

# Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire  
County Council

## Library Service Staff Consultation – Staff Impacts

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Department: Culture, Communities and Business  
Services

Date of  
assessment: 01/12/2020

### Description of current service/policy

166 FTE Library Team Assistants (LTAs) support the operation of 48 Libraries in Hampshire. The Service also employs a 0.12 FTE Sunday Team Leader at Winchester Discovery Centre and 3 FTE Events Officers. There are currently 28 different sets of opening hours, which include a range of opening times including evenings and Sundays. Events Officers plan and organise a range of paid events over one or two geographical areas within Hampshire. The opening hours vary from 11.5-62 hours per week depending on the size of the library.

Geographical impact: All  
Hampshire

### Description of proposed change

The closure of 8 libraries and the reduction in opening hours in all others, together with the standardisation of contracts will mean

-A reduction of 16.55 FTE LTAs overall

-Changes in working days

-Changes in working times/hours

-Changes to lunchtime length (30 minutes)

-Changes to work base

-A higher proportion of roles will work Saturdays, due to a reduced number of posts

-Staff more likely to work in different libraries within their cluster on a 2 weekly roster basis creating a clear dual workplace, due to increased cluster working

Events Team changes will result in:

-Reduction from 3FTE to 1FTE Events Officer, based mainly in Winchester

-Changes to tasks within role

# Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers HCC Staff (and partners)

## Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Yes

This staff consultation is the culmination of 2 years' of staff and public engagement, including a staff conference in April 2019, further staff briefings and discussions, a 10-week public consultation from 9 Jan-18 Mar 2020 (which provided staff and volunteers the opportunity to respond), and a 2-week public consultation in Aug 2020 specifically on opening hours (again providing opportunity for a staff and volunteer response).

Staffing proposals were then drawn up, and these formed part of a 45 day staff consultation which took place between 21st Sept and 5th Nov 2020. The results of this consultation have been reviewed and changes to the proposals made where appropriate.

<b>Statutory considerations</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
	<p>31% of Library Service staff are aged 55 and over, compared with 27% for Hampshire County Council.</p> <p>Mobility between branches It is possible that older members of staff are more likely to have mobility issues, which could impact their ability to travel between branches.</p> <p>From a business point of view it is important that staff are able to work across different branches (see additional information). Where concerns about travel have been raised as part of consultation feedback it is linked to issues of disability or childcare rather than age. One individual raised a concern that shift patterns would not coincide with their older person's free bus travel, but this colleague also made a successful application for EVR.</p>	

Age:  
Low

#### EVR

76 staff in scope applied for EVR and applications have provisionally been accepted from 50 people. 30 (60%) of those recommended for acceptance are aged over 55 and, of these 30, 12 are aged over 65. This is disproportionate to the age profile of the service, where 31% of staff are aged over 55.

EVR recommendations have been made following careful analysis of a range of selection criteria. Criteria included personal circumstances and a high number of those in the 55+ age bracket cited either personal health reasons or caring responsibilities. Overall, whilst disproportionate the impact is likely to be positive for those who wish to leave.

#### Covid-19

Older staff may be more likely to be susceptible to Covid-19 and therefore may have greater concerns about traveling between branches for the duration of the pandemic.

This consultation relates to the long term structure of the Library Service which is in place beyond the expected horizon of the pandemic. For the duration of the pandemic, Libraries have robust risk assessments in place and are Covid-19 secure. As is currently the case, where temporary adjustments are required to working practices in light of Covid-19 risk assessments, these take precedence and are reviewed regularly and in accordance with relevant government guidance.

7% of Library Service staff have disclosed having a disability, compared with 3.5% for Hampshire County Council. Of the 279 individuals in scope of the consultation, 18

individuals identified themselves as having a disability.

All staff in scope have been asked to identify their top three role preferences as part of the consultation exercise. As part of this exercise, colleagues were encouraged to include any personal comments or adjustments they would require in order to carry out the role including reasonable adjustments which would be required.

9 individuals made a specific request for a Reasonable Adjustment. Of these:

- 3 individuals have had adjustments accommodated
- 2 individuals were successful in their EVR applications so did not require adjustments
- 2 individuals did not require an adjustment based on the role they were matched to
- 1 individual's requested adjustment remains outstanding, further discussions are required once the post has been confirmed
- 1 individual has a range of adjustments in place of which one could not be accommodated due to business need; this will be discussed in further detail with the individual once the post has been confirmed

#### EVR

EVR selection criteria included consideration of personal circumstances.

