

# Evidence on the use of volunteers in libraries and on volunteer-run libraries

Scottish Libraries and Information Council

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## Executive summary

This report provides the results of a short literature review on the use of volunteers in libraries and volunteer-run libraries.

The evidence is drawn from a variety of sources including materials and examples supplied by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), a search undertaken by the IDOX information service with further follow up searches through Google. The evidence relates mainly to the UK and in particular to England and Wales where there has been a steady growth in volunteer-run libraries in recent years.

The types of evidence reviewed include government reports, articles from newspapers and journals, blogs and website articles, and reports from particular interest groups.

The report describes the context in which volunteers are being used in libraries: highlighting the move in both England and Scotland towards devolving more power to local communities and at the same time the tightening resources as a result of budget cuts for local authorities leading to the need to reduce costs where they can which has put pressure on public libraries.

The report then provides a number of examples of innovative ways in which volunteers are being used in libraries in England, Scotland and the USA. These highlight the opportunities that can be provided for volunteers as well as the types of role they undertake to enhance library services.

The third section of the report sets out the evidence under two main headings: volunteers in libraries and volunteer-run and community managed libraries. The first of these describes some of the roles that volunteers undertake in libraries from practical tasks such as shelving books to assistance with various activities taking place in the library such as reading groups and computer support. It acknowledges that there can be challenges in using volunteers but also highlights the fact that there can be benefits for the volunteer, the library and the wider community in having volunteers undertake tasks that are additional to those of professional staff.

The second aspect looks at the pros and cons in having volunteer-run libraries. While there is recognition that having volunteer-run libraries can reduce overall costs for the local authority there are concerns about whether this will adversely affect low-income communities which may not have the same capacity to run their local library and most of the evidence suggests that even with volunteer-run libraries there should be some input from the local authority in terms of management and staffing.

The report concludes that while there are useful roles for volunteers to play within libraries, to supplement and support services being offered, volunteer-run libraries without professional inputs or links to the public library service are not the preferred option. However it recognises that in areas threatened with complete library closure this may seem like the only alternative.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2015, The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) commissioned Blake Stevenson to undertake a short literature review of the evidence on the use of volunteers in libraries. The review included evidence relating to volunteer-run libraries as well as evidence relating to the use of volunteers in libraries.
- 1.2 We undertook the following to identify relevant literature:
- a search run for us by the IDOX information service;
  - our own Google search;
  - follow up leads from the literature generated by the two above methods;
  - review of articles identified by SLIC and examples of volunteering in libraries in Scotland from the recently launched Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015–2020.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 The evidence sourced mainly relates to the UK and in particular England and Wales where there has been a steady growth in volunteer-run libraries over the past few years and hence more literature about it. We provide a list of the materials reviewed in Appendix 1.

### Context

- 1.4 As the evidence relates mainly to the UK, we start with a summary of the context for library provision in the UK:
- In England and Wales the main statutory requirement is set out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 which states that  
***“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”***
  - In Scotland the statutory legislation (Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and subsequent legislation) refers to having an ***“adequate library service”***
- Both of these phrases in bold are not clearly defined which allows for contention about what they actually mean.

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<sup>1</sup> Ambition and Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015–2020. Scottish Library and Information Council and Carnegie UK Trust, June 2015

- 1.5 In both England and Scotland the background context is a move towards devolving more power to local communities (in England the Localism Act 2011 and in Scotland the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill).
- 1.6 In addition, as a result of budget cuts local authorities are operating tighter or austerity budgets and consequently expenditure on public libraries has been put at risk. 324 libraries have closed since 2011 (many of these in England) and in order to manage increasing budget constraints, some local authorities have reduced opening hours or staff numbers. In some cases, this has led to local authorities and communities seeking alternative and creative ways to sustain library services which has led to 44.5% more volunteers in libraries across the UK.

