

PUBLIC LIBRARY POSITION STATEMENT AND STANDARDS REPORT 2004

GUIDANCE

This Guidance has been prepared by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the English public library authorities. It is drawn mainly from "Framework for the Future" (2003) and draws on the Department's and authorities' responsibilities under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

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A Introduction

- A.1 Following the announcement of the 2002 Annual Library Plan (ALP) assessments, ALPs were discontinued as part of the Local Government White Paper implementation process. They were succeeded by Position Statements to be submitted for a maximum of two years by library authorities other than those which received an "Excellent" overall Comprehensive Performance Assessment or a "Good" overall assessment with an "Excellent" Libraries and Leisure score. These authorities continue to be exempt from submitting public library position statements. In addition, authorities that received a score of 4 "Excellent" for the *Framework for the Future* element of the 2003 Public Library Position Statements are also exempt from submitting such statements for 2004.
- A.2 The objective of public library position statement and standards reports (PLPSRs) is to show how English public library authorities are shaping and delivering their library services in line with the themes within *Framework for the Future* and to give an indication of their current service levels. Authorities are recommended to consider the full range of themes in *Framework for the Future* in drawing up their statements.
- A.3 All authorities are also required to submit information about their achievement of the public library standards as at March 31st 2004, as indicated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries (DCMS, 2001)*.
- A.4 This Guidance gives details of the information about standards required from those authorities that are asked to submit a public library position statement and standards report (PLPSR).
- A.5 We suggest that authorities should use their internal library, cultural and community planning as the basis for drafting their PLPSRs. They should also consider the extent to which they are building on previous reports on the development of public library services, including "Building Better Library Services" (Audit Commission, 2002).
- A.6 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 PLPSR website (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.

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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 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 PLPSR will be included by the Audit Commission in any future inspection and assessment of your library service. The PLPSR 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 asked to provide a PLPSR must submit it by 30th September 2004 for assessment. The electronic Public Library Standards Achievement Report should be completed and returned to IPF by Friday 23rd July 2004, so that the analysed information may be made available to the assessors.
- C.2 Electronic submission should be used, with statements being submitted in Adobe Acrobat format by email to: 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).
- C.3 Wherever possible authorities should concentrate on the performance of the library service, and state how they are improving it. Authorities are encouraged to quote examples of evidence of the implementation of their policies and practices.
- C.4 Authorities are requested to be succinct and to use bullet points wherever possible. They should not use appendices, nor include complete policy papers.
- C.5 Authorities should aim to keep their PLPSR within a maximum of 25 pages. This maximum length will not be changed after the publication of this Guidance.
- C.6 The elected member with the main responsibility for the library service (e.g. the appropriate cabinet member) should be asked to sign the PLPSR to indicate that the document has political backing within the authority.

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D Assessment

D.1 PLPSRs 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 PLPSR.

D.3 Two assessment scores will be given:

- the evidence that authorities are providing excellent policies and practice to implement *Framework for the Future*, in line with local needs and the corporate vision.
- the response to the public library standards as at March 31st 2004, including local targets and progress since national standards were introduced in January 2001.

D.4. The scores will be sent to the Audit Commission for inclusion in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The weighting of the scores will be 50:50.

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 for the attention of Martin Jennings, preferably by email to libstatements@ipf.co.uk, by December 18th 2004.

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<u>1. Corporate vision</u>	
1.1 Corporate vision and ambition for the public library service	<p>State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ your <u>authority's</u> 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.
<u>2. Response to <i>Framework for the Future</i></u>	
<p>In assessing your authority's response to the three main areas identified in <i>Framework for the Future</i> (and listed below at 2.1 to 2.3) please take into account the four main factors identified at paragraph 3.5 (page 23) of the strategy document.</p>	
2. 1 Books, reading and learning	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a short and focussed analysis of your key strengths, constraints and challenges; ▪ the headlines of your policies and practices for adults and children, which should be clearly stated, innovative, developmental, challenging and build firmly on the analysis; ▪ the main points of your activities to encourage participation across the full range of informal learning; ▪ the key points of your activities to develop and evaluate your practice; ▪ a short note on how your library service contributes to the Authority's Educational Development Plan, or Single Education Plan, whichever is appropriate for your authority. ▪ your priorities and targets, relating clearly to the key strengths, constraints and challenges ▪ the timescale for your activities, which should be clearly stated and challenging. ▪

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2.2 Digital citizenship	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a short and focussed analysis of your key strengths, constraints and challenges; ▪ the headlines of your policies and practices for adults and children, which should be clearly stated, innovative, developmental, challenging and build firmly on the analysis; ▪ a note of the library services that users may access electronically in libraries and remotely, including your library service's URL for your home page; ▪ a short note on your library service's involvement in developing and implementing your Authority's e-government strategy. ▪ the key points of your activities to develop and evaluate your practice; ▪ your priorities and targets, relating clearly to the key strengths, constraints and challenges ▪ the timescale for your activities, which should be clearly stated and challenging.
2.3 Community and civic values	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a short and focussed analysis of your key strengths, constraints and challenges; ▪ the headlines of your policies and practices for adults and children, which should be clearly stated, innovative, developmental, challenging and build firmly on the analysis; ▪ the headlines of your actions which assist library users and non-users to develop citizenship and to encourage a community identity, including other facilities available in libraries; ▪ a short note on how your library service links into your Authority's plans to improve and develop customer services. ▪ the key points of your activities to develop and evaluate your practice; ▪ your priorities and targets, relating clearly to the key strengths, constraints and challenges ▪ the timescale for your activities, which should be clearly stated and challenging.
2.4 Building capacity to deliver transformation.	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a short and focussed analysis of your key strengths, constraints and challenges; ▪ your actions to improve leadership, staff capacity and skills for your service; ▪ a note of the partnerships which are in place and are proposed, including any innovative partnerships; ▪ the key points of your activities to develop and evaluate your practice; ▪ your priorities and targets, relating clearly to the key strengths, constraints and challenges ▪ the timescale for your activities, which should be clearly stated and challenging.

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	Outline the main points of any service or staff restructuring proposals that are being developed that would impact on the quality of your library service. Include the main points of the rationale for these proposals.
<u>3. Public Library Standards: Information relating to standards met or not met in the financial year to March 31st 2004.</u>	
3.1 Public library standards - "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries" PLS 1 to 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 31st 2004; • State concisely why you did not meet any of these standards, and if you have a programme to meet the standards previously agreed with DCMS. <p><i>Notes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Public library Standards Achievement Report is available to download from the public library position statement website (www.libplans.ws)</i> 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> 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 31st 2004. Data for the other standards and part standards should be as at March 31st 2004.</i>
3.2 Public library standards - Local targets identified in "Comprehensive, efficient and modern public libraries".	<p>Provide your local targets for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ services for people with disabilities; ▪ services for ethnic minority communities; ▪ services for socially excluded people; ▪ services for children; <p>State your authority's performance in relation to your local targets at March 31st 2004,</p> <p>If you had no local targets for any of these groups for 2003/04 please state why you did not have r such targets.</p>

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<u>4. Resources</u>	
<p>4.1 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>4.2 Stock</p> <p>4.3 Staffing</p> <p>4.4 ICT</p>	<p>For each of these areas, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 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.▪ a note of the adequacy of your resources, including financial resources, to deliver against your priorities in these areas;▪ a note about the level of commitment within your authority to provide these resources;▪ the timescale for responding to those constraints and challenges which you have identified. The timescale should be clearly stated and challenging. <p><u>Note:</u> these bullet points refer equally to spaces, stock, staffing and ICT.</p>