

# **PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS REPORT 2004**

## **GUIDANCE**

This Guidance has been prepared by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the English public library authorities.

It draws on the Department's and authorities' responsibilities under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, and reflects the Secretary of State's entitlement to ask authorities for such information as she may require to carry out her duty under the Act. In this context it asks authorities exempt from submitting public library position statements for 2004 to provide information about their performance in meeting the public library standards with contextual information about the library service within the authority, in line with the Secretary of State's duty to superintend the public library service. It provides options for authorities on the level of detail to be submitted.

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### **A Introduction**

A.1 All authorities are required to submit information about their achievement of the public library standards as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004, as indicated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries (DCMS, 2001)*. This Guidance is for those authorities exempt from submitting a public library position statement and standards report (PLPSR) for 2004.

A.2 The objective of Standards Reports is to show how those public library authorities exempt from providing a PLPSR have responded to the requirement to meet the public library standards published in *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries* in the context of their authority's corporate vision and provision of resources.

A.3 Authorities exempt from submitting a PLPSR may choose:

- to supply a full PLPSR for assessment, in accordance with the guidance for those documents, which is available from the public library position statement website ([www.libplans.ws](http://www.libplans.ws)), or
- to provide a Standards Report according to this guidance, or
- to provide information about their performance in relation to the national standards published in *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries*, as well as their local targets for the groups identified in *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries*.

A.4 Authorities that choose to submit the minimum information required are asked to provide a short commentary for each of the standards or local targets they had not met by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 outlining the factors that militated against their attainment, e.g. lack of resources, demographics or other local factors. Authorities are encouraged to provide at least a Standards Report according to this guidance, but will not be penalised if they choose to provide the minimum information required.

A.5 Questions of interpretation of this guidance may be sent to the assessment team through the enquiry form on the discussions page of the public library position statement website ([www.libplans.ws/discussions/faq/enquiry.asp](http://www.libplans.ws/discussions/faq/enquiry.asp)). Answers will be sent to the enquirer, and published on the frequently asked questions section of the website. Please check this before asking a question as it may already have been answered.

### **B Audience**

B.1 The DCMS is the primary audience for this document. Other audiences include the authority's members, council officers, the Audit Commission, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and other Government departments. We encourage authorities to make the

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document accessible to their local communities through their websites and/or in print. Authorities should take into account the publication scheme they have developed in response to the Freedom of Information Act.

B.2 The Standards Report or, where the minimum is being provided, the commentary document, will be included by the Audit Commission in any future inspection and assessment of your library service. The document should be accepted by the Council as a record which can be made available to the auditor if required.

#### **C Timetable and presentation**

C.1 Authorities must submit their standards report or the commentary document by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004 for assessment. The electronic Public Library Standards Achievement Report should be completed and returned to IPF by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004, so that the analysed information may be made available to the assessors.

C.2 Electronic submission should be used, with standards reports being submitted in Adobe Acrobat format by email to: [libstatements@ipf.co.uk](mailto:libstatements@ipf.co.uk) or on a standard floppy disc. If submitting in an electronic format other than Adobe Acrobat, please ensure one hard copy is sent to IPF, NLA Tower, 12-16 Addiscombe Road, Croydon, CRO 0XT and one copy to DCMS. The contact at IPF for technical queries is Martin Jennings (0208 667 1144 email: [libstatements@ipf.co.uk](mailto:libstatements@ipf.co.uk)).

C.3 Authorities are requested to be succinct and to use bullet points wherever possible. They should not use appendices, nor include complete policy papers.

C.4 Authorities should aim to keep their standards report within a maximum of 15 pages. This maximum length will not be changed after the publication of this Guidance. There is no minimum or maximum length for commentary documents providing the minimum information required, but authorities are asked to have regard to the information sought at paragraph A4.

C.5 The elected member with the main responsibility for the library service (e.g. the appropriate cabinet member) should be asked to sign the standards report or commentary to indicate that the document has political backing within the authority.

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#### **D Assessment**

D.1 Standards reports or commentary documents will be assessed in relation to this guidance and information on authorities' performance in relation to the public library standards. An assessment framework and blank assessment form are published alongside this guidance, and are available from the public library position statement website. A four point scoring system (1 - weak, 2 - fair, 3 - good, 4 - excellent) will be used.

D.2 Assessors may ask for additional information from authorities to clarify any unclear aspects of the standards report or the commentary provided.

D.3 One assessment score will be given:

- the response to the public library standards as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004, including local targets and progress since national standards were introduced in January 2001.

D.4 The score will be sent to the Audit Commission for inclusion in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

D.5 Authorities will be sent the assessment form for their authority in late November 2004. If they have queries, wish to comment on the assessment or appeal against the assessment, such communications should be sent to IPF, preferably by email to [libstatements@ipf.co.uk](mailto:libstatements@ipf.co.uk), for the attention of Martin Jennings, by December 18<sup>th</sup> 2004.