### Types of evidence

- 1.7 The evidence falls into different categories in terms of its source. There is evidence from:
- reports from government departments, committees and non-governmental bodies (Arts Council England);
  - reports from groups with particular interest, for example the union, Unison, or the National Federation of Women's Institutes;
  - articles in newspapers and journals
  - blogs and website articles

## 2. Examples of innovative use of volunteers

- 2.1 There are many interesting examples of volunteers being used in creative ways in libraries. Some of these examples are in the UK, but we also identified examples of good practice elsewhere. A small selection of interesting practice is given below.
- 2.2 The national charity, The Reading Agency has established a Youth Innovation Network in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) and the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) which has received grant funding from the Social Action Fund. The initiative aims to work with local authority library services to develop national volunteering opportunities for young people aged 11–25 years to improve their skills and experience. The initiative also provides librarians with the resources and training necessary to engage young people and deliver successful volunteer programmes. Young people will benefit from opportunities to support staff performing a number of activities which include designing new services and engaging the community through social media.
- 2.3 Southwark Council has joined the initiative building on their current experience of undertaking volunteer programmes. Canada Water Library in Southwark has created opportunities for young people to help run the national Summer Reading Challenge providing training. Volunteers are presented with a Duke of Edinburgh Volunteering award on completion.
- 2.4 In the London Borough of Merton the local library service has established a partnership with the Volunteer Centre Merton to recruit and support volunteers to assist library staff in their role. Volunteers support staff through a number of activities and volunteer roles such as Heritage Research and Display Volunteer, Marketing Assistant, IT Trainer, Library Ambassador and Schools Library Service Volunteer which allow paid staff to focus on customer service and core professional duties. This volunteering model has been identified by Volunteering England as a good practice model that has increased the number of volunteering opportunities available but has remained sensitive towards the roles of paid staff.
- 2.5 Boris Johnson announced £100,000 worth of funding to develop a pan-London approach to increase the numbers of volunteers supporting libraries based on the Merton model of volunteering based on formal partnerships with local volunteer centres. The scheme is being developed with the Association of Chief Librarians (ALCL) and the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) as well as Merton Council.
- 2.6 Chattanooga Public Library in Tennessee has created meaningful opportunities for young people aged 12–18 to gain experience and improve their skills across a range of opportunities including running programmes for peers, programming assistant, and more informal opportunities such as craft creator or entertainer. The programmes involve

full training for all teens taking part, and mentorship of teens to lead their own library projects with the assistance of staff. Volunteers are supported to translate their experience into meaningful job-related terms so they can effectively explain the impact their service has had on the library and wider community.

- 2.7 In Scotland there are several interesting examples of the use of volunteers. In Dundee Central Library the Opportunities Hub was created to support those seeking access, skills and support to cope with the changes to Welfare Reform. The project created a dedicated space by refocusing and rebranding the Reference and Information Centre. Library staff who were already working closely with local agencies and groups in raising digital awareness are now part of a team who will shape the experience of people using the service. A volunteer coordinator works with library staff and partner organisations to ensure that libraries are recognised as being at the heart of digital inclusion in Dundee and a main point of contact for other agencies to direct clients to for advice and support.
- 2.8 In Glasgow the cancer charity Macmillan in partnership with Glasgow Libraries has established a volunteer-based service for members of the public who are affected by cancer to provide information and advice about services available to them. There is a volunteer co-ordinator who trains the volunteers and manages their work.
- 2.9 The next section sets out the evidence from the literature search about the use of volunteers in libraries.

## 3. The evidence

### Volunteers in libraries

- 3.1 Much of the literature examined highlights the fact that there has been a long tradition of volunteers being involved in libraries. This appears to be true not just of the UK but other countries such as Australia and the USA.
- 3.2 There is evidence on the benefits of volunteering in libraries both for the volunteer and for the library and the community served. For example, some of the benefits for the volunteer are summarised in the National Library for Australia website as follows:
- being active and involved in the community;
  - sharing your skills and learning something new;
  - meeting people and making new friends;
  - creating a more engaged and inclusive society;
  - contributing to the wellbeing of our local community.
- 3.3 A recent blog “The harsh truth about volunteers” written by Dawn Finch the Vice president of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) highlights some of the challenges of working with volunteers such as timetabling, commitment, sustainability and training.
- 3.4 She ends by saying that of course there are exceptions to the rule and that she has worked with a few “wonderful and supportive volunteers” in her time but that in public libraries it is a “genuine nightmare keeping reliable and effective volunteers”.
- 3.5 An article from the USA<sup>2</sup> talks about the prevalence of positive books and articles about library volunteerism and suggests that an earlier article from 1993 should be read to provide “some needed balance”. The article referred to states:
- “While the role of volunteers is crucial and deserves respect, it also requires a clear understanding of what volunteers do and, just as importantly, what they cannot do.”<sup>3</sup>
- 3.6 The first writer’s main point is that it is important to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers and that volunteers should only be doing tasks that would otherwise not be undertaken or would not be completed for a very long time.

