The Library is the Place:
Information, Recreation, Inspiration

EIFL Public Access Webinar July 19th 2023
Structure of the Sector

- 330 public libraries (urban, rural, island)
- 23 mobile libraries
- 1600+ staff
- 765,000 registered users (14.8% of population)
- 17 million visits p.a. (pre-COVID)
- Integrated highly valued NATIONAL service (as per all surveys!)
- Government? Dept of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
- Delivery? 30 local authorities, represented in City and County Managers Association
- Strategy implementation? Libraries Development Committee, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)
- Coordination? Libraries Development, LGMA
- Input and direction? 3 Strategy Committees, various WGs
Public Access in Libraries

• All libraries internet-connected
• Hardware mix: PCs, latops, tablets
• Different speeds, different capacities across local authorities
• Increasingly digitally skilled staff
Role of Libraries in National Broadband Ecosystem?

• Key provider of public access and skills training
• Major national and local government investment in 2018 – desktops, laptops, printers
• Continuing investment ever since – tablets, makerspaces, digital recording, sensory equipment – funded however we can
• Increasing recognition that public access is crucial to government policy and achieving objectives
• Libraries seen as delivery partner in SDGs, digital inclusion and media literacy/disinformation frameworks
• New strategy = new opportunities
What are the key lessons learnt and challenges faced in providing public access to ICT in libraries?

How has the use of public access technology in libraries changed over the years?

How does public access to ICT change library services?

Who are the users of public access technology in libraries?

How do people use public access technology in libraries?

What are the impacts of public access to ICT in libraries and how to measure them?
Strategy Development

- Strategy Working Group set up: DRCD, Directors of Service, County Librarians, LGMA
- External facilitator brought in to develop and run consultation
- Reporting into the Libraries Development Committee

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<tr>
<th>Strategy Consultation</th>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>stakeholder organisation surveys returned</td>
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<td>Two key stakeholder focus groups with 23 organisations</td>
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<td>Key stakeholder interviews</td>
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<td>2,993</td>
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<td>returned questionnaires</td>
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<td>Focus groups with over 300 members of staff</td>
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<td>Feedback from government departments</td>
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<th>Workshops</th>
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<td>Workshop with Local Authority Directors of Service</td>
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<td>Workshop with young people under 18</td>
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<td>Workshop with City and County Librarians</td>
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<td>Workshop with Irish language stakeholders (as Gaeilge/in Irish)</td>
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Our Vision

Ireland’s public libraries are leaders in enabling and supporting all people across all communities to be informed, connected, literate individuals, skilled for life.

Our Mission

To enrich the lives of people and communities in Ireland by providing universal access to information and resources to promote reading and enjoyment, lifelong learning, life skills, education and cultural engagement.
Our Values

- Quality and Excellence
- Trustworthiness and Integrity
- Intellectual Freedom
- Civic Participation
- Universal Accessibility
- Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity
- Creativity, Innovation, and Imagination
Theme One: People

1. Reading and Literacy is at the Heart of What We Do
   - Increased bookfund
   - Irish languages
   - Bookclubs
   - PLR

2. Libraries for All
   - Increase active use
   - Opening hours and MOL
   - Programmes: HI@YL, Little Library

3. Skills for Life
   - Digital skills, media literacy, health, business, financial literacy, green literacy
Theme Two: Spaces

4. Library as the Centre of the Community
   • Increase visitors
   • User-centred design
   • Local Economic and Community Plans

5. Our Buildings
   • Capital programme
   • Standards and benchmarks

6. Sustainability and Climate Action
   • Buildings
   • Vehicles
   • SDGs
   • Home energy saving kits
Theme Three: Connections

7. Our Digital Offer
- Library Management System
- Apps
- Library-owned eBook infrastructure
- Gigabit libraries network

8. Culture
- Online platform for access to digital cultural heritage
- Creative Ireland & Creative Communities

9. Cross-border and Transnational Co-operation
- European and international best practice
- EU Projects
- Peer learning programme
- Libraries NI and leadership
Three Strategic Enablers

10. Data Supported and User-focused Service Design
   - Data Dashboard
   - Impact Evaluation

11. Marketing
   - Promotions and communications training
   - National public libraries open day

12. Library Team
   - Workforce development
   - Leadership
   - Competencies, Recruitment and Retention
Launched Monday 17th

• https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/7f5616-public-libraries/w.gov.ie)