Of the 50 EVR applications accepted 27 people citing Health and Wellbeing issues amongst their reasons for requesting EVR. Overall, the impact is likely to be positive for those who wish to leave.

#### Shift patterns

Some of the proposed shift patterns

could have a detrimental impact on certain individuals; for example, where their disabilities mean they are unable to work consecutive days, require shorter shifts or fewer hours overall.

Rosters have been carefully prepared to include a mixture of shift patterns and sizes. Reasonable adjustments to roles have been made to accommodate certain specific requirements (see section 5 (b) of Consultation Response document.)

#### Mobility between branches

A requirement to work at different branches could be difficult for individuals with certain disabilities due to their difficulty in finding suitable transportation. Others may need to stay at one branch due to the equipment they require and the difficulties which would ensue if this had to be replicated across multiple branches. For some people, working and multiple branches may exacerbate their condition (e.g. anxiety).

From a business point of view it is important that staff are able to work across different branches (see additional information). However, where disabilities mean that staff have difficulty in fulfilling this requirement the requirement to travel has been reduced. New Equipment has been provided in an alternative branch as a reasonable adjustment in one case. See section 5 (b) of Consultation Response document for further information.

#### Reasonable adjustments (existing)

Some people may already have reasonable adjustments in their existing roles which are not shown on the proposed roles in the new rosters.

Where colleagues have already got

#### **Disability:**

Low

reasonable adjustments in place, these have been reviewed to ensure that they remain reasonable under the new structure. In some case, where reasonable adjustments cannot be satisfied but the colleague has requested EVR, this has been agreed. Elsewhere, existing reasonable adjustments have been upheld except for in one situation where an individual had a range of reasonable adjustments in place and one of these could not be upheld. In this situation additional adjustments have been put in place to mitigate.

#### Lunch Breaks

Shorter lunchbreaks may present difficulties for colleagues with certain disabilities, particularly those related to a requirement for medication, fatigue and digestive issues.

The requirement for shorter lunch breaks is already in place across some branches and, from a business point of view, it is important that lunch breaks are shortened to protect the number hour hours available within the structure and provide full time positions. (see additional information). Where this was required as a reasonable adjustment, 1 amendment has been made.

#### Caring for disabled relatives

Whilst not strictly a protected characteristic of their own, some individuals who have caring responsibilities outside of the workplace which may influence their availability and ability to fulfil shifts in the new roster.

The requirement for some staff to provide care to disabled relatives is a factor which has been taken into account when making decisions on EVR applications. Section 5 (b) of the

	Consultation Response document details the changes which have been made relating to caring responsibilities.	
<b>Sexual orientation:</b>  Neutral		
<b>Race:</b>  Neutral		
<b>Religion and belief:</b>  Neutral		
<b>Gender reassignment:</b>  Neutral		
	<p>The Library Service employs 483 staff, of which 87% are female and 13% are male. A key consideration is that women are generally more likely than men to spend time on caring responsibilities (particularly in terms of childcare and caring for vulnerable relatives). However, 47% of library customers identify as female (compared to 25% who identify as male and 28% who either have not provided gender information or who identify as 'other') and therefore it is also likely that the hours that women choose to visit libraries might naturally overlap with the hours that female staff may find it more difficult to work.</p> <p>All staff in scope have been asked to identify their top three role preferences as part of the consultation exercise. As part of this exercise, colleagues were encouraged to include any personal comments or adjustments they would</p>	

require in order to carry out the role.

In addressing the ability to make adjustments on the basis of childcare, priority has been given to single parents or parents with children in year 6 and below (or with commensurate needs).

Flexibility/part time roles and school/childcare hours:

The previous operating model contained a mix of full and part time positions with a range of shift sizes and hours. With regard to part time hours, this may have a range of impacts depending on individual circumstances. In some cases, colleagues may prefer their shifts to be compressed over fewer days (thus restricting the need for childcare and associated travel). Other colleagues are in an opposite situation and prefer hours to be spread across the week to enable them to work their hours during school time and provide their own childcare, feeling that they would be financially impacted through needing to fund additional childcare if this were not possible.