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<sup>2</sup> Handle with care: benefits and drawbacks of volunteers in the library, J. Bartlett, University of Kentucky, May 2013

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *ibid.* from Herb White Opinion Piece in *Library Journal*, 1993

- 3.7 The BIG Lottery Fund ran a Community Libraries programme in England which was evaluated in 2011. This was, among other things, about increasing volunteer opportunities within community libraries. The evaluation report noted the approach to volunteering had become more strategic over the course of the programme with libraries consulting with volunteers, partners and staff on the roles volunteers can play and adopting more formal policies and procedures with regard to using volunteers. As a result the roles and responsibilities of both volunteers and the libraries were more clearly defined. In some libraries this included a named member of staff to manage and support each volunteer: which allowed each volunteer to have tailored support and ensured that staff had a greater understanding of each volunteer's needs and skills.
- 3.8 The evaluation identified that the roles for volunteers were varied and in some libraries including providing capacity to support library staff in providing homework clubs and reading groups, supporting access to ICT facilities and in stock purchasing. In some libraries the volunteers were more involved in "decision-making panels such as the Friends Group and Management Board which mean that staff have very little interaction with volunteers."
- 3.9 In Scotland many libraries, including the National Library of Scotland, are managed by Trusts which are governed by a Board of volunteers. This is an empowering role for members of the community and the role of volunteers in the governance of libraries is seen as a positive one.
- 3.10 One key finding from this programme was that 75% of the libraries involved in the programme had developed new services in response to volunteer suggestions. Other benefits identified in the report included:
- volunteers benefit from additional skills and wellbeing: volunteers highlighted they liked the feeling that they are part of their community and giving back to it;
  - the library gains more capacity and resource to deliver courses/training/support that would not be possible without them.
- 3.11 The Scottish Library and Information Council's own publication Empowering Communities through Libraries (2011) has a section on the kinds of roles that volunteers fulfil as part of professionally managed services. These are listed as :
- providing a home service;
  - gathering local studies materials;
  - supporting children to take part in Summer Reading Challenge;
  - acting as a computer buddy;
  - supporting a reading group;
  - assisting with Bookbug Rhymetime;

- assisting with shelving books.

3.12 From the above it is clear that there are roles for volunteers to play within libraries, that there are benefits to both the volunteer, the library and the wider community and that there can also be negatives in working with volunteers.

3.13 The next section looks at the evidence relating to volunteer-run and community managed libraries.

### Volunteer-run and community managed libraries

3.14 The evidence for volunteer-run/community managed libraries comes largely from England and Wales. There has been a huge growth in such libraries in England and Wales over the past five years. The Public Libraries News website stated that since April 2010, it is estimated that 381 library service points have closed and at least 262 are now being run by volunteers. A further 233 are known to be currently under threat of closure or transfer. It suggests that about 876 libraries (19% of the overall total five years ago) could be closed or managed by volunteers (Public Libraries News).

3.15 Figures for 2012/13 from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) (released in December 2014) stated that the rate of library closure had dramatically slowed that year (to 49 as compared to 74 in 2012/13 and 201 in 2011/12) but that there had been a 6.8% reduction in staff (20,302) and 44.5% more volunteers (33,808).

3.16 By contrast in Scotland there is just one community-run library at present, in Moray.

3.17 The move to hand libraries over to be run by community volunteers has not been without challenge. One example quoted in The Guardian (December 2014) was in Sheffield where the Culture Minister wrote to the local authority to request information on how it was implementing £1.6 million of cuts to its libraries, to make sure it had met its legal obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. Eleven Sheffield libraries had been at threat of closure until volunteers, with support from the local authority, stepped in to take them over. However one area's Local Action Group had lodged a legal complaint over the council's approach to using volunteers arguing that its needs assessment was flawed and a quarter of Sheffield's residents had been left without access to a branch.

3.18 The National Federation of Women produced a report in 2013 based on the experiences of 13 volunteers from seven different community-managed libraries. It refers to the piecemeal approach that is being taken by local authorities to this and points out that not every community will be equally able to take on the running of a library, thus exacerbating inequalities:

“... only certain communities have the resources to effectively set up and run a library and we are concerned that the proliferation of these models could effectively lead to a ‘postcode lottery’ of library services with the creation of a two tiered system of library provision that undermines the benefits of skilled and trained library staff and underestimates the role that they play in both delivering an effective public service and supporting communities.”<sup>4</sup>

- 3.19 It raises the issue of inequality in another way: it describes how in one community where the library was taken over locally the book stock was updated to reflect the largely middle class demographic and while this was popular with many of its users it raised the issue of whether those who had less resource or capacity to organise might not see their needs met.

