pay.

This volunteering over the summer is what I look forward to every week. It’s a privilege to have such great facilities in the library and shows that central library is now a great place for musicians and other creative people to visit. It should be high on the list of places to visit in central Manchester, for tourists and people who live in the area.”

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IAML (UK & Irl) Excellence Award for Music Libraries Good practice self-assessment form

This self-assessment form has two aims: firstly to provide the Award Panel with background information about your service and secondly to put your nomination into the context of the whole of your service. All libraries nominated must be able to show that, irrespective of the focus of their nomination, they fulfil at least the first three good practice principles for music library services.

Using the table below:

- explain how your library fulfils the good practice principles for music service delivery you have selected to support your application (see notes on p.2 below). You should give a short description of what you do, bearing in mind the notes.
- Show for each principle which of the award criteria apply (Good practice, development and innovation).

Your response will be assessed by the Award Panel as follows:

For compulsory good practice principles, for each of your chosen Award criteria (i.e. good practice, development and innovation):

1 = principle not delivered

2 = principle delivered to acceptable standard

3 = principle delivered to excellent standard and regarded as benchmark by peers

For other principles of your choice a scale of 1 (poor) to 3 (excellent) will also be applied. You **MUST** show how you meet principles 1 – 3 but you may choose as many of the other principles as you wish and/or add other areas of your own to support your application. As different libraries will choose a different set of activities, depending on their circumstances, you will be considered for the Award **ONLY** if the average of your scores for the areas of good practice that you choose is 2 or above (i.e. reaches the acceptable standard or beyond).

Notes on good practice principles

Compulsory principles

1. Materials supporting the study, enjoyment and performance of music

Show how you ensure that what you provide is appropriate for your users and give a brief description of the range of materials available, with stock figures where relevant, and how you provide resources which you have chosen not to stock locally.

2. A knowledgeable person (or team) managing the service

Tell us about the knowledge of music, music librarianship and music materials that you and/or your staff can offer.

3. Good and appropriate availability of the service and access to collections, information and knowledgeable staff

Explain how you ensure that the service is available in accordance with users' needs and how you provide access to materials and expert staff advice and guidance

Other areas of good practice

4. Appropriate documentation and publicising of the collection and the service, through catalogues, website or other suitable means

Explain how materials are catalogued and tell us how you publicise your services (e.g. via the library website, leaflets)

5. Participation in appropriate inter-library co-operation

Tell us what kinds of co-operative activity you are involved with (e.g. regional catalogues, acquisitions policies, events, performance set loans)

6. Partnerships with other organisations to enhance the value of the service for users

In addition to inter-library co-operation, tell us about any other partnerships that you are involved with and the consequent benefits to your users

7. Engagement with both users and potential users

Explain how you ensure that your users are happy with the service you offer, how you provide opportunities for comments and suggestions and how you engage with people who don't yet use the service, but who may find it useful.

These principles are regarded by IAML (UK & Irl) as the main building blocks of any music library service, and libraries going forward to the second stage of the Award will be expected to fulfil those they have chosen to the acceptable standard. **You must show how you meet at least the first three.** You **may** also add any of the others from 4 – 7 listed on page 2 above, and/or areas that are not on this list to support your application.