

Suffolk Libraries – reopening and recovery plans – June 2020

Immediate Plans

- All libraries apart from Great Cornard (delivery service only), Saxmundham, Bungay and Stoke will open during the week of 6th July. Bungay and Stoke will open from the week commencing 13th July
- Mobile libraries will re-start from 7th July and will be carefully following social distancing guidelines
- Initially libraries will only offer a ‘Select and Collect’ service as the UK government is discouraging browsing for the time being
- No public access PCs, other IT services or public toilets will be available initially
- Opening hours will be restricted across all sites to allow appropriate time for cleaning at the start and the end of the day and to give colleagues space to curate resource bundles as part of a new ‘Select and Collect’ service. New site-specific temporary opening hours will be advertised in late June.

Measures to Support Customers during Restricted Service

- Overdue fees suspended until 31st August
- Fees for hiring CDs and DVDs suspended until 31st August
- Pre-lockdown loans extended to 31st August to help those still shielding
- Online payments are up and running and our Square payment system has been improved so we can take payments once all fees and charges are reintroduced. Libraries will remain as cashless as possible (for safety reasons).

Tentative Timeline for Return to Normality

How quickly we can get back to delivering more traditional services will depend on UK government advice and particularly guidance from Libraries Connected and DCMS. For instance, it would seem that groups and activities are unlikely to return until 2021 due to safety concerns. With this in mind we will be bolstering our live digital offer that has worked so successfully during lockdown.

We are currently working to the following loose timelines for traditional services (dependent on government advice):

- The **UKVI visa service** we run from Ipswich County will resume in July
- **Public access PC's** will be slowly reintroduced on an appointment only system from late July (this is likely to be in larger sites only to start with)
- **Reservations** will be reinstated as quickly as possible and it is hoped that these will be operational again before August
- **IT, printing and photocopying** will slowly come back online from August

- **Browsing shelves** will be available to customers from September. This will be reviewed in August but that may be too soon depending on the 'R' rate
- Once browsing is reinstated we will look to reinstate **newspapers** and **the ability to sit and read/work** in libraries (while maintaining social distancing)
- The **Home Library Service** remains suspended in its current form due to the health and age profile of our volunteers. However, some libraries will be undertaking home delivery as the service reopens to try and fill this gap. In the meantime, the Volunteer Manager is working on recruiting a younger cohort of volunteers and also looking at how this service can be expanded
- The **Music and Drama service** has no return date but we're taking a view on this based on national advice that we'll have by mid-June
- **Inter-county lending via SPINE** is on hold indefinitely. Suffolk will be ready to reinstate towards the end of July but Cambridge and Peterborough are not at the same stage as us, so we wait on them.
- We're not sure when **public toilets** will be made available again. We're sticking closely to government guidance on this matter so our Compliance Manger will advise us when it is appropriate to offer this.

New services that will be retained:

- **BLOC (young people's arts programme) and New Chapters (mental health and wellbeing service)** will continue to offer an amended service digitally and through partners to ensure key groups are not forgotten about.
- **Live streamed sessions and other virtual activities** will be centralised as a complete offer from July with their own name and identity.
- The **Lifeline Telephone Service** will continue. Initially, as libraries try and get moving again the majority of the workforce will be focused on this. A very small group of colleagues will continue to work from home who will be focusing on the Lifelines service and digital delivery.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES PERFORMANCE DURING LOCKDOWN - April & May 2020