“If the needs of a community are not being adequately evaluated then access to the library could be significantly restricted for a large proportion of the population”

- 3.20 It is clear that it does not think libraries should be left solely to be run by volunteers but that volunteers can have an important role to play if properly supported.

“It is concerning that the lack of guidance available to community managed libraries regarding training and legal requirements leaves volunteers – at best – vulnerable and, at worst, potentially liable.”<sup>5</sup>

“The NFWI does not believe that volunteers are an acceptable alternative to paid library staff, yet at the same time volunteers can and do make a tremendous contribution to the network.....Given the likely expansion of the [community-managed] models, it is critical that they are afforded an appropriate level of support and guidance.”<sup>6</sup>

- 3.21 In Wales, in recognition of the financial pressure facing local authorities and the likely reduction in public library service provision, the then Minister for Culture and Sport commissioned an expert review of public libraries in Wales which was undertaken in 2014. In the Foreword to the Expert Panel’s report the Chair states:

“Cooperative working between and within authorities, co-location with other services, and appropriate engagement with volunteers all seem to be more sustainable options than wholesale divesting of service points to their local communities.”<sup>7</sup>

- 3.22 The review recommended that further evidence be gathered to assess what impact there might be on the communities affected by the development of community libraries and by the emergence in some areas of independent charitable trusts as agencies responsible for

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<sup>4</sup> On permanent loan? Community managed libraries: the volunteer perspective. National Federation of Women’s Institutes, 2013. P.3

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.16

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.16/17

<sup>7</sup> Expert review of public libraries in Wales, 2014 p.5

the management of some public library services. It also recommended that “community managed libraries should not be considered as part of statutory provision at the present time, subject to the findings of the research....” (Recommendation VIII)

3.23 The report “Independent Trust and Community Libraries in Wales” sets out the findings from the research to provide this further evidence. It describes the independent authority-wide charitable trusts that had been established at that date by two authorities in Wales and suggests that subject to some further assessments once they have been established for a longer period of time, there did not appear to be any reason why such arrangements could not be considered as a suitable mechanism for delivering the authority’s statutory obligations.

3.24 The report goes on to examine “community libraries” and draws up a typology of three models:

- Model A- community managed libraries run independently of the local authority library service
- Model B- community managed libraries benefiting from ongoing resource provision and high level staff support from the local authority;
- Model C- community managed libraries that benefit from resources, advice, training and paid staff in each library, direct from the local authority.

3.25 The report points out that there is potentially an issue about maintaining performance levels and policy standards that relate to the Welsh Public Library Standards in the first model as they are completely independent. However it recognises generally that it is early days in terms of these models and that it is premature to make definitive judgements about them. Despite this it recommends that Wales strives to develop the local authority-led community model for smaller libraries threatened by cutbacks. It suggests that the community-managed models are not suited to larger libraries.

3.26 The need for local authority support for community libraries was also recognised in the Culture Media and Sports Committee’s third report of the session 2012-13 which stated:

“Councils which have transferred the running of libraries to community volunteers must, however, continue to give them the necessary support, otherwise they may well wither on the vine and therefore be viewed as closures by stealth.”

3.27 The UK Government response to the above report was to state that in a time of tight fiscal control volunteers and community-managed or supported libraries can “present a creative way to manage resources in appropriate individual cases. They are a way of growing the library service not replacing it.” They refer to the Arts Council England and

the Local Government Association Guiding principles for authorities on community-managed principles.<sup>8</sup>

