


## LIBRARIES

## AN ESSENTIAL PART OF LOCAL RECOVERY & RENEWAL



"From one key worker to another, you are doing an amazing job. I enjoy visiting the library - it can be my only place of solace during this time."

**NHS worker  
Newton Abbot Library**

"I think everyone who visits feels that they are cared for individually and personally."

**Crediton Library**

"You're doing really well. This is one of the only places in town where I feel safe."

**Teignmouth Library**

Libraries Unlimited delivers public libraries across Devon and Torbay, providing a trusted network of community hubs. Our services and programmes connect communities, support wellbeing, secure digital inclusion and access for all, offer learning, exploration and skills, reach children and young people and enable business startups.

Libraries Unlimited continues to be strongly placed to act as an anchor organisation, building on the role of the library as a trusted community resource, to ensure no community is left behind. We support rural and coastal communities, the city and market towns through our network of 54 libraries and mobile libraries.

This document outlines how we are delivering our strategic objectives to support the recovery and renewal of our communities, and the economy, through the COVID-19 pandemic.

**October 2020 - January 2021**

## Libraries Unlimited will provide support to people in Devon and Torbay who have been affected by COVID-19 and/or by lockdown

The pandemic has resulted in an increase in mental health issues including depression and loneliness. These in turn have a physical health impact; studies show that depression and loneliness decrease the rate of COVID-19 survival.



### Reading for rough sleepers

Exeter Library provided books to individuals in temporary accommodation during lockdown 2.



### Attending a funeral at the library

In Cridton a customer attended an online funeral at the library as he had no computer at home.



### Boosting mental health

Books and reading boost mental health, support learning and reduce feelings of isolation. Libraries have maintained essential Choose and Collect services.

"You are the only people that have contacted me....my wife is undergoing cancer treatment."

Dawlish Library

### Calling vulnerable and isolated customers

To date we have made in excess of 6,000 calls during lockdowns, and continue to phone our most vulnerable and isolated customers.

"My daughter is absolutely thrilled to be able to receive books [despite shielding]."

Exeter Library

### Library coming to you

Where safe to do so library staff are delivering books to individuals, in addition to our range of e-books, digital newspapers and magazines.



### Positive impact on wellbeing

We are running an [A-Z of Wellbeing](#) across our social media channels during January. Each letter links to a range of resources.



## Libraries Unlimited will support disadvantaged children and families in Devon and Torbay to reduce educational inequalities resulting from the pandemic

The disruption to education caused by COVID-19 is hitting disadvantaged children hardest. We work with partner organisations to deliver services to children and families in an effort to improve educational outcomes and promote a love of reading.



### Inspiring a love of reading

Exploring new ways to work in partnership with schools. Virtual school visits via Zoom at Exmouth Library.



### Helping to make Christmas special

Friends of Ilfracombe Library purchased books to go in Christmas parcels delivered by local charity On the Doorstep to over 40 families in need.



### Celebrating different cultures

We celebrated World Nursery Rhyme Week with a [video of favourite rhymes](#) in a variety of languages, for families to join in via social media.



"A huge thank you for offering the Books by Bike service. The joy of new library books!"

Exeter Library

### Supporting children missing books at school

We've boosted non-fiction and Beginner Reads collections to support children's learning thanks to support from local councillor funding.



### Making reading fun

Promoting the Reading Agency's Winter Mini Challenge to reward children for reading while they are not in school.



### Book gifting for families with Under 5s

In partnership with BookTrust we have gifted more than 2000 books to families via pre-schools and the library.

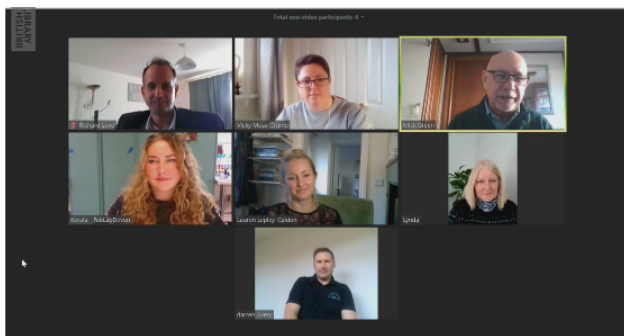
## Libraries Unlimited will support unemployed people and those starting small businesses in order to help the economy of Devon and Torbay recover from the pandemic

The economic and financial impacts of the crisis are already being felt. Many unemployed people will try to start their own small business and we will support them and others seeking work.