There is a business need to standardise shift patterns as described in the 'other information' section below. The varied nature of impacts depending on individual family circumstances indicates that there is no one approach to shift patterns that would suit all parents with childcare responsibilities. 5 posts were amended to respond to specific request for adjustments to take account of childcare responsibilities (see section 5 (b) of Consultation Response document.)

Saturday working:

Increased Saturday working may impact on parents of young children –



partly as it may impact family time and partly if the parent is the sole carer it may be more difficult to find childcare at the weekends.

In the previous operating model, 20% of posts worked every Saturday. Owing to the reduction of overall hours on a branch-by-branch basis, some shifts have increased Saturday hours to enable full time positions (37 hours) to be available in a 5 day working week. Therefore, a balance has been struck between an appropriate mix of full/part time roles and an increased requirement to work Saturdays. The proposed rosters circulated at the outset of the consultation included 30% of posts which worked every Saturday.

The requirement to work on Sundays (in both Andover and Winchester) has been eliminated in the new structure.

**Gender:**

Low

Saturday working is already a contractual requirement in the Library Service as Saturdays are amongst the busiest days from a customer perspective; operating hours need to meet customer demand. Further information on Saturday working is provided in the 'other information' section below. The rosters have been designed to protect full time workers from working every Saturday and have ensure that part time workers who do have two consecutive non-working days per week, where possible.

Where colleagues have highlighted increased Saturday working as a concern and have provided clear evidence as to why they would not be able to meet this requirement, efforts have been made to adjust posts. This may be through a reduction in Saturday hours and an increase in other hours through the week

(although this has not always been possible where there are not the hours available or this would have a knock-on effect on other staff), a reduction in overall hours including a reduction in Saturday hours (if those Saturday hours can be assigned to another role or used to create a new Saturday post) and, if neither of these is a viable option, the identification of a suitable alternative post which accommodates the desired number of hours with reduced Saturday working. Overall, as a result of feedback provided in the consultation the percentage of posts working every Saturday has reduced from 30% to 26%, with the rate of change varying between cluster to ensure overall alignment.

Travel to alternative branches:  
Some comments have been received about the difficulties in managing school drop-offs with a 9am or 9.30am start, particularly where staff are working in a range of branches and may have further to travel. A small number of comments have been received about the need to go home at lunchtime to provide childcare.

The range of rotas give a number of options for parents with childcare responsibilities – for example, start times of either 9 or 9.30am (to provide scope for school drop-offs) and the retention of part time shifts to support working parents. Where colleagues highlighted working time as a childcare concern, adjustments have been made where possible.

With regards travel to alternative branches, staff are already contractually required to work from up to 6 branches as part of a mobility clause which was introduced into contracts in 2017. More information about why mobility between branches

is a requirement is provided within the 'additional information' section below.

Dual-workbases provide more certainty on deployment, so parents and those with caring responsibilities can plan arrangements in advance. Wherever possible requests for alterations have been accommodated, including later start times and altered shift patterns. Further information is provided in section 5(b) of the Consultation response.

EVR applications:  
98% of EVR applications recommended for acceptance are from women, which is a slightly higher proportion than the demographic make up of the service (87% female).

No adverse equalities impact has been identified – either in terms of the women who have been recommended for acceptance or the men that have had their application refused.

**Marriage and civil partnership:**

Neutral

<p><b>Pregnancy and maternity:</b></p> <p>Low</p>	<p>The Library Service has a number of staff who are pregnant or on maternity or paternity leave at any one time. Comments made in respect of gender impacts may also apply to pregnant colleagues and parents of babies. No pregnancy related requests have been raised in EVR applications.</p> <p>All staff were invited to participate in the staff consultation, staff who are away from work on maternity, paternity or adoption leave have been contacted individually to ensure they have the opportunity to participate and to ask any questions. Hampshire County Council policy has applied ensuring that colleagues absent on maternity leave have been slotted into their first preference.</p>	
<p><b>Other policy considerations</b></p>	<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p><b>Mitigation</b></p>
	<p>Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week. Most of the staff in scope of the consultation are paid at Grade C of the County Council's salary scale and 77% of Library Service staff are part time.</p> <p>Cost of transport between branches: The cost of public transport to travel between branches or to parking at a branch can be high. Not all branches have free parking on site.</p> <p>During the staff consultation all staff in scope were asked to identify their top three role preferences were encouraged to include any personal comments or adjustments they would require in order to carry out the role</p>	

including issues relating to travelling between branches.