- 3.28 The guiding principles to which they refer recognise that there are different examples of models being adopted for community libraries including those that are completely independent and those which have some form of partnership with the public sector (as had also been identified in the Welsh research quoted earlier). They advise that in thinking about which model they want to implement, local authorities should think about the outcomes they want to achieve and should assess needs and ensure equalities. They describe some of the different models and provide a useful summary table which we have included at Appendix 2.
- 3.29 However as with other evidence there is concern that low-income communities are likely to find it harder to manage their local libraries while at the same time they may be the communities likely to gain most from having a local community library "...there may be a case for more intensive start-up and on-going support in low-income communities, or the greater involvement of existing community trusts, if community libraries are to become established and sustained throughout the country."<sup>9</sup>
- 3.30 A recent article (March 2015) in The Stoke Sentinel puts some of the negative perceptions of volunteer-run libraries succinctly:
- "Without a co-ordinator, whether paid or unpaid, a volunteer-led library was destined for limited success. No matter how dedicated, volunteers have other commitments. You need somebody to work on the long term vision".<sup>10</sup>
- 3.31 Interestingly the community-run library described in this article has just recruited its first paid member of staff, having secured its own funding for this.
- 3.32 There is a good summary of both the benefits and the disadvantages of volunteer-run libraries on the Public Libraries News website<sup>11</sup> which quotes from Locality's Community Knowledge Hub to list the benefits of volunteer-run libraries as follows:
- reduced running costs for local authorities;
  - increased community involvement in and control over local services;

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<sup>8</sup> Community libraries-Learning from experience: guiding principles for local authorities. Report by Locality for Arts Council England and Local Government Association. Jan 2013

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.53

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/Kathie-McInnes-volunteer-run-libraries-survive/story-26166723-detail/story.html#eiGZw87lkhxSelZq.99>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/campaigning/volunteer-run-libraries>

- increased take-up of library services;
- library service innovation and diversification;
- improved access to a range of public services.

3.33 However it points out that while there is reasonable evidence for all of these benefits from existing volunteer-run libraries, all the benefits listed could be achieved by the local authority through other routes.

3.34 One of the issues facing volunteer-run libraries is that of sustained financial viability. The Locality CEO is quoted in the same article as saying that this can be particularly difficult in more deprived areas.

“We recognise that, especially in deprived areas, one or more of the following are usually necessary to ensure financial viability: an endowment fund, a transfer of assets capable of generating income, a continuing financial relationship with the library authority in the form of grants or contracts, access to professional staff and resources from the library authority, help and investment of the community group to develop associated income-generating enterprises.”

3.35 The Public Libraries News website also sets out the disadvantages of volunteer-run libraries. This section includes the union UNISON’s view that:

“UNISON believes that public library services should be sufficiently resourced and professionally staffed. Volunteers may have a role to play, but they should not be used as replacements for employed, paid, trained staff in the public library service.....Volunteers should only be used in a limited number of circumstances to complement the work of paid staff.” (UNISON position on library volunteers 2013)

3.36 The main disadvantages listed in this website article relate to:

- the potential impact the use of volunteers may have on professional staff (loss of skills/jobs);
- the variability of using volunteers (may be more likely to recruit volunteers in wealthier areas/higher turnover);
- issues for the local authority to consider (whether it is legal to lend books from a volunteer-run library has been queried by the Public Lending Rights registrar; there is reputational risk for the local authority if a community library fails);
- a volunteer-run library, especially if it takes funds from other public sources, could be seen as a form of double taxation as libraries are paid for by tax payers: it could also be seen as discriminatory, why should some areas face cuts and a volunteer-run service while others do not when everyone has paid taxes to have a library service;
- issues of financing and whether the use of volunteers in one library encourages cuts elsewhere.

- 3.37 A recent article exploring the role of volunteers and the issues associated with their use in England states that possible disadvantages like poor working relationships between paid staff and volunteers can be alleviated through introducing a clear volunteer policy, which makes a clear distinction between the roles of paid staff and volunteers. In addition, a formal process for the recruitment, training and management of library volunteers is paramount to ensuring smooth working relationships and commitment to the service's overall aims and priorities. Ultimately, volunteers are an option which requires substantial investment.
- 3.38 The Public Libraries News website article also looks at the various practicalities of running a library. It refers to the Community Knowledge Hub, a website that provides practical help for those who want to run their own library. Some of the key practicalities relate to how close a relationship there is with the local authority: for example whether or not the volunteers will have support from a paid local authority member of staff; whether or not they have access to the local authority's library computer system; who will train the volunteers and whether they have a job description; if there are self-service machines in the library how these will be updated.
- 3.39 The Independent Library Report for England written by William Sieghart and a panel of advisers for the Department for Culture Media and Sport and published in December 2014 looks at the need to develop sector-led best practice guidelines to help local authorities when working with volunteers and community-led libraries. It highlights the need for communities to be consulted in greater depth and brought more into the management of their library service but recognises that there is a variety of models through which this might happen. It does point out that the examples of volunteer-run libraries tend to be in more affluent parts of the country and "there are still questions over their long term viability".<sup>12</sup> It suggests that there is not one model to suit every situation but that it is important that there is greater cohesion between the different types of libraries and more support both for local authorities and their communities to understand the different models and choices available.
- 3.40 SLIC's Empowering Communities through Libraries (2011) provides a useful summary of some of the issues for consideration in relation to the use of volunteers and of volunteer-run libraries. It asks the question: can a volunteer-managed service be a public library? It answers by saying that after discussion at CIPFA's Public Library Statistics Committee it was agreed that entirely volunteer-run libraries, even those which received local authority owned stock, would not be counted because it becomes impossible "to adequately define". However if the volunteers were extending library opening hours (for example to increase access to broadband) and remained under the management of the library then they would qualify.