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Authorities that choose to provide a Standards Report should use the guidance on pages 4 to 7  
Authorities that choose to provide the minimum information required should go to page 8

### **I Corporate vision and ambition for the public library service**

State:

- your authority's corporate ambition and vision for the public library service in the context of contributing to corporate objectives and meeting local needs. This should show how your authority intends the library service to evolve, respond well to the authority's corporate agendas, focus on public value, and identify and meet local needs;
- your authority's assessment of the priority it gives to the library service and its capacity to meet the vision;
- the headlines of evidence on which your authority has based this assessment;
- the main points from external evaluations of the impact of the library service, such as surveys of residents or library users.

### **II Public Library Standards: Information relating to standards met or not met in the financial year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004.**

II.i Public library standards - "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries" PLS 1 to 18

- Complete the electronic Public Library Standards Achievement Report with information about your authority's performance in each of the designated national standards and part standards (i.e. PLS 1 to 18 less PLS 10 and 16) as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004;
- State concisely why you did not meet any of the standards, and if you have a programme to meet the standards previously agreed with DCMS.

Notes:

1. The Public library Standards Achievement Report is available to download from the public library position statement website ([www.libplans.ws](http://www.libplans.ws))
2. Assessors will take your authority's progress in meeting the standards since March 2001 into account when assessing your Standards Report (other than PLS 1 (ii), 2 (i), 2 (ii), 3 (ii), 10 and 16, for which no standard measures were set in 2001). No standards measures have been set for PLS 19 i and PLS 19 ii.

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	<p>3. Data for PLS 12 to 15 collected in any year from the 2001/02 financial year may be used to provide information relating to your library service's performance for these standards. Use the most recent data you have available, up to that collected by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004. Data for the other standards and part standards should be as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004.</p>
<p>II.ii Public library standards - Local targets identified in "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries".</p>	<p>Provide your local targets for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ services for people with disabilities;</li> <li>▪ services for ethnic minority communities;</li> <li>▪ services for socially excluded people;</li> <li>▪ services for children;</li> </ul> <p>State your authority's performance in relation to your local targets at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004,</p> <p>If you had no local targets for any of these groups for 2003/04 please state why you did not have such targets.</p>

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<b>III <u>Resources</u></b>	
<p>III.i Spaces (“spaces” refers to the spaces your authority uses to deliver your library service. It particularly relates to paragraphs 2.2, 3.3, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 of "Framework for the Future", but not exclusively so. Spaces includes traditional library buildings and mobile libraries as well as new ways of providing space in which public library services can be delivered, often in partnership with other users of public space.)</p> <p>III.ii Stock</p> <p>III.iii Staffing</p> <p>III.iv ICT</p>	<p>For each of these areas, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ a short analysis of the key strengths, constraints and challenges which impact significantly on the delivery of your service overall in each of these areas.</li><li>▪ a note of the adequacy of your resources, including financial resources, to deliver against your priorities in these areas;</li><li>▪ a note about the level of commitment within your authority to provide these resources;</li><li>▪ the timescale for responding to those constraints and challenges which you have identified. The timescale should be clearly stated and challenging.</li></ul> <p><u>Note:</u> these bullet points refer equally to spaces, stock, staffing and ICT.</p>

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Guidance for authorities that choose to provide the minimum information required.

### **II. Public Library Standards: Information relating to standards met or not met in the financial year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004.**

<p>II.i Public library standards - "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries" PLS 1 to 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the electronic Public Library Standards Achievement Report with information about your authority's performance in each of the designated national standards and part standards (i.e. PLS 1 to 18 less PLS 10 and 16) as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004;</li> <li>• State concisely why you did not meet any of the standards, and if you have a programme to meet the standards previously agreed with DCMS.</li> <li>• Provide a short commentary for each of the standards or local targets your authority had not met at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004 outlining the factors that militated against their attainment, e.g. lack of resources, demographics or other local factors.</li> </ul> <p><u>Notes:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The Public library Standards Achievement Report is available to download from the public library position statement website (<a href="http://www.libplans.ws">www.libplans.ws</a>)</i></li> <li>2. <i>Assessors will take your authority's progress in meeting the standards since March 2001 into account when assessing your Standards Report (other than PLS 1 (ii), 2 (i), 2 (ii), 3 (ii), 10 and 16, for which no standard measures were set in 2001). No standards measures have been set for PLS 19 i and PLS 19 ii.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Data for PLS 12 to 15 collected in any year from the 2001/02 financial year may be used to provide information relating to your library service's performance for these standards. Use the most recent data you have available, up to that collected by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004. Data for the other standards and part standards should be as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004.</i></li> </ol>
<p>II.ii Public library standards - Local targets identified in "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries".</p>	<p>Provide your local targets for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ services for people with disabilities;</li> <li>▪ services for ethnic minority communities;</li> <li>▪ services for socially excluded people;</li> <li>▪ services for children;</li> </ul>

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	<p>State your authority's performance in relation to your local targets at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2004, If you had no local targets for any of these groups for 2003/04 please state why you did not have such targets.</p>
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