

# Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire  
County Council

## Library Fines and Charges Policy effective 9th April 2018

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Department: Culture, Communities and Business Services

Date of assessment: 03/04/2018

### Description of current service/policy

Charges apply to reservations and requests, hiring of DVDs, music CDs and audiobooks, and replacement costs for lost or damaged items. Fines levied for the late return of items can be avoided but in addition special rates apply to under 18s and concessions ensure that everyone can access services. It remains free to join, borrow books and use computers or public Wi-Fi. Also online resources, eBooks and eMagazines are free to use. The management team will review the policy every three years with the level of fines and charges reviewed annually.

Geographical impact: All Hampshire

### Description of proposed change

The proposed changes from April 2018 affect adult customers and apply specifically to maximum accrued overdue charges, the hire of audiobooks, requests for items not held in Hampshire's stock, Reading Group Membership, Drama Group membership, Music membership and performance sets hired by music groups. The increase in charges for national inter library loans, and for orchestral and vocal sets was identified using a comparison with the rates charged by other library services but also an exercise to identify the full costs involved to deliver these specific services including staff time, transportation, postage, etc. In addition annual price inflationary increases have informed the increase.

### Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

### Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? No

No consultation has been carried out, however extensive benchmarking with other Local Authorities has been undertaken. Any changes will be communicated in advance of implementation to provide adequate notice to customers.

<b>Statutory considerations</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<p><b>Age:</b> Low</p>	<p>Age - The proportion of Hampshire library customers aged 60 and over is 32% and compares with 26% for the Hampshire population. The proportion of children (0-17) is 27% for all Hampshire library customers and 21% for the population of Hampshire. Broadly speaking there is good representation of all age ranges and therefore the impact on the adults is spread across the customer profile. Levying fines for the late return of items encourages customers to bring back books on time, making copies available for others to borrow and increasing accessibility to stock. Customers can opt to receive emails reminding them of return dates and allowing them to avoid fines and charges. Alternatively customers can choose to borrow eBook formats where there are no fines and charges applied eg eAudio books.</p>	
<p><b>Disability:</b> Low</p>	<p>Disability – It is not possible to extract data about the disabilities of library customers but, due to the availability of concessions, it is assessed that the impact of the changes to fines and charges is low. Reductions apply for those receiving disability living allowance, personal independence payment or with verification of a long standing disability. Supporting evidence might be a Gateway card, Disability card or letter from a GP, optician, etc.</p>	

<b>Sexual orientation:</b> Neutral		
<b>Race:</b> Neutral		
<b>Religion and belief:</b> Neutral		
<b>Gender reassignment:</b> Neutral		
<b>Gender:</b> Neutral		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership:</b> Neutral		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity:</b> Neutral		
<b>Other policy considerations</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>

<p><b>Poverty:</b> Low</p>	<p>Loans returned or renewed on time cost nothing. However the library service aims to support people at risk of social exclusion and to satisfy this requirement the policy retains reduced overdue charges for children and vulnerable adults. Home Library Service customers are not charged fines or fees because they rely on volunteers. The small increase in the maximum fines levied for adult and children loans are to reflect that in the majority of cases of the loan is lost and not returned.</p>	
<p><b>Rurality:</b> Neutral</p>		

## Any other information

There is an annual audiobook membership available to reduce the cost to customers who borrow physical books in this format on a regular basis or the option to use the eAudio Book service for free.