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<sup>12</sup> Independent Library Report, Department for Culture media and Sport. Dec 2014 p.23

3.41 We have not identified much evidence of the pros and cons of volunteer-run libraries outwith the UK other than that there are beginning to be some examples in other countries where this is happening: examples (quoted on the Public Libraries News website) include:

- In Spain there are now a few volunteer-run libraries, and there has been resistance in some areas to these. In one area (Castilla-La Mancha) the law has been changed so that councils do not need to adequately fund libraries if their budgets do not allow it.
- In New Zealand there are some volunteer-run libraries that have existed for a long time providing a library service to areas that would not otherwise have one. In general the sense is that volunteers are used as part of the publicly-managed library system.
- In Holland a volunteer-run library met a lot of resistance when it opened and calls itself a “reading room” rather than a library.
- In Australia the National Library of Australia has a statement that “volunteers are not used as an alternative to paid employment or to displace paid staff”.

## 4. Key points

- 4.1 The main focus of this literature search has been on the evidence around volunteer-run libraries in England and Wales.
- 4.2 The materials reviewed suggest there is a lot of concern about the number of libraries that are solely volunteer-run with no paid staff: the main theme emerging appears to be that volunteers can be useful but should not be left without support from the local authority/a paid member of staff.
- 4.3 The vagueness of the terms under which libraries are to be provided, “comprehensive and efficient” in England and Wales and “adequate” in Scotland, leaves scope for varying interpretations and this is reflected in some of the materials reviewed, where either the local community is challenging or as in the case of Sheffield even central government is asking questions about proposed cutbacks and library closures.
- 4.4 The pace of the establishment of volunteer-run libraries in England and Wales appears to have slowed down more recently from the highest level in 2011/12.
- 4.5 There are a number of issues identified relating to equalities:
  - within an area which has a volunteer-run library will it be the more middle class members of the community who dominate what happens in the library?
  - across a local authority will it only be more affluent areas that can manage to take on a library and therefore will poorer areas face more library closures?
  - Is it fair that when everyone has paid taxes that some areas end up with volunteer-run libraries while others have publicly and professionally managed ones?
- 4.6 There are also issues raised relating to sustainability. It is still a relatively short time since many of the volunteer-run libraries were established so it may be too early to say how sustainable they will be. However the materials reviewed suggest there may be concerns in terms of financial viability, the turnover of people willing to be volunteers, and the maintenance of buildings once repairs are required.
- 4.7 While using volunteers to help extend and supplement library services is seen as generally helpful the evidence tends to suggest that volunteer-run libraries with no professional inputs or links to the public library service are not the preferred option. However it is also recognised that in communities which face losing their library the recourse to offering to run a service voluntarily seems preferable even though some evidence suggests that this will only encourage local authorities to make further cuts.

## APPENDIX 1 LIST OF SOURCES REVIEWED

### Reports

Independent Library Report for England. W. Sieghart, Department for Culture Media and Sport, December 2014

Expert review of public libraries in Wales. Welsh Government, 2014

Community managed libraries in Wales and the statutory provision of public library services: draft guidance for comment

Independent Trust and community libraries in Wales. D. Hywel and E. Roberts, Welsh Government, December 2014

The public library service under attack: how cuts are putting individuals and communities at risk and damaging local businesses and economies. S. Davies, Unison, 2013

The library of the future, Arts Council England, 2013

Library closures: third report of session 2012–2013, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, The Stationery office, 2013

Government response to the report of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, third report of session 2012–13: library closures, The Stationery office, 2013

On permanent loan? Community managed libraries: the volunteer perspective, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 2013

Local Solutions for future library services. Local Government Association, 2012

Community engagement in public libraries: an evaluation update of the BIG Lottery Fund's Community Libraries programme, BIG Lottery Fund, 2011

Opening up a new world: public libraries connecting housebound people to the networked nation, The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), 2011

Community libraries–Learning from experience: guiding principles for local authorities. Report by Locality for Arts Council England and Local Government Association. Jan 2013 This has the table for Appendix 2 in it.

