

**Six Steps Promise in Public Libraries**

The Six Steps Promise sets out the experience that people with sight loss and other print disabilities should have through public library services. The Promise is written primarily for library staff, but should also be made available to library users.

**Our Vision for this experience is:**

* *Everyone visiting a public library is inspired by an exciting accessible environment which makes reading and seeking information a pleasure.*
* *They have the opportunity to engage with libraries and reading through imaginative digital opportunities with support to build their skills, knowledge and creativity.*
* *They have access to a range of inclusive and diverse books and other information resources in accessible formats which allow them to engage with reading both for pleasure and for daily living.*
* *They are able to take part in a wide range of reading and cultural experiences, including book-based and digital activities, which are accessible to all.*
* *They are actively involved in decisions about service developments.*
* *They are supported through library services and activities taking place both in library buildings and in the community to improve their independence, health and wellbeing*

There are almost two million blind and partially sighted people in the United Kingdom as well as many others who experience other kinds of print disability. Like everyone else, they need their library and information services, and public libraries have a duty to provide accessible services for every member of their local community.

Since 2010, The Society of Chief Librarians, Share the Vision and the Scottish Library and Information Council have worked in partnership to support the Six Steps Promise. Many library services are providing excellent services, and the Six Steps promise is intended to provide the framework charter which every library can support.

The Six Steps Promise offers a low-cost but significant contribution to making public library services accessible to people with sight loss and print disability.

**The Six Steps**

1. Ensure that all blind and partially sighted customers are connected to the most appropriate service for their reading needs using the Six Steps, and that they are able to make full use of an accessible public library service
2. Use Reading Sight ([www.readingsight.org.uk](http://www.readingsight.org.uk)), the free website supporting blind and partially sighted people to access reading and reading services
3. Provide local collections of accessible reading materials and information in physical or digital formats, and be able to signpost customers to wider range of resources
4. Plan your digital and physical access strategies in consultation with blind and partially sighted people
5. Designate a champion for the reading needs of blind and partially sighted people, who has familiarised themselves with the specialist resources and services available
6. Support and promote Make a Noise in Libraries Fortnight ([www.rnib.org.uk/manil](http://www.rnib.org.uk/manil)) run annually by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

**Our partners**

Libraries work with a range of national partners to deliver the Six Steps Promise. National partners include Share the Vision, RNIB, Calibre Audio Library, Clearvision, ASCEL and the British Library. Share the Vision also works with the Scottish Library and Information Council, SCONUL and CyMAL to ensure that libraries of other kinds and in other Home Nations engage with their work.

Libraries also work locally with voluntary organisations and societies.

**The Six Steps Promise and national policies and priorities**

The Six Steps Promise links to the ***Society of Chief Librarians’ Universal Offers***:

* Reading Offer: Books and reading-focused promotions for people who engage with reading through alternative formats of all kinds including large print, e-books and audio.
* Learning Offer and Digital Offer: Providing safe and accessible spaces and resources for formal and informal learning, including digital skills and creativity and e-safety.
* Health Offer: Health information and support for people in accessible formats, and the provision of advice and signposting for people who are experiencing sight loss.
* Information Offer: Access to information and signposting to other provision in formats which people with sight loss can engage with.
* Children and Young People’s Promise: Provision of alternative format resources and accessible services for children in public libraries.

The Six Steps Promise also reflects the four priorities in the **Arts Council England’s**

***Envisioning the Library of the Future***:

1. Place the library as the hub of the community
2. Make the most of digital technology and creative media
3. Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable
4. Deliver the right skills for those who work for libraries.

and of the **five Arts Council goals**, as set out in *Great art and culture for everyone* (but with a particular focus on goal 2).

1. Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
2. Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
3. The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
4. The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled
5. Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries.

**Delivering on the Six Steps Promise**

SCL’s work to deliver on this Promise includes:

* Marketing and advocacy
* Developing the skills of library staff
* Sharing best practice
* Raising awareness of the range of resources
* Research and development.

From 2015 to 2017 Share the Vision will:

* Employ a Six-Steps-focused Intern to assist in updating resources
* Update the Reading Sight web pages and develop a new tool to signpost customers to appropriate services
* Produce a revised set of Six Steps
* Promote these via appropriate means
* Develop the first of a series of training modules
* Deliver a series of face to face workshops
* Update local Six Steps Champions details
* Seek a reconfirmation of commitment from library services to the Promise