Any staff continuing to work for the Library Service from an alternative workbase that is outside of their dual workbase would be able to apply for travel assistance, should the criteria set out in the Hampshire County Council Expenses Policy be met. In eight cases the distance between two branches exceeds 10 miles. In two of these cases (where the distance is over 24 miles) the travel assistance policy would apply. In two cases the roles have not been filled and in the remaining six instances, no concerns have been raised by individuals preferencing these posts (for example, because they live between the two branches identified).

**Poverty:**

Low

Changes in hours:

Some staff may be in the position of preferencing posts which are substantially different to the hours they currently work and this could have an adverse financial impact on them.

Posts in the new structure have been designed to match previous posts as closely as possible, with efforts made to preserve contract sizes and a balance of full and part time posts as described in the sections above. Efforts have been made to match people with similar sized posts – for example, where multiple people preferenced the same post, the individual's existing contract size was one of the factors taken into account. In some cases changes have been made following feedback to ensure that individuals did not experience financial hardship. Comments around the change in shift size was one of the factors behind the West A cluster being revised in its entirety. Whilst not a business priority, the Library Service

has been sympathetic to increased childcare costs as well as second employment and has made adjustments to shifts in light of feedback, where possible.

Some Library staff live and work in rural areas; they could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week, which may have a higher impact for staff using public transport. Most of the staff in scope of the consultation are paid at Grade C of the County Council's salary scale and 77% of Library Service staff are part time.

Branches are already divided into 14 different clusters to support the deployment of staff. These clusters included up to 6 alternative Libraries that staff already work across in addition to their base location. For the staff consultation preferencing exercise staff were placed into one of 9 ringfence clusters which contain up to 6 libraries.

Any staff continuing to work for the Library Service from an alternative workbase that is outside of their dual workbase would be able to apply for travel assistance, should the criteria set out in the Hampshire County Council Expenses Policy be met. In eight cases the distance between two branches exceeds 10 miles. In two of these cases (where the distance is over 24 miles) the travel assistance policy would apply. In two cases the roles have not been filled and in the remaining six instances, no concerns have been raised by individuals preferencing these posts (for example, because they live between the two branches identified).

Availability of public transport between

**Rurality:**

Low

	<p>branches: The cost of public transport to travel between branches or to parking at a branch can be high. Not all branches have free parking on site.</p> <p>During the staff consultation all staff in scope were asked to identify their top three role preferences and were encouraged to include any personal comments or adjustments they would require in order to carry out the role including issues relating to travelling between branches and access to transport.</p>	
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## Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

### Any other information

#### General comments and underpinning principles

This current staff consultation has been prompted by changes to the services delivered by Hampshire Libraries, most particularly the number of libraries open to the public and the opening times of these branches, as part of achieving £1.76 million in savings across the Service. With a reduction in the portfolio of just over 20% of branches (including 8 county-council managed libraries and 4 community-run, council supported libraries) and a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% together with a standardisation of all remaining hours, it is clear that the changes to the roles of customer-facing staff who facilitate these services will be significant. However, throughout the process, managers involved in designing the proposed changes have sought to achieve a balance between the needs of customers, the needs of staff and the needs of the business. With this in mind, key principles which were applied to the design of the rosters included:

- Notwithstanding the significant overall reduction in available hours across the Service and in individual libraries, existing rosters were used to form the basis of the new roster design so that, where possible, individuals could see posts which were broadly similar to those they currently occupied. This meant some variation between clusters. The 2-weekly roster pattern was retained.
- A decision was made to offer Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy to all staff in scope to minimise any potential compulsory redundancy situations.
- Efforts were made to retain a balance of full time and part time posts. In order to preserve good sizes of contract (including full 37 hour posts), lunchbreaks have been shortened, roles cover multiple branches and there is increased Saturday working.
- A need for additional pre-opening hours in some locations has been recognised and therefore start times are either 9.00am or 9.30am – offering a variety of shift patterns.