Empowering Communities through libraries. Scottish Library and Information Council (SLiC), 2011.

### Articles

Councils are cut down to size (equalities implications of cuts to council services in Surrey), in MJ, 3 May 2012

Living with grant cuts, in Local Government Chronicle, 7 April 2011

Time to make a contribution (slivers-of-time working), in Local Government Chronicle, 24 mar 2011

Books on the house as libraries move into pubs and cafes, Guardian, 9 December 2014

Sheffield libraries row: government may intervene over volunteer takeover, Guardian, 8 Oct 2014

Handle with care: benefits and drawbacks of volunteers in the library. J. Bartlett, University of Kentucky, May 2013

CILIP call for ministerial clarification over community-managed library 'advice' on gov.uk, CILIP October 2013. Available: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/news/cilip-call-ministerial-clarification-over-community-managed-library-advice-govuk-0>

Libraries run by volunteers as council look to save money. Guardian, 25 Mar 2013

Community Libraries, 10 case studies. For Arts Council England and Local Government Association by Locality. January 2013

The challenges facing public libraries in the Big Society: The role of volunteers, and the issues that surround their use in England. B. Casselden, A. Pickard and J. Mcleod, *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* (2014).

Analysis: The libraries that have been taken over by volunteers. *Third Sector*, 21 Aug 2012.

Use of volunteers, CILIP, Apr 2013

Will volunteer-run libraries survive? K. McInnes in *The Stoke Sentinel*. 13 Mar 2015

## Blogs

"The harsh truth about volunteers", D. Finch. April 2015

Public Libraries News various items including

- Official figures show fewer closures: big rise in volunteers; decline in usage and funding  
Dec 10 2014

- Passing the Bucks: the DCMS blames libraries; having volunteers only brings more cuts,  
Sep 29 2014

- Volunteer-run libraries

- "The reality is very different": a volunteer library manager speaks Oct 2013

CILIP. (2012) Use of volunteers in public libraries policy statement [Online]. Chartered Institute of

Library and Information Professionals. Available:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/getinvolved/policy/statements%20and%20briefings/pages/use-of-volunteers.aspx>

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## APPENDIX 2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITY LIBRARIES<sup>13</sup>

Type of model:	1) Independent Community Library These have no public sector involvement		2) Co-Produced Library These are partnership models with both public sector and community involvement		
	1a) Asset owning Independent community library, owns its own premises, sometimes after asset transfer from local authority	1b) Non-asset owning Independent community library, with no long term lease or freehold on its premises	2a) Community managed These are community-led and largely community delivered, rarely with paid staff, but often with some form of ongoing Council support and often still part of the public library network	2b) Community supported These are Council-led and funded, usually with paid professional staff, but given significant support by volunteers	2c) Commissioned community These are commissioned and fully funded by the council but delivered by a not-for-private-profit community, social enterprise or mutual organisation, either existing or newly created. Councils might commission i) individual libraries or ii) the whole library service
Provision of Council staffing and funding?	No	No	Some limited support, mainly in the provision of book stock, self-service terminals and professional advice	Yes, Council continues core funding and staffing	Yes, Council remains the funder
Part of the local library management system?	No	No	Yes, usually, but access to some functions may be limited	Yes	Yes
Community asset transfer (CAT) of the building?	Yes	No	Sometimes	Unlikely	Unlikely
Part of statutory provision?	No	No	Many are, some are not	Yes	Yes
Community influence in running libraries?	High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Extent of ongoing public funding?	None	None	Low	Medium	High
Case Study Examples	Grappenhall Library, Warrington	Primrose Hill Library, Camden	Buckinghamshire Bradford North Yorkshire	Lincolnshire Telford and Wrekin Northamptonshire	Croxteth Library, Liverpool Suffolk

<sup>13</sup> Community libraries—Learning from experience: guiding principles for local authorities. Report by Locality for Arts Council England and Local Government Association. Jan 2013