# Business & IP Centre Devon

### Targeted business support

Offering access to business experts, peer to peer networking and skills workshops, through funding from DCMS, via the British Library, to develop our Business and Intellectual Property Centre offer.



### Start Up Day

Over 80 attended our workshop as part of the national British Library conference inspiring a new and thriving community of start up business.



### Largest collection of business databases in the SW

Investing in business databases such as Mintel, COBRA, EMIS, British Standards, providing access to market research, risk profiles, global market data, guidance on setting up a business. Visit [BIPC](#) website for more information.

"I would never have got this job without you and I love it so much. Thank you so much."

**Barnstaple Work Club**

### Work Clubs

Our Work Clubs support clients to secure work, helping with CVs, joining online jobsites, and guiding online job applications.

"The contact and communication has been fantastic, you always go above and beyond in your efforts."

**Barnstaple Library**

### Improved employability

We are collaborating with Sunrise, to deliver Employability/English sessions to members of various ethnic communities in North Devon.



### Reset.Restart

Over 50 business owners engaging with this free local offer of experts, workshops and 1:1 support to help transform and future proof their companies.



## Libraries are hubs for community development and regeneration in Devon and Torbay

Lockdown and national restrictions continue to damage communities by breaking bonds and forcing people into isolation. Libraries provide lifeline services for communities through these difficult times.



### Digital Events Programme

Providing remote support and entertainment to communities across Devon and Torbay.

"We have a customer booked to use our computers in January to attend an online/virtual court hearing ... they do not have computer access anywhere else."

**Crediton Library**

### Providing support for changing needs

Meeting changing needs resulting from the pandemic, supporting communities in many unforeseen ways.

"I'm a carer and I've been using my tablet to complete a CV and take an online course on understanding autism. This just wouldn't have been possible before."

**Tiverton Library**

### Ensuring everyone is connected

Working with Devon Carers we distributed new tablet devices and ongoing digital support to isolated and digitally excluded carers.



### Impactful partnerships

Working with local health providers, community groups, and social prescribing networks. Baking for a foodbank supporting Exeter's homeless.



### Lifting community spirits

A Winter Wonderland, to cheer the Barnstaple community and inspire connections.

"The library has been such a godsend through the pandemic"

**Holsworthy Library**

### An essential part of the community

We frequently receive messages highlighting how vital the service is for communities.

# Lifeline services during Lockdown

During national lockdown we are offering local lifeline services:

- Choose and Collect to support the mental wellbeing and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Support learning, which is especially critical now, as the majority of children are learning from home.
- Computer services to support those who do not have a computer, device or internet at home to access essential online government services and job seeking support.

**Choose  
&  
Collect**



**and  
computer  
services**

"Reading books, disappearing into each different world the authors creates, is more important than ever for me at the moment."

**Braunton Library**

"We really thought your call was so reassuring that the library is fulfilling its full role of a caring community resource. THANK YOU...for just being there for those who need to feel they haven't been forgotten and left without a friendly chat and for being pro-active in contacting people."

**Paignton Library**

"You've been brilliant. Thank you for your help to get online. This library has been a life saver"

**Crediton Library**

We continue to offer a full range of online reading, research resources and a vibrant digital events programme for all ages and local business via our social media channels.

## Your library, wherever you are...

Your library card entitles you to free access to our digital libraries, 24/7.



## What's next...

- Virtual Writer in Residence at Exeter Library.
- Devon Libraries app launch, including self issue pilot.
- *What if YOU spoke?* programme of writing masterclasses for young people.
- A new year-round reading challenge for children aged 5-12.
- Bidding for funding to deliver a project to support individuals experiencing grief and loss.
- Arts Award *Discover at Home* to support the creativity of young people.
- Developing our Reminiscence Collection to support individuals with dementia and their carers.
- Creating loanable bags of items for individuals with visual impairments for whom their outdoor world has become unpredictable.
- Reaching out to individuals who are digitally excluded to promote our services to them.
- 'Poet In The City' helping people and places tell their stories across Exeter's libraries
- Launching a Reading Friends scheme aimed at new parents, tackling the social isolation many are feeling at this time.

## Can you help us?

## Contact us about our recovery and renewal work

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**Find out more** by visiting [librariesunlimited.org.uk](http://librariesunlimited.org.uk)



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