- The Library Service is a customer facing service. This means that opening times are based on customer need. Saturdays are amongst the busiest days from a customer perspective and therefore the Library Service is keeping every library open on a Saturday, some with slightly increased opening times, to ensure customers who work on weekdays have an opportunity to access a library. Saturday working is already a contractual requirement of all Library Team Assistants. A design principle of the new rosters was that no full-time role should work every Saturday (to ensure that full time posts are able to be carried out in a five-day working week). A number of part time roles included working every Saturday (either half day or full day) but where this was the case, efforts were made to ensure that the part time role had two full consecutive non-working days within the working week.
- Working across multiple branches is a key business requirement, the reasons for which are described in Section 7 of the Briefing Pack. Current Library Team Assistant contracts all include a mobility clause requiring mobility between branches.
- Opportunity has been provided for individuals in scope to make comment or highlight personal circumstances which may impact their ability to carry out a role. These personal circumstances have all been considered and, where possible and appropriate, amendments to proposals have been made.

#### Summary of consultation outcomes

- 292 individuals were in scope.
- Following workforce changes including leavers during the consultation, 281 individuals remain in scope and had the opportunity to preference a role in the new structure, as well as apply for voluntary redundancy.
- Of 76 applicants, 50 Individuals (26.97 FTE) have been accepted for voluntary redundancy
- 205 Library Team Assistants have been matched to either their first, second or third preferences and 1 Events Officer has been matched to the available role.
- 20 individuals were not matched to one of their top three preferences, but have been matched to a suitable alternative role
- 48 roles remain vacant within the structure – these will be offered to any displaced staff who were not within the original ringfence, or any Library Team Assistants on Fixed Term Contracts before being recruited to through normal mechanisms.
- No compulsory redundancies will be required as all staff in scope have either been matched to a suitable role or have been accepted for voluntary redundancy.
- No further competitive selection process (e.g. interviews) is required for permanent staff in scope of the review as information on preference forms has enabled all staff to be matched to a suitable role.

#### Summary of changes:

Overall, 61 roles have been changed in response to feedback (22% of the roles proposed have therefore been amended to a greater or lesser degree). These lists summarise the changes made and the reasons for change:

#### Type of Change

- 5 x AM/PM time swap
- 20 x Location Change
- 1 x Post removed
- 3 x Saturday only posts added



- 10 x Saturday working reduction
- 38 x shifts added or removed
- 10 x change of start time

#### Reasons for change

- 1 x Consultation feedback - dual work base
- 10 x Consultation feedback - reduce Saturday working
- 1 x Reasonable adjustment – Disability
- 2 x Requested adjustment - Caring responsibilities
- 5 x Requested adjustment - Child care
- 3 x Requested adjustment - Health/Wellbeing
- 3 x Service improvement - Business Need
- 3 x Service improvement - Roster correction
- 12 x To accommodate another adjustment (10 of these are vacant posts)
- 6 x To increase hours for a more comparable role
- 5 x Alton roster re-worked based on Consultation Feedback and followed by a re-preferencing exercise for the whole Ringfence
- 16 x West A roster re-worked based on feedback and followed by a re-preferencing exercise for the whole Ringfence

For clarity, a distinction has been drawn between ‘reasonable adjustments’ (following the definitions within the Equality Act relating to adjustments which have been requested linked to staff members with disabilities) and ‘requested adjustments’ (these being adjustments requested through consultation feedback which may or may not have connections with Equality Impacts).

#### Reasonable Adjustments

18 individuals identified themselves as having a disability, 9 of those made a specific request for a Reasonable Adjustment.

- 3 individuals have had adjustments accommodated
- 2 individuals were successful in their EVR applications so did not require adjustments
- 2 individuals did not require an adjustment based on the role they were matched to
- 1 individual’s requested adjustment remains outstanding, further discussions are required once the post has been confirmed
- 1 individual has a range of adjustments in place of which one could not be accommodated due to business need; this will be discussed in further detail with the individual once the post has been confirmed

#### Requested Adjustments

A further 39 individuals requested an adjustment to meet their personal needs, including but not limited to child-care commitments, caring responsibilities, commitments to other employment, wellbeing needs etc.

- 18 individuals have had adjustments accommodated
- 9 individuals were successful in their EVR application so did not require adjustments
- 4 individuals did not require the adjustment based on the role they were matched to
- 8 individuals remain outstanding, further discussions are needed with the individuals once the posts have been confirmed.

In response to feedback, rosters in two areas (West A and East B) were substantially revised following the publication of the staff consultation in September.