

CILIP Ireland response to the Consultation on the Draft Programme for Government

CILIP Ireland welcomes this consultation process and the opportunity to contribute to the Programme for Government. We have chosen to comment on the relevant outcomes and indicators in the consultation document which our profession can support and positively contribute to, rather than completing the online questionnaire.

CILIP is the largest professional body for information, library and knowledge management professionals in the United Kingdom. CILIP's objective is to put library and information skills and professional values at the heart of a democratic, equal and prosperous information society. CILIP Ireland represents members of CILIP in Northern Ireland. CILIP Ireland supports the professional development and enhancement of skill sets and standards of our membership in Northern Ireland; facilitating a highly skilled, diverse library and information workforce to meet the current and future needs of business, communities and the public. Our members represent a wide range of innovative and creative information, knowledge and library sectors, including academic, corporate, public, private and the third sector.

Libraries make a positive and extremely valuable contribution throughout society and consequently have a vital role to play in supporting Government to achieve the stated outcomes of this Draft Programme for Government. We believe libraries, librarians and information professionals are more relevant and necessary than ever to provide guidance and advice on accessing the ever increasing and complex sources of information that are available, as well as providing safe public spaces for all sectors of society. We are supportive of the outcome based approach and underlying purpose of improving wellbeing for all with a focus on the benefit for individuals and society. Working collaboratively and in partnership is a central tenet of our professional ethos. CILIP feel communities, society and the economy benefit from access to information, knowledge and skills. And whilst the breadth of our profession means we can speak to all of the outcomes and indicators, by way of illustration, we have outlined examples demonstrating how libraries and information professionals in Northern Ireland deliver on targets set out in the Draft Programme for Government document.

Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy

Indicator: Increased innovation in the economy: Rate of innovation activity (% of companies engaging in innovation activity)

The vast developments in the information and technology landscapes have meant our roles have evolved from information custodians to information curators and educators. Our curatorial expertise and lead in teaching information literacy enable the accessibility of quality information, teaching and research. Open Access (OA) projects delivered by the libraries at both Queen's University and Ulster University underpin world class research and innovation.

These projects ensure access to research which is free of charge and exempt from most copyright and licensing restrictions. It enables researchers to share their work internationally,

makes research easier to discover online and provides a good return on public spending. Access to research literature is key for innovative enterprises that will play an important role in creating a strong and competitive economy.

Outcome 3: We have a more equal society

Indicator: Reduced educational inequality: Gap between % non-FSME school leavers and % FSME school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and Maths

CILIP advocates for the difference that a good school library makes to student attainment. There is an evidence base illustrating the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes and personal development. There is a clear link between positive attitudes towards reading and scoring well on reading assessments.

CILIP Ireland believes the school library has a valuable role to play in encouraging students to develop a love for reading and increase reading attainment. ‘Accelerated Reader’ is a useful strategy employed by school libraries to assist in this key task. This computerised reading management program assesses the reading level of students, quizzes them on their comprehension after reading a book and provides a variety of reports for teachers.

According to an independent study by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Durham University, ‘Accelerated Reader’ produces ‘particularly positive effects’. In a joint publication in 2015 they stated:

*“The internet-based programme increased the reading age of pupils by three additional months in just 22 weeks. The effect on low-income pupils was even greater, with their reading age improving by five additional months in the same amount of time”.*¹

Continued and increased investment in school libraries would enable further role out of valuable programmes such as this.

Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives

Indicator: Improve mental health: % population with GHQ12 scores >4 (signifying possible mental health problem)

CILIP highlights the evidence base for the health benefits accruing from library use. Specifically in relation to mental health it applauds the work of Libraries NI as the lead partner in the very successful Health in Mind project. Funded by Big Lottery the project reached circa 200,000 people via their network of 96 public libraries providing reading, learning and information to support positive mental health and wellbeing.

The Linen Hall Library has ongoing engagement with the Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, programme an annual event to mark World Mental Health Day, and with project funding facilitated a very successful creative writing and art project which included groups for people with mental health issues.

Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential

¹http://www.renlearn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Accelerated_Reader_Final.pdf

Indicator: Improved educational outcomes: % school leavers achieving at least level 2 including English and Maths

CILIP believe poor literacy and numeracy stand in the way of children and young people achieving their potential. Good school libraries are an integral part of building these skills. School librarians support and deliver a broad range of reader development programmes to encourage reading for pleasure. For example, the NI Book Award was a scheme developed by two school librarians who sought to create a community of readers amongst Northern Ireland's young people through a local book award which was led by young people. Bringing reading for enjoyment into the spotlight was the primary purpose. This programme is an example of how libraries can contribute positively to the education of children and increase literacy levels. This would have an exponential benefit to the percentage of children achieving level 2 and above in English by school leaving age.

Indicator: Improved cultural participation: % engaging in arts/cultural activities in the past year

In addition to the heritage libraries within Libraries NI which provide local access to culture, Northern Ireland benefits from having a number of arts and cultural centres which promote cultural participation. The Linen Hall Library is both: a working library which also has a full arts and cultural programme throughout each year, demonstrating that libraries have multiple roles. The Linen Hall's programme links to significant events and anniversaries, and showcases the library's unique collections. As the Linen Hall prides itself on being a neutral space the programme is diverse and inclusive, and is an excellent example of addressing barriers to participation in arts and cultural activities. Recent programming for the Decade of Centenaries has concerned women in war, and the stretcher bearers of the First World War.

Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs

Indicator: Improved skills profile of the population: Proportion of local graduates from local institutions in professional or management occupations or in further study six months after graduation

CILIP believe that professional associations are a key asset in improving the skills profile of the population. CILIP is committed to developing the skills and expertise of the library and information sector and supports its membership at all stages of their careers. This includes accrediting higher education institutions delivering library and information courses across the UK. We believe a CILIP accredited programme is the best preparation for professional practice. All programmes are assessed using CILIP's Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB) which identifies the core knowledge and skills of the profession. The PKSB brings the areas of professional and technical expertise together with the generic skills and capabilities required by those in the library, information and knowledge management community. It also encompasses our ethics and values while placing value on the wider context both within the community and beyond. In Northern Ireland we accredit and support the Library and Information Management Postgraduate Diploma/Master of Science at Ulster University. The course draws on the direct experience of leaders in the library and information world to provide up-to-date and relevant insight into the key issues facing information services as they relate to the wider learning community, the strategic goals of the parent institution of participants and the promotion of lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society. It provides a first class academic foundation for professional practice, and is designed for library and information professionals in the public and private sectors, in schools, colleges or universities and in specialist libraries or information units.

CILIP's international recognised levels of Professional Registration are also integral to our furthering the skill set of our membership. They demonstrate commitment to personal development and the profession. Professional Registration is an excellent way to increase professional standing and show colleagues, employers and potential future employers that we are skilled and reflective practitioners.

Outcome 9: We are a shared society that respects diversity

Indicator: Increased shared space: % who think all leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres in their areas are “shared and open” to both Protestants and Catholics

Libraries are uniquely positioned at the heart of local communities, schools and campuses. They enjoy a level of trust as sources of knowledge, offering equal access in neutral and shared spaces. They foster and encourage a sense of community and open up new possibilities for community engagement and the sustainment of a vibrant society.

Libraries NI delivers its services through a network of 96 branch libraries, two heritage libraries, mobile libraries, a Homecall service for those who are housebound as well as outreach and online services. According to Libraries NI figures 89% of the population live within two miles of a public library service point. They are embedded within communities and used by people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. Libraries NI public consultations bear out that libraries are seen as shared spaces which contribute to community cohesion.

A number of local libraries are thriving in part due to use by established and emerging migrant communities. CILIP Ireland queries whether, given that Northern Ireland is an increasingly multi-cultural society, this indicator referencing Protestants and Catholics may be too narrow and could be revisited.

In addition, the Education Library Service supports cultural diversity projects in the classroom by providing information for teachers on the wide range of material available and by lending packs of resources for classroom learning.

Outcome 10: We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society

Indicator: Increased reconciliation: % of the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society

Libraries across all sectors are important custodians of local archives, heritage and special collections, all of which are key resources in establishing and maintaining the cultural identity of communities. A wealth of archives and collections are held in public, academic and specialist libraries across Northern Ireland. These resources can be used by a wide range of organisations, artists and researchers to facilitate events, programmes, projects and research relating to cultural identity.

In 2016 the Linen Hall Library ran a successful Together: Building United Community scheme wherein 50 children attended creative writing and drama classes. The challenging issues of bullying and cultural diversity were examined in a safe and supportive space and the children gained insight and respect not only for each other as individuals but also for their respective cultures and backgrounds.

Outcome 11: We have high quality public services

Indicator: Improve the quality of the healthcare experience: % of people who are satisfied with health and social care

In 2017 CILIP launches its 'A Million Decisions' campaign. Every day more than a million decisions are made in the healthcare sector that have deep and lasting impact on the lives of patients, their carers, families, business and communities. The campaign is reflective of the importance of the skills of information, library and knowledge professionals in underpinning the healthcare sector and enabling the right, evidence-based decisions to be made by healthcare professionals.

Currently, the Medical & HSC Library offers library and information services to Health and Social Care (HSC) and Public Safety (PS) staff throughout Northern Ireland. The library is run by Queen's University in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The Medical & HSC Library ran an impact survey from 1st to 24th June 2016 to help to identify the value of the library service to HSC staff. The case studies provided strongly highlighted the importance of evidence-based practice and the valuable role played by the library in providing the information that underpins this. The provision of this service assists Health and Social Care Professionals in accessing information and knowledge and consequently enhances the standard of service they can provide. This in turn increases the satisfaction levels among the general public in the services provided.

Outcome 14: We give our children and young people the best start in life

Indicator: % children at appropriate stage of development in their immediate pre-school year

Libraries support learning from an early age through the provision of access to books and other reading material and the delivery of a wide range of programmes. The Rhythm and Rhyme programme is free and comprises stories, rhymes and songs delivered on a regular basis by Libraries NI staff (or held in partnership with SureStart) for parents, carers and pre-school children (aged 0-4 years). The aim of the programme is to improve the language, concentration, listening and communication skills of children before they enter formal education. According to most recently available figures from Libraries NI 90,670 children attended sessions in 2015/16.

Indicator: % schools found to be good or better

School libraries are unique in their ability to support teaching and learning. The resources made available to pupils using school libraries include high quality and wide ranging library resources which have been carefully selected to meet a range of needs including age, learning style and ability. School librarians enhance the learning of pupils by bringing expert knowledge of these resources to enrich and support the curriculum. They have a wide and current knowledge of available books and online sources, and have the skills to develop and deliver information literacy teaching.

In 2015, CILIP commissioned the University of Salford to undertake research² to identify what evidence exists to support the employment of trained and professionally registered

²Brettell, A., Maden, M. (2015) What evidence is there to support the employment of trained and professionally registered library, information and knowledge workers? A systematic scoping review of the evidence. Available at: http://www.cilip.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/value_of_trained_lik_workers_final_211215.pdf

library, information and knowledge professionals. This research identified that school library and information professionals contribute to:

- Improved student achievement
- Positive pupil engagement
- Improved reading skills
- Facilitating student learning

All of these positive contributions will impact on schools being deemed good or better.